



**3** 6,000 people covered by Food Bank's Al-Ashayat Bank project with Awqaf



**11** BA cancels almost all UK flights in historic strike



**24** Lebanon's Hezbollah says it downed Israeli drone

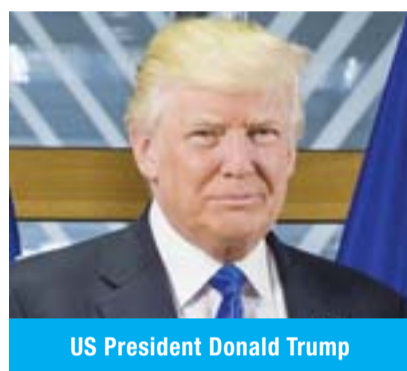


**28** Nadal wins 19th Grand Slam title in 5-set US Open thriller



# Crude gets boost as new Saudi minister commits to output cuts

Riyadh flags plan to enrich uranium • Saudi reforms start to yield results: IMF



US President Donald Trump



HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah

## Trump looking forward to meet Amir upon recovery

WASHINGTON: White House spokesman John Derry said in a statement that US President Donald Trump wishes his friend HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will recover quickly after his admission at a hospital in the US to complete medical checkups. President Trump has been informed that his scheduled meeting with HH the Amir on Sept 12 has been postponed to a later date, the White House spokesman said. The president is looking forward to meet HH the Amir

when he recovers, Derry added. HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad is greatly respected and has remained a "grand partner to the United States in the face of challenges in the region (the Middle East)", he said. Kuwaiti Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah announced on Sunday that HH the Amir had been admitted at a hospital in the US to complete medical checkups, thus his scheduled meeting with Trump had been adjourned to a date to be set later. — KUNA

ABU DHABI: Saudi Arabia's new energy minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, said yesterday that oil production cuts would benefit all exporting nations, in an indication he will support further reductions to address an oversupplied market and sagging prices. In his first comments since being appointed by his father King Salman on Sunday, the minister signaled no major change in approach in Saudi Arabia, the de facto OPEC leader which pumps about a third of the cartel's oil. "The pillars of our oil policy are pre-determined and will not change," he told Saudi broadcaster Al-Arabiya.

The prince was in Abu Dhabi to attend the World Energy Congress, followed by a meeting on Thursday of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) of the OPEC+ alliance for a supply cut deal reached last year. The ministers will consider fresh reductions, even though analysts are doubtful such a move would succeed in bolstering crude prices which have been badly dented by the US-China trade war.

Crude prices are moving around levels of \$60 a barrel, in contrast with more than \$75 a year ago, but were given a boost Monday by the Saudi official's comments, with West Texas Intermediate oil for October delivery advancing 53 cents to \$57.05 a barrel. Prince Abdulaziz said that the trade war, which has triggered fears of a global recession, has cast a "fog" over the oil market. However, he appeared to swing his support



ABU DHABI: (From left) UAE's head of State for National Security Hazza bin Zayed Al-Nahyan tours with Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman and UAE's Minister of Energy and Industry Suhail Al-Mazrouei during the opening ceremony of the 24th World Energy Congress yesterday. — AFP

behind further curbs to rebalance the crude market. "Cutting output will benefit all members of OPEC," he told Al-Arabiya on the sidelines of the conference, but added to reporters later that "it would be wrong" for him to pre-empt the decision of the alliance.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) last week lowered its growth forecast for oil demand for 2019 and 2020, blaming the ugly US-China trade dispute which has triggered fears of a global recession. "If I (am) to be concerned with IEA projections, I'll probably be on Prozac all the time," Prince

Abdulaziz said with a laugh, referring to the well-known antidepressant.

The prince also made light of gloomy depictions of the global outlook. "Do we have a recession today? No. They're projecting a recession subject to a possible trade war. Where is it?" he told reporters on the sidelines of the conference. "Do you really believe that the US and China and those other countries involved in this issue would not have the wisdom and sensibility to try and overcome these issues?"

Continued on Page 24

## News in brief

### Syrian found guilty of maid's murder

KUWAIT: Reports from Manila quote the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs as saying that one of the employers of slain Filipina worker Joanna Demafelis was found guilty of murder. The Philippine Star said the Syrian district criminal court found Mouna Ali Hassoun guilty of killing Demafelis. Hassoun is the wife of Lebanese Nader Essam Assaf, who is also charged with murder in Lebanon. Both Assaf and Hassoun were sentenced to death (in absentia) by hanging by Kuwait's Criminal Court last year. In Feb 2018, the body of Demafelis was found in a freezer in an abandoned apartment in Maidan Hawally. — Agencies

### Call to ban non-halal protein bars

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) has called for imposing a ban on all imports of several kinds of protein bars for including non-halal ingredients. In a press statement Sunday, PAFN Secretary General Adel Al-Suwait said the authority singled out Snickers, Mars, Bounty and Milky Way protein bars for the ban. He pointed that the authority has found that these products had non-halal ingredients. — KUNA (See Page 4)

### India car sales record worst-ever fall

MUMBAI: Passenger car sales in India plunged by 41 percent in their worst monthly fall on record, data showed yesterday, as the weakening economy hit demand and manufacturers called for government relief. It was the tenth straight month of falls in car sales amid soft consumer demand in Asia's third-largest economy, where growth slowed for the fifth straight quarter in the April-to-June period to 5.0 percent. Sales of commercial vehicles tumbled by 39 percent, while motorcycles and scooters dropped by 22 percent, the data showed. Thousands of jobs have also been lost across the sector. — (See Page 12)

### 17 killed in Morocco bus crash

RABAT: At least 17 people were killed in Morocco when floodwaters overturned their bus in the kingdom's southeast, authorities said yesterday in a revised toll. Rescuers have been searching for bodies since the accident Sunday, when the bus flipped on a bridge in a valley near the city of Errachidia, authorities said. They said a further 29 passengers, with various injuries but in "stable" condition, had been transferred to a hospital in Errachidia. Rescuers were continuing their search. — AFP

## Qatar road turned azure to cool city

DOHA: Qatar has turned a busy stretch of road in the capital Doha bright blue as part of an experiment to cool the tarmac surface and reduce the temperature of surrounding areas. Temperatures in the desert emirate sometimes reach 50 degrees Celsius and heat was a major concern when the country was named as host of the 2022 World Cup. While the

tournament will be hosted in the cooler winter months to avoid the hottest period, Doha still grapples with stifling conditions in the summer.

High temperatures can cause car dashboards to crack, paintwork to discolor and plastic trim to melt - encouraging authorities to look for innovative solutions. A 200 m stretch of a downtown thoroughfare leading to the waterfront has been coated with a one millimeter-thick blue heat-reflective pigment. Over an 18-month trial period Ashghal, Qatar's public works authority, will test if the new surface effectively brings down the temperature

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DOHA: A busy stretch of road is painted bright blue as part of an experiment to cool the tarmac surface. — AFP

## Patients die as Manila traffic jams block ambulances

MANILA: Gridlock in Manila is costing lives as ambulances stuck in traffic face severe delays in the race against the clock to reach the city's hospitals, medics warn. Special lanes for emergency vehicles are not enforced, the infrastructure is outdated, and local drivers are often unwilling or unable to make way - a situation experts say is causing patients to die en route.

"You feel empty. It is as if you were not given a chance to do everything in your capacity to help," ambulance driver and paramedic Joseph Laylo told AFP. "If the traffic was not that bad it could have saved the patient," he added, recalling how he lost a patient when



MANILA: This photo taken on Aug 5, 2019 shows an ambulance negotiating through rush hour traffic along the EDSA highway. — AFP

congestion tripled the time to hospital. Even with an encyclopedic knowledge of short cuts or aggressive driving such as blasting their horns or bumping unyielding vehicles, it is not always enough to arrive in time.

Continued on Page 24

## Abdalla, diplomat turned Sudan's first female FM

KHARTOUM: Asma Mohamed Abdalla, a seasoned diplomat who was sacked decades ago by now ousted leader Omar Al-Bashir, has become Sudan's first female foreign minister as the country transitions to civilian rule. Born in 1946, Abdalla was sworn in on Sunday as a member of the country's new 18-member cabinet, the first since Bashir was overthrown by the army in April. Bashir, who had seized power in an Islamist-backed coup in 1989, was deposed following months of nation-

wide protests against his ironfisted rule.

Dressed in a white traditional Sudanese thobe and wearing spectacles, Abdalla took the oath as foreign affairs minister at the presidential palace along with 17 other ministers. The swearing-in ceremony was held in the presence of members of the joint civilian-military ruling sovereign council, including its chief General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan. The sovereign council will oversee a 39-month transition period as Sudan embarks on the road to civilian rule, the main demand of protesters.



Asma Abdalla

Continued on Page 24

## With one suicide every 40 seconds, WHO urges action

GENEVA: Nearly 800,000 people commit suicide each year - more than those killed by war and homicide or breast cancer, the World Health Organization said yesterday, urging action to avert the tragedies. In a fresh report, the UN health agency said that the global suicide rate had fallen somewhat between 2010 and 2016, but the number of deaths has remained stable because of a growing global population. "Despite progress, one person still dies every 40 seconds from suicide," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement, insisting that "every death is a tragedy for family, friends and colleagues."

The global suicide rate in 2016 - the last year for which data was available - stood at 10.5 per 100,000 people. But rates varied widely, with suicides in some countries as low as five per 100,000, while Guyana, which topped the scales, registered a rate of over 30 per 100,000. Overall, the global suicide rate fell by nearly 10 percent from 2010 to 2016, with the western Pacific showing declines of nearly 20 percent and Southeast Asia registering a decline of only 4.2 percent.

The Americas meanwhile was the only region that showed an uptick in suicides, with a six percent hike over the six-year period. "We know that in the region of the Americas, access to firearms and guns is an important means of suicide," Alexandra Fleischmann of WHO's mental health division, told reporters in Geneva in answer to a question. The overall decline is explained by the fact that a number of countries - 38 in total - have put in place suicide prevention strategies, WHO said, stressing however that many more countries must follow suit.

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## Local

# Amir's global contributions boost Kuwait's international standing

## Kuwait is still extending its growing charitable activities

**KUWAIT:** The contributions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah have boosted Kuwait's international standing, said Minister of Commerce and Industry and State Minister for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan yesterday. In a press statement, Al-Roudhan congratulated His Highness the Amir on the fifth anniversary of naming him as "Leader of Humanitarian Action" and Kuwait as "Center of Humanitarian Action" by the United Nations.

These contributions put Kuwait on the map of humanitarian action through His Highness's effort provided for humanitarian work, as Kuwait humanitarian assistance has reached all over the world, Al-Roudhan said. HH the Amir's achievements extended to all parts of the world, earned him the title, "Leader of Humanitarian Action", as it reflects the great role played by His Highness in the service of humanity and for pursuit of peace and stability in the world, he added.

Elsewhere, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information has installed two booths depicting the fifth anniversary of the UN designation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as "Leader of Humanitarian Action" and Kuwait as "Center of Humanitarian Action." The booths were placed at the airport terminal T-4 and the 360 mall, said Mesfer Al-Hayan, the director of the exhibitions at the ministry, in a statement yesterday. The ministry is also distributing publications about the humanitarian and development

role on part of His Highness, as well as shedding a light on Kuwait's role in offering aid to various parts of the world to help peoples afflicted with hunger, poverty and natural catastrophes.

In related news, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) yesterday also heaped praise on HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, saying his name has become synonymous with philanthropy. The remarks were made by the Kuwaiti charity's chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer come five years to the day where the United Nations honored His Highness the Amir, ultimately christening him a "Humanitarian Leader" in recognition of his immense contributions towards humanitarian causes.

He said HH the Amir has always espoused timely and effective aid for those less fortunate, citing Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, amongst other countries, as the beneficiaries of Kuwaiti aid. This year has been nothing short of remarkable for KRCS in terms of the scope of aid the charity has given, he highlighted, saying the Kuwaiti people are "proud of His Highness the Amir" for his determination to rid the world of human misery.

### Officials praise Amir

Kuwait's Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri has stated that the 2014 UN honoring of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah was well-deserved and a recognition of Kuwait's great record of humanitarian activities. In a press statement

issued Sunday of the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the UN honoring of His Highness the Amir, Al-Jabri, also minister of state for youth affairs, hailed the prevailing love and respect of His Highness the Amir across the world.

There is no global consensus on the love of a leader similar to that of HH the Amir who revived and still is promoting the common human values, he said. He described HH the Amir as a leader of initiatives and a man who guides the world towards the better future for humanity. "HH the Amir is a mirror through which everyone sees his/her human soul which hates oppression whatever its kind or cause," he said. Minister Al-Jabri said that the UN honoring of His Highness the Amir was a source of pride for all Arabs and Muslims and a recognition of all positive sentiments towards humans who suffer anywhere.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's immense contributions towards humanitarian causes have placed Kuwait in the upper echelons of the international community, said an official on Sunday. Some five years after HH the Amir was christened "Humanitarian Leader" by the United Nations, the Governor of the Capital Governorate Sheikh Talal Al-Sabah said that "no words can adequately describe" his elation over the accolade.

HH the Amir's UN moniker is well-deserved given how his prolific career was devoted to the betterment of humanity, the Kuwaiti official emphasized. The



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

recognition HH the Amir has received from the biggest intergovernmental body in the world will forever stand the test of time, he added, describing it as the highlight of his career and something that all Kuwaitis should be proud of. He went on to wish the country continued prosperity and success under the watchful eye of His Highness the Amir. — KUNA

## Kuwaiti diplomat confirms support for Palestinians

**CAIRO:** Kuwaiti Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Ambassador Fahad Al-Awadhi on Sunday confirmed Kuwait's continuous support of the Palestinian cause that takes huge attention from all Arab countries. This came in a statement by Ambassador Al-Awadhi to KUNA on the sidelines of Kuwait participation at the 152nd session of Arab League Council at permanent delegates' level.

Al-Awadhi also pointed out that the Council is keen on discussing every issue related to the Palestinian cause in light of the continuous Israeli occupation and violations against the holy sites and the Palestinian people. He also stressed Kuwait continues supporting the brothers in Palestine, whether through UN Security Council as Kuwait is the only Arab member of the Council or at the humanitarian level through financial support.

He stressed the need of international community to support the budget of the Palestinian Authority, Al-Quds Fund and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and other bodies that support the Palestinian people. The session discussed solidarity with Lebanon, developments in Syria, Libya and Yemen and the occupation of the three Arab islands Lesser Tunb, Greater Tunb and Abu Musa of the United Arab Emirates in the Arabian Gulf. — KUNA

## China keen on strengthening strategic relations with Kuwait

**BEIJING:** China is keen to strengthen the historical and strategic relations with Kuwait within the framework of the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping, a Chinese official said yesterday.

This came during a meeting between the Secretary General of the Central Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China in Tai'an City, Cui Honggang and Kuwaiti Ambassador to China Samih Hayat, on the sidelines of his participation in the International Investment Cooperation Forum and the opening of the International Mount Tai Climbing Festival.

Honggang said there are tremendous potentials to develop the existing strategic relations between the two countries, noting that the Chinese president and His Highness the Amir have met several times and have drawn up the roadmap for developing bilateral relations. He called for speeding up the implementation of the agreements reached by the leaderships of the two countries, and enhancing



BEIJING: Cui Honggang speaks with Kuwaiti Ambassador to China Samih Hayat. — KUNA

cooperation and working together to facilitate the implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

"We look forward to working closely with Kuwait in protecting the multilateral free trade system", he said, adding that Kuwait, through its leading role in negotiations, will contribute to finalizing the signing of a free trade agreement between Kuwait and the rest of the GCC with China. The Chinese official also praised the great role played by Kuwait in the humanitarian and charitable fields, expressing his country's congratulations on the fifth anniversary of UN honoring of His Highness

the Amir as "Humanitarian Leader".

For his part, Ambassador Hayat stressed the importance of continuous communication at all levels to deepen and strengthen strategic relations with China. During the meeting, Hayat underscored necessity of activating fruitful cooperation through the implementation of the agreements signed between the governments of the two countries, and pushing for further development of the comprehensive strategic partnership between Kuwait and China. He confirmed that China has become Kuwait's first trading partner. — KUNA

## Kuwait-US relations have evolved into a strategic partnership

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait-US relations have been solid and friendly for more than 100 years and have evolved with time into strategic partnership at diverse levels. The United States of America recognized the State of Kuwait only three months after independence, on September 22, 1961, and later on, diplomatic relations were established. These ties have been based on principles upon which Kuwait has worked out its foreign policy and relations with other states; namely non-intervention in nations' domestic affairs, good neighborliness policy, neutrality and cooperation at economic and diplomatic levels.

Moreover, Kuwait seeks to attain other objectives with diplomacy and other means for safeguarding its security, stability and territorial sanctity, as well as the Gulf security, stability, Muslims' solidarity and efforts for a just and permanent settlement for the Palestinian cause.

On these grounds, the Kuwaiti-US relations have been maintained: a relationship of understanding, clarity, friendship and cooperation for service of the two peoples' interests. Corner stone of these relations dated back to 105 with construction of the American Hospital in October 1941. In the 60s and 70s of the past century, the relations were friendly, but the 80s, the relationship turned into a partnership with the hoisting of the American Flag on Kuwaiti oil tankers during the Iran-Iraq war.

In the 90s, it became a strategic bond — namely when Washington led an international coalition for liberating Kuwait. These relations deepened further after Washington, in 2004, classified Kuwait as a Major non-NATO Ally (MNN). The two countries are also bonded with close economic and commercial bonds. American exports to Kuwait, in 2017, hit USD 5.2 billion and Kuwait exports to US, reached USD three billion.

There are more than 200 American companies in Kuwait, with 75 American restaurants along with 4,000 American products in the domestic market. Kuwait and the US signed in February 2014 a framework agreement for commerce and investment, in an initial step toward an aspired free trade accord. In light of the agreement, the Kuwaiti-US council for commerce and investment was established. Its first meeting was held in May 2004 in Washington.

At the educational and scientific levels, a large number of Kuwaiti students attain their higher studies in the US. Their number, in 2017, reached more than 14,000. The US is a main arms supplier to Kuwait and Kuwaiti military cadets receive training and military education at American academies and universities. Kuwait and Washington, since 1984, have worked out several deals to buy arms including advanced warplanes, missiles and air defense systems.

Following Kuwait's liberation on February 26, 1991, the Kuwaiti-American military cooperation was crowned with a security pact, in September 1991, according to which the two countries would cooperate in various military sectors, training and security. On March 20, 2019, a decree was issued approving a memo regarding strategic dialogue — the basis to pursue boosting the strategic partnership. — KUNA



Sheikh Abdullah Al-Humoud Al-Sabah

**KUWAIT:** It is imperative to ensure the protection of the environment given the fact that it is among the most enduring signals of humanity, said a minister yesterday. Kuwait is eager to work closely with global bodies, including the United Nations, in efforts to guarantee a healthy and sustainable environment, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel said amid Kuwait-hosted talks over environment conservation.

Addressing member states of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the minister emphasized that cooperation is the most reliable strategy to ensure that environmental goals ultimately come to fruition. Highlighting the importance of such gatherings, IUCN president Zhang Xincheng said the talks provide a chance to assess and re-evaluate plans, pinpointing water scarcity and climate change as the most perennial environmental challenges.

Jordan's Minister of Agriculture and Environment Ibrahim Shahadeh pointed out that it is incumbent upon national governments to throw their weight behind environment conservation efforts, if for no other reason than to guarantee the betterment of



KUWAIT: Officials touring the exhibition on the sidelines of the forum. — KUNA photos



Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel



IUCN president Zhang Xincheng

future generations. On the talks, Kuwait's director general of the Environment Public Authority Sheikh Abdullah Al-Humoud Al-Sabah revealed that more than 100 officials have assembled for the forum, with the common goal of protecting the

environment particularly in Asia. Any environment conservation plan will prove futile if people are not cog-

nizant of the necessity to protect the environment and ensure their wellbeing, he added. — KUNA

Local

# Salem Al-Hamar: 6,000 people covered by Al-Ashayat Bank 2 project with Awqaf

General Manager of Kuwait Food Bank in an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times

**KUWAIT:** General Manager of Kuwait Food Bank Salem Al-Hamar spoke in an exclusive interview with Kuwait Times about its cooperation with the General Secretariat of Awqaf on the Al-Ashayat Bank 2 project. Some excerpts:

**Kuwait Times: Tell us about the Al-Ashayat Bank 2 project.**

**Salem Al-Hamar:** The General Secretariat of Awqaf has renewed its confidence in Kuwait Food Bank to conclude the Al-Ashayat Bank project for the second year in a row. This is consistent with the main objective of the Food Bank - to make the world benefit from the country of humanity. Thanks to God, the Al-Ashayat Bank project in the first phase achieved remarkable success in Kuwait, where it covered the requirements of more than 6,000 needy families in cooperation with the General Secretariat of Awqaf, which provided continuous technical, administrative and moral support for the success of this project - one of the largest charity works held in Kuwait.

**KT: What is the assistance provided by the Food Bank in cooperation with the Awqaf Secretariat in the Al-Ashayat Bank project?**

**Hamar:** The Al-Ashayat Bank project provides food and drink to needy Muslims throughout the year with funding from the Al-Ashayat Bank at the Awqaf Trust. The project aims to distribute necessary aid and supplies to thousands of needy families through a database that is continuously updated to add poor families. Undoubtedly, the Al-Ashayat Bank project aims to help families in need

face living conditions and provide them with a decent way of life.

**KT: After the success of the Al-Ashayat Bank 1 project, what is the goal of the Food Bank for Al-Ashayat Bank 2?**

**Hamar:** Kuwait Food Bank aims to cover the needs of 1,200 families - an average of 6,000 people - every month, making it the largest charity project in the region. This large number of people is covered by the Food Bank through a trained team of volunteers who work to deliver aid to the beneficiaries and also ensure their safety.

**KT: Which are the target groups of the Al-Ashayat Bank 2 project?**

**Hamar:** The Al-Ashayat Bank 2 project supports needy families, orphans and widows with basic food and drink items monthly throughout the year in cooperation with the General Secretariat of Awqaf, which has provided unlimited support towards this charity work. This has led to the success of this huge project, which is the first of its kind in Kuwait and the region due to its wide coverage at the local level. It should also be noted that there are a large number of families who need assistance, especially expatriate families and Yemenis and Syrians, who suffer from major problems. So there is a need to try to bring smiles to the faces of these families and help them by all means. There is a need to strike a balance between foreign aid and internal assistance.

**KT: What are the procedures for beneficiaries to benefit from this project?**



General Manager of Kuwait Food Bank Salem Al-Hamar

**Hamar:** Disabled families living in the country who wish to receive in-kind assistance can submit official documents proving their social situation at the new Food Bank headquarters in Qurtuba. The distribution of food is done away from the media glare in order to preserve the dignity of families. In conclusion, Hamar said charity work is not to achieve honor or for bragging, but is a mandate. He thanked the responsible and honest officials at the General Secretariat of Awqaf for their wonderful efforts and cooperation for the advancement of philanthropy in Kuwait. "We thank the General Secretariat of Awqaf and those in charge for their constructive cooperation with Kuwait Food Bank and their continued support for charitable work, endowment projects and other projects carried out by government agencies and charitable associations," Hamar told Kuwait Times.

## Message from the Azerbaijan ambassador

By Elkhan Gahraman

On September 9, 2019, our friendly and brotherly country the State of Kuwait celebrates the 5th anniversary of the UN honoring and proclamation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah protect him, as a 'Humanitarian Leader' and of Kuwait as a 'Center of Humanitarian Action'. On this notable occasion, I have the pleasure on behalf of the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and that of my own behalf to extend heartfelt congratulations and warmest wishes to HHI the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The well-deserved UN honoring came in recognition of the outstanding contributions of Kuwait, under the wise leadership of HHI the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to humanitarian action worldwide. Since HHI the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's assumption to power in 2006, the volume of Kuwait's humanitar-



ian aid notably increased. Under His Highness' wise leadership, Kuwait has the diplomatic ability to lead the march in support of peace and humanitarian and development initiatives in the region.

HHI the Amir is the first Arab leader who is globally renowned for his generous humanitarian contributions. The State of Kuwait and its leader HHI the Amir Sheikh Sabah have been active in organizing, hosting and partaking in regional and international humanitarian events. Under the visionary leadership of HHI the Amir, the State of Kuwait has achieved tremendous progress that all friendly countries both in the region and the world have appreciated. Using this opportunity, I would like to wish HHI a long life, robust health and continued success in his benevolent and effective activities.



The Head of Mission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Ju Myong Chol hosted a reception on the occasion of 71st National Day at Crowne Plaza Hotel. Higher officials, diplomats and media persons attend the event. —Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Deputy FM heads to Cairo for Arab League ministerial meeting

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah left yesterday to Cairo heading a Kuwaiti delegation participating in the 152 Arab League Council ministerial meeting, scheduled for the next two days. A statement by the foreign ministry said the league's current session is being held under sensitive circumstances in the region, which would double efforts to confront all challenging facing the region. The Kuwaiti delegation includes Assistant Foreign Minister for Arab Affairs Ambassador Fahad Al-Awadhi and Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Foreign Minister office Advisor Talal Al-Shatti. — KUNA



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah

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## Local

## Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The mesmerizing and therapeutic effect one can witness in the Kuwait Aquarium. —KUNA

# KISR launches campaign 'My day without plastic'

## Aims to guide people on how to deal with plastic waste

KUWAIT: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) yesterday affirmed necessity of promoting awareness of hazards resulting from plastic waste noting dissolution of such materials takes a very long time, some require up to 30 years. The warning was made by Dr Samira Al-Sayed Omar, KISR director, on the occasion of launching a campaign themed, "My day without plastic," by KISR's center for environmental research and life sciences.

The campaign aims to guide people on how to deal with plastic waste, shed light on these materials' negative impact on the environment and human health. Plastic materials do dissolve easily, Dr Omar said, adding that some items break apart in a few years but others are of heavy components that require more than 30 years to dissipate.

KISR has set criteria for specifications of plastic bags that are prone to melt away and has submitted recommendations to competent authorities on optimum thermal and chemical methods for generating fuel from hard plastic waste and transforming them into items of high economic feasibility. For his

part, Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said in a statement on sidelines of ceremonial launch of the campaign that the activity aims to preserve the environment and find solutions to plastic contamination in Kuwait.

### Protein bar ban

In other news, the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) has called for imposing a ban on all imports of several kinds of protein bars for including non-halal ingredients. In a press statement Sunday, the PAFN Secretary General Adel Al-Suwait said the authority singled out Snickers, Mars, Bounty and Milky Way protein bars for the ban. He pointed that the authority has found that these products had non-halal ingredients. The PAFN has also proposed banning imports of all kinds of processed or unprocessed ruminant meats from Kazakhstan due to the recent outbreak of the anthrax infection. Meanwhile, the authority advised lifting the ban on imports of goat, cow, and lamb meats from Kyrgyzstan after the end of an anthrax outbreak. It also re-

commended ending the ban on imports of poultry and its products from the southwestern Russian region of Rostov Oblast after the deadly outbreak of the bird flu there ceased.

### Children Channel enrich knowledge

Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri said on Sunday that the Children Channel enrich knowledge of Kuwaiti children and enhance traditions amongst them. In a press statement, on the sidelines of the official launch of Children Channel, Al-Jabri affirmed his keenness to have quality educational and entertainment programs that will be presented to the kids, which would teach the young Kuwaiti generation about national responsibilities to contribute to the country's development. He added the channel achieved its objectives during a trial broadcast period, pointing out that the ministry would execute its plan to update and develop its studios and equipment as well as train Kuwaiti citizens to use the new technology. Al-Jabri thanked all of those who participated in the launch of the Children Channel. —KUNA



KISR director Dr Samira Al-Sayed Omar

## Diabetes Institute holds lecture about fatty liver

KUWAIT: Dr Nicola Guess, Head of the Nutrition Unit at Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), which was founded by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, presented a scientific lecture titled "Fatty Liver, a Hidden Epidemic in Adults and Children". This lecture took place on 8th September, 2019 and was well attended by many healthcare professionals from all over Kuwait. Holding such scientific lectures stems from the Institute's mission which is "to address the diabetes epidemic in Kuwait through focused diabetes, research, integrated prevention, training, education and treatment". It also incorporates the Institute's vision which is "To be the leading diabetes institute in the MENA region and to be recognized internationally".



## Bourse benchmark bleeds 71 more points

KUWAIT: Bursa Kuwait wrapped yesterday's session with the All Share Market Index bleeding up to 71.9 points and settling at 5,863.3 points, with a 1.21 percent decline. Volume of traded shares, under the upper benchmark, amounted to 175.5 million, done through 7,354 spot transactions, valued at KD 39.3 million (approximately USD 133.6 million). The Main Market Index also moved down, shedding 19.7 points reaching 4,783.7 points, by 0.41 percent, amid a stock volume of 94.9 million shares, done in 3,308 spot dealings, valued at KD 7.17 million (USD 24.3 million). Following suit, the Premier Market Index also incurred major losses, moving down by 97.18 points, settling at the level of 6,415.2 points, by 1.49 percent, through stock volume of 80.5 million, done in 4,046 spot deals, valued at KD 32.16 million (USD 109.3 million). —KUNA



## Local

# World Energy Congress kicks off with Kuwaiti participation

## Exploring new energy futures, critical innovation areas and creative strategies

**ABU DHABI:** The 24th World Energy Congress (WEC) kicked off in Abu Dhabi yesterday, gathering ministers, CEOs, policy-makers and industry practitioners from 150 countries including Kuwait to explore new energy futures, critical innovation areas and creative strategies. The WEC leads delegates through a four-day interactive program designed to address the most critical issues facing the global energy industry today, under the theme "Energy for Prosperity", which runs from 9th-12th September, Emirates News Agency (WAM) said.

This Congress is the world's premier energy gathering, offering a unique opportunity for participants to better understand energy issues and solutions from a global perspective, WAM added. UAE Minister of State and Group CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, ADNOC Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, during a speech at the conference opening, reaffirmed UAE's commitment to maintaining and promoting a fully diversified energy mix and remaining a reliable supplier to global energy markets.

Addressing global energy leaders and policymakers at the 24th World Energy Congress currently underway in Abu Dhabi, Al Jaber detailed the mega trends affecting the rise in energy demand driven by population growth and the spending power of middle class consumers. "Over three times the amount of energy currently consumed by all of Europe will be added to global energy demand in the next two decades. To meet this demand, we will need an inclusive response that integrates and optimizes a fully diversified energy mix," he added.

He added that in a world that needs more energy with fewer emissions, ADNOC will continue to priorities

responsible production as it expands its operations. He stressed that meeting the world's energy needs, responsibly and economically will require a renewed spirit of partnership. He noted that this includes partnerships with new sets of investors, who value long-term sustainable returns; partnerships between energy companies where best practices are shared, technology is leveraged, and capital efficiency is maximized; as well as partnerships between consuming and producing nations that recognize the shift in demand from West to East.

For his part, UAE Minister of Energy and Industry, Suhail Al-Mazrouei said, UAE's strategy is to rely on 50 percent of clean energy. Adding UAE is directing its investments towards clean energy and encouraging the world to try to diversify energy sources. The opening ceremony was also attended by, Kuwaiti Minister of Oil, Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel, Undersecretary at the ministry of Electricity and Water Eng. Mohammad Boushehri and acting Charge d'affaires at the Embassy of Kuwait in the UAE Sheikh Sabah Al-Malik Al-Sabah. This year's Congress will feature 80 panel discussions, focusing on the entire energy spectrum, including oil and gas, electricity, development of clean coal, nuclear power and renewable energy, as well as transport, energy efficiency, finance, investment, consultancy, among others. The World Energy Congress is the world's largest and most influential energy event covering all aspects of the energy agenda with delegates from over 150 countries. The triennial event which started in 1924 is organized by the World Energy Council and is taking place in the Middle East for the first time.



**ABU DHABI:** Attendees take pictures of a robot during the opening ceremony of the 24th World Energy Congress (WEC) in the UAE capital. — AFP

## Kuwait PM expresses his great relief for Amir's well being

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday expressed great relief for the well-being of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. HH the Prime Minister, while chairing a weekly cabinet meeting at Seif Palace, briefed the cabinet about admission of HH the Amir and prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow his blessing upon HH the Amir to continue his "normal activity." Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said in a statement, Kuwaiti Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah announced on Sunday that HH the Amir had been admitted at a hospital in the US to complete medical checkups, thus his scheduled meeting with President Trump had been adjourned to a date to be set later.

The cabinet, meanwhile, congratulated His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people on the fifth anniversary of the UN honoring of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad as "Humanitarian Leader," and Kuwait as a "Humanitarian Center." Al-Saleh, also Acting Ministers of Interior and Finance, said the UN title



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairing the weekly cabinet meeting. — KUNA

was a recognition of His Highness the Amir's humanitarian contributions throughout the years.

For his part, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the cabinet about a recent visit by Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi during which the two sides discussed promotion of economic and development relations and cooperation. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, also acting Defense Minister, said the two countries signed cooperation agreements on the development of diplomatic skills, education and scientific research, oil, gas and petrochemicals.

Meanwhile, Minister of Education and Minister of

Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi briefed the cabinet about the start of school year and noted some traffic problems at the new university campus in Al-Shdadiya. He added work was underway in coordination with the Ministry of Interior to address these issues. The cabinet, on the other hand, approved establishment of the northern economic zone, custom agreement with Bahrain, environment agreement with Mauritania, encouragement of direct investment with South Korea as well as anti-corruption MoU with Seoul. The government also assigned authorities concern to complete preparations for the operations of government buildings in Sabah Al-Ahmad and Al-Khairan cities. — KUNA

## Hawally Municipality carries out field tours

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Hawally Municipality emergency team chief Ahmad Ramadan said the team carried out field tours to make sure shop owners did not encroach on outdoor yards, adding this resulted in issuing 24 violations to shops for violating Municipality rules. Four encroachments on state property were removed and 22 warnings were issued, while four ads were removed from the streets.

### Farm workers

The Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry said the service center at the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources has started receiving transactions of workers allocated to farms to process their residency permits (first-time article 18, article 18 renewal, transfer to article 18) at the center in Rabiya during normal working hours from 8:00 am until 1:30 pm.

### Technical workshops

A Chinese delegation headed by Deputy Chief of Staff of Armed Police visited Al-Tahreer (Liberation) Camp, where he was received by Assistant for Administrative Backup Brig Talaa Qadeer. The delegation saw the technical workshops at the backup command and was briefed about the duties of the National Guard. They also visited the protection command and were met by Commander Brig Hamad Ahmad. They then visited HH Sheikh Ali Al-Salem Camp where they were met by the Commander of the Shooting Range Col Saud Riyadh Saud.



## PAHW to allocate 135 housing units

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Housing Welfare will be open for allocating 135 housing units in sector N10 of Sabah Al-Ahmed city on Thursday, September 19, 2019 in a special session to be held at its headquarters in south Surra.

### Zamzam case

Mohammed Hassan Al-Ajmi, attorney of a company that had been allegedly fined by MOCI inspectors for commercial fraud for selling fake Zamzam water, stressed that the video showing the inspectors, the company name and contacts, had been used to defame his client and that the only violation was that of MOCI resolution number 216/2014 pertaining the ban on the import of Zamzam water for trade purposes. Accordingly, Al-Ajmi stressed that, on behalf of his client, he would take all the needed legal actions to protect his client reputation and hold those responsible for circulating the video legally accountable.

### Trash transport

Headed by Engineer Maha Al-Baghli, the municipal council's environmental affairs committee yesterday approved a proposal made by its member, Hassan Kamal and former member, Abdullah Al-Kandary pertaining the use of modern methods to transport trash and garbage in new cities.

### KFSD memo

KFSD and The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), USA yesterday signed a memo of understanding on cooperation in training, research and development. The memo was signed by KFSD director, Lt General Khaled Al-Mekrad and NFPA's chairman and CEO, Jim Pauley during a ceremony held at KFSD headquarters and attended by US Ambassador to Kuwait, Lawrence Silverman.

## Head of GCC anti-corruption bodies discuss public fund

**MUSCAT:** Heads of the bodies responsible for protecting integrity and fighting corruption in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries held their fifth meeting in Muscat yesterday to discuss the guiding system to protect public funds. The Assistant Secretary-General of the Anti-Corruption and Investigation Sector at the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), Dr Mohammad Bozbar, told KUNA that the meeting discussed a number of issues of common interest among GCC member states in the fields of protecting integrity and fighting corruption.

The agency's agents had previously recommended those topics during their fourth meeting, including the draft law to protect the public funds of the GCC countries and update the guidance code of the bodies responsible for protecting integrity and fighting corruption in the GCC countries, he said. This meeting discussed a number of other policies related to the development of future GCC cooperation in protecting integrity and fighting corruption, he added. The Kuwaiti delegation to the GCC meeting was chaired by Head of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), Abdulrahman Al-Nemsh. — KUNA



Heads of GCC anti-corruption bodies

## Detectives on the hunt for kidnapped Kuwaiti

**KUWAIT:** Criminal detectives are looking for five persons who kidnapped a Kuwaiti from Qurain, took him to a house in Jahra and beat him mercilessly. They then took him to an outdoor yard, beat him again and threw him in front of a Hawally building. The man went to the police station in a hysterical state and gave police a medical report about his condition. He did not give any information about the attackers.

### Missing husband

A Kuwaiti called police and told them her husband was not answering her phone calls, and asked them to help her find him and find out why he was not answering the phone. Detectives took over the case and investigations have begun.

### Bank account hacked

A Kuwaiti told police his wife's bank account

was hacked and KD 74 was withdrawn to recharge a telephone line. He gave police a bank report showing the transfer and the phone number. Investigations have begun.

### Egyptian youth found dead

The body of an Egyptian youth was sent to the corner. The man had earlier called police and asked for help, but when they arrived at his house, he was found dead. The 29-year-old youth had called for paramedics and was found on the floor.

### Rent problems

An Indian accused an Egyptian of taking KD 500 from him for two months' rent, then later demanded him to pay up. The Indian told police he rents a shop and pays the rent regularly to an Egyptian who collects the rent. The Egyptian had told him he is in need of money and asked for KD 500, promising to not take rent for two months. But the Indian was surprised by the Egyptian asking him for the money. When the Indian told the Egyptian that he promised not take rent for two months, he retorted: "That is not my business - you pay." Detectives are investigating. — Al-Rai

## Fahaheel Sports Club's football field approved

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Football Association (KFA)'s competitions committee approved the Fahaheel Sports Club's Nayef Al-Dabbous football field for matches to be played in Kuwait's premier league, which is due to kick off on the 18th of September. Notably, Fahaheel Sports Club had been deprived from playing on its own field for many years before the club developed it further to meet the required standards.

### Medical responsibility

Health minister Dr Basel Al-Sabah has decided to establish a new department for medical responsibility to be headed by his undersecretary.



UK parliament suspension set to begin after MPs vote on election

## S Sudan rebel leader in Juba in bid to salvage peace deal



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin (right) arrives to cast his vote at a polling station for the Moscow Duma elections on Sunday. — AFP

# Kremlin suffers losses in Moscow vote

## Shake-up in city parliament comes amid fall in Putin's approval ratings

MOSCOW: Pro-Kremlin candidates suffered major losses in a Moscow city election, results showed yesterday, following a police crackdown on a wave of anti-government protests over the summer. But Kremlin-backed candidates dominated in other local and regional elections held outside of the capital at the weekend. Demonstrations broke out in Moscow after top opposition figures were barred from standing in the city vote, but they widened in scope after a harsh response from authorities.

Kremlin-backed candidates previously held 38 of the Moscow assembly's 45 seats, but after the Sunday election that figure was down to 25. Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who called the first summer protests after his allies were kept off the ballot paper, put the losses down to his "Smart Voting" plan. The campaign called on Muscovites to back the politician, whatever their affiliation, most likely to beat a pro-Kremlin candidate.

The beneficiaries were the Communist Party—which took 13 seats, up from five—as well as the liberal Yabloko party and the left-leaning Just Russia, which each took three places. The shake-up in the city parliament comes amid a stagnating economy, declining living standards and a fall in President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings. "We fought for this together. Thanks to everyone for their contribution," Navalny said on Twitter following the Moscow results.

Lyubov Sobol, who emerged as a protest leader after she was blocked from running in the election, said the vote would go "down in history thanks to the courage and perseverance of Muscovites, and the cowardice and meanness" of the city administration.

### Collapse in popularity

But Viktor Seliverstov, a lawmaker in the ruling United Russia party, played down the role of Navalny's

scheme. "I don't see the effect of this so-called tactical voting. Communists aren't smart voting—Communists are Communists," he told Russian media. United Russia, formed in 2001 to support Putin, has seen its popularity collapse in recent years. In Moscow, none of the pro-Kremlin candidates ran under its banner, instead presenting themselves as "independents".

Kremlin-backed candidates won in all 16 regions where there were elections for governor. Alexander Beglov, the gaffe-prone acting governor of Saint Petersburg, was elected to lead Russia's second city after his main rival controversially withdrew a week before the vote. Activists alleged irregularities at polling stations across the country, while videos emerged on social media of ballot stuffing in Saint Petersburg and elsewhere.

The Kremlin also saw an upset in Far Eastern Khabarovsk, where the nationalist LDPR party took a

majority in the city council. The region already has an LDPR governor. Tens of thousands of people have taken to the streets of Moscow over the last few months calling for free and fair elections. Police detained several thousand of them and while most were released quickly, some faced serious charges. In the week before the election, five were sentenced to jail time ranging from two to four years.

On election day, police detained several protest figures including Maria Alyokhina of political punk group Pussy Riot and Ilya Azar, a journalist and city councillor. The results came as the United Nations rights chief urged an investigation into excessive use of force by Russian police in response to the protests. Analysts described the local vote as a test ahead of national parliamentary elections due in 2021 — both of the opposition's ability to mobilize support and the authorities' willingness to tolerate dissent. — AFP

## Two dead, travel chaos, after powerful typhoon pummels Tokyo

TOKYO: A powerful typhoon that battered Tokyo overnight with record winds killed two people, police said yesterday, as cancelled trains caused commuter chaos and more than 100 flights were scrapped, leaving thousands stranded at the airport. Typhoon Faxai, packing winds of up to 207 kilometers per hour, made landfall in Chiba just east of the capital before dawn, after barreling through Tokyo Bay.

The transport disruptions unleashed by the storm came less than two weeks before the start of the Rugby World Cup, and delayed the arrival of the Australian team—a reminder that Japan's typhoon season could present challenges for organizers. Police confirmed two people were killed in the storm—a woman in her fifties who was found dead in Tokyo and an elderly man in the neighboring Chiba prefecture.

Security camera footage showed that high winds pushed her across a street and into a wall, while the 87-year-old man was found dead in the woods under a fallen tree. The storm injured more than 30 people, including a woman who sustained serious injuries after gusts toppled a protective netting structure at a golf driving range onto nearby houses. Non-compulsory evacuation orders were issued to hundreds of thousands and authorities said more than 2,000 people had taken refuge in shelters at one point.

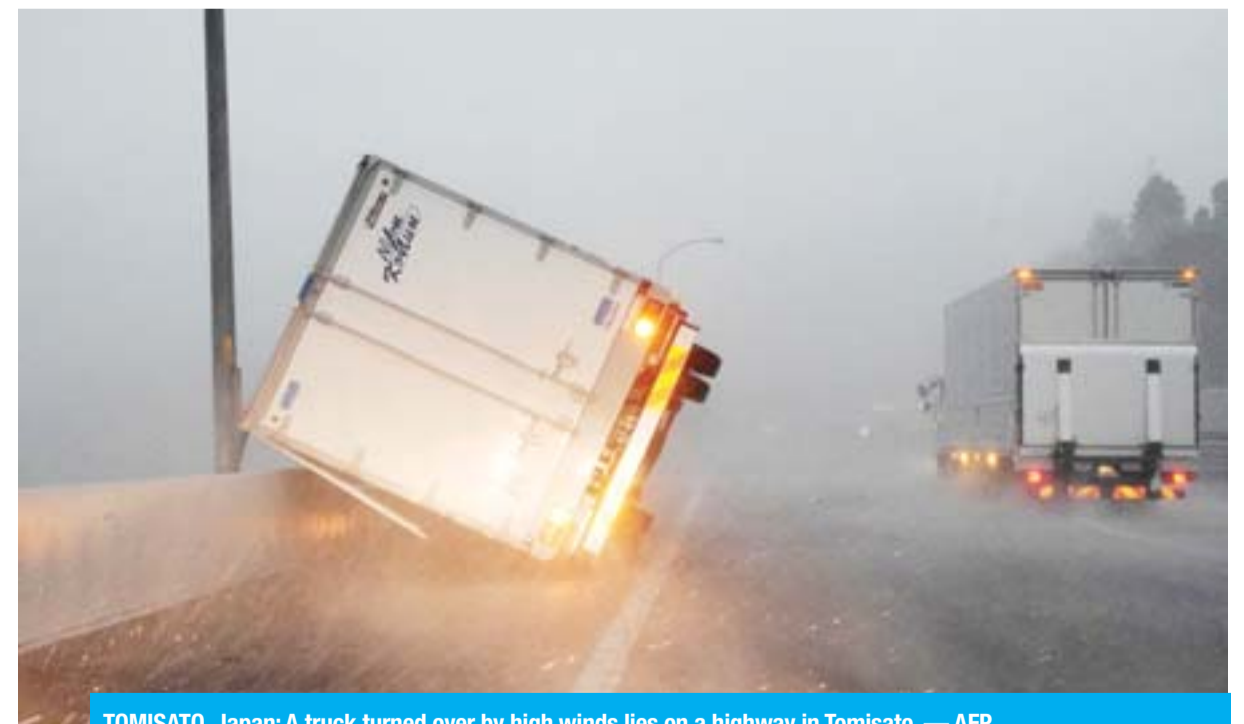
The strong winds downed trees and power lines. Nearly 760,000 households were still without electricity in the Tokyo area Monday evening. Scaffolding was ripped from buildings and protective sheeting hung to keep construction debris off the streets was crumpled and torn by the storm. While the damage was relatively light given the wind speeds, it was enough to cause chaos in the capital's notoriously busy morning commute.

The overland East Japan Railway train system was largely halted in the early hours of operation while tracks were checked for fallen trees and other debris. The storm also caused delays and stoppages on subway lines, leading to massive crowds at some stations in the busy metropolitan area that is home to 36 million people. Bullet train services that were suspended during the storm had largely resumed, though some were operating on a reduced schedule. Some roads were blocked by downed trees. And trains running to and from Narita International Airport were halted, with buses and taxis the only options left to those arriving or hoping to fly out. Thousands of people were stranded at the airport Monday evening, with officials preparing to distribute blankets and food.

### Wallabies arrival delayed

At least 138 domestic flights were cancelled, with the weather even delaying the arrival of the Wallabies in Tokyo on Monday ahead of the World Cup that kicks off on September 20. The French team managed to sneak in just ahead of the typhoon and reach their training camp near Mount Fuji. By mid-Monday morning, the storm had moved back offshore and was headed northeast away from Japan, back into the Pacific.

The weather agency warned that landslides were still possible in Chiba as well as the northern Fukushima region as the storm headed away from land. Japan is



TOMISATO, Japan: A truck turned over by high winds lies on a highway in Tomisato. — AFP

used to severe tropical storms and typhoons during late summer and autumn. Strong typhoon Krosa lashed western Japan in mid-August, bringing strong winds and torrential rain that claimed one life. And in late August, heavy rains left three people dead when massive floods also hit western Japan.

But this year, the typhoon season coincides with the Rugby World Cup, presenting a possible headache for teams and organizers. Tournament rules say that if a pool match has to be scrapped due to extreme weather,

it is classed as a draw, which could have a major impact on what is set to be a very close competition.

Nicholas van Santen, a spokesman for Rugby World Cup organizers, said they were working closely with the teams to minimize any disruption to their training schedules. "In the days and hours leading up to the typhoon making landfall, the organizing committee monitored the situation closely with the tournament's weather information provider and the relevant authorities," said Van Santen. — AFP

## International

S Sudan rebel leader in Juba  
in bid to salvage peace deal

## President Salva, Machar to discuss peace agreement as deadline looms

**JUBA:** South Sudan's exiled rebel leader Riek Machar arrived in Juba yesterday for the first time in a year to meet his rival, President Salva Kiir, and try salvage a stalled peace agreement. Machar landed in the capital in a Sudanese plane, preceded by two jets carrying a large delegation of around 60 people and security officers from Khartoum where he is living in exile, an AFP reporter witnessed. "President Salva Kiir Mayardit will hold a face-to-face meeting with FVP-Designate (First Vice President) Dr. Riek Machar," the government of South Sudan posted yesterday on its official Twitter account.

A government spokesman told AFP Sunday that Kiir and Machar would "discuss all the outstanding issues of the peace agreement and the way forward". Machar's visit is expected to last two days. The meeting comes as a November deadline looms to form a power-sharing government, a key plank in a 2018 peace agreement that has been delayed by disputes. Kiir has not been seen with Machar since the pair met in the Vatican in April, when Pope Francis stunned the world by kissing the feet of two men accused of responsibility for heinous war crimes.

South Sudan descended into war in 2013, just two years after the country gained independence, when Kiir accused his former deputy and fellow former rebel leader Machar of plotting a coup. Multiple attempts at peace have failed but in September 2018 the warring parties signed an agreement to form a unity government, which would see Machar return to government as vice president. The last time Machar

was in Juba was October 2018, for celebrations to mark the signing of the pact.

The power-sharing arrangements under the peace deal were supposed to take effect in May. But the process was delayed by six months until November. Crucial technical steps contained within the agreement, such as creating a unified army and agreeing on the internal boundaries of states, have failed to make progress.

## New political deals

Alan Boswell, a South Sudan expert with the International Crisis Group (ICG), said the only solution was Kiir and Machar coming to a political agreement on how to move forward with the deal. "We have been waiting for this moment for a long time. The only way to find a path forward is for these two to meet. The path is wide open for them to form a unity government but they will need to strike new political deals to do that," he told AFP Monday. "If they fail to agree on a way forward with direct talks then we are looking at a major crisis."

Following their extraordinary meeting in the Vatican, Kiir told parliament he had forgiven Machar, and urged his rival to return home. But Machar has been concerned about his personal security should he return to the capital. He fled on foot under a hail of gunfire when a previous peace deal collapsed in July 2016. He is currently living in Khartoum, the capital of neighboring Sudan, the country from which South Sudan broke away to claim independence in 2011.



**JUBA:** South Sudan's exiled rebel leader Riek Machar, center right, is welcomed by his rival, President Salva Kiir, center left, in Juba, South Sudan. —AFP

He was accompanied to Juba by Sudanese paramilitary commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who is best known by his nickname "Hemeti", and who is holding separate peace talks with Sudanese armed groups. Sudan has been engaged in its own bloody

transition toward peace since the overthrow of Omar al-Bashir in April. The fighting in South Sudan has left 380,000 people dead and forced more than four million South Sudanese—almost a third of the population—to flee their homes. —AFP

Netanyahu fights  
for political  
life before  
Israel votes

**JERUSALEM:** Israel moved into its final week of campaigning yesterday for an unprecedented second general election in five months with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu battling for political survival while facing a potential corruption indictment. With the September 17 vote looming, Netanyahu and his right-wing Likud drew outrage from opposition parties with a push for last-minute legislation that would allow party officials to bring cameras to polling stations.

His critics labeled it a naked attempt to depress turnout among Israel's Arab population, as it could intimidate many into staying away. They also pointed out that it could serve to energize Netanyahu's base of right-wing voters due to his warnings—so far unfounded—that the election could be stolen. The premier says he is only interested in protecting the integrity of the vote and preventing fraud. Netanyahu has used similar tactics in the past, including warning on election day in 2015 that Israeli Arabs were voting in "droves," a comment for which he later apologized.

Parliament had planned to hold the first of three required votes on the bill yesterday, but it failed to receive necessary backing from a committee and appeared dead for now. The main opposition Blue and White centrist alliance said it would vote against it, and ex-defense minister Avigdor Lieberman said his

nationalist Yisrael Beitenu would do the same. "The rule of law that Netanyahu is trying to undermine has won," Blue and White leader Benny Gantz said after the bill failed to make it out of the committee.

"In the coming days, Netanyahu will continue his spin. He will try to disrupt the election day, to challenge the election outcome and he will attempt to reinstate this law. We will not allow it," Netanyahu said. "There is no reason for those who really want pure elections to oppose the camera law that prevents election fraud. 'There is only one answer: Come in masses to the ballot box and vote for Likud,' he added.

The bill would have allowed election supervisors from political parties to bring cameras to polling stations, though not inside voting booths. Netanyahu's camera legislation comes as he struggles to remain in office and continue his reign as Israel's longest-serving prime minister. After April elections, Likud along with its right-wing and religious allies won a majority of seats, but Netanyahu was unable to form a governing coalition, suffering one of the biggest defeats of his political career.

He was unable to do so because he could not convince his old nemesis Lieberman to abandon a key demand and join the government. Netanyahu then opted to move toward a second election rather than risk Israeli President Reuven Rivlin choosing someone else to try to form a government.

## Trump, Putin posters

Lieberman has only gained in support since the last election, opinion polls show, and Netanyahu may face a similar conundrum after the upcoming vote. His main challenger is ex-military chief Gantz and his centrist alliance, as was the case in April. Netanyahu has once again sought to highlight his links



**JERUSALEM:** Israeli Prime Minister and Defence Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivers a statement to the media on the Iranian nuclear issue at the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem. —AFP

with world leaders, posting giant posters of himself alongside US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. He says he hopes to visit Russia later this week to hold talks with Putin, while he also planned a statement on Iran's nuclear program yesterday evening.

Ahead of April polls, Trump made controversial moves seen as backing Netanyahu, including recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights. So far Netanyahu has not benefited from similar decisions in the run-up to next week's vote. Gantz has sought to maintain a stoic presence as part of a campaign to present himself as someone Israelis can trust on security issues. But his main approach has been to argue that he can restore dignity to the prime minister's office after years of investigations into Netanyahu's affairs. —AFP

Evo's bet on  
Big Farming  
comes under fire

**LA PAZ, Bolivia:** In the tropical Bolivian city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, a wealthy farming hub on the edge of the Amazon rainforest, President Evo Morales gathered with ranchers late last month to celebrate a maiden shipment of beef to China. An elaborate ceremony was staged to mark what was supposed to be a crowning achievement in Morales' plan to make Bolivia a global foods supplier - entry to China's massive market just as Beijing shops around for alternatives to U.S. producers.

"This is just another tool to ensure we continue growing economically," said Bolivia's first indigenous president, who often goes as "Evo," at the Aug. 28 event. The country would send 8,000 tons of beef to China next year, he added. On the outskirts of the city, however, the cost of a rapid increase in farming was clearly visible. Wildfires were raging, likely sparked by a rise in slash-and-burn land clearances for cattle ranching or soy farming.

The Bolivian fires, which mirror those burning across swathes of Brazil, threaten to derail Morales' bid for a fourth consecutive term in office and another five years of "Economics," his brand of capitalism mixed with socialist state intervention. Critics link the fires to laws Morales has passed encouraging farmers and ranchers to settle in forested areas in recent years. That includes permission this year to use slash-and-burn methods to ramp up output despite a drought.

The scale of the fires is massive, threatening what is seen as a natural bulwark against climate change. In recent weeks, they have swept over 2.1 million hectares in land-locked Bolivia, an area almost the size of New Jersey, burning more than 700,000 hectares of forest in protected reserves, according to a report by local conservation group FAN. And they have drawn attention to Morales' newfound support for an industry once at odds with his government and put him on

the defense ahead of the Oct. 20 election. "Before (the fires) it was going to be hard for him to find support from undecided voters. Now it's going to be much harder," said political analyst Marcelo Arequipa. "It's looking complicated for him."

## Course of history

Morales' support for farming has surprised some. Unlike far-right President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, who has called climate change a hoax, Morales is known as a strident environmentalist abroad, often talking about the need to protect "Pachamama," or Mother Earth, in global forums. But Morales is also keen to push for development and economic growth in Bolivia, one of South America's poorest countries. At home, his government is increasingly becoming known as an ally of farming and ranching interests, calling agricultural commodities the "new gold" that will help diversify the economy away from Bolivia's key export, natural gas.

"These fires might change the course of history," said La Paz-based political scientist Franklin Pareja. "They're so big they've started to expose other things. For example, that this isn't just about giving opportunities to poor people but favoring agroindustrial corporate interests." After a wave of criticism over his government's initial slow response to the fires, Morales leapt into action late last month, hiring a Boeing SuperTanker to douse flames with water and joining firefighters battling them on the ground with hoses.

Morales' chances of electoral success may now hinge on whether the outrage over the fires can be leveraged by main rival Carlos Mesa. Some recent opinion polls indicate Mesa could triumph in a potential second round run-off. "This is a national disaster," Mesa told local broadcaster Red Uno. "We know who caused this disaster. Evo Morales and his irresponsible land-use policies."

The government has denied its policies have fueled the fires, calling it "a lie" and promising to invest whatever was necessary to re-grow the forests. Morales, once a coca farmer himself, placed the blame on periodic droughts that hit hard this year. "If you smoke a cigarette and toss it out it'll spark and there's a fire," Morales told ranchers at the ceremony in Santa Cruz last week. —Reuters

Protests as  
Morocco  
journalist goes on  
trial for abortion

**RABAT, Morocco:** Hundreds of people protested yesterday in front of a Moroccan court as the trial opened of a journalist accused of having a late-term abortion and sexual relations outside marriage. The case brought against Hajar Raissouni, who writes for the Arabic-language daily Akhbar Al-Yaoum, has triggered a furious debate in the media and online about civil liberties and freedom of the press in the north African country.

The protesters shouted out "Freedom for Hajar" and "Our society is in danger", and brandished placards urging "My body, my freedom" and "No, to the criminalisation of sex between consenting adults". The 28-year-old, whose paper has a history of run-ins with the authorities, risks up to two years in prison if found guilty under the penal code which bars sex before marriage and abortion, except if the mother's life is in danger.

She was arrested on August 31 as she left a clinic in Rabat, where her lawyer Saad Sahli said she had been undergoing treatment for internal bleeding. But the prosecution insisted she had been seen by a medic last week and showed signs of pregnancy and of having undergone a "late voluntary abortion". In a statement, it stressed her detention had "nothing to do with her profession as a journalist".

Raissouni, who is religiously but not yet legally married, had been due to wed her Sudanese partner this week. He was also



**RABAT:** Demonstrators hold up signs showing the portraits of Hajar Raissouni, a Moroccan journalist of the daily newspaper Akhbar El-Youm, as they gather outside a courthouse holding her trial on charges of abortion in the capital Rabat. —AFP

arrested at the same time, along with the doctor, a nurse and a secretary. Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International have joined social media users in calling for her release. "Instead of intimidating Hajar Raissouni by prosecuting her on unjust charges, the authorities should immediately and unconditionally release her," said Heba Morayef, Amnesty's regional director, last week.

Ahmed Benchemsi, regional communications director at HRW, echoed Morayef's call for all charges to be dropped. The case had "a whiff of political manipulation since the defen-

dant is a reporter" from one of Morocco's few remaining critical newspapers, he said. Touafik Bouachrine, the owner of Raissouni's newspaper, was sentenced in November to 12 years in prison on charges of rape and other offences. He also denies all charges and his lawyers say his trial was politically motivated.

According to official figures, Moroccan courts last year tried more than 14,500 people for "debauchery", 3,048 for adultery, 170 for homosexuality and 73 for having abortions. However, NGOs say between 600 to 800 women have clandestine abortions every day in the country. —AFP

At least 20  
killed in two  
attacks in  
N Burkina Faso

**OUAGADOUGOU:** At least 20 people were killed in two attacks in northern Burkina Faso on Sunday, in a region prone to jihadist violence, local and military sources said. One vehicle, transporting people and goods, "rode over an improvised explosive device (IED) in the Barsalogo area, leaving at least ten passengers dead, most of them tradesmen", a security source told AFP. Meanwhile, around 50 kilometers away, ten drivers of three-wheeler food vans, travelling in convoy, were killed by armed attackers in a second attack, a local official said. The security spokeswoman confirmed that attack without giving a death toll.

A former French colony that ranks among the world's poorest countries, Burkina Faso has been struggling with an Islamist militant revolt since 2015. The food vans were carrying provisions for people displaced by the fighting, according to the local source. The country's army has been increasingly targeted by jihadists. Earlier this month, an attack on a military base in northern Burkina Faso killed 24 in an unprecedented blow to the army in its campaign against jihadists.

The country's insurgency, which came from neighboring Mali, began in the north but has since spread to the east. Since 2015, more than 500 people have died in attacks that have become increasingly violent especially in the north and the east, according to a toll compiled by AFP. Burkina's capital Ouagadougou has been attacked three times, including a March 2018 jihadist assault on the military headquarters in the city that left eight dead. A summit of regional heads of state is due to be held in Ouagadougou on Saturday to discuss the security situation. —AFP

## International

# UK parliament suspension set to begin after MPs vote on election

## Parliament to reject Johnson's election proposal

**LONDON:** Britain's parliament will be suspended for five weeks following another expected defeat by MPs for Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday as he battles to salvage his hardline Brexit strategy amid fierce opposition in Westminster. The controversial suspension will begin shortly after MPs are set to vote again against Johnson's bid to hold a snap election next month—two weeks before the country is due to leave the European Union. "Parliament will be prorogued at close of business today," Johnson's spokesman said at a daily briefing, using the parliamentary term for the suspension.

He added it would happen regardless of the outcome of the vote on the October 15 poll. Johnson held talks with his Irish counterpart Leo Varadkar in Dublin before returning to the parliamentary turmoil later yesterday. He ordered the shutdown in an apparent bid to stymie a cross-party block of MPs opposed to a possible no-deal Brexit. The British leader has vowed to take Britain out of the EU by the latest October 31 deadline with or without a formal divorce deal—despite warnings that the latter scenario would entail economic chaos.

However, the planned suspension has provoked uproar from opposition MPs and Conservative critics, who have labeled the move a constitutional outrage. It appeared to backfire by galvanizing them into passing legislation last week—expected to receive royal assent yesterday—that forces Johnson to seek a Brexit delay if he fails to reach a deal at an October 17-18 EU summit. Johnson responded to the proposed law by trying to force the early general election, but fell short in a vote last week of the necessary support of two-thirds of MPs.

He tries again later yesterday in another vote widely expected to fail. Opposition party leaders, who met yesterday, have vowed to keep blocking the snap poll until Brexit has been extended beyond October 31. "He has got to ask for an extension," Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn told Sky News. "We will do everything we can to prevent us crashing out on October 31 and will support an election when it is clear we will avoid that crashing out."

### Significant gaps remain

Johnson met Varadkar on Monday hoping to lay the groundwork for new divorce

terms as he finds himself increasingly cornered just six weeks after taking over from his predecessor Theresa May. The British leader wants the bloc to scrap a special provision in the deal agreed by May to keep the Northern Irish border open in all circumstances after Brexit, arguing "alternative arrangements" exist.

But Brussels and Dublin have insisted the so-called backstop mechanism must remain in place to guarantee no return to a hard border between EU member Ireland and British-ruled Northern Ireland, which suffered decades of deadly sectarian violence. They say Johnson is also yet to propose the details of any workable alternatives. "While they agreed that the discussions are at an early stage, common ground was established in some areas although significant gaps remain," the two leaders said in a joint statement following an hour of talks.

Johnson's decision to prorogue parliament until October 14 and his promise to do Brexit come what may has rattled his ruling Conservative Party. Twenty-one Conservative MPs including Winston Churchill's grandson were sacked last week for voting in favor of the law aimed at



**DUBLIN:** Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, right, and Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson give a joint press conference on the steps of the Government buildings in Dublin. — AFP

blocking a no-deal Brexit. The dismissals and the defection of one MP to the Liberal Democrats left him without a working

majority. Several members of his government have also quit, including his own brother. — AFP

## One week after Dorian, Bahamians struggle amid ruins

**NASSAU, Bahamas:** One week after Hurricane Dorian devastated the Bahamas, residents struggled amid the ruins Sunday, with many forced to seek refuge far from their shattered homes as the death toll from the top-intensity storm hit 44 in the islands. Dorian, now classified as a post-tropical storm, caused "severe damage" in eastern Canada and was expected to move soon into the North Atlantic after cutting a destructive swath through the Bahamas and going up the US east coast.

In the Bahamas, people were still scrambling for shelter, with the lucky evacuees beginning to reunite with loved ones but the fate of uncounted others still in doubt. Prime Minister Hubert Minnis warned the death toll—which Health Minister Duane Sands put at 44, according to local media—was likely to climb "significantly". A loosely coordinated armada of passenger planes, helicopters and both private and government boats and ships—including redirected cruise liners—converged in the Bahamas on the horribly battered Abacos to help with evacuations, both to Nassau and to the US mainland.

Tropic Ocean Airways said it planned to fly supplies to hard-hit Marsh Harbor from Florida and bring out some 220 people to Nassau on a Delta Air Lines jet. On Saturday, a cruise ship carrying 1,400 people docked in Riviera Beach, Florida, CNN reported. All had documents to enter the United States. The



**BAHAMAS:** People await evacuation at a dock in Marsh Harbor, Bahamas, in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. — AFP

Coast Guard said all Bahamian ports had now reopened. As of Sunday morning, it had five cutters providing support and five helicopters taking part in search and rescue operations. It said 308 people had been rescued.

Many of those still waiting to leave Marsh Harbor were Haitian workers. The area where they lived—The Mudd—was almost completely wiped out by Dorian. Haitians who have arrived in Nassau have accused the government of prioritizing native-born Bahamians for evacuation from Marsh Harbor over Haitian nationals.

### Severe damage in Canada

Dorval Darlier, a Haitian diplomat who flew from Nassau to Marsh Harbor on Sunday, defended the Bahamian government against the allegations. "Haitians have been treated well," he said. "Some get mad (that) they have

been here since yesterday. But the government has first to find a shelter for them." "If I have to choose between my mother and my mother-in-law, you know who I have to choose first."

Thousands of miles north in Canada, Dorian caused "severe damage" in the Maritimes, a three-province region in eastern Canada comprising Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, the Canadian Hurricane Centre said. On Monday, Dorian was moving over the Labrador Sea and toward Europe, it said, adding that no serious injuries or fatalities have been reported. More than 500,000 power outages were reported across the Maritimes, according to the Centre. "Damage included many uprooted trees, downed power lines, and flying debris," it said, adding a crane crashed into a building shortly before the storm made landfall. — AFP

## Divided Catalan separatists to rally ahead of court verdicts

**BARCELONA:** Catalonia's separatists plan a big rally on Wednesday that will test the strength of the divided independence movement just weeks before a Spanish court serves verdicts against the leaders of the failed independence bid. The annual "Diada" pro-independence demonstration on Catalonia's national day, comes two years after the regional government's short-lived declaration of independence in October 2017.

While separatists remain in power in Catalonia, which accounts for a fifth of Spain's economic output, the independence movement appears rudderless, with senior leaders scattered abroad or in jail and growing internal divisions over strategy. Of all the Diada rallies which grassroots group ANC has staged since 2012, this has been the "most difficult" to organize, group president Elisenda Paluzie told AFP.

"One stage has closed, another begins and we don't know what it will look like. That's why it's hard to find a concrete reason to protest," she added. The day marks the fall of Barcelona to

Spain in 1714, and it has in recent years been adopted by independence activists. Organizers say a million people took part in past Diada rallies.

### No clear strategy

But separatists disappointed by the failure to achieve independence intend to shun this year's event on Barcelona's Plaza Espana. "The rally, now, no longer makes sense. There is no clear strategy behind it," said Silvia Senz, a 53-year-old linguist. Spain's Supreme Court is poised to deliver verdicts in the high-profile trial of 12 separatist leaders charged over their role in the secessionist bid which plunged the country into its worst political crisis in decades.

Former Catalan vice-president Oriol Junqueras and eight others face the most serious charge of rebellion. Public prosecutors have asked that he spend 25 years behind bars. Catalan leaders are trying to leverage the looming verdicts to galvanize supporters for Wednesday. "Even if the repression and the verdict are tough, they won't defeat us. We must show us that we are taking the initiative," said former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont, who fled to Belgium shortly after Catalonia declared independence.

"The first response to the verdicts should be a large mobilisation for this Diada," current Catalan president Quim Torra said on Thursday. Like his predecessor, Torra calls for "confrontation" with Madrid. — AFP

## Years later, cancer cases linger over 9/11 anniversary

**NEW YORK:** Jacquelin Febrillet was 26 years old on September 11, 2001 when jihadist hijackers flew two passenger jets into the World Trade Center just two blocks from where she worked. Fifteen years after the attacks that day, Febrillet, by then a mother of three, was diagnosed with metastatic cancer. The likely cause: a cloud of toxic ash that engulfed her. "I was there (on) 9/11... For years I have been working down there every day since 9/11. We were never told that something could happen," she says.

Unlike Febrillet, Richard Fahrer, then 19, wasn't in the area on 9/11, but he regularly worked as a land surveyor between 2001 and 2003 in south Manhattan, where the Twin Towers came crashing down. Eighteen months ago, the young father, now 37, was diagnosed with aggressive colon cancer—a disease that usually affects older men and which there is no history of in his family. Febrillet and Fahrer represent a growing category of patient who were living or working close to the World Trade Center in the wake of the attacks, which killed almost 3,000 people.

They were not among the thousands of emergency personnel who rushed to the site or who spent months clearing debris at Ground Zero, but their health is being similarly affected. As the 18th anniversary of the attacks approaches, New York continues to count the number of people who have developed cancer or other serious illnesses related to

the toxic cloud that hovered over Manhattan for several weeks.

### People are dying

The 9/11 attacks released unprecedented amounts of chemicals into the air, including dioxins, asbestos and other carcinogenic substances. Firefighters, other first responders and volunteers who helped with the months-long clean-up were the first to be affected. Studies found they faced an increased risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease. Ten thousand of them have been diagnosed with cancer by the World Trade Center Health Program, a federal treatment program helping survivors.

At the end of June this year, 21,000 people not considered first responders were also in the program—twice as many as in June 2016. Of these, almost 4,000 have cancer, the most common being prostate, breast and skin. Febrillet, now 44, is one of them. She recalls that the message at the time was to get the city back to normal as quickly as possible. "People were just going about their business a few days later. But look at what happened a few years later, people are dying," says Febrillet, who also lived close to Ground Zero.

Fahrer, too, laments that city officials did not do more to protect residents and office staff in the vicinity. "My wife asks me, 'Did terrorists cause your cancer?' I can't say 100 percent, but I do know there could have been better efforts to limit the exposure of healthy adults from entering into the disaster area," he says. Health experts say it is impossible to pinpoint exactly the cause of cancer in every patient, but note that there is a clear correlation between the rate and exposure to toxic debris. Several studies have shown that the cancer rate "has increased between 10 and 30 percent" among people who were exposed compared to those who weren't. David Prezant, New York fire department chief medical officer, told AFP. — AFP

## Pope Francis worried about drug use in idyllic Mauritius

**PORT LOUIS, Mauritius:** Pope Francis expressed concern yesterday about growing drug use among the youth on the paradise island of Mauritius, as he wrapped up an Africa tour with a whistle-stop visit to one of the continent's most stable, prosperous nations. Throngs of cheering faithful waving palm fronds lined the streets of Port Louis as the popemobile shuttled the Argentine pontiff to the hilltop Mary Queen of Peace Monument where he delivered his mass.

Organizers estimate 100,000 attended the service during the first papal visit since the one by John Paul II in 1989. While the island is a beacon of stability and relative prosperity, Pope Francis honed in on the struggles of the youth, who face growing inequality, unemployment and the scourge of drug abuse. "It is a hard thing to say, but, despite the economic growth your country has known in recent decades, it is the young who are suffering the most. They suffer from unemployment, which not only creates uncertainty about the future, but also prevents them from believing that they play a significant part in your shared history," said the pope.

### Vulnerable and helpless

"Uncertainty about the future makes them feel that they are on the margins of society. It leaves them vulnerable and helpless before new forms of slavery in this 21st century," "Let us not allow those who deal in death to



**PORT LOUIS:** Pope Francis, center, arrives prior to visiting the mausoleum of Jacques-Desire Laval in Port Louis, Mauritius, on the final stop of an Africa tour. — AFP

rob the first fruits of this land," he said. According to a Mauritius Drug Observatory report in 2018, the smuggling and use of drugs such as heroin, cannabis, cocaine and methamphetamine, has grown in recent years.

Some waited for the pope from before dawn, and many faithful were dressed in the yellow and white of the Vatican flag, coming from near and far. "More than 3,500 of us came from Reunion" island—about 175 kilometers — from Mauritius, said a woman who identified herself as Josette.

Giant screens were put up in Port Louis to allow devotees to watch the papal mass, and billboards adorned with Francis' image have sprung up across the coastal city. "I am very happy to be here today. It is a great joy to see the pope on Mauritian soil ... we thank the lord for that," said Brinda, who came from the south-west of the island nation to attend the mass.

### Model of pluralism

Mauritius comprises four volcanic islands and lies roughly 1,800 kilometers off the eastern coast of Africa. It is a melting pot of religions and ethnic backgrounds. The population of 1.3 million is predominantly Hindu but has sizeable Christian and Muslim minorities. About 30 percent of Mauritius is Christian, with most being Catholic.

The island was uninhabited when first visited by explorers in the Middle Ages, and was later briefly colonized by the Dutch, French and the British. Now citizens have multi-cultural roots, from India, China, Europe, Africa and elsewhere. Since independence in 1968, Mauritius has developed from a poor, agriculture-based economy, to one of Africa's wealthiest nations. It is best known for its position as a global tax haven and idyllic tourist beach destination. — AFP



## International

# Filipino heavyweights hanker for death penalty return

## Capital punishment goes against UN covenant

**MANILA:** If he gets his way, Filipino senator and boxing champion Manny Pacquiao would have drug criminals executed by firing squad. That's getting closer to becoming a reality in the Philippines, where in the past seven weeks, 21 bills have been filed before the lower house and Senate to reinstate the death penalty, collectively covering crimes ranging from drug trafficking and plunder to kidnapping, rape and murder.

It comes at the behest of President Rodrigo Duterte, the popular, self-styled "punisher", notorious for his crackdowns on crime, and a war on drugs that has killed thousands of mostly poor, urban Filipinos. Pacquiao, a staunch Duterte loyalist and the only boxer to win world titles in eight divisions, believes executions are the best deterrent for big drug syndicates. "We need it. In Asia, we are one of the few countries without a death penalty, so a lot of drug lords, pushers came in. It is alarming," said Pacquiao, who enjoys rock-star appeal among Filipinos, and is being touted as a future president.

"If you ask me, firing squad," he told Reuters, when asked how they should be dealt with. "But it depends on what the people want, as long as death penalty is imposed." But it isn't clear if Filipinos actually want capital punishment. Though opinion polls put Duterte's approval rating consistently above 80 percent, the same surveys reflect mixed views on his policies, including a poll 11 months ago that showed

less than a third of Filipinos agreed with reviving the death penalty.

Human rights groups say reinstating it counters a clear global trend of moratoria on executions or abolition of capital punishment, and goes against a United Nations covenant against the death penalty that the Philippines signed. That matters not to Duterte, who has repeatedly said he favors hanging criminals, as many as 20 per day. Most of the 21 bills have not prescribed a method of execution.

From 1950 to when capital punishment was abolished in 1987, the electric chair was used. The death penalty was restored in 1993, using lethal injections, then scrapped again in 2006, with 1,230 convicts taken off death row in what Amnesty International called the biggest commutation of its kind.

### Breaking point

If Duterte's drugs crackdown continues on the same scale and the death penalty is reinstated covering "heinous crimes" - including piracy, kidnapping, murder, treason and violent robbery - death row could potentially consist of tens of thousands of people, going by current numbers. In the country's largest prison, two-thirds of the 27,756 population are serving sentences for heinous crimes, according to the corrections department.

But the biggest problem, activists say, is the strain Duterte's drugs war is putting on an overstretched

criminal justice system now being pushed to breaking point. Under Duterte, police made 193,000 drug-related arrests, but many cases were thrown out or resulted in acquittals. Less than a third of drug cases in 2016 and 2017 led to successful convictions, according to the National Prosecution Service.

Duterte's opponents say the chance of miscarriages of justice are greater now than when capital punishment was last used. From 1993 to 2004, 72% of death penalty verdicts reviewed by the Supreme Court were overturned, sparing 677 people. Centrist Senator Grace Poe opposes the death penalty and says reforming the criminal justice system is vital, like addressing manpower shortfalls, improving investigation standards, preventing graft and giving poor people better access to legal help.

"Debating on the effectiveness and correctness of re-imposing the death penalty is not a waste of time. However, we need to give time to our other priorities," Poe told Reuters. For Duterte, executing criminals was his top priority, with a bill put to Congress on the first day of his presidency. The lower house overwhelmingly approved it, but it never reached the Senate, where resistance was anticipated, including from the influential Catholic Church, the country's dominant faith.

The church vehemently opposes it, citing the Vatican's decision last year to formally change its teachings to declare the death penalty inadmissible in all circumstances. But politics could prevail, with



**MANILA:** Philippine boxing icon Manny 'Pacman' Pacquiao poses for photographers during a news conference at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. —Reuters

Duterte's influence over both houses strengthened to a super-majority after mid-term elections in May. Pacquiao, a devout Christian, said he may propose doubling the justice department's budget to ensure innocent people aren't executed. "If we want good results, we need to help the justice system," he said. "They play a big part to eradicate illegal drugs. We can prevent mistakes in court decisions." —Reuters

## S Korean president appoints justice minister despite scandals

**SEOUL:** An embattled law professor began his duty as South Korea's justice minister after receiving presidential approval yesterday, despite an ongoing probe by state prosecutors into alleged misconduct by his wife. Cho Kuk was appointed to the role by President Moon Jae-in, the presidential Blue House said, with a mandate to reform the prosecutors' office. Liberal darling Cho was named last month by the president-himself a former human-rights lawyer-as a nominee to lead the ministry.

But the confirmation process became a partisan battleground when questions were raised over Cho's daughter's schooling and his relatives' investment in a private equity fund suspected of dubious operations. Officials from the prosecution office that Cho is to lead have carried out multiple raids over the past two weeks linked to the scandals. And last week his wife, professor

Chung Kyung-sim, was indicted for allegedly forging a college award for their daughter.

President Moon admitted in a televised statement yesterday that there was now a "sharp division" between critics and supporters of Cho, adding he had been "agonized" over the decision. But he said he stuck to his choice because it would leave a "bad precedent" if he had dropped Cho's nomination when it was not confirmed that Cho had broken laws himself. "I thought it was more important to follow principles and consistency," he said.

At his inauguration ceremony yesterday, Cho apologized for causing concern as he reaffirmed his commitment to implement reform. "I have been tasked with a very important duty at a personally difficult time," Cho said. "My shoulders are heavy as I am well aware that an arduous and rough path lies ahead of us." South Korea is an intensely competitive society where elite high schools have often been criticized-including by Cho, who has said they create a "more unfair society".

So he was slammed for hypocrisy when it emerged he had sent his own daughter to such an institution and that she had appeared to benefit from family



**GWACHEON, South Korea:** Newly appointed South Korean Justice Minister Cho Kuk, center, salutes the national flag during his inauguration ceremony at the ministry in Gwacheon. —AFP

connections. Cho was grilled by lawmakers in a marathon 14-hour hearing on Friday, where he said he had "caused deep disappointment" and that his "words and actions were not consistent". Analysts say the scandal has laid bare worsening class divisions in South Korea, the world's 11th largest economy.

South Korea has a single five-year presidential term and Moon's presidency

ends in 2022. A recent poll showed that Cho is the fourth-favorite presidential hopeful. Opposition Liberty Korea Party condemned the appointment, contending that the country's "rule of law is dead". Score-settling is ingrained in the South's winner-takes-all political system, with every one of the country's living former presidents either in prison or convicted of crimes after leaving office. —AFP

## Malaysia to make it rain as Indonesian smog pollutes air

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia prepared to seed clouds after air quality in parts of the country reached unhealthy levels due to smog from forest fires in neighboring Indonesia, an official said yesterday. Smog regularly blankets parts of Southeast Asia during the dry season when burning is used to clear Indonesian land for palm oil, paper plantations and other crops, sparking ire from regional neighbors.

In the latest outbreak, parts of Malaysia's eastern state of Sarawak on Borneo island have been blanketed over the past few days. The pollutant index in some places has reached "very unhealthy

levels", said Gary Theseira, special functions officer with the environment ministry. "It is extremely severe in Kuching," Theseira told AFP, referring to a city of half a million people. He said Malaysia is prepared to carry out cloud seeding to induce rain in an effort to ease the smog.

"The moment the cloud situation is right, the chemicals will be loaded and the aircraft will take off and proceed with the seeding," he said. Some countries conduct seeding during prolonged dry spells to induce rain and clear the air by releasing certain chemicals into the clouds, although some experts have questioned its efficacy. Boo Siang Voon, a 47 year-old engineer in Kuching described the skies as "hazy, hot with smoky smell".

"This year the smog is getting worse. Residents are using face masks. We should not pay the price of our health for the open burning. We want a solution," he told AFP. The Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur and neighboring Singapore were

also experiencing hazy conditions yesterday, with the air laced with the smell of burning foliage, although the pollutant index remained at moderate levels. Some Kuala Lumpur residents complained about eye and throat irritation.

Malaysia's meteorological department Sunday warned that hot conditions will prevail for another week, and the monsoon season is only expected to arrive at the end of September or early October. The ministry of science, technology and innovation on Friday said it would lodge a complaint with Indonesia for the haze and called for quick action to be taken to put out the fires. Indonesian authorities have deployed thousands of extra personnel since last month to prevent a repeat of the 2015 fires, which were the worst for two decades and choked the region in haze for weeks. Under pressure from neighbors, Indonesian leader Joko Widodo last month warned that officials would be sacked if they failed to stamp out forest fires. —AFP

## UN rights chief deeply concerned over India actions in Kashmir

**GENEVA:** The UN rights chief yesterday voiced alarm over the situation in Kashmir, following India's decision to revoke the autonomous status of the Muslim-majority region last month. "I am deeply concerned about the impact of recent actions by the government of India on the human rights of Kashmiris," Michelle Bachelet said in her opening statement to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

She pointed among other things to "restrictions on internet communications and peaceful assembly, and the detention of local political leaders and activists." India imposed a military clampdown on Kashmir from August 5 to prevent unrest as New Delhi revoked the disputed region's autonomy, with mobile phone networks and the internet still cut off in all but a few pockets. Kashmir, split between India

and Pakistan since 1947, has been the spark for two major wars and countless clashes between the two nuclear-armed arch-rivals.

Bachelet said she had urged both India and Pakistan to ensure that rights in the region are respected and protected. But she said she had "appealed particularly to India to ease the current lockdowns or curfews, to ensure people's access to basic services, and that all due process rights are respected for those who have been detained."

"It is important that the people of Kashmir are consulted and engaged in any decision-making processes that have an impact on their future," she said. Her comments came as Indian authorities tightened the security lockdown in Indian Kashmir on Sunday after breaking up religious processions by Shiite Muslims who defied a ban. Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi is scheduled to address the Human Rights Council on Tuesday, with a speech expected to focus heavily on the situation in Kashmir.

Bachelet also voiced concern Monday over India's controversial citizenship register in Assam state, which critics fear is a cover for the ruling



**ISLAMABAD:** Kashmiri blind students protest in support of Indian-administered Kashmir people in Islamabad. —AFP

Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party to expel Muslims. Pointing out that some 1.9 million people had been excluded from the final list, published on August 31, Bachelet lamented that the register has "caused great uncertainty and anxiety". "I appeal to the government to ensure due process during the appeals process, prevent deportation or detention, and ensure people are protected from statelessness," she said. —AFP

and anxiety". "I appeal to the government to ensure due process during the appeals process, prevent deportation or detention, and ensure people are protected from statelessness," she said. —AFP

## Australia girds for worst as bushfire season comes early

**SYDNEY:** Australia battled to contain around 160 bushfires in the east of the country yesterday, an early start to a wildfire season that authorities warn could be the worst in decades. Drought and strong winds have turned swathes of Queensland and New South Wales to tinder, prompting fires that have already damaged dozens of buildings and forced thousands of people to evacuate.

Australia's hot, dry climate makes bushfires a regular occurrence, but scientists say climate change is making conditions ever-more combustible. Government-backed researchers have already predicted the next six months of southern hemisphere spring and summer have "the potential to be an active season" because of a very warm and dry start to the year. Queensland Fire and Emergency Services assistant commissioner Brad Commins told AFP the early bushfire season had caught authorities off-guard.

Many of his staff would ordinarily be working on planning and preparation this early in September, but they have been called to action instead. "At this point, we're fairly early in the fire season so it's difficult to predict how long this will go on for, but it's certainly not what I've seen over the last 30 years," he said. "Without significant rain or without a significant weather change, I think we're in for the long haul."

The fire season usually starts in the far north of Queensland in September and slowly progresses down Australia's eastern states, hitting New South Wales around Christmas, and Victoria and Tasmania in January and February. But it is already hitting southern Queensland and New South Wales-where there are 70 fires and 99 percent of the state was declared in drought last May.

On Friday, a fire tore through the small town of Tenterfield, destroying around 25 buildings including five houses. The town's mayor, Pete Petty, told AFP it was "horrific" to see parts of the town burning. "The townspeople were in shock. It was like being in an apocalypse." Like scientists, Petty fears this is just the beginning. "We're in the middle of the worst drought in living memory," he said. —AFP

## Suicide bomber killed at Philippine army base

**MANILA:** A suicide bomber dressed in a traditional Muslim woman's gown died after detonating a bomb outside a military camp in the restive southern Philippines, but no other casualties were reported, authorities said. Suicide attacks were once very rare in the Philippines, but since July 2018 there have been four, including the latest explosion on Jolo island on Sunday.

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for all three previous suicide attacks, which experts have previously told AFP is a worrying escalation of extremism in the Philippines under the group's influence. According to a military statement, the attacker on Sunday was "foreign looking", wore an abaya gown and appeared to be a woman. However, authorities had not confirmed the attacker's gender. No group has yet claimed the attack, which came a day after an IS-claimed bombing wounded eight at a market on the island of Mindanao.

Separatist groups in the Christian-majority nation's south have waged decades-long insurgencies that have killed thousands. This weekend's attacks cast a shadow over a step towards a measure of peace in the region. The largest Muslim rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, began to lay down its weapons on Saturday. While the MILF has brokered peace with the government, other more extreme factions like jihadist group Abu Sayyaf continue to stage deadly attacks. —AFP

## Analysis

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## As Israel returns to polls, Palestinian democracy in stasis

When Israelis vote next week it will be their sixth general election since Palestinians last had the chance to cast ballots in parliamentary polls more than 13 years ago. Whether in Ramallah, Nablus or Gaza, 30-year-old Palestinians have never had the opportunity to choose their leadership. In the Palestinian territories, where unemployment is around 30 percent, a combination of factional rivalries, infighting and Israeli restrictions mean no elections have been held since 2006. Following a 2007 split, two governments effectively rule separate territories - with president Mahmoud Abbas leading the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority and Islamists Hamas in control in Gaza.

A decade of reconciliation talks have brought no results, while both are accused of centralizing power and seeking to quash criticism. Polls show Palestinians are angry with their political leaders and want them to put aside their differences to resist the Israeli occupation. "For both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas governing without elections is very comfortable. The split provides a cover - you can say you want elections but the other side doesn't," Khalil Shikaki, a prominent Palestinian pollster and political analyst, said. "This has been used as a pretext and most people believe it is a pretext - that there is no seriousness involved in seeking to organize elections."

## No functioning institutions?

Following the 2004 death of long-time Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and the end of the bloody second intifada, or Palestinian uprising, a push was made to rejuvenate Palestinian democracy. In 2005, Abbas comfortably won presidential elections held in both the West Bank and Gaza. But a year later, Hamas shocked the world by beating Abbas's Fatah movement in parliamentary polls. Unlike Fatah, the Islamists reject all negotiations with Israel and support violent means. In a 2007 near civil war Hamas overthrew Abbas's forces in Gaza. Palestinian politics has been stasis since, with the two tightening their grips on their respective territories. Abbas maintains partial autonomy in the cities of the occupied West Bank, where Israel controls the majority of territory and 400,000 settlers live alongside 2.7 million Palestinians. The 84-year-old has relied on presidential decrees to pass laws, while continuing security coordination with Israel - a policy unpopular with Palestinians.

Last year he officially dissolved the Hamas-dominated Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), or parliament, which had not met since the 2007 split. At the time he pledged to hold new elections by May, but none have occurred. "We don't have functioning institutions," said Nasser Al-Qudwa, a former Palestinian foreign minister, senior official in Abbas's Fatah party and Arafat's nephew. "The PLC is not there. Whose fault is that? I would say Hamas, but the legislative branch of the government is not there. The judiciary has always been weak and now it is very weak. So you have the executive with complete concentration of power."

## 'First Arab democracy'

In Gaza, Hamas has established a parallel government and its security forces crack down on political dissent. Unemployment in the strip is over 50 percent, with desperate poverty. Israel maintains a crippling blockade of Gaza it argues is necessary to isolate Hamas and prevent it from obtaining weapons or materials to make them. The two have fought three wars since 2008. UN officials and rights groups say the blockade amounts to collective punishment of Gaza's two million residents.

"You could argue Palestine was the first Arab democracy," Hugh Lovatt, an analyst specializing in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the European Council of Foreign Relations, said. "If you look back to 2005-6, democracy was steadily growing. It wasn't perfect but there were municipal, legislative and presidential elections. But we have seen a severe backsliding."

Hamas and Fatah blame each other for the lack of elections, while both accuse Israel of obstruction. Palestinians say any new elections should also take place in predominantly Palestinian east Jerusalem - an impossibility under current circumstances. Israel seized east Jerusalem in a 1967 war and later annexed it in moves never recognized by the international community. It considers the entire city its capital and outlaws any Palestinian Authority activity there.

Diana Buttu, a former spokeswoman for Abbas's government and now prominent critic, said the split was convenient for Israel and its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, seeking re-election in Sept 17 polls. "Israel is loving it. This is their greatest dream," she said. Shikaki's polling, for the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, found little optimism about new elections, but also that democracy was not a top priority. Only 10 percent see holding new elections as their top priority, while ending Israel's occupation was the top choice for 44 percent of respondents. "Palestinians live under Israeli occupation. The issues of poverty and unemployment are huge for the overwhelming majority of the Palestinians," Shikaki said. "These two issues are a lot more important than the transition to democracy." —AFP



Tunisian women look at posters of presidential candidates in the capital Tunis yesterday. —AFP

## Tunisian women absent from presidential campaign

Tunisia has long been seen as a pioneer for women's rights in the Arab world, but on the eve of presidential elections, women are calling this reputation into question. "Men promise a lot to women. But when Mr Moustache arrives in power, nothing happens," said Feryel Charfeddine, head of Calam, an association fighting violence against women. Whether they be passionate activists, laywomen or former elected officials, many women say they do not expect "much" from the polls that start with the first voting round on Sept 15.

"I'm not a pessimist, I'm a realist," said Charfeddine, who is alarmed by what she sees every day on the ground: increased violence, diminished rights and social conservatism. "Women aren't interested in politics anymore. Unconsciously, they know that it's the same patriarchal system that endures," she said. Women played a prominent role in the protests that toppled longstanding dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011 and they were a courted group in previous post-revolution elections.

But they have been largely absent from the 2019 presidential campaign,

which has focused heavily on security and economic issues. Nor are they well represented in the large pool of presidential hopefuls, with just two women standing out of 26 candidates. One is staunch anti-Islamist Abir Moussi, the other a former minister, Salma Elloumi. "They're part of the alibi," said lawyer Bochra Belhaj Hmida, who was elected to parliament in 2014 but is stepping back from politics. "I had a very, very rich experience, but I'm leaving politics without regret," she told AFP.

While in office, Hmida helped spearhead an inheritance equality law, facing fierce backlash from some sides for her position on the hotly debated issue. "Men expect women in politics to be the least disruptive as possible, that they don't debate and especially that they don't make decisions. I lost a lot of male friendships," she said. She noted as well a lack of female solidarity, saying it's "as if there was only one spot to win and you have to fight each other for it."

## 'Changing minds'

The sometimes taxing environment can dissuade engagement. "Women

don't feel supported and there is no willingness of political parties to change that," said Zyna Mejri, a young activist. Tunisia has been considered relatively progressive on women's rights in the Arab and Muslim world since its independence in the 1950s, adopting in 1956 a Personal Status Code that abolished polygamy and changed divorce law.

Beji Caid Essebsi, Tunisia's first president elected democratically by a nationwide vote in 2014, boasted of having been carried to power by the female electorate. He oversaw the passing of several key texts, including a law on violence against women and the repeal of a circular banning women from marrying non-Muslims. "It's true that we're way better off, but we still have a lot to do," Mejri said. "We can have every day a new great law about equality, but the problem is the enforcement of that law," she added, noting that "it's also about changing the mind of Tunisian society". "Schizophrenia", Charfeddine calls it, pointing to the gap between the country's progressive image of the society's strong conservatism.

## 'Universal principle'

Hmida often collided with the aggression of young men that did not understand her fight for equality. But she remains convinced of the need for debate and says she has at times shifted her point of view. "When I managed to establish a dialogue with some of these young people, it also opened my eyes... I became aware of their frustration, of the way they think the 'bourgeois' look at them," she said. The question of whether Tunisian society is "ready" for more equality infuriates Yosra Frawes, head of the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (AFTD).

"It's not even a question, equality is a universal principle," she said, noting however that she sees "an enormous setback" for women's rights in the country. She cites growing difficulties regarding sexual and reproductive rights, less access to health care - particularly in rural areas - and the impoverishment of women. According to a recent AFTD study, women make up more than 80 percent of Tunisia's agricultural workforce, a sector the association denounced as precarious and "exploitative". —AFP

## Trump makes US even less predictable

Stunning the world by saying he was canceling secret talks with the Taliban, President Donald Trump is again displaying his trademark unpredictability - at the cost, critics say, of weakening US credibility. After his three made-for-television summits with North Korean strongman Kim Jong Un, and as he voices openness to meeting Iran's leadership, Trump showed like never before that he is eager to talk to US adversaries by inviting the Taliban, the Islamist militants who have been fighting US troops for nearly two decades in Afghanistan.

But in revealing the bombshell, Trump had a dual surprise - the talks focused on a US troop withdrawal, which were to be held at the Camp David presidential retreat on Sunday, were off. He pointed to the Taliban's killing of a US soldier on Thursday in a bombing in Kabul, the latest in a string of deadly attacks. Aaron David Miller, a long-time presidential aide who helped arrange the ultimately unsuccessful Israeli-Palestinian-US summit at Camp David in 2000, believed that Trump was trying to put the brakes on a bad deal - and, as usual, to put himself in the middle.

"This clearly plays to the president's instincts and his need to be at the center of attention," said Miller, now a distinguished scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars. He questioned why the president - not a special envoy or secretary of state - would lead negotiations and why they would take place at Camp David, where a 1978 summit brought peace between Israel and Egypt. "It looks bad symbolically, and practically. Look at the result now. The president has suspended any negotiations with the Taliban," he said. "He appears to have made the situation worse," he said, branding Trump's approach "the summit of the vanities". Both the Trump administration and the Taliban have however kept the door open to future talks.

## 'The world is watching'

Trump, a self-proclaimed master negotiator who published a 1987 book called "The Art of the Deal," has spoken of his penchant for throwing others off guard. He has repeatedly followed his own advice as president, notably on China, where he has tossed out the rulebook of trade talks by repeatedly and suddenly hiking tariffs. Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the left-leaning Center for American Progress, said it was hard to identify a single foreign policy success brought by Trump's tactics.

"There doesn't seem to be any common thread or philosophy that drives his approach besides the use of own personal unpredictability," said Katulis, who worked in the White House under Bill Clinton. "This approach undercuts those who work for him in trying to do the foundational work needed to advance a peace deal in Afghanistan or get an agreement with North Korea or Iran," he said. "This creates the effect of the United States being a much more unpredictable and erratic actor, and this style ultimately may produce incentives for other countries to simply discount the word of America or any process it is engaged in right now."

Senator Amy Klobuchar, a Democratic presidential candidate, accused Trump of treating foreign policy "like it's some kind of game show". "He wants to have that moment, but then all the details aren't done, and then we end up in a worse place on the world stage," she told CNN. "The world is watching. China is watching. Russia is watching. They realize the weakness this creates when we don't have consistency," she said.

## Decisive in the end?

Defenders of Trump said he showed decisiveness by calling off the summit after the attack, which apparently took place after the invitation to Camp David. "If Taliban think we are doing peace deal so they can walk back in and slaughter Afghans at will and turn the country back into a terrorist Disneyland, then they are sadly mistaken," said James Jay Carafano, a fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation, tweeting that Trump delivered an "unmistakable message". —AFP

## Prisoner swap big win for Zelensky, but at a price

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky scored a big win by exchanging prisoners with Russia, experts say, but Moscow made him pay a heavy price and will be looking for more concessions. In office since only May, the political novice managed to fulfil a key campaign promise by getting 35 prisoners held by Russia sent home. The ex-detainees, including 24 sailors and filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, were given heroes' welcomes when they landed in Kiev - with Ukrainians across the country gathered around televisions showing them embracing family members and shaking the president's hand.

"Politically, it was a major victory for Zelensky," Ukrainian political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko said. The comedian-turned-politician, who swept to power in a shock April election win, will be able to point to the swap as proof that he is up to the task of being president. In exchange for the prisoners, Kiev handed the same number over to Moscow including Vladimir Tsemakh, a fighter with Moscow-backed rebels linked to the downing of flight MH17.

Kiev says Moscow insisted on Tsemakh's involvement in the swap and he was delivered to Russia despite pleas from the Netherlands. Investigators have described Tsemakh as a person of interest in the shooting down of MH17, which was travelling between Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur when it was hit by a Russian-made BUK missile over rebel-held eastern Ukraine. International investigators in June charged three Russians and a Ukrainian in absentia with murder in the case. The 298 people on board the plane, two thirds of them Dutch, were all killed.

## West 'fed up' with conflict

German tabloid Bild described Tsemakh's handover as a "double victory" for Russian President Vladimir Putin: "He gets the only suspect in detention... and Europe loses some of its confidence in

Ukraine, which ignored this call from the Netherlands". Kiev needs the West's continued support in its conflict with Russia, which is under European and US sanctions over its annexation of Crimea and role in the Ukraine crisis.

Russia took control of the Black Sea peninsula in 2014 and backs the separatists in the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which has left more than 13,000 people dead in the last five years. France and Germany helped to negotiate a peace accord that has yet to be implemented. Paris has called for a new summit of Putin, Zelensky and the French and German leaders to take place later this month.

The French foreign and defense ministers were due in Moscow for talks yesterday. "It is clear that the West will try to force us to resolve the problem with Russia. They are fed up," said a Ukrainian source with good knowledge of the issue. Kiev needs to have the courage, the source said, to resist the pressure and "get the most for ourselves in this situation". The focus of the talks will be reviving the Minsk accords, based on an agreement that was reached in 2014 but failed to stop the fighting. Although full-scale fighting has subsided, there are still regular clashes in frontline areas that leave dead on both sides.

## 'Traps laid by Putin'

The agreement called for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the frontlines, prisoner exchanges, local elections and the delivery of humanitarian aid. This would be followed by constitutional changes to give more power to regional authorities in exchange for the disbanding of rebel forces. It is unclear on what issues Zelensky would be ready to negotiate, but he has said resolving the conflict is his top priority.

The war has been a huge drain on government resources and drag on Ukraine's economy, and has forced some 1.5 million people from their homes. Fesenko said major concessions were out of the question, but the risk was that Zelensky would waste into dangerous waters. "The West understands that there are red lines Ukraine will not cross," he said, but Zelensky needs to be careful not to "fall into traps laid by Putin". —AFP

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## Business

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

**12** Nissan's Saikawa bows to pressure, to resign as CEO**13** Britain's economy shows unexpected strength, dampening recession fears**13** Euro on defensive ahead of ECB meeting amid growth worries

**LONDON:** Grounded British Airways planes sit on the tarmac at Heathrow airport Terminal 5 in west London yesterday. British Airways yesterday cancelled almost all flights departing and arriving into the UK, as the airline's first-ever pilots' strike began, sparking travel chaos for tens of thousands of passengers. — AFP

# BA cancels flights in historic strike

## First-ever British Airways pilots' strike sparks travel chaos

**LONDON:** British Airways (BA) yesterday cancelled almost all flights departing and arriving into the UK, as the airline's first-ever pilots' strike began, sparking travel chaos for tens of thousands of passengers. The industrial action over pay yesterday and today by members of the British Airline Pilots Association (BALPA) trade union follows around nine months of failed talks.

The carrier, owned by London-listed International Airlines Group (IAG) and which operates about 850 flights per day in Britain, said it had no option but to cancel nearly all scheduled flights. On the first day of the strike, 145,000 passengers faced cancelled international and domestic flights mainly at London's Gatwick and Heathrow airports.

BA chief executive Alex Cruz called for talks to continue. "We urge the union to please sit down with us as quickly as we can so that we can reach an agreement," he told the BBC. There were very few passengers milling around the departure area at Heathrow airport Terminal 5 in west London, AFP photos showed. Blue screens displayed a message saying that BA was "deeply sorry" for the "large number" of cancellations at T5, home to its British operations.

"Unfortunately, with no detail from BALPA on which pilots would strike, we had no way of predicting how many would come to work or which aircraft they are qualified to fly, so we had no option but to cancel nearly 100 percent of our flights," British Airways said in a statement. The airline stressed that it remained willing to return to talks but the union—which is seeking a bigger share of company profits—accuses BA for not wanting to negotiate.

### Customer frustration

"We understand the frustration and disruption

BA's strike action has caused our customers," BA added. "After many months of trying to resolve the pay dispute, we are extremely sorry that it has come to this." BA and its 4,300 pilots have been locked in a dispute that could disrupt the travel plans of nearly 300,000 people in total over the two days.

Pilots are also threatening to strike for one more day on September 27 - and then possibly again closer to the winter holidays—should the dispute drag on. BALPA has rejected a pay increase of 11.5 percent over three years that the airline proposed in July. BA says the offer would see flight captains receive "world-class" pay and benefits of around £200,000 (\$246,000 or 220,000 euros) a year. The airline pointed out also that two other unions representing 90 percent of the airlines' workers have accepted the 11.5-percent raise.

### BA 'not budging'

BALPA boss Brian Strutton also apologized for the travel chaos—but defended the historic industrial action and blamed the company for failing to negotiate. "We are very sorry for all the disruption that's been caused by the industrial action," he told the BBC. "I think British Airways took the decision some weeks ago that they would close down the airline operation and it's up to them to do things that way." BALPA points to a nearly 10-percent jump in pre-tax profits reported by BA-parent IAG last year.

"We are prepared to negotiate. We are prepared to move on our position, but so far British Airways has said to me: We are not going to budge," Strutton said. In early afternoon deals, IAG's share price sank two percent on the falling London stock market.

Independent aviation analyst John Strickland said the union had not acknowledged how BA had been forced to

embrace radical change in the face of fierce competition. "BA pilots are striking, on the face of it, about pay but terms and conditions come into it too," Strickland said. "They express concern about how BA is being run—whilst

not acknowledging just how radically the marketplace has changed for the airline in recent years, with more intense and diverse competition of all kinds from low-cost to premium offers." — AFP

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## New Saudi Energy Minister: A royal with experience in OPEC cuts

**DUBAI:** When former Saudi oil minister Ali Al Naimi crushed oil prices in 2014 by adding to global oversupply, one man in the kingdom stood firmly against this strategy. Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, King Salman's son and a veteran oil official, who on Sunday was named as new Saudi energy minister, is known in the industry for decades of work helping to foster OPEC production cuts.

As he takes the reins at the world's largest oil exporter from Khaled Al-Falih, Prince Abdulaziz faces intensifying demands from Saudi royals to prop up oil prices to help ease budget constraints and push through plans to get maximum value from a partial privatization of state oil

giant Aramco. Known in the industry as a good negotiator, Prince Abdulaziz has long experience in cutting deals within the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and respect among fellow OPEC members can help him implement that drive.

In 2016, when OPEC agreed to cut oil output, Prince Abdulaziz worked behind the scenes to bring fellow OPEC ministers into an agreement, OPEC sources said. OPEC and non-OPEC producers later inked their first deal since 2001 to curtail oil output jointly and ease a global glut after more than two years of low prices that overstretched many state budgets.

And when sanctions-hit Iran resisted a push by Saudi Arabia and Russia to increase oil output two years later to meet calls from US President Donald Trump to cool prices, it was Prince Abdulaziz, then minister of state for energy affairs, who helped convince Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh to agree to the deal. OPEC sources said. The prince's appointment caps 10 days of a series of swift changes that stripped Falih of his sprawling authority.

Falih was once seen in the industry and by foreign diplomats as the third most powerful man in Saudi Arabia after the king and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman,



**LONDON:** A few passengers walk around the near-deserted departure area at Heathrow airport Terminal 5 in west London yesterday. — AFP

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## Business

# Stocks gain on stimulus hopes; British pound hits 6-week high

## Emerging markets hit 5-week high on stimulus hopes: Lira slips

**LONDON:** Stocks gained yesterday as investors pinned their hopes on expected stimulus from the world's central banks to support slowing growth, while the pound hit a six-week high on hopes that Britain will not quit the EU without a deal. MSCI's All Country World Index, which tracks shares across 47 countries, was up 0.06%.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will try for a second time on Monday to call a snap parliamentary election, but is set to be thwarted once more by opposition lawmakers who want to ensure he cannot take Britain out of the European Union without a divorce agreement in place. Sterling hit a six-week high of \$1.2385 as investors saw the threat of a "no-deal" Brexit easing.

In a note published late on Friday, strategists at Goldman Sachs raised the probability of a Brexit deal to 55% from 45% and cut the likelihood of a "no deal" to 20% from 25% previously. "The threat of a no-deal Brexit has somewhat receded but has not gone away completely, which is reflected around current levels," said Esther Maria Reichelt, a strategist at Commerzbank.

European stock markets pared early gains, with the pan-European STOXX 600 index flat by midday in London. Earlier up on the day, the index eased as the pound's strength weighed on internationally exposed British stocks. Germany's trade-sensitive DAX index rose 0.3% after data showed that seasonally adjusted exports rose 0.7% in July. A Reuters poll of economists had pointed to a drop of 0.5%. The data was a positive surprise in largely gloomy readouts from major economies since Friday, which heightened expectations of stimulus from central banks.

On Friday, US jobs growth slowed more than expected in August, while data over the weekend from China showed the country's exports unexpectedly shrank as shipments to the US slowed. The two countries have been locked in a trade dispute since early 2018, and investors fear escalating tariffs between them - already curtailing growth - might tip the global economy into recession as early as next year. "If all the currently proposed tariffs are implemented, we foresee that growth in the first half of next year will slow toward the brink of a recession," said Mark Haefele, chief investment officer at

UBS Global Wealth Management.

But the prospect of central bank support kept risk sentiment buoyant. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan rose 0.2% and E-mini futures for the S&P 500 index were up 0.25%. On Friday, China's central bank cut reserve requirements for a seventh time since early 2018 to free funds for lending. Federal Reserve Board Chairman Jerome Powell said the US central bank would continue to "act as appropriate" to sustain US economic expansion, while the European Central Bank is expected to cut rates this week.

The euro fell to a five-day low before recovering ground to trade 0.1% higher at \$1.1032. The dollar was 0.05% lower against a basket of currencies. It traded at 106.995 yen, off the one-month peak of 107.235 scaled late last week. In fixed income, longer-dated euro zone government bond yields ticked higher, with most yields up 3 to 4 basis points in early trade. Oil rose on expectations that Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, will continue to support output cuts by OPEC and other producers to prop up prices under new Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman.

### Emerging Markets

Emerging market stocks climbed for a fourth straight session yesterday as hope for stimulus to support growth in the world's major economies buoyed investor sentiment, while currencies in the developing world were mixed against a tepid dollar. MSCI's emerging market stocks index rose 0.2% to hit a five-week high with Asian shares providing the biggest boost.

Data over the weekend showing an unexpected drop in Chinese exports last month, bolstering expectations of more stimulus from the world's second largest economy with equity investors cheering Friday's central bank move to cut reserve requirements. Mainland Chinese indices rose between 0.6% and 0.8%. The yuan, which recorded its best daily performance since June in the previous session, retreated to fall 0.2%.

"The latest move reflects the government's determination to use a combination of policy tools to stimulate the economy," said Huanzi Zhu, economist at Mizuho Bank. "The easing measure also comes at a critical time as the economy is expected to face more tariffs, one



**MUMBAI:** Women balance plastic buckets on their head as they collect fish to sell in a market in Mumbai. —AFP

tranche coming in mid-Oct and another in mid-Dec." South Korea's Kospi and Taiwan stocks also advanced higher, but Hong Kong stocks lagged the broader market to close 0.1% lower as pressure from anti-government protests grew.

Among stocks outside Asia, Turkey's BIST 100 index rose over 1%, while Moscow's MOEX index tacked marginally. Emerging market currencies were mixed with expectations rife among investors for an easing package from the European Central Bank this Thursday, and a likely quarter point interest rate cut next week from the Federal Reserve.

The lira fell 0.5% with focus on the Turkish central bank's monetary policy meet this week after President Tayyip Erdogan said over the weekend he expected the

central bank to keep cutting interest rates. The central bank, which slashed its key interest rate by 425 basis points to 19.75% last month, is under pressure to continue the downward trend as Erdogan looks to achieve an economic growth of 5% in 2020.

Russia's rouble tracked higher oil prices to hit a more than two-week high, while an improvement in the foreign policy conditions after a prisoner swap program with Ukraine, boosted sentiment. "In our view, this is an important step towards a gradual resolution of conflict between two countries and we think assets of both countries should benefit from a successful prisoners swap," said Credit Suisse analysts in a note. The Polish zloty edged higher against the euro ahead of its monetary policy tomorrow. —Agencies

## India car sales record worst-ever monthly fall on weak demand

**MUMBAI:** Passenger car sales in India plunged by 41 percent in their worst monthly fall on record, data showed yesterday, as the weakening economy hit demand and manufacturers called for government relief. It was the tenth straight month of falls in car sales amid soft consumer demand in Asia's third-largest economy, where growth slowed for the fifth straight quarter in the April-to-June period to 5.0 percent.

Figures from the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers showed that domestic sales tumbled to 115,957 in August from 196,847 a year ago, the sharpest fall since the organization started recording data in 1997-98, a spokesman said. Sales of commercial vehicles tumbled by 39 percent, while motorcycles and scooters dropped by 22 percent, the data showed.

Indian auto manufacturing giants Tata Motors, Ashok Leyland and Mahindra & Mahindra have slashed production amid the slowdown. Thousands of jobs have also been lost across the sector. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in August lifted a ban on purchasing new vehicles by government departments, but carmakers are calling for further support from New Delhi. SIAM president Rajan Wadhwa said last week the government needed to take "urgent" action such as cutting taxes on car sales to boost demand ahead of the busy festive season. —AFP

## Gulf Bank announces winners of Al Danah weekly draw

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 8th September 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 1-5 September 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week. The winners this week are: (1) Tahani Mahmoud Haji Hasan (2) Adnan Abdo Khlof (3) Nawal Yaqoub Yousef Alqallaf (4) Saeed Mohamed Thaeen Alrashdi (5) Ateyyah Ali Ateyyah Alateyyah.

Gulf Bank's third Al Danah quarterly draw for the prize of KD500,000 will be held on 25 September 2019. The final Al Danah draw for KD1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event. Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

## Nissan's Saikawa bows to pressure, to resigns as CEO

**YOKOHAMA:** Nissan Motor Co CEO Hiroto Saikawa will resign on Sept 16, the automaker said yesterday, bowing to pressure after he admitted to being improperly overpaid and marking further upheaval at a company battered by scan-

dals and plunging profit. Saikawa, who admitted to the overpayment last week, will be temporarily replaced by Chief Operating Officer Yasuhiro Yamauchi, Nissan's chairman of the board, Yasushi Kimura, told a news conference.

His resignation marks a dramatic early exit for a man who had been tasked with righting the Japanese automaker following the arrest and ouster of former chairman Carlos Ghosn late last year. But Saikawa's brief tenure has been characterized by strains with top shareholder Renault and tumbling profits. For investors, the wors-

ening relationship with Renault has been a particular concern, casting doubt on the future of the Franco-Japanese automaking alliance at a time of sweeping change and uncertainty in the global auto industry.

"Saikawa recently has indicated his inclination to resign, and in line with his desire to pass the baton to a new generation of leaders at Nissan, he will resign on Sept 16," Kimura told reporters. The search for a permanent replacement is underway and the company said it aimed to have a new CEO in place by the end of October.



Commerce. Furthermore, Gulf Bank have partnered with Ernst and Young Kuwait (EY) with reference to "Al Danah Prize Draw" system in order to assist in assessing processes, technical controls considering relevant parameters and provide recommendations in-line with industry leading practices.

The study was conducted in line with industry standards and control requirements relevant to similar prize draw schemes wherein, a detailed review of prize draw management system along with draw scheme parameters, data extraction for draw, filtration of customers as per defined business criteria and necessary system interactions was conducted to advise on any potential areas of improvements.

Among the candidates are non-Japanese, women, and those hailing from Renault, the chairman of Nissan's nomination committee, Masakazu Toyoda, told reporters. Saikawa told a news conference he wanted to solve the company's issues before stepping down, and he apologized for not being able to do so. He also said he would return the improper compensation. Saikawa's admission of overpayment, following an internal investigation, has pitched Nissan into fresh crisis and appears to have accelerated the search for a replacement. —Reuters

### EXCHANGE RATES

#### Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| US Dollar Transfer | 304.550 |
| Euro               | 339.120 |
| Sterling Pound     | 377.190 |
| Canadian dollar    | 233.010 |
| Turkish lira       | 55.370  |
| Swiss Franc        | 311.560 |
| US Dollar Buying   | 297.250 |

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

|                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| Japanese Yen      | 2.849   |
| Indian Rupees     | 4.260   |
| Pakistani Rupees  | 1.967   |
| Sri Lanka Rupees  | 1.679   |
| Nepali Rupees     | 2.653   |
| Singapore Dollar  | 222.140 |
| Hongkong Dollar   | 38.849  |
| Bangladesh Taka   | 3.594   |
| Philippine Peso   | 5.890   |
| Thai Baht         | 9.997   |
| Malaysian ringgit | 77.890  |

#### GCC COUNTRIES

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Saudi Riyal    | 81.268  |
| Qatari Riyal   | 83.702  |
| Omani Riyal    | 791.553 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 809.220 |
| UAE Dirham     | 82.972  |

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

|                           |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Egyptian Pound - Cash     | 21.500 |
| Egyptian Pound - Transfer | 18.485 |

|                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| Yemen Riyal/for 1000   | 1.223   |
| Tunisian Dinar         | 110.750 |
| Jordanian Dinar        | 430.340 |
| Lebanese Lira/for 1000 | 0.203   |
| Syrian Lira            | 0.000   |
| Morocco Dirham         | 32.330  |

#### Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

| Rate for Transfer     | Selling Rate |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| US Dollar             | 304.190      |
| Canadian Dollar       | 230.813      |
| Sterling Pound        | 373.865      |
| Georgian Lari         | 301.815      |
| Euro                  | 337.075      |
| Swiss Frank           | 301.815      |
| Bahraini Dinar        | 808.955      |
| UAE Dirhams           | 83.220       |
| Qatari Riyals         | 84.460       |
| Saudi Riyals          | 82.015       |
| Jordanian Dinar       | 430.328      |
| Egyptian Pound        | 18.398       |
| Sri Lanka Rupees      | 1.683        |
| Indian Rupees         | 4.233        |
| Pakistani Rupees      | 1.944        |
| Bangladesh Taka       | 3.602        |
| Philippine Peso       | 5.861        |
| Cyprus pound          | 18.097       |
| Japanese Yen          | 3.850        |
| Syrian Pound          | 1.590        |
| Nepalese Rupees       | 2.648        |
| Malaysian Ringgit     | 73.505       |
| Chinese Yuan Renminbi | 43.110       |
| Thai Bhat             | 10.935       |

|                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| Turkish Lira      | 54.175  |
| Singapore dollars | 218.554 |

#### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

| CURRENCY           | BUY      | SELL     |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Europe</b>      |          |          |
| British Pound      | 0.361522 | 0.375422 |
| Czech Korune       | 0.004911 | 0.014211 |
| Danish Krone       | 0.040748 | 0.045748 |
| Euro               | 0.326670 | 0.340370 |
| Georgian Lari      | 0.102185 | 0.102185 |
| Hungarian O.000921 | 0.000111 | 0.000111 |
| Norwegian Krone    | 0.029446 | 0.034646 |
| Romanian Leu       | 0.053707 | 0.070557 |
| Russian ruble      | 0.004553 | 0.004553 |
| Slovakia           | 0.009113 | 0.019113 |
| Swedish Krona      | 0.027000 | 0.032000 |
| Swiss Franc        | 0.302004 | 0.313004 |
| <b>Australasia</b> |          |          |
| Australian Dollar  | 0.197930 | 0.209930 |
| New Zealand Dollar | 0.186462 | 0.195962 |
| <b>America</b>     |          |          |
| Canadian Dollar    | 0.223108 | 0.232108 |
| US Dollars         | 0.300600 | 0.306900 |
| US Dollars Mint    | 0.301100 | 0.306900 |
| <b>Asia</b>        |          |          |
| Bangladesh Taka    | 0.002935 | 0.003736 |

|                   |          |          |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| Chinese Yuan      | 0.041197 | 0.044697 |
| Hong Kong Dollar  | 0.036756 | 0.039506 |
| Indian Rupee      | 0.003694 | 0.004466 |
| Indonesian Rupiah | 0.000017 | 0.000023 |
| Japanese Yen      | 0.002787 | 0.002967 |
| Korean Won        | 0.000241 | 0.000258 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 0.068858 | 0.074858 |
| Nepalese Rupee    | 0.002681 | 0.003021 |
| Pakistan Rupee    | 0.001342 | 0.002112 |
| Philippine Peso   | 0.005758 | 0.006058 |
| Singapore Dollar  | 0.213713 | 0.223713 |
| Sri Lanka Rupee   | 0.001320 | 0.001900 |
| Taiwan            | 0.009589 | 0.009769 |
| Thai Baht         | 0.009617 | 0.010167 |
| Vietnamese Dong   | 0.000013 | 0.000013 |

|                  |          |          |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Arab</b>      |          |          |
| Bahraini Dinar   | 0.802070 | 0.810130 |
| Egyptian Pound   | 0.018656 | 0.022016 |
| Iranian Riyal    | 0.000084 | 0.000086 |
| Iraqi Dinar      | 0.000210 | 0.000270 |
| Jordanian Dinar  | 0.424856 | 0.433856 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar    | 1.000000 | 1.000000 |
| Lebanese Pound   | 0.000151 | 0.000251 |
| Moroccan Dirhams | 0.021407 | 0.045407 |
| Omani Riyal      | 0.786297 | 0.794198 |
| Qatar Riyal      | 0.083037 | 0.083871 |
| Saudi Riyal      | 0.080167 | 0.081467 |
| Syrian Pound     | 0.001292 | 0.001512 |
| Tunisian Dinar   | 0.102042 | 0.110042 |
| Turkish Lira     | 0.046147 | 0.055992 |
| UAE Dirhams      | 0.082325 | 0.083153 |
| Yemeni Riyal     | 0.000991 | 0.001071 |

## Business

## Euro on defensive ahead of ECB meeting amid growth worries

## US-China trade war weighs on global economy

TOKYO: The euro was on the back foot yesterday ahead of a European Central Bank meeting later this week at which policymakers are expected to deliver new stimulus to bolster a flagging regional economy. Heightened expectations for an ECB easing come as other global central banks move to loosen the monetary spigot with the People's Bank of China on Friday taking steps to boost lending.

Adding to the calls for central bank easing are signs the global economy is struggling with China's exports unexpectedly falling in August, data released on Sunday showed. The dollar was confined to a narrow range versus the yen as traders weighed the prospect of US interest rate cuts against their demand for safe-haven assets.

Among Asian currencies, the yuan got off to a subdued start after the soft trade data. "The Chinese numbers play to the view that if we don't see progress in US-China trade talks, then further easing will be necessary, including tolerance of a weaker yuan," said Ray Attrill, head of foreign exchange strategy at National Australia Bank in Sydney. "The ECB is the big game in town globally this week, and the market is more comfortable with the Federal Reserve cutting rates, so I think the market is probably risk neutral."

Sterling edged lower as political uncertainty about how the UK would complete its divorce with the European Union by an Oct. 31 deadline dented appetite for the pound. Traders are likely to take their cues from the ECB

as major central banks line up support measures for a weakening global economy. The euro was little changed at \$1.10235 early in Asian trading after falling 0.1% on Friday. Sterling traded at \$1.2288 after falling 0.4% on Friday. The dollar index against a basket of six major currencies rose 0.03% to 98.447.

The dollar traded at 106.96 yen, up 0.04% from Friday. Trading could be subdued as one of the strongest typhoons to hit Tokyo in recent years made landfall yesterday, cancelling scores of train lines. The European Central Bank is all but certain to approve new stimulus measures on Thursday to boost an ailing economy, but the composition of its package is far from clear as a rift has opened between hawkish northern

## Brexit uncertainty is a risk to sterling

European policymakers and doves from the south. Data due later on German exports could provide further clues about the health of the global economy.

Policymakers are rushing to bolster growth as a wide-ranging dispute between the United States and China over trade policy drags into a second year, increasing the risk of recession. In the offshore market, the dollar rose 0.05% to 7.1076 yuan. China's central bank said on Friday it was cutting the amount of cash that banks must hold as reserves for the third time this year, releasing 900 billion yuan (\$126.35 billion) in liquidity to shore up the flagging economy.

The PBOC has now slashed the ratio seven times since early 2018. China's exports unexpectedly fell in August as shipments to the United States slowed sharply, pointing to



VIENNA: A cash machine/ATM is photographed in Vienna. A debate on whether to enshrine in the constitution the right to pay cash has entered Austria's election campaign, shining a light on the country's love of cold, hard currency. — AFP

further weakness in the world's second-largest economy. The US Federal Reserve will continue to act "as appropriate" to sustain the economic expansion in the world's

biggest economy, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said Friday in Zurich, confirming expectations for a rate cut at the Fed's next policy decision on Sept 18. — Reuters

## NBK Economic Update

## Project awards relatively weak in second quarter - but rise sharply

KUWAIT: After a relatively weak year for projects in 2018, awards picked up in 1Q19 (KD 700 million), but slowed to only KD 450 million in the second quarter, with overall first half awards much lower than previously expected. Nonetheless, some delayed projects have been rolled over into the second half of the year, with expected 2H awards having risen to about KD 4.2 billion according to the most recent estimates from MEED.

This brings total 2019 project awards estimate to around KD 5 billion (previously KD 4 billion), the strongest since 2015, and comes amid a pressing need to deliver on key development plan projects. Indeed, the pace of awards has risen sharply so far in 3Q19 (as of Sept.1), with KD 1.4 billion awarded out of an estimated KD 2.7 billion for the quarter. The strong performance so far in Q3 means that the outlook for 2019 is better than had previously anticipated, but cancellations and delays in project implementation remain a downside risk.

## MEED projects, as of September 1

First half awards were dominated by the construction (KD 573 million) and transport sectors (KD 360 million) mainly on account of a few megaprojects, the largest of which were the PAHW Jahra and Sulabiya low cost housing city (KD 430 million) and the MPW regional road south project (KD 285 million). As for the second half of the year, awards are expected to come mostly from the transport sector, in addition to large planned projects in the power/water sector.

## Transport

Transport sector awards in 2Q19 amounted to KD 210 million, a 40% rise from 1Q and versus no awards in 2Q18. The pickup in transport awards likely resulted from pressing needs as the country's transport and infrastructure



maintenance were becoming more overdue. Despite this, only two contracts pertaining to the Ministry of Public Work's (MPW) Regional Road South Project were awarded in 2Q19.

The urgency however became much more apparent in 3Q19, with most overdue awards finally coming to fruition. The quarter saw KD1.2 billion in transport sector awards, the highest since 2Q16, and likely to rise as the quarter comes to an end. Looking forward, the sector could see more modest activity, with several medium-sized projects scheduled for later this year and early 2020. This includes MPW's - Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Road Improvement (KD 105 million) and four parts of the Northern Regional Road at a combined value of KD 444million. Both projects are still under bid evaluation.

The construction sector witnessed a major contraction in 2Q19 with only KD 17 million in awards, much lower than previous quarters, with the slowdown likely stemming from deadline extensions and prolonged bid negotiations. The awards came from a single real estate project, the Al Andalus Mixed-use Tower. MEED figures suggest a mild pick-up in 3Q19 at KD 274 million in expected awards of which KD 64 million has already been awarded for the Public Authority for Housing and Welfare's (PAHW). Looking forward, the construction sector's outlook seems modest with KD1 billion in additional awards expected over the next three quarters to 2Q20, and setbacks are still possible, given recent trends. Planned projects of note

include the PAHW Jaber Al Ahmed Township (J2 and J3) and Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP)/Kuwait Municipality's South Jahra Labor City with a combined value of KD 285 million, scheduled for September and December 2019 respectively.

## Power and Water

With large, power-intensive projects under execution in the other sectors, and with a massive new petrochemical complex scheduled for 2H20, development in the power and water sector has become increasingly vital in meeting a rise in projected demand for utilities. The Ministry of Energy and Water expects demand for electricity to increase by 17 gigawatts by 2030.

Yet, only two contracts worth KD 60 million were awarded in the second quarter, but a pick-up is expected during 3Q19 (KD 1 billion) and in 2Q20 (KD 1.2 billion) to implement large planned projects (Chart 3). This includes KAPP/MEW's - Al Khiran IWPP Plant (KD 1.0 billion) scheduled for May 2020 and KNPC's Al Dibdibah Solar PV Power Plant in Shagaya Renewable Energy Complex (KD 360million) which will be one of the largest photovoltaic solar facilities in the region with a capacity of 1,500GWh of power per year, scheduled for September 2019.

## Oil, gas and chemicals

Following slow progress in recent years, the oil and gas sector has regained momentum with KD 167 million in awards in 2Q19 and an additional KD 57million in planned awards over 2H19. However, no further awards are expected in 2020, rendering a fairly weak outlook. Among the awards in 2Q19 was Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) New Strategic Gas Export Pipeline from North Kuwait to MAA (KD 144million) with L&T Hydrocarbons appointed as the main contractor.

The project is expected to be completed in 2021. Notable upcoming projects in 2019 include KOC's 11 Patterns Well Hook-up and Associated Works (KD 108 million) and KOC's Jurassic Non Associated Phase 2: JPF 4 & 5 (KD 270million) scheduled for November and December 2019. On a separate note, the under construction Al Zour refinery (KD 65million) experienced setbacks in Q3. New IMO Maritime sulfur content rules limit sulfur content to 0.5%, while Al-Zour was originally planned to produce 1% sulfur heavy fuel. Nevertheless, expected completion is still on track for 2021.

trade deficit increased in July to 9.144 billion pounds from 8.920 billion pounds in June, although this was still a little less than the 9.55 billion pounds deficit economists had forecast. — Reuters

## UK's economy shows unexpected strength

LONDON: Britain's economy picked up more than expected in July, data showed yesterday, dampening fears that it will succumb to its first recession since the financial crisis as the Brexit crisis escalates. Economic output in July alone was 0.3% higher than in June, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said, marking the biggest rise since January and topping all forecasts in a Reuters poll of economists that had pointed to a 0.1% increase.

The pound inched higher against the dollar on the figures, which showed the expansion was driven by the dominant services sector-although the ONS said the underlying picture showed its growth weakening through 2019. "While the figures are far from stellar, after a contraction in the second quarter the chances that we see a negative GDP print in the third have now dropped significantly, meaning that a technical recession will likely be avoided," said David Cheatham, chief market analyst at online broker XTB.

The world's fifth-biggest economy shrank in the second quarter, a hangover from a stockpiling boom in advance of the original March Brexit deadline. While most economists think modest growth will return in the current quarter, a slew of downbeat surveys has shown business activity wilting during the Brexit crisis, especially in August. They point to a risk that the economy will contract again, which would officially herald a recession. The ONS said gross domestic product in the three months to July was flat compared with the previous three-month period. A Reuters poll of economists had pointed to a 0.1% contraction.

## Trade tensions

Last month, the Bank of England forecast that econom-



A view of Dublin Port in Ireland. — AFP

ic output would grow 0.3% in the third quarter, although its forecast for zero growth in the second quarter proved to be too optimistic. Besides the political crisis at home, the outlook for the economy has dimmed further because of trade tensions between the United States and China. Wednesday's data showed the services sector, which accounts for almost 80% of British economic output, expanded 0.3% in July after four months of stagnation, the biggest uptick since November 2018.

Manufacturing output increased unexpectedly last month, rising 0.3% in monthly terms, while the construction industry also fared better than expected, posting a 0.5% rise in output. Separate figures showed the goods

## Questions for ECB: Time for shock and awe

LONDON: This week's European Central Bank meeting is shaping up as one of the most anticipated in years as the central bank gears up to boost a frail economy with a series of stimulus measures. A global trade war threatens to push the powerhouse German economy into recession and headwinds from Brexit are becoming stronger. No wonder the ECB has all but promised fresh stimulus on Thursday, one of the last steps the bank's chief Mario Draghi can take before stepping down on Oct 31.

"This will probably be the most interesting meeting since March 2016 because we have this confluence of economic issues, political issues and a transition to a new president coming together," said Pictet Wealth Management strategist Frederik Ducrozet. He was referring to the 2016 meeting where the ECB slashed its repo rate to -0.40%, increased monthly asset purchases to 80 billion euros including corporate bonds, and launched a second round of cheap multi-year loans. Fast forward to this week and here are five key questions for markets:

## How low will rates go?

The ECB is leaning towards a package that includes a rate cut, a befed-up pledge to keep rates low for longer and compensation for banks over the side-effects of negative rates, sources told Reuters last week. At the very least, markets expect a 10 basis point cut in the deposit rate to -0.50% — the first cut since 2016. Money market pricing suggests some investors are betting on a bigger 20 bps cut; nearly a quarter of economists polled by Reuters expect this too. The ECB may also use its forward guidance to flag another cut in coming months. Markets price in 35 bps worth of easing in total by end-2020.

## Will the ECB restart QE?

Nearly 90% of economists polled by Reuters expect the ECB to announce a return to quantitative easing (QE), starting with monthly asset purchases of 30 billion euros from October. Analysts say this would likely be accompanied by tweaks to the ECB's bond-buying rules given a scarcity of eligible debt. For instance, the ECB could increase the 33% limit on the share of a country's bonds it can hold. While not expected, any signs that the ECB could start buying equities or bank bonds would be a big surprise.

There's also scope for disappointment with deeply negative bond yields suggesting investors are heavily positioned for stimulus. Some argue a new QE program worth at least 600 billion euros is needed to significantly lift inflation expectations. Many ECB policymakers favor restarting asset purchases, but opposition from northern Europe complicates matters. Reuters reported last week. Some officials such as Francois Villeroy de Galhau, Klaas Knot and Sabine Lautenschlaeger have played down the need for more QE, which ended in December.

## How effective will measures be?

After slashing rates to record lows and pumping 2.6 trillion euros of cheap cash into the economy since 2015, inflation remains below its near 2% target and growth lackluster. Inflation expectations suggest the ECB's target won't be met for years. Little wonder many in the market question whether more stimulus would have the desired impact. More than 80% of economists polled by Reuters recently were sceptical about the ECB's ability to influence inflation.

Even if policymakers announced rate cuts, the relaunch of QE and reserve tiering simultaneously - matching or even exceeding expectations - Nomura analysts said it remained "questionable how significant an impact all of this will have on the economy." Still, more stimulus may boost growth through another route. Pictet's Ducrozet reckons that a very long, or open-ended QE program can encourage fiscal expansion: by keeping government yields low for longer, sovereign debt servicing costs will fall - creating the conditions for governments to spend. — Reuters

## VIVA changes its network name to 'SABAH AL INSANYA'

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, changed its network name to 'SABAH AL INSANYA', in line with the fifth anniversary of the UN honoring of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a 'Humanitarian Leader' and of Kuwait as a 'Humanitarian Center'.

This change came as a gesture from VIVA in recognition of the Amir's historical achievement, and runs along the lines of the celebration of the Kuwaiti people of this well-deserved international crowning of Kuwait's long history of humanitarian and charitable initiatives spanning throughout decades.

The employees of VIVA engaged emotionally with great pride during this day with their customers to emphasize the patriotic spirit amid the Kuwaiti people and expressed full gratitude to HH the Amir of Kuwait who has spared no efforts and has played exemplary humanitarian role in different countries in the world. In addition, the employees of VIVA pray to Allah the Almighty to grant the Amir with good health.

## Business

# The new Mercedes-AMG GLB 35 4MATIC

GLB 35 4MATIC combines great variability and plenty of space with sheer driving pleasure



**DUBAI:** With its passionate, striking design, great practicality and dynamics and space for up to seven occupants, the new Mercedes-AMG GLB 35 4MATIC (combined fuel consumption: 7.6-7.5 l/100 km; combined CO2 emissions: 173-171 g/km) is an unrivalled alternative in the compact SUV segment. The turbocharged 2.0-litre four-cylinder engine develops 225 kW (306 hp) and guarantees impressive driving enjoyment in combination with the AMG SPEEDSHIFT DCT 8G transmission and variable AMG Performance 4MATIC all-wheel drive (acceleration from 0-100 km/h in 5.2 seconds). Not to mention the advantages of an SUV: raised seating position, plenty of space for passengers and luggage, and well-balanced off-road performance.

"With the new GLB 35 4MATIC we are extending our product portfolio by adding a highly attractive model for an active target group that attaches special importance to versatility. This also includes the optional seven-seater capability of our new compact SUV, though without having to sacrifice the genes typical of an AMG. Because in its segment, our GLB 35 likewise fulfils our brand promise of Driving Performance," says Tobias Moers, CEO of Mercedes-AMG GmbH.

#### Responsive and emotive

Thanks to a twin-scroll turbocharger, the 2.0-litre turbocharged engine rated at 225 kW (306 hp) impresses with great responsiveness to movements of the accelerator pedal, high torque (max. 400 Nm from 3000 rpm) and great liveliness. The crankcase made of high-strength, light-weight die-cast aluminum reduces the vehicle weight where it matters most for driving dynamics. The exhaust turbocharging combines optimum responsiveness at low engine speeds with a strong power increase at higher speeds. The high technological level is also confirmed by CAMTRONIC variable valve control for low fuel consumption. Intelligent thermal management ensures a faster and more efficient warm-up of the engine and oil. And the compact piezo injectors deliver fuel extremely precisely for increased efficiency.

#### Fast and agile

The transmission masters fast gearshifts and a sporty driving style just as well as comfort-oriented gearshifts for relaxed long-distance journeys. During upshifts, partial ignition interruption produces an impressive sound experience, while the double-declutch function during downshifts benefits gearshifting comfort.

The function synchronizes the engine and transmission speeds, minimizes unwanted gas cycle responses and stabilizes the vehicle, for example when braking ahead of bends. This also supports a particularly dynamic driving style. The new Mercedes-AMG GLB 35 4MATIC displays its full sprint potential with the RACE START function included as standard. Higher engine rpm when starting off, in combination with optimized shift points, produces the best possible traction and maximum acceleration. RACE START remains active while the accelerator is kept fully depressed.

#### AMG dynamic select

The five AMG DYNAMIC SELECT drive programs - Slippery, Comfort, Sport,

Sport+ and Individual, make for a very variable driving experience with a wide range from serene comfort to agile and sporty. The programs modify key parameters, such as the response of the engine, transmission, suspension and steering.

The new "Slippery" drive program is optimized for low-grip road conditions, with reduced power and a flat torque curve. Smooth gear changes, earlier upshifts and the ECO start/stop system support the stability-focused driving impression. - The "Comfort" program stands for comfortable and fuel-efficient driving, for example thanks to very early upshifts. Suspension and steering are set up with an emphasis on comfort, the ECO start/stop system is active. - "Sport" and "Sport+" place the focus on agility and driving pleasure with sporty engine and transmission tuning. The ECO start/stop system is deactivated.

The "Individual" drive program enables the individual parameters to be selected and saved according to personal preferences. In addition, the gliding function is available in the "Reduced" and "Moderate" drive settings. The driving modes are linked to the AMG DYNAMICS agility control, which means that the handling characteristics can be even more closely matched with different

drive system continuously ensures the best possible ratio of dynamism, traction and efficiency. A multi-disc clutch with AMG-specific electromechanical control allows a variable torque split which can be instantly changed according to the driving situation. This ranges from purely front-wheel drive to a 50:50 percent distribution to the front and rear axle, for example during dynamic driving manoeuvres or on snow or ice.

The influencing factors for torque distribution are not only the driving speed, the lateral and longitudinal acceleration and the steering angle, but also the difference in rotational speed between the individual wheels and the gear selected. The all-wheel drive is regulated depending on the selected stage of the 3-stage Electronic Stability Program ESP - from safety-oriented yet sporty to highly dynamic.

The 4ETS dynamic handling control system further enhances handling safety and agility, in particular on slippery surfaces or on surfaces with different friction coefficients. It uses brake interventions to keep individual driven wheels from spinning when starting off or accelerating. At the same time the differential locking effect enables the drive torque to be shifted to the wheels that are not spinning.



requirements and driving conditions.

In the GLB 35 4MATIC, AMG DYNAMICS has the agility functions "Basic" and "Advanced", and their functionalities are automatically activated by the relevant drive program. Relevant parameters such as the torque distribution of the all-wheel drive system, the steering characteristics or the intervention thresholds of the completely newly developed ESP(r) (Electronic Stability Program) are intelligently adapted according to the drive program.

"Basic" is assigned to the "Slippery" and "Comfort" drive programs. In this case the GLB 35 4MATIC has extremely stable handling with a high level of yaw damping. - "Advanced" is activated in the "Sport" program. The GLB 35 4MATIC is then neutral and well-balanced. The lower level of yaw damping, reduced steering angles and increased agility support a dynamic driving style - for example on winding country roads.

#### Optimum traction

The performance-oriented all-wheel

#### Long-distance comfort

The AMG suspension is tuned for high cornering speeds with a low tendency to roll. This allows the dynamic potential of the GLB 35 4MATIC to be fully realized. The high reserves at the critical limits guarantee sheer driving pleasure - while the vehicle remains safe and predictable at all times. The complete redesign of all wheel-guiding components such as the steering knuckles and transverse control arms at the front axle, as well as the model-specific subframe and the wheel carriers at the rear axle, assist even more direct steering and increase the lateral dynamics. At the same time the suspension developers at Mercedes-AMG took care to maintain a balanced level of long-distance comfort.

#### Speed-sensitive power steering

The electromechanical, speed-sensitive power steering has a variable ratio and impresses with its precise and authentic feedback. The steering servo assistance is reduced at high speeds, and continuously

increases at lower speeds. This means that comparatively little steering force is required at low speeds, while the best possible control over the vehicle is maintained at high speeds. Depending on which drive program the driver has selected, it provides taut and sporty or more comfortable steering feedback.

The AMG high-performance brake system with silver brake callipers and black AMG lettering at the front is a worthy counterpart to the powerful drive system. Deceleration is finely controllable, with high fade-resistance even under heavy stress. This is ensured for example by the large brake discs, which are internally ventilated and perforated all-round. The front axle is fitted with 4-piston fixed callipers and cast iron brake discs in size 350 x 34 mm, while the rear axle has 1-piston floating callipers and cast iron brake discs in size 330 x 22 mm.

#### Hallmark AMG expressiveness

Based on the AMG Line, the new GLB 35 4MATIC is distinguishable by further model-specific design features. The AMG-specific radiator grille is used for the first time in a 35-series model, and emphasises membership of the AMG family. The front splitter, the prominent rear apron with two round, single tailpipe trim elements and the AMG roof spoiler in the vehicle colour also guarantee a high recognition factor.

The 19-inch AMG 5-twin-spoke light-alloy wheels painted in tantalum grey with a high-sheen finish and the AMG high-performance brake system with silver brake callipers and black AMG lettering at the front provide further visual highlights. Three further wheel variants from 19 to 21 inches are available on request, each in two colors. The optional AMG Night package with design features such as the front splitter and rear apron trim in high-gloss black, plus black chrome-plated exhaust tailpipe trim elements, provides eye-catching highlights. Because depending on the chosen paint finish, the result is strong contrasts or flowing transitions.

#### Highly individualisable interior

Membership of the AMG family is visually underlined by the sport seats upholstered in black ARTICO man-made leather/DINAMI-CA microfibre with red double topstitching and red seat belts. Two optional Leather packages with a choice of two-tone upholstery, for example in classic red/black, and topstitching on the beltline and dashboard, enhance the interior even further.

#### MBUX infotainment system

The innovative control and display concept MBUX creates an even closer bond between the vehicle, driver and passengers. At the same time the latest version of the infotainment system contributes to the great day-to-day suitability of the new GLB 35 4MATIC. Emotive displays such as the particularly striking Supersport mode with a central, round rev counter and bargraph-style driver information underline the exclusivity.

Whether it's operated with the touchpad, Touch Control buttons on the steering wheel, by voice control or gesture control: the control concept is both versatile and flexible. Thanks to the innovative voice con-

trol - activated with the keyword "Hey Mercedes" - the AI software recognises and understands practically all commands common in infotainment and vehicle control - even when spoken indirectly.

With the three AMG-specific display styles "Classic", "Sporty" or "Supersport", the vehicle functions are directly visualised on the left side of the instrument cluster and in the touchscreen display on the right. Visually, the two displays under one shared glass cover blend into a Widescreen Cockpit and as a central element consequently emphasize the horizontal orientation of the interior design.

#### Obey any command

The multifunction sports steering wheel in nappa leather ensures first-class ergonomics and intuitive operation. The steering wheel rim with a flattened bottom section, perforated leather in the grip area and red contrasting topstitching is both attractive and pleasant to the touch. The galvanized steering wheel gearshift paddles allow an even sportier driving style with manual gear shifting. The optional AMG Performance steering wheel and accompanying AMG steering wheel buttons are visibly and tangibly configured for performance. This allows fast and confident operation of specific dynamic functions - for a focused, concentrated and performance-oriented driving style.

#### Optional third seat row

The new GLB 35 4MATIC is the first compact car by Mercedes-AMG to be optionally available with a third seat row consisting of two additional individual seats, plus fore-and-aft adjustment of the second seat row and the EASY-ENTRY feature. The second seat row has a 40:60 split. The seats in the third row accommodate passengers up to a height of 1.68 meters in comfort. The seats can be lowered so that they are flush with the load compartment floor in order to extend the load compartment.

Convenience features in the third row include two drink holders between the seats and two storage compartments with rubber-lined inserts on the left and right in the load compartment panelling. Each of these is fitted with a USB charging socket. The extensive safety equipment underlines the high day-to-day suitability. It consists of extendable head restraints, seat belts with belt tensioners and belt force limiters, a window airbag that also protects the passengers in the third seat row, and i-Size/ISOFIX and Top-Tether anchorages for suitable child seats.

#### Even more dynamism

The optionally available AMG RIDE CONTROL suspension guarantees superior performance. The adaptive, electronically controlled damping provides a wide range of setups from comfortable to very sporty. The damping is adjusted individually for each wheel, and depends on the driving style, the road surface and the selected suspension setting. The best possible operating point is always selected on the basis of numerous data such as acceleration or vehicle speed. The suspension characteristics are modified by simply selecting one of the drive programs Comfort, Sport or Sport+.

## ABK announces first winner of 'Save and Win with Bedayati'

**KUWAIT:** In an effort to further inculcate the habit of savings from an early age, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) announced the launch of 'Save and Win with Bedayati', a monthly draw for account holders to win gift vouchers worth KD200 for school supplies. The 'Save and Win with Bedayati' promotion is open to existing as well as new Bedayati savings account holders. The first draw that was held on August 26th, was won by Joury Abdullah Al-Matroud from Al-Adan branch.

The next draw takes place on 26th September 2019,

followed by five more monthly draws on 24th October, 28th November, 19th December, 16th January 2020 and 13th February 2020. Bedayati Savings Account can be opened with a minimum balance of KD 10 for children up to 8 years of age. The account is designed to highlight the importance of the need to educate children on how to manage their personal finances through intelligent control of their money and instilling a saving culture.

Children will benefit from the monthly interest paid on the account, no minimum balance requirement, and no service charges, which are important factors for young savers. In addition, parents have the advantage of having an ATM card for their child's accounts, exclusive promotions and 24/7 account access through the bank's simple, fast and secure online banking channels. For more information about the 'Save and win with Bedayati' Campaign and other ABK products kindly visit [ahli.com](http://ahli.com) or contact an ABK customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli'.



What's On

# ACK welcomes back current, new students with orientation event

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) welcomed the new students throughout the orientation which was held for two days. The aim of the orientation was to inform new students with the rules and structure of the college and to familiarize them with the environment. ACK considers orientations important as it believes that new students should be guided in order to ensure their success throughout their college career.

In parallel, the bi-annual "Welcome Back" event organized by the Student Life Department took place for new and current students to allow them to enjoy their breaks between their classes. The event included various competitions such as "Spin the Wheel" trivia and bingo,

and prizes were distributed to the winners. The event also included a set-up for video games and many other challenging and fun games.

"Hosting events and fun activities is important to the Student Life Department as it ensures that students enjoy their time at ACK. We welcome all students to the beginning of the new semester, in particular the new students who joined ACK family, and we would like to wish them all success. The Student Life Department is keen to create a vibrant campus life and an environment that contributes to the support of our students in different ways to push them towards excellence and success," said Basel Dana, Manager of Student Life Department.



## LOYAC participants take part in Youth Empowerment Camp

LOYAC participants recently had a great experience by taking part in the Youth Empowerment Camp held in China from August 19 till September 1, 2019, sponsored by NBK. The trip included a cultural program including visits to various cities,

cultural exchange, volunteering at two panda centers, discovering the famed terracotta warriors, enjoying a scavenger hunt at the Forbidden City and hiking on the Great Wall of China.

Speaking on the occasion, LOYAC's communal service manager, Yosra Al-Essa stressed that the trip had been designed with the aim of developing participants' skills in cultural exchange and dialogue with other peoples. On his part, head of NBK's PR and communications team, Ya'qoub Al-Baqer stressed that taking part in the trip comes as part of the bank's community services targeting empowering Kuwaiti youth and developing their skills.



## Oncost to open its largest store in Qurain

Oncost, Kuwait's leading family grocer, is preparing to open its 21st store in Kuwait and its first in Mubarak Al-Kabir governorate, located in Aswaq Al-Qurain, on September 18, 2019. The newest store of Oncost will also be its largest venue, with more than 4,000 sqm of retail space, providing a wide range of retail products for individuals, families and businesses at wholesale prices. Oncost, which has consistently focused on satisfying the needs of its diverse customer base in the country, now hopes to bring its unique model of retailing to shoppers and businesses in and around Al-Qurain from September.

Saleh Al-Tunaib, Oncost's Chief Executive Officer, expressed his thanks to Oncost's loyal customers for their support to the brand over the years, and added, "By opening our 21st store, we will be taking a major step towards our main objective, which is to become the leading grocery retailer in the country with a presence in all governorates of Kuwait. We believe that Oncost would thrive in a market like Qurain because of the strong presence of large family households, restaurants, catering companies and retail offices. Furthermore, our aim is to enroll all our new customers in the Oncost Family Program, which would grant them access to many valuable benefits and exclusive savings on their grocery needs."

"What makes us stand out from other central markets in Kuwait is our focus on wholesale shopping in a retail environment for a carefully selected assortment of quality products, while providing those products at the best, fair and competitive prices in the market," Al-Tunaib added. Speaking about the impending opening of their new outlet in Aswaq Al-Qurain, Oncost's Chief Operating Officer, Dr Remesh TA said, "With the opening of our 21st branch in Kuwait, we are on track to achieve our aggressive target of opening 35 branches across the country over the next five years."

Oncost has built on its strength of providing a shopping experience that is fully customer-oriented and pivots around offering shoppers with wholesale prices in a retail environment. The company focuses on satisfying the food and beverage needs of shoppers while also providing them with a pleasant and enjoyable shopping. The opening of a new Oncost outlet in Aswaq Al-Qurain will also prove a boon to restaurants and cafes in the surrounding areas, as the company's food services division will provide them with a one-stop shop supply chain management for all their food and non-food needs.

Oncost is also confident that the new store will help enhance the Oncost Family Program, which offers up to 4 percent cashback rewards. Currently, the program has more than 100,000 members who enjoy the many benefits and privileges offered by Oncost and its affiliates program, which includes exclusive discounts from Careem, Red Tag, Twenty4, National Exchange Company, and Shifa Al-Jazeera Hospital.

## Olio Restaurant wins best Italian restaurant at World Luxury Spa and Restaurant awards

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa is pleased to announce that Olio Restaurant recently received the "Best Italian Restaurant" award at the World Luxury Restaurant and Spa Awards ceremony that took place in St Petersburg, Russia. An authentic Italian restaurant, Olio captures Italy's vibrancy with its open kitchen concept and a sophisticated yet authentic atmosphere.

"It is a pleasure for us to know that our guests and the industry have recognized the great work our team has put in to deliver exceptional luxury services. A heartfelt thank you to our customers for their continu-

ous support," said Savino Leone, General Manager of Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa.

"I'm proud to congratulate the whole team's passion and dedication. I am certain that winning this award is a strong impetus for us to continue to offer Stay Different experiences to our guests and to continue to win their hearts with exceptional dishes," he added. The World Travel Awards are voted for by travel & tourism professionals, business and leisure travel consumers worldwide and these luxury awards recognize Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa commitment to excellence over the last twelve months.



## 'Flavors of India' is back at Safir Fintas Kuwait Hotel

Safir Fintas Kuwait Hotel offers the lovers of diversity, a renewal of flavors from India. This Indian buffet with live cooking and music will take you on a journey to the enchanting India to enjoy along with your family members and friends along with a live cooking station at Flavors restaurant from 7 pm to 11 pm, every Thursday.

Culinary chefs have prepared authentic and traditional Indian dishes, as well as rich varieties that satisfy all tastes of appetizers, main dishes and exquisite desserts to make the evening a memorable one as Indian cuisine is basically influenced by many other countries. It is known for its large assortment of dishes and its liberal use of herbs and spices. Wheat, basmati rice and pulses with chana are important staples of the Indian diet.

From the buffet "Chicken Chettinad" is a classic Indian recipe, from the cuisine of Chettinad. It consists of chicken marinated in yogurt, turmeric and a paste of red chilies, kalpasi, coconut, poppy seeds, coriander seeds, cumin seeds, fennel seeds, black pepper, ground nuts, onions, garlic and gingelly oil.

"Bhuna Gosht" is a traditional Indian recipe of a delicious classic lamb curry

made with lamb, spices, fresh fenugreek leaves and bell pepper. Bhuna Gosht means pan fried lamb curry. What makes this curry special is the bhuna part as this consists of pan frying the meat with spices without adding water. "Mysore Pak" is an Indian sweet prepared in ghee that is popular in Southern India. It originated in Mysore in the Indian state of Karnataka. It is made of generous amounts of ghee, sugar, gram flour, and often cardamom.

Part of signature dessert is a homemade traditional Indian ice cream "Indian Kulfi," in addition to other Indian dishes infused by traditional herbs as part of culinary chefs' creativity. The live station will present "Panipuri" which is a type of snack from UP/Bihar region of the Indian sub-continent. It consists of a round, hollow puri, deep-fried crisp crepe and filled with a mixture of flavored water, tamarind chutney, chili, chaat masala, potato, onion or chickpeas.

The warm atmosphere upon the arrival will give you the ultimate experience along with the interior of the restaurant that reflects the culture of India while easing your mind and releasing your senses with the music played. Flavors of India... The Indian night has been launched in the presence of the press and media family in recognition of their efforts and constructive cooperation and as a permanent partner of the hotel, as well as the friends and guests of Safir Fintas Kuwait Hotel, in addition to the management colleagues of Safir Hotels and Resorts, who enjoyed the details of the Indian night and its unique ambience.

## ICSK Junior celebrates Teachers Day

ICSK Junior celebrated Teacher's Day on September 5, 2019, as a mark of accolade to the part played by the teachers in the society. This day is dedicated to Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan- second President of India. As a tribute to this great teacher, his birthday has been observed as Teacher's Day. A thought and the poem that were recited about this day accelerated the dignity of teachers. There were musical refreshments in the form of group

songs that changed the audience to the world of entertainment.

The students used masks to portray Shery ma'am and Sheeja ma'am. The skits ignited the spark of enthusiasm in Abdul Kalam's life and also the importance of a teacher in moulding a child. Energetic dances were performed by the students which made the whole crowd tap their feet to glory. A token of love was given by the students to the Principal Shery Dennis, Vice-Principal Sheeja C and all the staff on account of Teacher's Day celebration. Principal Shery Dennis addressed the assembly and said that teachers are enlightened with love for their students. Vice-Principal Sheeja C appreciated the participants and teachers-in-charges for the assembly.



Health & Science

# River 'armageddon' prompts wild fish rescue in Australia

**SYDNEY:** Australia began rescuing wild fish from drying sections of its biggest water system yesterday, hoping to avoid a repeat of mass fish deaths that prompted outrage last summer. Fish have become stranded in isolated pools in the Darling River amid a prolonged drought that has ravaged much of the sunburnt country's eastern interior. New South Wales state Agriculture Minister Adam Marshall warned of a "fish Armageddon" this southern hemisphere summer, without drastic action to save the river's critically endangered Murray Cod and other native fish species.

Last summer up to a million fish died in the same area of the river — part of the vast Murray-Darling Basin that serves as the lifeblood of Australia's food bowl. Scientists said the deaths were caused by low water and oxygen levels as well as potentially toxic algae. Now the government has begun an effort to relocate thousands of fish to healthier sections of the river or into hatcheries.

Up to 20 pools of fish will be moved downstream in the first stage of the relocation effort, which is expected to be rolled out across the drought-stricken state in the coming months. Other fish will be removed from the river altogether, and placed into private and state-owned hatcheries until the water starts flowing again. Some environmentalists have cast doubt on the efficacy of the Aus\$10 million (\$6.85 million) plan, which the state government has dubbed a "modern-day Noah's Ark". But Marshall



Photo shows a firefighting 737 jet water bombing a fire at Binna Burra, some 100 kms south of Brisbane. — AFP

defended it as "providing the best possible chance of survival" for the fish — while also admitting there will almost certainly be further severe fish kill events this summer. "With record low rainfall and high temperatures predicted over the coming months, this action will help protect our iconic species in the midst of the worst drought on record," he said. The health of the Murray-Darling Basin — a river network stretching across one million square kilometers, about twice the size of Spain — has been the

subject of intense debate in Australia for years. Experts and locals say the systemic depletion and pollution of the river is to blame for its poor condition. In January, a Royal Commission report accused the authority responsible for oversight of the basin of failing to be guided by environmental priorities and ignoring climate change projections. The body was accused of allowing politics to determine how much water could be removed from the river to irrigate farmland. — AFP

## Dogs in Norway hit by mysterious illness

**OSLO:** Dozens of dogs in Norway have recently been hit by a mysterious and at times fatal illness, raising concerns among dog owners who have been told to limit contacts between canines. Some 200 dogs have displayed the same symptoms — bloody diarrhoea and vomit, intense fatigue — in recent weeks and around 25 of them have died, Norway's Veterinary Institute said yesterday.

The number is an estimate, as the Scandinavian country does not have a national register. "This doesn't necessarily mean that it's the same illness, as there are lots of illnesses that can lead to these kinds of symptoms in dogs," Veterinary Institute spokesman Asle Haukaas told AFP. Autopsies on 10 dogs revealed in each case a severe intestinal infection and five of them had "abnormally elevated levels" of two bacteria, Clostridium perfringens and Providencia alcalifaciens.

The illness has been observed mostly in greater Oslo but there have been a few

cases in other parts of the country. Health authorities have urged owners to keep their dogs on a lead and to limit contacts between them. Many owners have stopped taking their pets to public areas and a number of dog shows and gatherings have been cancelled. Several theories have circulated in social media, including the possibility of a virus, a bacteria, food poisoning, or intentional poisoning.

"What is a little strange with this illness is that it has struck quite a large number of otherwise healthy dogs in a short period of time and very swiftly," an official from Norway's food safety authority, Ann Margaret Grondahl, said. The Veterinary Institute has ruled out salmonella, Campylobacteria and the possibility that the dogs may have ingested rat poisoning. Dog owners have been urged to bring their pets to a veterinarian at the first sign of any symptoms. There is nothing to indicate at this stage that the illness can be transmitted to humans. — AFP

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ACROSS

- 1. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
5. A defendant in a criminal proceeding.
15. (obstetrics) The number of live-born children a woman has delivered.
16. Unpleasantly loud and penetrating.
17. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
18. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
19. Yellow-fever mosquitos.
21. Biennial or perennial erect herbs having nocturnally fragrant flowers.
24. Used of old persons or old trees.
26. (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
27. A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
28. The twelfth sign of the zodiac.
31. A person who enjoys reading.
35. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
36. A ductile malleable reddish-brown corrosion-resistant diamagnetic metallic element.
40. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
42. A cooperative unit.
44. Having or showing knowledge and skill and aptitude.
45. A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
47. Any property detected by the olfactory system.
48. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
49. A thrumming sound.
51. A source of oil.
52. In operation or operational.
53. A rapid escape (as by criminals).
55. The azimuth of a celestial body is the angle between the vertical plane containing it and the plane of the meridian.
59. Large snake mackerel with rings like spectacles around its eyes.
63. God of wealth and love.
67. A parliamentary monarchy in southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula.
68. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
69. Of or relating to or characteristic of Uganda or its people.
73. One of the common people.
74. Being six more than fifty.
75. Tranquilizer (trade name Dalmane) used to treat insomnia.
76. (Norse mythology) Goddess of old age who defeated Thor in a wrestling match.
77. The last (12th) month of the year.
78. Type genus of the Artamidae.
79. Colored or impregnated with dye.

DOWN

- 1. Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.
2. Sheet glass cut in shapes for windows or doors.
3. (Greek mythology) Goddess of discord.
4. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
5. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
6. An assertion of a right (as to money or property).
7. Conqueror of Gaul and master of Italy (100-44 BC).
8. Goddess of fate.
9. The action of an armed force that surrounds a fortified place and isolates it while continuing to attack.
10. Take or catch as if in a snare or trap.
11. 1/10 gram.
12. The season when the leaves fall from the trees.
13. A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
14. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
20. A city in central Florida.
22. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
23. (computer science) A kind of computer architecture that has a relatively small set of computer instructions that it can perform.
25. A particular environment or walk of life.
29. Someone who cuts and delivers ice.
30. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
32. Performance of moral or religious acts.
33. A city in southern Finland.
34. Hear or try a court case anew.
37. A state in the western United States.
38. The capital and largest city of Liechtenstein.
39. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
41. (electronics) Of a circuit or device having an output that is proportional to the input.
43. A genus of Mustelidae.
46. A set of tags and rules (conforming to SGML) for using them in developing hypertext documents.
50. Either of two large muscles of the chest.
54. Type genus of the Alaudidae.
56. A genus of Stromateidae.
57. (of plants or trees) Having the top or outer parts cut off.
58. Of or relating to or containing barium.
60. Support column consisting of a steel cylinder filled with concrete.
61. Administer an oil or ointment to.
62. Marked by excessive enthusiasm for and intense devotion to a cause or idea.
64. A person who possesses great material wealth.
65. A federally chartered corporation that purchases mortgages.
66. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
70. Primitive predaceous North American fish covered with hard scales and having long jaws with needle-like teeth.
71. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
72. (Babylonian) The sky god.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Discovering what is most important to you is a high personal priority. Religion, law, politics, travel and higher education are some of the arenas where this takes place. This is a time of testing your limits to see how far you can go.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This may be a demanding day today, whether you work on a project or search for the meaning of a word. Your time will culminate in research as well as a little competition between co-workers or just with yourself.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your need to be respected may become an emotionally charged issue at this time. You develop a knack for organizing things and people, as a sense of ambition and practicality takes hold.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may have some ideas about ways in which to organize a particular project today. There is an opportunity to get some insight into some of your problems and responsibilities that may prove of great value in years to come.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A move may be in order—an upgrade from where you are now—personal or professional. The great wheel of change may appear to have been moving at a snail's pace, but now it is time for change.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your career may be at a rather delicate point today. This may mean a time element is in effect; however, you are able to achieve a positive outcome.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Finally, you seem to be able to enjoy a respite from problems and life is easier once again. Although you know change is important, you may be thinking how nice it would be if all could remain the same, for a while.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You want to make a positive difference in the lives around you, whether it is around the workplace or at home. You look for many different ways to do just that...



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a good time to organize and discipline your mind and methods of communication. Perhaps this is also a time for serious thinking. Education and studies of all kinds may be in order.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

An important relationship, perhaps with an older person or someone in authority, may come into focus today. There could be some tension or sense of opposition requiring compromise or negotiation on your part.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You will feel more and more confident these days. Things that may have been in suspended animation will now take precedence and take on structure and shape.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You have a strong need for communication of all kinds and may have too many extracurricular activities going on just now. You can be all over the place, always trying to make one more connection.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Dinosaurs word search puzzle with a grid and a list of dinosaur names to find.

Yesterday's Solution

Deserts of the World word search puzzle with a grid and a list of desert names to find.

Daily Sudoku

Daily Sudoku puzzle grid with some numbers pre-filled.

Yesterday's Solution

Solution to the Daily Sudoku puzzle from the previous page.

# Lifestyle

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019



Newly-wed Malaysian couples of Chinese descent pose for photographs during a mass wedding held on the ninth day of the ninth month at the Thean Hou Temple in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Ninety-nine couples were married in the mass wedding ceremony held on the ninth day of the ninth month, considered to be an auspicious date which will bring them good luck and prosperity. — AFP photos



## MALAYSIA'S GOT 99 COUPLES GETTING HITCHED AS ONE

Ninety-nine couples in Malaysia said their marriage vows at a popular Chinese temple yesterday, an auspicious date signifying long-lasting happiness. Witnessed by hundreds of relatives and friends, the couples, many in white bridal gowns and black suits, exchanged kisses and tight hugs at the temple steps in the capital Kuala Lumpur. Yesterday is the ninth day of the ninth month of the year and 99 is an auspicious number in Chinese because it sounds like the word "longevity."

"For me 99 is a special number," said Lee Sing Lee, 29, who said his vows to 24-year-old Charlyn Low, an accounts clerk. "I want our love to last forever and start a family soon," Lee said as he leaned over and kissed his bride under a hot tropical sun. Rainbow Goh told project consultant Jimmy Wai: "We have been in love for the past 12 years and we decided to get married on September 9 so that we can enjoy happiness together forever." — AFP



# New York bomb scene in **Kidman's 'Goldfinch'** evokes terror trauma

Portraying a terrorist attack on a New York art museum in "The Goldfinch," the new film starring Nicole Kidman, evoked fears of psychological trauma and uncomfortable real-life parallels, filmmakers said Sunday. The chilling scene at the start of Donna Tartt's Pulitzer-winning novel, on which the movie is based, sees 13-year-old Theo lose his mother and barely escape himself through a crumbling pile of priceless art treasures at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The bombing is shown without sound and strictly from the foggy perspective of the child in flashback sequences, in part to avoid comparisons with incidents such as the 9/11 attacks in the same city, director John Crowley said at Toronto's film festival. "With our perspective it felt wrong to reference real terrorist attacks," he said. "For you to have your head taken to that just didn't feel that appropriate."

Kidman, playing the mother of Theo's friend who is forced to take in the child following the bombing, said she had studied the effects of trauma for her UN ambassador work on war and crimes against women and children, as well as a number of film roles. "So much of the time it is not screaming in the moment" but rather taking "a lifetime to process what has happened," she said. "As an actor, a lot of times, when you're acting things that are very traumatic, your body doesn't know the difference," added Kidman, who recently played a murder detective in "Destroyer" and starred in Civil War drama "The Beguiled."

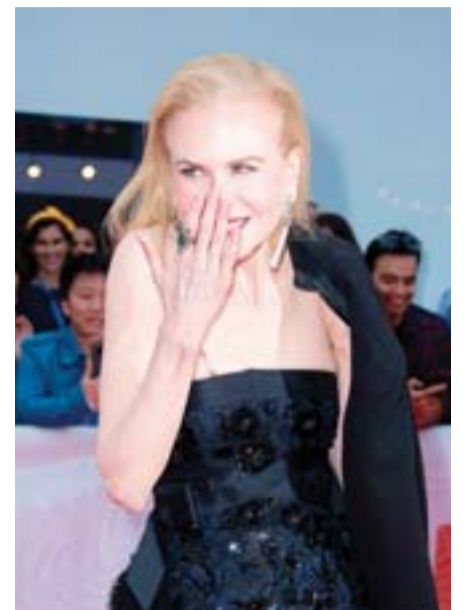
"Your brain says, 'Oh, this is real' ... and your body suddenly goes into that traumatic response," Oakes Fegley, the child actor playing Theo, said shooting the scene on a soundstage was "extremely eerie." "You can



(From left) Ansel Elgort, Nicole Kidman and Oakes Fegley attend 'The Goldfinch' premiere during the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival at Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto, Canada. — AFP photos



Actress Sarah Paulson attends 'The Goldfinch' premiere.



Actress Nicole Kidman attends "The Goldfinch" premiere at the Roy Thomson Hall during the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival Day 4.

see it in the film, that he doesn't even react fully until he leaves the museum. And it all hits him at that one moment where he releases that scream," he said.

Crowley said that author Tartt had been provoked to write the scene after the Taliban's demolition of the two ancient, giant statues—the Buddhas of Bamiyan—in

Afghanistan. The director said he deliberately avoided gratuitous shots of the museum attack because he was deeply aware of the offense of "the erasure of something that had sat there for thousands of years, just gone ... and what that meant, for the time that we live in." "My way into the offensiveness of the act in the gallery was to sort

of keep it off stage, as it were," he added. "Goldfinch" premieres Saturday night at the Toronto International Film Festival—the largest in North America, which runs until September 15. — AFP



Actress Scarlett Johansson attends the special screening of 'Jojo Rabbit' during the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival Day 4 at the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto, Ontario. — AFP photos



New Zealand producer Carthew Neal (left) and actor/director Taika Waititi (right) attend the special screening of 'Jojo Rabbit'.



Adam Driver attends the 'Marriage Story' premiere.

## Scarlett Johansson unveils 'Jojo Rabbit', 'Marriage Story' in Toronto

Scarlett Johansson dominated the Toronto film festival's red carpets Sunday with the debuts of two new films including the world premiere of satirical Nazi comedy "Jojo Rabbit." The movie from "Thor: Ragnarok" director Taika Waititi tells the story of a young German boy living during World War Two whose imaginary friend is a make-believe version of Adolf Hitler. Billed as an "anti-hate satire," it plots how the child—a Hitler Youth member with a fondness for Nazi uniforms and book-burnings—discovers that his mother (Johansson) is hiding a Jewish girl in their attic.

Johansson said the film's humor and childish perspective give audiences a new way to grasp "the atrocity of what was really going on at that time." She described the script, written by Waititi—who also plays the imaginary Hitler—as a "perfect jewel." The New Zealand-born director, who is of Maori and Jewish descent, said the release of the film was timely in today's polarized political climate. "Now we're seeing all those little pockets of hate groups and seeing these patterns that were happening in the '30s happening again," he said.

"And for me, now more than ever, I think it's important that we keep addressing that stuff and revisiting these stories," Johansson, the world's highest paid actress, also appeared on the red carpet for "Marriage Story," a drama about a divorcing couple in which she stars opposite Adam Driver. The Netflix movie received rave reviews last week at its world premiere in Venice—the same week that director Martin Scorsese chose to praise Driver as "one of the best, if not the best, actors of his generation." Driver, best known to wider audiences as the villainous Kylo Ren in "Star Wars," has been widely tipped for Oscar glory for his portrayal of a narcissistic New York theater director.

### 'A violent thing'

He told AFP the movie was a cautionary tale of the sudden violence with which a relationship can be ripped apart. It depicts his character's wife (Johansson) move to Los Angeles to pursue the acting career she has long put on hold, taking their child with her. "If you know someone where you're in the room together and it's second nature, and suddenly that's not there anymore, it can be a violent

thing—internally I mean, not physically violent," said Driver. "Where you lose love and you don't know how to articulate it."

Sunday also saw the world premiere of "The Goldfinch," starring Nicole Kidman, in which a terrorist attack on a New York art museum up-ends a 13-year-old boy's life. In the chilling scene from Donna Tartt's Pulitzer-winning novel, on which the movie is based, Theo loses his mother and barely escapes himself through a crumbling pile of priceless art treasures at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Director John Crowley said making the scene had evoked uncomfortable real-life parallels. "With our perspective it felt wrong to reference real terrorist attacks," said director John Crowley, who decided to shoot the sequence without sound and strictly through the foggy perspective of the child. "For you to have your head taken to that just didn't feel that appropriate." The Toronto International Film Festival is the largest in North America, and runs until September 15. — AFP

## Tomlinson felt 'comfortable musically' on Kill My Mind

Louis Tomlinson felt "comfortable musically" on new single "Kill My Mind." The One Direction star has admitted that whilst it was a "risk" heading in a different direction to his previous hits, including "Just Hold On" and "Back to You," he's glad he pushed himself out of his "comfort zone" as he has now found his "home" and is feeling "confident." Asked how "gratifying" the reaction to the rock song has been, Louis told Forbes magazine: "I think for anyone who works creatively it's always important to take risks and get out of your comfort zone a little bit. "But, for me, with this song I feel like I'm finally really comfortable musically."

"I think I played around with a few different sounds on my previous singles. "And I think I really found my home now. "Before I was kind of making music that I think I assumed was the music I was supposed to make as opposed to just following my heart and doing what I love. "I feel really comfortable and really confident in this song." The 27-year-old star added that he's been really "lucky" because his fan base have responded well to him singing in a way that comes naturally to him. He added: "It's taking a risk I suppose with the fan base. "But I think also where I'm lucky and what my fans have reacted to is they see



how comfortable I am and how natural this is for me. "And I think they feed into that."

The reaction has been absolutely incredible, it has been amazing. I feel great about the whole process." Louis also spoke about his biggest inspiration, Liam Gallagher, and how he's managed to retain his audience from Oasis by keeping people "interested" and not giving a "damn." He said: "If I think about my favorite band ever, Oasis, and I think about Liam Gallagher, I think it's almost as impressive he's retained such a strong and well-known sound, but still makes it different enough and exciting enough. "People have been listening to Liam Gallagher for however many years and still they're interested." — BangShowbiz

## Kristen Stewart wants to work with Taika Waititi

Kristen Stewart would "love to work" with Taika Waititi. The 29-year-old actress has said she's keen to appear in a film by the 44-year-old filmmaker, especially after seeing his latest project "Jojo Rabbit" - in which he also stars as an imaginary friend version of Hitler - during the Toronto International Film Festival over the weekend. She told Entertainment Weekly magazine: "I'd love to work with Taika. I saw his movie recently and I love it. I love that guy. He's a friend of mine, he's a blast, but I'm really proud of his film. It's beautiful. It's very affecting. I don't even want to say anything about it. I think everyone should absolutely watch it, but it's a very strange film that in the end is so gorgeous."

And Kristen may be able to cross two things off her wish list, after she also expressed a wish to play a gay superhero in a movie. Taika is set to direct "Thor: Love and Thunder" after previously working on "Thor: Ragnarok", and actress Tessa Thompson recently said during San Diego Comic-Con that her character in the movie, Valkyrie - who is the first openly LGBT character in a Marvel movie - will be looking for her "queen".

If Kristen did land the role of Valkyrie's love interest, it would come after she claimed she was told she wouldn't get a part in a Marvel movie unless she agreed not to hold

her girlfriend's hand in public, because it would ruin her chances. She said: "I have fully been told: 'If you just like do yourself a favor, and don't go out holding your girlfriend's hand in public, you might get a Marvel movie.' I don't want to work with people like that." — Bang Showbiz



Jennifer Lopez



Kristen Stewart

## Jennifer Lopez 'flattered' by Oscar buzz over Hustlers

Jennifer Lopez is "flattered" by the Oscar buzz surrounding her new movie "Hustlers". The 50-year-old actress and singer - who stars as savvy former stripper Ramona at the center of a scam in the movie - says it "brought tears to her eyes" to hear such positive feedback. She told the Los Angeles Times newspaper: "To wake up to that today was like, 'OK!' Obviously, I'm flattered. You work so hard your whole career ... I've done so many movies and I've done so many roles that I've learned to not do them for anything except that I love doing them ..."

"It brings tears to your eyes. It's like, oh! Somebody liked what I did! I love doing this and it doesn't matter, but it does matter - it does make you feel like all my hard work is being recognised, and that's nice." Jennifer previously admitted she was worried about her sexy costumes for "Hustlers". She said: "It's not like me being onstage with a bunch of tights and fishnets on and bodysuits. Those are sexy costumes. This is another level. You're out there naked. You sign on to be an actress and take on a role ... once you do it, you kind of settle within yourself like, 'OK, I'm going to do this in the best way,' because that's why I started acting to begin with, was to get into different people's mind sets and explore life and humanity in different ways and that is exciting to me about doing it. This is something I would never do." Jennifer also admitted she felt sick the first time she watched "Hustlers".

She explained: "When I watched the movie for the first time, I was like, a little bit sick to my stomach. I was like, 'Oh my God! What are they doing? They are going to kill this guy!' They were playing with fire. I'm a by-the-book kind of person. Like, I'm always afraid. I don't want to jaywalk or anything. They're going to get me." — Bang Showbiz



Models walk the runway for the Tory Burch Spring/Summer 2020 show during New York Fashion Week: The Shows at the Brooklyn Museum in New York City. — AFP photos



## Princess Diana, sustainability inspire New York Fashion Week

A homage to the late Princess Diana and a collection made almost entirely of sustainable clothing were among the breathtaking shows that lit up the second full day of New York Fashion Week Sunday. American designer Tory Burch, a paragon of Bohemian chic style, wowed a star-studded audience with soft floral prints and baggy, puffed-out sleeves that had a distinct 1980s feel.

The 53-year-old, who presides over a clothing empire worth more than \$1 billion in annual sales, said the Spring 2020 collection had been inspired by Princess Diana's personality rather than her wardrobe per se. "I have always admired her and I wanted to tread very carefully because clearly, she's a style icon and I didn't want to reference that. But I felt she had a fearlessness and being a humanitarian that she was very inspiring," Burch told AFP.

Princess Diana, known as Lady Diana Spencer before she married into Britain's royal family, died in a car crash in Paris in 1997. Her troubled marriage to Prince Charles was well documented, as was her extensive charity work. "She stands apart," Burch continued. "Her compassion, her integrity and her being a mom and going through difficult times in a public way that clearly she wasn't comfortable with. I can relate to that," added the thrice-married designer.

English actress Emily Blunt and American singer-songwriter Charlotte Lawrence were among the celebrities eyeing Burch's designs during the runway show at the Brooklyn Museum. Burch said she was enjoying having her husband Pierre-Yves Roussel as CEO of her eponymous company, which he joined earlier this year after leaving luxury goods behemoth LVMH. "It's a huge relief. I've been doing it for 14 years and to be able to just

work on product and brand has been very freeing for me," she said.

### Climate conscious Collina Strada

Elsewhere, designer Hillary Taymour's Spring 2020 collection cemented her commitment to sustainable fashion Sunday. Almost all of the 100 items that her Collina Strada label showcased on Sunday were made from recycled materials. Highlights included a series of printed jeans, wax dresses and psychedelic skirts.

"Every day I feel like I'm learning more and more what's the right thing to do and I'm trying to emulate that constantly," she told AFP. "We're in a climate crisis and people need to think about it. There's nowhere else to go. I'm just trying to learn as much as I can and be the best person I can," she added. — AFP



## Slovak Republic showcases culture, fashion and music

By Ben Garcia

For the first time, Slovakia hosted an event in Kuwait to showcase its culture and people. The event began after opening remarks from Slovak Ambassador Igor Hajdusek. Part of Hajdusek's promise to HH the Amir was to organize events that showcase Slovak cultural heritage and social, medical and artistic life to promote mutual

friendly relations and camaraderie among Kuwaitis, the Slovak community and other nationalities.

"I presented my credentials to HH the Amir on January 22 this year with the promise to host several events that will reintroduce the country's best practices, sites, culture and people," he said. Hajdusek introduced his country's rich history, adding the 1989 Velvet Revolution opened the door for the possibility of freedom from communism to

democracy. After that revolution, the former Czechoslovakia ceased to exist and two nations were born - the Slovak Republic and Czech Republic.

The envoy took pride in his country being the destination for many Kuwaitis in search of medical treatment abroad. "The country is well known to many as the best country for spa treatment. We have many visitors from Kuwait because of our spas. We are rich in interesting folk

dances, we have more than 1,600 mineral springs, we have several majestic castles and chateaus, the first folk architectural reserve in the world with 6,000 caves, the oldest EU marathon and the tastiest cheese-bryndza," he opined.

The ambassador then introduced members of the delegation to the invited guests, who were treated to Slovak fashion and music while sharing sumptuous food.



Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh.



Pigeon-enthusiast Joel Verschoot inspects a racing pigeon at the "Verschoot Pigeons Loft".



A picture shows racing pigeon at the 'Verschoot Pigeons Loft'.



Pigeon-enthusiast Joel Verschoot inspects a racing pigeon at the "Verschoot Pigeons Loft".



A picture shows racing pigeons at the "Verschoot Pigeons Loft" in Ingelmunster, Belgium. — AFP photos

## Ancient DNA study illuminates Indo-European language origins

For decades, researchers have debated how Indo-European languages came to be spoken from the British Isles to South Asia. Now, the largest-ever study of ancient human DNA suggests that the answer may lie with a mass migration of Bronze Age herders from the Eurasian Steppes, starting 5,000 years ago, westward to Europe and east to Asia. Vagheesh Narasimhan, co-first author of the paper published in the journal *Science* on Thursday, told AFP that the role of population movements over the past 10,000 years was key to understanding linguistic changes and the transition from hunter-gatherer activities to farming.

"There's been a lot of DNA work, as well as archeological work, about both of these processes in Europe," the postdoctoral fellow at Harvard Medical School explained, but these transformations are less understood in Asia. A global team of geneticists, archeologists and anthropologists analyzed the genomes of 524 never-before-studied ancient individuals from Central and South Asia, increasing the worldwide total of published ancient genomes by about 25 percent.

By comparing the genomes to one another and to previously discovered remains, and by placing that information into its historical context through archeological and linguistic records, the team was able to fill the gaps in our

current understanding. A 2015 paper indicated that Indo-European languages—the world's biggest language group that includes Hindi-Urdu, Farsi, Russian, English, French, Gaelic and more than 400 others—arrived in Europe via the steppes.

Despite being spread over a vast area encompassing myriad cultures, these languages share uncanny similarities in syntax, numbers, basic adjectives and numerous nouns including those related to kin, body parts and more. The path of the proto-Indo-European languages to Asia was less clear: one school of thought held they spread from farmers from Anatolia (present-day Turkey).

But the paper found that present-day South Asians have little if any shared ancestry with these ancient Anatolian farmers. "We can rule out a large-scale spread of farmers with Anatolian roots into South Asia, the centerpiece of the 'Anatolian hypothesis' that such movement brought farming and Indo-European languages into the region," said co-author David Reich, also at Harvard Medical School. "Since no substantial movements of people occurred, this is checkmate for the Anatolian hypothesis."

### Indus Valley Civilization

There are two new lines of evidence in favor of steppe

origin. First, the researchers detected genetic similarities that connect speakers of the Indo-Iranian and Balto-Slavic branches of Indo-European.

They found that the present-day speakers of both these groups descend from a subgroup of steppe herders who moved west toward Europe 5,000 years ago, then spread back east to Central and South Asia in the following 1,500 years. Another observation in favor of the theory: South Asians who today speak Dravidian languages (mainly in southern India and southwestern Pakistan) had very little steppe DNA, while those who speak Indo-European languages like Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali have far more.

As far as agriculture is concerned, prior work has found that farming spread to Europe via people of Anatolian ancestry. South Asians, however, share little to no ancestry with the Anatolians, ruling them out, while the archeological record shows the activity also predates the steppe herders, leading researchers to conclude agriculture arrived independently in the region.

A second paper, meanwhile, published in the journal *Cell* Press by several of the same authors, describes the first genome of an individual from the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC), one of the great civilizations of the ancient world contemporaneous with Egypt and

Mesopotamia. Its towns, which first appeared 3000 years BCE, were populated by tens of thousands of people, who used standardized weights and measures, built great roads and traded with places as far away as East Africa.

The team was able to overcome technical challenges posed by the hot, humid and monsoonal climate to sequence for the first time a Bronze Age individual from South Asia. The DNA belongs to a woman who lived four to five millennia ago buried at Rakhigarhi, the biggest town of the IVC, also known as the Harappan civilization.

Based on their findings, the authors believe that modern South Asians are descended from the Harappan people who later mixed with steppe herders who migrated from the north. Beyond its academic value, sequencing ancient DNA can help improve modern genome studies that look at genetic predisposition for diseases, a burgeoning area of medicine. "In Europe, this has been widely studied, and people use these all the time in medical studies, but in South and Central Asia, there's been a paucity of this—and this paper sort of helps close that gap," Narasimhan told AFP. — AFP

# JOEL VERSCHOOT, THE MAN WITH THE MILLION-EURO PIGEON

Belgian pigeon breeder Joel Verschoot could probably have settled down to a comfortable retirement in March after he sold the world's most expensive racer, Armando the pigeon won worldwide headlines and netted Verschoot 1.25-million euros (\$1.4-million) when he won over Chinese buyers in an online auction. Now the famous bird toils for a Beijing public works magnate, fathering what his new owner must hope will be a new generation of feathered champions. But 64-year-old retired abattoir worker Verschoot is not done yet. He still consecrates up to 10 hours a day tending for and racing his charges.

Before Armando set the online pigeon auction world alight earlier this year, the Flemish fancier's most expensive protegee was 400,000-euro Nadine. Now Verschoot wants to better his record. He has hidden away two of Armando's heirs—"a son and a daughter"—in the hope they mate and raise a brood. Standing in his garden in Ingelmunster, a small town near Kortrijk in West Flanders, Verschoot still remembers the "incredible" record-setting auction.

When Armando's sale came up, two Chinese buyers went head to head, raising each other by 100,000 euros a time until one was forced to retire from the field. "We never thought it could go up like that," he told AFP, recalling how his then 50-year-old father introduced him to pigeon fancying at a young age. Joel was the only one of the elder Verschoot's nine children to take an interest in training his father's 50-strong racing flock. Now he has 300 birds of his own, and fame in the sport.

Since retiring from the abattoir in 2015, Verschoot has turned a hobby into an international business, fuelled by the rise of Chinese interest. Belgian birds have a global reputation as racers and Nikolaas Gyselbrecht, CEO of the online site Pigeon Paradise, says China accounts for 40 percent of sales. Verschoot's—and later Armando's—reputation was built in middle-distance races of 500 to 700 kilometres (300 to 400 miles).

### Best in Europe

As a trainer, he explains, his specialty was keeping apart male and female pairs for two weeks before the day-long race. The lovesick birds, he reckons, are all the more determined to return to each other's bosom at speeds of up to 80 kph after this enforced celibacy. "Quick, quick, quick, back to the house and the women!" he chants. Armando was not merely randy, however, he was also "crafty", his trainer explains: expert at dodging power cables and airborne predators.



Pigeon-enthusiast Joel Verschoot poses at the "Verschoot Pigeons Loft".

He came second in a race in Limoges, France in 2017 and 2018, and won last year's meet at nearby Angouleme. At the start of this year things got serious at the race in Poznan, Poland, that acts as a kind of pigeon Champions League for the best birds in Europe. He won. And now his champion's DNA is much sought after. The Chinese buyer is thought to have kept Armando in a training loft in Belgium, the equivalent of the stud at a thoroughbred racing stable.

"Soon Armando will have grandchildren which will go on the market, for more and more," Verschoot beams. Some purists are less excited by the arrival of big money deals in their traditional sport. "Ordinary fanciers would never be interested in a pigeon for his sperm," complains Bernard Anca, of specialist weekly *La Colombophilie* Belge. "That's not what's going to promote our sport." Maybe Belgium's pigeon racing scene has room for a variety of approaches, after all between 18,000 and 20,000 Belgians are licensed breeders. But Anca is pessimistic. "You have to give up a lot of your time, and it's rare that a breeder is followed into the hobby by his wife or kids," he said. — AFP



A picture shows racing pigeon at the "Verschoot Pigeons Loft".



A picture shows racing pigeons at the "Verschoot Pigeons Loft".







Sports

# Astros erupt for 21 runs against Mariners as Gerrit Cole cruises

## Dodgers blank Giants, inch closer to division title

**HOUSTON:** The Houston Astros hammered the visiting Seattle Mariners for 21 runs on 22 hits, and Gerrit Cole set a single-season standard for strikeouts in a 21-1 rout on Sunday afternoon to complete a four-game series sweep. Cole (16-5) extended his winning streak to 12 by surrendering one run on one hit over eight dominant innings. His strikeout of Seattle right fielder Keon Broxton in the sixth inning was his 11th of the game and 277th on the season, eclipsing the 276 strikeouts he recorded in 2018, his first season with the Astros. Cole extended his franchise record of double-digit strikeout performances to 17 this season, including five in succession. He became the second pitcher in history with at least 14 strikeouts in three consecutive starts (Pedro Martinez, 1999). He threw 96 pitches on his 29th birthday. The Astros improved to 16-1 against Seattle this season, a mark that includes a 10-0 record at home. Houston is 16-4 over its last 20 games and matched its franchise record with its 55th home victory this season. The Astros are 27-4 over their last 31 games at Minute Maid Park.

### PADRES 2, ROCKIES 1 (10 INNINGS)

Wil Myers singled home Manny Machado with one out in the bottom of the 10th inning to lift San Diego past visiting Colorado. Machado drew a one-out walk in the 10th from right-handed reliever Jesus Tinoco. Left-hander Sam Howard came on and walked the only hitter he faced, Eric Hosmer. Myers then greeted right-hander Yency Almonte, the eighth Colorado pitcher, with a line-drive RBI single to center. Tinoco (0-2) took the loss. Craig Stammen (8-7), the fifth pitcher deployed by the Padres, struck out two in the top of the 10th inning.

### DODGERS 5, GIANTS 0

Matt Beatty and Corey Seager hit home runs, while Kenta Maeda pitched four strong innings of relief as Los Angeles earned a shutout victory to avoid being swept by visiting San Francisco. Beatty hit his ninth homer of the season, while Seager delivered his 14th. The game was the last on the bench at Dodger Stadium for Giants manager Bruce Bochy, who is retiring at the end of the season. He finished his career 107-108 in the Dodgers' home park, the most victories all time by a visiting manager.

### YANKEES 10, RED SOX 5

Gleyber Torres and Mike Tauchman each slugged two-run home runs to power visiting New York past Boston. Torres had three hits and four RBIs, and Aaron Judge also went deep as the Yankees set a club record for homers in a season at 268, surpassing the 267 they hit last year. New York won for the 11th time in its last 15 games and will seek a series victory in the finale of the four-game set Monday. Jackie Bradley Jr. and Mookie Betts homered for the Red Sox, who fell to the Yankees for the 13th time in 18 meetings this season and suffered another setback to their slim playoff chances. Boston has dropped five of its last eight and is eight games behind the Oakland A's for the second AL wild-card berth.

### MARLINS 9, ROYALS 0

Sandy Alcantara pitched a four-hit shutout and every position player had at least one hit as Miami

avoided a sweep by beating visiting Kansas City. Alcantara (5-12) didn't allow a leadoff batter to reach until the eighth inning, when he got out of a one-out, bases-loaded jam with a double-play grounder to shortstop. He struck out eight and walked two while throwing 102 pitches. The Royals had outscored the Marlins 10-2 in the first two games of the series.

### ATHLETICS 3, TIGERS 1

Sean Manaea held Detroit to one run on two hits in seven innings, leading Oakland to a victory at home. Manaea, making just his second start of the season and first at home in more than a year, struck out 10 and walked two for his first win since Aug. 24, 2018. Manaea (1-0) had shoulder surgery last September, and it took the left-hander almost a full calendar year to return to a major league mound. The Tigers (42-100) became the first team to reach 100 losses this season, and are 2-7 in September. They hadn't lost 100 games since the 2003 season.

### WHITE SOX 5, ANGELS 1

Jose Abreu and Danny Mendick each homered and four Chicago pitchers limited visiting Los Angeles to five hits. With Mike Trout out because of a sore big toe on his right foot, the Angels scored their only run of the game on Shohei Ohtani's RBI single in the first inning off White Sox starter Dylan Cease. Cease lasted only 3 1/3 innings, but Chicago got scoreless outings from relievers Josh Osich (2 2/3 innings), Aaron Bummer (two innings) and Alex Colome (one inning).

### BREWERS 8, CUBS 5

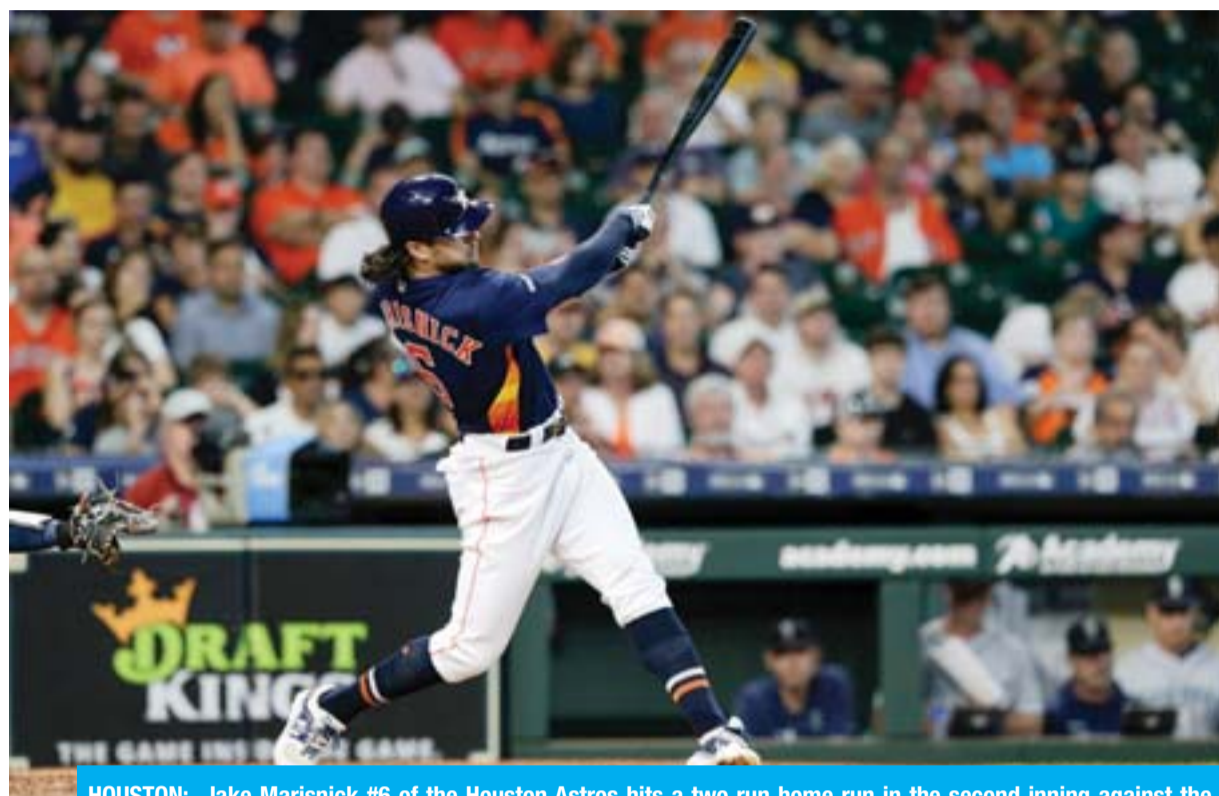
Pinch hitter Tyler Austin's three-run homer highlighted a five-run fourth inning as Milwaukee recorded a series victory over visiting Chicago. Ryan Braun added an RBI double in the fourth inning, and Eric Thames homered to lead off the sixth inning for the Brewers, who won the final three contests of the four-game set to move within two games of Chicago for the second wild card in the National League. Brent Suter (1-0) picked up the win after allowing one hit over two scoreless innings in relief of starter Adrian Houser.

### INDIANS 5, TWINS 2

Francisco Lindor and Carlos Santana each homered and Mike Clevinger extended his winning streak to 10 games as Cleveland beat Minnesota in the rubber game of their three-game series in Minneapolis. Lindor also doubled and stole a base. Jason Kipnis went 3-for-4 with a run scored and Frammil Reyes had two hits and two RBIs for Cleveland. Clevinger (11-2) has not lost in his last 13 starts, since he was beaten June 28 at Baltimore. He allowed two runs and four hits over 6 1/3 innings, striking out seven and walking two. Brad Hand pitched a scoreless ninth for his 34th save.

### CARDINALS 2, PIRATES 0

Right-hander Jack Flaherty struck out 10 in eight scoreless innings to lead visiting St. Louis to a win over Pittsburgh. Flaherty (10-7) allowed five hits and walked one, and he has been strong as the Cardinals look to lock down the National League Central title. The eight shutout innings matched a career best he set in his previous start against San Francisco. Paul Goldschmidt had



**HOUSTON:** Jake Marisnick #6 of the Houston Astros hits a two run home run in the second inning against the Seattle Mariners at Minute Maid Park in Houston, Texas. — AFP

an RBI double and Harrison Bader an RBI single for St. Louis, which took two of three in the weekend series.

### REDS 4, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Eugenio Suarez homered twice and pinch hitter Michael Lorenzen delivered a walk-off double with one out in the ninth inning as host Cincinnati broke Arizona's five-game winning streak. Suarez gave the Reds a 2-1 lead with his two-run homer in the third inning, and he tied the game at 3 with a one-out homer in the eighth inning off reliever Jimmie Sherfy. Suarez has 44 homers and leads the majors with 24 homers since the All-Star break. Ketel Marte hit his fourth homer in six games for a 3-2 lead in the fifth inning for the Diamondbacks.

### PHILLIES 10, METS 7

Phil Gosselin's pinch-hit RBI single in the sixth inning gave Philadelphia the lead for good in a marathon win over host New York. By winning the final two games of the three-game series, the Phillies moved within two games of the Chicago Cubs for the second National League wild-card spot while dealing a blow to the Mets' postseason aspirations. The game lasted four hours and 29 minutes — one minute shy of the longest nine-inning game in NL history. The two teams combined to use 16 pitchers — eight a piece.

### RAYS 8, BLUE JAYS 3

Right-hander Tyler Glasnow made a successful return from a nearly four-month absence and Avisail Garcia supported him and five Tampa Bay relievers with two doubles and a home run, lifting the Rays to a win over visiting Toronto. Austin Meadows also home-

red for the Rays, his 28th of the season, as Tampa Bay completed a four-game sweep with a fifth straight win overall. Glasnow, out with a forearm strain since May 10, pitched the first two innings of the win, allowing a two-run homer to Randal Grichuk in the second inning but no other hits. He struck out five and walked two in his 41-pitch cameo.

### RANGERS 10, ORIOLES 4

Ronald Guzman and Rougned Odor both homered, Nick Solak drove in four runs, and Mike Minor threw eight strong innings as visiting Texas defeated Baltimore. This victory completed a Texas sweep of the four-game weekend series, and the Rangers won six of the seven games they played against the Orioles this year. It marked the first time Texas has swept a four-game series in Baltimore since 1972. Texas twice scored three runs in an inning and got runs in five of the first six frames to turn the game into a rout. The Rangers forced Baltimore starter Asher Wojciechowski out after only two innings.

### NATIONALS 9, BRAVES 4

Max Scherzer pitched six strong innings and Yan Gomes hit a pair of home runs to help visiting Washington end its four-game losing streak with a win over Atlanta. Scherzer (10-5) allowed only one run on two hits, two walks and struck out nine. Gomes hit a solo home run in the second inning and added another solo shot in the seventh, giving him nine this season. He went 2-for-5 and sparked the team's 17-hit attack. Atlanta's season-best nine-game winning streak ended, as did its 13-game home winning streak, the best in franchise history for the modern era. — Reuters

## Ott Tanak clinches 120th FIA World Rally Championship win in Toyota Yaris WRC

**YVASKYLA:** GAZOO Racing (GR) World Rally Team (WRT) reached a new milestone recently with the Toyota Yaris WRC winning the fastest event on the FIA World Rally Championship calendar, Rally Finland, for the third year in a row. Ott Tanak, in the No 8 Toyota Yaris WRC, repeated his victory from one year ago to increase his championship lead, while Jari-Matti Latvala, driving the No. 10 Toyota Yaris WRC, finished third on his home event. With these achievements, the Finland-based GR WRT maintained its record of getting two cars onto the podium on the event every year since its debut in 2017.

Tanak moved into the lead on the third day following an intense battle with his competitors, and took a lead of 16.4 seconds into the fourth and final day. He instantly increased that to 20 seconds in the first of the final four stages, when he claimed his 200th WRC stage win. It is also his 120th in the Toyota Yaris WRC and 50th so far this season.

Guided by co-driver Martin Jarveoja, Tanak went on to set another fastest time in the rally-ending Power Stage as he clinched his victory, outpacing his nearest rival by 0.7 seconds to take the maximum 30 points away from the rally. With this, his championship lead increased to 22 points. Latvala and co-driver Miikka Anttila took their eighth stage win of the event on SS21 on their way to sealing their first podium finish of the season. The double podium win helped the team to close up to the leader in the manufacturers' championship.

Akio Toyoda, Team Chairman, commented: "The city of Jyväskylä, the center of the rally, welcomed us with the words 'Welcome to My Home Roads,' just as last year. In addition, they called our car the 'Hometown Hero.' I really appreciate the local people and all the supporters across the globe who cheered us on. I would also like to send words of celebration and appreciation to Tanak and Jarveoja, who climbed onto the top of the podium, Latvala and Anttila, who stood on the third step, and all the team members. I strongly believe the hard and enjoyable drives from our drivers and co-drivers will make the Yaris an ever-better car! The team will keep fighting to secure the Manufacturers' Championship and to make our driver and co-driver become the World Rally Champions. To all



the fans, I wish for your continuous support for GAZOO Racing WRT."

Ott Tanak, Driver of the No. 8 Toyota Yaris WRC, said: "It feels really amazing to get this victory. It was very important to gain a good result here to help us in both championships. I would say that this is a perfect result to begin the second part of the season. I also think it is a great boost for the whole team and now we need to keep pushing, starting with Germany."

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nurburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established GAZOO Racing (GR), to consolidate all of its motorsports

activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' GR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

The next rally, Rallye Deutschland, is effectively three rallies in one. Taking place on German asphalt, the event features twisting roads through Mosel vineyards, the notoriously tough Baumholder military area, and fast country lanes of Saarland. The differing characteristics of these roads and the often-changeable weather conditions can make car set-up and tire choice difficult.

## Solheim Cup no longer showcases best female golfers

**GLENEAGLES:** Even though women's golf is dominated by Asian players who are not eligible for this week's Solheim Cup, the event nonetheless remains a highlight of the calendar with two evenly-matched teams and a genuine rivalry nearly three decades in the making.

The 16th staging of a competition created in 1992 to showcase the sport's best women in a format mirroring the Ryder Cup, and sponsored by Ping equipment company founder Karsten Solheim, starts at Gleneagles in Scotland on Friday. Little could Solheim, who died in 2000, have envisaged all those years ago that come the 2019 event only three of the top 15 players in the women's world rankings would even be eligible - with South Korean players occupying no less than seven of the top spots.

But that will not detract from the passion on display by both teams. The United States have a stronger line-up top to bottom, headed by world number three Lexi Thompson, but are nonetheless only slight betting favourites, perhaps because their team includes five rookies.

European captain Catriona Matthew for her part will have three debutants — Anne Van Dam, Celine Boutier and Bronte Law — on a team with a combined 31 appearances, compared with 18 for Juli Inkster's American line-up.

### WILDCARD PICKS

Both captains made controversial wildcard picks, Matthew in choosing 38-year-old Suzann Pettersen, who at the time of her selection had played only twice all season since returning to the LPGA Tour following childbirth.

But Matthew said in a conference call that she is backing Pettersen, a 15-times LPGA winner, to rise to the occasion. "She's been one of the best European players on the LPGA the last 10 or 15 years and a huge part of the Solheim Cup over that time," said Matthew, an ambassador of Aberdeen Standard Investments, a Solheim Cup sponsor.

"She's got that fire and passion for it. As a leader on the golf course, some of the younger ones and rookies really look up to her and respect her and I think it's great to have that experience on the golf course."

"I had no doubt in my mind she would be an asset for the team so I broached the subject with her (of selection) and I think she was really quite delighted." While Matthew opted for experience, her counterpart Inkster put more weight on current form when she overlooked nine-times veteran Cristie Kerr, whose 21 career points is a US team record.

Michelle Wie is not on the team either, as the former child prodigy was not available as she rehabilitates a debilitating wrist injury. Inkster said she would have loved to have picked 41-year-old Kerr, but could not ignore the form of a player without a top-10 finish since May.

"She's kind of struggled this year," said Inkster. "If I saw any light at the end of the tunnel, I probably would have picked her in a heartbeat." Inkster maintained she was not concerned at her team's overall inexperience. "We're young but I think we're good," she said. "We have a lot of players with a lot of heart and I really think they won't be intimidated, which I like." — Reuters

## Sports

# Ricky Ponting hails 'relentless' bowlers as Australia retain Ashes

## Ex-England skipper Nasser Hussain says Australia deserved to keep the Ashes

**MANCHESTER:** Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting said on Sunday that the tourists' "relentless" bowlers deserve as much credit for retaining the Ashes as Steve Smith. The world's top-ranked Test batsman, Smith has been in superb form this Ashes with 671 runs, including three hundreds, at an average of 134.20.

Smith made a commanding 211 in Australia's 185-run victory in the fourth Test at Old Trafford, a result that left them 2-1 up with just one to play ahead of next week's finale at The Oval. But Ponting — twice a losing Ashes series captain in England in 2005 and 2009 — insisted the bowlers' efforts should not be ignored.

"I think they (Australia) should have had a bigger lead, not just on the back of Steve Smith," Ponting, one of the best batsmen of his generation, told Sky Sports. "Everyone is talking about what impact he has had, but the whole bowling department has been absolutely outstanding. Look at the difference in the bowling attacks in this game."

"(Mitchell) Starc, (Pat) Cummins, (Josh) Hazlewood and (Nathan) Lyon, match that up with the England attack. There were more holes in that England attack than the Australia one."

"They were relentless in everything they did." Meanwhile, ex-England skipper Nasser Hussain said Australia deserved to keep the Ashes. That England took the game into the final hour of Sunday's last day before being dismissed for 197, having been none for two after Cummins took two wickets in two balls, said much about their resolve.

But Hussain, the last England captain to fail to win an Ashes series on home soil in 2001, said the hosts could have no complaints given they had lost the opener by 251 runs and then only drawn level thanks to Ben Stokes's stunning century that secured a one-wicket win in the third Test at Headingley.

"There has been progress," said Hussain. "You can't fault the character and resilience of this England side. Other England sides would have just crumbled in a heap. "But the problem is they often find themselves 10 for two, 20 for two."

"Against certain sides you can come back from that, but from nought for two last night against this Australian attack, you can't come back from that."

"Let's be honest, if England had gone to The Oval at 1-1, I think it would have been a travesty," he added. — AFP



**MANCHESTER:** Australia's David Warner (C) celebrates with teammates after Australia win on day five of the fourth Ashes cricket Test match between England and Australia at Old Trafford in Manchester, north-west England. Australia retained the Ashes with a 185-run thrashing of England in the fourth Test at Old Trafford. —AFP

## Rashid leads Afghanistan to famous test win over Bangladesh



**CHITTAGONG:** Afghanistan's cricketers and team members pose with their winning trophy after defeating Bangladesh in the one-off cricket Test match at Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. —AFP

**CHATTOGRAM:** Rashid Khan picked up six second innings wickets to lead Afghanistan to a famous 224-run win over Bangladesh in the maiden Test match between the two sides at Chattogram yesterday.

Racing against time to complete a win with less than four overs left in the weather-hit match, the longest-format rookies bundled out the hosts for 173 in their second innings amid a drizzle and fading light.

The 20-year-old Rashid, who became the youngest test captain ever during the one-off match, took six for 49 in the second innings to finish with 11 wickets in the match to go with his knock of 51 with the bat in the first innings.

Rashid was adjudged the player of the match, which he dedicated to fellow spinner and former captain Mohammad Nabi who retired from Tests but will continue to play white-ball cricket. Playing only their third Test match after being inducted as a Test-playing nation two years back, it was the second victory for the strife-torn country.

"We are new in this format, total credit goes to the coaching staff and the players for this victory," Rashid said at the presentation ceremony. "We had the best preparation for this game. The only thing (I said) from my side was enjoy your bowling and enjoy your batting, that's what matters in test cricket. Everyone applied themselves,

it was a total team effort."

Rahmat Shah's 102 - the first century in the format by an Afghanistan batsman - and a 92 from Asghar Afghan allowed the touring side to post 342 in the first innings. Rashid and Nabi, who took 3-56 in the first innings, then combined to skittle Bangladesh for 205 for a handy first innings lead. Afghanistan then made 260 in their second innings to set Bangladesh a steep target to chase on a spinning track.

Once Afghanistan reduced Bangladesh to 136-6 in the second innings, the fate of the match was almost decided but for the intervention of bad weather.

Heavy showers allowed little play through the final day leaving Afghanistan with about 18.3 overs in the final session to take the remaining four wickets and force a result. Rashid took three out of those with just 3.2 overs remaining.

It was a disappointing result for Bangladesh, who made their debut in the format way back in 2000. "It's a combination of both, (lack of) application of our batsmen and Afghanistan also bowled really well," skipper and batting mainstay Shakib Al Hasan said.

"All credit goes to Afghanistan but at the same time we also have to do a lot of work hard. After playing for 20 years, we cannot say it's a build-up process. We need to forget this match as soon as possible and focus on the T20 series." — Reuters

London, he is expected to play as a specialist batsman. Stokes has been a shining light amid an often fallible England batting line-up this series, scoring 115 not out in the drawn second Test at Lord's before his stunning unbeaten 135 secured a dramatic one-wicket win in the third Test at Headingley.

England, if Stokes was selected purely as a batsman, would bring in a bowling all-rounder from within the squad in either Sam Curran, who would be playing on his Surrey home ground, or Chris Woakes.

Both Curran and Woakes missed out at Old Trafford. If England coach Trevor Bayliss, in what will be his last Test before he leaves his post, and captain Joe Root bring in one of the pair, it would likely mean one of the struggling batsmen — Jason Roy, Jonny Bairstow or Jos Buttler — making way.

England have been without James Anderson, their all-time leading wicket-taker, for most of this series after the 37-year-old paceman broke down with a calf injury having bowled just four overs during Australia's 251-run win in the first Test at Edgbaston.

### England squad for fifth Test:

Rory Burns (Surrey), Joe Denly (Kent), Joe Root (Yorkshire, capt), Jason Roy (Surrey), Ben Stokes (Durham), Jonny Bairstow (Yorkshire, wkt), Jos Buttler (Lancashire), Craig Overton (Somerset), Jofra Archer (Sussex), Jack Leach (Somerset), Stuart Broad (Nottinghamshire), Chris Woakes (Warwickshire), Sam Curran (Surrey). — AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**Chittagong, Bangladesh:** Final scoreboard at the end of the one-off Test between Bangladesh and Afghanistan at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

**Afghanistan first innings 342** (Rahmat Shah 102, Asghar Afghan 92, Rashid Khan 51; Tajjul Islam 4-116)

**Bangladesh first innings 205** (Mominul Haque 52; Rashid Khan 5-55; Mohammad Nabi 3-56)

**Afghanistan second innings 260** (Ibrahim Zadran 87, Asghar Afghan 50; Shakib Al Hasan 3-58)

**Bangladesh second innings (136-6 overnight)**

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Liton Das lbw b Zahir               | 9   |
| Shadman Islam lbw b Nabi            | 41  |
| Mosaddek Hossain c Asghar b Zahir   | 12  |
| Mushfiqur Rahim lbw b Rashid        | 23  |
| Mominul Haque lbw b Rashid          | 3   |
| Shakib Al Hasan c Zazai b Zahir     | 44  |
| Mahmudullah c Zadran b Rashid       | 7   |
| Soumya Sarkar c Zadran b Rashid     | 15  |
| Mehidy Hasan lbw b Rashid           | 12  |
| Tajjul Islam lbw b Rashid           | 0   |
| Naveem Hasan not out                | 1   |
| Extras: (b4, lb2)                   | 6   |
| <b>Total:</b> (all out; 61.4 overs) | 173 |

**Fall of wickets:** 1-30 (Liton), 2-52 (Mosaddek), 3-78 (Mushfiqur), 4-82 (Mominul), 5-106 (Shadman), 6-125 (Mahmudullah), 7-143 (Shakib), 8-166 (Mehidy), 9-166 (Tajjul), 10-173 (Soumya)

**Bowling:** Yamin 4-1-14-0, Nabi 20-5-39-1, Rashid 21.4-6-49-6, Zahir 15-0-59-3

**Result:** Afghanistan won by 224 runs.

## Root wants to stay on as captain after Ashes blow

**MANCHESTER:** Joe Root is in no doubt he should remain as England's Test captain despite presiding over their first failure to win a home Ashes series in 18 years. England were looking to regain the Ashes after a humiliating 4-0 loss under Root in Australia in 2017/18.

But Australia's 185-run victory in the fourth Test at Old Trafford on Sunday left them with an unassailable 2-1 lead in the five-match series ahead of next week's finale at The Oval.

Root, whose tactical acumen has been questioned this series, may be England's best batsman but three of his last five Test innings have ended in ducks. Nevertheless, he had no doubts about continuing in the often stressful role of England captain.

"Definitely, yes," the 28-year-old said when asked if he still felt he was the right man for the job. "Whenever you lose a series it hurts and I have to take that on the chin. It's still very raw."

"You have to look at areas you want to get better at, both in yourself and as a team. "But I have been given a fantastic opportunity to captain the Test side and will continue to work very hard doing my best at that. That is in my control and I have to make sure I keep getting this team in the best shape to win as many games as possible."

This was England's first defeat in an Old Trafford Test since 2001 and Root, one of several players also involved in this season's World Cup triumph, has little time in which to revive flagging spirits ahead of Thursday's start at The Oval.

England, however, could still end this series all square at 2-2 and gain valuable points in the inaugural World Test Championship with a victory in south London. "It's important to look at next week," said Root.

"We have an important Test match against Australia and we have to make sure we finish this summer strong; do not lose this Ashes series. "We have the Test championship to play for, do not lose this Ashes series. It matters to me, it matters to everyone involved. "I know the Ashes are not coming home but in terms of the Test championship, at the end of the two-year cycle those points could be crucial. "Every game against Australia matters." — AFP

## Ten S Lanka players opt out of Pakistan tour over security

**COLOMBO:** Ten Sri Lankan players, including captain Dimuth Karunaratne and veterans Lasith Malinga and Angelo Mathews, have opted out of the upcoming tour of Pakistan over security concerns, the country's cricket board (SLC) said yesterday.

Sri Lanka are due to tour Pakistan to play three one-day internationals (ODIs) and three Twenty20 matches to be held between Sept. 27 and Oct. 9 and the board held a meeting with the players to discuss security arrangements for the tour.

Pakistan are looking to host their first Test on home soil — as part of the World Test Championship in December — since a 2009 militant attack on Sri Lanka's team bus in Lahore left six security personnel and two civilians dead while six players were injured.

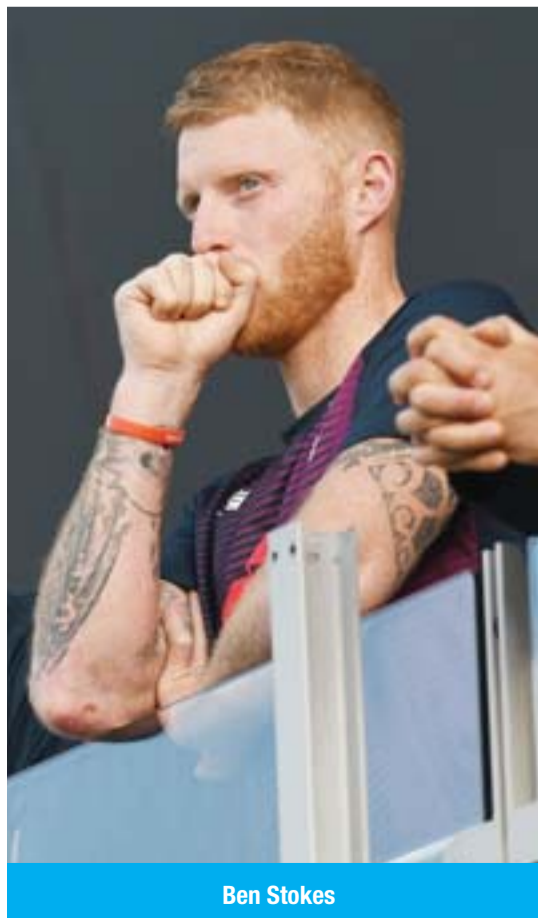
The Lankan players were briefed on the security situation in the country by the SLC's chief security advisor and were given the freedom to decide whether to take part or not.

"The meeting was aimed at informing the players about the security arrangements during the forthcoming tour and also to find out their 'decision' (either taking part or not) before... the selection of squads for the ODI and T20I series," SLC said in a statement.

The other players who chose not to play were Niroshan Dickwella, Kusal Perera, Dhananjaya De Silva, Thisara Perera, Akila Dhananjaya, Suranga Lakmal and Dinesh Chandimal. Kusal Mendis was unavailable for selection due to an injury.

Last month, the SLC and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) agreed to bring forward the limited-overs leg of the split series and pushed back the two Tests, which were originally set to take place in October.

Pakistan did not host international cricket for six years following the 2009 attack, with the team playing their home matches in the United Arab Emirates, but have hosted teams such as Zimbabwe and West Indies in recent years. — Reuters



Ben Stokes

## England to assess Stokes's bowling fitness for Ashes finale

**LONDON:** England will assess star all-rounder Ben Stokes's fitness to bowl in this week's fifth Test with Australia at the Oval as they look for a consolation win after failing to regain the Ashes.

Stokes was included in an unchanged 13-man England squad announced Monday following a 185-run defeat in the fourth Test on Sunday that ensured Australia would keep hold of the Ashes at 2-1 up with one to play in the five-Test series.

Given the tight turnaround to a Test starting on Thursday, the lack of any changes is not altogether surprising. It may well be, however, that national selector Ed Smith and his panel do make alterations for the upcoming tour of New Zealand, with promising batsmen Dominic Sibley and Zak Crawley among those pushing for places.

Durham paceman Stokes, England's vice-captain, did not bowl in Australia's second innings at Old Trafford following a right shoulder injury sustained during his 11th over in the tourists' first innings.

If Stokes is unfit to bowl at the Oval in south

Sports

# Perfect Spain and Italy close in on Euro 2020

## Ramos equals Casillas' Spain appearances record

PARIS: Spain and Italy moved to within touching distance of Euro 2020 on Sunday after respective wins over the Faroe Islands and Finland saw them maintain their perfect qualifying records for next year's tournament.

Rodrigo and Paco Alcacer both scored twice in an easy 4-0 victory over the Faroes in Gijon, on a night when captain Sergio Ramos equalled Iker Casillas' national appearances record with his 167th cap.

It was their sixth win from six in Group F and put them on a perfect 18 points, seven clear of Sweden, who drew 1-1 with Scandinavian rivals Norway. With two teams qualifying from the group, they are also a further point ahead of third-placed Romania following their 1-0 win over Malta.

"Yes, it's almost done, but not yet mathematically," said Spain coach Robert Moreno when asked if his team had all but qualified with four games to spare. "We must grow as a team by winning all our matches. Of course, the final goal is qualification, but what matters is that the team has the feeling of doing things well."

The evening began in a sombre fashion with a minute's silence in tribute to former coach Luis Enrique's daughter Xana, who died of bone cancer aged nine last week. Moreno, who took over as boss from Enrique when the ex-Barcelona coach stepped down in June, made 10 changes to the starting XI which won 2-1 in Romania on Thursday, with only Ramos keeping his place.

However the hosts wasted little time in taking the lead, Rodrigo tapping in despite suspicions of offside in the 13th minute following a defensive mix-up, and the Valencia striker put the game to bed five minutes after the break when he lashed a vicious left-footed strike into the top corner with the aid of a deflection.

Substitute Alcacer put the cherry on the cake with

two goals in the dying moments, first slotting home from Thiago Alcantara's low cross in the 90th minute before flicking in a near-post header to score his third Spain goal this week.

### JORGINHO KEEPS ITALY ON TRACK

Italy also kept their 100 percent record thanks to Jorginho's late penalty, which fired Italy their own sixth straight win, 2-1 at nearest rivals Finland. Chelsea midfielder Jorginho's 79th-minute winner in Tampere sent Roberto Mancini's side six points clear of the second-placed Finns in Group J, after in-form Norwich City striker Teemu Pukki had levelled Ciro Immobile's first Italy goal in two years with a penalty of his own six minutes before. "I was feeling the pressure of not scoring with this jersey," said Lazio striker Immobile.

"But I knew the time would come. Tonight wasn't easy, but we did well. We are happy, we are starting again after the disappointment of missing out on the World Cup."

Four-time world champions Italy are flying high with a maximum 18 points with four qualifying games to play, nine points ahead of third-placed Armenia despite their thrilling 4-2 win over Bosnia and Herzegovina earlier on Sunday.

They could now secure qualification for the tournament, which kicks off in Rome next June, against Greece or Liechtenstein — who surprisingly drew 1-1 in Athens — next month. Switzerland kept their hopes of qualifying from Group D alive with a 4-0 thumping of Gibraltar, who are yet to pick up a point or score a goal after five games.

Goals from Denis Zakaria, Admir Mehmedi, Ricardo Rodriguez and Mario Gavranovic were enough to move Vladimir Petkovic's side to within three points of leaders Ireland.

They are also just a point away from second-



GIJON: Spain's forward Rodrigo vies with Faroe Islands' defender Rogvi Baldvinsson (L) beside Spain's midfielder Mikel Oyarzabal (R) before scoring the opening goal during the UEFA Euro 2020 qualifier group F football match between Spain and Faroe Islands at El Molinon stadium in Gijon. —AFP

placed Denmark, who could only manage a goalless draw at Georgia, and have a game in hand on both their rivals. The Swiss' fate could be decided in the

next round of games next month, when they travel to Copenhagen to take on the Danes before hosting Ireland in Geneva. —AFP

## Patriots begin title defense with rout of Steelers

NEW ENGLAND: Seemingly ageless Tom Brady passed for 341 yards and three touchdowns Sunday as the New England Patriots topped the visiting Pittsburgh Steelers 33-3. The Patriots (1-0) held a pregame celebration for their Super Bowl championship, then began defense of that title in strong style. Brady improved to 6-0 at home against Pittsburgh (0-1). The 42-year-old was 24 of 36, hitting Phillip Dorsett for two touchdowns and Josh Gordon for another. Stephen Gostkowski added four field goals. Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger was 27 of 47 for 276 passing yards, and he was intercepted once.

### CARDINALS 27, LIONS 27 (OT)

Matt Prater made a 33-yard field goal with 3:48 remaining in overtime to help Detroit salvage a tie with Arizona, which overcame an 18-point fourth-quarter deficit in Glendale, Ariz. Prater's field goal capped a 60-yard drive after Zane Gonzalez made a 28-yard field goal, his fourth of the game, on the first possession of overtime for a 27-24 lead, capping the Cardinals' run of 21 straight points. Arizona rookie quarterback Tyler Murray, the No. 1 pick in the 2019 draft, completed 29 of 54 passes for 308 yards and two touchdowns, both in the fourth quarter when the Cardinals overcame a 24-6 deficit. Arizona had 293 of its 387 yards of total offense in the fourth quarter and overtime after a listless first three quarters.

### CHIEFS 40, JAGUARS 26

Quarterback Patrick Mahomes, the NFL's reigning Most Valuable Player, passed for 378 yards and three touchdowns as Kansas City toppled host Jacksonville. Playing on a heavily wrapped left ankle he sprained in the first quarter, Mahomes drove Kansas City to scores on each of its first seven possessions while going 25 of 33 with no interceptions. Jacksonville lost

its new quarterback, Nick Foles, to a broken left clavicle in the first quarter. Tyreek Hill, who signed a three-year contract extension with the Chiefs late last week, left in the first quarter with a shoulder injury.

### COWBOYS 35, GIANTS 17

Dak Prescott tied a career high with four touchdown passes and threw for 405 yards as Dallas rolled to a season-opening victory over visiting New York. Prescott completed 25 of 32 passes and produced his second career 400-yard game. Prescott finished 50 yards shy of his career high set against Philadelphia last season. Prescott also set a Cowboys passing yardage record for a season opener, breaking the mark held by Troy Aikman. Prescott threw touchdowns to tight ends Blake Jarwin and Jason Witten and then connected with Amari Cooper and Randall Cobb.

### CHARGERS 30, COLTS 24 (OT)

Austin Ekeler's third touchdown of the day, a 7-yard run with 5:01 left in overtime, lifted Los Angeles to a season-opening win over Indianapolis in Carson, Calif. Starting in place of holdout Melvin Gordon, Ekeler rushed for 58 yards on 12 carries while catching six passes for 96 yards and two scores. Veteran quarterback Philip Rivers hit on 25 of 34 passes for 333 yards and three touchdowns with one interception. Indianapolis forced overtime with 38 seconds left on a 19-yard touchdown pass from Jacoby Brissett to T.Y. Hilton, followed by a 2-point conversion run from Marlon Mack.

### RAVENS 59, DOLPHINS 10

Lamar Jackson tied a franchise record with five touchdown passes as Baltimore routed host Miami. Jackson, who led all NFL quarterbacks last year with 695 rushing yards in just seven starts, spent the offseason working on his passing, and it was evident on Sunday. He completed 17 of 20 attempts for 324 yards with no interceptions. Thanks in part to Jackson, the Ravens also set a franchise record for most points in one game. Baltimore tied for the second-most points ever in an NFL season opener, trailing the 1973 Atlanta Falcons (62).



FOXBOROUGH: James Conner No 30 of the Pittsburgh Steelers is tackled by John Simon No 55 of the New England Patriots during the second half at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts. —AFP

### 49ERS 31, BUCCANEERS 17

Visiting San Francisco returned two interceptions for touchdowns, and Jimmy Garoppolo passed for another as the 49ers defeated Tampa Bay. Richard Sherman and Ahkello Witherspoon scored the Niners' touchdowns on defense after both intercepted Bucs quarterback Jameis Winston. San Francisco recorded two interceptions on defense all of last season, setting a historic NFL low. Garoppolo completed 18 of 27 passes for 166 yards in his first start since Week 3 of the 2018 campaign, when he sustained a season-ending ACL injury.

### EAGLES 32, REDSKINS 27

Carson Wentz threw three touchdown passes and rallied host Philadelphia from an early 17-point deficit for a win over Washington. Wentz was 28 of 39 for 313 yards with a pair of 50-plus touchdown passes to DeSean Jackson. It was Wentz's first game in nine months while he recovered

from a stress fracture in his back. Jackson had eight catches for 154 yards. Case Keenum finished 30 of 44 for 380 yards and three touchdown passes in his first start for the Redskins.

### VIKINGS 28, FALCONS 12

Dalvin Cook ran for 111 yards with two touchdowns and safety Anthony Harris recorded two interceptions and recovered a fumble as Minnesota rolled past visiting Atlanta in Minneapolis. Kirk Cousins (8 for 10, 98 yards) threw for a touchdown and ran for another as the Vikings scored TDs on three of their first four possessions. Minnesota recorded all of its points off three Atlanta turnovers and a blocked punt. Cook, limited to 15 games over his first two seasons because of injuries, ran the ball 21 times and had 53 yards on his first three carries. The Vikings, who averaged 93.3 rushing yards in 2018, had more than 100 on the ground in the first half and 172 for the game. —Reuters

## Europe's clubs divided over CL reform

LAUSANNE: The battle over the future of the Champions League will resume today when the European Club Association (ECA) meets in Geneva and the leadership faces rebellion from members. ECA, led by Juventus chairman Andrea Agnelli, is closely involved in proposals to reshape Europe's main club competition from 2024.

The proposals were presented by European football's governing body UEFA in May although details had leaked earlier. The reforms include the introduction of weekend fixtures, four groups of eight, and a tiered system with relegation and promotion that would see the top six teams in each group automatically qualify for the following year's competition.

ECA, which boasts of "more than 230 members", faced an outcry from many of those clubs and from national leagues which would be hit hard by the scheme. "A semi-closed league with more matches... threatens to enormously impoverish the Spanish league," said Javier Tebas of La Liga.

England's Premier League issued a statement saying: "The domestic game should continue to be the priority for professional clubs." Opponents say the plan is designed to guarantee the income of a handful of big clubs.

"This reform would especially harm medium and small clubs," said Wanja Gruel, the president of Young Boys of Berne, the reigning Swiss champions. "It eliminates the access to the top flight of European competitions through domestic leagues. Fans will gradually lose interest in domestic leagues and those leagues would be further economically damaged."

Last month UEFA announced it was cancelling a meeting with the ECA and the European Leagues, a wider body representing more than 900 European clubs, scheduled for September 11.

UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin said he wanted to "collect feedback" from member federations. The cancellation of the meeting "reveals strong opposition," said Bernard Caiazza, president of French Ligue 1 club Saint Etienne, who are outspoken opponents of the plan. —AFP

## Kuwait archery team return home with gold, bronze medals

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait delegation to the Kyrgyzstan International Archery Championship headed by President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations President Eng. Duaij Al-Otaibi returned home Sunday evening. Kuwait's team of archers Abdallah Taha, Bader Al-Mutairi and Faisal Al-Sindi won the Team's gold medal, while Sindi won the bronze individuals medal.

Eng. Al-Otaibi said for Kuwait winning two medals in the Kyrgyz tournament is an important achievement as the first at the international level in this sport. He asked Public Authority for Sport (PAS) to give more support for archery to help archers achieve more results, as the case with the rifle and shotgun.

Meanwhile KSE and Arab Shooting Federations Secretary Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi said the win reflects the progress Kuwait archers have made after winning local and regional tournaments, although the sport was introduced recently.

He said the board of directors is keen on supporting shooters of both genders in order to represent Kuwait at their best in all arenas.



## 'Germany's van Dijk': Sulee learning to lead wobbly defence

HAMBURG: Fresh from a stinging defeat by the Dutch, Joachim Loew's fragile young Germany team will look to their new defensive general Niklas Sulee when they test their mettle in a must-win Euro 2020 qualifier at Northern Ireland.

Germany are now just three points above the Netherlands following Friday's loss in Hamburg and three behind Group C leaders Northern Ireland — who are yet to drop a point — in a three-horse race to secure automatic qualification.

The pace, strength and ability to time tackles to perfection of Bayern Munich defender Sulee — billed as "Germany's Virgil Van Dijk" in the German media — has led to him replacing the likes of Jerome Boateng and Mats Hummels as first-choice centre-back for both club and country. After the controversial decision to drop experienced centre-back duo Hummels and Boateng from the national-team set up in March, Loew sees the 24-year-old as his new defensive leader in a rejuvenated Germany side.

"Niklas now has responsibility, we expect more from him. He has to organise and direct things at the back" said Loew at the time. Yet as Germany continue along the rocky road to rehabilitation following last year's World Cup disaster, Sulee is still struggling to stabilise Germany's wobbly defence. —AFP

**25** Astros erupt for 21 runs against Mariners as Gerrit Cole cruises

**26** Ricky Ponting hails 'relentless' bowlers as Australia retain Ashes

**27** Perfect Spain and Italy close in on Euro 2020



NEW YORK: Rafael Nadal of Spain (R) holds the trophy after his win over Daniil Medvedev of Russia (L) during the men's Singles Finals match at the 2019 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York. — AFP

## Nadal wins 19th Grand Slam title

### Nadal edge Russia's Medvedev in five-set US Open thriller

**NEW YORK:** Delivering one of his most dramatic major final performances, Rafael Nadal captured his 19th career Grand Slam title Sunday by winning his fourth US Open, outlasting Russia's Daniil Medvedev 7-5, 6-3, 5-7, 4-6, 6-4.

The 33-year-old Spanish left-hander moved one shy of Roger Federer's all-time men's record 20 Grand Slam triumphs and became the second-oldest New York champion in the Open era after Ken Rosewall in 1970 at age 35.

"Has been one of the most emotional nights in my tennis career," Nadal said. A video tribute in the wake of his gritty triumph moved Nadal to tears. "The way that the match became very dramatic at the end, that makes this day unforgettable," Nadal said.

"Watching all the success, all the moments that came to my mind, I tried to hold the emotion, but some moments was impossible." It took a supreme effort from the Spanish maestro, who nearly became the first player to drop the final after leading by two sets since Ted Schroeder in 1949 before winning a near five-hour thriller.

"This victory means a lot," Nadal said. "And the way it happened. It was hard to control the nerves. The nerves were so high after having the match almost under control."

World number two Nadal took the top prize of \$3.85 million at Arthur Ashe Stadium and added to his US Open trophy haul from 2010, 2013 and 2017.

Nadal, who was in his fifth US Open championship match and 27th Grand Slam final, is the first man to claim five major titles after turning 30. Nadal, who rose to 22-12 in five-set matches, only lost once at a Slam when up two sets, to Italy's Fabio Fognini in the 2015 US Open third round.

"I more or less had the match under control," Nadal said. "The way he was able to fight, to change the rhythm of the match, was incredible."

#### UNBELIEVABLE, OUTRAGEOUS'

At four hours and 50 minutes, the match finished four minutes short of equalling the longest final in US Open history from Mats Wilander's 1988 win and Andy Murray's 2012 title. It was the second Slam title of the year for Nadal after taking his 12th French Open crown in June.

In addition to reaching the brink of Federer's mark, Nadal moved one shy of the Open era record five US Open titles won by Federer, Jimmy Connors and Pete

Sampras. "A 19th Grand Slam title is something unbelievable, outrageous," Medvedev said.

Nadal, who won his only prior meeting with Medvedev in last month's Montreal final, stretched his win streak over Russians to 20 matches since losing to Nikolay Davydenko in the 2011 Doha semi-finals.

Fifth seed Medvedev, 23, would have been the youngest men's Grand Slam champion since Juan Martin del Potro at the 2009 US Open. Medvedev, who will rise to a career-best fourth in the rankings, was a champion at Cincinnati and runner-up at Montreal, Washington and the Open.

"His summer was one of the best summers I ever saw," Nadal said. "People saw why he is already number four in the world." Medvedev, who saw his career-best 12-match win streak snapped, would have been the first Russian to win a Grand Slam title since Marat Safin at the 2005 Australian Open and the first Russian to win the US Open since Safin in 2000.

#### ELECTRIC FIFTH SET

On a knife's edge at 5-5 in the third set, Medvedev reeled off eight of the last nine points to force a fourth,

breaking Nadal in the 12th game with a backhand winner. "To be honest in my mind, I was already thinking, 'What do I say in the speech, it's going to be in 20 minutes,'" Medvedev said.

"I was like, 'I have to fight for every ball,' and it went further but it didn't go my way." Nadal was broken in the 10th game of the fourth set to force a fifth when Medvedev blasted a sterling backhand return winner.

Nadal rescued three Medvedev break chances to hold in the second game of the fifth set, fired a backhand volley winner to break Medvedev in the fifth game and seized a 5-2 edge when Medvedev hit an overhead smash long.

Serving for the match, Nadal was broken when umpire Ali Nili issued Nadal a time violation for his first serve and the Spaniard sent his second long, the crowd booing Nili for his call. Nadal squandered two break and match points in the ninth game as the drama intensified.

Again serving for the match, Nadal rescued a break point then hit a forehand drop volley for his third match point chance and Medvedev sent a forehand return long to end matters. Nadal screamed and fell to the court on his back in joy and exhaustion. — AFP

### Age-defying Scola propels Argentina towards WCup glory

**SHANGHAI:** Luis Scola is 39, his hair has more than a few streaks of grey and at the Basketball World Cup in China he has shared the court with rivals half his age. But Argentina's evergreen captain is playing a big part in the country's bid to win the world crown for the first time since the inaugural edition in 1950.

He was named player of the game in Sunday's 91-65

victory over Poland, drilling 21 points to propel Argentina into a quarter-final showdown with title-contenders Serbia on Tuesday. The forward was also named best player against Nigeria for registering a double-double, scoring 23 points and 10 rebounds.

The last member of Argentina's so-called "Golden Generation" who won the Olympics in 2004, Scola has won every major trophy in international basketball, except the World Cup. "What age are you talking about, I'm 28, right?" he joked after Argentina swatted aside Venezuela in the second round. Speaking in an unmistakably American accent, a product of spending a decade in the NBA up until 2017, Scola added: "I understand everybody talking about my age, but my brain does not function that way."

"I am not going to the court and thinking, oh my god, I'm older than these guys, or, oh my god, these guys are

five, 10, 15 years younger than me. "To me, it's natural. "I just think that I'm a player, I am a good player and I'm going to make good plays and help my team win."

#### 'NO GOODBYE TOUR'

However much he tries to avoid it, talk about his age and how much longer he can plod on for is never far away. Scola, who spent the last two seasons in Chinese basketball, is featuring in a record-equalling fifth World Cup. Last week he reached another milestone when his heroics against Nigeria moved him up to second on the FIBA World Cup all-time scoring list, trailing only the legendary Brazilian Oscar Schmidt.

If that was a proud moment, there is the growing prospect that Argentina could be in for a shout of at least a medal, although Serbia will present a mighty

challenge despite losing to Spain on Sunday. That same day, Scola shared the court with the youngest player in the tournament, Poland's 18-year-old Aleksander "Olek" Balczerowski. Scola had said that what happens at the World Cup will dictate if he would carry on for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Doing so would have a nice symmetry because he is the only remaining member of the Argentina team that stunned the USA on the way to Olympic gold at Athens 2004. He was also in the team which won silver at the 2002 World Cup. Asked what it was like to now be the grandfather of a team whose average age is 27, younger than most other rosters at the World Cup, Scola replied: "This is not like a tour or a goodbye week. "This is a world championship and we are trying to go all the way to the medals. "We don't do maths with the ages." — AFP