

# Friday Times

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SAFAR 12, 1441 AH | FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2019

**4** Strong passion for perfume in Kuwait all year round



**37** NBK reports 10.9% rise in 9M 2019 net profit



**45** Tennis star Osaka picks Japanese citizenship with eye on Olympics



## Iranian women attend first football match in 40 years

See Page 47



## Local

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Fishing boats are moored at Sharq marina. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## Dog dilemma in Kuwait

Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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**T**his article is about the situation of dogs in Kuwait and how some of them turn from domestic pets into strays and predators. Who is responsible for this and are there solutions?

I believe that the lives and survival of pets in Kuwait is not easy, because it depends primarily on the owner. The animal might be lucky to have a kind owner who knows how to take good care of the animal, or a crazy owner who practices the worst forms of torture on the poor animal, or young children who do not know how to care of an animal and its needs.

So when they get bored of the pet, they take easiest route by kicking it to the street to suffer from hunger and heat, because the pet is not prepared to deal with the streets or the animals there. Or it could end up at the Friday animal market, which is not better than the street. This is an unfortunate end of a creature that had been predestined to be here, and we bear moral responsibilities that hold us accountable for the harm it suffers.

An expatriate woman sent me a letter about a personal experience related to

dogs in Kuwait, and I will share with the readers some parts of the letter. She said: "I got a little dog a year ago, which I love walking every day. Unfortunately, having a dog has opened my eyes to the miserable world of dogs in Kuwait. On my walks on Abu Hassania beach, I see dead dogs left for weeks (owned by people because they wear a collar), and dogs just dumped by owners starving day by day. I try my best to rescue the dogs I meet, but it's a never-ending story. The animal shelters in Kuwait are overfilled with dogs and puppies and cannot take more dogs."

She added that countries like Turkey have neutering programs to avoid this, while Switzerland requires people to get a dog license before buying a dog. Finally, the woman suggests all expats dumping their animals when they leave Kuwait should be fined big time (KD 500 is my suggestion). This lady is right to worry about the issue of dogs breeding in the streets. I do not think there is something called a stray, but they are animals neglected or left on the street by their owners. Rarely, they may be animals that were lost

or stolen.

I liked the woman's suggestion, because some expatriates when they leave Kuwait leave the animal on the street, especially if they do not find someone to adopt it or if they cannot take it with them because of the high ticket prices and fees required. So a fine is required, but I do not know how to make sure that the returnee had a dog or whether or not they had a license to own a dog. I also do not know who will verify the owner's info.

I believe a dog is a big responsibility, as being a dog owner means you have to walk it daily. I have a cat and every time I need to take it to the vet, it usually takes me a few days to even get an appointment, aside from the cost of consultation and medicine, which is not cheap.

I know some people here don't hate dogs but also don't welcome having them in their houses, especially those who view this matter from a religious perspective. Also, I notice some people do not even pick up the poo while waking their dog. I wish Kuwait bans the import of all dogs and runs education campaigns for people. So before taking

a dog into your house to please the kids, think twice about who will bear the responsibility in case of illness, and the fact that dogs have needs just like human beings.

Stray dogs did not appear out of nowhere, but because of the neglect of some dog owners who abandoned them. They did not go to animal shelters but threw them on the streets, which turned them into sick dogs that breed randomly and cause harm.

The animal health department of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources is legally authorized to deal with animals. I hope that a campaign will be launched to prevent pet shops from selling animals - especially dogs - without a license, and make sure about the identity and age of the owner and their ability to care for the animal. Also, the sale of any animal poison should be prohibited. Dogs should not be killed or poisoned.

Establishing new animal shelters or offering them up for adoption in the West should be done, because a culture of respecting animals and preserving their rights is clearly missing.



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# Passion for *perfume*

By Nawara Fattahova

Wherever you go in Kuwait, whether it is a mall, hotel, restaurant or even a health club, you can smell the heady scent of perfume. Wearing strong perfume is part of Kuwaiti culture particularly and of the Gulf region in general. As perfumes are usually expensive, financial situation and wealth of the user are somehow related to this issue. Usage of perfume differs among nations, as some use it for occasions only, while others use it daily. Kuwaitis use it throughout the day no matter the occasion.

especially when going to the mosque for prayers.

The passion for perfumes has even been expressed in poems. Poets have mentioned perfume as reminding them of places or persons. For instance, one of the most popular romantic poets Qais bin Al Mulawah mentioned musk and carnation used by his beloved one.

Arabian perfumes have more varieties than Western fragrances. In addition to liquid perfumes, there is the heavy thick oil called 'Dihn al-oud' that is used for the skin, and only a few drops are enough. There is also 'bukhoor', wood mixed with essence that is burned and used for clothes, hair and the home as well. It can also be used on top of the perfume.

This high consumption of perfumes in the Gulf has made it a profitable business for both local and international companies. This has made the annual perfumes exhibition held at the Mishref fairground the most visited expo in the region, if not the world. And due to high demand, the exhibition is held twice a year, and is growing bigger every year.

The word perfume comes from the French language, expressing the good smell of burning wood essence (bukhoor). Bukhoor was first discovered about 4,000 years ago in Mesopotamia, where the perfume was used in religious rituals and also on the body by soaking the wood in oil and water and using the liquid on the body.

The Arabs were the first to use the floral crown to get the liquid out of it around 1,300 years ago. The oldest perfume was rose perfume, which was popular among many Arab tribes. Arabs also used jasmine, violet and lemon blossom as the main sources of perfume. In addition, they used other sources such as wood (especially sandalwood), leaves (mint, geranium and lavender) and roots (ginger and iris). Also, musk and amber are the main ingredients of perfumes. Arabs were the first to use distillation in producing perfumes.

According to [www.marketwatch.com](http://www.marketwatch.com), the global perfume and fragrance market has witnessed a con-

tinued demand during the last few years and is projected to reach \$64.6 billion at a compound annual growth rate of 6 percent by 2023 in terms of value. The perfume and fragrance market has witnessed substantial innovation in terms of new product launches along with research and development and collaboration by the industrial players. The overall increasing disposable income of the consumers and their evolving buying pattern over the past few years has also led to a surge in the sales of perfumes and fragrances during the forecast period.

Globalization and urbanization have significantly affected the composition of the consumption basket of consumers and have influenced their buying behavior. The urban life also encourages consumers to segregate priority and non-priority goods for themselves. In developing economies, especially India and China, major factors such as growing number of affluent and middle class, rising household disposable income, and higher luxury spending have also contributed to the increasing sales of perfumes in these economies. The emergence of consumer-oriented societies along with the spread of consumerism and evolving consumerist attitudes in the GCC region has further reinforced the potential growth of the perfume industry.

The leading market players in the global perfume and fragrance market primarily are Elizabeth Arden, Inc (US), L'Oreal (France), Shiseido (Japan), IFF (US), Chanel (France), Estee Lauder (US), Avon (US), Vivenza (Kuwait), Royal Beauty Group Co(Kuwait), AlQuraishi Fragrances (Kuwait), Reehat Al Atoor (Bahrain), Asghar Ali Co WLL(Bahrain), Rasasi Perfumes Industry LLC (UAE), Arabian Oud (Saudi Arabia), Swiss Arabian Perfume Group (UAE), Atyab Al Marshoud (Kuwait), Al Shaya (Kuwait), Ajmal Perfume (UAE) and Abdulsamad Al Qurashi (Saudi Arabia).



This habit has roots from ancient times. Islam encourages Muslims to always be clean and smell good. It also warns Muslims against annoying others by smelling bad. And different hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) mention that he used perfumes,





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# KCC to perform on the world stage

By Ben Garcia

**M**usic is a universal language. On Dec 1, 2019, the Kuwait Chamber Chorale (KCC) will perform in front of a global audience at a concert organized by DCINY, the leading concert producer in New York. Fifty-three members of KCC will fly to New York from Kuwait to present the concert at Carnegie Hall. In Feb 2020, they are also invited to perform at the Dubai Opera, a very significant venue as well.

The KCC is a non-profit, unique and one-of-a-kind musical ensemble. It was conceived in the hearts and minds of a few ardent music lovers residing in Kuwait. The vision became a reality when Fredrick Nirmal, 39, contacted choristers from various choir groups in Kuwait to come forward and join the musical venture. "KCC was born out of a passion for music. We are all in same direction and we all want to learn. We all want to perform - we all like the music we are playing," Nirmal told Kuwait Times.

"We all wanted to have a group that could perform on the world stage. This is about to happen. This is our objective and we are very happy that we were selected to perform at Carnegie Hall. KCC endeavors to position itself as an integral part of the community and not just be a peripheral attraction. Every concert, special event and outreach program seeks to find new ways to genuinely engage listeners. From amateur musicians to artistic collaborations with other musical groups, KCC constantly seeks new ways to bring immediacy, relevance and personal connections to all segments of the community through the shared experience of orchestral music," he added.

Nirmal said the reward for each one of them is the fact that KCC can be a uniting force, even as the musicians come from various backgrounds and ages. "In a chorale group, it has to be mix of everyone - that is why we have young and

## Member voices

### Suresh Thomas, 61, bass

"I am the senior-most member of the choral group. I just love being with the group. I don't play any instruments though, but my contribution is very significant in a choral group like KCC. I may be the oldest in age, but I am proud of being part of this wonderful team of people headed by Nirmal. I am happy that I will be joining them in the concert of a lifetime at Carnegie Hall."

### Christi Tomas, 57, tenor

"I am what we call the jack-of-all-trades. I can be in the base, tenor and alto. I am into music - I play the guitar, piano, cello and other instruments. Music is my life! I teach several musical instruments to young kids too. It is really very rewarding - it's fulfilling if you teach kids and they actually learn something."

### Jin Jacob, 43, tenor

"My role in the group is to help everyone in doing their homework, making sure that everyone is updated and in the loop and have been practicing their assigned lines. So, even as we only have training once a week, we are up to date. When the time of training comes, we can easily follow and do our part."

old ladies and gentlemen."

KCC's debut concert was conducted in March 2017 with a presentation of acclaimed Western classical anthems. "The concert had about 40 live instrumentalists and 65 vocals in four parts (bass, tenor, soprano and alto). The packed audience in the concert hall was enthralled, leaving a lasting

impression with the high-quality presentation," he said. The second concert presentation in 2018 was yet another milestone, when KCC proudly presented a few anthems, duets and solo renditions from the evergreen G F Handel's oratorio 'The Messiah'. On Oct 26 and 27, 2019, KCC will perform Joseph Haydn's 'The Creation' in Kuwait.

Asked if they are a chorale with strong religious connections, Nirmal replied in the negative. "We want to be known not as religious group, so our group comprises of a lot of members from various religious affiliations - there are Hindus and Christians and we have Muslims in the group too. So it is not religious in nature - this is a group of people willing to entertain, and music is innate in the members," he said.

KCC consists of musicians from all age groups, from children as young as 11 to adults over 60. The basic element that binds the team to stay together is their love and passion for music. It's a group of enthusiastic instrumentalists, passionate for their love of music, and nothing quenches their thirst for the utmost and supreme quality when it comes to concert performances. Members of KCC stand committed to the call and strive to achieve greater heights in all their engagements with music in the future. All expenses for learning and practicing music are shared by its members. Well-wishers do donate to the choir after listening to the high quality presentations, but KCC utilizes such gifts to help poor children with a passion for music.

The chorale is trained by Nirmal, who plays the piano and cello. According to the members, he is an excellent music teacher and team player, the reason why KCC has been so successful in all its concerts and presentations. KCC has an administrative core team of six senior members, who under the guidance of the director, manage the day-to-day affairs and concert preparations.



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# Kuwait's economic steps in right direction: World Bank

## MENA economic outlook subject to substantial downside risks

**WASHINGTON:** The World Bank has lauded economic steps that have been taken by the Kuwaiti government for boosting the private sector, saying these moves "are on the right track". The Kuwaiti government is seeking to limit the state participation in the economy to bolster the private sector and minimize barriers facing commerce and investments, the report notes. Key initiatives that have been taken by the Kuwaiti government cover laws, privatization, partnership between the private and public sectors in fields such property development, education, water, sewage, transports and management of solid waste. These efforts have been exerted in the right direction, the WB report affirms.

On the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the report said economic growth in the region will slow by 0.6 percent this year compared with 1.2 percent last year. The growth forecast for 2019 is revised down by 0.8 percentage points from the April 2019 projection due to lower oil prices since April 2019 and a larger-than expected contraction in Iran. MENA's economic outlook is subject to substantial downside risks, most notably, intensified global economic headwinds and rising geopolitical tensions.

The latest edition of the MENA Economic Update titled "Reaching New Heights: Promoting Fair Competition in the Middle

East and North Africa" discusses the current sluggish growth due to conservative oil production outputs, weak global demand for oil and a larger-than-expected contraction in Iran. On the other hand, a boost in non-oil activities in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), most prominently in construction, partially offset the dampening effect on the region's average growth numbers as a result of Iran's economic contraction.

"Countries in the region have implemented bold reforms to restore macroeconomic stability, but the projected growth rate is a fraction of what is needed to create enough jobs for the fast-growing, working-age population," said Ferid Belhaj, World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa region. "It is time for courageous and far-sighted leadership to deepen the reforms, to bring down the barriers to competition and to unlock the enormous potential of the region's 400 million people as a source of collective demand that could drive growth and jobs."

In the medium-term, the World Bank expects real GDP in the MENA region to grow at 2.6 percent in 2020 and 2.9 percent in 2021. The projected pickup in growth is largely driven by increasing infrastructure investment in GCC countries and the recovery

in Iran's economy as the effects of current sanctions wane. However, the report warns that a further escalation in regional tensions could severely weaken Iran's economy and spill over to other countries in the region. While rising oil prices would benefit many regional oil exporters in the short run, the overall impact would be to hurt regional trade, investment, and spending on infrastructure.

In addition to providing economic growth forecasts for each country, the report highlights how unfair competition results from markets dominated by state-owned enterprises and politically-connected firms which deters private investment, reducing the number of jobs and preventing countless talented young people from prospering.

"The lack of fair competition is holding back the development of the region's private sector, which history has shown to be the source of broad-based growth and jobs," said Rabah Arezki, World Bank MENA Chief Economist. "Countries in the region have an opportunity to transform their economies by levelling the economic playing field, and creating business environments that encourage risk-taking and reward innovation and higher productivity." — KUNA

## Roudhan hails role of female entrepreneurs



**KUWAIT:** Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan speaks at the Women's Cultural and Social Society.

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan announced welcoming women into the world of business and investment, adding that the legislative amendments approved by MoCI during the past two years had contributed in creating more opportunities for female entrepreneurs.

Speaking at the Women's Cultural and Social Society, Roudhan stressed the presence of businesswomen fully capable of becoming an added value for Kuwait's economy. He also iterated his full belief in Kuwaiti women as an integral part of the future economy. The society's Chairperson Lulwa Al-Mulla called for putting an end to gender discrimination in all fields.

### Shisha ban hailed

Secretary of the Kuwait Society for Smoking and Cancer Prevention Anwar Burhamah strongly hailed the Municipal Council's approval of a proposal made by member Hamdi Al-Azmi on banning shisha for families at various restaurants and cafes. Burhamah added the society had been calling for

fighting all forms of smoking since its establishment in 1980, noting that studies have proven the disastrous effects of passive smoking on dental health, as the tobacco used includes nicotine and countless carcinogenic substances. Burhamah stressed recent studies had shown that smoking e-cigarettes is also harmful, because the vapor damages blood veins and include carcinogenic substances as well.

• CEO of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), Emad Al-Sultan yesterday visited the tests of citizens applying to work in the anti-corruption authority (Nazahah).

• Health Minister Dr. Basel Al-Sabah recently gave strict instructions to various health zone directors and hospital managers to follow up the collection of fees from expatriates without exceptions, said informed sources.

The sources explained that the minister had been tipped that some expatriate and, sometimes, Kuwaiti doctors have been ignoring the fee collections from sick relatives or friends. "The minister's instructions stressed warning doctors, be them expats or Kuwaitis, against such practices and telling them they would be held accountable for them", the sources underlined.

## Municipality first public body set up in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality was the first public service body established in Kuwait - in 1930 - to initially serve Kuwait City. It later extended its services to cover villages and Failaka Island 20 years later, as mentioned in a book titled "The Dream of Modern Kuwait...History of Kuwait Municipality Pre-oil" written by Municipality director from 1971 to 1980 Mohammed Al-Maasherji, who attributed the idea of establishing the Municipality to Sheikh Yousif Al-Qenae, who wanted to follow in Bahrain's footsteps in this regard and published the idea in Kuwait Magazine in 1928.

In this regard, civil society researcher Bader Al-Hetaiah told KUNA that the Municipality was established before the discovery of oil and that it used to rely on both donations and rev-

enues it collected as fees. Hetaiah added that a meeting was held at Mubarakiya School on April 9, 1930 to call for electing the first 12-member Municipal Council for a two-year tenure, before direct orders from Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah were made to appoint Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the first Municipality chief, while Sulaiman Al-Adasani was elected as its first director.

Hetaiah said that Kuwait was plagued by smallpox from July to December 1932, which claimed around 3,000 lives. "It was then that the Municipality imported the needed vaccines from Iraq and launched a vaccination campaign to fight the disease," he explained.

In addition, Hetaiah said that under its second director Nisf Al-Nisf, the Municipality played a major role in recruiting citizens to work in a private shipping and unloading company, distributing aid to citizens affected by the heavy rainfall in 1934 - the year of haddamah (destruction) - which destroyed several houses, and collecting a half per cent custom tax to be used for establishing the first education ministry (al-maaref department). — KUNA



**The old Municipality administration building.**



# Amiri Diwan launches third edition of KAFO initiative

## EPA chief hails youth's interest in environmental issues

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** Various vital issues including education, environment and health were discussed and presented the third annual Kuwait's Achievers for Future Opportunities (KAFO) forum held on Wednesday at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center. The event included various sessions on volunteering, sports, entrepreneurship, science and technology, media, arts and culture. Video presentation of previous achievements and projects was presented during the opening ceremony.

Work on KAFO, an initiative by the Amiri Diwan, started in 2015, and the first version of KAFO's website was launched in 2017. KAFO aims to create tools and channels to showcase young achievers and enable collaborative opportunities including knowledge transfer that leads to national development.

"KAFO is one of the Kuwait Youth Program (Kuwait Listens) projects launched in 2013 as a recommendation to launch a platform for Kuwaiti achievers. We studied the needs of the society

and the way of connecting achievers. Participants can build their CVs on the website and show the possible ways of cooperation, in addition to searching for achievers according to their specialization," Executive Manager of KAFO Fatemah Al-Mosawi told Kuwait Times.

"This fair is just a part of our activities that present the achievements of participants. We have nine ideas that we would like the public to know and participate in achieving them," she pointed out. KAFO has been hugely successful, and participants are increasing every year. "Over 500 participants attended today to participate in this event. Our platform includes over 3,000 achievers, and this number is increasing every year," concluded Mosawi.

Chairman and General Director of the Environment Public Authority Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah attended the event and praised the high interest of the achievers in environmental issues. "Various environmental initiatives were presented today, but we aim to have more. The previous environmental initiatives were great, although they



**KUWAIT:** Officials participate in the third annual Kuwait's Achievers for Future Opportunities (KAFO) forum held on Wednesday at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center. — KUNA

were presented by young people. The young achievers can also participate in improving the environmental situation in Kuwait through social media or drones that take pictures of the vegetation," he noted.

"We also cooperate with KAFO in taking samples of the waste in the sea or emissions produced by factories causing air pollution. Today, the young achievers move actively and this supports our efforts at EPA," stressed Sheikh Abdullah.



**KUWAIT:** The interior ministry yesterday celebrated the graduation of batches 44 and 45 of border security personnel and the graduation of batch 9. Assistant undersecretary for border security Maj Gen Sheikh Salem Nawaf Al-Ahmad expressed the supreme commandment's pride in border security forces and welcomed the new graduates into the force. Assistant undersecretary for education and training affairs Maj Gen Mazen Al-Jarrah and assistant undersecretary for backup services Maj Gen Zuhair Al-Nasrallah were also present.



**KUWAIT:** Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah yesterday received and honored Lt Col Saleh Al-Rashed from the traffic department, who was insulted by a sheikh for refusing to violate the law and pass illegal transactions.

## Iran FM pitches Gulf security plan to neighbors

**TEHRAN:** Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif pitched the Islamic republic's Gulf security plan to neighboring nations yesterday, saying regional security cannot be provided by foreign powers. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced the plan at the UN General Assembly last month, calling on Gulf nations including arch-rival Saudi Arabia to join it but without giving details.

In an article published yesterday in Arabic by Kuwait's Al Rai daily, Zarif said that the plan, named Hormuz Peace Endeavour, offered the chance of "expansive security" and cooperation between Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. Cooperation could include areas such as a regional non-aggression pact, combating terrorism, cybersecurity, energy and freedom of navigation, Zarif said.

"In order to save the region from the edge of ruin, we feel the necessity of realising a new discourse more than ever," he wrote in the article, a

translation of which was provided by his ministry. "The fate of the people and nations of the Persian Gulf is entwined ... either everyone benefits from security in the region or everyone will be deprived of it," Zarif said.

Tensions have risen in the Gulf since last year when US President Donald Trump unilaterally abandoned a 2015 nuclear deal between major powers and Iran and began reimposing crippling sanctions. They flared again this May when Iran began reducing its own commitments under the deal and the US deployed military assets to the region. Since then, ships have been attacked, drones downed and oil tankers seized. In June, Trump called off air strikes against Iran at the last minute after the Islamic republic's forces shot down a US drone.

Last month, twin attacks on Saudi oil infrastructure, which knocked out half the kingdom's production, drew accusations of blame against Iran not only from the US but also from its European allies. Tehran has denied any involvement in the attacks, which were claimed by Iran-backed rebels fighting a Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. The US has since formed a coalition with its allies Australia, Bahrain, Britain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE to escort commercial shipping in the Gulf. Tehran has warned that the planned US-led International Maritime Security Construct will only increase instability. — AFP

## Kuwait: Turkish military operation threatens stability

**KUWAIT:** An official source at Kuwait's foreign ministry said on Wednesday the military operation launched by the Turkish army in northeast Syria posed "a direct threat to the security and stability in the region". The source urged Turkey and the parties to the conflict in Syria to exercise self-restraint and avoid resorting to the military option. "The military escalation risks

undermining the chances of political solution sought by the international community after the tangible progress made in the quest for peace in Syria," the source said.

The source was referring to the recent success of the Syrian parties in forming a constitutional committee under the mediation of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria Geir O Pedersen. Highlighting the need to realize the aspirations of the Syrian people and maintain Syria's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, the source called on all parties concerned to exercise self-restraint and avoid resort to military option that could exacerbate the suffering of the Syrian people. — KUNA





Yemen to become the world's poorest country

## EU removes UAE, Switzerland from tax-haven list

Page 17

Page 12



**AKCAKALE:** A picture taken in Akcakale at the Turkish border with Syria shows smokes rising from the Syrian town of Tal Abyad after a mortar fired from Syria landed in the garden of a Turkish government building in Akcakale. —AFP

# Turkish military hits 181 targets

## Turkey presses offensive in Syria, Erdogan hits out at critics

**ISTANBUL:** Turkey pressed its military offensive against US-allied Kurdish fighters in north-east Syria yesterday, shelling towns and bombing 181 targets from the air in an operation that has forced thousands of people to flee their homes. At least 23 fighters with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and eight civilians, two them SDF administrators, have been killed, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The SDF has not given a casualty toll, while six fighters with Turkey-backed rebel groups have also been killed. More than 60,000 people have fled since the offensive began, the Observatory added. The towns of Ras al-Ain and Darbasiya, some 60 km to the east, have been largely deserted as a result of the attack. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan told members of his AK Party in Ankara that 109 militants had been killed so far in the two days of fighting, while Kurds said they were resisting the assault.

According to a senior Turkish security official, armed forces struck weapons and ammunition depots, gun and sniper positions, tunnels and military bases. Jets conducted operations up to 30 km into Syria, and a Reuters witness saw shells exploding just outside the town of Tel Abyad. "The operation is currently continuing with the involvement of all our units... 109 terrorists have been killed so far," Erdogan said in a speech to members of his AK Party in Ankara.

NATO member Turkey has said it intends to create a "safe zone" for the return of millions of

refugees to Syria. But world powers fear the operation could intensify Syria's eight-year-old conflict, and runs the risk of Islamic State prisoners escaping from camps amid the chaos. Erdogan sought to assuage those concerns, saying that militants from the jihadist group would not be allowed to rebuild a presence in the region.

Taking aim at the European Union and Arab powers Saudi Arabia and Egypt, which have voiced opposition to the operation, Erdogan said those objecting to Turkey's actions were dishon-



**Trump says incursion is a 'bad idea'**

est. He threatened to permit Syrian refugees in Turkey to move to Europe if EU countries described his forces' move as an occupation. Turkey is hosting around 3.6 million people who have fled the conflict in Syria. "They are not honest, they just make up words," Erdogan said in a combative speech, singling out Saudi Arabia and Egypt. "We, however, take action and that is the difference between us."

The Turkish operation began days after a pull-

back by US forces from the border, and senior members of US President Donald Trump's own Republican Party condemned him for making way for the incursion. The decision has been widely criticized as an abandonment of Syrian Kurds. Ankara brands the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia as terrorists because of their ties to militants who have waged an insurgency in Turkey. But many members of Congress, and US officials, credit the Kurds with fighting alongside American troops to defeat Islamic State militants.

### 'Bad idea'

The Kurdish-led authority in northern Syria said a prison struck by Turkish shelling holds "the most dangerous criminals from more than 60 nationalities" and Turkey's attacks on its prisons risked "a catastrophe". The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) holds thousands of Islamic State fighters and tens of thousands of their relatives in detention.

There was no immediate comment on the situation in the prisons from Turkey. Trump called the Turkish assault a "bad idea" and said he did not endorse it. He said he expected Turkey to protect civilians and religious minorities and prevent a humanitarian crisis - as Turkey has said it would. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, usually a vocal Trump ally, has criticized his decision to withdraw US troops from northeastern Syria and unveiled a framework for sanctions on Turkey with Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen.

Their proposed sanctions would target the assets of senior officials including Erdogan, mandate sanctions over Turkey's purchase of a Russian S-400 missile defense system and impose visa restrictions. They also would sanction anyone who conducted military transactions with Turkey or supported energy production for use by its armed forces, bar US military assistance to Turkey and require a report on Erdogan's net worth and assets.

The United Nations Security Council will meet to discuss Syria at the request of the five European members, Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Poland. In a letter to the 15-member Council seen by Reuters, Turkey said its military operation would be "proportionate, measured and responsible". The 22-member Arab League said it would hold an emergency meeting on Saturday. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned Turkey's military incursion and cautioned about the possibility of ethnic cleansing.

"Israel is prepared to extend humanitarian assistance to the gallant Kurdish people," he wrote on Twitter. Russia said it planned to push for dialogue between the Syrian and Turkish governments following the incursion. Italy condemned the offensive as "unacceptable", saying military action in the past always led to terrorism. "The intervention risks greater humanitarian suffering and undermines the focus on countering Daesh (IS)," said British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab. — Reuters



## International

# US takes custody of two notorious Islamic State 'Beatles' from Kurds

## 'They are the worst of the worst'

WASHINGTON: Two notorious Islamic State jihadists dubbed "The Beatles" who were held by Syrian Kurds are now in US custody and have been moved out of the country, President Donald Trump said yesterday. Turkey has launched an assault on the Syrian Kurdish forces - with which the US partnered to combat Islamic State militants - sparking fears that the offensive could lead to captured fighters they held escaping and reconstituting the group.

"In case the Kurds or Turkey lose control, the United States has already taken the 2 ISIS militants tied to beheadings in Syria, known as the Beatles, out of that country and into a secure location controlled by the US," Trump tweeted. "They are the worst of the worst!" The pair were part of an extremely violent all-British four-man cell that kidnapped and tortured foreigners, including journalists, at the height of the Islamic State group's power in Syria and Iraq.

A US defense official had earlier confirmed they had taken custody of two "high-value" IS individuals from the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) that held the captured jihadists. "They have been moved out of Syria and are in a secure location," the official said, without identifying where. "They are being held in military custody pursuant to

the law of war." One other member of the four-man jihadist cell was killed in a drone strike and the fourth is imprisoned on terror charges in Turkey.

### 'Particularly bad'

Their cell is accused of abducting and decapitating around 20 hostages including American journalist James Foley, who was beheaded in 2014. Trump had earlier said the US was taking steps to prevent the potential escape of particularly dangerous Islamic State group fighters amid the Turkish offensive. "We are taking some of the most dangerous ISIS fighters out and we're putting them in different locations where it's secure," Trump said at the White House.

"We have taken a certain number of ISIS fighters who are particularly bad and we've wanted to make sure nothing happened to them with respect to getting out," he said. The move addressed one of the most worrisome issues of Trump's green light to Turkey to invade Syria, where the Kurds, a longtime US battlefield partner, are viewed as a terror threat by Ankara, a NATO ally of Washington.

The SDF have been holding prisoner some 10,000 captured Islamic State group fighters. The SDF-held fighters include around 2,000 of foreign nationality, many of

sault Kurdish militias previously allied with America. Earlier this week, Trump said he would "obliterate" Turkey's economy if it went too far. The US and the UK also expressed concern over the risk of a humanitarian catastrophe in the region.

### 'Think carefully'

Ahead of the launch of the offensive, Russian President Vladimir Putin urged his Turkish counterpart President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to "think carefully" before taking any action "so as not to harm overall efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis," the presidency said following a phone call between the two leaders. Erdogan for his part told Putin that the offensive "will contribute to Syria's peace and stability and ease the path to a political solution".

### No funding for 'safe zone'

EU chief Jean-Claude Juncker demanded a halt to the operation, telling Ankara the bloc would not pay for any so-called "safe zone" that might be created. He told the European Parliament he recognized Turkey had "security concerns" along the border. But he warned that the military action would not lead to a "good result", saying a political solution was the only way to end the Syrian conflict.

### 'Risk of resurgent IS'

Turkey "is willingly risking further destabilizing the region and a resurgence of IS" (Islamic State) by attacking northeastern Syria, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said. "Syria needs stability and a political process... however, the Turkish offensive now threatens to cause a new humanitarian disaster," Maas said in a statement, adding that Berlin would "urge Turkey to end its offensive and to pursue its security interests peacefully". —AFP



RITSONA: Children hold photographs, as Syrian Kurd refugees protest at the Ritsona camp, yesterday after Turkey launched an assault on Kurdish forces in northern Syria with air strikes and explosions reported along the border. —AFP

them from European countries that have refused to take them back. Trump said the Kurds were still guarding many of the Islamic State group militants, but also said

Turkey would be responsible for them. "If the Kurds don't watch, Turkey will watch. They don't want those people out any more than we do," he said. —AFP

## How the world is reacting to Turkey's assault in Syria

PARIS: World governments reacted with concern Wednesday after Turkey launched a military offensive on Kurdish forces in northern Syria, while the UN Security Council plans to hold an emergency meeting to discuss the assault. Here are some of the initial comments following the start of the attack, called "Operation Peace Spring".

### 'Act with restraint'

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg urged Turkey to show "restraint", while acknowledging that Ankara had "legitimate security concerns". "It's important to avoid actions that may further destabilize the region, escalate tensions, and cause more human suffering," Stoltenberg said at a news conference in Rome, in remarks released by his office. The UN Security Council's president, South African ambassador Jerry Matthews Matjila, also appealed to Turkey to "protect civilians" and exercise "maximum restraint".

### 'Bad idea'

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday called the incursion into northern Syria a "bad idea". He insisted Washington "does not endorse this attack", despite having withdrawn US troops from the area in what was interpreted as a green light for Turkey to as-

## Erdogan threatens EU with 'refugee influx'

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned the EU yesterday that Ankara would allow millions of refugees to head to Europe if the bloc criticized Turkey's military offensive in Syria. "Hey EU, wake up. I say it again: if you try to frame our operation there as an invasion, our task is simple: we will open the doors and send 3.6 million migrants to you," Erdogan said in a speech to his party. Turkey launched an operation into Syrian territory on Wednesday, aimed at combating Kurdish militants tied to insurgents in its own territory.

Erdogan said 109 "terrorists" had been killed so far in the operation, which would soon cover ground from Manbij in northern Syria to the Iraqi border some 350 kilometers east. "God willing, we will crush these snakes' heads quickly," he said. "What we are trying to do is prevent the establish-

ment of a terrorist state on our southern border. This cannot happen," Turkey currently hosts 3.6 million refugees from the eight-year conflict in Syria - the highest number in the world.

Under a 2016 agreement with the EU, Turkey agreed to prevent refugees from leaving towards Europe in exchange for six billion euros and visa-free travel for its citizens, but has frequently criticized the lack of assistance from Brussels. "You have never been sincere," Erdogan said, addressing the EU. "Now they say they will withhold three billion euros from us. Have you ever kept any promise you gave us so far? No." One aim of the military operation is to establish a "safe zone" in which at least one million Syrian refugees can be repatriated, after the long-term presence of refugees became an increasingly political liability.

"For those who want to return to their country but don't have a home left anymore, we plan to build settlements for one million people, with international financing," Erdogan said. He also sought to assuage concerns regarding Islamic State prisoners currently held by Kurdish forces. "Those that need to be kept in jail we will keep in jail. We will return foreigners to their home countries if they accept them back," he said. —AFP



## International

# Yemen to become world's poorest country if war continues, UN says

## 79 percent of the population living under the poverty line

**DUBAI:** War-ravaged Yemen is on course to become the world's poorest country if the conflict persists, the United Nations said in a report. "If fighting continues through 2022, Yemen will rank the poorest country in the world, with 79 percent of the population living under the poverty line and 65 percent classified as extremely poor," according to the United Nations Development Program report, published Wednesday. Because of the war, poverty in Yemen has jumped from 47 percent of the population in 2014 to a projected 75 percent by the end of 2019.

Yemen, long the poorest country in the Arabian Peninsula, plunged into war after Houthi rebels seized the capital Sanaa in late 2014. A Saudi-led military coalition launched a blistering offensive months later to prop up the internationally-recognized government of Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi against the Iran-aligned insurgents. The fighting has since killed tens of thousands of people, most of them civilians, and pushed Yemen to the brink of famine.

It has also displaced millions and left more than two thirds of the population in need of aid. The UN has previously described Yemen as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. "Not only has the war made Yemen the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, it has plunged it into a harrowing development crisis too," UNDP Yemen's resident representative, Auke Lootsma, said in a statement on Wednesday. "The ongoing crisis is threatening to make Yemen's population the

poorest in the world — a title the already suffering country cannot afford."

### Power-sharing talks

Yemen's internationally recognized government and southern separatists are holding indirect negotiations and are close to reaching a power-sharing agreement, sources from both sides said. The two camps have been for weeks in indirect and discreet talks in Saudi Arabia's western city of Jeddah with the kingdom's mediation, an official from the separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC) told AFP.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said there has been "a lot of progress" in the past couple of days. A Yemeni government source confirmed that talks between the two parties have been ongoing. In August, fighting between the two camps - both of which are battling Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels - opened a new front in the country's complex war. But sources from both sides told AFP on Monday that they are close to reaching a power-sharing deal.

"The agreement would stipulate that the government return to Aden and that the Security Belt Forces be responsible for security under the supervision of the Saudis," a source informed about the negotiations said. The source also said that the deal would include "the participation of the STC in government". The Security Belt Forces - dominated by the secessionist STC - in



**SANAA:** Yemenis and Shiite Houthi rebels visit the site of a damaged funeral hall building in the capital Sanaa during an event commemorating three years since its destruction in a reported Saudi-led coalition air strike. — AFP

August took control of the southern city of Aden, which has served as the government's base since it was ousted from the capital Sanaa by the Houthi rebels in 2014.

The clashes between separatists and government forces - who for years fought on the same

side against the Houthis - have raised fears that the country could break apart entirely. The coalition intervened in Yemen in March 2015 as the Houthi rebels closed in on Aden prompting Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi to flee into Saudi exile. — Agencies

## Tunisia presidential hopeful walks free from jail in runoff

**TUNIS:** Tunisia's presidential candidate Nabil Karoui received a hero's welcome as he walked free from jail Wednesday, just days ahead of a runoff against a political newcomer. Karoui's release is the latest twist in a shock election dominated by political outsiders in the country whose 2011 revolution sparked a wave of regional uprisings. His return to the arena as a free man comes at a time of uncertainty for the country hailed as the sole democratic success story of the Arab Spring. An AFP journalist outside Mornaguia prison near Tunis saw a throng of media mogul Karoui's supporters waving Tunisia's red-and-white flag and campaign banners as they jubilantly cheered for him. An elated Karoui then left the scene in a black Mercedes, without speaking to the press. The Court of Cassation's decision to free Karoui, a business tycoon who has been detained since August over a money laundering probe, comes ahead of Sunday's final presidential vote. Despite being behind bars, he won 15.6 percent of votes in the first round of the presidential poll.

### No clear majority

The runoff comes as Tunisia appears poised for complex, rowdy negotiations to form a government. Announced shortly after Karoui's release, preliminary results of last Sunday's legislative election showed Islamist-inspired party Ennahda came out on top with 52 out of 217 seats - far short of the 109 needed to govern. Karoui's Qalb Tounes party placed

second with 38 seats. In the run-up to the parliamentary poll, Ennahda and Qalb Toues had officially ruled out forming an alliance. The abstention rate was 58.6 percent, nearly double that of the last legislative polls in 2014, despite the post-revolution constitution putting parliament at the heart of political power. TV pundits contend that the high abstention rate is not only a mark of voter apathy, but also a repudiation of the parties taking part.

### A tired electorate

It was a similar sense of rejection of the establishment that catapulted political newcomers Karoui and rival contender conservative law professor Kais Saied to the lead in the September 15 presidential first round. The sidelining of Tunisia's post-Arab Spring political class in the vote was rooted in frustration over a stagnant economy, high unemployment, failing public services and rising prices. While the country has succeeded in curbing jihadist attacks that rocked the key tourist sector in 2015, its economy remains hampered by austere International Monetary Fund-backed reforms. Saied had announced last weekend he was quitting campaigning in order to avoid an unfair advantage over Karoui.

### Televised debate

With the contenders now free to campaign on a level playing field, the pair will face off in a televised debate Friday, one of the organizers said. The debate is expected to begin at 9:00 pm should Karoui confirm his presence, national television channel Wataniya said. Wataniya has also invited Karoui for an on-screen interview. Previous requests to release Karoui had been turned down and he has branded his arrest as "political". Karoui's lawyer Kamel Ben Messoud on Wednesday said the Court of Cassation had "annulled the detention order" against his client. Another of his lawyers, Nazih Souei, said Karoui remains under investigation, "but he is free". — AFP

## Iraq mourns protest dead

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq began three days of national mourning yesterday for more than 100 people killed during recent protests, while the government was expected to present a reshuffle to parliament in response to the political crisis. While social media sites in Iraq remained inaccessible - except intermittently via virtual private network (VPN) applications - more images emerged of the violence over the past week in which mainly protesters died from live fire.

Footage showed demonstrators - who initially demanded jobs and services before calling for "the fall of the regime" - being fatally shot, or running for cover under heavy fire. Authorities initially blamed "unidentified snipers" and infiltrating "saboteurs" but later acknowledged that the military had used "excessive force" in the Shiite bastion of Sadr City in Baghdad. The judiciary also announced that a riot police officer had "confessed to killing a protester" in Hilla, south of Baghdad.

Prime Minister Adel Abdel Madhi responded to public anger in his second public address in less than a week, pledging to propose a cabinet reshuffle to parliament yesterday. The deeply divided assembly depends on the participation of its largest bloc: 54 lawmakers led by populist cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr. The bloc includes ministers but Sadr called for the resignation of the government nearly a week ago.

Since protests and violence calmed on Tuesday, the government has proposed reforms to lower youth unemployment, currently at 25 percent, while the labor ministry proposed an online job register. — AFP



## International

# Social networks face quandary on politics in the misinformation fight

## Biden asks Facebook to take down 'debunked' claims

**WASHINGTON:** As social media firms ramp up their fight against misinformation, politicians have been largely left exempt. To some, that's a huge problem. Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms have decided to allow politicians including President Donald Trump extra leeway to their rules, seeking to avoid stifling political debate and leaving "newsworthy" content online.

But Trump's efforts to push falsehoods and conspiracy theories have prompted calls for platforms to rethink those guidelines to prevent the president and others from spreading false and misleading information. Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden recently asked Facebook to take down "debunked" claims in a Trump ad on the leading social network, only to be rebuffed. In a response to Biden, Facebook said statements by politicians, even if false, are "considered direct speech and ineligible for our third-party fact checking program."

Senator and presidential candidate Kamala Harris meanwhile called on Twitter to ban Trump after the president violated the platform's rules by accusing his critics of "treason" and warning that an attempt to impeach him amounted to a "coup." The candidates' demands are typical of the conundrum social media firms face as they seek to remain open for public debate while curbing "hate speech," abusive conduct and patently false claims from politicians.

Facebook and Twitter have both steered away from removing "newsworthy" content

which may include false or misleading comments from political leaders. YouTube offers a similar exemption. This policy "seems like a troubling compromise because it's an invitation to political actors to say whatever they think is expedient whether it's true or not," said Paul Barrett, deputy director of the Stern Center for Business and Human Rights at New York University and author of a report on "Disinformation and the 2020 Election."

Barrett's report recommends that social networks take down "provably false" information, though he acknowledged that would leave big loopholes for politicians stretching the truth. The report noted that a majority of deliberately deceptive or false information shared on social media comes not from Russia or other foreign sources but from within the United States, making it more complicated to take down. "It's a real conundrum. I don't think there's an easy answer," Barrett said.

### 'Vector for misinformation'

Facebook vice president Nick Clegg said last month the social network would treat speech from politicians "as newsworthy content that should, as a general rule, be seen and heard." Gaurav Laroia of the watchdog group Free Press said exceptions allowed by Facebook means the company "is allowing its platform to be a vector for misinformation in the lead-up to the 2020 election."

Facebook's ad policies leave a gaping loop-

tailed discussions". Varadkar told Ireland's parliament on Wednesday that he would work "until the last moment" to get a deal, but added: "Certainly not at any cost."

### 'Blame game'

After days of trading increasingly bitter accusations of inflexibility, the diplomacy appears to be intensifying in a late bid to find a breakthrough. "The reason the prime minister is meeting Leo Varadkar is not simply just to have a social conversation," Business Minister Kwasi Kwarteng told BBC radio. "They are seriously focused on trying to resolve this issue and trying to get a deal on which basis we can leave the EU."

"We're coming to a situation where I think a deal is possible". Brexit Secretary Steve Barclay will meet his EU counterpart Michel Barnier in Brussels today. "We've put forward serious proposals and have been willing to be flexible. Now it's time for the EU to do the same," Barclay said. But Barnier struck a downbeat tone Wednesday, telling the European Parliament that "we're not on the point of envisioning and finding a deal".

And Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament's Brexit coordinator, weighed in, saying Britain's proposals were "not serious" and were aimed at starting a "blame game". "The real traitor is he or she who risks bringing disaster upon his country and it's citizens, pushing the UK out of the EU," the former Belgian premier tweeted.—AFP



ROCHESTER: Democratic presidential candidate, former Vice President Joe Biden greets supporters following a campaign event in Rochester, New Hampshire. —AFP

hole for Trump, the biggest political ad spender on the platform, as he faces a congressional impeachment inquiry, according to Free Press. Senator Elizabeth Warren, another presidential candidate, accused Facebook of buckling to pressure from the White House on political misinformation. "Trump and (Facebook CEO Mark) Zuckerberg met at the White House two weeks ago. What did they talk about?" Warren tweeted.

"Facebook is now okay with running political

ads with known lies." Facebook maintains it has not changed its stand but clarified a policy of steering clear of the touchy subject of moderating political speech. "Our approach is grounded in Facebook's fundamental belief in free expression, respect for the democratic process, and the belief that, in mature democracies with a free press, political speech is already arguably the most scrutinized speech there is," Facebook public policy director Katie Harbath said. —AFP

## British, Irish PMs meet over Brexit stalemate

**LIVERPOOL:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his Irish counterpart Leo Varadkar met for last-ditch Brexit talks yesterday, with just days left to strike an EU divorce deal as both sides blame each other for the deadlock. Time is running out to sign off on any agreement at an October 17-18 European Union summit, ahead of Britain's scheduled departure from the bloc at the end of the month after nearly five decades of membership.

Johnson has vowed Britain will leave on October 31 with or without a deal - despite MPs passing a law last month that requires him to seek another Brexit delay if he fails to secure a pact at the summit. Johnson and Varadkar arrived in Liverpool, northwest England, according to an AFP photographer in the city, after days of recriminations over the failure to find an acceptable compromise on the key stumbling block over the Irish border.

They were later seen arriving at the exclusive Thornton Manor estate across the River Mersey on The Wirral peninsular for what Downing Street said was "a private meeting to allow both leaders and their teams to have de-

## Romania beleaguered government collapses in no-confidence vote

**BUCHAREST:** Romania's beleaguered left-wing government collapsed in a no-confidence vote yesterday, paving the way for the president to appoint a new prime minister. The collapse comes just weeks before a presidential election and amid controversy over the country's nominee for EU commissioner. Prime Minister Viorica Dancila lost her parliamentary majority in August when the junior coalition partner of her Social Democrats (PSD), withdrew support, citing major disagreements.

That followed hard on the heels of shock losses for the PSD - Romania's biggest party - in May's European Parliament elections and the jailing of its once all-powerful leader, Liviu Dragnea, on corruption charges. A total of 238 MPs in the 465-seat parliament voted in favor of the motion against Dancila's government, clearing the way for President Klaus Iohannis to name a new prime minister. "I leave with a clear conscience of having accomplished my duty," Dancila, 55, said after the vote. Before the vote, opposition lawmaker Raluca Turcan denounced

Dancila's "political patronage" and "lies" to ensure her government's survival.

### Brussels watching closely

"This is the last day where we are addressing an illegitimate prime minister who has trampled on Romanians' expectations to move faster toward Europe," Turcan said. Dancila had lobbied lawmakers until the last moment to back her. She had instructed her own party lawmakers to abstain from voting to prevent possible "betrayals" and had tried to win support, promising to pay local communities 300 million euros (\$330 million) this Friday to make sure their MPs back her. Lawmakers likely to change sides had also been offered public service posts and spots on party lists for next year's legislative elections.

The result of the vote was being eagerly awaited in Brussels after Dancila's candidate for EU commissioner was rejected. Newly-elected European Commission head, Ursula von der Leyen, has requested a replacement. Dancila - whose PSD has been in power since late 2016 but has seen massive protests over controversial judicial reforms - is also due to run in presidential elections with the first round scheduled for November 10. Incumbent centre-right President Iohannis already looks set to be re-elected for a second term, and the collapse of Dancila's government will weaken her chances even further. —AFP



## International

# The idea of married priests raises fears of Church split

## The emotive issue could fracture the Catholic Church, critics warn

**VATICAN CITY:** An idea to fill empty pulpits in remote locations by allowing married men to become priests is bitterly dividing a Vatican assembly, with critics warning the emotive issue could fracture the Catholic Church. The hot-button topic of whether an exception can be made to the centuries-old custom of celibacy in places where there is a shortage of priests has dominated the start of the three-week "synod" on the Pan-Amazonian region.

Austro-Brazilian bishop Erwin Krautler said Wednesday he estimated some two-thirds of the bishops in the region support the idea of "viriprobat" (married "men of proven virtue") as candidates for priesthood. "There is no other option, indigenous peoples are clearly asking for it," the former bishop of Xingu in Brazil told journalists. Pope Francis has suggested those at the assembly consider the possibility of ordaining married men for remote locations, such as the Amazon or the Pacific Islands, where communities seldom have Mass due to a lack of priests.

Only priests can consecrate the Eucharist, which is a key part of Catholic Mass. Krautler and other supporters of the idea say the Eucharist is more important than celibacy, which is not a Church law and only dates back to the 11th century. "Just as the magnificent jaguar faces exile from its habitat, the ecclesiastical ecosystem no longer manages to arouse and support

enough priestly and religious vocations," a person who attended the synod debates cited an unnamed Spanish-language bishop as saying. "We are witnessing a sort of deforestation of Catholic culture," he added.

### 'Crusade'

The synod's chair, Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes, said Monday the Church needed to "define new paths for the future" in response to the calls not only for married priests but also for suitable ministries for women in the region. The Roman Catholic institution is concerned about the sharp increase in the Amazon region of evangelical Pentecostal churches, which do allow married men to serve as pastors.

The Church has been flexible on the issue before, allowing married Anglican priests to convert to Catholicism. But the issue deeply upsets some traditionalists, who argue that making an exception for the Amazon would open the door to the end of celibacy for priests in general. They say priests are supposed to be married to God.

One of the pope's fiercest critics, US Cardinal Raymond Burke, called last month for a 40-day "crusade of prayer and fasting" over "serious theological errors and heresies" contained in the working document for the synod. He made a public appeal to Francis not to allow any excep-



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis (right) arrives with prelates to attend the afternoon session, on the opening day of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region in the Vatican. —AFP

tions to priestly celibacy. German conservative cardinal Gerhard Mueller said in an interview with the Repubblica newspaper Thursday that "Church tradition is not a game that can be styled to one's liking".

The bishops at the synod will draw up suggestions for the Argentine pope, who is expected to then write his own document. The

hard-conservative wing of the Church frequently takes aim at Francis's papacy, saying he is not outspoken enough on abortion, too compassionate towards homosexuals and divorcees, and too accommodating towards Muslims. But Francis has brushed off fears of a rupture within the centuries-old institution, saying in September he was "not afraid" of a schism. —AFP

## Ghana puts nine 'coup plotters' on trial for treason

**ACCRA:** Ghana has charged nine people with treason for allegedly plotting to overthrow the government, in a rare case for one of West Africa's most stable democracies. The suspects, who were arrested in a security operation last month, pleaded not guilty as they appeared in court in the capital Accra on Wednesday. They include four military officers and a medical doctor accused of using his hospital to manufacture weapons as part of a scheme to "destabilize" President Nana Akufo-Addo's government.

Prosecutors in court said the accused - part of a group called Take Action Ghana - intended to stage several protests with the ultimate aim of overthrowing the president. The judge remanded those charged in custody until October 28 for another hearing. Two other suspects who were initially arrested were discharged. Defense lawyer Victor Adawudu told the local media that his clients were being set up. "My clients are innocent. They are being framed up and must be released," he said.

Ghana is viewed as a bulwark of stability in a region characterized by insecurity and turbulence. It has been run by democratically-elected governments since 1992 and is gearing to hold fresh polls late next year. Incumbent Akufo-Addo looks set to face a challenge from former leader John Mahama for the top job. Treason is a criminal offence punishable by the death sentence in Ghana, but the country has stopped executing prisoners since its return to civilian rule in 1993. —AFP

## Poland's populists set for victory but majority at risk

**WARSAW:** Poland's governing right-wing party is poised to win a general election on Sunday, buoyed by generous social spending and fiery nationalist rhetoric, but its majority is at risk, giving opposition parties a narrow chance to snatch power. In office since 2015 and led by ex-premier Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the Law and Justice (PiS) party has sought to mobilize mainly poorer rural voters by coupling family values with populist promises to extend benefits and hike the minimum wage. Kaczynski, widely regarded as Poland's de facto leader, has led a highly polarizing campaign, attacking sexual minorities and rejecting Western liberal values, all with the tacit blessing of Poland's influential Catholic church which holds sway over rural voters. The Civic Coalition (KO), supported by outgoing EU Council President Donald Tusk - Kaczynski's arch-rival - has rallied mainly urban voters upset by the PiS's divisive politics, judicial reforms threatening the rule of law and high-profile graft scandals. Railing against the PiS's anti-LGBT views and its close ties to the church, but sharing its welfare goals, left-wing parties are poised to return to parliament after a four-year hiatus. Surveys also suggest two smaller groups could win seats, including the far-right. "The electorate is split down the middle, with around 45 percent each for the PiS and the centrist and leftist opposition," Anna Materska-Sosnowska, a Warsaw University political scientist said. "Turnout will decide whether the PiS will govern alone, whether it will have to build a coalition, or even if it might lose its majority," she added.

### 'Promises kept'

The PiS has capitalised on a growing populist backlash against liberal urban elites, similar to trends in Western Europe and the US. Its generous social programs have sought to appeal to Poles who felt they reaped little gain from Poland's explosive growth after it shed communism in 1989. "Our great social program has led to the fact that the sphere of poverty, often extreme misery... has been abolished," Kaczynski, 70, told supporters at a War-

saw rally this week, calling it "our moral achievement." "PiS has done a great deal of good for families, pensioners, for children... they've kept their promises," Malgorzata Kowalska, 66, a retired orphanage employee told AFP as she left a Warsaw church. But a recent study shows that while extreme poverty dropped slightly in 2016-17 to just over four percent it rebounded to 5.4 percent in 2018 as inflation rose. Joanna, a 40-year-old stay-at-home mother raising three girls receives 1,500 zloty (350 euro, \$380) per month in child benefits. She says the cash-in-hand won't sway her. "Regardless of how much they'll give, I'll never vote for the PiS," said the formerly self-employed psychology graduate, slamming the party's "contempt for Poles who don't fit the stereotype of traditional Catholics."

### 'Clean up politics'

Malgorzata Kidawa-Blonska, the even-tempered 62-year-old deputy speaker of parliament chosen by the KO as its candidate for prime minister, has sought to provide a clear alternative to Kaczynski's polarising campaign. "Let's clean up politics, free Poles from hatred, hypocrisy and political toxins," she told supporters in Warsaw this week. The KO opposition has vowed to reverse a string of controversial PiS judicial reforms which the EU says threaten judicial independence and the rule of law but has otherwise offered voters little. Days ahead of the vote, the European Union yesterday took the PiS government to the EU's top court over a new disciplinary regime for judges that allegedly threatens their independence. According to Laurent Pech, a professor of European law at Middlesex University in the UK, threats to the rule of law in Poland are bound to "significantly worsen" should PiS return to power. Kaczynski's plans for a "future reorganisation" of the courts are likely to mean a purge of the Polish judiciary under false pretences which will lead in turn to a renewed open conflict with the EU," he told AFP via email.

### Most migrants

On the economic front, Poland has fared well with strong growth under the PiS, something critics attribute to favorable external factors. Joblessness hit a 30-year record low of 5.1 percent in September as employers struggled to find workers. Despite the PiS's strident anti-migrant rhetoric in the campaign ahead of its stunning 2015 victory, Poland became the world's top temporary labor destination in 2017, surpassing even the US, according to the OECD. —AFP



## International

# With White House uncooperative on impeachment, what is next?

## Trump loyalists see a hyper-partisan abuse of power

**WASHINGTON:** The White House's open defiance of the impeachment investigation has thrown the process into turmoil, with Donald Trump's loyalists and adversaries scrambling to carve a path forward in the battle over the American presidency. While some believe House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's effort to hold Trump accountable is a profile in constitutional courage, Trump loyalists see a hyper-partisan abuse of power.

Either way, the process is likely to provoke a "national nightmare," as constitutional scholar Cass Sunstein put it in his 2017 book "Impeachment: A Citizen's Guide." Will Democrats succeed in obtaining documents and testimony from key witnesses such as US diplomats, whose text messages show they helped coordinate efforts to pressure Ukraine into investigating Trump's political adversary Joe Biden? Or can Trump thwart the process and essentially block congressional oversight?

### Historic firestorm?

Impeachment proceedings have been undertaken just three times before in America's 243-year history. Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton were impeached by the House of Representatives but survived Senate trials, while Richard Nixon, facing almost certain impeachment and conviction by the Senate, resigned in 1974. Today's crisis "is a historic showdown," Chris Edelson, an

assistant professor of government at American University said.

The focus of the current impeachment investigation - pressuring another country's leader to interfere in US elections - "is certainly a first," he said, decrying Trump's "brazen" effort with Ukraine. The White House and its defenders have seized on Pelosi's refusal to hold a floor vote to launch the inquiry, arguing the entire process is illegitimate. Law professor Frank Bowman at the University of Missouri disagrees. "Nothing in the House rules requires that a resolution be passed before the full House... can take steps to exercise impeachment power," Bowman wrote in a blog post.

### Next steps?

Pelosi has not signaled her timeline for filing articles of impeachment, but lawmakers predict it could happen this year. Several House committees are gathering information as part of the probe, and while they have been blocked at multiple turns, Pelosi says there is a "growing body of evidence" that shows Trump abused his office.

As the process accelerates, Trump's administration is girding for war in the courts, and a case Tuesday in Washington related to special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation may prove instructive. In arguing to a judge that House requests for grand jury materials in the Mueller

In another tweet, Trump dismissed the impeachment process as a Democratic bid to influence the election, saying "their total focus is 2020, nothing more." But Trump, who broke with precedent by campaigning for reelection almost from the moment he took office in 2017, is himself pouncing on the impeachment as the new cornerstone of his 2020 effort. He and the Republican Party have pushed hard to raise funds off the back of their accusation of unfair treatment from the Democratic lower house in Congress.

And on Thursday and Friday, Trump will take that message to his core supporters when he holds campaign rallies in Minneapolis and in Louisiana. Even if the House impeaches Trump, it remains unlikely that the Republican-led Senate would convict him in the subsequent trial. However, Trump's already turbulent presidency would be forever associated with the impeachment.

### Ukrainian phone call

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi formally launched the impeachment inquiry last month after revelations Trump pressured Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in a July 25 phone call. In the call, Trump asked Zelensky to look into what the US leader said were corrupt business deals involving Biden. Democrats say that Trump tried to coerce Zelensky by holding back US military aid to Ukraine. Trump says there was no quid pro quo and that his only desire is to combat corruption. He subsequently said publicly he would also like China to investigate Biden, something critics say bolsters the allegation that Trump is seeking foreign help to discredit opponents. On Tuesday, the Trump administration blocked a potentially major witness, ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland, from testifying before Congress. Democrats then slapped Sondland with a subpoena to appear on October 16. "The failure to produce this witness, the failure to produce these documents" was "additional strong evidence of obstruction," House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff said.

Later the same day, the White House announced in a lengthy legal statement that it rejected any cooperation with the Democrats at all. Lawmakers want to hear on Friday from another key witness: former US ambassador to Kiev Marie Yovanovitch, who is scheduled to appear before the House Intelligence Committee. US media has reported that Trump removed her from her post because she opposed his efforts to get Ukraine to investigate Biden. —AFP



**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump speaks during an executive order signing regarding federal regulations in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. —AFP

probe be denied, Justice Department lawyers pointed to Nixon's impeachment case and said courts should not have given Watergate grand jury data to Congress, The Washington Post reported.

Nixon went to the Supreme Court in his failed bid to prevent the release of incriminating White House tapes, so there is potential for the high

court to be drawn into today's impeachment fight. Trump said as much Wednesday: "It probably ends up being a big Supreme Court case," he told reporters. Democrats are mulling whether to engage in a protracted court battle, or wrap up their investigation with the evidence they have, add White House obstruction to articles of impeachment, and pull the trigger. —AFP

## Democrat Biden calls for Trump's impeachment

**WASHINGTON:** Democratic White House hopeful Joe Biden called Wednesday for Donald Trump's impeachment, saying the president "betrayed" the United States, but Trump dug in, predicting that the Supreme Court would have to resolve the fight. "To preserve our constitution, our democracy, our basic integrity, he should be impeached," Biden told supporters at a rally in New Hampshire, adding his voice to that of other Democratic contenders. "He's shooting holes in the constitution, and we cannot let him get away with it," added Biden.

Meanwhile a poll by Fox News, a TV channel generally viewed as sympathetic to the president, showed that "a new high" of 51 percent of voters want Trump impeached and removed from office. Trump, however, gave no sign of buckling under pressure from the Democratic party probe into his alleged bid to damage Biden by strong-arming Ukraine to investigate the former vice president. Having threatened a constitutional crisis by refusing to cooperate with the congressional investigation, Trump predicted that the row would end up "being a big Supreme Court case." He told reporters in the White House that his Republican party was being "treated very badly." Democrats accuse Trump of stonewalling and obstruction. "No one is above the law, not even President Trump," the Democratic majority leader in the House, Steny Hoyer, said Wednesday.

### Impeachment - campaign message

On Twitter, which Trump is using to bombard the public with conspiracy theories about a "deep state" aiming to eject him, the president argued that the whistleblower behind the impeachment case had been shown to be partisan and inaccurate. "The Whistleblower's facts have been so incorrect about my 'no pressure' conversation with the Ukrainian President, and now the conflict of interest and involvement with a Democrat Candidate, that he or she should be exposed and questioned," Trump tweeted.

## The migrant caravans: Finding freedom and hardship in America

**LOS ANGELES:** A year to the day after crossing the US-Mexico border in May 2018, Luis Rodriguez, 20, writhed on a gurney in a Los Angeles emergency room with a kidney and bladder infection. He wasn't just in pain - he was worried. His asylum claim had not yet been approved. He had no work permit, though he'd been working seven days a week anyway.

Now he was seriously ill, and bills were mounting. When Rodriguez arrived in the United States, he had planned to finish his final year of high school, earn a university degree and then become a systems engineer. He'd always been studious and driven in El Salvador, the kid teachers commended. But here in the hospital, his goals seemed out of reach.

He felt alone in this country - but, he said he hadn't had much choice in leaving his own. Rodriguez is gay. He and his first love, Bryan Claros, were high school classmates, meeting secretly when they could on an isolated stretch of beach outside their hometown of La Libertad. One March night, four gang members surrounded them there, beat up Claros and threatened Rodriguez, both men told Reuters.

"Never show your faces here again," Rodriguez recalled them saying. A police detective's report on the incident, reviewed by Reuters, confirmed the outlines of their account, saying Rodriguez was the victim of "aggravated threats" by terrorist groups or gangs and that "it was recommended that he emigrate ... because these individuals who threaten people always act out the threats they make." —Reuters



## International

# Racism and anti-Semitism have no place in Germany

## Investigator tells German broadcaster: 'He planned to kill'

**HALLE:** Germany must crack down on hate, violence and hostility, Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday, a day after a gunman attacked a synagogue and killed two people nearby in a live-streamed rampage. There could have been many more victims had the suspected perpetrator, German national Stephan B, breached the gates to the synagogue in the eastern city of Halle, Merkel said.

The gunman failed to get into the synagogue in Wednesday's attack, but went on to kill two bystanders in his live-streamed rampage, which appeared to be modeled on last year's gun attack on a New Zealand mosque. "I am, like millions of people in Germany, shocked and dejected by the crime that was perpetrated in Halle yesterday," Merkel said to loud applause in an address to a trade union congress in Nuremberg.

"We all know, we only just avoided a terrible attack on the people in the synagogue," she added. "There could have been many more victims." In a video of more than 30 minutes that the attacker live-streamed from a helmet camera, he was heard cursing his failure to enter the synagogue before shooting dead a woman passer-by in the street and a man in a nearby kebab restaurant.

Two other people were injured but regional broadcaster MDR said their condition was not critical. "We are happy about every synagogue, every Jewish community and all Jewish life in our country," Merkel said. "That means ... the representatives of the state must use all the means of the state to crack down on hate, violence and hostility towards people." A military

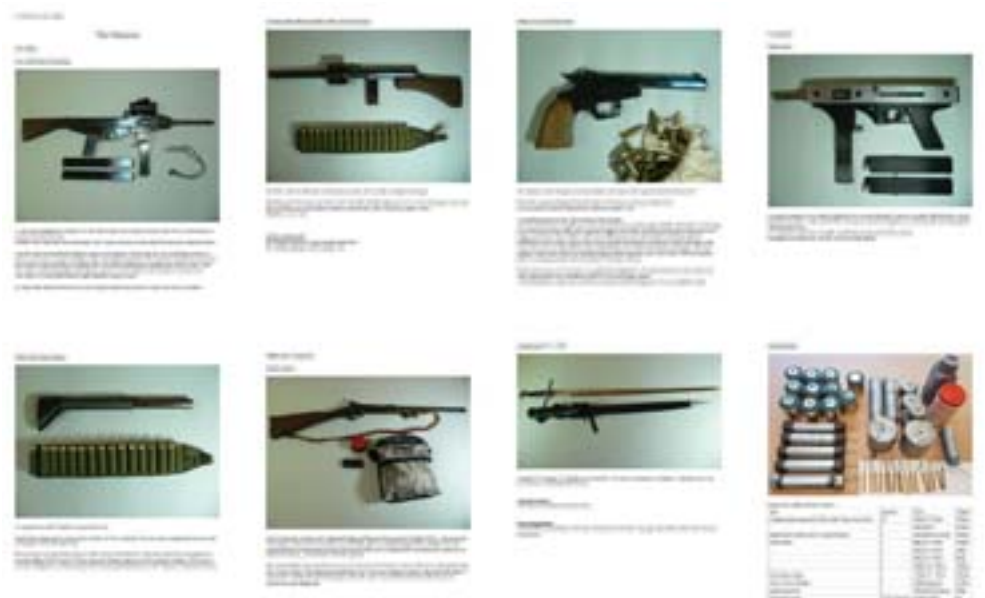
source said Stephan B. had done military service, but received no special training. His full name cannot be published under German privacy laws.

German media said investigators had searched the attacker's home. MDR reported that he lived with his mother in Benndorf, west of Halle. "He planned to kill people," MDR quoted one investigator as saying. Earlier, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited the synagogue and told reporters: "Today is a day of shame and disgrace ... It fills us all with horror that an attack took place in our country, a country with this history". "I'm very sure the overwhelming majority of this society in Germany wants Jewish life to be part of this country," Steinmeier said. "We must protect Jewish life."

### Attacks

Most Jewish institutions in Germany's large cities have a near-permanent police guard due to occasional anti-Semitic attacks by both far-right activists and Islamist militants. Josef Schuster, president of the council of Germany's Jewish community, criticized police for not being stationed outside the synagogue that was attacked as dozens prayed inside.

"If police had been stationed outside the synagogue, then this man could have been disarmed before he could attack the others," Schuster told Deutschlandfunk public radio. In the event, the synagogue's solid locked gates and high walls provided ample protection against the attacker's seemingly improvised weapons. Schuster said that while it was normal



**HALLE:** This online document obtained by AFP on 4chan platform shows pictures of hand-made weapons and munitions. The document appears to be by German killer Stephan Balliet according to SITE monitoring group. — AFP

## Halle gunman's fumbling, furious assault caught on camera

**FRANKFURT AM MAIN:** After minutes of stillness punctuated by clicks and muttering, the camera pitches up and shows the close-shaved, youthful face of a man looking into the lens. On Wednesday in the east German city of Halle, the man before the camera is preparing to commit a violent assault against a synagogue that will devolve into a random, blundering search for fresh targets.

The shooter's technique recalls the self-presentation of the man who killed 51 and wounded dozens at a mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March. In a heavy German accent, he hurriedly babbles a brief anti-Semitic diatribe blaming Jews for being "at the root of problems" in Western societies. Then the shooter readies an apparently home-made shotgun before driving the short distance to the synagogue, blasting hip-hop over a bluetooth speaker. Parking in the leafy street by the high brick wall of the Jewish cemetery, the man who introduced himself as "Anon" is discouraged

when he sees the massive wooden synagogue doors bolted shut. When he fails to barge open smaller entrances, he lights the fuse of a home-made bomb and hurls it over the wall. A shocked old man in a cap hurriedly turns his bicycle away as the shooter walks from the explosion. After the door resists another bomb, a 50-something woman in a pink shirt, light scarf and glasses walks by, grumbling at the bizarrely-dressed attacker but apparently almost unfazed.

He levels an automatic weapon and fires a short burst into her back. Further efforts to force the door prove useless, and after pitching more bombs and a molotov cocktail over the wall, he fires another, longer burst into the lifeless body of the woman lying by his car. "Pig!" he shouts, before realising he has punctured a tyre. The automatic weapon lets the killer down when a man stops his van soon after to check on the dead woman. Attempting to fire a new burst, the gun only clicks and he fumbles to

practice in his experience for all synagogues to have police guards while services were being conducted inside, this appeared not to be the case in the state of Saxony-Anhalt, where Halle is located.

However, the head of Germany's police union was sceptical about providing that level of protection. "We'd have to guard every synagogue, every church, every mosque, every

change the magazine. When the frightened passer-by has driven off, attempts to blast the lock off the synagogue door with a shotgun are equally unsuccessful. "Sorry guys. I'm a fucking idiot. I can't kill shit," he tells his imagined viewers in English as he drives away. Inside the synagogue, worshippers have watched the attacker's attempts to penetrate the building on the security cameras. "We barricaded our doors from inside and waited for the police," Jewish community leader Max Privorotzki told Stuttgarter Zeitung. "In between, we carried on with our service."

A few streets away, the gunman spots a kebab shop and pulls up, grabbing his cobbled-together arsenal. "Doener. That'll do," he says under his breath. He tosses one of the bombs inside, firing a final burst with the automatic before it jams for good. But his arrival is enough to scare patrons and the owner, and several men flee from the plush red-upholstered benches into the depths of the store.

"He was really calm, like a professional. Perhaps he's done something like this several times," proprietor Rifat Tekin, who escaped by ducking behind the salad counter, later told broadcaster NTV. From the shooter's perspective, there is more wrestling with weapons and

holy place in Germany around the clock, so I don't know if this was a mistake or if this really couldn't have been foreseen." Oliver Malchow told ARD public television. Germany's federal prosecutors ramped up their legal case yesterday, saying they would ask the investigating judge at the Federal Court of Justice to issue an arrest warrant against Stephan B, who was detained on Wednesday. —Reuters

cursing as he attempts to harm the men cowering at the back of the shop, who are pleading for their lives.

Cartridges rattle onto the floor from his seemingly inept fingers. After briefly stepping outside and scaring pedestrians, he returns to the shop where he executes one of the men at point-blank range with two shotgun blasts, cutting off his cry of "No!". "At least I've demonstrated how useless improvised weapons are," he mutters to himself and the camera on his way out, a lone bottle of cola somehow still standing on one table, another toppled next to an abandoned meal and a pair of glasses at the next.

The police cut off his first attempt at escape in the car, and he exchanges fire with them before falling to the ground for several seconds, struck by a bullet as he attempted to drive off. "I'm bleeding, I've been shot in the neck," he says once he is underway again, groaning with pain and grimacing in the moments his face is visible. He turns the car radio on over hectic, cartoonish music from his bluetooth speaker, but the presenters are discussing the US-China trade war rather than his failed onslaught. "Sorry guys, that was it. A total loser..." the killer says, before tossing the still-broadcasting smartphone out of the window. —AFP



# \$14.02 bn promised for global fight against AIDS, TB, malaria

## France offers to contribute an extra \$60 million

**LYON:** Governments, businesses and philanthropists pledged just over \$14 billion yesterday to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, exceeding the target set for a replenishment meeting in Lyon, France. "I am delighted to be able to tell you that having set a target of raising at least \$14 billion... we have today secured pledges, commitments for \$14.02 billion," the fund's chief executive officer Peter Sands announced.

Standing next to conference host Emmanuel Macron, Sands said there had been increases in the pledges of all the G7 bloc of rich countries, 20 donations from African governments, and 11 new donors from the private sector. Sands was speaking shortly after Macron had officially announced the final tally of \$13.92 billion, just short of the target. Conference organizers said \$14 billion would help save 16 million lives and avert 234 million infections by 2023.

Macron, who in the morning described \$14 billion as "the minimum," and warned he would

"not allow anyone to leave this room, nor Lyon, until the \$14 billion has been obtained", said several countries had increased their pledges during the day. African countries have promised double the amount they pledged at the fund's last meeting in Montreal three years ago, he said. "When there is common cause, we know how to reconcile," he said, thanking Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, who contributed \$50 million each.

The total of all the pledges came to \$13.8 billion, Macron said. France offered to contribute an extra \$60 million from its own coffers, which billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates agreed to match for a total of \$13.92 billion. Macron said he was "convinced" the shortfall would be made up within weeks as more donors come forward. Just minutes later, however, Sands said all the money had been found. This was despite government officials having predicted that collecting such a large sum would likely be challenging, especially as global attention moves from AIDS towards fighting climate change.—AFP



**LYON:** French president Emmanuel Macron (left) shakes hands with Global Fund managing director Peter Sands during a press conference at the end of the Global Fund meeting to Fight HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria yesterday. —AFP

## EU removes UAE, Switzerland from tax-haven list

**LUXEMBOURG:** The EU removed Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates from its list of tax havens yesterday, giving two global hubs for multinational tax schemes the all clear. "Albania, Costa Rica, Mauritius, Serbia and Switzerland have implemented ahead of their deadline all necessary reforms to comply with EU tax good governance principles," the bloc's 28 finance ministers said. The EU's grey list has included Switzerland since its launch in December 2017 as the country was deemed as having inadequate tax rules, although it had expressed commitment to reform them. "If Switzerland is off this list, it is a success for me. The best list is the shortest," said Pierre Moscovici, European Commissioner for Economic Affairs, at a press conference in Luxembourg. Switzerland had approved a tax reform in October 2018, but its entry into force had been delayed due to a referendum.

The United Arab Emirates, which includes Dubai, was also given a clean bill of health, lifted out directly from the blacklist after rushing through reforms. "Today, the EU has whitewashed two of the world's most harmful tax havens," said Chiara Putaturo, Oxfam's EU Policy Advisor on Tax. "Despite recent reforms, both countries will continue to offer sweet treats to tax-dodging companies, like very low tax rates, accelerating the race to the bottom on corporate taxation."

The move leaves only nine countries or territories considered to be uncooperative on the list: American Samoa, Belize, Fiji, Guam, Oman, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States Virgin Islands and Vanuatu. The 28 EU finance ministers drew up the lists - that followed several scandals including Panama Papers and LuxLeaks - in the hopes of "naming and shaming" countries into better combating tax evasion by multinationals and wealthy individuals. Blacklisted countries face only limited sanctions, consisting of freezing them out of European aid or development funding.—AFP

## Malaysia must scrap 'cruel' death penalty

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian police sometimes use torture to extract confessions from suspects in death penalty cases and their trials are often unfair, Amnesty International said yesterday, piling pressure on the government to abolish capital punishment. The Southeast Asian country has the death penalty for dozens of crimes and it is mandatory for several offences, including murder and drug trafficking.

A reformist alliance which took power in 2018 pledged to scrap capital punishment entirely, a move that would have handed a reprieve to almost 1,300 people on death row. But after facing opposition, officials announced only the mandatory death penalty for some offences would go, leaving it to judges in such cases to decide whether to order someone to hang or jail them. In a new report, Amnesty said that torture and beatings were sometimes used to force confessions from suspects accused of offences punishable by death.

A Malaysian on death row, who was arrested in possession of methamphetamine in 2005, said police broke his finger during interrogation and he was forced to sign an inaccurate statement, according to Amnesty. It was common for defendants who could not afford a lawyer to go without any legal assistance until charges were brought in court, and they were often left without legal support for long periods, the rights group said.

"From allegations of torture and other ill-treatment to an opaque pardons



**PETALING JAYA:** Shamini Darshni Kaliemuthu (left) and Brian Yap, representatives from Amnesty International Malaysia, attend the launch of a report on the death penalty in Malaysia yesterday. —AFP

process, it's clear the death penalty is a stain on Malaysia's criminal justice system," said Shamini Darshni Kaliemuthu, executive director of Amnesty International Malaysia. "Amnesty International's research shows why this government must now honor its pledge to abolish this ultimate cruel and inhumane punishment without delay."

Legislation to make the changes is expected to be tabled in parliament soon. A moratorium on executions has

been in place since last year, shortly after the new government took power. Amnesty urged the government to take the first step towards total abolition by eliminating the mandatory death penalty entirely, including for drug-related offences, when it puts forward the new legislation. It said 73 percent of those on death row were convicted of drug crimes. The Malaysian law minister's office did not have an immediate response to the report. —AFP



## International

# Kashmir hotels empty or shut as tourist restrictions lifted

## Internet and mobile phones remain cut off in most areas

**SRINAGAR:** India lifted yesterday restrictions on tourists visiting Kashmir, but for hotels around the picturesque lake in Srinagar two months into a lockdown it was still far from business as usual. Authorities in early August had told holidaymakers to leave “immediately” over “terror threats” to a major Hindu pilgrimage, sending thousands scrambling for places on planes and buses.

A few days later on August 5 New Delhi scrapped Indian-administered Kashmir of its semi-autonomous status, sent in tens of thousands of extra troops and imposed a lockdown. More than two months later the internet and mobile phones remain cut off in most areas and fixed-line phone lines are unreliable, crippling many businesses - including in tourism. “Lifting the restrictions on tourists coming will not help until communications are restored,” Vishal Sharma, general manager of the five-star Taj Vivanta hotel said.

“We haven’t had a single direct call (on the phone) for a booking,” he said, all 83 rooms at the hotel empty. “The last two months were the worst ever.” It was a similar story at the luxury Lalit Grand Palace where a senior member of staff, preferring to stay anonymous, said occupancy in the 113 rooms was “very low”. Most other hotels around the lake were shuttered, as were travel agents, while Srinagar’s famous houseboats, usually full at this time of the year, looked mostly empty.

### ‘Terrorists’

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since 1947 and has been the spark of two wars and numerous skirmishes since, most



**SRINAGAR:** A local man rows a boat near houseboats hotels in Dal Lake in Srinagar yesterday. The local government of Jammu and Kashmir announced the end of restrictions for tourist visiting the state following the security advisory issued before the scrapping by the Indian government of Article 370 that granted a special status to Jammu and Kashmir. — AFP

recently in February with tit-for-tat air strikes. India says that most people in its part of Kashmir support its August 5 move, and that militants backed by Pakistan are covering businesses into not cooperating. It says that communications remain snapped to prevent these “terrorists” organizing attacks.

Authorities say they have killed several militants in gun battles and intercepted weapons. Authorities yesterday also released three low-ranking politicians who along with hundreds of other local lawmakers, activists and others have been detained since August 5. Those still

in detention include three former Kashmir chief ministers: Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti. Farooq Abdullah, 81, was formerly arrested in mid-September under a law allowing him to be held for up to two years without charge that has been widely used, and criticized, in Kashmir.

More than 250 people have been sent to jails outside Jammu and Kashmir, the Press Trust of India news agency reported. UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said last month she was “deeply concerned” while Washington has called for a “rapid” lifting of restrictions. The

issue has clouded preparations for a two-day “informal summit” between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping beginning in India today.

India’s August move to split Jammu and Kashmir state in two irked China because it will make the Ladakh region - claimed in part by Beijing - of the state a separate administrative territory. China has given diplomatic backing to Pakistan, while part of its Belt and Road infrastructure initiative passes through Pakistan-administered Kashmir, which is claimed by India.— AFP

## Minister stabbed by IS-linked pair

**JAKARTA:** Two members of an IS-linked terror network stabbed Indonesia’s chief security minister Wiranto yesterday, the intelligence head said, as the powerful politician underwent emergency surgery for his wounds. Television images showed security officers wrestling a man and woman to the ground in Pandeglang on Java island after the attack on Wiranto, who goes by one name, as he was exiting a vehicle.

The suspects were identified as 31-year-old Syahril Alamsyah and Fitri Andriana, 21 - a married couple, according to local media. They were members of Jamaah Ansharut

Daulah (JAD), an extremist group responsible for deadly suicide bombings at churches in Indonesia’s second-biggest city Surabaya last year, State Intelligence Agency chief Budi Gunawan told reporters in Jakarta.

JAD is among dozens of radical groups that have pledged loyalty to the Islamic State group in Indonesia, which has long struggled with Islamist militancy. Wiranto, 72 - who police have said was one of several targets in an earlier failed assassination plot - was rushed by helicopter to the capital where he was treated for two knife wounds in his stomach. “He is currently in surgery and I ask that all Indonesians pray that he gets well soon,” said President Joko Widodo.

“And I ask for everyone’s help in fighting radicalism and terrorism because we can only do it together,” he added. The assassination attempt comes just over a week before Widodo kicks off a second term as leader of the Southeast Asian archipelago of some 260 million people, the world’s biggest

Muslim majority nation. Three others - a local police chief and two aides - also suffered knife wounds in yesterday’s attack but authorities said they had non-life-threatening injuries.

### ‘Fought the police’

An eyewitness told an AFP reporter that the female attacker was dressed in a body-and-face-covering niqab. “When the car stopped, there were people circling around, protecting him,” he said. “But a man got into the circle and stabbed Wiranto. The woman also tried to stab him. He was arrested and the woman fought the police.” Last year, JAD staged a wave of suicide bombings by families - including young children - at churches in Surabaya, killing a dozen congregants. Many past attacks by Indonesian militants have been against police and other state symbols. Authorities routinely arrest suspected IS-loyal militants that they claim were planning bomb and other attacks. “JAD

members are targeting what they call Ansharut Thagut (tyranny) and that includes senior government officials,” said Muhammad Syauqillah, program director of the University of Indonesia’s Terrorism Study Center. Wiranto, the retired chief of the armed forces and a failed presidential candidate, was appointed to his post in 2016 and oversees several departments, including the foreign affairs and defence ministries.

He has faced controversy over alleged human rights violations and allegations of crimes against humanity linked to Indonesia’s brutal occupation of East Timor. In May, police said Wiranto and three other top officials were targeted in a failed assassination plot linked to deadly riots in Jakarta after Widodo’s re-election victory. A group of six people - arrested before they could carry out the killings - planned to murder the officials and an election pollster in a bid to plunge the country into chaos, police said at the time.— AFP



# Lifestyle

Friday Times

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This photograph shows a sculpture titled 'Goliath Monumental' carved by French artist Christophe Charbonnel in the streets of Mont de Marsan, southwestern France, during the 11th edition of the triennial 'Sculptures of Mont de Marsan' on the theme of Myths. — AFP

**Olga Tokarczuk, Peter Handke  
win Literature Nobels**

See Page 20



# Olga Tokarczuk, Peter Handke win Literature Nobels

Polish writer Olga Tokarczuk yesterday won the 2018 Nobel Prize in Literature, which was delayed over a sexual harassment scandal, while Austrian novelist and playwright Peter Handke took the 2019 award, the Swedish Academy said. Tokarczuk, considered the most talented Polish novelist of her generation, was honored “for a narrative imagination that with encyclopaedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life”. Her books portray a polychromatic world perpetually in motion, with characters’ traits intermingled and language that is both precise and poetic.

Handke meanwhile won “for an influential work that with linguistic ingenuity has explored the periphery and the specificity of human experience,” the Academy said. Handke “has established himself as one of the most influential writers in Europe after the Second World War.” His works are filled with a strong desire to discover and to make his discoveries come to life by finding new literary expressions for them, the Academy said. Tokarczuk and Handke each take home a cheque worth nine million kronor. Tokarczuk becomes just the 15th woman to have won the prestigious distinction, out of 116 literature laureates honored since 1901.

## Academy rocked by scandal

Dating back to 1786, the Swedish Academy is at pains to repair its reputation after a devastating scandal that saw Frenchman Jean-Claude Arnault, who has close ties to the Academy, jailed for rape in 2018. The Academy was torn apart by a deep rift between members over how to manage their ties to him. The dispute exposed scheming, conflicts of interest, harassment and a culture of silence among its 18 members, long esteemed as the country’s guardians of culture.

The revelations shook Sweden, a Lutheran nation that prides itself on transparency and consensual democracy and is intolerant of inequality. Arnault is married to Katarina Frostenson, a member of the Academy who later resigned over the scandal at the height of the #MeToo movement against harassment of women. The pair also ran a cultural club in Stockholm that received funding from the body.

Ultimately, seven members quit the Academy. In tatters, it postponed the 2018 prize until this year—the first delay in 70 years. “From having been associated with literature of the highest order, the Nobel Prize is for many now associated with #MeToo... and a dysfunctional organisation,” Swedish literary critic Madelaine Levy told AFP. Even before the scandal, the Academy had courted controversy in 2016 when it gave the prestigious prize to US singer songwriter Bob Dylan, leading some to question its judgement.

The Academy has in the past year been revamped with new members and statutes. Literature professor Mats Malm took over as the new permanent secretary in June. “The changes have been very productive and we are hopeful for the future,” Malm told AFP in an interview just days before the prize announcement. He acknowledged the affair had tainted the institution and said improvements were still needed.

“A lot of hard work remains, of that we are certain.” In 2017, the last year the prize was awarded, it went to British author of Japanese origin Kazuo Ishiguro, best known for his novel “The Remains of the Day”.—AFP



The Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy, Mats Malm, announces the winners of the 2018 and 2019 Nobel Prize in Literature at the Swedish Academy in Stockholm, Sweden. —AFP photos



Members of the Nobel Committee for Literature, left to right, Chairman Anders Olsson, Per Westberg, Rebecka Karde, Mikaela Blomqvist and Henrik Petersen announce the winners of the 2018 and 2019 Nobel Prize in Literature.



## Poland's Olga Tokarczuk: Perpetual motion literature

**O**lga Tokarczuk, considered the most talented Polish novelist of her generation, has a string of best-sellers to her name and a style that blends the real with the mystical. A vegetarian and environmentalist with long, dark dreadlocks, the 57-year-old writer is also a political activist who does not shy away from criticizing Poland's right-wing Law and Justice (PiS) government. She received death threats in 2015 after telling state media that an open and tolerant Poland was a myth. Her publishers assigned her a security detail for a week.

Her books portray a polychromatic world perpetually in motion, with characters' traits intermingled and language that is both precise and poetic. "I don't have a clear biography of my own that I could recount in an interesting way. I'm made up of the characters that I pulled out of my head, that I invented," Tokarczuk said in an interview with The Polish Book Institute. "I'm made up of all of them. I have a huge, multi-frame biography."

Tokarczuk has written more than a dozen books and won numerous honours, including Britain's Man Booker International Prize last year and Poland's most prestigious Nike Literary Award twice. Her books have been turned into plays and films and translated into more than 25 languages, including Catalan, Hindi and Japanese.

### Mystic

Born on January 29, 1962, in the western town of Sulechów, Tokarczuk studied psy-

chology at the University of Warsaw. She worked as a therapist for a few years in the western city of Wałbrzych and published a collection of poems before taking a stab at prose. Following the success of her early books, she turned to writing full time and settled in the Sudety mountains near the Czech border.

The mother of one is an animal lover with a keen interest in astrology and psychoanalyst Carl Jung. "She's a mystic in constant search of the truth, a truth that can only be perceived on the move, by transcending borders," said Kinga Dunin, a friend and fellow writer. "All set forms, institutions and language are death," Dunin told AFP.

### Spanning borders

Tokarczuk's first novel, "The Journey of the People of the Book," released in 1993, chronicles a failed expedition to find a mysterious book. She won the Booker International Prize along with her translator Jennifer Croft for her 2007 novel "Flights", whose English version came out in 2017. The book was praised for its "series of startling juxtapositions (as Tokarczuk) flies us through a galaxy of departures and arrivals, stories and digressions, all the while exploring matters close to the contemporary and human predicament".

Her 900-page "The Books of Jacob" spans seven countries, three religions and five languages, tracing the little-known history of Frankism, a Jewish messianic sect that sprang up in Poland in the 18th century. Released in 2014, its pages are numbered in reverse in the style of Hebrew books. It became both an award-winning bestseller and the target of harsh criticism from nationalist circles in Poland.

Tokarczuk also co-wrote the screenplay for the Polish crime film "Spoor", which won the Alfred Bauer Prize for a work of particular innovation at the Berlin film festival in 2017. "Spoor" was also selected as Poland's entry for the best foreign language film at the 2018 Oscars. When not travelling, Tokarczuk divides her time between an apartment in Poland's western city of Wrocław and her mountain home.—AFP

Polish author  
Olga Tokarczuk

## Peter Handke: Avant-garde writer, Nobel critic

**A**ustrian Peter Handke, one of the most original German-language writers alive, once used his famously sharp tongue to call for the Nobel Prize in Literature to be abolished. The prize brings its winner "false canonization" along with "one moment of attention (and) six pages in the newspaper," the novelist, playwright, poet and translator told Austrian media in 2014. It was not the first time that Handke had shown himself to be an iconoclast. He has described Thomas Mann, a giant of German literature and a 1929 Nobel laureate, as a "terribly bad writer" churning out "condescending, snotty-nosed prose".

But what really appalled many peers and fans was his attendance at former Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic's funeral, and his sympathy for the Serbs in the 1990s Yugoslav wars. Handke was born in Griffen in southern Austria during World War II on December 6, 1942 to a German soldier father and a mother from Austria's Slovenian minority. After a few early years in Communist East Berlin, Handke grew up back in Austria, and first discovered his love of writing while contributing to the magazine of his hated Catholic boarding school.

He burst onto the literary scene in 1966 with his novel "The Hornets" and with a play, "Offending the Audience", in which four actors dissect the nature of theatre and then turn on the audience. That success led him to kiss goodbye to his law studies and write full-time. He has never looked back, leading a peripatetic existence and writing prolifically.

### Cult classics

Notable works include "Short Letter, Long Farewell", the poetry collection "The Innerworld of the Outerworld of the Innerworld" and "A Sorrow Beyond Dreams" about his mother, who killed herself in 1971. He has also been no slouch in film-making, cooperating several times with German director and close friend Wim Wenders. Many of their works explore themes such as loneliness and mortality. In 1972, Wenders adapted Handke's novel "The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty" about a goalie who is sent off during a match and later commits a murder.

The pair also worked together in the 1987 cult classic "Wings of Desire", about a pair of angels roaming Berlin. In the 1990s Handke emerged as a vocal defender of the Serbs in the bloody break-up of Yugoslavia, even comparing them to the Jews under the Nazis, a remark he later retracted. His 1996 travelogue "A Journey to the Rivers: Justice for Serbia", caused a storm, and in 1999 he returned Germany's prestigious Buechner prize in protest at NATO's bombing of Belgrade.



Austrian novelist and playwright Peter Handke

### An indignity

At the 2006 funeral of Milosevic—who died while on trial for crimes against humanity, and who wanted Handke to testify in his defence—the writer made a speech in front of thousands of mourners. Some stood up for Handke, including Nobel-winning compatriot Elfriede Jelinek. But many others, from Susan Sontag to Salman Rushdie, lined up to lambast him. German poet and essayist Hans-Magnus Enzensberger, noting Handke's 1960s firebrand past, said it was "a paradox that the remnants of the peace movement are running around with supporters of mass murder".

In 2006 an outcry forced him to reject another German prize—the Heinrich Heine award—and the Comedie-Francaise theatre in Paris refused to put on one of his plays. And when, in 2014, he came to collect the Ibsen prize in Norway, he was greeted with demonstrators chanting "fascist" and holding "Genocide-denier" placards. "What an indignity!" Handke told the Austria Press Agency afterwards. "Not for me, but for the seriousness of writing." But despite it all, at 76 and with a mane of grey hair, Handke remains active.

His play, "The Innocent, Me and the Unknown Woman by the Side of the Road", premiered at Vienna's hallowed Burgtheater in February 2016, while later that year a Wenders-Handke creation, "The Beautiful Days of Aranjuez", competed at the Venice Film Festival. "Without him I would perhaps have become a painter," Wenders said. — AFP



## Lifestyle | Music



In this photo poet Safiullah Sobat shows the old harmonium that belonged to Ahmad Zahir.



In this photo a painting of Ahmad Zahir, known as Afghanistan's Elvis Presley, is pictured at a restaurant called Ahmad Zahir's Cottage in Kabul.

## Burning love: Afghan Elvis's legacy endures, decades after death

Supporting a black quiff and sideburns, Ahmad Zahir sang of love and heartbreak in liberal 1970s Kabul—a city now plagued by war and suffering, but where the popularity of Afghanistan's "Elvis" remains undimmed 40 years after his death. Zahir—the son of a former prime minister with a penchant for brandy and his red Mercedes-rose to fame in an era when the capital hummed with Western tourists and women strolled through the streets in high heels.

"Everybody loved him," 73-year-old Safiullah Sobat, a long-time friend of Zahir, told AFP. "At nighttime girls would come outside his house and honk the horn of their cars." But on the day of his 33rd birthday in 1979, Zahir was found dead in his car in mysterious circumstances. His death—much like his life—has become part of folklore.

In Afghanistan today, where space for music and dance has shrunk under the shadow of war, music channels still play his songs daily and fans—even those born decades after his death—continue to snap up his albums and join Facebook groups created in his honor. "His songs will touch your heart no matter what mood you are in, happy or sad," says Hashmat, who goes by one name and is the manager of "Ahmad Zahir's Cottage", a colorful restaurant in downtown Kabul.

The 26-year-old welcomes his customers—mostly young cou-



In this photo, poet Safiullah Sobat shows a poster of Ahmad Zahir, known as Afghanistan's Elvis Presley, at the Ahmad Zahir Cultural Centre in Kabul. — AFP photos

ples—with tea, a hookah pipe and most importantly, their hero's songs. Zahir—an ethnic Pashtun—played concerts in various locations across the country and had fans among all ethnic groups in Afghanistan, which is far more polarised now than at the height of his fame. "Today we see ethnic rivalries have sadly increased but Ahmad Zahir's music is still connecting people," explains Basir Burhan, a 30-year-old amateur musician.

Wherever you go in Afghanistan, he said, "if there is music, there'll definitely be one Ahmad Zahir song playing". Former DJ Zubair Rezaee, 27, described Zahir as "evergreen". He endures because when "you listen to his songs ... you think they are for you, at any time, at any place. "The wars, the changes in society and a different generation, nothing has affected the quality of his songs," he said.

### Rumors and secrets

The 1960s and 70s are remembered as a golden age of music for Afghanistan, when young musicians were mostly influenced by Indian classics and would flock to "Radio Kabul"—the only radio broadcaster at the time—to record hits at their studio. Zahir's best-known works were inspired by Persian poets like Rumi and Hafiz, and he sang mostly in Dari or Afghan Persian. But he did not shy away from covering Western greats such as France's Enrico Macias and, of course, Elvis Presley.

"At a time when singers shaking their bodies or dancing on stage was seen as awkward, he appeared on stage and screen doing exactly that," said Zahir's friend Sobat, who also runs "Ahmad Zahir's Art and Culture Centre" in Kabul. "He was talking about Elvis a lot and when you look at his hairstyle, his clothes, the way he moved his body in concerts, you realise he was inspired by Elvis." Over the decades since his death, conflicting accounts have surfaced about whether Zahir—who recorded more than 20 albums in his short life—was killed or died in a car accident.

The official line was that he was killed in a crash near the Salang Pass, north of Kabul. But many maintain the communist regime assassinated him after his songs became increasingly critical, or because of rumors he had a secret affair with the daughter of the then prime minister. Sobat believes he was murdered. "When I saw his body in the coffin, there was hole in his forehead with signs of burns. He was shot at close range," he said.

Years of war have followed and under the Taliban, who banned music, his grave in Kabul was desecrated. But it has been rebuilt and since then, every June 14, his birthday, pilgrims have flocked to Shohada-E-Salehin Cemetery on the southern edge of Kabul to lay flowers on his grave and play one of his last memorable songs. "My death shall arrive one day/ In a spring bright with waves of light/ Oh, perhaps my lovers at midnight /lay wreaths on my sorrow(ful) grave," the lyrics read. — AFP

## Gingers Unite: Ed Sheeran, Prince Harry promote mental health

The doorbell rings to the tune of the British national anthem "God Save the Queen", and Prince Harry opens the door to find Ed Sheeran on the threshold. Both men have red hair and beards. "It's like looking in the mirror," the prince quips before ushering the pop star inside. This is the opening scene of a video released on Thursday in which Queen Elizabeth's grandson and the Grammy-winning musician join forces to campaign on an issue both care about deeply.

The clip, posted on Harry's Instagram page, shows the pair sitting at a table talking about their joint passion, but after a short while it becomes clear there is a misunderstanding. "This for me is a subject and a conversation that is just not talked about enough. I think people all over the world are really suffering," Harry says. Sheeran responds that he has been trying to write a song about the issue to help raise awareness. He then adds: "People just don't understand what it's like for people like us."

Looking confused, Harry asks: "What?" So Sheeran elaborates: "You know, the jokes and snide comments, I just feel like it's time that we stood up and said, you know, we're not going to take this any more. We are ginger and we're going to fight." Apparently embarrassed, Harry says: "OK. Slightly awkward," before going on to explain that he was not talking about discrimination against people with red hair, but rather about World Mental Health Day.

Hastily deleting the words "GINGERS UNITE" from a document on his laptop, Sheeran quickly gets on-message and the video closes with the pair urging people to reach out to anyone who may be suffering from mental health problems. Harry, sixth-in-line to the British throne, has long campaigned on the issue. On Thursday, he was in Nottingham, central England, visiting community projects aimed at preventing mental health problems and violence among young people.

Harry and his wife Meghan, whose official titles are the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, have increasingly used the Internet to engage directly with the public. Both have launched legal action against British media outlets over coverage they deem intrusive and inaccurate.—Reuters





## Top DJ **Fatboy Slim** pays homage to Greta Thunberg

British superstar DJ Fatboy Slim paid tribute to teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg by performing a remix of his hit song “Right Here, Right Now”, using samples from her dramatic UN speech. The 56-year-old artist played the mash-up, made by South African electronic artist David Scott, at a show in Gateshead, northeast England, last Friday, with a video clip of the performance recently going viral on social media.

The remix samples Thunberg’s demands for action against climate change in her fiery speech at the United Na-

tions last month to be taken “right here, right now”, using it during each refrain of the song’s title. It also includes other excerpts from the 16-year-old Swede’s speech. “When Greta spoke to the UN and I saw the video and it was quite late at night, and as soon as she said ‘right here, right now’, the Fatboy Slim song popped into my head and I just knew in that moment I had to create a mash-up,” Scott told AFP.

“When Fatboy Slim picked up the video and reposted it, it was a massive shock and a massive honour as well. I’ve always looked up to him as a music producer. “If you look at

the (original) video as well it ties into the whole story, it’s the story of evolution, how we came from the sea and evolved into humans and now we are at this stage where we consume and consume, and that’s where the video ends, with this big fat kid,” he added. Hundreds of protesters have blocked central London streets this week as part of worldwide events organized by Extinction Rebellion, the climate movement partly inspired by the pigtailed activist.—AFP

## In Brooklyn catacombs, classical music rises among the dead

Deep in one of New York’s most prestigious cemeteries, the eerie vibrations of a string concerto ricochet off catacomb walls, a seance of sorts invigorating the spirit of classical music. Media reports regularly warn of the genre’s impending doom, but Andrew Ousley, who founded the cheekily named “Death of Classical” series, says the obituaries are beyond premature. “Classical music can be relevant, it can be impactful for people who are not already among the template,” he told AFP at a rehearsal in Brooklyn’s famed Green-Wood Cemetery for this week’s concert series.

“The music is not dead; it’s the creativity of the approach in getting to audiences that feels more the issue to me.” After debuting his “Crypt Sessions” series—an intimate show held in the crypt of Harlem’s Church of the Intercession—in 2015, Ousley began curating shows in the National Historic Landmark cemetery, using the 1850s-era catacombs normally closed to the public as a venue.

The artist Jean-Michel Basquiat, composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein and William “Boss” Tweed, known for his corrupt mid-19th century political reign over New York, are among



Green-Wood’s famous residents. The spooky haunts offer “extraordinary acoustics” that lend “an incredible generosity of sound, that for classical, for acoustic music, for strings, voice, piano, is unbelievably enhancing,” Ousley said.

The catacomb shows known as the “Angel’s Share” series—named after a distiller’s term for whiskey that evaporates as the liquor matures—include tastings of the spirit that encourage concert-goers to mingle. “I think it’s important to surround the music with a larger experience,” Ousley, 36, said. “Especially for people who are less familiar with the rituals of classical music or the experience of it, it breaks down nervousness or a worry of, ‘Am I going to do the right thing, clap at the right time?’”

### Unpretentious as possible

The National Endowment for the Arts found that in 2017, 8.6 percent of American adults reported attending a classical music event, down from 11.6 percent in 2002. A more detailed study that the US agency released in 2012 found a growing decline in

stateside classical attendance, with more than one-third of the audience over age 65. Ousley said the crypt and catacomb shows draw in a mixed bag of audience members, ranging in age and expertise, defying the notion that classical music attendees are aging out.

“I try to have music to have integrity and have quality and the level of performance that is high for somebody who’s seen a thousand shows,” Ousley said outside the catacombs as the sun dipped below the tree line. “But then also, programming and the presentation of it, and the communication around the experience, and the experience itself that surrounds the music, to be as welcoming and unpretentious as possible for people who have never been.”

For Eli Spindel, the artistic director of the String Orchestra of Brooklyn that will play this week’s program, major classical music institutions do sometimes “tend to be too conservative.” “But the things that they’re able to accomplish are amazing and couldn’t be accomplished by people with smaller budgets, smaller venues,” he said. “You do want to have orchestras who are performing Mahler’s Ninth Symphony, in the highest level in a large hall.”

He sees traditional venues and more eccentric classical performances as essential to maintaining a healthy ecosystem for the genre to thrive. This week, the program in Green-Wood aptly centers on the subject of grief and “how we find catharsis and meaning in the loss of life,” Ousley said. The showcased piece is “Stabat Mater,” a medieval Christian hymn to Mary whose musical score was composed by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi in 1736.

The concert also features Samuel Barber’s melancholic “Adagio for Strings” and Arvo Part’s “Fratres,” performed as immersive visual projections dance on the catacomb’s arched space. “The smallest motion of the bow will just create very beautiful, blooming sound,” said Spindel. “This is a very appropriate chamber for this music,” he added with a smirk.—AFP



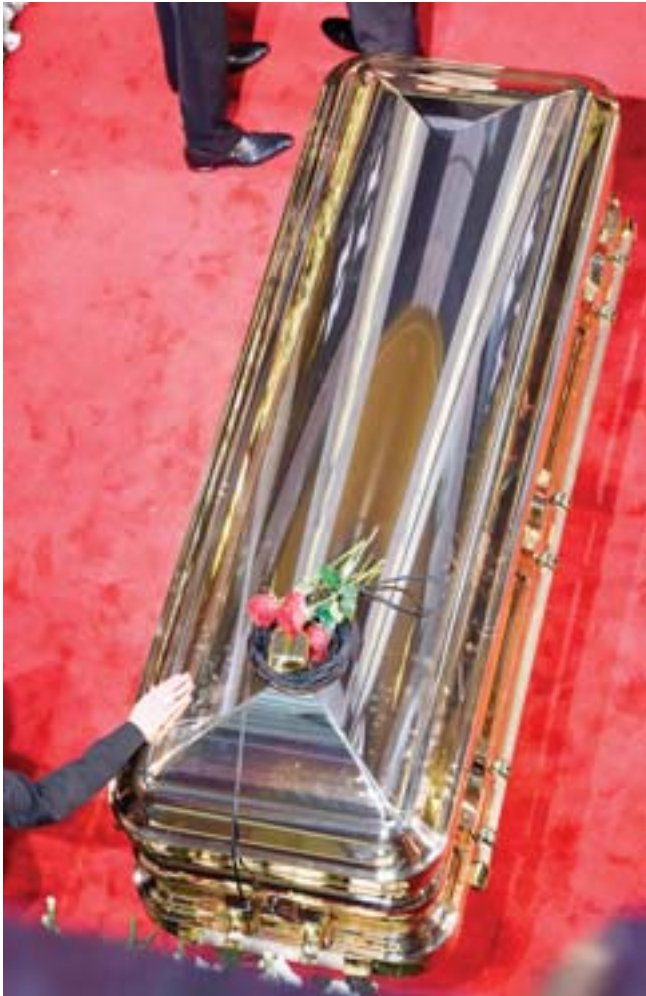
People listen to a concert of the ‘Death of Classical’ series at the Greenwood Cemetery in New York City.



Musicians play during a rehearsal of the ‘Death of Classical’ series at the Greenwood Cemetery in New York City. — AFP photos



# Mexico says last goodbye to legendary singer **Jose Jose**



A microphone and roses are seen on top of the coffin of late Mexican singing legend Jose Jose during a tribute at the Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City. — AFP photos

Thousands of tearful fans said a final goodbye in Mexico City Wednesday to superstar singer Jose Jose, whose death last month triggered national mourning and a family feud worthy of a telenovela. The government said 15,000 people thronged the Palace of Fine Arts in the heart of the Mexican capital to file past a gold-plated coffin and cry for “The Prince of Song,” whose velvety voice and ballads of heartbreak made him one of the most successful Latin American singers of all time.

A Mexican air force plane flew Jose Jose’s ashes—half of them, anyway—to his native Mexico City from Miami, where the musician died of complications from pancreatic cancer on September 28 at age 71. The other half remained in Florida, under a grudging deal negotiated between his eldest children, Jose Joel and Marysol, and their half-sister, Sarita, who lived in Miami with her father and initially resisted plans to bring his body back to Mexico.

In the days after their father’s death, Jose Joel and Marysol accused Sarita of hiding his body, seeking to get rich off his death and “putting on make-up” amid the family’s mourning. They went as far as to file a police report, hire a lawyer and insist on an autopsy, before the Mexican consulate in Miami and President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador himself intervened to mediate.

#### ‘He’s home now’

Under the truce brokered by the Mexican government, half of Jose Jose’s cremated remains stayed in Florida with Sarita and her mother-Cuban national Sara Salazar, who was the singer’s third wife. Jose Joel and Marysol, who were born to Jose Jose’s second wife, took the other half to Mexico. “We have brought back the heart of our beloved Prince of Song, my father. He’s home now,” said Jose Joel at the Mexico City airport, where white-gloved ushers placed Jose Jose’s coffin in a glistening vintage hearse.

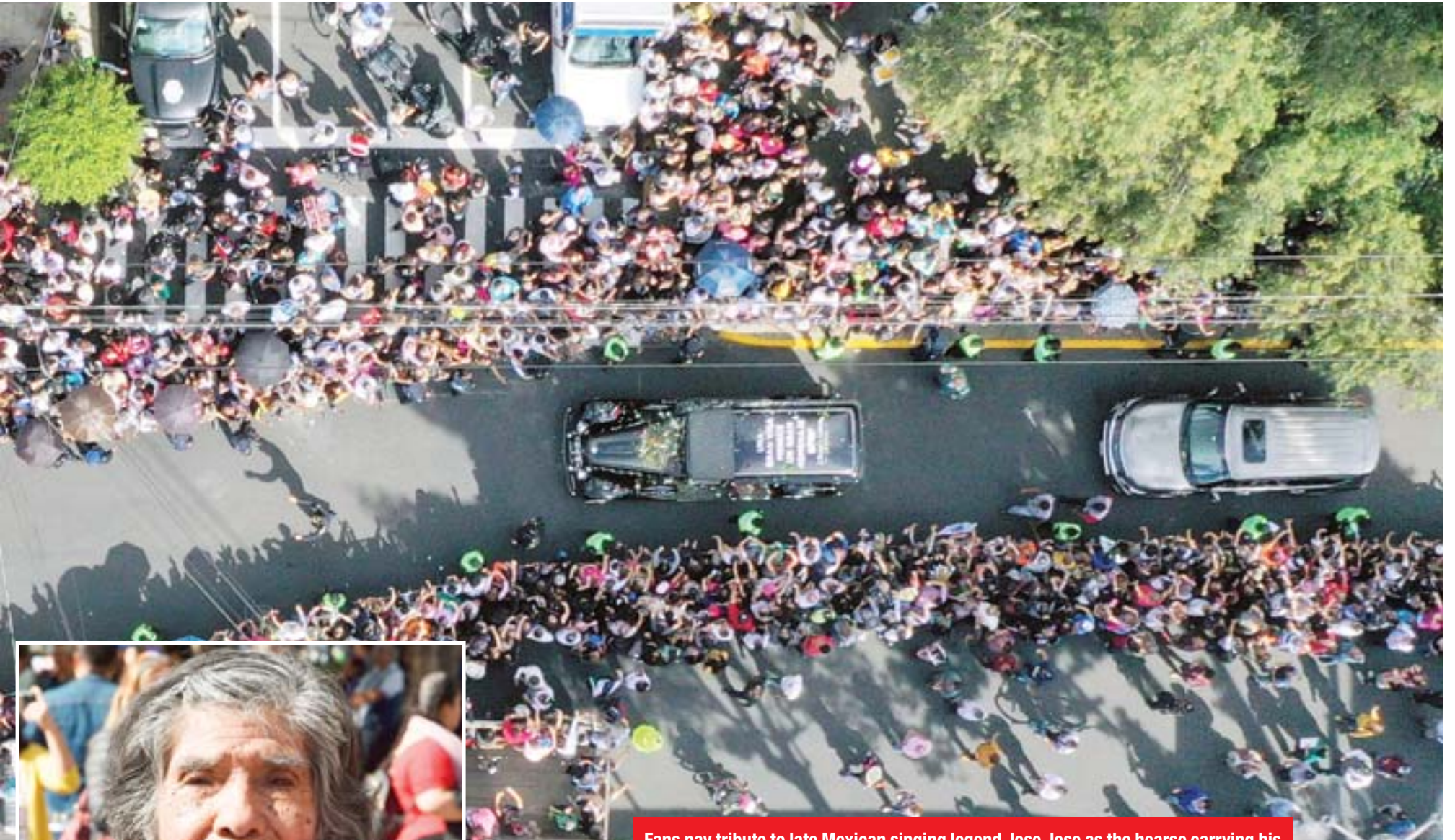
Escorted by police, the hearse made its way to the Palace of Fine Arts, where the coffin was placed on a red carpet beneath a giant black-and-white picture of Jose Jose with the words “How sad it was to say goodbye”—the opening lyrics to his most famous song, “El Triste.” “He was one of a kind, unique in all the world. No one can ever, ever replace him,” said Leticia Hernandez, 58, carrying a poster with photographs of the singer, as the National Symphony Orchestra played his classic songs in the background.



The first wife of late Mexican singing legend Jose Jose, Anel Norena, left, and their children Jose Joel, second left, and Marysol, right, stand by the singer’s coffin during a tribute at the Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City.







Fans pay tribute to late Mexican singing legend Jose Jose as the hearse carrying his remains heads to the Fine Arts Palace in Mexico City for a memorial in his honor.



"He will live on in our hearts," another mourner, 52-year-old Araceli Segura, said through tears. The coffin was then brought for a mass at the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's patron saint.

#### Collective grief

Thousands of mourners also gathered at a statue of the singer in his home neighborhood, Claveria, for a collective outpouring of grief. The hearse made a stop there, then brought the half of Jose Jose's remains to the Panteon Frances cemetery, where they were laid to rest alongside those of his mother, a concert pianist. Jose Romulo Sosa Ortiz, as he was born, sold more than 100 million albums in a career spanning over five decades.

He adopted the stage name Jose Jose in tribute to his father, an opera singer who was also named Jose, after his death in 1968. Living under the constant gaze of the public, Jose Jose openly struggled with alcoholism. He quit drinking in 1993, but health issues led him to give up singing as his voice gave out in the early 2000s. He moved to Miami in 1995 with Salazar. —AFP





## Lifestyle | Feature



This handout photo courtesy of @koki\_mel\_au on Instagram shows tourists climbing Uluru in Australia's Northern Territory.—AFP photos



## Tourists surge at Uluru before Australia bans climb

Large numbers of tourists are rushing to scale Uluru—also known as Ayers Rock—ahead of a looming ban on climbing a site sacred to indigenous Australians. Photographs of hundreds of people clambering up the giant red monolith have provoked a social media backlash, with critics lashing as “ignorant” those going against the wishes of the traditional Aboriginal owners of the land, the Anangu.

“A mass of morally and ethically bankrupt people,” indigenous woman Laura McBride tweeted alongside an image showing a queue of people snaking up the side of Uluru. “One even hiking a toddler up, teaching the next generation how to be ignorant.” “Imagine rushing to climb Uluru before it closes just so you could brag about disrespecting the oldest living culture in the world,” tweeted National Indigenous Television journalist Madeline Hayman-Reber, who called the scenes “embarrassing”.

Officials say the ban, which comes into effect on October 26, is intended to show respect for cultural practices, protect the site from further

environmental damage and to ensure visitors’ safety. More than 395,000 people visited the Uluru-Kata National Park in the 12 months to June 2019, according to Parks Australia, about 20 percent more than the previous year. Around 13 percent of those who visited during that period made the climb, park authorities said.

More recent figures are not available but Tourism Central Australia CEO Stephen Schwer said there had been a “significant jump” in the number of people visiting in recent weeks, with the period leading up to the ban coinciding in part with school holidays. “It’s been very busy, particularly down in the national park precinct itself,” he told AFP. “We’ve had quite an issue with accommodation availability, because there’s a lot of people want to climb Uluru before it closes. It’s been a busier than normal holiday period.” Japanese visitors and Australians on driving holidays were most likely to want to scale Uluru, Schwer said, though he urged them not to do so. Australian tourist Belinda Moore, 33, drove to Uluru from her home in central Queens-



land state to ascend the rock, an experience she said she “absolutely loved”. “It’s always been something to tick off the bucket list and when we heard it was closing, we knew it was now or never,” she told AFP.

Moore said she did not think her climb was disrespectful to traditional owners as she was not Aboriginal. “It may be for their own people, because it’s their sacred site,” she said. “I’m pretty sad that they’re closing it, but it’s still amazing just to see it. I would still recommend it.” The climb will be permanently closed as of October 26, the anniversary of ownership being handed back to the Anangu people.

Uluru has great spiritual and cultural significance to indigenous Australians, with their connection to the site dating back tens of thousands of years. Though visitor numbers were expected to decline once the ban was in place, Schwer said local tourism operators were “not particularly concerned” as it would return the area to normality. “People need to remember that in central Australia we’re a very interconnected community,” he said. “The people who are requesting the climb closure are our friends and colleagues. “We’re just looking forward to being able to have the climb consigned to the annals of history.”—AFP

## Japan student uses invisible ink to ace ninja report

A Japanese student aced an assignment on ninja culture by making her own invisible ink from soybeans in a stealthy move that impressed her professor. Eimi Haga, a member of Mie University’s ninja club, turned in an essay on a visit to a museum about the nimble assassins with an attached message to heat it before reading. “I knew that I needed to take it home and put it above a stove,” said Yuji Yamada, who

teaches Japanese history, including ninja culture. “She replicated what is written in records of ninja art. She strived to prove what was written actually works and went through a trial-and-error process. I was impressed,” he said. When the characters of Haga’s essay revealed themselves in the heat, Yamada—who had promised his students extra marks for creativity—decided to award her an A. Haga, 19, made the ink by soaking

soybeans overnight and then squeezing them into a paste.

She told AFP she had tested three different kinds of paper for the optimum effect. “If the paper is too thin, it burns when heated. If it’s too thick, it doesn’t absorb the ink very well,” she said. “I usually use pens and PC to write things. It’s been a while since I took a brush to write with an invisible ink,” she said. Yamada said reports filed as scrolls or folded

into throwing stars were the most creative his students had been up until now. “We discussed the use of invisible ink, but I was amazed that someone actually used it,” he said, adding that he didn’t read the entire paper because he wanted to keep some of Haga’s work invisible. “By learning about ninja... we can apply their knowledge and ways to modern society.”—AFP



# Foreign hybrids stubbing out Morocco's renowned cannabis



Avillager stand in a fields of cannabis near the town of Ketama in Morocco's northern Rif region.—AFP photos

Morocco's rugged Rif Mountains have long been renowned for their cannabis but traditional varieties are being smoked out by foreign hybrids offering higher yields and greater potency. The local strain of marijuana, known as Beldiya, is coveted by aficionados but is gradually disappearing from the fields in the North African kingdom. Nowadays in Ketama, a region in the heart of the northern Rif, a strain called "Critical" is king.

Hicham, a 27-year-old cannabis farmer, says that he grows Critical because "the new imported seeds give a much higher yield." Major cannabis producers decide what to plant and "hybrid plants have become a market all on their own," said Moroccan anthropologist Khalid Mouna, who has written a thesis on the economics of Ketama's cannabis production. Critical, which Mouna said comes from the Netherlands, is the latest hybrid created in laboratories in Europe or North America to be introduced to Morocco. With names like "Pakistana", "Amnesia" and "Gorilla", hybrids are popular for their potency and affordability. Critical sells for 2,500 dirhams per kilo (\$252, 230 euros), while Beldiya goes for up to 10,000 dirhams per kilo, local sources told AFP.

## Buoying production

Morocco has long been a leading producer and exporter of hashish-refined cannabis resin—even though the production, sale and consumption of drugs is illegal in the country. A quarter of hashish seizures worldwide originated from Morocco between 2013 and 2017, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. While Morocco's cannabis cultivation is falling, the adoption of hybrids means hashish production has remained stable. In 2003, 134,000 hectares were under cannabis cultivation, falling to 47,500 hectares by 2011 under

a large official reconversion program, according to a 2015 study by the French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT). But modern hybrid strains produce five to 10 kilos of hashish per quintal, a traditional unit of weight equivalent to 100 kilos, compared to a single kilo for kif, as local cannabis is known. "The substitution of hybrids for kif might explain why the production of Moroccan hashish has barely decreased," the study said.

## Livelihood

In Ketama, kif is part of the culture. Producing it and smoking it are tolerated by the authorities and its cultivation provides a livelihood for 90,000 to 140,000 people in an otherwise deprived region known for its poor soil. People in the area told AFP that it was mostly traffickers or intermediaries who bought the cannabis harvest for smuggling to Europe or other Moroccan towns.

Hicham divides his time between his cannabis field and a cafe, where he and his friends smoke joints and watch satellite TV—a distraction from unemployment, he says. In this rural region, job prospects are rare, with one in four young people unemployed, according to official figures. Hicham and his friends all left school early to support their families, and many have left for Europe in search of work. Those who stay mostly work seasonally for large cannabis growers, earning about 100 dirhams per day for a month or two at a time. Most lack the money to get set up and work for themselves.

## Environmental cost

The high yields of imported hybrid cannabis plants come at a cost however. The strains require heavy fertilization, which can damage the soil. And their insatiable thirst threatens the

region's water supplies, according to the OFDT. Critical grows in the dry summer, requiring heavy irrigation, while Beldiya is planted in winter, depending only on rainfall. Some locals complain that major producers enforce the planting of hybrids even in arid areas. "The traffickers impose it and the people don't have any other choice," says Mohamed Benyahya, a local community figure. To water their plantations, major producers install solar pumps on the roofs of their mansions. Not far from Hicham's local cafe, a vast terraced cannabis plantation sprawls up a nearby mountain. Rows of carefully maintained plants are watered by drip irrigation via a network of pipes connected to a reservoir.

## To legalize, or not

Hybrids like Critical are notable also for high levels of THC, marijuana's main psychoactive chemical. The adoption of hybrids explains the "rapid and significant increase in the average THC content" of seized Moroccan hashish, according to the OFDT. For smokers, the effect compared to Beldiya is pronounced. "One makes you think, the other makes you paranoid," says Mohamed, a friend of Hicham.

"European consumers no longer want hybrid cannabis on account of its high THC levels," Mouna said. "Traditional Moroccan cannabis remains highly coveted, particularly by advocates of legalization." Cannabis decriminalization remains controversial in the conservative country. Proposals to legalize cannabis have so far met fierce political opposition. For Mouna, legalization could help regulate cannabis consumption while also preserving the more traditional and environmentally friendly Beldiya. And, while Hicham may have switched to growing Critical, he still only smokes Beldiya. "The modern varieties," he says, "are mediocre."—AFP







This file photo shows an interior view of the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris in the aftermath of a fire that devastated the cathedral. —AFP photos

# Six months on, Notre-Dame's rebirth still years away

One day after the blaze that scarred Notre-Dame, President Emmanuel Macron addressed a nation in shock at the damage to one of its great cultural landmarks, with a promise that rang as clearly as the peal of the cathedral's bells. "We will rebuild the cathedral even more beautifully and I want it to be finished within five years," Macron said on national television on the evening of April 16, 2019. "And we can do it," he added.

But six months after the April 15 fire that tore through the roof of the 13th-century Paris cathedral and toppled its spire, the reconstruction process is shaping up to be much more complex than many anticipated. Workers have had to clean up

significant quantities of lead that melted from the roof and contaminated areas around the cathedral, with critics saying the authorities were slow to warn the public of the risks.

There remains no consensus on how the cathedral should look after reconstruction, with many experts wanting the spire to be rebuilt exactly like the original, and Macron arguing for an innovative solution. Above all, the process of securing an edifice still at risk of collapse after the fire damage has taken precedence over any reconstruction. It is only at the end of 2020 that a complete check will allow architects to work out how to restore the cathedral. No reconstruction is expected to start before 2021.



In this file photo Patrick Palem, expert of the heritage restoration, holds the head of a statue showing the face of French architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc as Saint Thomas, stored in SOGRA workshop in Marsac-sur-Isle near Bordeaux, one of the statues which sat around the spire of the Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris and removed for restoration.





In this file photo the steeple and spire of the landmark Notre-Dame Cathedral collapses as the cathedral is engulfed in flames in central Paris.

### Not scaremongering

It is impossible at this stage to say “how much this is going to cost, how long this is going to last,” said Michel Aupetit, the archbishop of Paris. Macron’s five-year goal would see the cathedral’s reconstruction completed in the spring of 2024, before Paris hosts the Olympic Games that year. The top priority is to eliminate any risk to the vaulted ceiling, with the main danger coming from 500 tons of scaffolding that was erected around the fire for renovation work before the blaze.

The damage caused by just a single bar of scaffolding falling could prove irreparable, and the work to remove the structure will take several months. “This is not scare-mongering. It is a physical reality,” said Christophe-Charles Rousselot, director general of the Fondation Notre-Dame, the charity that is overseeing the gathering of donations to the cathedral. With regards to the spire, a late addition to the mediaeval cathedral designed by the 19th-century French architect Eugene Viollet-le-Duc, many see it as an integral part of the building.

“It needs to be rebuilt as it was before,” said Philippe Villeneuve, the architect in charge of restoring the cathedral, arguing that the sheer power of the spire integrated it with the mediaeval church. His is backed by Viollet-le-Duc’s descendants and, according to opinion polls, the French public. But the government has left open the possibility of an international competition for architects to design something new.

### ‘I feel orphaned’

Experts are also intensively researching the precise original architecture of the cathedral, so that when reconstruction begins it is as accurate as possible. “Before 2010, we only have old-style surveys, plans that have been redrawn on numerous occasions which are very partial and very imprecise,” said Remi Fromont, one of the architects responsible for the site who is working on drawing up accurate plans.

Andrew Tallon, a Belgium-born scholar who died aged 49 in November 2018, carried out hugely valuable laser scans of the interior in 2010 that have proved an even more valuable



In this file photo smoke and flames rise during a fire at the landmark Notre-Dame Cathedral in central Paris.



## Lifestyle | Feature

legacy than he could have imagined. "We know that we will have shortcomings. Not all the chapels were systematically scanned. There are still areas of doubt," Fromont said.

In the aftermath of the fire, private individuals and above all rich French cooperations rushed to pledge hundreds of millions for the rebuilding of the cathedral. There were concerns whether this funding would ever be realized. But France's richest man Bernard Arnault in September signed a formal accord over his pledge of 200 million euros (\$220 million), as did the Pinault family for their promised 100 million euros.

A signing on another 100 million promised by the oil giant Total is awaited in October. The consortium of fundraising groups behind the drive believes that 800 million euros (\$890,000) can be raised in total, with over 616 million euros now either transferred or pledged. But lovers of the historic masterpiece, be they tourists, architecture buffs or worshippers, may have to wait some time before Notre-Dame becomes theirs again.

"I have felt myself orphaned, it is like being in mourning," said Michele Chevalier, 70, a regular at Notre-Dame who was at the service when the first evacuation took place. "I still manage to pray, but it's not the same."—AFP



This file photo shows the altar surrounded by charred debris inside the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris in the aftermath of a fire that devastated the cathedral.



This file photo shows damage on the nave and rubble during preliminary work in the Notre-Dame de Paris Cathedral three months after a major fire.



This file photo shows parts of a destroyed ribbed vault and scaffolding.



In this file photo people kneel on the pavement as they pray outside watching flames engulf Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.



A picture shows the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris.



## Comic

### Word Search

#### Happy New Year

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a popular location for celebrating New Years Eve.

SEIBABNEWYEARSEVEY  
 GCHAMPAGNETYIMNSTT  
 ENSSUETHCDANCEDRHR  
 SQINFETOODMUAYOEIA  
 EFCGFINASLSUERFKRP  
 DHEFNFRRRRIASEDATS  
 AIUSEIASEBRONIEMYK  
 RBBTTESMTIESAFCEFR  
 AMTAYIANNORLAYESIO  
 PISWLEVROEFTTEEMIRW  
 NDEARLEINIHIJVCBOSE  
 DNETRVONTETEASENTR  
 AISWIAAORINASHROHI  
 YGYEOBITNTEIRRUKCF  
 OHWINEITSSKSIOHATS  
 NTYLIMAFNOISACCORT  
 ETSAEFSNOITULOSERY  
 SREZITEPPAYFRIENDS

- |            |                  |               |                |
|------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| APPETIZERS | DECORATIONS      | HATS          | PARADES        |
| BABIES     | END OF DECEMBER  | HOLIDAY       | PARTY          |
| BALLOONS   | EVENTS           | HORNS         | PUNCH          |
| BANNERS    | FAMILY           | KISS          | RESOLUTIONS    |
| BUFFET     | FATHER TIME      | MIDNIGHT      | SINGING        |
| CELEBRATE  | FEAST            | MUSIC         | STREAMERS      |
| CHAMPAGNE  | FESTIVITIES      | NEW YEARS DAY | THIRTY FIRST   |
| CONFETTI   | FIREWORKS        | NEW YEARS EVE | TIARAS         |
| DANCE      | FIRST OF JANUARY | NOISEMAKERS   | WINE           |
| DAY ONE    | FRIENDS          | OCCASION      | YEAR IN REVIEW |

### Yesterday's Solution

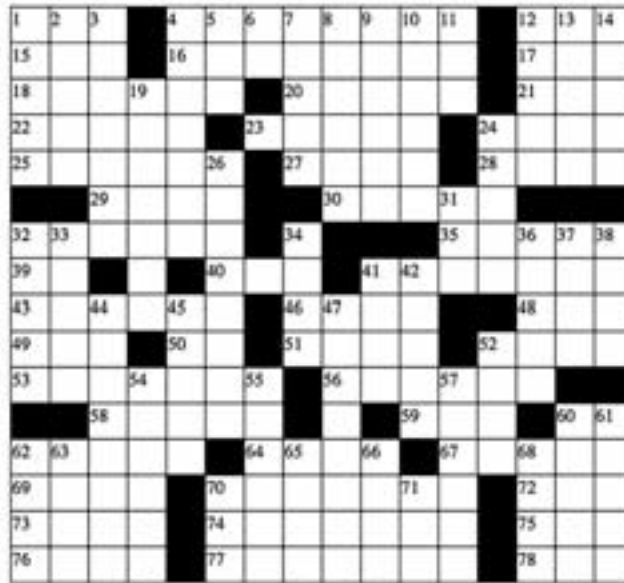
#### Hanukkah

YADILUHPONISHRES  
 AMVELSTKOLIVEUTL  
 IALMUUNCHARITTEAE  
 UCKIUYINAGFUSGALLI  
 MZYGAMESKJDAHESHCPV  
 AIESUMAEIERTETEJAME  
 CIREALORWUOBBISREES  
 CUSAPARUASTRATHITG  
 ARNDUSLHUBDUEGOLLI  
 BEELYIARTLPOINLEAOS  
 EIEIEMERTEINLPHSES  
 SHGCLYALMELMMLHRLIL  
 HFDGDSIESIAEIOYTAB  
 GHISSUATGBLSAINTSTAS  
 IETCIGHHARUNEMAKTDU  
 LA YHRAIKUNARHLSLELLAH

- |             |                |            |           |
|-------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| BIMUELOS    | FESTIVAL       | LATKE      | PSALMS    |
| BLESSINGS   | GAMES          | LEVIVOT    | SEVIVON   |
| CANDLES     | GELT           | LIGHTS     | SHAMASH   |
| CHANUKAH    | GFPTS          | MAYDZ TZUR | SONGS     |
| CHARITY     | HALLEL         | MACCABEES  | SUFGANYOT |
| CUSTOMS     | HANEROT HALALU | MATZSHAH   | TALMUD    |
| DAIRY FOODS | HEBREW         | MENORAH    | TORAH     |
| DREIDEL     | HOLIDAY        | MIRACLE    | TRADITION |
| EIGHT DAYS  | HOLY TEMPLE    | OLIVE OIL  | YEARLY    |
| FAMILY      | JERUSALEM      | PONTSHKES  | YEHUDIT   |
| FEAST       | KISLEV         | PRAYERS    |           |

The hidden message is: HANUKKAH IS A JEWISH HOLIDAY THAT LASTS EIGHT DAYS

### Crossword 2330



#### ACROSS

1. A unit of heat equal to the amount of heat required to raise one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit at one atmosphere pressure.
4. Family of erect mosses with club-shaped paraphyses and the hexagonal cells of the upper leaf surface.
12. An enclosed space.
15. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
16. Deeply eroded barren land.
17. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
18. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
20. Malicious satisfaction.
21. A sign of assent or salutation or command.
22. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
23. Fig tree of India noted for great size and longevity.
25. Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.
27. Medium-sized tree having glossy lanceolate leaves.
28. A polite name for any woman.
29. Lacking companions or companionship.
30. Soreness and warmth caused by friction.
32. The basic unit of money in Israel.
35. Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).

39. A state in midwestern United States.
40. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
43. A member of the people inhabiting an area of northern Mongolia and eastern Siberia.
46. Herb of the Pacific islands grown throughout the tropics for its edible root and in temperate areas as an ornamental for its large glossy leaves.
48. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
49. A crystalline rock that can be cut and polished for jewelry.
50. A doctor's degree in optometry.
51. (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
53. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
56. A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
58. A rotary duplicator that uses a stencil through which ink is pressed (trade mark Roneo).
59. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
62. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
64. Young of domestic cattle.
67. Genus of East Indian trees or shrubs.
69. Anything that serves as an enticement.
72. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).

### Daily SuDoku

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

### Yesterday's Solution

YAM PASADENA FAN  
 EPA ANURESIS OLA  
 AIL TOMBAC SCALD  
 HALDOL DADA MOA  
 ENETS LAMA  
 CITE SABAH GABA  
 ASARH SCADARRAS  
 ROUE FBERGAMOT  
 APT DATA NABA  
 FOOTPAD RAMADAN  
 EDGAR VALE DABA  
 KEBAB CANE  
 SABAHAN OPINION  
 IRA ENCOLURE OKA  
 LEA ACETONIC WEB  
 DAL THROTTLE ANU

### Yesterday's Solution

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

73. European twining plant whose flowers are used chiefly to flavor malt liquors.
74. Pertaining to or involving or having the nature of space.
75. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
76. At or constituting a border or edge.
77. Loggerhead turtles.
78. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

#### DOWN

1. An imaginary elephant that appears in a series of French books for children.
2. A crown-like jewelled headdress worn by women on formal occasions.
3. Amphibians that resemble lizards.
4. Capital of Swaziland.
5. Tag the base runner to get him out.
6. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
7. A gum used especially as a thickener or emulsifier.
8. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
9. Enough to meet a purpose.
10. A port city in southwestern Turkey on the Gulf of Antalya.
11. Standard time in the 5th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 75th meridian.
12. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
13. Using the voice.
14. A can for storing tea.
19. Be a signal for or a symptom of.
24. Tired to the point of exhaustion.
26. Blister beetles.
31. The federal agency that insures residential mortgages.
33. Czech dramatist and statesman whose plays opposed totalitarianism and who served as president of Czechoslovakia from 1989 to 1992 and president of the Czech Republic since 1993 (born in 1936).
34. An informal term for a father.
36. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
37. Type genus of the Anatidae.
38. Remove with or as if with a ladle.
41. A city in northwestern Syria.
42. Ratio of the hypotenuse to the opposite side.
44. Coming into view.
45. A Greek dialect that flourished under the Roman Empire.
47. (botany) Of some seeds.
52. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
54. A small chin beard trimmed into a point.
55. A member of a North American Indian people living around the mouth of the Colorado river.
57. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
60. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
61. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
63. Set down according to a plan.
65. South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
66. A sudden quick movement.
68. The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
70. A committee in the executive branch of government that advises the president on foreign and military and national security.
71. Take in solid food.



## TV Listings



00:30 Saw III  
02:25 Female Fight Squad  
04:00 The Chronicles Of Riddick  
06:00 A Deadly View  
07:40 The Wrath Of Vajra  
09:40 The Chronicles Of Riddick  
11:40 Security  
13:25 A Knight's Tale  
15:50 Power Rangers  
18:05 211  
19:45 Captain America: The First Avenger  
22:00 Romeo Is Bleeding  
23:55 Saw IV



00:45 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet  
01:40 Catching Monsters  
02:35 Bad Dog  
03:25 Lone Star Law  
04:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet  
05:02 Wildest Europe  
05:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
06:36 Dark Days In Monkey City  
07:00 Dark Days In Monkey City  
07:25 Wildest Islands  
12:50 Bad Dog  
13:45 The Vet Life  
14:40 Animal Cribs  
15:35 Catching Monsters  
16:30 Flying Wild Alaska  
17:25 Animal Cops Houston  
18:20 Bad Dog  
19:15 The Vet Life  
20:10 Vet Gone Wild  
21:05 Wildest Europe  
22:00 Catching Monsters  
22:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees  
23:50 The Vet Life



00:15 EastEnders  
00:45 The Woman In White  
01:40 Holby City  
02:35 Hold The Sunset  
03:00 Bad Move  
03:25 Agatha Raisin  
04:10 Father Brown  
05:00 Doctors  
05:30 Doctors  
06:00 Doctors  
06:30 EastEnders  
07:00 Holby City  
07:55 Father Brown  
08:40 Death In Paradise  
09:35 Casualty  
10:25 Hold The Sunset  
10:50 Bad Move  
11:15 Holby City  
12:10 Father Brown  
12:55 Death In Paradise  
13:50 Hold The Sunset  
14:15 Bad Move  
14:40 Casualty  
15:30 Doctors  
18:30 The Coroner  
19:20 The Coroner  
20:10 The Woman In White  
21:05 Line Of Duty  
22:00 The Good Karma Hospital  
22:45 The Good Karma Hospital  
23:35 Doctors



00:00 Homicide Hunter  
01:00 Secrets Of The Morgue  
01:55 I Married My Killer  
02:50 It Takes A Killer  
03:20 It Takes A Killer  
03:45 Live PD: Police Patrol  
04:10 Live PD: Police Patrol  
04:30 The First 48  
05:15 Homicide Hunter  
06:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
07:00 Live PD: Police Patrol  
07:20 The First 48  
08:05 The First 48  
08:50 Homicide Hunter  
09:35 Homicide Hunter  
10:30 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
11:25 What The Killer Did Next  
12:20 Crimes That Shook Britain  
13:15 Live PD: Police Patrol

13:45 Live PD: Police Patrol  
14:10 It Takes A Killer  
14:40 It Takes A Killer  
15:05 Homicide Hunter  
16:00 The First 48  
17:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill  
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain  
19:00 The First 48  
20:00 Homicide Hunter  
21:00 It Takes A Killer  
21:30 It Takes A Killer  
22:00 60 Days In: Narcoland  
23:00 Hero Ink  
23:30 Hero Ink



00:25 Real Husbands Of Hollywood  
00:50 Impractical Jokers  
01:15 Broad City  
01:40 Friends  
02:03 Friends  
02:25 South Park  
02:50 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
03:15 Broad City  
03:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
04:10 South Park  
04:35 Impractical Jokers  
05:00 Friends  
07:10 Impractical Jokers VII Special - Practically Live!  
08:00 Takeshis Castle Thailand  
10:15 Friends  
12:20 Ridiculousness  
14:30 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making The Team  
15:25 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making The Team  
16:15 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making The Team  
17:10 Friends  
19:30 Ridiculousness  
21:30 Comedy Central Presents: Menna W FINA  
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah  
22:30 Trevor Moore: The Story Of Our Times  
23:30 Most Ridiculous



00:30 Bizarre Foods With Andrew Zimmern  
01:20 America's Cutest Pets  
02:10 My Cat From Hell  
03:00 Dirty Jobs  
03:50 Cliptastic  
04:15 Cliptastic  
04:40 Tanked  
05:30 America's Cutest Pets  
06:15 My Cat From Hell  
07:00 Dirty Jobs  
07:50 Cliptastic  
08:15 Cliptastic  
08:40 Weather Gone Viral  
09:30 Secret Space Escapes  
10:20 Mighty Cruise Ships  
11:10 Tanked  
12:00 Salvage Hunters  
12:50 Unchained Reaction  
13:40 Powering The Future  
14:30 UFOs: The Lost Evidence  
15:20 Dirty Jobs  
16:10 Tanked  
17:00 America's Cutest Pets  
17:50 My Cat From Hell  
18:40 Dirty Jobs  
19:30 Chopped Junior  
20:20 Dirty Tricks  
21:10 Breaking Magic  
21:35 Breaking Magic  
22:00 Sci-Jinks  
22:25 Sci-Jinks  
22:50 Keeping Up With The Kruger  
23:40 Tanked



00:00 True Nightmares  
01:00 The Real Story With Maria Elena Salinas  
02:00 Ted Bundy: Mind Of A Monster  
03:45 True Nightmares  
04:30 Murder Chose Me  
05:20 Murder Comes To Town  
06:10 Deadline: Crime With Tam-

ron Hall  
07:00 Evil Online  
07:55 Evil Online  
08:50 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
09:45 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones  
10:40 Murder Comes To Town  
11:35 Murder Chose Me  
12:30 Murder Chose Me  
13:25 Deadline: Crime With Tam-ron Hall  
14:20 Nightmare Next Door  
15:15 Nightmare Next Door  
16:10 Southern Fried Homicide  
17:05 The Perfect Murder  
18:00 The Perfect Murder  
19:00 Disappeared  
20:00 Disappeared  
21:00 Love Kills  
22:00 Forbidden: Dying For Love  
23:00 The Shadows Of Death



00:00 Alex & Co.  
00:50 Evermoor Chronicles  
01:40 Alex & Co.  
02:05 Binny And The Ghost  
02:55 Evermoor Chronicles  
03:45 Alex & Co.  
04:35 Violetta  
05:25 Binny And The Ghost  
05:45 Rolling With The Ronks  
06:00 Shake It Up  
06:25 Raven's Home S3  
06:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
06:55 Sydney To The Max  
07:20 Penny On M.A.R.S  
07:45 K.C. Undercover  
08:10 Bizaardvark  
08:35 Jessie  
09:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
10:15 Bizaardvark  
11:05 Liv And Maddie  
11:55 K.C. Undercover  
12:45 Bunk'd  
13:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
14:00 Disney Cookabout  
14:25 Shake It Up  
14:50 A.N.T. Farm  
15:15 A.N.T. Farm  
15:40 Penny On M.A.R.S  
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse  
16:10 Bizaardvark  
16:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
17:00 Raven's Home S3  
17:25 Descendants 3  
18:55 Descendants Wicked World  
19:30 Shake It Up  
20:20 Liv And Maddie  
21:10 Jessie  
22:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir  
22:50 Lolirock  
23:10 Evermoor Chronicles  
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:00 Sofia The First  
00:25 Disney Junior Music Nursery Rhymes  
00:30 Gigantosaurus  
01:00 PJ Masks  
01:25 PJ Masks  
01:50 Paprika  
02:00 Zou  
02:15 Zou  
02:30 Henry Hugglemonster  
02:55 Henry Hugglemonster  
03:20 Paprika  
03:30 Paprika  
03:40 Zou  
04:25 Paprika  
04:35 Paprika  
04:45 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:10 Henry Hugglemonster  
05:35 Paprika  
05:45 PJ Masks  
06:30 Gigantosaurus  
06:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons  
07:00 The Lion Guard  
07:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
08:00 PJ Masks  
08:30 Vampirina  
09:00 Sofia The First

09:30 Elena Of Avalor  
10:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy  
10:30 PJ Masks  
11:00 Vampirina  
11:30 Vampirina  
12:00 Doc McStuffins  
12:30 Gigantosaurus  
13:00 Puppy Dog Pals  
13:30 Puppy Dog Pals  
14:00 PJ Masks  
14:30 T.O.T.S.  
15:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers  
15:30 Vampirina  
16:00 Elena Of Avalor  
16:30 Sofia The First  
16:55 PJ Masks  
17:00 PJ Masks  
17:30 T.O.T.S.  
17:45 T.O.T.S.  
18:00 Puppy Dog Pals  
18:15 Puppy Dog Pals  
18:30 Vampirina  
19:00 PJ Masks  
19:30 The Lion Guard  
20:00 Sofia The First  
20:25 PJ Masks  
20:30 Elena Of Avalor  
21:00 Fancy Nancy Clancy  
21:30 T.O.T.S.  
21:45 T.O.T.S.  
22:00 Puppy Dog Pals  
22:15 Puppy Dog Pals  
22:30 Vampirina  
23:00 PJ Masks  
23:30 The Lion Guard



00:15 Dual Survival  
01:05 Masters Of Disaster  
01:50 Mythbusters  
02:35 Salvage Hunters: The Restorers  
03:20 American Chopper  
04:05 American Chopper  
04:50 How Do They Do It?  
05:15 How Do They Do It?  
05:35 Property Wars  
06:00 Storage Hunters UK  
06:20 Property Wars  
06:45 Dual Survival  
07:35 Deadliest Catch  
08:20 Gold Rush  
09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
09:55 Salvage Hunters  
10:45 How Do They Do It?  
11:10 How Do They Do It?  
11:30 American Chopper  
12:20 American Chopper  
13:05 Storage Hunters UK  
13:30 Property Wars  
13:55 Salvage Hunters  
14:40 Ed Stafford: Man Woman Child Wild  
15:30 The Great Build  
16:15 Aaron Needs A Job  
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier  
17:50 Gold Rush  
18:40 How Do They Do It?  
19:05 How Do They Do It?  
19:25 American Chopper  
20:15 American Chopper  
21:00 Speed Is The New Black  
21:50 Aaron Needs A Job  
22:40 Twin Turbos  
23:30 Deadliest Catch



00:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
00:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
01:00 Boyster  
01:20 Boyster  
01:45 Counterfeit Cat  
02:10 Counterfeit Cat  
02:30 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
02:55 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
03:20 Boyster  
03:40 Boyster  
04:05 Counterfeit Cat  
04:30 Counterfeit Cat  
04:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja  
05:15 Supa Strikas  
05:35 Supa Strikas  
06:00 Lab Rats

06:25 Lab Rats  
06:50 Phineas And Ferb  
07:15 Phineas And Ferb  
07:40 Gravity Falls  
08:05 Gravity Falls  
08:30 Phineas And Ferb  
08:55 Phineas And Ferb  
09:20 Big City Greens  
09:40 Big City Greens  
10:05 Phineas And Ferb  
10:25 Phineas And Ferb  
10:50 Lab Rats  
11:10 Lab Rats  
11:35 Phineas And Ferb  
11:55 Phineas And Ferb  
12:20 Gravity Falls  
12:45 Gravity Falls  
13:10 Big Chibi 6: The Series  
13:15 Phineas And Ferb  
13:40 Phineas And Ferb  
14:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
14:30 Phineas And Ferb  
14:55 Phineas And Ferb  
15:20 Big City Greens  
15:45 Big City Greens  
16:10 Supa Strikas  
16:35 Supa Strikas  
17:00 Phineas & Ferb: Across The Second Dimension  
18:15 Phineas And Ferb  
18:40 Supa Strikas  
19:05 Lab Rats Elite Force  
19:30 Lab Rats Elite Force  
19:55 Big Chibi 6: The Series  
20:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
20:25 Big Hero 6 The Series  
20:50 Phineas And Ferb  
21:15 Phineas And Ferb  
21:40 DuckTales  
22:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
22:30 Star vs The Forces Of Evil  
22:55 Big Chibi 6: The Series  
23:00 Furiki Wheels  
23:25 Dude That's My Ghost  
23:50 Dude That's My Ghost



00:00 Very Cavallari  
01:00 Very Cavallari  
02:00 E! News  
03:00 WAGs Miami  
04:00 WAGs LA  
05:00 WAGs LA  
06:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
07:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian  
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop  
08:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
09:50 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
10:45 Keeping Up With The Kardashians  
11:40 E! News  
12:35 Very Cavallari  
13:30 Very Cavallari  
14:25 Very Cavallari  
15:20 E! News: Daily Pop  
16:15 Botched  
17:10 Botched  
18:05 Botched  
19:00 E! News  
20:00 Very Cavallari  
21:00 Very Cavallari  
22:00 Very Cavallari  
23:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



00:15 Clash Of Warriors  
01:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...  
01:45 Cities Of The Underworld  
02:30 Evolve  
03:15 The Universe  
04:00 Ancient Aliens  
04:45 Deep Sea Salvage  
05:30 UFO Hunters  
06:15 Ancient Impossible  
07:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...  
07:45 Cities Of The Underworld  
08:30 Evolve  
09:15 The Universe  
10:00 Ancient Aliens  
10:45 Deep Sea Salvage  
11:30 UFO Hunters  
12:15 Ancient Impossible  
13:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
13:45 Evolve

14:30 The Universe  
15:15 Schindler  
16:00 Deep Sea Salvage  
16:45 UFO Hunters  
17:30 Ancient Impossible  
18:15 10 Things You Don't Know About...  
19:00 Cities Of The Underworld  
19:45 Evolve  
20:30 The Universe  
21:15 Ancient Aliens  
22:00 MysteryQuest  
22:45 UFO Hunters  
23:30 Ancient Impossible



00:20 Lost Gold Of World War II  
01:05 Storage Wars  
01:25 Storage Wars  
01:50 American Pickers  
02:35 Pawn Stars  
03:00 Pawn Stars  
03:25 The Lost Evidence  
04:15 The Zodiac Killer: Case Closed?  
05:05 Forged In Fire  
06:00 Truck Night In America  
06:45 Lost Gold Of World War II  
07:30 Storage Wars  
07:50 Storage Wars  
08:15 American Pickers  
09:00 Pawn Stars  
09:20 Pawn Stars  
09:45 The Lost Evidence  
10:30 Forged In Fire  
11:15 WW2 Treasure Hunters  
12:00 American Pickers  
15:00 Big Easy Motors  
17:15 Fifth Gear  
18:00 Fifth Gear  
18:45 Mountain Men  
21:00 The Curse Of Civil War Gold  
21:50 The Curse Of Civil War Gold  
22:40 American Pickers  
23:30 American Pickers



00:00 Fish Tank Kings  
01:00 48 Hrs Destination  
01:30 48 Hrs Destination  
02:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea  
02:55 Log Cabin Fever  
03:50 Andy And Ben Eat Australia  
04:15 Andy And Ben Eat Australia  
04:45 Confucius Was A Foodie  
05:40 Access 360 World Heritage  
06:35 Places We Go  
07:00 United Plates Of America  
07:30 Confucius Was A Foodie  
08:25 Cruise Ship Diaries  
09:20 Fish Of The Day  
09:45 Fish Of The Day  
10:15 Fearless Chef  
11:10 Access 360 World Heritage  
12:05 Places We Go  
12:30 United Plates Of America  
13:00 Confucius Was A Foodie  
13:55 Cruise Ship Diaries  
14:50 Fish Of The Day  
15:15 Fish Of The Day  
15:45 Fearless Chef  
16:40 Access 360 World Heritage  
17:35 Chef On The Road  
18:30 Confucius Was A Foodie  
19:25 Sara's Australia Unveiled  
19:50 Sara's Australia Unveiled  
20:20 Fish Of The Day  
20:45 Fish Of The Day  
21:15 Fearless Chef  
22:10 David Rocco's Dolce Vita  
22:35 David Rocco's Dolce Vita  
23:05 Access 360 World Heritage



00:00 Buried Secrets Of WWII  
00:50 Primal Survivor  
01:40 Border Wars  
02:30 The Big Picture With Kal Penn  
02:55 The Big Picture With Kal Penn  
03:20 Route Awakening  
03:45 Route Awakening  
04:10 Buried Secrets Of WWII  
05:00 Primal Survivor  
06:00 Border Wars  
07:00 The Big Picture With Kal



## Stars



### Aries (March 21-April 19)

You might like to ignore responsibilities and do some socializing, but realities demand that you tend to business for the moment. Your superiors value your ability to make practical decisions. Others may seek you out for advice concerning business matters. You could be put in charge to make decisions that affect conditions in the workplace. You are most persuasive and you will find others most cooperative. You possess a powerful, persistent drive and are a hard, steady worker. You have a sense of mission and mystery. You are willing to do the work that others would not go near. A young person is monitoring your activities today. Whether you realize it or not, you are being an important mentor. Enjoy dinner out-of-doors this evening.



### Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Intense focus on your career can find you mercilessly cutting back and getting down to the essentials regarding your professional direction. You will have a sense of being almost driven to pursue your course and succeed. Perhaps you will want to take a class or have someone guide you with a new skill or technique. This could be a time when what you think you need for inner growth and change may not agree with your progress in the business world. You may not appreciate all of the intensely personal stuff that is boiling up now. It is best to get your lessons learned now—it will help to decrease frustrations later. Deal with situations as they appear and ask questions if someone is not easily understood. Relax with your loved one this evening.



### Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Philosophizing, or expressing your theories, is an inborn talent and you are in love with grand gestures and long thoughts. Someone may bring up a subject of interest today and you may want to explore. You enjoy fair, just, frank and broadminded persons as well as long conversations with your friends touching on a variety of subjects this afternoon. You dare to dream big. You are very tolerant and accepting of differences and may find yourself promoting your own ideas much of this day. Your sense of inner direction is good and should lead to some ideas for future monetary opportunities. Later today you will be able to make a great deal of headway on your personal projects. You will find a way around almost any obstacle.



### Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Obtaining and exchanging information takes on an emotional significance for you. Learning the experience of others will help you in your own decision making. The power of organization on a social scale regarding business, politics, etc., seems to take on an important aspect. This may mean that you are a concert pianist and have social obligations to play before a charity or perhaps some performance before an educational group. Professionally speaking, it is very important to exhibit superior social skills, particularly if you travel and perform out of the country. Most certainly, this is a wonderful time to discipline your mind through study, education or writing. You will have many experiences to write about and the outcome will be intriguing and positive.



### Leo (July 23-August 22)

Respect, status and achievement are central goals you have been wanting and today may prove to gain you insights along that line. You are good when you work with teammates but to lead a team calls for a whole different bag of tricks. Your mental energies, ideas and thoughts, may undergo some transformation. There is a natural sense of growth and development present. You are a productive thinker and you like to respond in positive ways to the needs of your friends and family. You are a good example for others to follow. A family discussion this evening may call for your administrative abilities. You will help to make the right decision, particularly when you remove emotions from the process. Others are inspired by your positive attitude.



### Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Communications could be strained this morning. There could be a misunderstanding that needs clearing up—ask questions and remain respectful. By the afternoon all will be at ease. Everything will transform and begin to work together. You may discover communication is more expressive. Something lost is found by another person. A difficult project can be finished by you. A lost customer will find the right aisle or item, thanks to you. All is working together to make things work out right, particular when the participating parties are patient and have taken care of any physical problems. Your occupation will eventually bring about some incredible results. This evening is a good time to work in the garage or in a garden.



### Libra (September 23-October 22)

You can put your ideas into words and describe or analyze situations for yourself and others quite well. This could involve teaching and lecturing, etc. Chances are you work in one of the many service occupations, taking care of and looking after people. A bout of philosophy or even a little religion could have an enormous effect on your career during this time. Lasting values—whatever you find to be true and lasting—can guide you now as you open up avenues that have remained blocked. Outer circumstances are favorable and it should be easy for you to push forward in projects and in all aspects of your life. Things may seem almost magical in the way they work out at this time. You will successfully organize and accomplish your projects this evening.



### Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Obtaining and exchanging information is an important aspect today. You may be very forceful in what you say and think just now. With all of this emotional energy, you could speak or communicate very well—you have a great mental drive. Your positivism lets you get right to the point and you have little patience with those who do not tend to business. You have plenty of enthusiasm and warm up to things and people quickly. You have an inner self-confidence that burns with its own light. Figuring things out and looking for the best solution to problems are just where you love to spend your energies. You have a heightened interest in health and diet, as well as an urge to get your personal things organized into a rational system.



### Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A supervisor or some senior worker steps in to create some sort of change in direction today. This is a go-with-the-flow sort of day and gives you plenty of opportunities for success in problem solving. Later today, you may consider restructuring your finances. You want a better sense of personal security for the future. Just as important is the way you are using all your resources. Your financial obligations may or may not increase just now, but your way of handling these obligations will change—for the better. However, because of some inside information, it looks as though your finances will show significant improvements—soon. Take time to review your goals and perhaps some of the methods by which you reach those goals.



### Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your willingness to give credit to others that deserve recognition is commendable and higher-ups have noticed. You may also go beyond the assigned and expected tasks asked of you. Help may be needed and you just jump in and lend a hand. Your eagerness to take the risk and make a decision—above and beyond your job identity—will bring you recognition. Today is a self-expression day. You will find others listening to your particular ideas. A good conversation with those you love is possible this evening. Teach others to share their experiences by listening—you enjoy your family. Seek advice and support from your family and encourage your family to seek your advice and support as well. Family members enjoy a strong bond.



### Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Taking care of the necessary parts of life—health, work and such—is the greater preoccupation just now. Sorting things out and getting them organized to utmost efficiency keeps you busy. When there is an opportunity to move forward in your business or in your work, do not hesitate to take on the new. These additional activities will not distract you from keeping a good balance in your life. You have all the drive and energy you could want—it should be easy to focus this energy. The path is open and clear. Marriage and other close relationships give rise to great expectations particularly now, as a new cycle gets underway in your life. Enjoy and appreciate your ties to others; seek and promote harmony in the interaction between people. Be good to you.



### Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a period of great mental activity and heightened communication with others. Your own growth and success may be linked to questions of security—home and family, in particular. Faith, family, friends, mental and physical fitness, volunteer services and finances are the subjects you will want to keep your mind keyed into while you are learning to balance your energies. These are the things that are needed for good balance. This may be a time during which you can get ahead by finding your limits and establishing a home base from which to move forward. Don't be afraid to project your image. Group cooperation, perhaps teaching or lecturing, could further your career now. Prepare yourself for a good tomorrow by doing the best you can today.

## Country Codes

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



# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

Friday, October 11, 2019

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

- Diagnosis/Treatment of General Ear, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatric
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- Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- Diagnosis & treatment of voice and swallowing disorders
- Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

Salmiya, Belajaf Street, Tel: 1881122

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

ACADEMIC CERTIFICATES:

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

SPECIALIZED IN:

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

SHARL Ahmad Alshar of., Building 16, Floor 11.  
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 @DrFahadS, @DrFahadS, @DrFahadS  
 Email: dr.fahad@beautybeyond.com.kw  
 www.beautybeyond.com.kw

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

Specialized in:

- 1- Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty), Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4- Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24-hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

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 Otorhinolaryngology (E.N.T)  
**Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj**  
 ENT Specialist

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

Specialized in:

- Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- Vocal cord augmentation.
- Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- Thyroid surgery.
- Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- Treatment of snoring.
- Treatment of vertigo.

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

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- Single Port Surgery
- Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, including Colorectal Cancer
- Surgical treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Disease
- Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (cryptoglandular)
- SWAT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Robot-assisted)
- Treatment of Intractable Bowel Symptoms
- Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- Gallstones & Mechanical Intestinal Surgery
- Colonoscopy Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- Laparoscopic mini hepatectomy
- Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

**Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine**  
 Head of Cardiology departmenta  
 at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

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- Breast surgeries
- Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
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**Dr. Rany Essam Mitwally**  
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**Dr. Ahmed Hosni Abd Elhamid**  
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**DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED**  
Consultant of General Surgery Laproscopic and Bariatric Surgery

**Academic Certificates – Training**

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

**Scope of clinical Practice.**

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

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



# Classifieds

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, **SHAIK YUSUF SHAIKH KARIM QURESHI**, holder of Indian Passport No. L6661740 presently residing in Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **SHAIKH YUSUF SHAIKH KARIM** and Surname: **QURESHI**. (C 5599)

I, **KUTTIKATTIL RAMDAS** holder of Indian Passport No. L3857702 having permanent address Kerala, India 679105 residing in Kuwait at present, hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **RAMDAS** and Surname: **KUTTIKATTIL**. (C 5455) 11-10-2019

I **Rosamma Mathew Kallukuzhy**, Kallukuzhy House, Umbidi P.O, Thottackad, Kottayam (holder of Indian Passport No. K5294494) presently residing in Kuwait do hereby declare that henceforth my name will be read as given name: **Rosamma Mathew**, Surname: **Kallukuzhy**. (C 5453) 10-10-2019

The embassy of India, Kuwait has

no objection to **KAMAL SHERWANI MALIK**, of Indian Passport No. S9731277 issued on 04/09/2018 at Kuwait to change the name of his son from old **SHAHEEM KAMAL SHERWANI** to new **ABDULLAH KAMAL SHERWANI** in his Kuwait birth card. (C 5451)

**Old name:** D COSTA FILIPE ROCHA FULIPINA, new name: FELIPE DA COSTA FILIPA ROCHA, Passport No: K7034936, ID 271121603451. (C 5452) 8-10-2019

## MATRIMONIAL

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## Hospitals

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

## Clinics

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

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



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## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind to variable wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h .

**BY NIGHT:** Fair and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 24 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 10/10/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	42 °C	31 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	41 °C	26 °C		
ABDALY	42 °C	27 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	42 °C	29 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	40 °C	32 °C		
AHMADI	36 °C	29 °C		
NUWAISIB	40 °C	27 °C		
WAFRA	41 °C	26 °C		
SALMY	41 °C	26 °C		

## 4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	10/11	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	40 °C	24 °C	NW-SE	8 - 28 km/h
Saturday	10/12	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for mist forming at night	40 °C	23 °C	SE-W	06 - 28 km/h
Sunday	10/13	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for fog forming at night	40 °C	22 °C	SE-SW	06 - 32 km/h
Monday	10/14	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with a chance for mist forming at night	39 °C	21 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 28 km/h

## PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	04:28
Sunrise	05:47
Zuhr	11:35
Ast	14:54
Sunset	17:23
Isha	18:39

## RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	41 °C
MIN. Temp.	25 °C
MAX. RH	92 %
MIN. RH	17 %
MAX. Wind	N 39 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm



# Business

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2019

## NBK reports 10.9% increase in 9M 2019 net profit

**KUWAIT:** The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced its financial results for the 9-month period that ended on September 30, 2019. NBK reported a net profit of KD 302.2 million (USD 993.8 million), increasing by 10.9 percent compared to September 30, 2018 with total assets increasing by 6.6 percent to reach KD 28.9 billion (USD 95.1 billion).

**Performance highlights: 9M 2019**

- Operating income reached KD 672.8 million (USD 2,212.6 million), growing by 1.7 percent

- Customer loans and advances reached KD 16.4 billion (USD 53.8 billion), increasing by 6.2 percent year-on-year

- Customer deposits increased by 12.2 percent to reach KD 15.8 billion (USD 51.9 billion)

- Capital Adequacy Ratio of 15.8 percent, in excess of regulatory requirements



Isam Al-Sager



Nasser Musaed Al-Sayer

- NPL to gross loans ratio at 1.37 percent and an NPL coverage ratio of 227 percent demonstrate maintenance of strong asset quality indicators

Consistently positive long-term credit ratings reflect conservative approach to risk

Commenting on the interim results, NBK Group Chairman, Nasser Al-Sayer, said: "The bank continues to operate in a challenging macroeconomic environment,

but we are pleased that despite headwinds we are growing our business - and its profitability - across the region. Although there has been slower demand for credit in Kuwait, we have seen growth in our loan book, and we expect this trend to continue until the end of the year. By continuing to focus on our strategy to diversify and digitalize our operations we have seen incremental and continuous top- and bottom-line growth across business units and

- Net profit for the 9-month period ended 30 September 2019 was KD 302.2 million (USD 993.8 million)
- Total assets reached KD 28.9 billion (USD 95.1 billion), increasing by 6.6% year-on-year
- International operations contributed 26% to Group profits
- NBK has been recognized for excellence in digital services and its sustainability initiatives
- Al-Sayer: NBK is on track to record another year of strong earnings
- Al-Sayer: We achieved solid results across business units demonstrating the positive impact of our strategy of diversification

geographies. Key metrics demonstrate the Bank's strong position, with 9-month net profit growth of nearly 11 percent and a 6.6 percent increase in total assets."

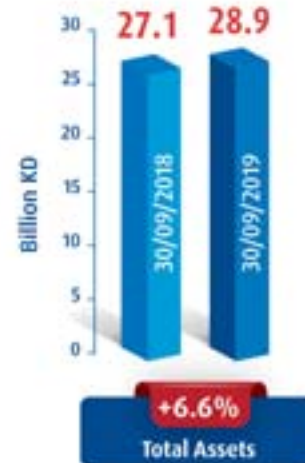
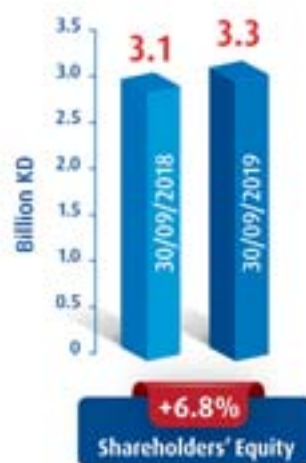
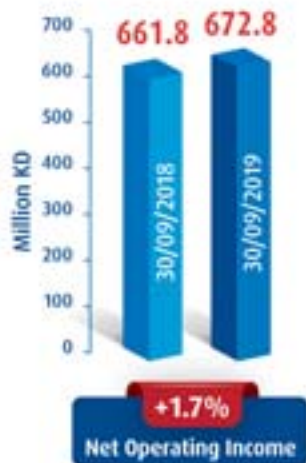
NBK Group CEO, Isam Al-Sager, commented: "We're achieving solid results across business units, demonstrating the positive impact of our strategy of diversification, to mitigate risk and navigate market headwinds. Our digitalization initiatives continue to be rolled out across the bank, optimizing back- and front-end operations and creating a more seamless experience for customers. This year we have been formally recognized by Global Finance magazine for

our leadership in the digital arena - in areas including online banking, consumer digital banking and real-time transaction tracking.

In terms of income diversity, it is particularly pleasing to have achieved solid growth across units, with robust bottom-line contributions made by international operations, consumer banking and our Islamic subsidiary - Boubyan Bank - for the period ended 30 September. Meanwhile, we are making significant progress on our ESG goals, with the Bank now a constituent of the FTSE4Good Index Series, the only Kuwaiti bank included in the benchmark."

# 302.2

## Million KD Net Profit for the 9 Months, 2019



Moody's Aa3    Fitch Ratings AA-    S&P Standard & Poor's A+



## Business

# Dollar takes a dive, euro catapulted higher as US-China talks start

## Turkey assets under pressure after Syria incursion

**LONDON:** A dive in the dollar catapulted the euro higher and flattened stocks yesterday as the first US-China trade talks since July and a report accusing the European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi of going rogue jostled for attention. Markets were bombarded from all sides: denials and counter-denials on the state of US-China trade talks and the Brexit countdown, a Turkish military push into Syria and a blizzard of weak data stretching from Japan to France.

Asia had managed a broadly positive finish but Europe's main bourses and Wall Street futures were left dithering as the more serious action took place in the currency markets. The euro shot above \$1.10 versus the dollar as the greenback turned weaker across the board - partly due to market chatter about a currency pact with China to stop devaluation - but there was plenty else too.

The Financial Times reported that the ECB had restarted its bond-buying program last month despite objections from its own officials, a further sign of how the move has reopened divisions within the institution. ECB meeting minutes then showed similar. "The view on the currency story could be swinging here," said Saxo Bank's head of European currency strategy, John Hardy, "And the market is sensing that euro-dollar is the pressure point."

Perhaps the main mover overnight though was a rally in China's offshore yuan, which strengthened to its best levels in more than two weeks after a Bloomberg report said US and Chinese officials were reviving a currency pact first mooted earlier this year that stops further tariff hikes in return for commitments to hold the yuan stable. As well as the ECB resistance to Draghi's moves, that could also have a read-across for the euro, Saxo's Hardy said, with the United States expected to lay out sanctions next week in retaliation for Eu-

rope's past aid for planemaker Airbus. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly flagged how the euro has been weakened by extreme measures such as negative interest rates, so he may effectively issue a "cease and desist" along with the sanctions, Hardy said. There also was the Brexit tangle. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson was meeting his Irish counterpart in a last-ditch attempt to revive a British proposal for a deal that the EU said falls far short of what is needed.

"Big picture - the more severe that Brexit is, in the short term, it's likely to lead to a lower value of the pound, a higher level of inflation and slower growth in the economy," Bank of England chief Mark Carney told reporters.

### Dire trade situation

S&P 500 mini futures traded down 0.2 percent, though losses had been trimmed by a New York Times report that Washington would soon issue licenses allowing some US firms to supply non-sensitive goods to China's Huawei Technologies. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan had closed 0.1 percent higher while Japan's Nikkei rose 0.45 percent. Shanghai shares also rose 0.8 percent.

Top US and Chinese negotiators were scheduled to meet in Washington on Thursday and Friday to try to end a bruising 15-month-old trade war. Without significant progress, Trump is set to raise the tariff rate on \$250 billion worth of Chinese goods to 30 percent from 25 percent next Tuesday. "Barring any surprise today, it looks like their talks are breaking down. The tariff will be hiked. The situation looks dire," said Norihiro Fujito, chief investment strategist at Mitsubishi UFJ Morgan Stanley Securities.

China is unlikely to be willing to make an easy compromise with a US president who seems increasingly vulnerable to domestic political



**NEW YORK:** In this file photo traders work during the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) at Wall Street in New York City. — AFP

pressure as opposition Democrats seek to impeach him, analysts said. US Democratic presidential contender Joe Biden called for the impeachment of Trump for the first time in a deepening partisan fight over a congressional investigation of the Republican president. "Mr Trump's recent impeachment risk has turned the timetable against him," Chi Lo, senior economist at BNP Paribas Asset in Hong Kong, wrote in a report to clients.

US Treasuries yield went flat having risen to 1.594 percent on Wednesday, pressured partly by this week's heavy bond supply. The 10-year Treasuries yield had dipped to 1.577 percent overnight, but had shuffled back up to 1.590

ahead of US trading while all the ECB chatter also pushed euro zone yields slightly higher.

In commodities, oil prices also turned, with Brent bouncing between \$52.82 and \$58.23 a barrel and US (WTI) crude at \$52.50 per barrel. Copper strained for its best day in a month as it rose 1.1 percent to \$5,749 a ton. Among the heavyweight emerging markets, Turkey's lira and government bonds saw another day of falls as investors fretted about negative international reaction to Ankara's military operation in northeast Syria. Focus was also on the mood in Ecuador after another day of fierce protests against recent fuel price hikes had hammered its markets on Wednesday. — Reuters

## Saudi Arabia says its oil output fell in Sept after attacks

**LONDON:** Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, told OPEC that the kingdom's oil production in September fell by 660,000 barrels per day (bpd) compared with August to 9.13 million bpd in the wake of attacks on its energy installations. Secondary sources said Saudi Arabia's oil production was even lower, falling month-on-month in September by 1.28 million bpd to 8.56 million bpd, OPEC's monthly report showed.

The Sept. 14 attacks targeted two of state oil giant Saudi Aramco's plants, initially knocking out half of the kingdom's oil production - 5 percent of global output. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries said that in September the group's overall production was 1.32 million bpd lower month/month at 28.49 million bpd.

OPEC, in the report, lowered its forecast for non-OPEC supply growth in 2020 by 50,000 bpd to 2.2 million bpd, due to downward revisions for Kazakhstan and Russia. But the Vienna-based group left unchanged its 2020 forecast for global oil demand growth at 1.08 million bpd. OPEC trimmed its forecast for world economic growth in 2020 to 3% from 3.1 percent, saying "it seems increasingly likely that the slowing growth momentum in the U.S. will carry over to 2020". — Reuters

## World Bank trims 2019-2021 growth outlook for Philippines

**MANILA:** The World Bank yesterday cut its forecasts for economic growth in the Philippines for 2019 and the next two years, citing external problems, including the US-China trade war, and a slowdown in public investments. The global lender projected the Philippine economy would grow 5.8 percent this year and 6.1 percent next year, slower than the forecasts of 6.4% and 6.5 percent announced in April, which were also a reduction. The bank also lowered its 2021 growth forecast to 6.2 percent from 6.5 percent previously.

"Given the global environment, resuming the fast pace of expansion in infrastructure and human capital spending will be key for the Philippines to regain higher growth momentum while continuing to lay the foundation for greater inclusion," said Mara Warwick, the World Bank country director for Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. In April, the bank also cut

its 2019 and 2020 GDP growth forecasts for the Philippines because of a delay in approval of this budget and a slowdown in global trade.

"Timely passage of the 2020 budget and decisive action on the country's tax-reform program will remove uncertainties and help the private sector make timely decisions, boosting job creation," Warwick said in a statement. Despite the projected slowdown, the World Bank expects the Philippines to continue making progress in reducing poverty.

"In the medium term, accelerating implementation of high-impact infrastructure projects and the recently approved critical reforms like the Ease of Doing Business Law and liberalization of the rice trade will help the country sustain inclusive growth that generates high-paying jobs and reduces poverty," said World Bank Senior Economist Rong Qian.

Last week, Philippine central bank Governor Benjamin Diokno said he remained confident 2019 growth would reach 6 percent, the lower end of its 6 percent to 7 percent forecast, but acknowledged it might just miss the mark. The Philippine government's proposed 2020 budget of 4.1 trillion pesos (\$79.3 billion) is 12 percent higher than this year's spending plan, with the largest chunk, 24 percent, allotted for infrastructure development. — Reuters



## Business

# Amid acrimony and low expectations, US-China trade talks to resume

## Trump's attitude toward process subject to sudden change

WASHINGTON: As they prepared to return to the negotiating table yesterday, top Chinese trade officials faced a blitz of aggressive US maneuvers, with expectations for a grand bargain between both sides approaching zero. President Donald Trump—who has taken the global economy on a white-knuckle ride since launching multi-pronged trade offensives with China and Europe last year—said Wednesday the outcome was down to him.

"They want to make a deal," he said at the White House. "The question is do I want to make a deal." US duties on \$250 billion in Chinese imports are due to rise in five days while relations meanwhile deteriorated through the week. Washington has slapped visa restrictions on senior Chinese officials and black-listed more than two dozen Chinese firms, accusing both of persecuting ethnic Muslims in China's western Xinjiang region.

The measures have outraged Beijing and in the process penalized major Chinese players in the artificial intelligence sector, in which both nations are intense rivals. Chinese trade envoy Liu He is due to meet Thursday with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. But Trump's attitude toward the process is subject to sudden change, given the churning pressures competing for his attention.

He is as usual engulfed in turmoil, facing Democrats' intensifying efforts to impeach him and Republicans' stinging criticism for effectively allowing a Turkish assault on US-allied Kurdish forces by pulling American forces from northern Syria. Markets

were nevertheless buoyed on Wednesday by media reports that Beijing will propose a partial deal to prevent further escalation.

China is willing to bump up purchases of US farm exports and make other concessions but will stop short of addressing Trump's core grievances, according to Bloomberg and The Financial Times. In return, Beijing would expect a pause on planned increases in US import tariffs, which are currently scheduled to increase in waves through December. Earlier in the week, firebrand White House trade adviser Peter Navarro told NPR that Trump was uninterested in half measures, showing "steely resolve" instead.

### More and more friction

"It's either a big deal or no deal," he said, adding that any attempt to reach an incremental bargain would be a "miscalculation by China." Washington accuses China of attempting to forge global industrial predominance through massive state intervention in markets, the theft of intellectual property, hacking and subsidies, accusations shared by Europe and Japan. But Cleve Willems, a former Trump trade advisor, said Wednesday a partial deal could be the president's best move. "I don't think the administration should be afraid of a partial deal," he told CNBC, adding that a bargain that came with some structural reforms to China's economy could be worth it. "I think it's a way that the president can essentially have his cake and eat it too. He can say, look, I made progress on some real significant things but I'm still tougher than

anyone else has ever been." China's purchases of US soybeans jumped in September after stagnating during the summer. This could offer some relief to American farms, which have borne the brunt of retaliation in the trade war.

Warning signs for the global economy have blared ever louder in recent weeks, however, increasing the pressure on both sides to reach a deal. The International Monetary Fund this week said the trade war was due to shave nearly \$700 billion from global growth next year, with 90 percent of the world's nations now experiencing a "synchronized slowdown." US central bankers believe the trade war is raising the chances the United States could slip into recession, according to a readout released Wednesday from last month's Federal Reserve policy meeting.

American exports have weakened, manufacturing is now contracting and business investment has fallen off sharply due to uncertainty created by the trade war. And if that slump persists, layoffs could soon follow, eroding consumer spending and dragging growth down with it, according to the Fed's minutes. "We all know the next round of tariffs is going to hurt the United States as much or more than China," Wendy Cutler, vice president of the Asia Society Policy Institute, told AFP on Wednesday.

"I think neither side will admit it but I think they're both under pressure to find a way to forestall the next set of tariff increases," she added. "Every month that these trade talks continue, there's more and more friction in the relationship." —AFP

## Turner painting unveiled on Britain's new £20 note

LONDON: The Bank of England unveiled Britain's new £20 polymer banknote yesterday, featuring artist J M W Turner and his most cherished masterpiece. The note includes Joseph Mallord William Turner's self-portrait and his 1838 oil painting "The Fighting Temeraire". It will enter general circulation on February 2, 2020. "As the new Turner £20 testifies, money can be a work of art in everyone's pocket," Bank of England Governor Mark Carney said.

The note was unveiled at the Turner Contemporary art gallery in the southeast English seaside resort of Margate. The £20 note accounts for more than half the banknotes in circulation. "Our banknotes celebrate the UK's heritage, salute its culture, and testify to the achievements of its most notable individuals," said Carney. "Turner's painting was transformative, his influence spanned lifetimes, and his legacy endures today. The new £20 note celebrates Turner, his art and his legacy in all their radiant, colorful, evocative glory."

Turner was selected by Britain's central bank following nominations from the public. The Bank of England issues £5, £10, £20 and £50 notes. The latest series is being printed for the first time on polymer rather than paper. They retain a regular layout, featuring a 1990 portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, and a historical figure on the reverse. The new £5 and £10 notes have



This handout image from the Bank of England shows the new Twenty Pound Note, back and front, featuring late British painter JMW Turner. —AFP

already been rolled out.

The £5 note features World War II prime minister Winston Churchill and novelist Jane Austen appears on the £10 note. The bank claims the new £20 note is its most secure one yet and "very difficult to counterfeit", with features such as two clear windows, two-color foil, a hologram, raised dots, an ultra-violet 20, tiny letters and a three-dimensional crown.

World War II code-breaker Alan Tur-

ing, a computer science pioneer, will appear on the new rarely-used £50 note, to enter circulation by the end of 2021. Sterling is the first of the world's four most traded currencies-ahead of the US dollar, the euro and the yen—to switch to polymer. Australia was the first country to issue a polymer banknote in 1988 and they are now used in several countries including Canada, Russia and New Zealand. —AFP

## India pursues China-led trade deal despite domestic opposition

NEW DELHI: India is pressing ahead with talks to join a China-led free trade pact, officials said yesterday, despite some domestic producers' concerns that the country could be flooded with cheaper Chinese imports. Negotiators for the 16-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) are in the Thai capital Bangkok this week for talks aimed at finalizing the giant free trade zone by the end of the year.

Trade Minister Piyush Goyal will join Indian delegates on the weekend for direct talks with his counterparts from China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. India will be looking for safeguards to be built into the proposed pact to prevent a sudden surge in imports, the trade ministry said in a statement. Goyal has been holding talks to allay fears of a flood of Chinese imports if New Delhi joins the agreement, the ministry said.

"The focus and emphasis of the meetings chaired by the Commerce and Industry Minister was on putting in place appropriate safeguards including auto-trigger mechanism against sudden surge in imports from RCEP countries," it said in a statement. India has reached an agreement in principle with other countries to include a safeguard mechanism that would trigger duties if goods are deemed to have been dumped from a partner country, a source with knowledge of the negotiations said.

Indian producers fear cutting tariffs on dairy and other produce would open the door to cheap Chinese imports and threaten an agriculture sector that supports most of India's 1.3 billion people. A political ally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party has joined opponents of the free trade pact. The nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) called on Friday for a nationwide campaign against the deal, saying any change in tariffs would cripple factories and farms at a time of slowing economic growth. — Reuters



## Business

# Nations open path to break deadlock on taxing digital giants

## Paris vows to scrub levy once global accord is in place

**PARIS:** The world's wealthiest nations were urged Wednesday to accept a "unified approach" to break the deadlock over taxing the global revenues of digital giants, a dispute that has stoked tensions between the US and several European nations. The OECD group of wealthy democracies published its suggestions to bridge gaps between three competing plans to tax technology firms, which currently shift the bulk of their earnings to low-tax jurisdictions.

Public outrage has grown over the practice, which critics say deprives many nations of their fair share of tax revenue, since digital giants can often pay next to nothing in countries where they rake in huge earnings. France in particular has railed against EU rules that let American heavyweights like Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon declare their earnings from across the bloc in low-tax havens like Ireland or Luxembourg.

This year it imposed its own tax on digital giants, drawing the ire of US President Donald Trump even though Paris has vowed to scrub the levy once a global accord is in place. The Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development is leading the negotiations to reach an accord next year. But for months it has made little headway on reconciling the three competing plans—one backed by Britain, another

by the US, and a third by developing countries.

While they all propose spreading taxing rights across countries where a firm does business, "there are nevertheless gaps between the proposals," the OECD said. "Failure to reach agreement by 2020 would greatly increase the risk that countries will act unilaterally, with negative consequences on an already fragile global economy. We must not allow that to happen," the agency's Secretary-General Angel Gurría said. "This is a very good proposal," French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said at a Eurogroup meeting of eurozone finance ministers in Luxembourg, adding that "I hope it will provide new momentum."

### 'Still require work'

OECD officials have said a broad agreement is needed by January if the digital tax is to be approved next year-in which case it would come into effect in 2021. The UK proposal focuses mainly on digital groups, and says any country where a firm has users could impose tax. It largely echoes the Digital Services Tax that London plans to impose next year. The American plan would cover a much broader group of consumer companies with marketing operations in a country—a World Bank analysis has cited Coca-



**PARIS:** This file illustration picture shows the US multinational technology and Internet-related services company Google logo displayed on a tablet in Paris. — AFP

Cola or General Motors as potentially impacted.

The third option would target all companies with a "sustained economic participation" via technology or other means, which could give a greater share of a firm's global tax payment to smaller countries. The OECD said its "unified approach" aimed to take elements from each plan, though it admits that "certain aspects still require

further work". The suggestions will be formally presented at a meeting of G20 finance ministers and central bank governors in Washington on October 17 and 18. Governments are under pressure to address widespread public outrage over tech multinationals exploiting global tax rules dating back to the 1920s to pay only cursory taxes on their profits. —AFP

## Regulators reject Qatari-backed Deutsche Bank board member

**FRANKFURT:** In a rare intervention, Deutsche Bank's regulators are blocking a banker backed by its largest shareholder, Qatar, from a seat on the supervisory board because of a conflict of interest, according to two people with knowledge of the matter. The rejection is a further hiccup for the German lender, which has reshuffled management, is cutting thousands of jobs and closing down some businesses in an effort to make a profit.

Deutsche Bank chair Paul Achleitner had announced in August the appointment of former UBS manager Juerg Zeltner, praising him as a valuable addition and "a top-level European banker with proven expertise". Zeltner was also to represent the interests of Qatar's royal family - a top shareholder in the German lender. KBL is controlled by the same family.

Deutsche's regulators - the European Central Bank and financial markets watchdog BaFin - have now determined that Zeltner's position on Deutsche's board would be a conflict of interest because he is also the chief executive officer of KBL European Private Bankers (KBL epb), a business that overlaps with Deutsche's. "It's a done deal. It is now only a matter of finding a face-saving way out," the person said. Deutsche Bank declined to comment. The bank said last month in a statement that all potential conflicts of interest that could arise from Zeltner's activities and his relationship with one of Deutsche's major shareholders had been reported to the supervisory board and the company. —Reuters

## Spanish farmers balk at no-deal Brexit

**MADRID:** At this time of year, Juan Colomina is preparing for the start of the harvest of thousands of tons of fruit and vegetables grown under plastic in southern Spain and exported to the world. This year he has an added complication - trying to work out which forms are needed to get crops of fresh produce like lettuce and tomatoes through French and British customs in the event that Britain leaves the European Union without a withdrawal agreement.

"Our peak season starts now," said Colomina, head of Coexphal, an association representing more than 9,000 farmers in Almeria, southern Spain, who send dozens of trucks daily to Britain laden with everything from broccoli to watermelons. "We don't know exactly what kind of documentation we'll need until we know what kind of Brexit will happen," he added.

With just three weeks before Britain is due to leave the world's biggest trading bloc, it is still unclear on what terms it will leave or indeed whether it will become the first sovereign state to depart the European project. It's a big unknown causing headaches in farms across Spain, Britain's

biggest foreign supplier of fruit and vegetables.

Britain's putative Oct 31 exit date from the EU comes at the height of Spain's export season when the end of the British summer heralds imported tomatoes and lettuce grown in huge industrial greenhouses in the year-round Mediterranean sun. Growers and exporters will have to prepare paperwork to present at borders to smooth the passage of trucks and prevent delays that could turn perishable loads to garbage.

"I can't believe administrations will be so blundering as to say it's all change from one day to the next because no-one is prepared," said Francisco Sanchez, manager of growers' association Onubafruit which represents over 1,000 farmers. Nearly a third of Onubafruit's production - mostly strawberries, raspberries and blueberries - is exported to Britain, selling to supermarket groups like market leader Tesco and No. 2 Sainsbury's.

Both growers and supermarkets fear a change in status of Britain overnight from EU member to default terms of the World Trade Organization (WTO) could lead to huge queues at French ports with delays and millions of euros in losses. The EU accounted for nearly two-thirds of Britain's imports of fruit and vegetables last year, according to the Office of National Statistics. Spain was the biggest foreign supplier of fresh produce, followed by the Netherlands.

In turn, Britain is an important market for Spanish produce - its third biggest - with fruit and vegetable exports worth nearly two billion euros (\$2.2 billion) last year. If

Britain leaves without a deal, trucks carrying produce from the trading bloc will have to have present customs, sanitary and quality control documents, Spain's Acting Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Luis Planas, told Reuters.

Spain had done its preparation, he said, by setting up a process to present documents electronically and working alongside France which tested out its 'smart' border to speed entry into Britain last month. "Our exporters want to sell," the minister said. However, many producers do not have these documents and processes in place, exporters and producers say.

Many do not want to invest in software needed to present the documents electronically in case the no-deal scenario does not happen, said Jose Maria Pozancos, director of Fepex, the Spanish association of producers and exporters of fruit and vegetables. Growers say they speak daily to British supermarkets, but are receiving no guidance from them as to what to expect. The British government has said that in the event of a no-deal Brexit, its priority is to keep goods moving and avoid delays at the border without compromising security.

It has indicated it would minimize checks or simply waive through lorries from EU countries. "The answer to all these questions is 'it depends' because nobody knows what the specifics will be," said Dave Lewis, chief executive of British supermarket chain Tesco. Tesco was working closely with producers, Lewis told Reuters. Sainsbury's declined to comment on specifics. However, it has repeatedly warned of the consequences of a no-deal Brexit. —Reuters



## Business

# Delhi hawkers to be free from threat of eviction after five-year delay

## Delhi govt officials set up TVC to issue vending certificates

**MUMBAI:** Delhi is set to become the first Indian city to fully implement a law that protects street vendors against the threat of eviction, authorities in the capital said on Thursday, five years after the landmark legislation was first introduced. Delhi government officials have set up Town Vending Committees (TVC), which will survey hawkers in the city and then issue vending certificates to give them the right to do business from a fixed spot, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said.

“Without street vendors, no city can function. We just need to regularize them so that other citizens are not inconvenienced,” Kejriwal posted on Twitter. “Vendors will get the right to make an honest living, and they will not be harassed by the police and other authorities,” he said, adding that licenses would be issued before the end of the year. With Asian towns and

cities expanding and striving to become more international and attract investment, street vendors and hawkers are viewed increasingly as a hindrance to city planning.

Vendors selling everything from snacks and tea to toys and clothes are a common sight in India's cities, with items for sale spread out on pavements or in mobile carts. The Street Vendors' Act was introduced by federal lawmakers in 2014 to help protect the country's hawkers from eviction, with states required to establish hawking zones, set up TVCs and issue licenses.

Unlicensed hawkers are often targeted for bribes by criminals or corrupt officials and police, and flee eviction drives which are becoming more common as cities modernize and competition for space grows from pedestrians and cars. “The law emerged after a long struggle for improved liveli-

hood security, legality and protection from eviction,” said Shivani Chaudhry, executive director of the Housing and Land Rights Network, a non-profit in Delhi.

“Street vendors form the backbone of the city economy. Non-implementation of the law has resulted in their continued persecution, including arbitrary evictions, and lack of recognition of their rights,” she said. No states had fully implemented the 2014 act, according to the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI). Members of NASVI, who are staging a protest in Delhi on Thursday against the slow rollout of the law, said there was still no detailed plan for its implementation in the capital.

“There is a lack of political will to implement the law, and there is a pushback from citizens because of the misconception that vendors cause

congestion,” said Shalini Sinha at WIEGO, a global non-profit that helps informal workers. “But walkability is not at odds with street vending, and authorities should be more concerned about livelihoods than vehicle parking,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Delhi has now set up 28 TVCs with representatives from street vendors, the municipal commission, police and town planners, who will conduct the survey. But there are few other details on the law's rollout, said Arbind Singh, a coordinator for NASVI. “The same authorities promised implementation five years ago. Now, with local elections in Delhi due soon, the promise of implementation looks to be just a political gimmick,” he said, referring to polls due by February next year. “Meanwhile, evictions continue - so we are very skeptical.” —Reuters

## Nissan to build new Juke car at UK plant as Brexit looms

**SUNDERLAND, England:** Nissan said it will begin making the next-generation Juke vehicle at Britain's biggest car plant on Monday, just over two weeks before a possible no-deal Brexit which the industry has warned could bring production to a halt. Nissan decided in 2015, before the 2016 referendum was even held, to make the latest version of the sport utility vehicle at its northern English Sunderland factory, reflecting how major decisions are made years in advance.

The Japanese company, which was en-

couraged by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s to use Britain as a gateway to the Continent, has spent 100 million pounds on the latest investment in Juke with 70% of the output for EU markets. “Thirty-five years ago Nissan decided to create a plant in the UK to serve our European markets,” said Nissan's Europe Chairman Gianluca de Ficchy on Thursday.

“The new Juke represents a further 100 million pound investment in our Sunderland plant and is designed, engineered and manufactured in the UK for European customers,” he added. The factory is also due to build the new Qashqai model from next year but the firm has previously said it could review that 2016 decision especially if there is a change to “free trade agreements.” Nissan's then Europe manufacturing boss Colin Lawther told lawmakers in 2017: “As those circumstances change - and we will not wait until the end of the process - we will continually review the decisions that

we take based on anything that materially changes.”

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said he is prepared to take Britain out of the European Union without an agreement but is seeking a deal with the bloc, although time is running out to secure an orderly departure before the Oct. 31 deadline. The car industry fears that a no-deal Brexit will add tariffs on vehicles, engines and components as well as introduce customs delays which could rapidly stop production and risk the long-term viability of British sites.

Ministers have said they are prepared for a no-deal outcome and could help affected sectors. Brexiteers have long argued that Europe's biggest economy, Germany, which exports hundreds of thousands of cars to Britain each year, would protect that trade. Nissan is ending the night shift at the Sunderland plant and the overall headcount of staff will be a little lower at around 6,000 as it focuses on ramping up the new vehicle. —Reuters

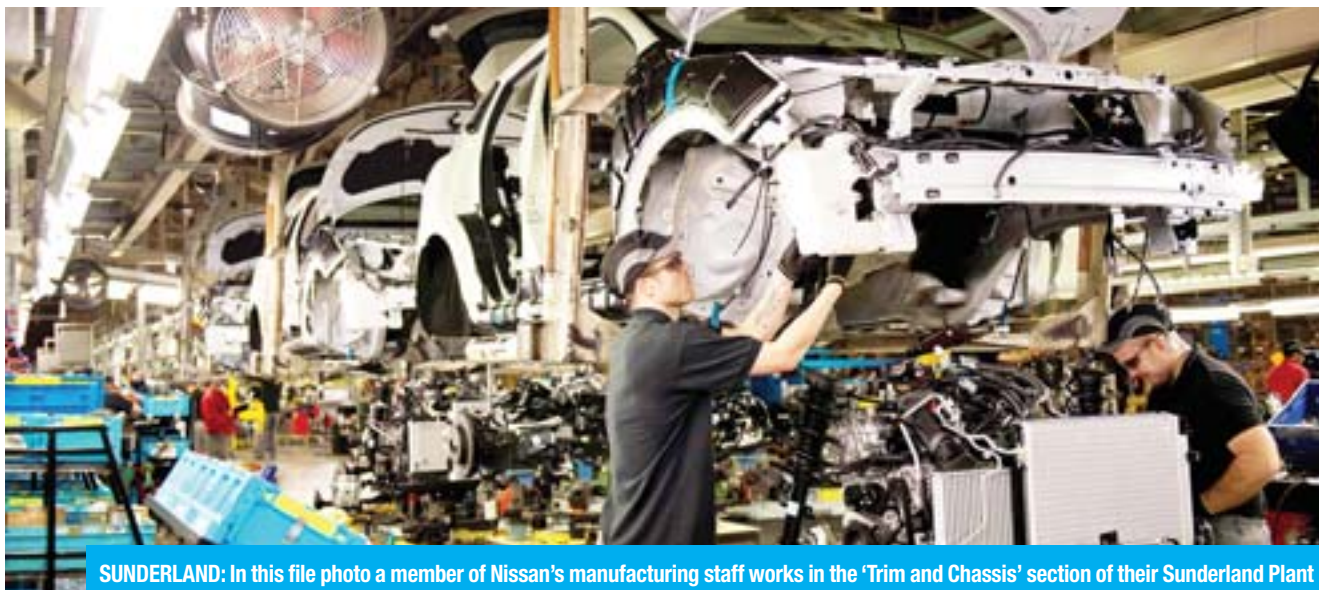
## British city launches innovative fund to tackle climate change

**LONDON:** The mayor of one of Britain's largest cities has launched an innovative fund aimed at tackling social and environmental problems from hungry children to carbon emissions. The 10 million pound (\$12.20 million) venture - the first of its kind in the UK - launched on Wednesday aims to attract private sector contributions to advance Bristol's 2050 vision of a “fair, healthy and sustainable city” that is “carbon neutral and zero-waste”.

Bristol city council invested 5 million pounds in CityFunds, an example of ‘impact investing,’ a multi-billion dollar movement which pursues social and environmental outcomes and financial returns. Rather than focusing on a single issue, CityFunds invests in local companies that work towards achieving the south-western city's four socio-economic priorities, from equal access to housing to greening transport.

Big Society Capital, a social investment firm, also invested in the fund which backs projects including a wind turbine built by residents to power deprived communities. Bristol is one of more than a dozen cities including New York, Buenos Aires and Taipei that in September announced plans to fight global warming and pledged to report their progress to the United Nations. Bristol's mayor, Marvin Rees, said in a statement the fund would transform the city, which suffers from inequality, and could be a “step towards delivering inclusive and sustainable growth.”

The idea for CityFunds was partly inspired by similar projects in American cities like Chicago which have worked with business to tackle poverty, said Anna Shiel of Big Society Capital. The “scale, longevity, and inclusivity” makes this fund unique, said Shiel, adding the model could be replicated across the country. So-called social entrepreneurs face scrutiny from investors over their ability to deliver social and environmental impact as well as profit. —Reuters



**SUNDERLAND:** In this file photo a member of Nissan's manufacturing staff works in the 'Trim and Chassis' section of their Sunderland Plant in Sunderland, north east England. — AFP



## Sports

# Scotland plead for WCup go-ahead as typhoon threatens campaign

**TOKYO:** Scotland coach Gregor Townsend has urged World Cup chiefs “to do all they can” to make sure his side’s must-win match against Japan is played as an incoming super typhoon threatens to end their campaign.

Scotland need to beat the hosts in Yokohama on Sunday to have a chance of reaching the quarter-finals. But if the match is cancelled they will be going home. In an unprecedented move for the tournament, officials announced yesterday that tomorrow’s matches between England and France, and Italy and New Zealand, had been axed because of the expected impact of Super Typhoon Hagibis, likely to be the biggest storm to hit Japan this year.

Scotland’s final Pool A fixture against Japan in Yokohama, at 7:45 pm (1045 GMT) on Sunday, is also in the projected path of the typhoon, but officials will delay a decision on whether it will go ahead until the morning of the match.

Cancellation would see the match declared a 0-0 draw, with both Japan and Scotland receiving two points each. That would put Japan through to the knockout phase, with Ireland likely to join them provided they don’t slip up against Samoa tomorrow.

It would also mean Scotland were out, leading to more World Cup heartache after a controversial refereeing decision led to them being denied a quarter-final win over Australia four years ago. But Townsend, during a hastily-

arranged press conference at Scotland’s hotel in Hamamatsu on Thursday, said: “We believe the game hasn’t been cancelled because the weather forecast is much improved for Sunday.

“It looks like the game will be played and that’s what we have to keep faith with.

“I’d hope that everyone who is involved in the tournament would want the game to be played and that they will do all they can to ensure that it is. “We have to have faith in the organisers that the game will be played even if it’s behind closed doors or at a different venue.”

Former Scotland fly-half Townsend added: “The way I read the rules was that you can’t change days but you could change venues and contingencies would be in place.

“I’ve since been told there is a force majeure (provision in the rules) and things can change because of exceptional circumstances.

“If that means (playing the game on) Monday because it takes a day for things to be put back in order then who knows. But right now I think they’re planning on it going ahead on Sunday.”

Scottish Rugby responded to Thursday’s announcement by World Rugby with a statement that said it “fully expects contingency plans to be put in place to enable Scotland to contest for a place in the quarter-finals on the pitch”.

But World Cup tournament director Alan Gilpin said yesterday teams knew long before the event started that “matches in the pool phase



**SHIZUOKA:** Scotland’s prop Willem Nel (C) runs to evade Russia’s fly-half Yuri Kushnarev (L) and Russia’s flanker Tagir Gadzhiev (R) during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup Pool A match between Scotland and Russia at the Shizuoka Stadium Ecopa in Shizuoka. — AFP

wouldn’t be postponed”. He added: “We have looked again at the potential to apply some consistency to our contingency plan across all the games and we treat all the matches fairly.

“Italy are in the same position as Scotland are in. It (Japan v Scotland) is a huge match and we would love to play that game. “But we won’t treat that match any differently.” — AFP

## Wallabies avoid typhoon to line up ‘tough’ Georgia

**SHIZUOKA:** Escaping an incoming super typhoon, Australia will warm up for the Rugby World Cup quarter-finals with a last Pool D outing today against “tough” Georgia.

World Rugby took the unprecedented step Thursday of cancelling two games — England v France and New Zealand v Italy — as Japan braces for Super Typhoon Hagibis, likely the biggest storm to hit the country this year.

But the match in Shizuoka today will take place before the typhoon hits, avoiding cancellation and handing the Wallabies a useful run-out against a competitive Georgian side playing for pride. Wales’ 29-17 victory over Fiji on Wednesday ensured Australia a quarter-final place, with the Welsh likely advancing as pool winners should they see off minnows Uruguay in Kumamoto on Sunday.

With some pressure lifted, the Australia players will still be performing with an eye on making the team for the likely quarter-final against Pool C winners England in Oita on October 19. With that in mind, the Wallabies made two late changes on Thursday, bringing in Lukhan Salakaia-Loto and Rob Simmonds for Michael Hooper and Adam Coleman on the bench, both of whom were said to be carrying minor niggles.

Assistant coach Simon Raiwalumi added that the niggles were “nothing too major, but with that (quarter-final berth) confirmed, we decided to go that way”.

Experienced Australia prop Sekope Kepu was under no illusion of what awaited the team: “Georgia have a great scrum and a great forward pack

“They are tough buggers and they don’t really take any crap from anybody.” Georgia opened their campaign with a 43-14 defeat by Wales before beating Uruguay 33-7 and then going down 45-10 to Fiji. — AFP

## Typhoons, heat and ice: When extreme weather disrupts sport

**TOKYO:** After an approaching typhoon prompted the cancellation of two games at the Rugby World Cup, here are some other examples of extreme weather disruption in sports:

### JAPAN’S F1 FATALITY

Japan’s Formula One Suzuka race track is no stranger to extreme weather and in 2014 French driver Jules Bianchi crashed in the heavy rain — on the fringes of a typhoon — and tragically died nine months later without regaining consciousness. A typhoon forced the postponement of qualifying in 2004 as did heavy rain in 2010, and as Hagibis approaches, organisers say that while they want to minimise disruption the safety of fans and competitors is their top priority.

### TRAGEDY AT SEA

Violent storms wreaked havoc on the 303 yachts that started in the 1979 Fastnet yachting race off the south coast of England, resulting in England’s largest peace-time rescue operation. At least 75 yachts capsized and there were 19 fatalities, while naval and civilian vessels as well as helicopters plucked 125 yachtsmen from the sea. In

1998, fierce storms battered the 115 yachts which started in the annual Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. Only 44 made it to the finish, while five sank and 66 pulled out. Six sailors died and 55 were plucked from their yachts.

### THE ICE BOWL

The 1967 NFL championship game between the Dallas Cowboys and Green Bay Packers was played in such atrocious conditions that it gave birth to safety rules to prevent players and fans being exposed to such extreme weather again. The temperature was a freezing -26 Celsius (-15F) with a wind chill factor of -44C. The whistles stuck to the referees’ lips with one ripping his skin off, and calling plays by shouting through bleeding lips. For the record, Packers legend Bart Starr scored a touchdown with 13 seconds remaining to win the game.

### BRITAIN’S BIG FREEZE

The third round of English football’s 1963 FA Cup lasted 66 days as Britain was hit by a major freeze. Frost and snow, as well as power cuts, rain and mud were responsible for 261 postponements, with 16 of the 32 ties called off 10 or more times. The round was ultimately spread over 22 playing days.

### HAIL HITS THE TOUR

In this year’s Tour de France, the last 30 kilometres of stage 19 were cancelled when a powerful hailstorm hit the Alps, blanketing the road and giving organisers had no time to clear the course before the race leaders arrived. The following day, stage 20 was shortened by 71 kilometres because of land-

slides caused by storm weather.

### RUGBY’S ‘WATER POLO TEST’

Officials considered postponing the 1975 New Zealand-Scotland Test because Eden Park was underwater, but with Scotland due to fly home the next day they decided to play. Torrential rain never let up in the so-called “water polo Test” and All Blacks prop Billy Bush said he feared someone would drown. Despite radio messages imploring fans to stay safely at home, 45,000 turned up to see the All Blacks win 24-0.

### THE WET WORLD CUP

The 1995 World Cup semi-final between South Africa and France was delayed an hour after treacherous rain flooded the field in Durban. People were handed mops and brooms to help clear the water enough for the game to go ahead, which was fortunate for the Springboks, the hosts, who won and went on to beat New Zealand in the final. Had the match been abandoned, France would have made the final because of their better disciplinary record which was the tie-breaker then.

### BITTER CHILL

For current French players Louis Picamoles and Wesley Fofana, this is not the first time they have faced weather disruption. In 2012 they were at Stade de France for the Six Nations match against Ireland which was called off 10 minutes before kick-off because of a bitter chill and the referee feared for the players’ safety on the frozen ground. When the match was eventually played three weeks later, it resulted in a 17-17 draw. — AFP



## Sports

# Game would have gone ahead 'if New Zealand needed the points': Parisse

**TOKYO:** Italy captain Sergio Parisse has slammed the decision to cancel his side's World Cup match against New Zealand because of Super Typhoon Hagibis, saying the game would have gone ahead if the All Blacks needed a win.

The number eight also said it was "ridiculous" for organisers not to have an alternative to cancellation as "it isn't news that typhoons hit Japan". In an unprecedented move at a Rugby World Cup, organisers scrapped today's matches between England and France, and New Zealand and Italy — with both fixtures in the path of the powerful typhoon.

While England and France both advance to the quarter-finals regardless, with two points each from a Pool C match now deemed a draw, Thursday's announcement ended Italy's slim hopes of reaching the last eight.

Admittedly, this would have required Italy to beat three-time world champions New Zealand for the first time — and with a bonus point. "It is difficult to know that we won't have the chance to play a match against one of the great teams," Parisse told reporters in Toyota City yesterday.

"If New Zealand needed four or five points against us, it would not have been cancelled," he added in comments published on the official Rugby World Cup news service but later removed. With a match meant to be played at the City of Toyota Stadium officially declared a scoreless draw as a result of the cancellation, the points Italy received left them third in Pool B on 12 points behind South Africa on 15, with reign-

ing world champions New Zealand topping the group on 16. The All Blacks will now face the runner-up of a tightly-contested Pool A in the quarter-finals.

While few expected Italy to cause a huge upset this weekend, the 36-year-old Parisse, whose 142 Test appearances are second only to retired New Zealand great Richie McCaw in the all-time list, was disappointed not to be facing the All Blacks for what could be the final time in his long career.

"We had the chance to play in a big stadium, against a great team," Parisse said. "It is ridiculous that a decision of this nature has been made because it isn't like the fans arrived yesterday. "It is ridiculous that there was no Plan B, because it isn't news that typhoons hit Japan. The alternative is Plan B. When you organise a World Cup you should have one in place."

Parisse even suggested there was an element of disrespect in the decision, even though Italy have lost every one of their previous 15 Tests against New Zealand. "Sure, everyone might think that Italy versus New Zealand being cancelled counts for nothing because we'd have lost anyway, but we deserved to be respected as a team," he added.

"If Italy and New Zealand decide they don't want to play, then fine. But as I said before, if New Zealand needed the points it wouldn't have been cancelled."

Meanwhile Italy coach Conor O'Shea lamented a "horrible" finish to the World Cup. "I



**URAYASU:** New Zealand's head coach Steve Hansen (L) and captain Kieran Read attend a press conference in the team's hotel in Urayasu yesterday, during the Japan 2019 Rugby World Cup. — AFP

saw the players' reaction after training and it was horrible because these guys have given their lives to Italian rugby and their World Cup has ended on the training pitch, when it should be on the playing field," he said.

"I feel bad for Sergio and the whole squad." But All Blacks coach Steve Hansen said cancellation was a "no-brainer", insisting when you "get a typhoon to the level we're getting then safety is the paramount thing". — AFP

## Fiji offer blueprint to trouble Wales

**OITA:** Fiji bowed out of the World Cup leaving a blueprint for putting Six Nations champions Wales under pressure and highlighting the need for more Tests against the Tier 1 nations. The free-running Pacific islanders are always popular crowd-pleasers with their audacious off-loads and while they failed to make the final eight in Japan they were not far off despite limited preparation.

They pushed Wales all the way, leading 10-0 after eight minutes and were 17-14 up with 20 minutes remaining before a late 15-point surge saw the Tier 1 side come out on top 29-17.

With limited preparation compared to the top-ranking sides, Fiji coach John McKee conjured up a "constant attack" game plan that would have future Wales opponents taking note.

"We knew we wouldn't win an arm wrestle or a penalty shoot out with them, so we had to back ourselves to score tries. You saw we didn't take penalty shots, we took scrums or kicked to the corner," McKee said. The first of their three tries came from a backline move after taking a scrum instead of a penalty close to the Wales line.

And they won a penalty try in the second half when Wales collapsed a lineout drive after Fiji kicked for the corner rather than take an easy shot at goal. "We chanced our arm a little bit and backed our attacking play, to see if we could put them under pressure to see

how they reacted," McKee said. "For large parts of the game, that worked very well for us."

Just as they dominated Wales for much of the game, the free-spirited Fijians started the tournament racing to a 21-12 lead against Australia before wilting to lose 39-21. Between Australia and Wales, they suffered an upset loss to Uruguay and beat Georgia.

"What's pleasing to me is we had an opportunity on the world stage to show what this team's capable of," said the New Zealand-born coach. The 29-17 scoreline against Wales was little different to the 23-13 result the last time the two teams met at the 2015 World Cup.

But in the intervening four years, Wales played 48 Tests of which 41 were against fellow Tier 1 sides.

Fiji, a Tier 2 team, played 27 Tests which included only 10 against Tier one nations and their hastily cobbled together outfit still managed wins against France, Scotland and Italy.

"Coming to the World Cup, it's a big factor when you don't play so many Tier 1 Test matches, the uplift in intensity is difficult to go with," McKee said.

"Every World Cup, the competition gets higher and higher. In 2015 we thought we did OK and with a lot of work we could do better and we haven't. We're sort of in the same position."

"If we play more Tier 1 Test matches that will be great. But at the same time, I understand that it's very complicated to organise the whole international calendar." McKee's frustration echoed that of Georgia coach Milton Haig who said his side's 43-14 loss to Wales in their opening game was a perfect example of why they need to play Tier 1 opposition regularly.

"You can't play a team like Wales at the World Cup and produce miracles if you are not used to playing at this speed," Haig said. "Georgia needs at least four matches a year against Tier 1 teams and until that happens, these are the results you will get." — AFP

## Henshaw back as Ireland chase vital bonus point

**FUKUOKA:** A fit-again Robbie Henshaw will make his first World Cup appearance in Japan tomorrow after being named to start in Ireland's crucial match against Samoa in Fukuoka. Ireland need a bonus-point win to ensure they qualify before the final Pool A showdown on Sunday between hosts Japan and Scotland — if Typhoon Hagibis allows it to proceed.

"We can't control what happens with the Japan-Scotland game, so tomorrow it's up to us to get our business done as best we can," coach Joe Schmidt said when naming his side yesterday. Ireland-Samoa, played in the country's south-west likely to be spared by Hagibis, is the only game on Saturday to go ahead and Pool A is the only pool with qualification still up for grabs.

If Ireland win without a bonus point it will put them at risk of finishing third despite losing only one game as the pool goes down to the wire with Japan on 14, Ireland on 11 and Scotland on 10.

The return of the 38-Test centre Henshaw, who suffered a hamstring injury soon after arriving in Japan, is one of 11 changes from the side that beat Russia 35-0 as Schmidt zeros in on his first-choice line up.

"Robbie is fresh and we're excited to have him in there. It is a little bit about balancing the load as well, albeit in a huge game for us," Schmidt said. Half-backs Conor Murray and Johnny Sexton will start together for the 55th time, equalling the Ireland record set by Peter Stringer and Ronan O'Gara between 2000 and 2015. Sexton, Bundee Aki, Tadhg Beirne and Keith Earls are the only survivors from the Russia match while hooker Rory Best returns to captain Ireland for the 37th time, overtaking Keith Wood and moving into second place behind Brian O'Driscoll (83).

Only flanker Peter O'Mahony and full-back Rob Kearney are missing from what is thought to be Schmidt's preferred starting line up. O'Mahony and Garry Ringrose are the only two Ireland players that have started in the first three matches. The former is on the bench against Samoa and the latter has the weekend off. — AFP



## Sports

# Thai badminton star cleared of doping as tests linked to meat

**BANGKOK:** Former badminton world champion Ratchanok Intanon bears “no fault” after testing positive for doping, the sport’s governing body said yesterday, clearing the path for the Thai star to compete in the 2020 Olympics after another close brush with a possible suspension.

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) said the women’s world number 5 was found to be in violation of anti-doping regulations earlier this year. But Ratchanok, known as “May” in Thailand, was able to prove that the low amount of the banned substance clenbuterol was related to meat she had eaten at a barbecue restaurant.

“She was found to bear no fault or negligence for the violation, and thus no period of ineligibility has been imposed on her,” the statement said. The conclusion was reached after taking into account the sufficiently low concentration of clenbuterol in her system, according to the 26-page doping panel decision.

It also cited positive tests of clenbuterol from at least eight samples collected from the restaurant where Ratchanok had eaten meat. Thailand’s Badminton Federation celebrated the decision in a statement saying Ratchanok was “confident”

she did not do anything wrong. It was the second close call with drug tests for Ratchanok, who broke down in tears in 2016 when cleared of doping. Back then it was ruled that the detected substance had been administered for a tendon injury and was allowed.

The player has caught the imagination of Thais as much for her rags-to-riches back story as on-court heroics. Her parents are migrants to Bangkok from the country’s poor northeast who worked in menial jobs at a badminton centre on the outskirts of the city.

While they worked, Ratchanok honed her on court skills. This week’s result will come as a relief to the former world no 1 and for Thai sports in general, which is already weathering a doping scandal in weightlifting. Thai weightlifters were not allowed to compete at the world championships despite the country hosting the event last month after nine Thais — including two reigning Olympic champions — were suspended following positive drug tests since November. The tests prompted Thailand to voluntarily ban itself from the September championships in Pattaya as well as next year’s Olympics. — AFP



**BANGKOK:** File photo taken on August 4, 2019 Thailand’s Ratchanok Intanon hits a shot against China’s Chen Yufei during their women’s singles final match at the Thailand Open badminton tournament in Bangkok. — AFP

## High noon decision Friday on typhoon-hit Japan GP qualifying

**SUZUKA:** Japanese Grand Prix organisers will decide at noon Friday (0300 GMT) if the race weekend timetable, including tomorrow qualifying, can go ahead as Super Typhoon Hagibis threatens the Suzuka circuit.

A spokesperson for the governing body FIA told AFP Thursday that any decision to change the weekend programme rested with the local authorities in consultation with the FIA and Formula One.

The typhoon has already claimed casualties at the Rugby World Cup in Japan, with tomorrow’s England-France clash in Yokohama and the New Zealand-Italy match in Toyota City cancelled.

Two minor support races scheduled for Saturday at Suzuka have already been scrapped as a precaution. Tomorrow’s third free practice session and qualifying are likely to follow suit, but the volatile nature of Hagibis means even Sunday’s race could be under threat, though the current forecast is for better weather that day.

Earlier, the FIA issued a statement saying the safety of fans and drivers would be the top priority as Hagibis — classed as “violent” and the equivalent of a Category Five hurricane — is predicted to make landfall near Tokyo tomorrow. The latest forecasts for Saturday predict heavy rain and winds gusting in excess of 100 kilometres an hour to batter the Suzuka Circuit, which lies near the Honshu coast about 300 kilometres (180 miles) southwest of the capital.

“Every effort is being made to minimise disruption to the Formula 1 timetable, however, the safety of the fans, competitors and everyone at the Suzuka Circuit remains the top pri-

ority,” said the FIA. The qualifying session, originally scheduled to start at 3 pm Saturday (0600 GMT), determines the starting order for Sunday’s race.

It leaves the organisers with two options to form the race grid. They can either shift qualifying to Sunday morning, something that was done successfully at Suzuka in 2004 and 2010 because of bad weather, or they can use the timings of the drivers from Friday afternoon’s second free practice to determine the starting order. Whatever happens, a postponement of the grand prix to Monday is impossible, the FIA said. After the tail-end of a typhoon affected the 2014 race at Suzuka, French driver Jules Bianchi crashed heavily after losing control in rain and poor visibility and died the following year from his injuries having never recovered from a coma.

Drivers yesterday backed changing the weekend timetable. “I don’t think anybody wants to put anybody’s life in danger,” said Ferrari’s four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel. “The decision is not for us, necessarily, because for us it’s nice and easy, cosy, in the garage. “But for the people out there around the track, it is not nice to be sitting there with rain going sideways.” A blank Saturday would be a huge disappointment to thousands of fanatical supporters at one of the best-attended races on the circuit, but other drivers were prepared for the worst.

“I’ve got my speedboat on standby, so I’m ready,” joked Red Bull’s Max Verstappen. “At the moment it doesn’t look very likely. So we’ll have a bit more free time tomorrow and it means waking up a little bit earlier on Sunday,” he added. — AFP

## Hamilton warns Ferrari not to snub Vettel to ‘ramp up’ Leclerc

**SUZUKA:** Lewis Hamilton said yesterday that Sebastian Vettel was now “clearly not” number one at Ferrari but warned against the team “ramping up” support for rookie Charles Leclerc ahead of this weekend’s Japanese Grand Prix.

Ferrari’s botched team orders at the previous race in Russia two weeks ago handed Hamilton a surprise victory after Mercedes had trailed Ferrari on the timing sheets all weekend.

Vettel ignored team instruction several times to hand back the lead to Leclerc at Sochi.

The German’s retirement with a mechanical problem and a virtual safety car then enabled Hamilton and Bottas to secure the top two steps of the podium.

Both Leclerc and Vettel were at pains yesterday to point out that all was now “clear” between them and Ferrari. But the major beneficiary of their spat, Hamilton, has been keenly watching the antics of the Maranello team. “It’s an interesting dynamic they have there because obviously Seb was number one and now clearly not,” Hamilton told reporters at Suzuka. Leclerc has been the fastest man on the grid since the summer break, securing four straight pole positions and two race wins.

“From kind of the energy, from the outlook, they’re trying to ramp Charles up to be (number one). Is that good for a team? I don’t think so,” said Hamilton.

Hamilton said he had a similar issue in his

2007 rookie season at McLaren when he partnered Fernando Alonso, and that didn’t end well after the Spaniard was angered by losing his number one status.

“Obviously when I was with Fernando he was the hired number one. But then mid-season they changed that,” recalled Hamilton.

“He was still the number one because he was the highest-paid driver.”

“But then they gave us equal fuel and then you started seeing changes like Montreal and Indianapolis. Then that dynamic shifted, and it obviously didn’t go well for the team,” he added.

“There are drivers that always wanted that number one status. I like to earn that. Start on an equal platform, then either of you can get that number one status on that weekend. Weekend-in, weekend-out.”

Mercedes can secure a record sixth successive constructors’ championship with another one-two in Japan. “It’s pretty special,” said Hamilton. “I’m really proud to be a part of it.”

Hamilton knows a victory Sunday will leave only his teammate Valtteri Bottas able to catch him in the remaining four races.

But Saturday’s qualifying and practice have been put in doubt by the approach of Super Typhoon Hagibis, which has already caused havoc with the cancellation of two Rugby World Cup games. Japanese Grand Prix organisers will decide at noon on Friday (0300 GMT) whether to scrap Saturday’s schedule, saying the safety of fans and drivers was their top priority.

A relaxed Hamilton, though, did not seem bothered by Hagibis, categorised as “violent” — the highest level on the Japan storm scale, even if it causes qualifying to be shifted to Sunday morning.

“I love driving in the rain,” Hamilton said, seemingly oblivious to Hagibis potentially lashing Suzuka with torrents of water and winds well in excess of 100 kilometres per hour. — AFP



# Opener Agarwal hits ton as India dominate South Africa

**PUNE:** Mayank Agarwal hit his second century in successive matches on the opening day of the second Test against South Africa yesterday and said his side should aim for a 500-run first innings. The opener, who made a double century in India's opening Test win, scored 108 after the hosts elected to bat.

India were 273-3 when bad light forced an early end to play, with skipper Virat Kohli unbeaten on 63 and vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane on 18. Kohli and Rahane put on 75 runs for the fourth wicket to thwart South Africa's determined bowlers who kept them under pressure as the gloom crept in.

Agarwal, 28, said he was thrilled with his performance. "The team is in a good position, winning the toss, batting first and with one batsman short, it's a good thing to make runs... 450-500 would be nice," Agarwal said.

"Try and get big runs in the first innings... (that) could help us in case we don't want to bat again. It could really put pressure on the South Africans." Kohli, leading the Test side for the 50th time, reached his half-century with a boundary off fast bowler Vernon Philander.

But Agarwal took the lead role despite being hit on the helmet from a bouncer by debutant pacer Anrich Nortje. He went on to hit Nortje

for three glorious off drives in one over before lunch. The right-handed batsman put on 138 runs for the second wicket with Cheteshwar Pujara, who made 58, to steady the innings after the fall of Rohit Sharma early in the day.

He was eventually caught in the slips by South African captain Faf du Plessis — one of fast bowler Kagiso Rabada's three wickets for the day. "There were periods where I was getting boundaries very easily, there were periods where they bowled very good line and lengths and were testing the bouncer as well," said Agarwal, who is playing his sixth Test since making his debut last year.

Rabada also claimed Sharma, who edged the ball into the gloves of wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock for 14 in the 10th over. That was a disappointment for Sharma, who hit twin centuries in his first run as Test opener in Visakhapatnam where India took a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Rabada struck again to get Pujara, caught again by du Plessis, just before tea. Pujara, who was dropped by Temba Bavuma before he scored, hit a six and nine fours.

Rabada returned figures of 3-48 in 18.1 overs. Victory for India in the series will see them beat the record of 10 straight home series wins they share with Australia. — AFP



**PUNE:** India's captain Virat Kohli plays a shot on the first day of second test cricket match between India and South Africa at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune yesterday. — AFP

## Naomi Osaka picks Japanese citizenship with eye on Olympics

**TOKYO:** Tennis star Naomi Osaka has decided to choose Japanese nationality with an eye on the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, public broadcaster NHK reported yesterday. Osaka, who has a Japanese mother and a Haitian father, told NHK she has completed an administrative step to obtain Japanese citizenship ahead of her birthday next week.

Japanese law stipulates that a Japanese with more than one nationality must choose one before turning 22 years old. "It gives me a special feeling to try to go to the Olympics to represent Japan," the two-time Grand Slam champion told the broadcaster in an interview in Tokyo. "I think I will be able to put more of my emotion into it by playing for the pride of the country," she said, according to the article published in Japanese on the NHK website. Osaka added she wants to aim for the gold although she is also worried as expectations will be high.

The young tennis sensation is a household name in Japan, where her every move is followed feverishly by local media, particularly when she is in the country of her mother's birth. She is the face of several leading Japanese brands, including the carrier ANA, and "Naomi-chan" — as she is affectionately known — was the main attraction at last month's Pan Pacific Open in Osaka, which she won.

But she has faced controversies over her dual heritage in a nation that is fairly racially homogeneous, as well as scrutiny for her imperfect Japanese language skills — though others insist they add to her charm.

Mixed-race children can often face prejudice in Japan, although attitudes among younger generations are changing. Osaka became the first Japanese player to win a Grand Slam last year after beating Serena Williams at the US Open. — AFP



Naomi Osaka

## Cardinals swamp Braves, book NL showdown with Nationals

**LOS ANGELES:** The St. Louis Cardinals exploded for 10 runs in the biggest first inning in Major League Baseball playoff history on Wednesday, routing the Atlanta Braves 13-1 to book a National League Championship Series showdown with the Washington Nationals.

The Nationals advanced with a 7-3 extra-innings victory over the Dodgers in Los Angeles, where Howie Kendrick belted a grand slam in the 10th to complete Washington's rally from an 0-3 deficit. Kendrick's blast off Dodgers relief pitcher Joe Kelly came after Los Angeles' three-time Cy Young Award-winner Clayton Kershaw — pitching in relief — gave up home runs to Anthony Rendon and Juan Soto on back-to-back pitches in the eighth inning. With the score tied at 3-3, Kelly walked Adam Eaton to lead off the 10th and Rendon doubled before Soto was intentionally walked.

Kendrick fouled off a pitch, then smacked a 97 mph fastball over the wall in center field.

"You know what, it was electric," said Kendrick, whose massive shot atoned for three fielding errors in the series. "Probably the best moment of my career."

The Dodgers had seized the early initiative with homers from Max Muncy and Enrique Hernandez.

The Nats pulled a run back when Soto singled in a run in the sixth. Their late-game turnaround gave the Nationals a 3-2 win in the best-of-five National League Division Series and denied the Dodgers — winners of a whopping 106 regular-season games — in their bid to reach the World Series for a third

straight year. They fell in MLB's championship showcase to the Houston Astros in 2017 and to the Boston Red Sox last year. Instead the Nationals — who rallied from a 3-0 eighth-inning deficit to beat the Milwaukee Brewers in the NL wild card game — will battle the Cardinals for a World Series berth in the NL Championship Series starting on Friday.

"We never gave up," Kendrick said of a Nats team that started the season 19-31. "The city had faith in us, the fans had faith in us. We believed in ourselves, everybody came through for us."

All the drama came early in Atlanta, where Braves starting pitcher Mike Foltynewicz — who pitched seven scoreless innings in a game-two victory — retired just one batter before he was pulled in the first frame.

Tommy Edman, Dexter Fowler and Kolten Wong each had two-run doubles, Cardinals pitcher Jack Flaherty walked with the bases loaded to force in a run, and St. Louis scored their final run of the first on a strikeout when Braves catcher Brian McCann couldn't corral a pitch in the dirt. St. Louis sent 14 batters to the plate before Braves relief pitcher Max Fried finally ended the inning.

"It's hard to score 10 runs in an inning without hitting a home run," mused Cardinals manager Mike Shildt. "But just great at-bats, relentless."

It was the most ever runs in the first inning of a post-season game and tied for the most runs in any inning of a playoff game.

"I don't know that I've seen that many guys hit in the first inning that quick in my entire life," said shell-shocked Braves manager Brian Snitker. "I don't know. It wasn't how we drew it up, I know that."

"That thing just kept rolling and we couldn't stop it." The Cardinals' 13 total runs matched their total in the first four games of the best-of-five NL Division Series. The Braves endured their 10th straight playoff series defeat while the Cardinals wrapped up a 3-2 series win to reach the NLCS for the first time since 2014. — AFP



## Sports

# Kipchoge compares sub two-hour marathon to going to the moon

**VIENNA:** Kenya's world record holder Eliud Kipchoge has compared running a sub two-hour marathon to going to the moon before his unofficial attempt in Vienna tomorrow to become the first athlete to break the barrier.

"I am running to make history, to show that no human is limited. It's not about money, it's about showing a generation of people that there are no limits," Kipchoge, who will make his second attempt to break the two-hour mark, told reporters.

The 34-year-old Olympic champion set the world record of 2:01.39 at the Berlin marathon last September, smashing the previous one by 78 seconds, but said Saturday's race is a completely different challenge.

"Running Berlin and running Vienna are different. Running Berlin is for winning and running a world record, Vienna is like going to the moon," he added. A 41-man pacing squad will support Kipchoge, who missed out by 26 seconds in Monza, Italy, in May 2017.

Kipchoge said he had chosen Vienna as it was a "sporting city", the course was fast and because of the Prater park. "It's a natural environment," he said. "I am feeling well. I have run on the course and it is a good course. It is flat and very fast and in the park where we can enjoy the environment. I am ready for tomorrow," he said.

The sport's governing body, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), will not recognise the run as an official record because it is not in open competition and it uses in and out pacemakers.

In Monza, Kipchoge also received drinks from a moving motorbike rather than having to collect them from a table. But IAAF president Sebastian Coe told Reuters in an interview last month the milestone would still be important.

"If there's an exciting attempt for getting under two hours for the marathon I'm not sure that most people are going to be sitting there going, 'Well, it wasn't sanctioned as a world record because it wasn't in open competition,'" said Coe.

"I just don't think it matters. It's just a big milestone being met and our sport has space for all sorts of things and I think it will appeal and add value." Organisers of the event, dubbed the INEOS 1.59 challenge, said the exact start time would depend on the weather forecast and would be announced on Friday.

"The current conditions are looking to be optimal for temperature, humidity, wind and precipitation for this Saturday morning," said Robby Ketchell, who leads the weather analysis. He said the temperature



VIENNA: Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge poses for photographers prior to his press conference in Vienna yesterday, prior to his attempt to break the two-hour barrier on the October 12, 2019 marathon in Vienna. —AFP

was expected to be between five and nine degrees Celsius between 0500 and 0800 local time on Saturday when the run is likely to take place.

"After 0800 the temperature is looking

like it will rise slightly, and humidity will drop slightly. For the Challenge we need a 24-hour window of no rain to keep all the surfaces dry and that is currently looking to be the case for tomorrow too." — Reuters

## The marathon: Five milestones of a legendary race

**PARIS:** First run in Athens in 1896 in just under three hours, the marathon has become the classic challenge for thousands of runners around the world every year. As Kenyan Olympic champion Eliud Kipchoge attempts the previously unthinkable feat of breaking the two-hour barrier Saturday, AFP looks back at other marathon milestones.

### 1896: INAUGURAL GAMES GETS GREEK HERO

The inspiration for the feat is the popular, albeit historically inaccurate myth of Pheidippides, the Greek "hemerodromos" (military runner), who is said to have run from the battlefield of Marathon to Athens in 490 BC to announce victory over the Persians, only to die of exhaustion afterwards.

In spite of the fact the story was invented by the satirist Lucian in the second century AD - around 700 years after the Battle of Marathon - Baron de Coubertin, father of the modern Olympics, championed the romance and bravery of the tale to ignite interest in the 1896 Olympics.

Seventeen runners took part in the first Olympic marathon at the inaugural Games in 1896, starting in Marathon and ending in the Olympic stadium in Athens, a distance of just under 40km - a little short of today's standard 42.195-kilometres (26 miles 385 yards).

The first to cross the finish line was a shepherd and former soldier, Spyridon Louis, who became a national hero when he completed the race in two hours and 58 minutes despite stopping to quaff a glass of wine halfway through. Third-place finisher Spyridon Belokas was disqualified after it was discovered that he had completed part of the course in a carriage.

A Greek woman, Stamata Revithi, was denied entry to the

race although contemporary reports claim that she successfully completed the course the day after.

### 1908: MOST FAMOUS LOSER

Twelve years later at the London Games, tiny Italian Dorando Pietri — he stood just 1.59 metres — entered London's White City stadium dehydrated, in agony and drunk with fatigue as he closed in on victory.

He was helped by spectators and half-carried over the line, finishing first in a time of 2hrs 54min 46sec and then collapsing unconscious.

Pietri was disqualified for being helped and the race awarded to Johnny Hayes, who finished 32secs behind, after an appeal from the American team. Moved by his exploit, Queen Alexandra presented Pietri with a gilded silver cup and he became an international celebrity.

That race, which started in Windsor and ended at White City, was the first time the marathon — previously around 40km-long — was run at 42.195km, with an extra 385 yards (352 metres) added to set the finish line in front of the royal box. This would become fixed as its official distance and Hayes' time of 2hrs 55mins 18secs was the first official world record.

### 1960: BAREFOOT BIKILA STUNS WORLD

Ethiopia's Abebe Bikila became an international sporting icon at the 1960 Rome Olympics, running barefoot to victory on his way to setting a new world record of 2hrs 15min 16sec and making history as the first African to win the Olympic marathon.

Bikila twice passed the Obelisk of Axum — erected opposite the Circus Maximus in 1937 after it was taken from Ethiopia by the Fascist regime — and raced up an ancient Apian Way lit by Italian soldiers holding torches on his way to finishing at the Arch of Constantine just by the Colosseum.

He was nearly 28 when he won the marathon, which was staged in the late afternoon and evening due to the punishing late summer heat. The former soldier, and member of the imperial bodyguard of ruler Haile Selassie, retained his title four

years later in Tokyo — he was the first person to win two Olympic marathons - and paved the way for an era of African distance running dominance.

### 1967: WOMEN JOIN THE PACK

Ever since Stamata Revithi was prevented from running in the 1896 Olympics, women were banned from taking part in marathons, officially for reasons of health and femininity. But in 1967 a 20-year-old journalism student, Kathrine Switzer, defied the ban and ran in the Boston marathon, becoming the first woman officially to complete the course.

She gained entry by registering as KV Switzer and was issued race number 261. On seeing her during the race, one organiser tried to remove her bib and expel her but was prevented by her coach and her partner, a hammer thrower.

The scene was captured by a photographer and travelled the world, turning Switzer into a feminist icon. Fired by anger and a desire to show that women could run the distance, Switzer completed the race in 4hrs 20mins.

The Boston marathon was officially opened to women in 1972 and in 1984 women ran the Olympic marathon for the first time. Switzer won the New York marathon in 1974 and in 2017, at the age of 70, she returned to Boston. Again wearing bib number 261, she finished in 4hrs 44mins 31secs.

### 2018: RECORD SMASHED

On a flat course and with a finish line at the Brandenburg Gate, the Berlin marathon has gained a reputation as the ideal circuit for setting new world records. Eliud Kipchoge did just that in September 2018 with a lightning quick time of 2hrs 1min 39secs, smashing Dennis Kimetto's previous record by an astonishing 78 seconds. The Kenyan had taken inspiration from a run he made in May 2017 when he clocked 2hrs 25secs on a special track at the Monza National Autodrome in Italy. It was the fastest run over the marathon distance but because of the time trial tactics used it is not recognised by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). Kipchoge will try again to break the two-hour barrier in Vienna tomorrow. —AFP



# Iranian women attend first soccer match in 40 years

**TEHRAN:** Iranian women entered the country's national stadium in Tehran yesterday after being able to purchase tickets for a national team game for the first time in 40 years.

Women have been banned from watching men's games since shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution with only a few exceptions made for small groups on rare occasions.

But under pressure from world governing body FIFA and women's rights campaigners, Iranian authorities earmarked around 3,000 tickets for them to yesterday's World Cup Asian qualifier against Cambodia in the 78,000 capacity Azadi Stadium.

The tickets are for a special women's only section of the stadium, a decision that has been criticised by some campaigners who would prefer women to be able to attend with their male family members.

Footage posted on social media showed women arriving at the stadium more than two hours before the scheduled kick-off time.

The women waved flags and blew 'vuvuzela' horns while the rest of the stadium was still mostly empty.

But while campaigners have welcomed the access granted for yesterday's game, it is unclear if such scenes will become the norm in Iran.

A report posted by the semi-official Fars news agency warned that women attending yes-

terday's match could be exposed to foul language, drug use and even violence.

"Now that the government has decided to let women into Azadi stadium ... we must be hopeful that the spectators will try to respect Iranian women in order to change the public atmosphere of the stadium," the report said.

FIFA stepped up pressure on Iran to meet commitments allowing women to attend World Cup qualifiers following the death last month of Sahar Khodayari, who set herself on fire to protest against her arrest for trying to get into a match. Dubbed "Blue Girl" online for her favourite team Esteghlal's colours, Khodayari had feared being jailed for six months by the Islamic Revolutionary Court for trying to enter a stadium dressed as a man.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino has urged Iranian authorities to open up stadiums to women for all games, not just World Cup qualifiers. The sport's governing body has sent officials to Tehran to monitor access for women at the match and said it will continue to press for their inclusion.

"FIFA's stance on the access of women to the stadiums in Iran has been firm and clear: women have to be allowed into football stadiums in Iran. For all football matches," it said in a statement.

"Further details on the next steps to be implemented to ensure the future access of women to



**TEHRAN:** Iranian women cheer during the World Cup Qatar 2022 Group C qualification football match between Iran and Cambodia at the Azadi stadium in the capital Tehran yesterday. — AFP

the stadiums in Iran will follow once we have performed a thorough assessment of yesterday's match based on the input provided by the FIFA delegation that is present in Tehran." — Reuters

## Argentina coach hails 'positives' despite Messi absence in Germany draw

**DORTMUND:** Lionel Scaloni praised his battling Argentina side, missing Lionel Messi, as they scored second-half goals to earn a 2-2 draw in a friendly against an experimental Germany team Wednesday.

The Germans flew into a 2-0 lead with first-half goals by Serge Gnabry and Kai Havertz in Dortmund before Lucas Alario turned the game when he came on for Argentina with an hour gone. The Leverkusen striker pulled a goal back, then set up Lucas Ocampos for a deserved late equaliser.

"We matured during the game," said Argentina coach Scaloni. "We made two or three mistakes in the first half, but got a grip in the second half, were more patient and we take a lot of positives for the future. "I was impressed with the attitude, we didn't give up when we went 2-0 down." Germany head coach Joachim Loew admitted his side faded after a bright start. "We wanted to be in the game right from the off, but unfortunately we couldn't hold on for 90 minutes," said Loew.

"We lost a few balls, a bit of courage and got into trouble." Loew handed out four debuts in Dortmund. Freiburg defender Robin Koch and striker Luca Waldschmidt started, then Leverkusen forward Nadiem Amiri and Schalke midfielder Suat Serdar came on for second-half debuts.

Loew was forced into a hastily re-arranged defence as Koch replaced centre-back Niklas Stark, who pulled out before kick-off with a stomach bug. Despite 13 withdrawals due to either illness or injury, Germany impressed early against an Argentina team missing Messi, Sergio Aguero and Angel di Maria.

With Messi suspended for comments made at the Copa America, Juventus' Paulo Dybala partnered Lautaro Martinez up front



**DORTMUND:** Argentina's midfielder Lucas Ocampos, Germany's defender Lukas Klostermann and Argentina's midfielder Leandro Paredes (L-R) vie for the ball during the friendly football match Germany v Argentina at the Signal-Iduna Park in Dortmund, western Germany. — AFP

for Argentina. The friendly was a repeat of the 2014 World Cup final, yet Argentina's Manchester United defender Marcos Rojo was the only survivor when the Germans won in Rio de Janeiro. Rojo partnered Manchester City veteran Nicolas Otamendi in an Argentina defence which crumbled early on.

A week after scoring four goals for Bayern Munich at Tottenham, Gnabry put Germany ahead on 15 minutes. The winger used his pace when Atletico Madrid's Angel Correa lost possession to get in behind the defence to stab the ball past Argentina goalkeeper Augustin Marchesin.

When Rojo then lost the ball to Waldschmidt, Gnabry turned provider, using his pace to present Havertz with a simple tap-in on 22 minutes. It should have been 3-0 when Brandt just failed to connect with a Niklas Sule header as Germany looked like they would run away with it.

However, the South Americans had the best of the second-half, starting when Scaloni put Alario on for Dybala on 62 minutes. Alario showed his strength in the air to head past Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen four minutes later. — AFP

## Euro 2020 hopefuls England must tighten up at the back: Trent

**LONDON:** Trent Alexander-Arnold says England must improve their defensive record if they are to stand any chance of winning Euro 2020. Gareth Southgate's side can assure themselves of a place in next year's finals if they beat the Czech Republic in their Group A qualifier in Prague today. England are firm favourites to advance after a perfect start to the qualification campaign, including a 5-0 win over their next opponents at Wembley in March. England have a wealth of attacking options including Harry Kane, Raheem Sterling and Jadon Sancho but have had defensive problems in recent matches.

A 5-3 win over Kosovo at Southampton last month did little to paper over cracks that showed when the Netherlands won 3-1 in the Nations League semi-final in June. Individual errors accounted for many of the goals shipped across those two games as Southgate continues to strive for a settled back four. "If we want to be regarded as one of the best teams in Europe and go far in the Euros, and try and win the competition, our clean sheets and goals conceded must be fewer," Liverpool full-back Alexander-Arnold said.

"We have to concede fewer goals. As defenders, as a team and as a unit we know where to improve and where to work on. "Some games, it just happens. We will analyse what went wrong and try and make sure it does not happen again." Champions League-winning right-back Alexander-Arnold will battle with Kieran Trippier for a place in Southgate's team. James Maddison has withdrawn from the England squad for the two Euro 2020 qualifiers due to illness. The Leicester midfielder, 22, has made an impressive start to the Premier League campaign and was in strong contention to make a senior debut. — AFP





BANGKOK: File photo taken on August 3, 2019, Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon reacts after beating compatriot Pornpawee Chochuwong during their women's singles semi-final match in Bangkok. Ratchanok bears "no fault" after testing positive for doping, the sport's governing body said yesterday. — AFP

## Thai badminton star cleared of doping

See Page 44