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Business 8
 Ford to cut 12,000 jobs in Europe by 2020-end



Sports 11
 Kohli leads the way as India pack off West Indies



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Qatar participates in NATO meeting

Qatar participated in a meeting of the North Atlantic Council with the partner countries for Resolute Support of the defence ministers at the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the Belgian capital Brussels on Thursday. Qatar's delegation to the meeting was headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs HE Dr Khalid bin Mohammed al Attiyah. The meeting was also attended by HE Abdulrahman bin Mohammed al Khulafai, Ambassador of Qatar to the Kingdom of Belgium and Head of Mission of the State of Qatar to the European Union and NATO. (QNA)

FM MEETS UNRWA COMMISSIONER-GENERAL

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs HE Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani met Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Pierre Krahenbuhl in Doha on Thursday. During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral relations and issues of joint interest. The meeting was attended by UN Secretary-General's Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Muraikhi. (QNA)

UN freezes drawdown of Sudan peace mission

THE UN Security Council on Thursday agreed on a four-month pause in the drawdown of a peacekeeping mission from Sudan's Darfur region as leaders in Khartoum press on with difficult talks on a political transition. The council unanimously voted to renew the mandate of the UN-African Union mission known as UNAMID until October 31, overcoming reservations from China and Russia. China, Sudan's major trading partner, has long supported Khartoum's view that the conflict in Darfur was winding down and that peacekeepers were no longer needed. The council last year agreed to push ahead with a series of phased drawdowns with a view to shutting down the mission in 2020. (AFP)

Shura Council, Portugal assembly sign MoU to enhance cooperation

QNA LISBON

THE Shura Council and Portugal's Assembly of the Republic signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) at the assembly's headquarters on Thursday.

The MoU was signed by Shura Council Speaker HE Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Zaid al Mahmood and President of the Assembly Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues.

As per the MoU, the two sides have agreed to establish partnership and promote relations that connect both sides based on the principles of equality and mutual trust.

They have also agreed to establish two parliamentary groups of friendship to exchange information, work on unifying stances of common interest and unifying stances on topics at international conferences, meetings and forums. They also agreed on mutual support in appointing leadership positions of international parliamentary organisations and exchanging expertise in various fields, such as legislative work and internal organisation.

During a meeting, the two parties reviewed parliamentary relations between the Shura Council and Portugal's Assembly of the Republic. They also reviewed the means to boost and develop ties and discussed a number of topics of common interest.

Shura Council Speaker HE Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Zaid al Mahmood and President of Portugal Assembly Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues sign the MoU in Lisbon on Thursday.

Indonesian official lauds Qatar's labour reforms

QNA DOHA

MINISTER of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs HE Yousef bin Mohammed al Othman Fakhro met with Chairman of the Protection Agency and Indonesian Manpower Placement Nusran Wahid and his accompanying delegation in Doha on Thursday.

Wahid praised Qatar's new labour legislation that guarantees the protection of labour rights in accordance with the international standards.

During the meeting, they discussed activating the agreement to recruit skilled and semi-skilled Indonesian workers in Qatar soon.

They agreed for the joint technical committee stipulated in the recruitment agreement signed between the two parties, to hold its meetings in the next two months to develop appropriate mechanisms to re-initiate the process of bringing Indonesian workers to Qatar as soon as possible. (PAGE 16)

At least 39 killed in Congo mine collapse (PG 5)

Worst is still to come: Sizzling Europe battles wildfires, health risks

Wildfires raged across Catalonia and French authorities stepped up restrictions on water use and driving in cities as swaths of western Europe remained in the grip of an intense heatwave. Temperatures climbed towards 44 degrees Celsius in parts of Spain and France, driving many people to seek relief in the sea, rivers, fountains and swimming pools. Spanish firefighters struggled to contain wildfires across more than 16,000 acres in Catalonia. (PAGE 7)

Twin suicide attacks rock Tunisia capital

AGENCIES TUNIS

QATAR CONDEMNS ATTACKS

QATAR on Thursday condemned the two explosions that targeted a police car and the headquarters of the Counter-Terrorism Unit in the Tunisian capital, leading to deaths and injuries. In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated Qatar's firm stance rejecting violence and terrorism regardless of the motives or reasons. It stressed Qatar's solidarity with the Tunisian government in all the measures it will take to maintain security and stability. The statement offered Qatar's condolences to the families of the victims, the people and the government of Tunisia. It wished the injured a speedy recovery. (QNA)

Two suicide bombers attacked security forces in the Tunisian capital on Thursday, killing a police officer and wounding at least eight people including several civilians, the interior ministry said.

The first bombing took place near a police patrol car in Charles de Gaulle Avenue, wounding three civilians and two policemen, the ministry added in a statement.

One of the two policemen died later in hospital, a spokesman for the ministry said, according to Tunisia's state news agency TAP.

Four other security personnel were wounded in a second suicide attack that targeted a police building in the capital shortly after, according to the ministry. The suicide bomber reportedly tried to storm the anti-terrorism building in the district of Gornaji, but was prevented by police, witnesses said.

The attack prompted authorities to put security forces on alert at key state institutions. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for attacks, a US-based monitor said. (PAGE 5)

Nation

Good morning Doha

DIAL DOHA	FIRE AMBULANCE POLICE	999	Airport Services Operator	44656666	Drain Centre	44687894
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Qatar's Es'hailSat to showcase products at Arab Radio and TV Festival in Tunisia

QNA DOHA

ES'HAILSAT, the Qatar Satellite Company, will take part in the 20th Arab Radio and TV Festival being held at Culture City in Tunis from June 28 to 30.

The annual festival, organised by Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), aims to contribute to the development of Arab radio and television production, enhance its quality and promote innovative and meaningful trends in the industry.

Es'hailSat will be showcasing Es'hail-1, Es'hail-2 and new state-of-the-art teleports. Es'hail-1 and Es'hail-2 are currently transmitting high quality, premium DTH television content from the 25.5 /26 E hotspot.

In addition to providing transmission and expansion opportunities for established news and sports channels, Es'hailSat supports niche channels to launch their services within the region.

Es'hailSat's new teleports which became commercially operational in Q1 of 2019, provide customers with secure and independent satellite transmission. The facility supports satellite TTKC and capacity management together with a wide range of services such as uplink, downlink, multiplexing, encoding, playout and other value added services. The high-tech teleports will also provide back-up studios for TV channels and serve as a disaster recovery facility for customers.

President and CEO of Es'hailSat Ali bin Ahmed al Kuwari, said: "The Arab Radio and TV Festival gives us the right platform to engage with customers and partners. With the new satellite and teleports operating successfully, we see this festival as an important element in our strategy to attract customers from across the region who value broadcasting independence and high quality of service, to launch their services with Es'hailSat".

MURAIKHI MEETS ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR



Minister of State for Foreign Affairs HE Sultan bin Saadul Muraikhi met on Thursday with Ambassador of Romania to Qatar HE Cristian Tudor. They reviewed relations of bilateral cooperation as well as matters of common concern. (QNA)



QATAR TAKES PART IN ARAB MINISTERIAL WATER MEETING The Arab Ministerial Water Council on Thursday held its 11th session in Cairo. Qatar participated in the associated meetings with a delegation led by Qatar's Permanent Representative to the Arab League HE Ambassador Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz al Sahlawi. (QNA)

Implementation of Doha Declaration projects moving smoothly, says Mal

QNA DOHA

THE implementation of the Doha Declaration of the 13th Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Doha 2015) projects is moving rapidly and smoothly, said Major-General Dr Abdullah Yousif al Mal, advisor to the Minister of Interior, who is also the chairman of the Follow-up Committee for the implementation of the World Programme for the Doha Declaration.



Major-General Dr Abdullah Yousif al Mal, advisor to the Minister of Interior, with other officials at the meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the Doha Declaration, in Doha on Thursday

In a statement after the 9th meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the Doha Declaration on Thursday, Dr Mal said many countries have been added to the list of beneficiaries of the programme such as Palestine, Kyrgyzstan, some South American countries, Tunisia, Morocco and some of the least developed countries on the African continent. He said the committee reviewed what has been achieved for the five continents around the world, specifically for the least developed countries, and discussed what is to be submitted to the 14th United Nations Conference on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice to be held in Kyoto, Japan, in April next year.

The committee also discussed the projects on the themes of the Universal Declaration of Education for Justice, the integrity of the judiciary, the rehabilitation of prisoners and

the prevention of crime among young people through sport. Dr Mal said the coordination meeting is held every three months between the committee charged with following up the implementation of the Doha Declaration on behalf of Qatar and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to evaluate the achievements made. Director of Division for

Treaty Affairs at UNODC John Brandolino, who is the head of the United Nations delegation participating in the meetings, said the meeting addressed the achievements of the World Programme for the Implementation of the Doha Declaration adopted in 2015 in more than 65 countries around the world in the form of direct technical assistance in various areas of the programme in sport, educa-

tion, prisoner rehabilitation and judicial integrity. Brandolino noted Qatar's generous support for the programme, stressing that Qatari partners are outstanding. He added that the high-level meetings with Qatar reflect the country's commitment and the very good work it is doing with the agency. Third Secretary at Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations and International Organizations in Vienna HE Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Nasser al Thani highlighted the progress made in the programmes for prisoner rehabilitation and youth education in Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, El Salvador and others. He also referred to the feedback from the judges towards the programmes, which represent a major step towards the integrity of the judicial process, and to educate and establish ties between members of the judiciary in different countries to enhance communication and exchange of experiences.

Qatar slams attack on North Iraqi town

QNA DOHA

THE State of Qatar expressed on Thursday its condemnation and denunciation of an armed attack that targeted a town in North Iraq and left three dead and two injured. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs renewed in a statement the firm position of Qatar of rejecting violence and terrorism regardless of motives and reasons. The statement also expressed Qatar's condolences to the victims' families, the government and the people of Iraq, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

150 take part in Bunts Qatar events on Environment Day

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK DOHA

MORE than 150 children and adults took part in an array of competitions organised by Bunts Qatar on the occasion of World Environment Day recently.

Ooredoo was the main sponsor of the event that included drawing, clay modelling and quiz contests focusing on environmental protection. On the occasion noted conservationists, wild photographer from India Krupakar-Senani were felicitated. The winners of the contests were also awarded. The quiz was

hosted by Arun Kumar. Deepak Shetty, president of Bunts Qatar, emphasised on the need for having such events to educate the children about environment and its sustainability. The closing ceremony was graced by ICC President Manikanthan as the chief guest as well as Avinash

Gaikwad of ICBF and Dr-Nishakantha Shetty as guests of honour. Also present were AshwinShetty, Manohar Shetty, Navneeth Shetty, Chaitali Shetty, Ravi Shetty, Dr PadmashriShetty, SupriyaShetty, NithyanandShetty, Swaroop-Shetty and Akshini Shetty.



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THE PURPOSES OF SHAREE'AH IN HAJJ



ALLAH Almighty did not create us in vain and will not neglect us. Rather, He created us to inhabit the earth and achieve succession on it. This, however, will not be realised unless we become the best Ummah (nation) brought to mankind, and this necessitates purifying the self, which is a persistent enjoiner of evil. The only means to purify the self is to apply the teachings of Islam, fulfil its pillars as we learnt them from the Prophet, peace be upon him, and be keen to dedicate all our righteous deeds solely for the Sake of Allah. Allah Almighty Says (what means): {...Indeed, prayer prohibits its immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do...} [Qur'an 29:45]

In a Hadeeth, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Whose prayer does not forbid him from doing immorality and evil, he gets nothing but going further from Allah." Regarding the pillar of fasting, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "How many people are fasting and receive no reward but the suffering of hunger and thirst."

This means that fasting and prayer do not benefit the servant when he goes to extremes in committing immorality and harming Muslims. When the Prophet, peace be upon him, was asked about a woman who used to intensively fast and pray but used to harm her neighbours, he judged her to be among the dwellers of Hell.

There are neither sexual relations nor disobedience:

Allah Almighty Says (what means): (Hajj is during) well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein [by entering the state of ihram (state of ritual consecration)], there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj... [Qur'an 2:197]

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "Whoever performs a Hajj during which he neither commits sexual intercourse nor disobedience will return as sinless as a newborn on the day that his mother delivered him." [Al-Bukhari]

Imam Al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy on him, mentioned in the etiquettes of Hajj is that one should treat his companions kindly. The leader should gently treat those who are with him and do what is beneficial for them. The travellers should say good words to each other, provide food and show the best morals.

Addressing His beloved, Muhammad, peace be upon him, Allah Almighty Says (what means) concerning Zakah: [Take O, Muhammad] from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing. [Qur'an 9:103]

The sublime purpose and supreme request is purifying the self and refining the soul and the senses. For the pillars of Islam to be accepted, it is a prerequisite that the Muslim fears Allah, wishes all goodness for the servants of Allah and avoids

harming his fellow Muslims in any way. There are many of those who pray and receive no benefit of their prayer; rather, they obtain nothing but tiredness since their prayer does not forbid them from doing evil and committing misdeeds.

The best and most beloved righteous deeds:

In a Marfoo' Hadeeth that was narrated by 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, it was mentioned that: "The best deed is to make a believer happy by clothing him (to cover his 'Awrah), satisfying his hunger or fulfilling his need." [At-Tabaraani]

It was also narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "The most beloved deed to Allah Almighty, next to the obligatory acts of worship, is to make a Muslim happy." [At-Tabaraani]

It was narrated on the authority of Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "One of the causes of winning the forgiveness (of Allah) is to make your Muslim brother happy." [At-Tabaraani]

Reflecting on these Ahadeeth (narrations), one realises that the common idea is to highlight the moral aspect, which aims at the unity of Muslims and at discarding whatever leads to dispute and rancour. The Prophet, peace be upon him, considered it one of the best forms of Jihaad that a Muslim spares the people his evil. It was narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him, that a man came to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and said: "O Messenger of Allah! Who is the best of mankind?" The Prophet, peace be upon him, replied: "A believer who performs Jihaad with his life and property for the Sake of Allah." "Who is next?" the enquirer asked again. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "It is he who saves the people from his evil." [Al-Bukhari, Muslim and Al-Haakim (with slight differences in wording)]

It is as if Allah, the Creator, has put this slogan for the Muslims in order for them to be guided therewith in their transactions. It is my advice to you to fear Allah regarding your beloved brothers in religion and creed.

Piety of Hearts:

Hajj is one of the greatest rituals of the great religion of Islam. Allah Almighty has prescribed it in order to purify His servants from all sins and misdeeds as well as the seduction and filth of the worldly life. The obligation of Hajj is in fact a response to a great and wise divine

call. Allah Almighty Says (what means): (And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass.) [Qur'an 22:27] This call has to be honoured and respected. Allah Almighty Says (what means): [That [is so], and whoever honours the symbols of Allah—indeed, it is from the piety of hearts.] [Qur'an 22:32]

Reflecting on the verses, one observes that piety and purification of the soul is the most important relation between all acts of worship.

We should know that seeking what is good and avoiding what is evil is the supreme purpose and requirement. When it is achieved, the wounds resulting from disputes will heal, all Muslims will be united like the most pious in person's heart, the old will be kind to the young, the rich will be kind to the poor and the strong will be kind to the weak. Only with this will Islam become strong, its flag will become high and nothing will be above it.

There is no disputing in Hajj:

An aspect of honouring this great obligation is to perform it as Allah Almighty wants, hoping that He will accept it. Also, one is required to avoid whatever renders it invalid or makes its reward imperfect.

Allah Almighty Says (what means): (Hajj is [during] well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein [by entering the state of ihram (ritual state of consecration)], there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no disputing during Hajj... [Qur'an 2:197])

There is no disputing either during or after the Hajj. The Muslim has a pure soul and heart and likes for his fellow Muslim whatever he likes for himself. Moreover, he grieves when his Muslim brother is hurt, even because of a thorn or is afflicted with a disaster. On the other hand, he is prone to seek revenge, abuse the honour of his brother, lie to him and deceive him. Astonishingly, you see some Muslims who are very modest in words and deeds but when one of them is tried, he proves that he is very far from faith and the fear of Allah. He forgets that Muslims, and all other people, will return to Allah, the Creator, the Supreme Judge and the Ever-Just, and nothing is hidden in the earth or in the heavens from Him.

The Muslim, whether he is a pilgrim or not, should avoid the sins of backbiting, tale bearing, telling lies, cheating, deceiving, arguing, disputing and quarrelling. Allah Almighty forbids that a

Muslim is violated in any way, for this is likely to raise evil and plant enmity and hatred among Muslims. Qataadah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "The righteous deed is greater in reward during the sacred months, and disobedience is greater in sin during these months as well; even though disobedience is grave and hideous at all times"

The obligation performed once in a lifetime — Hajj, which is performed during numbered days — is a test for the Muslims. Will they be patient to avoid evil during and after Hajj? Whoever has a good soul and a truthful intention, Allah will help him, strengthen his morale and boost his determination. Allah Almighty Says (what means): Allah is guiding them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good. [Qur'an 29:56]

All acts of worship, whether they are daily or annual, constitute a school. Hajj is the obligation required once in a lifetime. It is a school that teaches us how to purify ourselves during and after these numbered days and until we meet Allah Almighty.

We should perform the rituals of Hajj with a spirit of brotherhood, unity and collaboration. We should act like one body and seek one goal while our hearts are full of the ember of faith that filled the hearts of the Companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him. We should follow the example of our righteous predecessors in loving each other, seeking excuses for each other and treating each other in a way that pleases Allah Almighty.

The best Companion:

It was narrated that Buhaym Al-Jili, may Allah have mercy on him, who was a faithful, devoted worshiper, accompanied a rich merchant during the Hajj journey. When it was the day of travel, Buhaym, may Allah have mercy on him, kept weeping until his tears fell to the ground and said: "This journey reminds me of my journey to Allah." Then he engaged in loud weeping, a matter that annoyed his Companion, the merchant. After returning from the Hajj, a man came to visit them. He started with the merchant and asked him about his status with Buhaym, may Allah have mercy on him. The merchant said: "By Allah, I do not think that there is someone like him from among people. Although he is poor and I am rich, he was better than me in spending. Although he is old and I am young, he was better than me in serving. Although he was fasting and I was not, he cooked food for me." Then the visitor left the merchant and entered upon Buhaym, may Allah have mercy on him, greeted him and then asked him about the status of the merchant during the journey. Buhaym, may Allah have mercy on him, answered: "He was the best Companion. He remembered Allah often, recited the Qur'an for long periods of time, quickly engaged in weeping and endured the faults of his Companion. May Allah reward him with what is good for this."

O Allah, accept our deeds, Hajj, fasting and voluntary night prayer and make us righteous servants of Your. Aameen

A promised fixed return on investment is Riba

Question: Assalam Alaikum, I am an Indian working in Saudi Arabia. Presently, I have been offered a commercial Property (Retail space in a Mall). The developer assuring me if I pay full amount, he will give me minimum 1% of the cost of property as rent, every month for next 15 years. If the property goes with higher rent, I will get the higher rent otherwise minimum I will get 1% rent. Please let me know, whether this type of arrangement is ok in Islam. The developer is assuring me a minimum fix return on my investment and I am confused it may constitute interest, which is haram. I await your Fatwa/Advise to proceed further. Khuda Hafeez

Answer: All perfect praise be to Allaah, The Lord of the Worlds. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, and that Muhammad, sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, is His Slave and Messenger.

It is impermissible for you to invest your money in the mentioned commercial venture because of the stipulation on part of the developer to guarantee you a minimum of one per cent return on your investment given the points clarified in Fataawa 50870, 51500 and 10549.

It is, however, possible to validate the contract if you both agree that your ratio of profit is to be determined in proportion to the capital invested by you. Thus, you become entitled to a ratio of profit that conforms to your share in the capital and you would also suffer the loss exactly according to the ratio of your investment. Thus, you are not guaranteed a minimum fixed profit regardless of whether the business accrues profit or loss. It is worth mentioning that the partner's ratio of the total profit does not have to be in proportion to his share in the capital as long as the proportion of profit to be distributed between the partners is agreed upon at the time of making the contract. A partner with 30 percent of investment can be entitled to a larger or smaller ratio of profit if it is agreed among the partners with their free consent. Ibn Muflih, may Allah have mercy on him, wrote: "In a profit-sharing partnership, the ratio of profit for each partner should be agreed upon at the time the contract becomes effective, even if the ratio of each partner was not in proportion to the capital invested by him..." [Al-Furoo']

On the contrary, the loss must be divided between the parties exactly in accordance with the ratio of capital invested by each one of them. Kashshaaf Al-Qiraa' reads: "...Whether the two parties agreed that the ratio of profit for each partner is in proportion to the capital invested by him or according to what they stipulated, the proportions of losses borne by partners must be commensurate with the proportions of their contributions to the capital. This is because the loss [Al-Wadhee'ah] is upon the capital and the profit is according to what they stipulated. Loss denotes a decrease in the capital, the property of the partners; therefore, each partner is liable for a percentage of loss that matches his share of ownership in the partnership."

Allaah Knows best.

Paying bribe to get one's right and ward off evil

Question: Assalaamu alyakum. I want to open a small shop on a road in my area. The road is normally not anyone's private property and it is common for people to set up small shops, which is tolerated by the government. The problem is that local police officers and powerful leaders regularly ask the shop owners for an amount of money. If it is not paid, then they will usually harass that person and in some cases destroy the shop or make it impossible to do business. Is it halal for me to give them an amount if they approach me? Or is that considered a bribe?

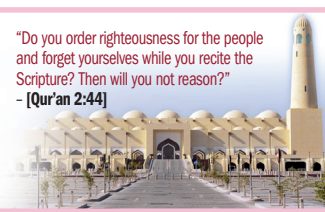
Answer: All perfect praise be to Allaah, The Lord of the worlds. I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allaah, and that Muhammad, sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, is His slave and Messenger.

If there is no impediment to opening a small shop because the government tolerates it but some officials harass people unless they pay bribes, as you mentioned, then there is no harm on you to pay them the bribe, and they bear the sin for it and not you.

Tuffat Al-Ahwal bi-Sharh At-Tirmithi reads, "What is paid to obtain a right or to ward off injustice does not fall under the category of the prohibited bribe. It was reported that Ibn Mas'ood was captured in Abyssinia for something and he freed himself by paying two dinars. It was also narrated on the authority of a group of Taabi'oon (generation following that of the Companions) that there is no harm if a man pays in order to preserve his life and wealth if he fears injustice..."

Al-Mirqaah Sharh Al-Mishkaah reads, "It is said that the bribe is what is given to deprive someone of his right or to give him what is not his. However, if it is given to obtain one's right or to ward off injustice, then there is no harm in that..."

For more benefit about the prohibited bribe, please refer to fatawa 12346. Allaah knows best.



"Do you order righteousness for the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?" - [Qur'an 2:44]

"Don't care about how many people may get mad at you for doing the right thing, because they won't be standing with you on the Judgment Day."

- Dr. Bilal Philips

India faces weak monsoon rains, raising fears for crops, economy

REUTERS
MUMBAI

INDIA'S monsoon rains were below average for the fourth straight week, with rainfall scanty over central and western parts of the country in the week ended on Wednesday, raising concerns about major crop production and the impact on the nation's economy.

Monsoon rains are crucial for the country's farm output and economic growth. About 55% of India's arable land is rain-fed, and agriculture makes up about 15% of a \$2.5 trillion economy that

is Asia's third-biggest. And India's economy, which grew at its slowest in more than four years over the January-March quarter, isn't in any condition to take a big hit from a poor monsoon.

If the rains don't improve over the next two to three weeks, India could be facing a crisis that hammers crop harvests and rural demand. Companies that sell everything from tractors to fertiliser to consumer goods to farmers would be vulnerable.

"Sowing has already been delayed by three weeks. If the monsoon doesn't revive in two,

three weeks, then the entire season could be wiped out," said Harish Galipelli, head of commodities and currencies at Inditrade Derivatives & Commodities in Mumbai.

India received 24% less rainfall than the 50-year average in the week ended on June 26, data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) shows. In some areas, such as the eastern part of Madhya Pradesh, known for growing soybean, the deficit was as high as 69 percent, the data shows.

The monsoon has so far delivered 36% less rainfall than normal since the start



(File photo) Women plant rice saplings at a paddy field in a village in Nagaon district, in the northeastern state of Assam. (REUTERS)

of the season on June 1 due to a delay in the onset of the seasonal rains.

The sowing of summer crops such as rice, soybeans and corn has been lagging as a result. Farmers had planted summer-sown crops on 9.1 million hectares as of June 21, down 12.5% compared with the same time last year, according to provisional data from India's Ministry of Agriculture.

India needs a good monsoon this year as in 2018 a drought ravaged crops, killed livestock, emptied reservoirs and drained water supplies

to city dwellers and some industries. Hardest hit were the western states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, along with Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the south, and Madhya Pradesh in central India.

Some municipalities like Chennai, Mumbai and Hyderabad were forced to cut water supplies to ensure their reserves lasted until monsoon rains replenished reservoirs.

The IMD has forecast average rainfall in 2019, while the country's only private forecaster, Skymet, has predicted below-normal rainfall.

AFGHAN PRESIDENT GHANI VISITS ISLAMABAD

Pakistan, Afghanistan vow to improve strained relations

REUTERS
ISLAMABAD

ISLAMABAD wants an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, says Imran Khan



Afghan President Ashraf Ghani (left) with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan during a meeting in Islamabad, on Thursday. (AFP)

PAKISTAN called on Thursday for stronger trade relations with Afghanistan and more cooperation on regional security as Afghan President Ashraf Ghani visited Islamabad, pledging renewed effort to end the 18-year war in Afghanistan.

The visit comes amid a series of meetings among regional countries and talks between US officials and the Taliban on a withdrawal of foreign troops and a political settlement between the Kabul government and the insurgent movement.

Ghani was welcomed by a 21-gun salute, but relations between the two countries have long been strained. Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of supporting the Taliban, a charge Pakistan denies, saying it has suffered heavily from the fighting. Pakistan insists

it wants to help the Afghan peace process, and last week it hosted a meeting of senior Afghan politicians and members of the Taliban as part of an intra-Afghan dialogue.

Prime Minister Imran Khan said in a statement Pakistan wanted a "qualitative transformation in Pakistan-

Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi told Ghani that the visit should prompt a new chapter in bilateral relations, saying: "Let this visit of yours be a watershed."

Afghanistan relations" and repeated Pakistan's support for an "Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process."

Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi told Ghani his visit should prompt a new chapter in bilateral relations, saying: "Let this visit of yours be a water-

shed." Similar declarations have been made repeatedly over the years, then followed by renewed episodes of mistrust, but both countries are aware their struggling economies cannot afford permanent hostility.

As well as the peace process, the two have joined moves to increase transport and energy connectivity projects, including the Central Asia-South Asia electricity transmission line and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline.

"The two leaders agreed that enduring peace in Afghanistan would bring rich economic dividends to both the countries," Khan's office said in a statement.

Ghani's visit came shortly before talks are expected to resume between US officials and the Taliban. The talks are aimed at agreeing a timeline for the withdrawal of foreign troops and guarantees that Afghanistan will not be used as a base for militant groups.

However, the Kabul government has so far been shut out of the peace process by the Taliban's refusal to talk to what it considers an illegitimate "puppet" regime appointed by foreign powers.

Sri Lankan presidential hopeful Rajapaksa faces new lawsuits in US court

REUTERS
COLOMBO

SRI Lankan torture victims have filed 10 new claims for damages in a US court against wartime defence chief Gotabaya Rajapaksa, lawyers for the plaintiffs and a rights group said, possibly jeopardising his plan to run for president.

Rajapaksa, the younger brother of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, is seeking to renounce his US citizenship to enable him to run in Sri Lanka's presidential election this year, and lawsuits over alleged human rights abuse during the war against separatist Tamil fighters could complicate his bid.

The plaintiffs have alleged that Rajapaksa was from 2005 to 2015 in command of security forces who systematically abducted, tortured, raped, and extorted money from suspects, the South Africa-based International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) and US law firm Hausfeld that filed the case in the US District Court in central California said on Wednesday. Rajapaksa was a US citizen at the time. He has dual citizenship.

The victims were repeatedly raped and sexually assaulted, the law firm and the rights group said in a statement.

The 10 plaintiffs include three women. Eight of the plaintiffs are ethnic Tamil and two from Sri Lanka's majority Sinhalese community.

Six of them were repeatedly raped and sexually assaulted, the law firm and rights group said in the statement.

Lawsuits in the United States could delay his bid to renounce his US citizenship, and he would not be able to contest for president with US citizenship.

A spokesman for Rajapaksa rejected the allegations and said the lawsuits were aimed at tarnishing his image ahead of the election, which is expected by December.

AI plane makes emergency landing after 'bomb threat'



The Air India flight was escorted to Stansted Airport after the bomb threat.

AFP
LONDON

BRITAIN on Thursday scrambled fighter jets to escort an Air India passenger flight forced to land at London's Stansted

airport following a "bomb threat", according to security officials and the airline.

"The RAF (Royal Air Force) can confirm Quick Reaction Alert Typhoon aircraft were launched this morning...

to intercept a civilian aircraft," Britain's defence ministry said in a statement.

"The aircraft was safely escorted to Stansted Airport." The plane, en route from the Indian city of Mumbai to Newark in the United States, made a "precautionary landing" at the airport after a "bomb threat", Air India said in a tweet that was subsequently deleted.

It later said the diversion, initiated at around 9:50am local time (0850 GMT), followed "reports of a security alert".

"The plane (is) currently at the airport," an Air India spokesperson added in a statement, noting all the 327 passengers were being cared for inside a terminal.



An injured girl being treated at a hospital in Srinagar, on Thursday. (AFP)

11 killed in Kashmir minibus plunge

DPA
SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

ELEVEN students were killed when their vehicle skidded off a road into a deep mountain gorge in India-administered Kashmir on Thursday.

At least seven others travelling in the minibus were injured in the accident in South Kashmir's Shopian district, senior administration official Mohammad Saleem Malik said. The condition of two of them was critical.

The victims, nine of them women, were enrolled in a computer training institute in Surankote town, Malik said. They were aged between 20 and 25. India has the highest number of traffic fatalities in the world.

Indonesian president calls for unity after court upholds his election win

REUTERS
JAKARTA

INDONESIA'S Constitutional Court on Thursday upheld the victory of President Joko Widodo in April's election, dismissing allegations by the opposition that the vote to lead the world's third-biggest democracy was rigged.

Widodo won re-election by a double-digit margin, an official count released last month showed. But his rival, retired general Prabowo Subianto, refused to concede defeat and went to court, citing systematic fraud and abuse of power.

"I urge all Indonesians to reunite and advance the country," Widodo told reporters after the court decision and just before he was due to fly to Japan for a G20 summit.

The panel of nine judges unanimously dismissed the opposition's case in its entirety, saying there was no evidence to support claims of cheating.

The court said claims that Widodo had misused state funds and the state apparatus to drum up support, that press freedom had been restricted during the campaign, and that there had been voter intimidation and vote-buying were all unfounded.

Fresh protests hit Hong Kong as activists seek voice at G20

REUTERS
HONG KONG

PROTESTERS in Hong Kong blocked roads and forced workers to leave the justice secretary's offices on Thursday in the latest unrest to rock the city over an extradition bill that has now been suspended.

Millions have thronged the streets in the past three weeks to demand that the bill, which would allow criminal suspects to be sent to mainland China for trial in courts controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, be scrapped altogether. "You know what everybody has deep in their hearts - is that this is about our future and it's very very personal," said 53-year-old Brian Kern, who was attending the protests.

In sweltering heat of 32 degrees C, some protesters chanted, "Withdraw evil law, release martyrs... Teresa Cheng, come out," referring to the justice secretary. Others shouted, "Condemn excessive force by police and release protesters." Police formed a cordon to block the demonstrators and



Protesters gather outside the Department of Justice during a demonstration demanding that Hong Kong's leaders step down and withdraw the extradition bill, in Hong Kong, on Thursday. (REUTERS)

one officer held a banner warning them away. Minor scuffles broke out between pro-democracy group Demosisto and officers. "Fight for Justice," "Free Hong Kong," and "Democracy

Now" were some of the demobilized on protest banners.

Police chief Stephen Lo warned of consequences for outbreaks of violence and condemned what he said was an environment of hostility making his officers' task difficult.

In the early hours, riot police wielding batons and shields chased dozens of protesters as they broke up a siege of police headquarters. By nightfall on Thursday, only around 200 protesters remained. Black-clad and

masked, they sat peacefully outside government headquarter.

The demonstrators have seized on this week's G20 summit of world leaders in Japan to appeal for Hong Kong's plight to be put on the agenda, a move certain to rile Beijing, which has vowed not to tolerate such discussion.

"We know that the G20 is coming. We want to grasp this opportunity to voice for ourselves," said Jack Cool Tsang, 30, a theatre technician who took a day off work to protest.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tunisia president hospitalised in 'critical condition'

TUNIS: Tunisia's 92-year-old president, Beji Caid Essebsi, a major player in the country's transition to democracy since 2011, was taken to a military hospital on Thursday after suffering a "severe health crisis", the presidency said. One of Essebsi's advisers to Reuters he was in a "very critical" condition but was alive. Prime Minister Youssef Chahed said on Facebook that Essebsi was receiving the attention he needed and that people should stop spreading fake news about his condition, after some reports said the president had died. The presidency said in a new statement that "this condition now is stable and he is under the necessary checks". (REUTERS)

Mass arrests in Ethiopia after coup bid

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian security forces on Thursday rounded up scores of suspects believed to have links to a coup bid in northern Amhara state and the murder of the army chief in attacks which have highlighted the political crisis in the nation. The weekend attacks have heaped pressure on Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, already facing waves of ethnic violence which have displaced over two million people, as he pushes forward with democratic and economic reforms. An ethno-nationalist party in Amhara, one of several political groupings gaining ground as political space opens up, said more than 56 of its members and supporters had been arrested. (AFP)

1 killed, several hurt as twin suicide blasts rock Tunisia capital



Policemen inspect the scene after a suicide bombing targeted a police vehicle in Tunis on Thursday. (EPA-EFE)

AFP TUNIS

Two suicide bombers attacked security forces in the Tunisian capital on Thursday, killing a police officer and wounding at least eight people including several civilians, the interior ministry said. One attack on the main street of Tunis wounded three civilians and two police personnel, the interior ministry initially said. "Five are wounded —

three civilians and two police officers", Interior Ministry spokesman Sofiene Zaag told AFP, before later saying that a police officer had died of his wounds. Body parts were strewn in the road around a police car on Habib Bourguiba avenue near the old city, according to an AFP correspondent. "It was a suicide attack, which took place at 10:50 (0950 GMT)," Zaag said. The second attack targeted a base of the national guard in

the capital and wounded four security personnel, the ministry said. "At 11:00 am (1000 GMT) an individual blew himself up outside the back door" of the base, wounding four security personnel, Zaag said. Civil protection units and police rapidly deployed to Habib Bourguiba avenue, where the interior ministry is located. People initially fled in panic, before some crowded around the scene of the attack,

expressing anger against the authorities. Shops and offices were closed by police. Tunisia, the cradle of the Arab Spring uprisings, has been hit by repeated Islamist attacks since the 2011 overthrow of longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. On October 29, 2018 an unemployed graduate blew herself up near police cars on Habib Bourguiba, killing herself and wounding 26 people, mostly police officers, according to the interior ministry.

The Tunisian authorities said the suicide bomber had sworn allegiance to IS. The attack was the first to rock the Tunisian capital for over three and a half years. In March 2015, gunmen killed 21 tourists and a policeman at the National Bardo Museum in Tunis. And in June of that year, 30 Britons were among 38 foreign holidaymakers killed in a gun and grenade attack on a beach resort near the Tunisian city of Sousse.

Palestinians blast 'amateur' Kushner at UN Jerusalem meet

AFP GENEVA

PALESTINIAN officials on Thursday dismissed the Bahrain conference led by "amateurs" like Jared Kushner, as they opened two days of talks on Jerusalem's future at the United Nations.

The meeting at the UN's European headquarters lacked the fanfare -- and



Jared Kushner.

Kushner's initiative lacks credibility because "you cannot begin the process of resolving this complicated issue through the economic door." "It has to be done through the political door."

Riyad Mansour - Palestinian permanent observer to the UN

multi-billion dollar economic plans -- that accompanied the Bahrain talks spearheaded this week by President Donald Trump's son-in-law.

The Geneva meeting, called the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, was convened by the UN's Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Officially, the conference is aimed at preserving Jerusalem's multi-faith heritage,

but with few top-level officials on hand its outcomes are unlikely to influence the Middle East peace process. Nevertheless, Palestinian leaders sought to portray the meeting as a counterpoint to the 'Peace to Prosperity' conference in Bahrain, boycotted by the Palestinians who accused the unabashedly pro-Israeli Trump of dangling the prospect of cash to try to impose political solutions.

Blasting "the amateurs of political activities like Kushner," the Palestinian Authority's social affairs minister Ahmad Majdalani called the Bahrain talks a "resounding failure" in his opening remarks. He charged that Kushner's plan merely aimed to "improve our lives under occupation." "We want an end to occupation."

The Palestinian permanent observer to the UN, Riyad Mansour, told reporters that his problem with the Bahrain meeting was not "a personal issue" with Kushner. Rather, he stressed, Kushner's initiative lacks credibility because "you cannot begin the process of resolving this complicated issue through the economic door."

"It has to be done through the political door," Kushner, a 38-year-old real estate investor, said he has focused on jump-starting the Palestinian economy because the Middle East peace process needed a fresh approach rather than a deadlock on the political front.

The two-day Geneva conference on Jerusalem includes speeches from Arab and Israeli academics as well as religious leaders.

Trump's idea of short war is 'illusion': Iran



An Iranian woman walks past a mural painting depicting the late founder of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (right) and Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran, recently. (AFP)

Iranian FM says Trump was mistaken in thinking a war between US and Iran would not last long

AFP TEHRAN

IRAN'S foreign minister on Thursday warned US President Donald Trump he was mistaken to think a war between their countries would be short, as Washington sought NATO's help to build an anti-Tehran coalition.

"Short war" with Iran is an illusion," Zarif tweeted a day after Trump said he does not want a war with Iran but warned that if fighting did break out, it "wouldn't last very long".

The latest developments in the Iran-US standoff came

as a diplomatic source in Vienna said Tehran would not exceed a uranium stockpile limit agreed with world powers, contrary to what it had said earlier this month. Iran had set Thursday as a deadline to surpass the agreed 300-kilogram reserve of enriched uranium because it no longer felt bound by certain limits contained in the 2015 deal, which the United States unilaterally pulled out of in May 2018.

"They won't exceed it today," the diplomatic source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP in Vienna on the eve of a meeting by a com-

Macron to ask Trump to drop some Iran sanctions

AFP TOKYO

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday he will try to convince US President Donald Trump to suspend some sanctions on Iran to allow for negotiations to de-escalate the crisis in the region.

"I want to convince Trump that it is in his interest to re-open a negotiation process (and) go back on certain sanctions to give negotiations a chance," Macron told reporters on the train from Tokyo to Kyoto. The French leader will meet his US counterpart on the sidelines of the G20 summit this weekend. (REUTERS)

US seeks NATO help in anti-Iran coalition

AFP BRUSSELS

THE US defence chief on Thursday pressed NATO allies to join Washington's efforts to squeeze Iran and ensure the safety of ships in the Gulf after a spate of attacks.

As US-Iranian tensions soar, Acting Secretary of Defence Mark Esper asked NATO countries for support by publicly condemning Iran and to consider creating a maritime coalition to protect freedom of navigation through the strategic waterway.

After President Donald Trump said any conflict with Iran "wouldn't last very long", Esper stressed that the US wanted to avoid conflict and get back to the civilian world.

Washington has rattled up crippling economic sanctions on Tehran after the Islamic republic's forces shot down a US drone in the Gulf region, following a series of attacks on tankers that Washington blames on Iran.

NATO defence ministers discussed the crisis in Brussels, where Esper said he sought to "internationalise" the Iran issue, after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo last week called for a "global coalition" to deal with Tehran.

Esper said he urged allies to "consider public statements condemning Iran's bad behaviour."

39 killed in Congo mine collapse

REUTERS KINSHASA

At least 39 artisanal miners were killed on Thursday when part of a copper and cobalt mine owned by Glencore collapsed in southeast Congo, the provincial governor said.

The accident occurred in the KOV open-pit mine at the Kamoto Copper Company (KCC) concession, in which Glencore subsidiary Katanga Mining owns a 75 percent stake, said Richard Muyeje, the governor of Democratic Republic of Congo's Lualaba province.

"It was caused by the clandestine artisanal diggers who have infiltrated (the mine)," he told Reuters. "The old terraces gave way, causing significant amounts of material to fall." "KOV is a delicate site and presents many risks," he added. Glencore said in a state-

ment that it had confirmed 19 fatalities so far and was assisting search and rescue operations by local authorities.

The statement said an average of 2,000 illegal miners sneak onto KCC property each day. The rudimentary practices employed by artisanal miners can compromise the safety of the mines, and accidents among them are common.

Delphin Monga, provincial secretary of the UCDT union which represents KCC employees, said a crack in that part of the pit had been noticed on Wednesday. He said KCC had put up red warning signs, but the diggers had ignored them.

The KOV mine, which spans a vast flat expanse on the outskirts of the city of Kolwezi near the Zambian border, is one of the largest high-grade copper assets in the world.

Saudi women rights activists appear in court

REUTERS RIYADH

SEVERAL Saudi women activists were to stand trial on Thursday, said people familiar with the proceedings, after a two-month hiatus in a case that has drawn international scrutiny of the kingdom's human rights record.

Among those appearing at the courthouse in Riyadh were academic Aziza al-Youssef, who is in her 60s, and conservative preacher Ruqayya al-Mohareb, the sources said. Blogger Eman al-Nafjan was also expected to be present.

The three are a part of a group of around a dozen women arrested in the weeks before and

after a ban on women driving cars in the conservative kingdom was lifted in June 2018. Few charges have been made public but those against at least some of them are related to contacts with journalists, diplomats and human rights groups.

The public prosecutor said last year that they were suspected of harming Saudi interests and offering support to hostile elements abroad.

The women's arrests - and the torture alleged by some of them, which Saudi authorities deny - has heightened Western criticism of a pivotal Middle East ally following last year's murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the



(File photo) Demonstrators from Amnesty International stage protest on International Women's day to urge Saudi authorities to release jailed women's rights activists. (REUTERS)

kingdom's Istanbul consulate. They appear to be part of a broader crackdown on dissent that has netted scores of oth-

er activists, intellectuals and clerics over the past two years even as Saudi Arabia eases some social restrictions and

seeks to reform its economy. Youssef, Nafjan and Mohareb were granted temporary release in March conditional on attending future court sessions. Four more were later released on similar terms. The rest of the women remain in prison.

It was unclear if others who had appeared in previous sessions, including rights campaigner Loujain al-Hathloul and university professor Hatem al-Fendi, would also have a new hearing.

Foreign diplomats and reporters are barred from entering the courtroom, and the government communications office did not reply this week to a request for comment about the case.

Bodies Pile Up At The US-Mexico Border

Death is a great deal to risk on a journey to the United States. Only people truly desperate for safety, prosperity and a better life would do so

A SINGLE photograph of two bodies has grabbed the attention of the world. Taken from overhead, it shows a man face down in the water at the edge of the Rio Grande with his toddler daughter held to his back under his T-shirt. The stillness of the scene is in jarring contrast to what must have been their frantic last moments struggling against the muddy current in a doomed effort to reach the other side.

But theirs weren't the only recent border deaths. On Sunday, Border Patrol agents found the bodies of a young woman, two infants and a toddler on the US side of the border near McAllen, Texas, dead apparently of dehydration and heat exposure. The Border Patrol also reported finding the bodies of three men in different spots along the Texas side of the border last week, and the bodies of two men in the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass, Texas, about 130 miles southwest of San Antonio the week before. A seven-year-old girl was found dead in the Arizona desert on June 12, and, separately, the body of a woman in her 40s was found. She had lost consciousness and died after her travelling companions left her behind in southwest Arizona.

Death is a great deal to risk on a journey to the US; only people truly desperate for safety, prosperity and a better life would do so. Even those who make it across and throw themselves at the mercy of the US government face inhumane conditions and, occasionally, death. At least six migrant children died in the last year while in US detention, according to one tally, and at least 10 adults have died since June 2018 while in US custody or shortly after their release. An inspector general's report found overcrowding so bad at one adult processing center in El Paso that men had to stand on toilets to make room for others and to try to get a whiff of non-fetid air.

A range of reports in recent weeks depict an immigration detention system dangerously overstuffed and ill-equipped to care for children who suddenly fall ill, or who need legal help, food, schooling, clean clothing or distractions from the monotony of incarceration while officials seek to find less-restrictive places for them. In some facilities advocates report that children have no access to showers, toothbrushes or soap; kids are described

as filthy and in some cases, ill. Meanwhile, a Washington law firm has summoned judges from the US 9th District Court of Appeals recently by saying that toiletries such as soap and toothbrushes might not be covered by the legal requirement that children be held in "safe and sanitary" conditions.

Washington has failed utterly to find solutions; it does little but bicker over how to address the problem. That stasis precedes Trump's ascension, and it is a disheartening indictment of our dysfunctional political system in which elected officials are incapable of moving beyond partisanship to forge responsible solutions even in the face of a growing humanitarian crisis. Voters bear some of the blame for not demanding more of them, and for continuing to elect politicians who refuse to give ground even when lives are at stake. Trump and his anti-immigrant advisors have filled that void with appallingly draconian policies, apparently believing that making people miserable by holding them in substandard conditions and separating them from their children will dissuade others from entering the US to ask for help. Beyond being ineffective, it is grotesquely inhumane. If we, as a nation, do not raise our voices in collective outrage, we are complicit.

The father and daughter in the picture, Oscar Alberto Martinez Ramirez and 23-month-old Valeria, left El Salvador on April 3 with Martinez's wife and the girl's mother, Tania Vanessa Avalos. They spent two months in a Guatemalan detention center before continuing north, reaching Matamoros, across the river from Brownsville, Texas, on Sunday. They went to the US consulate to make an appointment to seek asylum under Trump's "wait in Mexico" metering policy (which is under legal challenge). It's unclear what the family was told but the Associated Press reports that 40 to 45 asylum interviews are conducted daily, with a waiting list of more than 800 people. So the family decided on Sunday to swim for it. In the early evening, Avalos watched from the Mexican riverbank as her husband and daughter floundered in the current and drifted away from their deaths.

Sometimes a single incident can galvanize the public. We hope that's the case here. A photograph of a dead toddler on her drowned father's back should be speaking to us all.



(Tribune News Service)

Pompeo Optimistic About Afghan Peace Process

Talks with the Taliban remains critical, but the optimism of the US Secretary of State seems ungrounded

CATHERINE PUTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

EN route to India, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stopped in Afghanistan for a quiet moment of the Trump administration's efforts at establishing peace and to take further jabs at Iran.

One headline comment from his brief visit to Kabul was in response to a Tolo News reporter's question as to whether a peace deal can be reached before the presidential elections now set for September. "I hope we have a peace deal before September. That's certainly our mission set," Pompeo said.

Pompeo, accompanied by Zalmay Khalilzad, the US envoy spearheading efforts to make peace in Afghanistan, met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

In his remarks to the press, Pompeo talked up the United States' efforts to bring about peace in Afghanistan. "For the last nine months, the United States has facilitated a peace process intent on protecting our national interests while convening all the parties for inter-Afghan negotiations that will allow Afghans to fashion a political settlement and determine the future for their country." Khalilzad has held a steady stream of meetings — bouncing between Qatar, Kabul and Washington — with Afghan government officials and Taliban representatives. He has not, however, managed to get them in a room together.

The Taliban, while clearly open to talking withdrawal with the Americans, remains adamant in its labelling of the Ghani-led government as a Western puppet. In January, the United States and the Taliban reached an 'agreement in principle' that, as Pompeo put it this week, "any comprehensive peace agreement must address four interconnected issues: counterterrorism, foreign troop presence, inter-Afghan dialogue leading to inter-Afghan negotiations, as well as a permanent ceasefire." Pompeo said "we have made real progress" on the terrorism point, and are "nearly ready to conclude a draft text outlining the Taliban's commitments to join fellow Afghans in ensuring that Afghan soil never again becomes a safe haven for terrorists."

The Taliban has asserted that the US has a timeline for withdrawing its troops; Pompeo denied it. "This should come as no surprise, but sometimes our adversaries announce things that just aren't true." That comment, and certainly more, is given the key aspect of the counterterrorism bullet point in a Taliban pledge to not let Afghan soil be used by terrorist groups.



The main interests of the US are clear: Avoiding a repeat of 9/11 by drawing out a commitment from the Taliban to not let Afghan territory be used as it was by al-Qaeda and withdrawing American troops from the country

On the other matters, Pompeo reiterated that "all sides agree" that the first two must be achieved first. He cast this as the US not negotiating on the Afghan government's behalf. "Rather, we're working to bring Afghans together at the negotiating table to decide the future of their own country collectively."

Meanwhile, Afghanistan is lurching toward a much-delayed presidential election. Ghani's five-year mandate — to say nothing of the US-brokered National Unity Government system established between Ghani and Abdullah — technically expired in May, though a Supreme Court ruling will let Ghani remain president until the election.

Ghani is running for a second term and Abdullah is running against him, again, for the presidency. Ghani's opponents wanted an interim government to steer the country until the next election, which was originally scheduled for April, delayed to July, and then further to September.

Essentially, the US is working toward bringing the Taliban — which has continued attacks throughout the negotiating process, including what it termed an ambush that claimed the lives of two US soldiers this week — into a political structure that is crumbling as it stumbles toward an election.

The US' main interests are clear: Avoiding a repeat of 9/11 by drawing out

a commitment from the Taliban to not let Afghan territory be used as it was by Al Qaeda and withdrawing American troops from the country. But if the latter happens, the question has to be asked why the US — which via Pompeo's mouth this week said "our adversaries announce things that just aren't true" — would believe such a commitment to be lasting once the troops leave. It's a pernicious cycle, especially as the war drags into its 18th year and it's clear the United States cannot achieve a military victory. But walking away increasingly takes on the tone of abandoning the Afghan government with every meeting that doesn't include Kabul.

Talking with the Taliban remains critical and far better than silence between the sides, but Pompeo's optimism seems ungrounded. Meanwhile, as always, Washington's attention is drawn elsewhere.

Pompeo alluded to this in his remarks: "With so much going on in the world right now, sometimes it's easy to forget about America's commitment here in Afghanistan, but the world should know that the Trump administration hasn't forgotten and the American people have not forgotten." Pompeo's big trip — with visits to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Afghanistan, India, Japan and South Korea — hits several major hotspots. The Associated Press described the tour through the Middle East and Asia as "aimed at building a broad, global coalition to pressure Iran."

But there's more on the table: Trump is scheduled to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Osaka, a meeting sure to stir the domestic US political firestorm, he's also scheduled to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping and discuss the resumption of trade talks; then Trump and Pompeo hope to resurrect denuclearisation talks with North Korea while in South Korea.

On Vacation? Turn Off Your Devices And Open A Book

To open a book is to meditate — there are no pop up ads and no phone calls to interrupt as the author unfolds a story

LEVI KING
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

A FEW weeks ago, as I prepared to head to Australia for some relaxation among the wombats and kangaroos, a wise advisor offered some wise advice. "I know you like to read during your vacations," she said. "This time, don't use your Kindle. Don't use your phone, iPad or laptop. Read actual books instead — books made from paper, with real pages and covers."

It seemed whimsical, at first, like when people pine for the good old days when you had to rent a VCR just to watch a movie. I have fond memories of those outings, but I still prefer Netflix to Blockbuster.

It also seemed impractical — why would I want create luggage space for three or four books when I can carry all of them on a device that fits comfortably in my back pocket? Then she explained herself, and it all started to make sense. I think her reasoning applies to busy entrepreneurs everywhere, so I thought I'd share it here:

● "Time is money" isn't always a profitable mindset

I'm going on vacation, so you'd think I'd be escaping a "time is money" mindset by definition. That isn't necessarily the case. All I'm doing is transporting my body from one locale to another.

This new locale is more exotic, to be sure, and certainly more dangerous (have you seen the lists of things that can kill you down under?). But if you're anything like me, novelty alone is never enough to take you out of yourself long enough to really connect with what's in front of you.

I associate my devices — Kindle, laptop, phone, etc. — with speed and convenience. They're the ultimate time-savers. A traditional book, on the other hand, offers nothing but the information between its covers to recommend it.

I can't approach it with an ulterior motive (to fill a few minutes waiting for an email, for example). I don't have 1,000 other titles to choose from with a flick of my thumb — I've made my choice, and I have to stick with it.

This means I'm incredibly selective about which books I bring with me. I do my homework, homing in on titles that



truly catch my interest, or on authors who've been recommended by people I trust. I find the process incredibly satisfying, and when I finally lie back to enjoy what I've picked out, I can devote myself to it completely.

● I'm not getting away from it all if I take it all with me

The folks who pine for Blockbuster have a point. Back in those days, movie

night was an event. You set aside your whole evening for it. You were super picky about what you took home with you, knowing you had to live with it once you did.

You even found virtues in terrible movies, because you'd actually sit there and watch them all the way through. Today, if a show doesn't catch your attention like a first drop of a roller coaster, you keep looking until you find one that does.

To add insult to injury, even great entertainment is subject to ceaseless interruptions. When was the last time you watched a whole movie without answering a text or reading a message on LinkedIn?

A book — that relic of the past that overthrew empires and leveled the playing field for everybody — offers none of that. It requires a definite adjustment to focus when your brain is expecting intermittent alerts that some update, headline, or colleague demands your attention, but the peace of mind that comes with turning the corner is worth it.

● My brain needs a break as much as my body

I tend to be aware of my body's limita-

tions, even if often push those limitations right to the edge. I know that I need sleep, exercise, recreation, and healthy food. I'm told that I owe it to my family, customers, and coworkers to keep myself fit.

I try to act accordingly. I haven't eaten a dessert in years. I chase my fitness based on whether a gym is available, and I'm pretty faithful about sneaking in a workout several times a week.

My mind is a whole other ballgame. It's easy to forget that it needs a little loving care, too. It's continually bombarded by life's demands, whether that's fundraising or child-rearing or simply catching up on the news. To open a book is to meditate. I'm alone with the author. There are no pop up ads to compete with the narrative; no phone calls to interrupt a unique voice systematically unfolding its story.

It's a beautiful thing. It's a conscious act of resetting, like when you reboot your computer and a bunch of nagging errors magically disappear. I'm sure I'll return to my Kindle as soon as I'm back from vacation. For now, though, it's just me and the waves and the sound of turning pages.

US top court blocks Trump's census citizenship question

Court says Trump administration gave a contrived explanation for its plan

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

THE US Supreme Court on Thursday handed President Donald Trump a stinging defeat, ruling that his administration gave a "contrived" explanation for its plan to include a contentious citizenship question in the 2020 census in a decision that will make it difficult to add the query to the population survey.

Conservative Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the 5-4 ruling and joined the court's four liberals in the majority, upholding part of a federal judge's January decision barring the question in a victory for a group of states including New York and immigrant rights organizations that had challenged the plan.

Critics have called the citizenship question a Republican ploy to scare immigrants into not taking part in the decennial population count and engineer an undercount in Democratic-leaning areas with high immigrant and Latino populations. That would benefit non-Hispanic whites and help President Donald Trump's party gain seats in the US House of Representatives and state legislatures, the critics said.



Immigration activists gather outside the US Supreme Court to await the ruling on the Trump administration's attempt to add a citizenship question to the US census in Washington, DC, on Thursday. (EPA-EFE)

Trump's administration has told the court that its rationale for adding the question was to better enforce a law that protects the voting rights of racial minorities.

Critics called that rationale a pretext, with the Supreme Court's majority embracing that theory.

“We are presented with an explanation for agency action that is incongruent with what the record reveals about the agency's priorities and decision-making process.”

John Roberts, Conservative Chief Justice

Roberts said that under a

US law called the Administrative Procedure Act, the federal government is required to give a reasoned explanation for its actions.

Roberts said the sole stated rationale — enforcement of the Voting Right Act — “seems to have been contrived” and was “more of a distraction.”

“We are presented, in other words, with an explanation for agency action that is incongruent with what the record reveals about the agency's priorities

and decision-making process,” Roberts wrote.

“Accepting contrived reasons would defeat the purpose of the enterprise,” Roberts added.

As part of the ruling issued on the last day of the court's current term, the justices sent the issue back to the Commerce Department for it to decide whether to provide a different rationale for requiring people taking part in the census to declare whether they are citizens.

UK lawmakers seek to block no-deal Brexit by stopping govt funds

REUTERS
LONDON

PRO-EUROPEAN Union lawmakers will seek next week to block a new prime minister from taking Britain out of the European Union without a deal and against the will of parliament by trying to cut off some of the government's funding.

Former Conservative Attorney General Dominic Grieve and former Labour Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett have tabled an amendment to routine finance legislation — dubbed estimates — that was set to be nodded through early next week.

Senior veteran Conservative lawmaker Ken Clarke added his influential weight to their bid, saying he would vote for the amendment. The change aims at

denying funds to certain government departments unless parliament has ratified a deal, or Withdrawal Agreement, with the EU, or lawmakers have agreed to Britain leaving without a deal.

The suggestion that we could or should be taken out of the EU without the consent of the House of Commons is fundamentally wrong, and frankly unconstitutional,” Grieve told The Sun.

Clarke, 78, asked by reporters if he would vote with Grieve, said: “Yes, I have always voted with all those votes... and I hope they eventually find some procedural device to stop no deal.” A spokeswoman for Prime Minister Theresa May said such a funding block would be “grossly irresponsible.”



British PM Theresa May (R) arrives with her husband Philip May in Osaka, Japan, on Thursday. May is attending the G20 meeting in Osaka. (EPA-EFE)

Feisty Trump sets tone as stormy G20 summit looms

AFP
OSAKA, JAPAN

US President Donald Trump set the tone on Thursday for what promises to be a stormy G20 summit by lashing out at friends and foes alike over trade tariffs and foreign policy.

The long-running US-China trade war looked set to dominate the two-day meeting of world leaders in Osaka from Friday but clashes also loomed over climate and hotspots including North Korea and Iran.

On board Air Force One en route to Japan, Trump fired off a characteristically bullish tweet, chiding long-standing ally India for “unacceptable” tariffs on American goods.

“India, for years having put very high Tariffs against the United States, just recent-



US President Donald Trump.

ly increased the Tariffs even further. This is unacceptable and the Tariffs must be withdrawn.”

The US president had earlier taken aim at China, saying Beijing wanted to do a deal because the world's number-two economy was “going down the tubes.”

Furious at what he sees as an unfair advantage in the trading system, Trump has already hit Beijing with \$200 billion in levies on Chinese imports and appeared to threaten more.

“You have another \$325 billion that I haven't taxed yet — it's ripe for taxing, for putting tariffs on,” he said in an interview with Fox Business Network.

Chinese President Xi Jinping touched down in Osaka several hours before Trump in driving rain as a potential typhoon edges towards Japan. The two leaders are expected to meet Saturday.

Trump touched down just before 7pm local time (1000 GMT), the president clutching an umbrella and walking gingerly down the plane steps.

Biden, Democratic heavyweights face off in second 2020 debate

AFP
MIAMI

ALL EYES turn to frontrunner Joe Biden on Thursday when he and nine more Democratic presidential hopefuls take the stage for a second night of debate, with immigration, health care and economic inequality commanding the candidates' attention.

Elizabeth Warren, cementing her status as a top-tier candidate, set the tone of the first debate of the 2020 presidential race in Miami Wednesday, calling out disparities in wealth and income as “corruption, pure and simple.”

The first take also featured a spirited encounter among congressman Ben O'Rourke, Senator Cory Booker, former San Antonio mayor Julian Castro and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio on everything from



Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

health care and economic inequality to climate action, gun violence, Iran and immigration.

They hit out at President Donald Trump's economic and immigration policies, but diverged on how zealously the next president should shift the

country onto a more liberal course. The next round, also in Miami, features former vice president Biden, 76, squaring off against number two candidate Bernie Sanders and eight others — the climax of the biggest American political debate since the 2016 presidential campaign.

Despite heavy campaigning in early voting states, millions of Americans were tuning in to the 2020 race for the first time Wednesday.

What they heard from the start was the progressive ideology of Warren, the night's only candidate polling in double digits, who criticized what she called a rigged system. “When you've got a government, when you have an economy that does great for those with money and is not doing great for everyone else, that is corruption, pure and simple,” she said.

Britain adopts 2050 net zero emissions goal

AFP
LONDON

BRITAIN on Thursday became the world's first major economy to adopt the tough new target of lowering fossil fuel emissions to a level of net zero by 2050. Energy and Clean Growth Minister Chris Skidmore signed an order paper enacting the legislation after it passed both houses of parliament without a vote earlier this week.

Britain is already on course this year to make low-carbon sources such as wind and solar responsible for more than half of all its power generation. “When the first time since the 1800s,” The UK kick-started the Industrial Revolution, which was responsible for economic growth across the globe but also for increasing emissions,” Skidmore said.

Merkel seen shaking for 2nd time this month

REUTERS
BERLIN

GERMAN Chancellor Angela Merkel was seen shaking as she met President Frank-Walter Steinmeier Thursday, her second such bout within two weeks, but her spokesman said she was fine and she headed off to Japan for this weekend's G20 summit.

Merkel, 64, has no history of serious health issues. She was attending a farewell ceremony for Justice Minister Katarina Barley, who is leaving to become a lawmaker in the European Parliament, when the incident occurred.

Standing next to Steinmeier as he addressed the gathering, Merkel started shaking visibly in her upper body, then crossed her arms as if to brace herself. She was offered a glass of water but declined to drink it while Steinmeier spoke.

Berlin is in the throes of a heatwave. After the ceremony with Steinmeier, Merkel went on to the Bundestag (lower house of parliament) for the swearing-in of the new justice minister. She showed no signs of shaking and looked relaxed,



German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

chatting and laughing with Vice Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Asked if the chancellor would take part in this weekend's G20 meeting in Japan, the spokesman said: “Everything is taking place as planned. The chancellor is well.” Merkel later left on a flight to Osaka for the G20 meeting.

Another government official told Reuters that while Merkel attributed the tremors on June 18 to drinking too little water and too much coffee on a hot day, Thursday's episode was more a psychological issue as she tried desperately to avoid a repeat.

‘Worst still to come’: Sizzling Europe battles wildfires and health risks

REUTERS
TARRAGONA, SPAIN

WILDFIRES raged across Catalonia and French authorities stepped up restrictions on water use and driving in cities as swathes of western Europe remained in the grip of an intense heatwave.

Temperatures climbed towards 44 degrees Celsius in parts of northern Spain and southern France, driving many people to seek relief in the sea, rivers, lakes, fountains and swimming pools.

Spanish firefighters struggled to douse wildfires across more than 16,000 acres in the northeastern region of Catalonia, and said the affected area could increase as much as five-fold because of the fierce heat and winds.

Helicopters dumped water on the fires, which raged some 80 km inland from the coastal town of Tarragona. There were no reports of casualties, but the regional government said some 45 people had been evacuated from farmhouses in the area.



An helicopter drops water to douse forest fire near Bovera, west of Tarragona, Spain, on Thursday. (REUTERS)

The wildfires are among the worst Catalonia has seen in 20 years, the regional government said, and residents were warned to stay inside to avoid inhaling smoke.

In neighbouring France to the north, authorities extend-

ed restrictions on vehicles, already imposed in Paris and Lyon, to Marseille and Strasbourg in an effort to curb air pollution.

Paris banned more than half of the cars — generally older, dirtier models — reg-

isters in the capital region, which has nearly six million inhabitants, while the heatwave lasts. Several cities reduced speed limits to reduce car emissions.

Some schools postponed summer examinations, and

parts of northern France were put on drought alert, with water supplies to businesses, farmers and ordinary residents restricted. Agriculture Minister Didier Guillaume announced a ban on the transportation of animals until the heatwave has ended.

Grid operator RTE said French electricity demand on Thursday was close to a summer record seen two years ago, as people turned on fans and coolers to full blast for relief from the scorching temperatures.

He said four drownings had been recorded in France since the start of the week directly linked to the heatwave as people try to cool themselves. However, the full toll directly linked to the heatwave would only be known in the days or weeks ahead.



US economy accelerated in Q1, but momentum fading **PAGE 10**



DOW 26,592.17 +53.35 PTS	QE 10,444.48 +26.16 PTS	SENSEX 39,586.41 -5.67 PTS	GOLD 1,409.90 -0.39%
BRENT PRICE 66.51 PERCENTAGE +0.03%	WTI PRICE 59.46 PERCENTAGE +0.13%	SILVER 15.28 -0.65%	

Brent crude drops to \$66 ahead of G20, OPEC meetings

US WTI crude futures fell 13 cents, or 0.2 percent, to \$59.25 a barrel

REUTERS
NEW YORK

OIL prices edged lower on Thursday, pressured by worries about whether the G20 summit will produce a breakthrough on trade that could strengthen the global economy and boost oil demand.

Brent crude futures fell 18 cents, or 0.3 percent, to \$66.31 a barrel. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures fell 13 cents, or 0.2 percent, to \$59.25 a barrel.

US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday a trade deal with Chinese President Xi Jinping was possible this weekend but he is prepared to impose US tariffs on most remaining Chinese imports if the two countries don't agree.



crude stocks. Inventories fell 12.8 million barrels, exceeding the 2.5 million barrel drop analysts had expected.

Despite these stunning numbers there are still many doom-and-gloom people that are down on the economy. That is why the oil market will take its cue from G20 headlines," Phil Flynn, an analyst at Price Futures Group in Chicago, said in a note.

Traders said follow-through buying was being cramped by uncertainty over whether there will be a trade breakthrough at the G20 that can boost oil demand, and by questions about continued output cuts by OPEC and its allies.

After the G20 summit ends on Saturday, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia meet on Monday and Tuesday to discuss an extension of production cuts to support prices.

Quick read

Qatar Stock Exchange gains 28.16 points

QATAR Stock Exchange (QSE) index gained 28.16 points (0.27 percent) when the bourse closed trading at 10,444.48 points on Thursday. The volume of shares traded increased to 58.50 million from 58.04 million, and the value of shares increased to QR288.77 million. From the 47 companies listed on QSE, shares of 46 saw trading. From these, 26 companies gained, 15 closed lower, while five remained unchanged. (QNA)

India wins US solar case at WTO but impact disputed

INDIA won a World Trade Organisation challenge to solar industry incentives in eight US states on Thursday, although the United States told the panel the ruling would have little or no impact. India brought the dispute to the WTO in 2016 after a successful US challenge to India's own solar power policies, which Washington said had cut US solar exports to India by more than 90%. (REUTERS)

EU okays IBM's \$34 bn Red Hat buy

THE EU's powerful anti-trust authority on Thursday cleared the buyout by IBM of open source software company Red Hat, one of the biggest tech mergers in history which the computing giant said would enhance its cloud offerings. "The European Commission has approved unconditionally... the proposed acquisition of Red Hat by IBM, both information technology companies based in the US," a statement from the EU executive said. "The commission concluded that the transaction would raise no competition concerns," it added. (AFP)

Ford to cut 12,000 jobs in Europe by 2020-end

The auto giant will cut manufacturing sites to 18 by 2020 from 24

REUTERS
FRANKFURT

FORD said it will cut 12,000 jobs in Europe by the end of next year to try to return the business to profit, part of a wave of cost reductions in an auto industry facing stagnant demand and huge investments to build low emission cars.

The challenge of investing in electric, hybrid and autonomous vehicles while having to overhaul combustion engines to meet new clean-air rules, has forced Europe's carmakers to slash fixed costs and streamline their model portfolios.

Ford Europe has been losing money for years and pressure to restructure its operations increased after arch-rival General Motors raised profits by selling its European Opel and Vauxhall brands to France's Peugeot SA.



Workers assemble cars at the newly renovated Ford's Assembly Plant in Chicago, recently. (AFP)

affected at Ford's wholly owned facilities and consolidated joint ventures in Europe by the end of 2020, primarily through voluntary separation programmes.

Around 2,000 of those are fixed salaried positions, which are included among the 7,000 salaried positions Ford is reducing, globally, the carmaker said. The rest are workers on hourly contracts or agency workers.

Ford said it would close three plants in Russia, a plant in France and Wales, and cut shifts at factories in Valencia, Spain and Saarlorius, Germany

plant closures and discontinuing loss-making vehicle lines to pursue a 6 percent operating margin in Europe.

But demand for cars in Europe is falling, European automobile manufacturers' association ACEA said on Thursday, predicting that European passenger car registrations

will shrink by 1 percent in 2019 to 15 million cars, revising its previous forecast of 1 percent growth.

Car sales will stagnate or decline in the next three years, AxiPartners said in a survey of the industry published this week. Manufacturers balancing sales of electric and combustion engines cars will see margins hit particularly hard, the survey said.

Ras Girtas wins RoSPA electricity sector award

QNA
LONDON

RAS Girtas Power Company (RGPC) has won the RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) Electricity Industry Sector Award for the second year running, in a ceremony hosted in London.

The RoSPA Awards recognise the achievements of firms in health and safety management systems, including practices such as leadership and workforce involvement. Competitiveness awards go to the best entries in 24 industry sectors including construction, healthcare, transport and logistics, engineering, manufacturing and education.

RGPC Chairman Mohammed Nasser al Hجري said the winning of the RoSPA Award in the competitive category for second time reflects how important health, safety and well-being are to RGPC.

It continues to be our number one priority and we are totally committed to meeting the highest standards possible, for our employees and majees. RGPC CEO Abdul Majeed Al Rayhi received the award from RoSPA Vice President Baroness Jolly.

Trump demands withdrawal of India's 'unacceptable' tariff hike

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

US President Donald Trump on Thursday demanded India withdraw retaliatory tariffs imposed by New Delhi this month, calling the duties "unacceptable" in a stern message that signals trade ties between the two countries are fast deteriorating.

India slapped higher duties on 28 US products after the United States withdrew tariff-free entry for certain Indian goods, Washington is also upset with New Delhi's plans to restrict cross-border

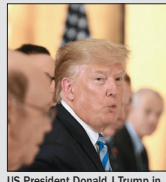
data flows and impose stricter rules on e-commerce that hurt US firms operating in India.

"I look forward to speaking with Prime Minister Modi about the fact that India, for years having put very high tariffs against the United States, just recently increased the tariffs even further," Trump said on Twitter.

"This is unacceptable and the tariffs must be withdrawn!" said Trump, who will meet Modi at this week's G20 summit in Japan.

rejected Trump's argument, saying Indian tariffs were not that high compared to other developing countries and US tariffs on some items were much higher.

India's trade ministry did not immediately respond to a Reuters email seeking comment.



US President Donald J Trump in Osaka, Japan on Thursday. (EPA)

I look forward to speaking with Prime Minister Modi about the fact that India, for years having put very high tariffs against the United States, just recently increased the tariffs even further, Trump said on Twitter

determined Pompeo's efforts to reduce friction between the two countries.

trade privileges for India under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), under which New Delhi was the biggest beneficiary that allowed duty-free exports of up to \$5.6 billion.

India initially issued an order in June last year to raise import taxes as high as 120 percent on a slew of US items, increased by Washington's refusal to exempt it from higher steel and aluminum tariffs.

But New Delhi repeatedly delayed raising tariffs as the two nations engaged in trade talks. Trade between them was worth \$142.1 billion in

2018, with India having a surplus of \$24.2 billion.

The relationship took a big hit with India's sudden introduction of new e-commerce rules for foreign investors in February.

That angered the United States which saw a protectionist New Delhi effort to help small traders at the expense of US firms such as Walmart and Amazon.com.

Companies such as Mastercard and Visa have also been battling Indian central bank rules that mandate them to store their data only in India.



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Friday, June 28, 2019

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India withholds Air India share sale

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

INDIA has put on hold plans to sell a stake in debt-laden state-run carrier Air India because of high oil prices and volatile foreign currency movements, the country's junior civil aviation minister said on Thursday.

"The present environment is not conducive to stimulate interest amongst investors for strategic disinvestment of Air India in the immediate near future," Hardeep Singh Puri said in parliament.

The government will revisit the sale once global economic conditions become more conducive, he said.

India's aviation sector is facing turmoil with one of its biggest private carriers, Jet Airways, facing bankruptcy, while passenger growth in the market overall has slowed.

India last year failed in its attempt to sell a 76 percent stake in loss-making Air India due to a lack of interest from bidders and said it would return with an alternative proposal soon.



India last year failed in its attempt to sell a 76 percent stake in loss-making Air India due to a lack of interest from bidders and said it would return with an alternative proposal soon.

While the government said at the time that it was forced to review the plan because of high oil prices, a weaker rupee and rising interest rates, potential bidders suggested they found some of the stake sale terms too onerous, making it a non-starter.

The government has since hived off a part of the airline's debt, about 300 billion rupees (\$4.34 billion), into a separate entity and is trying to sell off some of its assets and subsidiaries, such as the ground-handling unit, piecemeal.

"The government has prepared a revival plan for Air India which includes a comprehensive financial package," Puri said, adding it would focus on increasing revenue and reducing costs.

The government injected 39.75 billion rupees into the airline in the fiscal year that ended March 31. Air India is expected to report a loss of more than 76 billion rupees for the same year, Puri told parliament.

US ECONOMIC GROWTH SHIFTS INTO LOWER GEAR



A US flag flies in the foreground as containers are seen at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro, California, recently. (AFP)

US economy accelerated in Q1, but momentum fading

● Q1 GDP growth unrevised at 3.1 percent ● Weekly jobs claims increase 10,000 to 227,000

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

US economic growth accelerated in the first quarter, the government confirmed on Thursday, but the export and inventory boost to activity masked weakness in domestic demand, some of which appears to have prevailed in the current quarter.

Gross domestic product increased at a 3.1 percent annualised rate, also driven by spending on highways and defense, the government said in its third reading of first-quarter GDP. That was unchanged from its estimate last month. The economy grew at a 2.2 percent rate in the October-December period.

Despite the unchanged reading, growth in consumer spending was revised lower and business investment in intellectual property products was stronger than previously estimated.

There were also upward revisions to spending on nonresidential structures. Revisions to the trade deficit and inventory accumulation were minor.

Economists polled by Reuters had expected first-quarter GDP growth would be unrevised at a 3.1 percent rate.

Excluding trade, inventories and government spending, the economy grew at only a 1.3 percent rate in the first quarter. That was the slowest rise in this measure of domestic demand since the second quarter of 2013.

When measured from the income side, the economy grew at a tepid 1.0 percent rate in the first quarter. A gauge of inflation tracked by the Fed increased at a 1.2 percent rate in the first quarter, instead of the previously reported 1.0 percent pace.

The economy will mark 10 years of expansion in July, the longest on record. But momentum is slowing, with manufacturing struggling, the trade deficit widening again and the housing sector still mired in a

soft patch.

While consumer spending appears to have regained speed in the second quarter, business spending on equipment is expected to have contracted further following Wednesday's weak report on durable goods orders in May. The trade war between Washington and Beijing is hurting both business and consumer confidence.

The Atlanta Fed is forecasting GDP growth to rise at a 1.9 percent annualised rate in the April-June quarter.

Though a separate report from the Labour Department on Thursday showed the number of Americans filing applications for unemployment benefits rose more than expected last week, there is still no sign of a significant pickup in layoffs as economic growth shifts into lower gear.

Initial claims for state unemployment benefits increased 10,000 to 227,000 in the week ended June 22. The

four-week moving average of initial claims, considered a better measure of labor market trends as it irons out week-to-week volatility, rose 2,250 to 221,250 last week.

Trade and inventories accounted for the bulk of the surge in GDP growth in the last quarter. The trade deficit narrowed to \$905.0 billion in the first quarter, instead of \$930.6 billion as reported last month. The trade gap contributed 0.94 percentage point to GDP rather than the 0.96 percentage point estimated last month.

The US-China trade tensions have caused wild swings in the trade deficit, with exporters and importers trying to stay ahead of the tariff fight between the two economic giants.

The standoff has also had an impact on inventories. Growth in inventories was revised down to a \$122.8 billion rate in the first quarter from the previously estimated \$125.5 billion pace.

Uber targets expansion in fast-growing W African markets

REUTERS
LAGOS

GLOBAL ride-hailing firm Uber Technologies Inc is in talks with regulators over plans to expand into two West African countries and provide a boat service in Nigerian megacity Lagos, a company executive said on Thursday.

In much of sub-Saharan Africa there are low levels of personal car ownership, rapidly expanding populations and a lack of efficient mass transport

systems in fast-growing cities. Uber, which said it has 36,000 active drivers in sub-Saharan Africa, operates in a number of countries in East and South Africa but is largely absent from West Africa, aside from Nigeria and Ghana.

The firm has identified the region as a target for potential expansion. Chief Business Officer Brent Entwistle told Reuters. He said the company was in talks with regulators in Ivory Coast and Senegal regarding the possible launch of services.

"Both Abidjan and Dakar are logical opportunities for us," said Entwistle, adding that discussions were at an early stage. He did not disclose further details.

"We have talked about West Africa today as being a big growth priority for us and launch priority for us moving forward," said Entwistle.

Ivory Coast and Senegal have two of the world's fastest growing economies, according to the International Monetary Fund. Nigeria, Africa's largest

economy, is also the continent's most populous nation.

A number of motorcycle ride-hailing firms have also targeted West Africa as an area for expansion in the last few months.

Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos, a megacity of around 20 million inhabitants built on a lagoon where Uber began operations in July 2014, is beset by heavy congestion.

Entwistle, who spoke to Reuters during an interview in Lagos, said the company was

in talks with state regulators about providing a transport system on the city's waterways as a way of bypassing its choked roads.

"We are looking at the waterways here, which are very interesting to us as it relates to a potential service," said Entwistle.

The company has launched a boat service in the Indian city of Mumbai in the last few months.

"We did launch Uber Boat in Mumbai and we have watched

EU car lobby cuts 2019 sales forecast to 1% fall

REUTERS
BRUSSELS

EUROPE'S automotive lobby on Thursday cut its forecast for passenger car registrations this year to a 1.2 percent fall from a 1 percent rise, blaming slower growth and business concerns over Britain's impending exit from the European Union.

The European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) said it now expected car sales in the European Union to just exceed 15 million this year.

It goes without saying that any additional barriers, costs or delays as a result of Brexit will pose a serious threat to jobs and growth in the auto industry, both in the UK as well as in the EU, ACEA Secretary General Erik Jonnaert said in statement.

For the second year in a row, carbon dioxide emissions from new passenger cars grew, rising 1.9 percent from the year before

"Aside from the uncertainty due to Brexit and changing macroeconomic conditions, this represents a natural stabilization of the market." In its industry guide published on Thursday, ACEA said production of vehicles in Europe dropped 0.2 percent from 2017 to 2018, amid a global decline of 0.6 percent.

Production of passenger cars in the EU was down 1.4 percent in 2018 from the year before, it added.

The bloc produces about a quarter of the world's passenger cars. In Germany's strong auto manufacturing industry, employing some 13.8 million Europeans, according to ACEA.

For the second year in a row, carbon dioxide emissions from new passenger cars grew, rising 1.9 percent from the year before.

Jonnaert said that put European carmakers at risk of not meeting the bloc's 2020 emissions reduction targets.

"The prospect of fines for not reaching the 2020 CO2 target is to varying degree a serious concern for carmakers," he said, adding the increase was due partly to a rise in sales of higher-emitting petrol cars following a scandal over diesel pollution in 2015, as petrol engines powered more than half of new passenger cars in the EU, while diesel accounted for 35.9 percent.

Airlines urge regulators to work together to return 737 MAX to service

FAA identifies new risk with 737 MAX that Boeing must address

REUTERS
PARIS

AIRLINES on Thursday urged global regulators to coordinate on measures needed to bring the grounded 737 MAX jetliner back into service, as Boeing grappled with a new technical glitch and investors sold shares of suppliers over fears of more disruption.

Airlines are now warning of the prospect of flights being

disrupted beyond the end of the busy summer period when the grounding of over 300 MAX jets and a delivery halt affecting at least 100 more has caused cancellations and high leasing bills.

The 737 MAX was grounded worldwide in March in the wake of two accidents in five months, which prompted Boeing to redesign part of an automated software system suspected of

playing a role in the crashes that also involved faulty sensor data. The International Air Transport Association, a body representing some 290 airlines and over 80 percent of global traffic, said technical requirements and timelines for the safe re-entry to service of the 737 MAX should be aligned.

The statement came a day after an IATA summit to discuss the grounding of Boeing's top-selling passenger jet - the second such meeting held in recent weeks.

It also followed news on Wednesday, first reported by

Reuters, that the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had identified a new risk that Boeing must address on the 737 MAX before it can start flying again.

The FAA did not elaborate on the latest setback, but sources familiar with the matter told Reuters it was discovered during a simulator test last week. It was not yet clear if the issue could be addressed with a software upgrade or would require a more complex hardware fix.

Boeing shares fell 4 percent to \$359.78 in pre-market trade,

while shares of some suppliers, such as Britain's Senior Plc, also dropped sharply.

Downgrading its rating on Senior to "equal weight", Barclays said it expected a widespread "supplier reset" following the grounding of the 737 MAX, with the impact on 2020 results not yet factored into analysts' consensus forecasts.

"Aviation is a globally integrated system that relies on global standards, including mutual recognition, trust, and reciprocity among safety regulators," IATA said. "Aviation cannot function

efficiently without this coordinated effort, and restoring public confidence demands it," IATA added, calling also for global alignment on additional training requirements for 737 MAX flight crew.

Travel firm TUI said on Thursday it did not expect an additional financial impact after the FAA's latest warning on the 737 MAX. TUI has already taken a 300 million euro (\$341 million) hit to remove the jet from its summer schedules.

China was first to ground the MAX after a March 10 crash in Ethiopia within five months

of a similar crash off Indonesia, killing a combined 346 people. "Once regulators approve the MAX for flight, airlines must remove the jets from storage and implement new pilot training, a process that will differ for each airline but that US carriers have said will take at least one month."

Some airlines and regulators have argued that pilots should be trained in a MAX simulator before flying, though Boeing's minimum training requirements do not call for flight simulators, according to draft proposals.



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Serena seeking return to form in quest of 24th crown at Wimbledon PAGE 13



THE BIG ONE
CRICKET WORLD CUP
SRI LANKA VS SOUTH AFRICA

'UNBEATEN' INDIA MOVE A STEP CLOSER TO WORLD CUP SEMIS



India's players celebrate beating the West Indies in their 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match at Old Trafford in Manchester, England, on Thursday. India won by 125 runs to move into the semi-finals of the tournament. India, who won the 1983 World Cup in England and in 2011 in India, have been unbeaten in this tournament so far. (AFP)

TEAM	P	W	L	T	NR	PTS
AUSTRALIA	7	6	1	0	0	12
INDIA	6	5	0	0	1	11
NEW ZEALAND	7	5	1	0	1	11
ENGLAND	7	4	3	0	0	8
BANGLADESH	7	3	3	0	1	7
PAKISTAN	7	3	3	0	1	7
SRI LANKA	6	2	2	0	2	6
WEST INDIES	7	1	5	0	1	3
SOUTH AFRICA	7	1	5	1	3	3
AFGHANISTAN	7	0	7	0	0	0

Note: Top four teams qualify for semi-finals.

Dashing Kohli leads the way as India pack off West Indies



India captain Virat Kohli during his knock of 79 runs at Old Trafford in Manchester on Thursday. Kohli, who set up the win for his side, became the fastest batsman to reach 20,000 international runs in his 417th innings. (REUTERS)

INDIA		WEST INDIES	
R. L. Rohit b Holder	45	Chit. Gayle c Jadhav b Shami	6
Rohit Sharma c Hope b Roach	15	Shai Hope b Shami	31
Virat Kohli c sub b Holder	74	Shai Hope b Shami	5
Vijay Shankar c Hope b Roach	14	Nicolas Pooran c Shami b Yadav	28
Kedar Jadhav c Hope b Roach	7	Shimon Hetmer c Rahul b Shami	18
Mahendra Singh Dhoni not out	56	Jason Holder c Jadhav b Chahal	18
R. Pandya & Allen b Cottrell	0	Carlos Brathwaite c Dhoni b Bumrah	1
Naseem Shah c Hope b Cottrell	0	Fabian Allen bow b Bumrah	1
Kuldeep Yadav not out	7	Kemar Roach not out	14
Extras (10, w)	268		
TOTAL (107, 7 wickets, 50 overs)	268		
Fall of wickets: 1-29 (Sharma), 2-98 (Rohit), 3-126 (Shankar), 4-140 (Jadhav), 5-180 (Kohli), 6-250 (Pandya), 7-252 (Shami).			

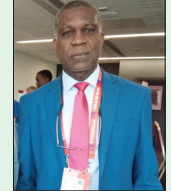
one-day team, remain the only unbeaten side in the tournament and need just one victory from their remaining three league games to guarantee a semi-finals berth. West Indies joined Afghanistan and South Africa as the three teams to bow out of the race for the final four so far. "We can't complain, we have just become the number one side in the world and we have been playing like that for a while now," said captain and man-of-the-match Kohli. "Things hadn't gone our way with the bat in the last few games but we have found a way to win."

Shami, who took a hat-trick in the previous game, returned figures of 4-16, removing the dangerous Chris Gayle early after a scratchy innings from the opener. But it was Kohli who set up the win as he became fastest batsman to reach 20,000 international runs in his 417th innings - India's Sachin Tendulkar and Caribbean batsman Brian Lara both required 453 international innings to reach the landmark. Wicketkeeper-batsman M.S. Dhoni and Hardik Pandya boosted the total, putting on 70 runs for the sixth wicket to punish the otherwise-disciplined bowlers. Pandya hit 46 off 38 balls while Dhoni remained unbeaten on 56, ending the innings with a big six. The West Indies bowlers, led by paceman Kemar Roach, had kept India in check until the latter stages, stemming the flow of runs with regular wickets. Roach returned impressive figures of 3-36 in his 10 overs, including the wicket of India opener Rohit Sharma for 18. Kohli, whose 82-ball knock included eight boundaries, extended his fine run of form with some eye-catching shots that charmed a partisan crowd at Old Trafford. West Indies were in trouble early in their reply when

Don't bring politics into sport: Holding

WI great refuses ICC diktat not to refer the term 'Chinaman'

AJAY NAIDU
MANCHESTER



Former West Indies pace bowler great Michael Holding at Old Trafford in Manchester on Thursday.

IT'S not just America that has a problem with China as it threatens to overtake it to become the next superpower. It seems even the International Cricket Council (ICC) has a problem with China! Or else why would the ICC ask its commentators not to refer to the term 'Chinaman' which basically is a left-arm spinner's version of 'Googly'?

Well, strange as it may seem the ICC, for reasons best known to them, asked its commentators to avoid saying 'Chinaman' on air. The only problem was, a certain Michael Holding didn't agree and, true to himself, he put his foot down. "Chinaman is a cricketing term and shall continue to say it. Don't bring politics into sports," the no-nonsense West Indian legend told this scribe.

For the record, India's left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav dismissed Pakistan's mainstay Babar Azam with a 'Chinaman' that beat the batsman in the air and through the gate.

Rohit equals Dhoni's record of sixes

The sun was shining brightly. The stands at Old Trafford were a sea of blue as Indian supporters came out in huge numbers. And Indian captain Virat Kohli won a good toss and batted first. Thus the atmosphere was set perfect for Rohit Sharma to continue with his sublime form. Already the Indian opener had struck two hundreds in this World Cup against South Africa

and Pakistan. And soon, as he pulled a short delivery from pacemaker Kemar Roach over the mid-wicket fence for a six, he equalled Mahendra Singh Dhoni's record of 225 sixes, the most hit by an Indian batsman in one-day cricket in his 211th ODI appearance.

Had he hit one more six, he would have surpassed Dhoni to the fourth position among the batsmen with most number of sixes in one-day cricket. But, as luck would have it, he was out caught behind getting a faint edge to the wicketkeeper off Kemar Roach. The umpire didn't give him out so the West Indies asked for a referral and the TV Umpire Michael Gough gave him out much to the surprise of Rohit himself.

The list is currently led by former Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi, who has a staggering 351 sixes in his name. Afridi is followed by West Indian talisman Chris Gayle, who has so far hit 324 sixes in ODIs.

Against Pakistan, Rohit had already surpassed Dhoni to reach the number of international sixes. Rohit - 4th highest in the world - has 358 sixes (including ODIs, T20s and Tests) compared to Dhoni's 355.

Michael fancies playing wicket-taking bowlers

AJAY NAIDU
MANCHESTER



Kemar Roach is the only bowler worthy of being in West Indies team for one-dayers, according to Michael Holding.

WHEN he used to bowl for the West Indies, he was fast and furious. The man whose run up to the wicket and smooth action was a sight to behold, 'Whispering Death' as Michael Holding was referred to during his playing days now speaks with the freedom and authority of a man who knows his trade. And indeed, having played the game with great passion and pride, Holding just cannot understand the way the West Indies have been going about their business in this World Cup.

"First of all you need to understand that 50 overs is a lot of cricket. And you need proper batsmen and proper bowlers to do the job. You need wicket-taking bowlers in the side," said Holding. "I'm not a fan of players who can do a bit of this and a bit of that," he said referring to the number of all-rounders in the side.

True to his self, Holding didn't hold himself back saying, "(Carlos) Brathwaite, (Sunil) Ambris, (Faiban) Allen have no business to be in the side. They are no good. They bowl a lot of rubbish. Even I can fancy my chances as a batsman against these bowlers. I can get about 60 (runs) batting against them at this age of 65," he quipped. "In T20 cricket, they might get away bowling a few overs here and there but definitely not in One-day cricket."

According to the West Indian legend only one bowler in the current side measures up to his expectations - Kemar Roach. "Roach is the only wicket-taking bowler in this side. But, strangely, they don't play him in every match. The others just make up the numbers!"

Pakistan's Waqar says 1992 World Cup parallels are 'freaky'

AFP
LONDON

FORMER captain Waqar Younis says it is becoming "impossible to ignore" the parallels between Pakistan's World Cup resurgence and their 1992 triumph.

Victories against South Africa and New Zealand in the past week have breathed new life into Pakistan's bid to reach the semi-finals in England and Wales after they won just one of their opening five fixtures. Their trajectory through the tournament has so far mirrored that of their only World Cup triumph to date, when they started slowly in 1992 before picking up pace to lift the trophy. "It is becoming impossible to ignore the parallels with 1992," said Waqar in a column for the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"The similarities are freaky and even though the players won't have been thinking about it, there is no way they can put it out of their minds altogether."

The prolific fast bowler was robbed of his role in the tournament 27 years ago due to a back injury.

But he is hoping for a repeat of the scenes of joy witnessed when the team returned victorious to Pakistan. "It was heartbreaking, especially when we won, said Waqar of missing the 1992 World Cup.

Two-time champions India next play hosts England in Birmingham on Sunday.

Qatar's Younousse & Tijan all set for World Beach Volleyball action

Indonesia, Aus in talks over possible 2034 World Cup bid

Qatar's second pair of Tamer & Assam excited to make World debut

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

It is indeed a proud moment for Qatar as their two pairs, including rising stars and fourth seed Cherif Younousse and Ahmed Tijan, begin their quest for glory in the FIVB Beach World Championships, which get underway in Hamburg, Germany on Friday.

Younousse, who has appeared in the worlds twice before and was fifth (2015) and ninth (2017) with Jefferson Santos Pereira, has teamed up with Ahmed Tijan. With their steady progress, they earned the fourth seeds in their first World Championship for the team and have been placed in Pool D.

Tamer Abdelrasoul and Assam Ahmed Mahmoud are the second duo. They also make their debut and will be eyeing to qualify for the second round, which will be easy though, Mahmoud, a regular volleyball player in Al Ahli Club, is excited about getting an opportunity to play in the worlds for the first time.

"I'm very proud that I'll be representing Qatar in the World Championships for the



Qatari players with coach Mariano Baracetti (left) and officials after a training session ahead of the FIVB Beach World Championships in Hamburg, Germany.

first time. We're excited to get chance. Hopefully, we'll exploit and try to make to the next stage. We know that all the teams are tough but we worked hard and are feeling confident about good results in Hamburg," said Mahmoud before leaving Doha.

Younousse and Tijan have been the leading duo in Asia, having won the Asian Games and Asian Championship staying undefeated throughout. Besides, they have won three bronze medals in high-

ranking events on the FIVB World Tour. Their confidence level should be high, entering the event.

In three last events on the World Tour, Younousse and Tijan secured the third spot in the Four-Star Xiamen Open and followed it up with a 17th spot in the Four-Star Ostrava Open and were placed ninth in the Four-Star Warsaw Open. They also featured in two non-Tour events and won them to give a winning lift to their confidence and form.

It is needless to say that they will be seeking to improve on what Younousse achieved along with Pereira in two previous attempts. They know their level well and if they could play to what has fetched them the fourth seeds and sixth rank in the world, it won't be a problem for them to enter the knock-out, their prime objective.

Younousse and Tijan will begin with pool play in D, having been bracketed with Dries Koekelkoren and Tom



Qatari players in action during a training session in Hamburg.

MEN'S POOL

Pool D
Cherif Younousse/Ahmed Tijan (Qatar) - Fourth seed
Dries Koekelkoren/Tom van Walle (Belgium)
Ondrej Perusic/David Schweiner (Czech Republic)
Enrico Rossi/Adrian Carambula (Italy)

Pool E
Konstantin Semenov/Ilya Leshchukov (Russia) - Fifth seed
Alison Cerutti/Alvaro Morais Filho (Brazil)
William Allen/Stafford Slick (USA)
Tamer Abdelrasoul/Assam Mahmoud (Qatar)

stantin Semenov and Ilya Leshchukov (Russia), Alison Cerutti and Alvaro Morais Filho (Brazil) and William Allen and Stafford Slick (USA). The Qatar second team opens against the Russians at 2 pm, also on Friday.

There are 48 pairs in the men's and women's sections. They have been divided into 12 groups on single round-robin format. After the pool stage, top two pairs will advance directly to the knockout phase.

While four best pairs out of the 12 right best pairs will automatically be placed in the first knock-out, the remaining eight will battle it out for four slots in the Lucky Loser elimination phase. The championship will conclude on July 7 with the men's bronze and gold medal matches.

AFP
JAKARTA

INDONESIA and Australia are in preliminary talks about making a joint bid for the 2034 World Cup, the Southeast Asian nation's football association said on Thursday.

The neighbours discussed the potential proposal at a special meeting of the Asian Football Federation (AFF) in Laos last week.

"At the meeting we agreed to join with Australia to continue bidding for the World Cup," Gatot Widagdo, spokesman for the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI), told AFP.

No comment was immediately available from the Australian side.

Widagdo said the PSSI started talks with Australia's football federation after Thailand withdrew from a combined bid with Indonesia to host FIFA's showpiece tournament.

The Indonesia-Australia talks come just days after Thai prime minister Prayut Chan-O-cha announced that 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations had agreed to launch a bid to host the 2034 event.

It is not clear what impact the multi-country bid would have on Australia and Indonesia's possible hosting. Indonesia also plans to team up with Australia in a bid to host the 2021 FIFA Under-20 World Cup, Widagdo said.

Salah sends Pharaohs into AFCON last 16

AFP
CAIRO

MOHAMED Salah scored his first goal of the Africa Cup of Nations as hosts Egypt secured a place in the last 16 on Wednesday with a 2-0 win over the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Ahmed Elmohamady prodded Egypt ahead on 25 minutes after a wicked Salah cross and the Liverpool star slammed in a second shortly before half-time to spark frenzied celebrations at a packed Cairo International Stadium.

Record seven-time champions Egypt rode their luck at times as DR Congo twice struck the crossbar in the first half but the Group A leaders held firm to join Nigeria as the first teams through to the knockout phase.

Egypt overcame the distraction of Amr Warda being

banished from the squad earlier in the day over mounting sexual harassment allegations.

"I think the team is strong and the squad is strong but we are not happy to lose a member of our family," said coach Javier Aguirre.

"The team focused more on our match and played the 90 minutes in a serious manner. I don't think the Egyptian team will be affected by the absence of anyone."

Salah was guilty of missing a handful of chances in the curtain-raiser and this season's Premier League joint top scorer again threatened inside five minutes here when an interception broke his way only for the Egyptian to skew wide under pressure.

After four days of small crowds, another capacity 75,000 crowd turned out to cheer on the hosts in the



Egypt's Mohamed Salah (centre) scores against DR Congo during their 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) Group A match in Cairo on Wednesday. (EPA-EFE)

capital, but they were nearly silenced when Marcel Tisserand slammed against the bar at a corner. DR Congo came to Egypt as one of the most unpredictable qualifiers having finished

third in 2015 only to make a timid quarter-final exit two years ago, and they fell behind for the second straight game as Elmohamady forced home after the ball fell kindly to him fol-

lowing an aerial challenge with Christian Luyindama.

Having created the opener with his vicious right-wing cross, Salah then stung the palms of Ley Matampi with a powerful 25-yard free-kick.

Egypt would be rescued by the woodwork once more though when a deep cross was nodded back across goal by Bokadi Bope and Jonathan Boling's looping header bounced back off the bar.

With his side riding their luck, Salah rose to the occasion and settled Egyptian nerves two minutes before half-time with a typically brilliant finish.

Played into space down the right by Mahmoud "Trezeguet" Hassan, Salah skipped inside Tisserand and ripped a crisp low drive inside Matampi's near post to cue a volcanic eruption from the masses of delirious Egyptian supporters.

Leclerc plays down hopes of Ferrari fightback in Austria

REUTERS
SPELBERG, AUSTRIA

CHARLES Leclerc refused to fuel any false optimism at the Austrian Grand Prix on Thursday and said Ferrari faced another hard weekend with dominant rivals Mercedes chasing an 11th win in a row.

Formula One's oldest and most successful team arrived at the scenic Spielberg track 140 points adrift of the champions, who have won all eight races this year with Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas.

Leclerc, in his first season with Ferrari, finished third and best of the rest in last Sunday's French Grand Prix.

"I think at the moment it's quite difficult. They seem very, very quick," said the 21-year-old Monegasque when asked whether Ferrari could give Mer-

cedes a tougher time at the Red Bull Ring.

"They were extremely quick in Paul Ricard, especially in the race pace, so I think we are focusing on ourselves and trying to do the best job possible. But, to be honest, it's quite difficult to be at their level."

Leclerc is still chasing his first career win, coming close in the second race of the year in Bahrain. The youngster has been on the podium three times and sounded more hopeful after Sunday's race, in which he had chased down Bottas to finish 0.929 behind the Finn.

"I think he was struggling quite a bit in the second set of tyres with some blistering. We weren't. I think we managed quite well our race so it shows that still everything is possible but it's just very difficult," he said.

QFA President meets CONCACAF chief



QFA President Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed al Thani met with Victor Montagliani, chief of CONCACAF to discuss matters of mutual interest in football on Wednesday. Hassan al Thawadi, Secretary-General of Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, was also present during the meeting which took place on the sidelines of the CONCACAF Gold Cup currently being held in the United States. Matters of mutual interest were discussed that included signing of MoUs in the near future. The two officials later exchanged souvenirs after QFA President presented Montagliani with a football jersey.

France-US showdown in Paris cauldron keeps women's World Cup burning

REUTERS
PARIS

HIGH stakes, high heat, high turn-out and high expectations - the US women's soccer team have declared themselves ready for a high-profile women's World Cup quarter-final against hosts France in Paris on Friday.

For many fans the match is like a final, with "Les Bleues" among the stand-out teams of the tournament and perennial challengers to the domination of the American defending champions.

"It's going to be a fantastic match," USA co-captain Megan Rapinoe told reporters on Thursday.

"It's going to be a great stage for both teams who have had a lot of pressure and a lot of eyes on them to really just go out and perform."

The atmosphere at the Parc des Princes is expected to be highly charged, not just because of the quality of the teams but the groundswell of support from French World Cup fans and the soaring temperatures amid a heatwave.



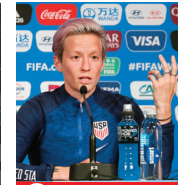
France's players take part in a training session in Clairefontaine-en-Yvelines France on eve of their 2019 Women's World Cup quarter-final match against the USA. (AFP)

The temperature is expected to hit 35 Celsius on Friday, although by the time the match kicks off at 1900 GMT, it should have dropped to around 28 degrees. TV viewing figures have exceeded all expectations, with nearly 11 million people tuning into France's 2-1 win over Brazil on Sunday.

More than 35 million watched the match in Brazil, underlining the popularity of women's soccer globally.

"This is a magnificent showcase piece for our sport," Jill Ellis, the US head coach, said on Thursday. "This game makes it bigger. Both teams want it and have to go earn it. It's going to be a fantastic game."

France and the United States were the pre-tournament favourites to lift the trophy and they have been on a crash course since December, when the draw suggested they would meet in the quarter-finals if



Big Stage!

It's going to be a fantastic match. It's going to be a great stage for both teams who have had a lot of pressure and a lot of eyes on them to really just go out and perform.

USA co-captain Megan Rapinoe

both teams topped their groups. "This is a big game and the players know that," said Ellis.

"They're wired for this, they're built for this, you don't come into the U.S. programme and hide in the shadows - you come

in and you're in the spotlight right away."

If the French win on Friday, it would be the first time in tournament history the United States have failed to advance to the semi-finals. The Stars and Stripes have won three World Cups.

Overall, this World Cup has shown that women's soccer has star-power and can pull in fans, creating a buzz and momentum that advertisers and sponsors cannot ignore.

"The women's game in general has grown tremendously," said Rapinoe.

"I guess the task for each team is to try to be the team that is growing as fast as the game is. France has done a really good job of that."

Although France's highest World Cup finish is fourth, the team has been making waves in international football recently with top-notch players like Wendie Renard and Amandine Henry.

"This is the kind of game that makes World Cup so exciting," US forward Tobin Heath said.

Cup Talk

Pakistan clash draws 229m TV viewers in India

MUMBAI: The June 16 clash between neighbours India and Pakistan attracted 229 million television viewers in India, accounting for over 60% of the screen audience for the first three weeks of the World Cup in the cricket-crazy nation. The first 27 matches in the 10-team quadrennial tournament, which is being played in England and Wales, attracted 381 million viewers, according to Broadcast Audience Research Council of India. The Virat Kohli-led side had four matches – including the washout against New Zealand – slotted in during that period, drawing a combined total of 321 million viewers. The rain-hit, stop-start World Cup match at Old Trafford, Manchester, between the political rivals drew a massive global audience and organisers received nearly 800,000 applications for tickets at the 23,000-capacity stadium. Official broadcaster Star India is showing the World Cup in six languages, including English. The broadcaster's live streaming platform Hotstar saw 170 million daily active users during the India-Pakistan match, making it the highest-ever single day reach for the platform. (REUTERS)

Shirzad to replace Alan in Afghanistan team

AFGHANISTAN'S Sayed Ahmad Shirzad has been approved as fellow pacesman Atab Alam's replacement for the remainder of the World Cup, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Thursday. The ICC said Alam, who had taken four wickets in three matches during the tournament, had been replaced under "under exceptional circumstances" without further details. Shirzad has played only one ODI in his career but is in line to feature in Afghanistan's remaining two games against Pakistan on Saturday and West Indies on July 4. (REUTERS)

Coach tells Lanka to beware of Proteas

1996 champions aim for improved batting to keep semis hopes alive

AFP CHESTER-LE-STREET

SRI Lanka coach Chandika Hathurusingha has warned that misfiring South Africa could still be dangerous after his side revived their World Cup hopes with a shock victory against England. The Sri Lankans, the 1996 champions, had a miserable start to the tournament in England and Wales, with just one win from their first five games, during which they suffered two washouts.



Being alert

When you have no pressure of qualifying, they can come and play without any pressure, fearless cricket and that can get them going, so at the same time they can turn up and just want to go home, so you never know.

Sri Lanka coach Chandika Hathurusingha on South Africa

We didn't play our best cricket to win the game in terms of batting.

"And I think we had a perfect bowling display, defending that target (232-9). I mean, cricket is a funny game. You can lose so many games and win the one that is the most important, it is this next game. I think we have enough talent and the skill-set to compete with them tomorrow."

The coach talked about the importance of putting partnerships together and the need to "click as a batting group". "We have been practising a lot of power-hitting with various ways of using the net facilities we have," he said.

"The good thing that what has worked for us is that the top order, we had two good partnerships at the start, apart



Sri Lanka's Lahiru Thirimanne takes part in a training session at the Riverside Ground in Chester-le-Street, England, on Thursday, ahead of their 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match against South Africa. (AFP)

Duminy 'ashamed' of South Africa World Cup flop

CHESTER-LE-STREET: JP Duminy has apologised to South Africa fans after the country's "dismal" showing at the World Cup. Faf du Plessis's men have beaten only winless Afghanistan in their opening seven games, meaning they cannot mathematically reach the last four. "It's been pretty dismal from our part," said Duminy, who will retire from the 50-over game after the tournament in England and Wales. "We obviously want to apologise to the public and the South African fans for letting them down. You know when you represent your country it is always a proud moment and you understand that you represent 50, 60 million people, that is a proud moment in itself. And when you put in performances like that, you know, you in a way almost feel ashamed of that."

Reports have emerged that coach Ottis Gibson will be in the firing line after the tournament, with Cricket South Africa (CSA) president Chris Nerzani promising that "heads will roll". All-rounder Duminy, who has not featured in the past four matches, said the players, not the coaches, should take responsibility for a dismal campaign. "It's always a difficult one when they bear the most brunt of our performances," he added, speaking ahead of South Africa's match penultimate match against Sri Lanka on Friday. (AFP)

from the last game. We know what they can produce and we still back them to do that so hopefully in the next few games they come off.

Sri Lanka have six points after six matches, one behind Bangladesh and Pakistan and two behind fourth-placed England. Those three com-

peting teams have all played seven games. The top four sides from the 10-team round-robin phase progress to the semi-finals.

India and NZ games 'quarter-finals' for England, says Root

REUTERS LONDON

FOURTH-PLACED England will be playing two virtual "quarter-finals" at the Cricket World Cup when they face India and New Zealand in their last two round robin matches as they look to seal a semi-final spot, batsman Joe Root has said. England's 64-run loss to Australia on Tuesday left their qualification hopes in the balance with Bangladesh, Pakistan (both one point behind) and Sri Lanka (two points behind with a game in hand) breathing down their necks.

England had not beaten India or New Zealand in seven attempts at the World Cup since 1992 but Root is confident they can still reach the knockout stages.

"We'll see these two games as quarter-finals... which in a way when it comes round to the knockout stage, should serve you well," Root told reporters.

"We believe we're still more than capable of qualifying for the semi-finals and when that happens, it doesn't really matter how you got there because that's when the tournament really starts to kick in."

"I personally think we've got to be very calm about how we approach the next couple of games. The games themselves might get quite emotional, especially the atmosphere at Edgbaston in Birmingham. Root also said that England have not adapted to the slow pitches at the tournament, having played on batsman-friendly surfaces at the same grounds during One-Day International bilateral series played in the build-up to the World Cup. The hosts were criticised for not making most of the conditions against Australia despite winning the toss while their "one-dimensional" approach to batting has been slammed by pundits.

THE CHAMPIONSHIPS: WIMBLEDON 2019

Serena arrives, seeks return to form

REUTERS LONDON

SERENA Williams will bring her quest for a non-consecutive 24th Grand Slam title to Wimbledon next week where she will try to shake off a nagging knee injury and show the tennis world that her window of opportunity is still open.



Serena Williams of USA arrives for a training session at the All England Tennis Championships in Wimbledon, London, on Wednesday. The tournament will be held from July 1 to July 14. (EPA-EFE)

Williams has won 23 Grand Slam titles, one behind the all-time record held by Margaret Court, for over two years and has shown little evidence of late that she will be able to snap that drought at the All England Club. "As long as she's playing, she's going to be a threat to win anything," ESPN tennis analyst and former world number one John McEnroe told a conference call.

"But it's just now there's more things that can go wrong. I suppose, like more days where she might not have it and other days where players won't give in as easily. So that just makes it more difficult." The 37-year-old American's time on court has been limited

to a handful of matches since the Australian Open in January due in part to a knee injury that kept her from competing in a tune-up event ahead of Wimbledon, where action begins on July 1.

After losing in the third round at the French Open, Williams did not exactly sound her confident self when asked if she would have enough time to get in optimal shape for Wimbledon, where she is a seven-times winner.

"I hope so. I'm still working on it and working on getting there," said Williams. "So I think it will be, I think it is enough time. We'll see, but I definitely hope so." When Williams was at the peak of her career, she was so far above the competition that she could barrel her way through a Grand Slam draw even if she was having an off day.

But the combination of in-

jury, a limited playing schedule and an increased standard of women's tennis over the past few years have left many to question whether she can again triumph in one of tennis' big riband events.

Two steps slower Williams won the most recent of her Grand Slam titles at the 2017 Australian Open when she was in the early stages of her pregnancy, which led to her taking a year off from competition.

She came back with a bang in 2018 and despite not playing at her best managed to reach the final at both Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

"It's hard for me to bet against Serena. Look what happened last year: Two finals in Grand Slams," said ESPN tennis analyst and 18-times Grand Slam champion Chris Evert. "The one difference that I see in Serena is since she's come back, she's been one or two steps slower than normal. I think that's a little bit of fitness. I think it's a little bit of match play. I think it's a lit-

tle bit of confidence." Healthy legs are key to any player's game but perhaps even more vital for someone like Williams who relies heavily on her physicality and court coverage to set up big shots.

Williams has been unable to deliver her trademark big serves on a consistent basis of late but will likely take comfort in the friendly confines of the All England Club given she is most effective on grass.

But unlike in her prime, Williams' rivals know she is not the same player she once was and do not walk onto the court nearly as intimidated as they once were when facing one of the game's all-time greats.

"There's so many things that may be going against Serena, and she thrives on that, and she loves that, and that's when she comes through," said Evert.

"I would have said in January, if there was any Grand Slam she was going to win, it would probably be Wimbledon... and if her serve is on, she's going to be tough to beat."



Rafael Nadal takes a break during a training session at the All England Championships in Wimbledon, London, on Wednesday. (EPA-EFE)

Wary of past pain, Nadal eyes 3rd title

REUTERS LONDON

RAFA Nadal received a degree of sympathy this week when he questioned a Wimbledon seeding formula that relegated him down to third in this year's draw despite a world ranking of two.

After all, he has been champion there twice, is bang in form after a record-stretching 12th French Open, is injury free and last year was a whisker away from reaching the final.

Despite that, the 33-year-old would be the first to admit that despite twice lifting the trophy the All England Club's laws have not always been to play his advantage.

While his 2008 defeat of Roger Federer in a final for the ages stands as one of his greatest days, shock losses at the hands of Steve Darcis, Lucas Rozol, Dustin Brown and Gilles Muller represent some of his darkest moments.

Wimbledon's low bouncing laws also provide the ultimate test of the creaky knees that disrupted Nadal's season this year and forced him to withdraw from Miami.

It is why Nadal's excite-

ment is tempered by a little trepidation every time he heads to his most erratic Grand Slam and why there is a sense of unfinished business.

After backing up his 2008 triumph with a runner-up finish in the 2010 final and reaching the final again in 2011 – Nadal then went five visits without going past the fourth round.

Those dismissing his grass-court prowess were forced to eat humble pie last year when Nadal roared through to the semi-finals when he lost 8-6 in the fifth set to Novak Djokovic in one of the highest-quality matches ever seen on Centre Court.

Nadal has again opted to play on concrete grass-court matches in the build-up to Wimbledon, preferring instead to practise in Mallorca and then take part in the Aspal Classic exhibition event at the swanky Hurlingham Club where, on Wednesday, he was soundly beaten by Marin Cilic.

"I love to play on grass," he said shortly after claiming his 18th Grand Slam title by defeating Dominic Thiem in Paris. "Honestly, the last two years that I played in Wimbledon, I felt close again."

Don't care-Kyrgios the hottest ticket in town

REUTERS LONDON

PERHAPS, in years to come, tennis fans will yearn for the days of "characters like Nick Kyrgios", just as they do for John McEnroe, the one-time Superbrat everyone loved to hate who is now embraced as a lovable rogue from the golden age.

Maybe the Australian will publish an autobiography titled "Bothered" (as in not), just as McEnroe did with "Ser-

ious" (as in "you cannot be"), his most famous outburst of all).

The main difference between the two, of course, is that McEnroe won seven Grand Slam singles crowns, and loved the game. Kyrgios would appear to have more in common with Andre Agassi, who also achieved greatness on court despite, he later revealed in his autobiography, hating almost every minute of his career.

Kyrgios should be challenging the dominance of the



Nick Kyrgios of Australia.

Big Three. His head-to-head record against them is impressive (2-0 against Novak Djokovic, 3-3 against Rafa Nadal, but 1-5 against Roger Federer) and it seems to be generally accepted that he has the talent

to win Grand Slams.

The problem appears to be that Kyrgios doesn't seem to care about it and has never gone beyond the quarter-finals in a major. Still only 24, his career is littered with fines and penalties, particularly for "smacking".

– not trying – which he often does when anything gets under his skin. He serves under-arm, argues with and abuses officials and fans, and shows scant respect for opponents.

In a recent interview he ripped into Djokovic ("super

player" but with a "sick obsession with wanting to be liked") and Nadal ("super salty" and "gracious only when he wins").

He says he does not care about fans when he tanks or is ejected from a tournament – not trying for "smacking" the Open for throwing a chair.

He boasts of the millions he has in the bank and uses those riches to justify not needing to try. He pulled out of this year's French Open citing illness, days after saying the tournament "absolutely sucks".



SCOTT LAIRD

TRAVELPULSE | TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Tips for enjoying a hassle free visit to Paris

FRANCE is the world's most visited country, with almost 87 million tourism visitors in 2017. A significant portion of those visitors, which is more than the population of France itself, were bound for Paris.

Paris is at the top of many travelers' lists and has been for centuries. It was the kickoff point for the Grand Tour tradition among the upper classes during the headiest years of the British Empire, as well as a must-stop destination for debutantes to buy ball gowns during the Belle Époque.

Today, throngs of global visitors stand in lines to see attractions such as the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre, smile with delight as they bite into their first Parisian croissant and excitedly peer through the glass barrier at the macaron counter at Laduree.

They also get into arguments with each other over budgeting or, worse, fall asleep into their bouillabaisse from exhaustion or fall for common tourist scams. Here's a short list of tips I've compiled over the course of several visits to Paris.

Avoid the train from the airport

If arriving at Charles de Gaulle International Airport in Roissy, the RER Regional train serves Gare du Nord, where connections to taxis and the Paris Metro are available. While this is generally the most convenient way into Paris, it's also fraught with problems. Laden with luggage off an overnight flight from North America, jetlagged with clouded judgment, it makes visitors a prime target for pickpockets — even veteran travelers can fall victim.

It's better to take one of the direct bus services (some of which have free Wi-Fi) that drop off at points convenient to several Paris hotels, or enjoy the door-direct service of a taxi or a ridesharing service. After a few days of being used to the rhythm of the city, with the benefit of a few good night's sleeps, it's less risky to take the train back to the airport (although a taxi to the train station is probably a safer bet — save the Metro for in-stay journeys without luggage).

Ignore strangers near popular tourist attractions

It's a shame to have to give such advice when the purpose of travel is to connect with new people, but most situations where visitors to Paris will be approached on the street by a stranger turn out to be well-trodden scams. Don't sign petitions, trust anyone who has "found" jewelry on the



The Stravinsky Fountain sits between the Centre Pompidou museum and Saint-Merri church.

ground or take a picture for someone who will drop their own camera and demand payment. Scammers prey on the good nature and politeness of visitors, and it's, unfortunately, safer to ignore strangers on the street.

That's not to say one shouldn't strike up conversations with neighbors in cafes or restaurants, but something starts to seem odd, trust your gut.

Don't ignore the concierge

Hotel concierges are lifesavers in Paris, particularly when it comes to booking tables in restaurants (often necessary a day or two in advance) or offering advice about excursions or pre-booking museum tickets. Best of all, their services are free of charge.

Concierges also cultivate relationships with many of the proprietors of restaurants they frequently send guests to, so guests



The Pantheon, in Paris; Latin Quarter, holds the tombs of Voltaire, Rousseau, Alexandre Dumas and other famous French citizens.



will arrive armed with the power of that relationship to ensure they have a trouble-free experience.

Don't overschedule

This is good advice for any destination, but even more so in the City of Light, where half the joy of exploring the city is getting lost



and wandering. Too many visitors attempt to work off a checklist, attempting to see the Louvre, Eiffel Tower, Montmartre and Arc de Triomphe all in the same day.

A better idea is to agree on one or two prime objectives for each day, preferably within the same area. Perhaps it's the Eiffel Tower in the

morning and Musee d'Orsay in the afternoon, knowing each won't take an entire half day, leaving plenty of time for transit and wandering. My visits have generally been long weekends, and I tend to focus each trip on a different quarter of the city.

Don't be afraid to 'be a tourist'

Most visitors to Paris simply will not blend in, no matter how hard they try. Don't be afraid to take pictures of monuments or take advantage of the Batobus, the tourist boat that stops at popular attractions along the Seine. In spite of its reputation for snooty residents, Paris has fully embraced the fact that tourism is one of the city's major industries. Visitors needn't be ashamed of their status, and attempts to "go native" will typically only make one stand out even more.

But don't overdo it

That said, there's also no harm in paying general respect to the norms of a place one is visiting. One needn't be a fashion plate, but generally speak-

ing Parisians don't wear shorts, tank tops, baseball caps, flip-flops, souvenir items or stereotypically "French" attire (the one exception seems to be horizontally striped shirts).

Parisians are also generally reserved — it's rare that they'll strike up conversations with strangers and when they do speak, it's generally several decibels lower than what North Americans may be used to — it's polite to modulate accordingly.

Preplan expenses and preplan flexibility

Preplanning can be important when it comes to budget, but it's also important to allow enough budget for contingencies, such as taking cabs or rideshares when pressed for time or due to fatigue, when hunger strikes or a refreshment break is needed. Most of the arguments I overhear in Paris concern budget or time management, so it's best for everyone's sanity if the major non-negotiable items are settled in advance.



Cafes with outdoor seating line the streets of Paris, and are a good place to people watch.



Line up for crepes at La Droguerie on Rue des Rosiers in the Marais neighborhood of Paris.



No trip to Paris is complete without sampling a few macarons.



Le Consulat Cafe in the Montmartre section of Paris is said to have been a popular hangout for artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh.

Annabelle Comes Home: Latest in the uneven horror franchise is a letdown



Katie Sarife in a still from the film Annabelle Comes Home. (TNS)

RAFER GUZMÁN

NEWSDAY | TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

ANNABELLE Comes Home, "the latest entry in Gary Dauberman's successful horror franchise, feels like a test of David Lynch's oft-cited theory that 70 index cards equal a feature film.

He didn't say they have to be related, did he? Dauberman, the screenwriter and co-creator of the "Annabelle" franchise — part of the "Conjuring" universe — makes his directorial debut with this third installment. It's a mix of high points and low points, much like the overall series itself. The characters can be compelling, the young cast (all female) is engaging and there's even a little thread of pathos running through the story. Somewhere around the 50th index card, though, the ideas lose focus, the story unravels and "Annabelle Comes Home" starts to feel like a stack of random ideas.

The movie gets off to a fairly strong start. Ed and Lorraine Warren, the famed paranormal investigators (series regulars Patrick Wilson and Vera

Farmiga), provide a slight twist to the usual baby-sitting scenario: Their daughter, Judy (Mckenna Grace), has a touch of clairvoyance, like Mom. Their basement is spookier than the average, too, filled with evil objects from old cases. The only local girl brave enough to take a weekend-long gig watching Judy is Mary Ellen, played by Madison Iseman as a plucky, All-American blonde.

Enter Daniela, a raven-haired troublemaker who invites herself over, makes a bee-line for the basement and discovers a glass case containing the doll Annabelle (she of the ginger pigtails and death-mask smile). This is where things get good. Daniela, played with smarts and a sly sexuality by Katie Sarife, feels like a blend of Louise Brooks in "Pandora's Box" and Veronica Lodge in the "Archie" comics. "What'd you do to get in here?" she asks the doll, as if addressing a fellow delinquent. Daniela has a personal reason for dabbling with damnation, though, making her the film's most (perhaps only) complex character.

During the film's enjoyable first acts, Dauberman lights a slow fuse and

patiently lets it burn. He has fun with the early-'70s backdrop, using the forgotten board game Feely-Meeley to create a couple of shivery moments. Once Annabelle gets loose and wreaks havoc, though, Dauberman throws in every idea from his corkboard: Demons, dead priests, bloody brides, a doorway to the afterlife. Cinematographer Michael Burgess ("The Curse of La Llorona") shoots most of it in a muddy charcoal-gray, as if trying to hide the clichés.

"Annabelle Comes Home" is a letdown partly because it starts out so well. It would be interesting to see Dauberman, who also adapted Stephen King's "It" (2017), tackle a coming-of-age film or even a straight-ahead drama and use a fresh deck.

Film: ANNABELLE COMES HOME
Rating: ★★ (R - some gruesome imagery)
Director: Gary Dauberman
Cast: Madison Iseman, McKenna Grace, Katie Sarife
NOW SHOWING IN QATAR

Annabelle Comes Home kicks off Tuesday with solid \$3.5 million in US

REBECCA RUBIN

VARIEITY ENTERTAINMENT NEWS SERVICE

WARNER Bros. and New Line's Annabelle Comes Home collected strong \$3.5 mn in Tuesday night previews.

The supernatural thriller is expected to earn \$30 mn over its first five days in theaters. Annabelle Comes Home is the third Annabelle movie and seventh entry in the Conjuring franchise. Preview ticket sales are in line with honor titles like Purgé 3: Election Year (\$3.6 mn), The Curse of La Llorona (\$2.8 mn). Those numbers are slightly above 2014's Annabelle, which earned \$2.1 mn in previews.

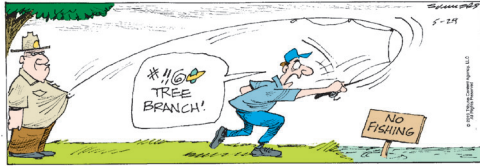
Annabelle Comes Home is on pace for one of the lowest debuts in the Conjuring Universe. The first Annabelle movie marks the smallest start with \$3.7 mn. The biggest opening weekend in the franchise belongs to The Nun with \$53 mn.

Despite new offerings, Disney and Pixar's Toy Story 4 is expected to lead domestic box office charts again. The animated forquel launched with \$118 mn last weekend and has since generated \$1.35 mn in North America and \$258 mn worldwide.

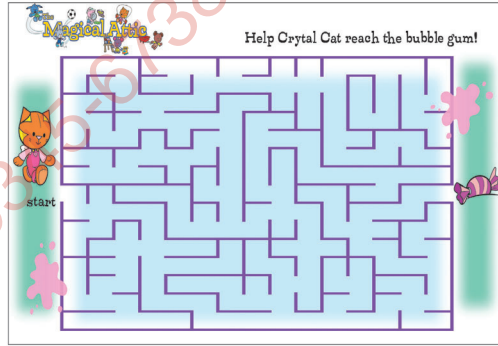
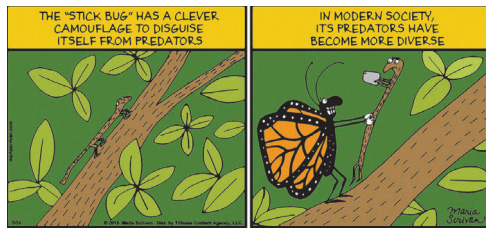
QT KIDS CORNER



Bound & Gagged By Dana Summers



Half Full By Maria Scrivan



PLAYHOUSE

Los Angeles Times Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
17				18					19			
20			21						22			
23			24						25			
26			27						28			
29			30						31			
32			33						34			
35			36						37			
38			39						40			
41			42						43			
44			45						46			
47			48						49			
50			51						52			
53			54						55			
56			57						58			
59			60						61			
62			63						64			
65			66						67			
68			69						70			

- ACROSS**
- 1 Soft ball
 - 5 Berkshire Hathaway headquarters city
 - 10 Greenish-yellow pear
 - 14 Mine, in Montreal
 - 15 Chicano rock band Los
 - 16 "Enchanted" girl in a 2004 film
 - 17 Hors d'oeuvre cracker
 - 18 Lose tautness
 - 19 Logician's error, maybe
 - 20 2011 Steve Carell romcom
 - 23 Slangy affirmative
 - 24 Light beam
 - 25 Possessor's realm
 - 26 Lav, in Bath
 - 30 Zero in
 - 31 Federal bldgs. with mailboxes
 - 34 Rickety abode
 - 38 Diva's time to shine
 - 39 Savings plan init.
 - 40 Fair-haired sci-fi race
 - 41 "Stop whining!"
 - 42 Chinese menu surname
 - 47 Put away
 - 48 Pine, cleaning brand
 - 49 Old Nintendo game console: Abbr.
 - 50 UFO pilots, supposedly
 - 51 Nintendo game console
 - 53 Weather cov., 34- no
 - 41-Across has any
- DOWN**
- 1 DEA operative
 - 2 House of Saud bigwig
 - 3 Duty roster
 - 4 Like soda pop
 - 5 Part of a comfort simile
 - 6 Mad Magazine cartoonist
 - 7 Leigh Hunt's "___ Ben Adhem"
 - 8 Earring style
 - 9 "Take two ___ and call me ___"
 - 10 Kind of dancer
 - 11 Breakfast spread
 - 12 Balkan native
 - 13 Superman accessory
 - 21 Holler
 - 22 Beaver
 - 25 Town, in Germany
 - 26 Irish banknotes
 - 27 Protein-building acid
 - 29 Poet with dedication?
 - 30 Military plane acronym
 - 31 McCain's running mate
 - 32 "... all ye faithful ..."
 - 33 Decides not to attend
 - 35 Baseball club
 - 36 Tulsa sch. named for an evangelist
 - 37 Use an axe on
 - 42 Test version
 - 43 London area that includes Canary Wharf
 - 44 "Is there another way?"
 - 45 Landed
 - 50 Ity
 - 52 Answer at the door
 - 53 Pealed
 - 54 Scratched (out)
 - 55 Pocket bread
 - 56 Small decorative case
 - 57 Carpenter's groove
 - 58 Wasn't honest
 - 59 French waters
 - 60 Stir up
 - 61 Malamute's burden

SUDOKU

THE SAURAJI PUZZLES By The Mepham Group

Level: 1 2 3 4

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

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk

Level: 1 2 3 4

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

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LAGEE
RISVU
RIYFUP
VACRIA

Answer here:

HE LIKED TO GAMBLE BY PLAYING ROULETTE AND THEN BLACKJACK OR ---

backlash or - VICE VERSA

Answer: He liked to gamble by playing roulette and then blackjack or - VICE VERSA

Jumbles: EAGLE, VIRUS, PURIFY, CAVIAR

ANSWERS

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

LABOUR MINISTER MEETS INDONESIAN OFFICIAL



Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs HE Youssef bin Mohammed al Othman Fakhroo met with Chairman of the Protection Agency and the Indonesian Manpower Placement Nusran Wahid and his accompanying delegation in Doha on Thursday. During the meeting, they discussed activating the agreement to recruit skilled and semi-skilled Indonesian workers to Qatar soon. (QNA)

MAHMOUD MEETS CHAIRMAN OF TWELVE PLUS GROUP



Speaker of the Advisory (Shura) Council HE Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Zaid al Mahmoud met with Duarte Pacheco, chairman of the Twelve Plus Group, which includes the parliaments of the European countries, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, on the sidelines of his official visit to Portugal. The meeting reviewed the parliamentary relations between Qatar and the Twelve Plus Group and the ways of supporting and strengthening them. They also discussed a number of issues of common concern. The meeting was attended by members of the Shura Council and members of the Assembly of Portugal and Ambassador of Qatar to Portugal HE Saad bin Ali al Mohannadi. (QNA / LISBON)

Qatar Airways wraps up an outstanding week of awards, inaugural flights and orders

QA swept up honours at Skytrax and APEX awards, launched two new destinations in the Philippines and Portugal, and announced order for five new Boeing 777 freighters

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QATAR Airways (QA) has wrapped up a remarkable week, concluding a successful appearance at the Paris Air Show 2019, launching inaugural flights to Davao, the Philippines and Lisbon in Portugal, and breaking records at the 2019 Skytrax World Airline Awards and 2019 Passenger Experience Association's (APEX) Passenger Choice Awards.

QA swept up honours at the prestigious 2019 Skytrax World Airline Awards and 2019 Passenger APEX Passenger Choice Awards. The national airline of Qatar took home a total of 11 Skytrax World Airline Awards, including 'World's Best Airline' - becoming the only airline in the



competition's history to win it five times (2011, 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2019).

The airline was also named 'Best Airline in the Middle East', 'Best Cabin Service in the Middle East', 'Best Food & Beverage in the Middle East', and 'Best Seat Comfort in the Middle East'.

QA also set a new mark at the 2019 APEX Passenger Choice Awards, winning four out of six in the highly competitive Middle East category - an

all-time record for a single airline in a region. The airline was named 'Best Overall Carrier in the Middle East', 'Best Cabin Service in the Middle East', 'Best Food & Beverage in the Middle East', and 'Best Seat Comfort in the Middle East'.

QA Group Chief Executive Akbar al Baker said: "We are honoured to be globally recognised by our customers by winning these prestigious awards. Setting new records

at two separate awards events is a landmark achievement and, is testament to the tireless efforts of the entire Qatar Airways team. It is a proud moment for the airline as our constant innovation and service standards set the benchmark in our industry.

"These standards and innovative thinking were on display at the Paris Air Show 2019 with our showcase of the ultra-modern Airbus A350-1000 alongside the state-of-the-art Gulfstream G500 and announcement of our order of five new Boeing 777 Freighters. During the same seven day period we also demonstrated our commitment to connecting people around the world, by launching two new exciting destinations: Davao in the Philippines and Lisbon in Portugal."

ICAI holds yoga session



The event held at Birla Public School was attended by around 70 people including chapter members, their spouses and students.

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DOHA

THE Doha chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) commemorated the International Yoga Day recently by hosting an interactive yoga session for its members at Birla Public School (BPS).

The event was attended by around 70 people including chapter members, their

spouses and students.

The session was conducted by yoga practitioner at the Indian Embassy Ashish Gahlawat. He conducted basic yoga exercises which can be practised daily along with breathing techniques that relax the mind and the body. Captain Kapil Kaushik, the defence attaché at the Indian Embassy, was the chief guest for the event. In his keynote address, Capt Kaushik highlighted the

health benefits of yoga and its growing popularity across the world.

Earlier, ICAI Doha chapter chairperson CA Rukkiya Pachisa welcomed the members while the vote of thanks was proposed by chapter vice chairman CA Sandeep Chowdhary.

The Doha chapter of ICAI, which was established in 1981, is the oldest of the 33 overseas chapters of the ICAI.

SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS MARK INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY



MES INDIAN SCHOOL: MES Indian School organised special yoga classes for students at its Conference Hall to mark the International Yoga Day recently. With the objective of health for all and to inculcate the value of discipline among students, the event saw participation of a number of enthusiastic students. The school's principal Hameeda Kadar highlighted the significance of yoga in mitigating stress and anxiety that one confronts in day-to-day life and urged the students to practice it on a daily basis. Heads of sections, teachers and students attended the programme. (TNN)



IDEAL INDIAN SCHOOL: IDEAL Indian School (IIS) organised yoga sessions for its students on the occasion of the International Yoga Day recently. Nearly 500 students of Junior, Girls and Boys sections demonstrated various 'asanas' (yoga postures) with great enthusiasm. Warm up and stretching exercises were also conducted while the benefits of yoga exercises were highlighted simultaneously. Principal Syed Shoukath Ali encouraged the students to practice yoga regularly to keep fit and improve concentration. (TNN)

QAF celebrates graduation of 32nd batch of diploma course



Qatari Armed Forces celebrated the graduation of the 32nd batch of Military Sciences Diploma course including 133 officers at Ahmed bin Mohammed Military College in the presence of Deputy Chief of Staff for Education and Training Major General Hamad Ahmed al Nuaimi. The training session lasted for nine months and included a sword drill in the Republic of Turkey last April, marching movements of all kinds, light weapons and field skills, as well as a number of topics related to map and compass, signal, duties of staff, field aid and military geography. (QNA)