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Eid: Residents capture joy across Qatar

Crowds gathered in cultural and touristic spots and malls where shows and events kicked off as part of the week-long Eid Celebrations organised by Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA).

By Raynald C Rivera
The Peninsula

DOHA: A festive spirit gripped the entire nation as it marked the first day of Eid Al Adha yesterday with lavish spectacles and diverse activities across various locations.

It was hard to ignore the celebratory mood as crowds gathered in cultural and touristic spots and malls where the shows and events kicked off as part of the week-long "Eid Celebrations in Qatar" programme organised by Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA).

Hundreds of families headed to Katara to catch the staging of "Sinbad, the Sailor" which saw the interplay of storytelling, thrilling acrobatics and cutting edge technology, cementing once again Katara's status as a hub for world-class spectaculars.

"As usual, Katara continues to offer its local and foreign audiences and visitors the best recreational and cultural programmes and experiences. The Cultural Village has an established reputation as a renowned hub and fun house," said Katara General Manager Dr Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Sulaiti.

A massive screen showing scenes of Sinbad's voyages and adventures in the sea served as a perfect backdrop in the telling of the story culled from the popular "One Thousand and One Nights" collection. The ship set in the centre of the stage contributed to a more realistic simulation of the scenes set centuries ago.

Told in Arabic language, the story is close to the hearts of many people here as Qatar had a strong relationship with the sea where people mainly depended their livelihood during the pre-oil era.

People cheered as aerial artistes performed stunts and acrobatics with much daring during the 50-minute play presented three times concluding with a breathtaking fireworks display. Katara also brought smiles to children as it presented them 'Eidyah', a gift given as part of Eid tradition.

→ Continued on page 3
→ See also page 16



Fireworks at Katara during the Eid Al Adha celebrations, yesterday.
Pic: Kammutty V P / The Peninsula

Emir and Father Emir perform Eid prayer



Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani attending the Eid Al Adha prayer at Al Wajbah praying area, yesterday.
→ More pictures on page 2

QNA

DOHA: Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Father Emir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani performed the Eid Al Adha prayer along with citizens at Al Wajbah praying area. H E Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Khalifa Al Thani, H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani, Personal Representative of the Emir; H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Thani and a number of Their Excellencies sons of Father Emir took part in the prayer. A number of Sheikhs, ministers and citizens also attended the prayer.

Dr Thaqeel Sayer Al Shammari, Court of Cassation judge and Supreme Judiciary Council member, who led the prayer, delivered the Eid sermon in which he thanked God for his grace on Muslims as they completed the fast and for the blessing of safety and security. He called on Muslims to stay committed to their prayers and follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The judge also called on Muslims to make Eid a show of unity and cooperation.

Meanwhile, Emir in telephone calls yesterday, exchanged Eid greetings with Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Prince Mohammed bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi of Yemen, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, President Dr Hassan Rowhani of Iran and President Idriss Deby of Chad. Emir and the Iranian President exchanged views on regional issues and challenges facing the region, particularly the phenomenon of terrorism.

Qatar, GCC and Arab League voice concern over 9/11 bill

QNA

DOHA: Qatar expressed yesterday its concern regarding the US Senate's passing of a bill that allows victims of September 11 to sue governments of foreign countries in US courts. The act is called "Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism."

Head of the media office in the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the piece of legislation violates international law, particularly the principle of sovereign equality between states.

The Qatari official said that the passed bill represents a dangerous precedent. He added that Qatar warned that such a bill would have dangerous implication on relations between states. He conveyed that Qatar looks for the US administration to take the necessary measure to prevent Congress from passing the bill, in order to maintain joint interest of United States and other countries.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also expressed its concern regarding the bill agreed by the US senate that allows victims of the September 11 attacks to sue Saudi Arabia in US courts.

The GCC said that the bill violates the international law's principle of sovereign equality between states. GCC Secretary-General Dr Abdul Latif Al Zayani said that passing such a flawed bill will have a negative impact on relations between gulf states and the US. He added that the piece of legislation could cause some damage to the global economy also.

Arab League has criticised the US Congress adoption of a law referred to as the "Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act."

In a statement, Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Ghait said that the law does not correspond with the United Nations' principles nor the foundations of international laws among nations.

He expressed hope that the US administration would retract this 'shameful' law which would have serious repercussions and negative impact on the region.

Aboul Ghait voiced Arab League's clear and firm position that rejects terrorism in all its forms.

On Friday, the US House unanimously passed the "Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act" in a voice vote. The White House has threatened to veto the bill, which also unanimously passed in the Senate.

Pneumonia diagnosis fuels questions about Hillary's health

WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK: Hillary Clinton plans to release additional health records, after an abrupt departure from a 9/11 anniversary ceremony on Sunday raised concerns about her fitness to serve as commander in chief.

The incident — captured on amateur video — gave her rival Donald Trump, 70, a new opening to question her fitness for the nation's highest office. The questions about her health were compounded by the nearly eight hours of silence from Clinton and her team about the health scare.

→ See also page 14

Qatar condemns car bomb attack in Turkey

DOHA: Qatar has strongly condemned the bombing that targeted a police station in the southeastern province of Van in Turkey yesterday, injuring dozens of people. In a statement the Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed Qatar's full solidarity with the Turkish Republic.

A car bomb exploded outside the provincial HQ of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Turkish officials blamed the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has waged a three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state.

Ex-British premier Cameron quits politics

AFP

LONDON: Britain's former prime minister David Cameron **(pictured)**, resigned his seat in the House of Commons yesterday, less than three months after losing an EU referendum in which he had campaigned to stay in the bloc.

Cameron stepped down as prime minister in June, hours after Britain's dramatic vote to leave the European Union (EU), handing power to his successor Theresa May in July. "The circumstances of my resignation as prime minister and the realities of modern politics make it very difficult to continue (in parliament)... without the risk of becoming a diversion," Cameron said in a statement.

"I fully support Theresa May and have every confidence that Britain will thrive under her strong leadership," the 49-year-old added.

The former premier was pilloried after the shock referendum defeat.

Critics accused him of recklessness in holding the vote in the first place and mismanaging the Remain campaign in the face of anti-EU populism.

His decision to stage the referendum was seen in Westminster as a bid to placate eurosceptic opponents in the centre-right Conservative Party. His resignation from parliament is unusually quick — former prime ministers have typically retained their seats for a number of years after leaving office.

Cameron denied it was linked to May's decision last week to let state-funded schools reintroduce selection by academic ability, a controversial move he opposed during his six years in office.



Emir, Father Emir receive Eid well-wishers



DOHA: Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Father Emir H H Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani yesterday received scores of well-wishers on Eid Al-Adha at Al Wajba Palace.

They received Prime Minister and Interior Minister H E Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, Sheikhs, ministers, Advisory Council Speaker H E Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khulaifi and his deputy, ministries' undersecretaries, Advisory Council members and citizens.

The Emir also received heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Qatar, officers of the Armed Forces and police, and heads of national institutions and departments.

The well-wishers extended greetings to the Emir and the Father Emir, praying that Eid carries good and blessings to the Qatari people and the Arab and Islamic nations.

H E Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Khalifa Al Thani; H H Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani, Personal Representative of the Emir; H H Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa Al Thani; and sons of the Father Emir were present.

The Emir received more well-wishers, including Sheikhs and citizens, at Al Wajba Palace in the afternoon.

They expressed sincere greetings and best wishes to the Emir, praying for good and blessings to the Emir, Qatar, Qatari people and the Arab and Muslim nations.

Several sons of the Father Emir were also present, reports QNA.













A feast of flavours for Filipino community

'Kulinarya Qatar 2016, Filipino Community Family Day and Food Festival' opens to promote Filipino cuisine and tourism.

By Raynald C Rivera
The Peninsula



Layla Bernal Al Lengawi (fourth left), Head of Kulinarya Qatar 2016 core team, and Philippine Ambassador Wilfredo C Santos (third left) inaugurate 'Kulinarya Qatar 2016, Filipino Community Family Day and Food Festival' in the presence of other officials at Westin Doha Hotel and Spa. Pic: Striker Innovation

DOHA: It was a feast of flavours for hundreds of Filipinos who marked the first day of Eid Al-Adha at the 'Kulinarya Qatar 2016, Filipino Community Family Day and Food Festival' which opened at Westin Doha Hotel and Spa yesterday.

Fifteen Doha-based Filipino restaurants have set up stalls at the festival, offering authentic Filipino cuisine catered to the Filipino palate longing for a taste of home.

The three-day festival is this year's major event of Kulinarya Qatar — a brand and movement initiated by the Philippine Embassy to promote Filipino cuisine and tourism.

It is a showcase of the mélange of tastes and varied influences that make Filipino food an emerging trend in many parts of the world.

"Kulinarya Qatar showcases our culture, our heritage, our way of life. It shows our connectivity with the rest of the world through the fusion of Malay, Spanish, American and Chinese flavours in our cuisine," Philippine Ambassador Wilfredo C Santos told the media at the opening of the event. It serves as the first anniversary celebration of the unique initiative supported by the Filipino community.

"I am very glad that Kulinarya Qatar is now in its second year and its success is largely due to the efforts of our community and our restaurant owners who have united to promote our cuisine in this part of the world," said Santos.

He noted how the project had evolved into a community-driven initiative in a short time since its launch. "We started Kulinarya Qatar as a way to promote our country as a tourist and business destination through our cuisine and I'm glad to see that in its second year, it is now community-driven and largely supported by the Filipino community," he said.

"I thank the Kulinarya core team for their hard work, perseverance and dedication allowing our Filipino families to come together on this very special occasion of Eid Al-Adha," the ambassador added.

Layla Bernal Al Lengawi of United Filipino Entrepreneurs in Qatar (UFEQ), who leads the Kulinarya Qatar 2016 core team, stressed the festival's role in their continuous efforts to foster a stronger Filipino community through food and culture.

Highlights on the opening day of the festival included the talent competition of Little Mr. & Ms Kulinarya Qatar 2016, the 'Pasiklaban fruit and vegetable carving' contest and a zumba session.

Twenty companies and Filipino entrepreneurs are also showcasing their products at the festival which is open from 10am to 10pm today and tomorrow.

'Glow Zumba' to be led by Filipino actors and dancers Joshua Zamora and Jopay Paguia will be held at 5pm today.

The final event and awarding of winners of Little Mr. & Ms. Kulinarya Qatar 2016 will be held at 4pm tomorrow.

Al Bashir praises Qatar's role in sustainability of peace in Sudan

QNA

DOHA: Sudan's President Omar Hassan Al Bashir has praised Qatar's role at the local, regional and global levels in favour of the sustainability of peace in his country, adding it "comes as an extension of the successes achieved by the Qatari leadership in establishing world peace."

In a speech to the Sudanese people on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha yesterday, President Al Bashir said hopes of security and stability in Darfur have been achieved through the auspicious visit of Emir H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to Darfur to declare the completion of the terms of the Doha peace agreement enforcement in the region.

"We on this occasion expressed our deepest appreciation to brethren in Qatar, which have made significant contributions to remarkable, fruitful and constructive efforts that enabled Sudan to cross to real stability," he added.

He said all efforts exerted would be reflected in convocation of the national dialogue's general conference, scheduled for October 10.

Qatar's pilgrims in good health

DOHA: Qatar's pilgrims flocked yesterday to Jamarat in Mina to throw stones after they stood on Arafat. The pilgrims followed in the example of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and threw the largest Jamara. They spent the three Tashreeq days in Mina praying to Allah and throwing the three Jamara on Dhu Al-Hijjah 11, 12 and 13. They started with the first Jamrah, the middle Jamrah and then the largest Jamrah with seven pebbles.

Qatar's Hajj mission said Qatar pilgrims were in good health, reports QNA



Officials of Qatar's Haj Mission.

Residents capture joy of Eid

Continued from page 1

People also thronged malls to watch live entertainment shows, including Tarzan (City Centre), Beauty & The Beast (Dar Al Salam), Flying Superkids (Al Khor Mall), Alvin and the Chipmunks (Ezdan Mall), Pirates from the Caribbean (Lagoona Mall) and Sinbad the Sailor (Hyatt Plaza). They also enjoyed parades which rotated around the six participating malls.

The Pearl-Qatar also saw many visitors for the Barney, Aladdin and Bubble shows as it launched three-day festivities.

Families also enjoyed 'Fafa Saves the Forest' children's show at Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC).

Mashal Shahbik, Director, Tourism Events and Festivals, said, "We are delighted to invite our visitors and families returning to Qatar before the start of the school year to capture joy with us at Eid Al Adha celebrations.

"We are excited by our renewed partnership with Baraem TV to bring 'Fafa Saves the Forest' to QNCC's main theatre. Over the past few weeks, ticket sales around the region have shown it to be a major attraction for families from the GCC.



"We would also like to extend our gratitude to partners for enriching Qatar's offerings, whether with shows in malls, outdoor events and water sports, or cultural activities.

"Thanks to them, visitors and residents can enjoy Eid at multiple locations, including Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum, Al Samariyah Equestrian Centre, Aqua Park, Aspire Zone, the Pearl-Qatar, Katara Cultural Village, Souq Waqif and Al Dossari Zoo & Game Reserve," he added.

With the theme 'Capture Joy', the festival offers events and activities in 18 locations. Among other events that started yesterday were a series of concerts at Abdualziz bin Nasser Theatre in Souq Waqif and traditional cultural performances at Dahl Al Hammam Park.

People also took advantage of the holiday to visit popular places such as Souq Waqif where there are amusement rides, Aspire Park, the Corniche and Museum of Islamic Art .

Programmes organised by the Public Relations Department at the Ministry of Interior also drew large audiences who enjoyed performances by talents from the Indian, Sri Lankan, Indonesian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Nepalese communities at Wakra Sports Club, Asian Town in Industrial Area and Barwa Workers Sports Complex in Al Khor.



Slaughterhouses at Central Market receive over 5,500 sacrifices on first day of Eid



People in queue waiting for their turn outside the slaughter house in Livestock Market on the first day of Eid Al-Adha yesterday. Pic: Abdul Basit / The Peninsula

The Peninsula

DOHA: Slaughterhouses at the central market received over 5,500 sacrifices which represent 25 percent of total sacrifices expected during the Eid days, on the first day of Eid Al-Adha yesterday, said a senior official.

Five of the eight abattoirs are operating in Doha under strict supervision of professional veterinarians and health inspectors who monitor the animals' health conditions and meat and the ban on butchering outside the slaughterhouses.

The ban has been imposed under the law regulating human food, said Mohammed Al Sayeed, Head, Control Department, Ministry of Municipality and Environment.

Two abattoirs — one belonging to Widam Company and the other to Baladna Company for Animal Products — are serving the public from 5am to 5pm, said Juma Khamis Al Muraikhi, Director, Al Khor-Al Dhakira Municipality, yesterday.

As the vast majority of the sacrifices are sheep and goats, people used to rush to the slaughterhouses after Eid prayers and so Widam has given priority to these sacrifices, Al Muraikhi said.

Slaughtering of cows and camels is done from noon because bigger animals need more time, space and butchers that is why these animals are kept for afternoon, he added.

Sale and slaughtering are held under the supervision of veterinarians who also provide consumers with advice.

Al Muraikhi pointed out that the public has been advised to keep away from slaughtering halls to maintain hygiene and avoid any possible spread of infectious diseases or contamination.

He said health inspectors are monitoring food outlets, public parks, entertainment places and malls and urged the people to keep the environment clean and hygienic.

Mattar Al Kuwari, Head, Health Control Department, Al Khor-Al Dhakira Municipality, urged consumers to contact the ministry's call centre, which is working round the clock to report any violation of the health law.

Inspectors are targeting traditional kitchens, which witness more orders during Eid, Al Kuwari said, pointing out that the aim is to ensure compliance by these outlets with the health law and requirements.

As people are not allowed to have their animals slaughtered outside the designated abattoirs across the country, inspectors are also preventing butchers from providing services at homes, Al Kuwari said.

Widam is operating eight slaughterhouses, five of which are in Doha, including an automated one with a capacity of over 180 animals per hour.

In addition, there are three slaughterhouses in Al Khor, Al Shamal Industrial Area and Al Mazroua.

Abattoirs are open during the three days of Eid from 5am to 5pm to cope with demand for sacrifices.



Australian sheep for distribution at Widam's automated slaughterhouse yesterday. Pic: Baher Amin / The Peninsula



Pilgrims arrive to throw pebbles at the Jamarat in Mina near Makkah, yesterday. Pilgrims pelt pillars symbolising the devil with pebbles to show their defiance on the third day of the Haj as Muslims worldwide marked the Eid Al Adha.

Pilgrims begin stoning Jamarat

AFP

MINA: Pilgrims from around the world yesterday performed first day of the stoning ritual in Mina in the final major rite of the Haj.

Rivers of pilgrims flowed on multiple ramps towards the Jamarat Bridge where the 'stoning of the devil' took place under high security and without incident, the interior and Haj Ministry spokesmen said.

A number of safety measures have been taken and pilgrims said they were satisfied with this year's organisation.

"I was awaiting the worst and in the end everything took place perfectly," said a French pilgrim who gave his name only as Abdullah, 33.

"The Saudi police managed the situation very well," he said, after shaving his head. Saudi pilgrim Ibrahim Ayed, 40, who took part in the Haj and the stoning ritual for the first time in a decade, agreed.

"There has been a clear improvement," he said. The stoning — to continue until tomorrow — coincided with Eid Al Adha, Islam's feast of sacrifice which is celebrated by more than 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide.

Sheep are slaughtered and the meat distributed to needy Muslims, commemorating Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) readiness to sacrifice his son on the orders of God, who in the end sent a lamb in the boy's place. The Jamarat ritual, in Mina at the eastern edge of Makkah, emulates Prophet Abraham's stoning of the devil in resisting the temptation to disobey God's order

Elevated cameras stationed several metres apart filmed the pilgrims, most clad in white and moving behind coloured flags identifying their groups.

The stoning bridge, which resembles a large multi-storey car park, was erected in the past decade at a cost of more than $1bn.

It was designed to prevent overcrowding. Hundreds of police were stationed on each of the Jamarat's five floors, linked by escalators, from where pilgrims tossed gravel-sized stones against rough stone walls.

More than 1.8 million faithful, most of them from abroad, are performing the six-day Haj, which officially ends on Thursday.

The Haj is one of the five pillars of Islam and capable Muslims must perform it at least once.

Faruk Hamloui, an Algerian who for years has guided his compatriots at the Haj, said: "People learned and understood that only organisation and respect for the routes" can avert tragedy. It is a message emphasised by officials.

They "stressed the need to adhere to directives and not take lightly the movement of pilgrims towards the Jamarat Bridge," Mahmoud Damanhoori, board member of a local foundation which assists Southeast Asian pilgrims, said.

Dozens of officers regulated the flow of pilgrims at the edge of the stoning walls.

Three policemen stationed overhead on a metal promontory sent instructions by walkie-talkie to officers on the ground who intervened when pilgrims lingered too long or blocked the way.

Syria truce takes effect under US-Russia deal

The initial 48-hour truce came into force at 7pm local time across Syria except in areas held by militants like the Islamic State group.

AFP



Syrian men carrying babies make their way through the rubble of destroyed buildings following a reported air strike on the rebel-held Salihin neighbourhood of the northern city of Aleppo, yesterday.

ALEPPO, SYRIA: A ceasefire brokered by Russia and the United States took effect in Syria at sundown yesterday, despite scepticism over how long the truce in the five-year conflict would hold.

The initial 48-hour truce came into force at 7pm local time (1600 GMT) across Syria except in areas held by jihadists like the Islamic State group.

Syria's armed forces immediately announced a seven-day "freeze" on military operations, lasting to midnight next Sunday.

But opposition forces had yet to formally sign on and the deal's fragility was underscored just hours before sundown when President Bashar Al Assad vowed to retake the whole country from "terrorists".

The agreement, announced Friday after marathon talks between Russia and the United States, has been billed as the best chance yet to halt the bloodshed in Syria's civil war which has raged since March 2011.

As well as bringing a temporary end to the fighting, it aims to provide crucial aid to hundreds of thousands of desperate civilians.

A final rocket was fired from the east into government areas just five minutes before 7pm, while rebel neighbourhoods had not been hit by bombardments for about two hours, they said.

"I was checking the time all day, waiting for it to turn 7pm," said Khaled Al Muraweh, a 38-year-old shopkeeper in the Furqan district of western Aleppo. "I hope the ceasefire holds so I can see my brother who lives in the opposition-held part of the city."

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said it was "quiet" on nearly all fronts across the country.

But just moments before the ceasefire came into force, the monitoring group reported three people killed in regime shelling of the rebel-held town of Douma near Damascus.

Thirteen civilians were also killed in unidentified strikes in Idlib province Monday afternoon, the Observatory said. Bombardment rocked the central town of Talbisseh all day, an activist there said, finally quieting down as the truce came into effect.

"We spent Eid in our bomb shelters and basements today," said Hassan Abu Nuh, referring to the Eid Al Adha holidays which started yesterday. "For the past half hour, we haven't heard anything, but we aren't very hopeful... For Eid, I'm just planning on staying alive." Senior Russian military official Sergei Rudskoi said the "cessation of hostilities is being resumed across all the territory of Syria".

But Russia would "continue to carry out strikes against terrorist targets", he said.

Ahead of truce, Assad vows to retake Syria from 'terrorists'

AP

BEIRUT: Syrian President Bashar Assad vowed yesterday that his government would take back land from "terrorists" and rebuild the country in remarks made just hours before the start of a cease-fire brokered by the United States and Russia.

Assad spoke during a rare public appearance that included attending prayers for the Eid Al Adha in the Damascus suburb of Daraya, which had surrendered last month and reverted to government control after a four-year siege.

But in the build-up to the start of the truce at sunset, government forces and their allies bombed opposition areas in the country's north, while Al Qaeda-linked militants pushed on with an offensive in southern Syria.

In Geneva, the UN envoy for Syria said his office would monitor the start of the cease-fire "carefully, before making any hurried comments." Staffan de Mistura said in a text message to *The Associated Press* that no statement from his office about the truce was expected before the following afternoon.

The cease-fire deal, hammered out between US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Geneva on Saturday, was backed by Assad's government. But it has received mixed messages of commitment from various rebel factions.

It allows the Syrian government to continue to strike at the Islamic State group and Al Qaeda-linked militants with the Jabhat Fatah Al Sham group, earlier known as the Nusra Front, until the US and Russia take over the task in one week's time.

Under the terms of the agreement, the rebels and the Syrian government are expected to stop attacking one another. Assad's key allies — Russia, Iran and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah — have also endorsed the deal.

But that scenario is complicated by the fact that Jabhat Fatah Al Sham remains intertwined with several other groups fighting on the ground.

One of the more immediate goals of the Kerry-Lavrov agreement is to allow the UN to establish aid corridors into Aleppo, the contested northern Syrian city. Over 2,000 people have been killed in fighting over the past 40 days in the city, including 700 civilians and 160 children, according to a Syrian human rights group.

On Saturday, presumed Russian or government airstrikes on rebel-held Idlib and Aleppo provinces killed over 90 civilians, including 13 children in an attack on a marketplace in Idlib, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

In the aftermath, rebels and opposition activists were asking on Sunday whether the government side could be trusted. Several previous negotiated cease-fires have all eventually collapsed. A partial "cessation of hostilities" that brought sorely needed relief to civilians in March unraveled as the government continued to strike targets in opposition areas, including near a hospital and school near Damascus and a marketplace in Idlib province, killing dozens of civilians.

Previous cease-fires were also preceded by soaring violence as parties on all sides sought to improve their positions in the build-up to the start of the truce.

30 dead after air strikes on Yemen water well

AP

SANA'A: Caolition airstrikes on a water well in northern Yemen have reportedly killed 30 people and wounded 17, a UN official said yesterday, making it one of the deadliest attacks since peace talks collapsed a month ago. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, Jamie McGoldrick, said in a statement that the casualties in the village of Beit Saadan included first responders and children. The strikes took place on Saturday, on the eve of Eid Al Adha.

McGoldrick said he is "deeply disturbed by the unrelenting attacks on civilians and on civilian infrastructure," and urges rival parties to resume a cease-fire declared by the UN in April.

Yemen's official news agency *Saba*, which is controlled by Houthi rebels, has reported that 100 people were killed or wounded in the airstrikes. Witnesses said an initial airstrike killed 13 people, but then a number of rescuers were killed in subsequent airstrikes. .

The coalition made no statement regarding the airstrikes, but its spokesman, Brig Gen Ahmed Al Asiri, has said before that relief and rights groups are biased and give misleading reports.

Libya's unity govt loses third oil port

AFP

TRIPOLI: Libya's UN-backed unity government lost control yesterday of a third oil port seized by rival forces, raising fears of a major outbreak of fresh violence in the chaos-ridden country.

The loss comes after fighters backing a rival administration in east Libya seized two other terminals from guards loyal to the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA) on Sunday.

All three Mediterranean ports are in Libya's "oil crescent", an area seen as a vital source of income for the GNA, which has struggled to assert its authority across the country.

"Our armed forces were able to take control of Zuwaytina port and secure it completely," a spokesman for the fighters that took the terminals said.

The *Lana* news agency loyal to the eastern administration reported a military source as saying: "The armed forces are now concentrated at the port and have secured it after expelling outlaw militia from it."

The forces are commanded by controversial General Khalifa Haftar, who has refused to back the GNA and supports the parallel authority based in eastern Libya near the border with Egypt.

Yesterday, they took the Al Sidra and Ras Lanuf ports before attacking Zuwaytina to the east.

It is the first time that Haftar's forces and fighters loyal to the GNA have clashed directly since the unity government started working in the capital in March.

The unity government called on all forces loyal to it to "protect and defend" the ports against what it called "flagrant aggression" against Libyan sovereignty.

It warned on Sunday night that the country was at a "critical juncture", adding "the hopes of Libyans for stability in the country have been dashed".

The head of the rival government in the eastern city of Bayda said it would work on reopening the ports as soon as possible.

"We will work on the oil ports resuming work as soon as possible so as to guarantee all Libyans a decent life," Abdullah Al Thani said.

Haftar's forces said they would hand over the management of the ports to the National Oil Corporation (NOC) to resume oil exports.

The NOC is split into two rival branches, one allied to the GNA and the other to the administration that Haftar supports.

Oil is Libya's main natural resource with reserves estimated at 48 billion barrels, the largest in Africa. But since 2010 the country's production has plummeted from 1.5 million barrels per day to just 200,000 bpd.

The seizure of the ports deals a heavy blow to the unity government, depriving it of a key source of income.

In late July, the GNA agreed to resume oil exports out of Ras Lanuf and Al Sidra — which together have a capacity of 700,000 bpd — after a months-long closure following jihadist attacks.

They shut after attacks in January by the Islamic State group, who have gained a foothold in the country.

Cultural Village Foundation – Katara invites you to attend:

Eid Al Adha Celebrations

During Eid Days

1st Show: 7:00 pm
Eidyah (giveaways) for children: 7:45 pm

2nd Show: 8:15 pm
Eidyah (giveaways) for children: 9:00 pm

3rd Show: 9:30 pm
Fireworks: 10:15 pm



Indulge yourself and your family with the joyous and entertaining moments in Katara including the dazzling shows inspired by the ancient tales "Sinbad, The Sailor" and the spectacular fireworks that will rock the skies of the cultural village.

Katara is a destination for all family members.

Eid Adha Mubarak.

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احتفالات العيد في قطر
Eid Celebrations in Qatar

North Korea ready for new nuclear test: Seoul

A Seoul official claimed that Pyongyang has a tunnel where it can conduct an additional nuclear test.

AFP

SEOUL: North Korea is ready to conduct an additional nuclear test at any time, South Korea's Defence Ministry said yesterday, three days after the reclusive North's fifth test drew widespread condemnation.

Pyongyang set off its most powerful nuclear blast to date on Friday, saying it had mastered the ability to mount a warhead on a ballistic missile and ratcheting up a threat that its rivals and the United Nations have been powerless to contain.

"Assessment by South Korean and US intelligence is that the North is always ready for an additional nuclear test in the Punggye-ri area," the site of the North's five nuclear explosions, South Korean Defence Ministry spokesman Moon Sang-gyun told a news briefing.

"North Korea has a tunnel where it can conduct an additional nuclear test," Moon said.

South Korea is pushing for more sanctions against Pyongyang to close what it says were loopholes left in the last United Nations Security Council resolution adopted in March.

Both China and Russia backed sanctions imposed in March following the North's January nuclear test, but their apparent ambivalence about fresh sanctions cast doubt on the Security Council's ability to quickly form a consensus.

"We expect that China, as one of the Security Council member states, should take this issue seriously and play a very constructive role to come up with a very effective and strong sanctions resolution," a South Korean foreign ministry official said.

The Security Council denounced the latest test on Friday and said it would begin work immediately on a resolution. The United States, Britain and France - three of the five veto-wielding permanent members - pushed for the 15-member body to impose new sanctions.

However, China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said sanctions alone could not solve the North Korean nuclear issue. The crux of the issue lay with the United States, not China, she added.

Speaking to Lavrov yesterday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China "strongly urged North Korea and other relevant parties to remain calm and exercise restraint, and not take any new steps to intensify tensions", China's Foreign Ministry said.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Lavrov and Wang condemned North Korea's latest nuclear test in a phone conversation yesterday. Russia and China are the remaining veto powers on the Security Council.

As tensions rose on the Korean peninsula in the week of last week's test, South Korea's President Park Geun-hye said that North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles posed an "imminent threat.



South Korean President Park Geun-Hye (second right) talks with the leaders of the ruling Saenuri Party, the main opposition Minjoo Party of Korea and the People's Party — Lee Jung-Hyun (right), Choo Mi-Ae (second left) and Park Jie-Won , during their meeting at the presidential Blue House in Seoul, yesterday. Park met political party leaders following North Korea's nuclear test, after the country's military unveiled plans to hit back at Pyongyang in case of war.

Opposition vows anti-Mugabe mass protest

AFP

HARARE: Zimbabwean opposition parties vowed yesterday to stage mass protests to press for electoral reforms, unfazed by veteran President Robert Mugabe's threat to increase a crackdown on organisers of anti-government protests.

"We are going ahead with the demonstrations," said Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) spokesman Douglas Mwonzora, speaking on behalf of opposition parties under the coalition of the National Electoral Reform Agenda recently.

"This is the demonstration that we are doing on the 17th. We are going ahead with or without their blessing or permission. We have the law in our favour and we are not going to negotiate the law with Mr Mugabe."

Jacob Ngarivhuma, leader of fringe political outfit Transform Zimbabwe, said: "This Saturday we are organising 210 demonstrations throughout the country to force the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to accept reforms.

"We are going to continue fighting. This is the language they understand."

The planned protests follow a two-week police ban on street protests in the capital which was over turned by the high court last week.

Opposition to Mugabe's rule has grown in recent months with a surge of public demonstrations triggered by an economic crisis that has left banks short of cash and the government struggling to pay its workers.

Two weeks ago police made a series of arrests, including activists and bystanders, following violent demonstrations in the capital.

Mugabe, who has long been accused by opponents of silencing his critics and smothering democracy, warned at the weekend the protestors were "playing a dangerous game".

"Let the opposition parties and all those angling for chaos, mayhem and violent demonstrations be warned that our patience has run out," Mugabe said in an address to his party's central committee.

"We also understand that they are planning to terrorise the rural areas in the mistaken belief that they can intimidate and harass our supporters. Let them be warned. They cannot win that war."

Families allege murder as Dhaka fire toll rises

AFP

DHAKA: Relatives of workers killed in a fire at a packaging factory in Bangladesh have filed a murder case against the owner, police said yesterday, as the death toll from the disaster rose to 31.

Another 12 people are missing after the disaster on Saturday, the worst since the collapse of the Rana Plaza garment complex in 2013 that killed more than 1,100 people. The government has launched an investigation into what caused the fire, but police in the industrial town of Tongi, where the Tampaco Foils Limited factory was located, said bereaved relatives had already filed a private lawsuit.

"A murder case was filed by relatives of a dead worker against eight people, including the owner and his wife," Tongi police chief Firoz Talukdar said.

Feeding children



Children queue for food donated by a company to mark the Eid Al Adha in Lagos, yesterday.

Thailand downplays Zika risk

Reuters

BANGKOK: Health and city officials in Thailand downplayed risks from rising infections from the mosquito-borne Zika virus, which is linked to serious birth defects, and expressed concern that disclosing information would damage its tourism industry.

On Friday the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDPC) warned of the increasing spread in Thailand of Zika, which can cause microcephaly in unborn children.

Thailand is combating the risk by misting and spraying mosquito-infested areas, said Anuttarasakdi Ratchatatat, epidemiologist at the health ministry's Bureau of Vector Borne Disease.

It has not changed or updated its Zika prevention plan since Singapore, which has a more extensive prevention campaign, began reporting a spike in cases from late August.

Twenty-two new cases were confirmed on Sunday in the upmarket Sathorn area of Bangkok, part of the city's Central Business District, including a pregnant woman who later gave birth with no complications.

"It's concerning because I live just around the corner," said Dietrich Neu, a Canadian who works in publishing.

"It's different in Canada; the government would be all over it. There would be a centre where people can get treated and leaflets about what the symptoms are."

The health ministry yesterday urged Thais not to panic as it said the virus was not deadly or contagious and ministry epidemiologist Anuttarasakdi added that it did not want to deter tourists.

"The information on Zika is quite sensitive because if we say which province has infections then attention will turn on that province, and if that province is popular with tourists it will have an impact on tourism," he said.

"We don't want people to be too alarmed."

Health authorities in Thailand are not treating Zika as seriously as dengue, which is much more widespread in the country, said Assistant Professor Watcharee Chokejindachai from the Faculty of Tropical Medicine at Mahidol University in Bangkok, because of a perception that Zika is less dangerous.

Activists demand international probe into Gabon unrest

AFP

LIBREVILLE: African and European activist groups called yesterday for an international inquiry into alleged "massacres" by troops and police after Gabon's presidential election, narrowly won by incumbent Ali Bongo.

"Many families are still looking for members who have disappeared since August 31," Tournons La Page said in its statement.

"Civil society demands an international inquiry into the massacres of populations by... the forces of repression in the service of a man, a clan and a family," it added.

Zuma pays $542,000 bill in house improvement scandal

AFP

JOHANNESBURG: South African President Jacob Zuma **(pictured)** has paid back $542,000 of public money spent refurbishing his private home, his office said yesterday, in a controversy that has dominated his second term in office.

The country's highest court found earlier this year that Zuma had violated the constitution by defying an order to repay some of the funds used to renovate Nkandla, his traditional homestead.

It ordered him to pay back funds spent on non-security upgrades -- including a chicken coop, swimming pool and amphitheatre -- valued by the treasury at $542,000.

"President Zuma has paid over the amount... to the South African Reserve Bank as ordered by the Constitutional Court of South Africa," the presidency said in a statement. It added that the president raised the money through a home loan.

The treasury confirmed separately that the payment had been received.

The Nkandla scandal has dogged Zuma's presidency, becoming a symbol of alleged corruption and greed within the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party and triggering several unsuccessful impeachment bids by the opposition.

A 2014 report by the public ombudswoman, Thuli Madonsela, found that Zuma and his family had "unduly benefited" from the upgrade work -- valued in 2014 at then $24m -- and ordered him to pay back some of the money.

The president reacted by ordering two government investigations that cleared his name, including a report by the police minister which concluded that the swimming pool was a fire-fighting precaution.



In March, the Constitutional Court ruled Zuma had "failed to uphold, defend and respect the constitution as the supreme law of the land".

The ANC suffered historic losses in South Africa's local elections last month, garnering less than 54 percent of ballots cast -- an eight-point drop from the last local poll in the year 2011 and its worst showing since the fall of white-minority rule in 1994.

Congo opposition walks out of talks on vote delay

Reuters

KINSHASA: Opponents of Democratic Republic of Congo President Joseph Kabila walked out of talks aimed at breaking a dangerous political impasse yesterday, weakening the already tenuous credibility of the negotiations.

Most major opposition parties were already boycotting the talks, which they see as giving a chance for Kabila to justify what they say is his plan to stay in power beyond the end of his mandate in December, breaking constitutional term limits.

But some opposition leaders agreed to the talks on the timing of the presidential election which was due to happen in November but which authorities say cannot be held before July as millions of voters still need to be registered.

"We have suspended our participation ... because the positions were diametrically opposed," opposition representative Samy Badibanga said, but he added that the delegation could return if Kabila's side makes concessions.

The opposition had insisted the presidential election be the next poll held, while the government refused to budge from its position that local elections should take place first, further delaying the presidential vote, Badibanga said.

The government delegation's spokesman, Leonard She Okitundu, called the walkout "just a negotiating tactic" and was confident the opposition would return.

Congo has never experienced a peaceful transition of power since independence from Belgium in 1960.

Diplomats and observers fear the political crisis could trigger a repeat of civil wars that killed millions of people between 1996 and 2003.

Thai junta to end trial of civilians by military courts

BANGKOK: Civilians accused of royal defamation and other security offences will no longer be tried in military courts, the junta said yesterday, rolling back a heavily-criticised practice introduced after their 2014 coup.

Since the coup, breaches of a tough royal defamation law and other national security crimes have been punishable in military courts, presided over by a bench of officers.

Those courts have imposed severe sentences including record jail terms for civilians of up to 30 years for alleged lese majeste.

But yesterday, the junta said an August referendum vote endorsing their new constitution has allowed them to ease their grip on the legal system.

Duterte gave 'go-signal' to execute Veloso

Philippine foreign secretary denied that Duterte gave Jokowi the all clear to execute Filipino drug trafficker.

AFP

JAKARTA: Indonesian President Joko Widodo said yesterday that his Philippine counterpart, Rodrigo Duterte, gave him the go ahead to execute a Filipina maid on death row whose plight has garnered huge support.

The Philippines denied the claim, saying Duterte had simply pledged to respect whatever the outcome of Indonesia's judicial process.

Duterte -- who is waging a bloody crackdown on drugs in his country that has claimed nearly 3,000 lives in just two months -- apparently gave Widodo the green light during a bilateral meeting last week in Jakarta.

Widodo said he and Duterte were discussing the woman's case when the controversial Filipino president made the remarks. "I explained about the delay of execution the other day."

"President Duterte then said please, go ahead if you want to execute," Widodo added.



Mary Jane Veloso **(pictured)** was arrested in Indonesia in 2009 carrying a suitcase lined with 2.6 kilogrammes of heroin and was sentenced to death.

The mother of two was moments away from facing the firing squad last year when she was granted a temporary reprieve, after a woman suspected of recruiting her was arrested in the Philippines.

Legal proceedings against the alleged recruiter are ongoing in the Philippines. The Indonesian government, which has some of the world's toughest anti-narcotics laws, maintains Veloso's death sentence for drugs trafficking still stands.

In a statement, Philippine Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay denied Duterte had given Widodo the all clear "other than to tell the Indonesian President that he respects their judicial processes and will accept whatever the final decision they will arrive at regarding her case".

Veloso's execution had been "indefinitely deferred", Yasay added.

Her case attracted huge attention in the Philippines and Indonesia, with rallies of support and world boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao pleading for her life to be spared.

Her supporters claim she went to Indonesia for a job as a maid and was duped by an international drug syndicate into carrying heroin.

Duterte took office in June after winning elections on a promise to kill tens of thousands of criminals.

Widodo is waging his own war against drugs and has ordered the execution of eighteen convicted smugglers since taking office in 2014.

The country's anti-drugs chief this month voiced support for implementing a bloody crackdown on traffickers like that in the Philippines, saying he believed such a campaign would safeguard "our beloved country".

5.4 magnitude quake jolts South Korea

AFP

SEOUL: A powerful 5.4-magnitude earthquake hit the southern region of South Korea yesterday evening, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said, following an earlier quake of 4.9-magnitude.

The Korea Meteorological Administration (KMA) put the second tremor higher than USGS, at 5.8-magnitude, describing it as the "biggest ever".

"It was the biggest quake ever to hit the country," Yoo Yong-Gyu, a KMA official said, adding the tremor was "felt all across the country".

NEWS BYTES

MH370 'alleged' debris handed to Australian agency

CANBERRA: An American amateur investigator handed possible debris from missing flight MH370 to Australian officials yesterday and said several pieces were blackened by flames, raising the prospect of a flash fire onboard.

Mystery has surrounded the fate of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 since it disappeared in 2014, carrying 239 passengers and crew on a routine flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB), said Blaine Gibson had handed over unspecified debris yesterday.

China to tighten judicial system to protect rights

BEIJING: China has tightened judicial procedures against illegally obtained evidence and upheld the presumption of innocence, state media said yesterday, as the country seeks to combat perceptions of human rights violations within Communist Party-run courts.

Chinese officials acknowledge that while illegally obtained evidence and forced self-incrimination of detainees is banned, it still has work to do to eliminate torture.

Nonetheless, the government consistently rejects any criticism of its human rights record, saying it adheres to the rule of law.

Philippines wants US troops out of Mindanao

AFP

DAVAO: President Rodrigo Duterte **(pictured)** ratcheted up his feud with the United States yesterday, ordering all American special forces out of the southern Philippines where they have been advising local troops battling Islamist extremists.

Duterte's order came a week after he insulted US President Barack Obama, causing Obama to cancel their scheduled bilateral meeting at a summit in Laos.

The Filipino leader, the first to hail from the south and who claims Muslim ancestry, has been stepping up efforts to bring peace to the southern Philippines, where decades-long insurgencies with Islamist and communist rebels have claimed more than 150,000 lives.

Last month he restarted peace talks with the largest separatist group, the 12,000-strong Moro Islamic Liberation Front (Milf), which like others has been fighting since the 1970s for an independent Islamic state or autonomous rule.

US advisors in the area help train Filipino troops but are barred from engaging in combat except in self-defence.

Previously, about 500-600 US personnel rotated through the Mindanao region but in 2014, then-defence secretary Voltaire Gazmin said this would be cut back to 200.

Duterte did not specify when or how many Americans would be expelled but said the Philippines alignment with the West was at the root of the persistent Muslim insurgency.

"These US special forces, they have to go in Mindanao," he told a gathering of government employees.

"The people will become more agitated. If they see an American, they will really kill him."

The US embassy could not be reached for comment.

The United States is Manila's main military ally and the Philippines' colonial ruler until 1946. In his speech, Duterte showed photographs and cited accounts of how US troops killed during America's occupation of the Philippines in the early-1900s to explain his decision.

Duterte's spokesman Ernesto Abella said that "the statement reflects new direction towards coursing an independent foreign policy".

The Filipino leader also hit out at Obama and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for criticising his bloody crackdown on crime that has claimed 3,000 lives in a little over two months.

"This Obama, when you accuse me of killing... let he who is without sin, cast the first stone," he said recently.

In a brief encounter in Laos, Obama urged the Filipino leader to conduct his crime war "the right way" and protect human rights, but Duterte has dismissed it as being none of America's business.



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte holds up a photo and cites accounts of US troops who killed Muslims during the US's occupation of the Philippines in the early-1900s, during his speech at the Malacanang Palace in Manila, yesterday.

Vietnam to extradite pirates to Malaysia

AFP

HANOI: A Vietnamese court yesterday agreed to hand over to Malaysia eight Indonesians who were arrested last year on suspicion of hijacking a Malaysian-flagged oil tanker, according to reports.

The men washed up on Vietnam's Tho Chu island on a lifeboat claiming to have encountered an accident at sea in June 2015.

They were taken into custody after officials discovered they were carrying large sums of cash, and were accused of hijacking the MT Orkim Harmony oil tanker.

The group spoke Indonesian, officials said, and both Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur requested to have the men extradited.

"The Hanoi people's court has ruled out a request by the Indonesian embassy to bring back the suspects to its country for a trial," state-run VNExpress news site said.

"The court accepted Malaysia's proposal to extradite the men to Malaysia" based on Vietnam's mutual legal support laws with Malaysia, the report added.

Court officials did not respond for a request to comment Monday, though the report said the suspects have 15 days to appeal the ruling.

MT Orkim Harmony was carrying around 6,000 tonnes of petrol worth an estimated $5.6m when it was commandeered on June 11 last year en route from Malaysia's western coast to the port of Kuantan on the east coast.

The eight suspected pirates eluded search crews by escaping in a lifeboat under cover of darkness, Malaysian authorities said.

The tanker's 22 crew members were mostly unscathed except for a slightly injured Indonesian sailor who was treated for a gunshot wound to the thigh.

The vessel was the latest ship targeted by increasingly bold pirates behind an upsurge of sea hijackings in Southeast Asia in recent years that have typically aimed at smaller tankers carrying valuable petrol, diesel or gas oil.

Backlash over Marcos 'revisionism'

AFP

MANILA: The Philippine government faced a backlash yesterday over claims it was trying to whitewash the history of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Critics said a series of edits to the Facebook page of the country's official government record were an attempt to put a positive gloss on years of authoritarian rule.

Among changes that sparked fury over the weekend was the claim that Marcos imposed martial law in 1972 to deal with Muslim secessionists and a communist insurgency.

Opponents charge Marcos declared martial law to keep himself in power. They also say he threw opposition figures in jail and plundered state coffers.

The gazette also said he gave up his role in 1986 to "avoid bloodshed"; historians agree he reluctantly fled in the face of massive popular opposition.

"The caption should have been "Ferdinand Marcos stole $10bn worth from Filipinos, had 34,000 Filipinos tortured, had 3,240 Filipinos murdered, and was so hungry for power he tried to stay dictator for life," one angry commentator posted on Facebook.

Thousands protest in Taipei over slump in China tourist visits



Representatives of Taiwanese tourism industry take part in a march calling for the government to tackle the falling number of Chinese tourists visiting the island since Democratic Progressive Party leader Tsai Ing-wen took office, in Taipei, yesterday.

AFP

TAIPEI: Thousands of tourism industry workers took to the streets in Taiwan yesterday, demanding the government address a slump in visitors from China as cross-strait ties deteriorate.

Operators who had previously benefited from a boom in mainland tourists under former President Ma Ying-jeou's Beijing-friendly government are now only getting a fraction of the business as relations with China grow increasingly frosty under new president Tsai Ing-wen.

The number of visitors from China has dropped almost 24 percent in the months since Beijing-sceptic Tsai took office in May, compared with the same period last year, according to Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council.

While Beijing has not publicly said it is seeking to limit tourists to the island, observers say it is a stealth pressure tactic on Tsai.

Those working in the tourism sector say anti-China rhetoric from the Taiwanese public is also turning away visitors who feel they are not welcome.

"In the beginning it may have been Beijing interfering," said Ma Ching-chung, who heads an association of tour bus operators in New Taipei City.

"But later on it became the mainland tourists themselves who didn't want to come," he said at yesterday's protest in the capital Taipei.

As many as 10,000 people, from tour guides to bus drivers and restaurant workers, gathered in front of the Presidential Office demanding Tsai take action.

They waved placards with slogans such as "No job, no life" and "Cross-strait is one family" while chanting "We need to survive."

"Tsai Ing-wen should proactively reach out to China to negotiate," said 43-year-old tour guide Carol Ku, who says she has not worked for a month.

"Going forward, tourism won't be the only sector to be affected," she said.

Chinese visitors accounted for about 40 percent of the total 10 million tourists to Taiwan last year, according to government figures.

The biggest slump in visitors from mainland China is those arriving with tour groups -- a plunge of 40.6 percent.

That has hit the tea shop where Maggie Huang works in Alishan in central Taiwan, well known for its mountainous views and tea farms.

Huang, who is in her forties, says her shop used to be visited by as many as 30 mainland tour groups a day. Yesterday, they had none.

"We don't care about politics. We are just normal citizens trying to make a living," she said.

Tsai's government has said it is seeking to attract more tourists from Southeast Asia to make up the shortfall, but Huang is not optimistic.

"To have to learn totally new languages, it's very difficult," she said.

The cabinet last week approved a $948m bailout for the tourism sector that includes loan extensions and assistance for the unemployed.

Taiwan is self-ruling but China still sees it as part of its territory to be reunited.

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EDITORIAL

Unhealthy secrecy

Two months ahead of the dramatic US presidential election, the spotlight has shifted to the health of candidates. Probably, hard core and acerbic partition politics was making the campaign overheated and Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton's ailment proved to be a major distraction.

The 68-year-old former US secretary of state was on Sunday taken sick and had to be rushed out of the 9/11 anniversary commemoration at Ground Zero in New York after a 90 minute presence. Her black van pulled up near the site where she stood with her aides around her. As the door opened and Hillary tried to step in, she seemed to have stumbled more than once, going by a video that has gone viral on the Internet. At one point of time, the former first lady almost fell off the sidewalk where she stood.

The Hillary campaign's handling of her health scare would affect her image among the electorate.

As Hillary left the 9/11 site for her daughter's apartment in the vicinity, she gave people and the press opportunity to speculate. The only thing heard was that she had got 'overheated' and left in a huff. Till 90 minutes, no one knew what was wrong with the woman who was most likely going to be in the US Commander-in-Chief's chair in less than 60 days. She emerged beaming from the building after some time, proclaiming, "I feel great; was just overheated. It's a beautiful day in New York.

Trust has been the biggest casualty of Hillary's campaign. From the use of private email for official correspondence to the Clinton Foundation's funding, the former New York Senator have had fingers pointed at her several times during the campaign and hasn't emerged unscathed from the controversies.

Republican Presidential nominee Donald Trump has taken advantage of the Hillary campaign's opacity about her health to claim that she lacks the "physical and mental stamina to be the US president. Though Trump has been controversial to the hilt and has fallen out with several segments of American society due to his brazen comments, transparency — including that for his health — has never been his campaign's weakness. In fact, yesterday Trump declared that he is going to declare the full details of his health soon.

Hillary was diagnosed with pneumonia two days ahead of her 'overheating' episode on Sunday. However, her campaign did not come out with the details until long after her health condition became a public spectacle. Though her aides have admitted that the health scare could have been better dealt with, the damage has already been done.

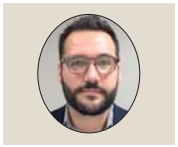
Quote of the day

I am proud of the contribution British Muslims make to this country and proud that Britain is home to people from vibrant and diverse backgrounds.

Theresa May
British Prime Minister



Modi targets low-caste votes as polls in India's biggest state loom





By Iain Marlow and **Bibhudatta Pradhan**
Bloomberg

Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party is seeking to woo Dalits in order to win the state's legislative elections, which would give him greater momentum to push his economic agenda at the national level.

In a small village near the Ganges, deep in the hinterland of Uttar Pradesh, an attack on a 13 year-old girl and her father symbolises the challenge for Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of elections in India's most populous state.

Sudha and her 50 year-old father Charan Singh, who farms a one-acre sugarcane plot, occupy the lowest rung of the country's caste system: they are Dalits, once known as "Untouchables." There are more than 41 million Dalits in Uttar Pradesh, roughly one-fifth of the northern state's population.

One afternoon in August, when Sudha went to drink from a water pump at a local Hindu temple, she said the priest yelled that she was polluting the water and slapped her face. As she ran to her father, the priest followed with a five-and-a-half foot trident, a symbol of the Hindu deity Shiva. With an accomplice, the priest repeatedly stabbed the Dalit farmer and beat him unconscious, Singh said, showing the scars on his back.

Local police, who confirmed the events, charged and jailed the two men under a law that covers crimes against underprivileged groups, and said the pair confessed. They are awaiting trial. It's just one incident in a recent surge in attacks.

Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party is seeking to woo Dalits in order to win the state's legislative elections, which would give him greater momentum to push his economic agenda at the national level.

The vote in Uttar Pradesh, scheduled for early next year, is the most important among a raft of state elections in 2017. It would give Modi a friendly government in the state and boost the BJP's strength in the opposition-dominated national upper house of parliament, where some key legislation has been stuck. A win would also help propel the prime minister towards a potential second term in 2019.

While the BJP dominated Uttar Pradesh in the 2014 national elections, Modi faces a tough fight for Dalit votes against several caste-based parties — in a state where caste is the most important factor for voters.

Singh, who voted for the BJP two years ago, said he will now support the Bahujan Samaj Party led by four-time former state chief minister Mayawati, India's most powerful Dalit politician. Mayawati, who goes by one name, has accused Modi and the BJP of failing Dalits. Singh's neighbors in their village say they too have lost faith in Modi and will vote for the BSP. "When the whole world was saying 'Modi, Modi,' we could not be left behind. We wanted development," Singh said. "But nothing changed. We are disappointed."

The BJP is regarded as a party of upper-castes and the urban business elite. It is also the natural political home for Hindu hardliners who have caused image problems for Modi by attacking Muslims and other lower-caste Hindus.

In Modi's home state of Gujarat, so-called "cow vigilantes" posted a video of them beating Dalits who had skinned a dead cow. Hindus consider cows holy and BJP politicians have urged people to treat cows as they would their mothers.

Dalits dispose of a cow's body when it dies — they earn a living from selling the skin and other body parts. The attacks prompted widespread Dalit protests, leading to the resignation of the state's BJP chief minister.

In the wake of the assaults, the BJP has tried to ease tensions. Modi has said: "If you want to attack, attack me, not Dalits."

These efforts will be crucial in Uttar Pradesh. Party leaders, including president Amit Shah, have sat cross-legged on the ground and eaten food with Dalit families, considered taboo by many upper-caste Hindus. BJP leaders have lionised the legacy of former Dalit leader B R Ambedkar, the architect of India's constitution, and helped Dalits gain access to Hindu temples.

In the last national elections, the BJP swept the state of Uttar Pradesh and won 24 percent of the Dalit vote nationwide, more than any other individual party, according to one analysis.

It's unclear if Modi can repeat that outcome at a state level. A recent poll by the Delhi-based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies showed the ruling Samajwadi Party is ahead of the BJP. The survey, conducted in July and August, suggests no one party will win a clear majority, according to Saurabh Mukherjea, Ambit Capital Pvt. Ltd.'s chief executive officer of institutional equities.

"Dalits who had rallied behind the Bharatiya Janata Party during the general elections of 2014 seem to be reverting to Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party," Mukherjea wrote in a research note on August 25. "With the absence of a chief ministerial candidate also hurting the BJP, it appears unlikely that the BJP will be able to repeat the success story of 2014 general elections."



A file photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with BJP President Amit Shah at an election rally in Bihar.

In the city of Aligarh, where pot-holed roads are choked with bullock carts, local BJP leaders recently led a motorcycle rally. Carrying Indian and BJP flags on bamboo poles, supporters gathered around a local BJP leader and showered him with rose petals.

BJP organiser Jai Thakur said the party is trying to win Dalit support, insisting Mayawati's party has been unable to stop attacks against them and had done nothing over its four terms to improve the state's infrastructure.

He said Uttar Pradesh's predominant Yadav caste — one of the so-called "other backward classes" who account for roughly half of the state's population — and Muslims, which have both tended to vote for the Samajwadi Party, are also fed up. "While the other parties are using Dalits as vote banks, their condition is not improving," Thakur said.

Diwakar Shukla, a 29-year-old at the rally, said Modi's efforts appealed to rural youth. "These small regional parties who have ruled the state for decades, they have not provided roads, electricity, jobs or anything to youths."

Above a demolished shop in a small town in Uttar Pradesh's rural Sambhal district, Mayawati's BSP party is working to foil Modi's plans to win the state.

Despite not winning a single seat in the last federal election, the BSP received nearly 20 percent of the vote in the state and local BSP leader Pratap Singh said his party plans to win over Dalits in Uttar Pradesh by promising to shower them with benefits.

"Only the corporate houses get benefits from Modi's policies, not the poor," Singh said. "His efforts to woo Dalits are not there on the ground."

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Saving South Sudan from its founding fathers



By Eli Lake
Bloomberg



Actors George Clooney (left), Don Cheadle (centre) and The Sentry co-founder John Prendergast discuss The Sentry's investigation into the ongoing humanitarian crisis in South Sudan during a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington DC, yesterday.

Five years after gaining its independence, South Sudan is a basket case. It is wracked by civil war. Its leaders have looted the treasury. Many of its people are on the brink of starvation.

Now some of the most high-profile champions of the young nation's independence are calling on the US government and international banks to treat its leaders the same way Washington treats terror networks and drug cartels.

The recommendation is found in a devastating report released today from the Sentry, a new organization founded by the actor George Clooney and a human rights advocate, John Prendergast, to track the illicit financing of African wars.

Clooney and Prendergast were some of the most persistent advocates for the 2011 referendum that resulted in South Sudan gaining independence from Sudan.

Today both men are advocating for the exposure of that country's government. In a forward to the report, the two write: "South Sudan's top officials have benefited both financially and politically from the continuing war and atrocities committed within their country."

The details uncovered by the Sentry's researchers are damning. While their armies rip the country apart, President Salva Kiir Mayardit and former vice president Riek Machar Teny have set their families up in lavish estates in Nairobi, Kenya and Kampala, Uganda.

South Sudan saw its fortunes rise exponentially after the 2005 peace deal that gave the area semi-autonomy and promised the referendum. By 2006, the government's budget was at $1.7bn and growing. This windfall was largely divided between the warlords. For a while, Kiir and Machar were able to share the wealth. But after South Sudan briefly cut off oil to the north and then the global price of oil dropped in 2013, the alliance between the two rivals fell apart, and that December civil war broke out.

The president's 12-year old son owns a 25 percent stake in a profitable holding company, while Kiir's other children and wife own pieces of several major businesses in the country.

This corruption, which is standard for many third-world nations, also contributes directly to the suffering of South Sudan's people. One striking example is the case of General Paul Malong Awan, who recruited a militia responsible for mass killings in Juba, the capital, in 2013.

In 2015, the US drafted a UN resolution to place Malong on a list of sanctioned individuals who had violated the cease-fire in South Sudan, but that measure was blocked by Russia and Angola.

The report says Malong has taken more than 80 wives and has fathered more than 100 children. Many of those children have been entrusted with stakes in major businesses, particularly in the Northern Bahr El Ghazal province, where he is governor. The report found that Malong or his family owned two palatial estates in Uganda and a mansion valued at $2 million in a gated Nairobi community.

Given the misery of South Sudan's people since independence, some critics have concluded that, in retrospect, the push for the referendum that created the country was not worth it. But that's the wrong lesson.

Before independence, when the South Sudan region was ruled by the regime of Omar Al Bashir in Khartoum, the largely Christian and animist peoples were treated as second-class citizens. The north and south fought horrific civil wars between 1955 and 1972, and then again between 1983 and 2005.

The second Sudanese civil war, which claimed at least 2 million lives, was ended only after the Sudan People's Liberation Army was promised the 2011 referendum on independence.

In an interview Sunday, Prendergast told me the mistake the US, the World Bank and other Western institutions made in South Sudan was not the push for independence, but rather the failure to check the rampant corruption of South Sudan's political and military leaders.

"The US invested tremendously in the capacity-building of the state, without dealing with the root cause of the conflict," he said. "This horrific corruption."

He has a point. Between 2010 and 2015, the US Agency for International Development poured nearly $3bn into South Sudan. Since 2011, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has granted more than $6bn in aid.

Prendergast said all of this money was supposed to build the institutions that would make for good government and stamp out graft. But instead, it was like "spending money on a house being eaten by state-sponsored termites."

Indeed, Prendergast said, from the very outset, the courts, police and other checks on power that foreign aid was supposed to be building up were "deliberately disempowered" by the political and military leaders.

The roots of this problem go back a decade. South Sudan saw its fortunes rise exponentially after the 2005 peace deal that gave the area semi-autonomy and promised the referendum. Overnight, a proto-state that had had just a six-figure annual budget gained control over valuable oil resources.

By 2006, the government's budget was at $1.7bn and growing. This windfall was largely divided between the warlords. For a while, Kiir and Machar were able to share the wealth. But after South Sudan briefly cut off oil to the north and then the global price of oil dropped in 2013, the alliance between the two rivals fell apart, and that December civil war broke out.

It's a conflict that continues to destroy the country. The Sentry recommends that for now, the US should lead an effort to make the ill-gotten money the country's warlords are fighting over as toxic as possible.

This means pushing for multinational targeted sanctions on these kleptocrats and tracking their wealth the way the US government and banks in the past have hunted down the terror leaders and drug kingpins.

It's a bold proposal, particularly coming from Clooney and Prendergast, who did so much to awaken the world to the cause of South Sudan's independence. Now they now must rally the world again — to the cause of saving South Sudan from the men who liberated it.

The writer is a Bloomberg View columnist writing about politics and foreign affairs.

September 11 and the long-lost joys of flight



By Alyssa Rosenberg
The Washington Post

When I was 16, I got on a plane departing from Boston's Logan International Airport, bound for England. I was on my way to visit my pen pal, which in retrospect is not the most anachronistic part of this story. That began when a heavy snowstorm diverted the flight from Manchester to Norwich, on the other side of the country. I took the trip at a time when cellphones were not yet universal, much less cellphones with international plans or swappable-SIM cards, and I was traveling abroad alone for the first time. Anxious about how I'd let my friend and his family know that I might not arrive for hours, I paged a flight attendant, who went to inquire about our schedule. On her return, she asked me to leave my seat and follow her - to the cockpit, where she buckled me in and left me to chat with the pilot and co-pilot, all the way through our eventual take-off and landing in Manchester.

Nine months later, the events of Sept. 11, 2001, turned that experience into an immediate relic. Nine days after the attacks, I flew again out of Logan, from which American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, had been hijacked. The troops providing security insisted that my pediatrician fax the prescription for my EpiPens to the airport to prove the injectors weren't intended to be used as weapons.

I tell these stories not out of any lingering sense of trauma, but from a place of wistfulness. The 9/11 attacks, which happened 15 years ago, had wide-ranging impacts on American policy and culture, many of which we're still entangled in. And while the attacks were unprecedented in their violence and the holes they left in American cities, these four hijackings were the fatal endpoint of a slow-growing decay in the trust and glamour that defined American air travel in an earlier era.

Despite the scale and lethality of the 9/11 attacks, they represented the return of skyjackings in a new, more deadly form, rather than an entirely new form of violent crime.

As Brendan Koerner explained in his wonderful 2013 book, "The Skies Belong to Us: Love and Terror in the Golden Age of Hijacking," skyjackings raged like an epidemic during the 1960s and '70s, an era when "a more pervasive sense of hopelessness, a feeling that no amount of civic engagement could ever salvage a system that had been rigged to serve a selfish elite," spread among many Americans.

Airlines initially responded by making it policy that pilots and airline crews should cooperate with hijackers in hopes of avoiding violence, even to the extent of training pilots to land in Cuba, a popular destination for skyjackers, or to explain in Spanish that they couldn't make it all the way there. But, as Koerner writes, "By the end of 1972, the skyjackers had become so reckless, so dismissive of human life, that the airlines and the federal government had no choice but to turn every airport into a miniature police state."

Congressional legislation and executive action by President Nixon brought metal detectors to US airports. And for a time, deterrence worked — so well, in fact, that skyjackings came to been as a relic of the past. Koerner writes:

"After 1991 skyjacking disappeared entirely from America's aviation landscape: over the next nine years, not a single commercial flight was seized in American airspace. As the skyjacking threat grew more remote with each passing year, airlines came to view security as an expensive nuisance ripe for trimming. They doled out contracts to private firms that submitted absurdly low bids; those firms, in turn, routinely provided less personnel than promised, or hired screeners whose only training consisted of watching twenty-minute instructional videos. By 2000 the average salary of an airport security officer was just $ 12,000."

I recently found myself revisiting "The Skies Belong to Us" not to blame airlines, airports or even federal regulators for the 9/11 attacks. The hijackers, after all, used knives, box cutters and pepper spray, which weren't yet banned on airlines. Koerner's book is a powerful testament to the idea that, at least when it comes to air travel, 9/11 exacerbated a decline already in progress in the belief that flying was safe and that our fellow passengers were trustworthy. In retrospect, those nine years free of skyjackings feel like the exception, rather than a permanent rule.

The hassles and suspicions of flying today are a small part of what 9/11 has cost us. But the wonders of a view from the cockpit, or the joy of meeting someone you love right at the gate, are still losses worth mourning.

Despite the scale and lethality of the 9/11 attacks, they represented the return of skyjackings in a new, more deadly form, rather than an entirely new form of violent crime.

All thoughts and views expressed in these columns are those of the writers, not of the newspaper.
All correspondence regarding Views and Opinion pages should be mailed to the Editor-in-Chief.

Ghani hopes for peace with major warlord

Negotiations with Hizb-i-Islami's Gulbuddin Hekmatyar have been going on since May.

Reuters

KABUL: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani **(pictured)** said yesterday a peace agreement with one of the country's most notorious Islamist warlords is close to being concluded, offering hope of progress towards ending decades of conflict.

Negotiations with Hizb-i-Islami, a militant group of several hundred fighters led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a veteran of almost 40 years of fighting in Afghanistan, have been going on since May, when a draft accord was signed.

But a final agreement has been held up with many on the government side suspicious of bringing the prominent Pashtun warlord into the political fold and civil rights activists concerned about longstanding accusations of human rights abuses against him.



Hekmatyar has been allied at various times with Pakistan, the Washington-backed anti-Soviet mujahideen in the 1980s and the Taliban, who are seeking to force the NATO-led coalition out of Afghanistan and bring in Islamic law.

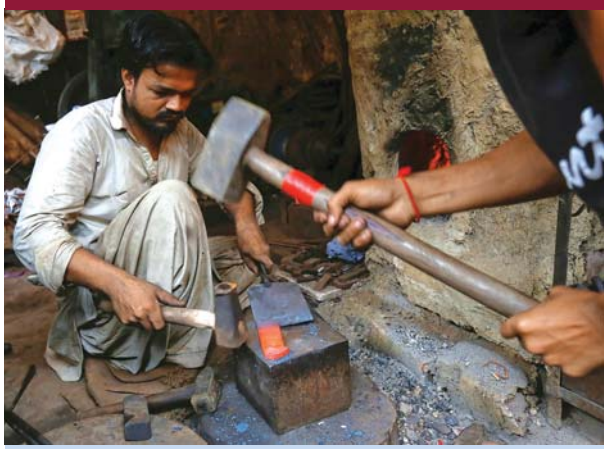
"Some issues are left and those are issues that would be very important for implementing peace," Ghani said at the start of the three-day Eid holiday. "These issues should be solved within a limited period of time."

He thanked both Hizb-i-Islami and the High Peace Council for their efforts to negotiate a deal. "There is hope that, God willing, the agreement will be finalised soon and we will witness a major step toward the creation of peace environment and end of fighting," he said.

Hekmatyar, who was included on the US State Department's Specially Designated Global Terrorist list in 2003, has played relatively little direct part in the insurgency in recent years. But an accord would offer some encouragement that the Kabul government can persuade militant groups to move away from the battlefield and into the political process after failed efforts to start peace talks with the Taliban.

During the bloody civil war of the 1990s, Hekmatyar's forces were accused of killing thousands of civilians in heavy bombardments of the Afghan capital and more recently, they were linked with several al Qaeda and Taliban attacks on international forces in Afghanistan and the Kabul government.

Striking when iron is hot



Men prepare a butcher's knife used for animal sacrifice ahead of the Eid Al Adha festival at a workshop in Karachi, Pakistan, yesterday.

Senior Afghan police officer dead in roadside bomb attack

Reuters

JALALABAD: A senior commander in one of Afghanistan's most dangerous provinces was killed by a Taliban bomb on Sunday, adding to a heavy toll of senior officers killed in recent days.

Zelawar Zahid, police commander in the eastern province of Nangarhar, was killed by a roadside explosive device near a checkpoint in Hesarak district, a spokesman for the local governor said.

His death follows last week's suicide attack on the defence ministry in Kabul, in which an army general and two senior police commanders died.

In a tweet posted by the movement's spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

Nangarhar has been the focus of repeated security operations in recent months.

Afghans mark Eid with prayers for peace

AFP

KABUL: Millions of war-weary Afghans yesterday marked the Islamic festival of Eid Al Adha with prayers and feasting, hopeful of a brief respite from fighting that has seen record-breaking losses this year.

Fellow Muslims across Asia spent the day slaughtering livestock, giving charity to the poor and visiting relatives on Islam's second-holiest holiday.

Afghanistan has seen fighting between government forces and Islamist militants — mainly Taliban insurgents but also Islamic State fighters — reach record levels this year following the 2014 withdrawal of US-led foreign combat troops.

"Our country has been at war for nearly four decades, but the three days of Eid are the happiest days of our life because this is an occasion where families come together and enjoy and celebrate this festival," Kabul resident Nasratullah Wafa said.

The roads of the capital were mostly empty and many were blocked by military to safeguard against possible attacks, while police stood guard over mosques during the morning Eid prayers.

US Brigadier General Charles Cleveland in August said Afghan security forces were on track for their bloodiest year to date, surpassing the roughly 5,000 deaths of local police and troops and around 15,000 wounded in 2015.

He did not offer figures but said there was an increase of about 20 percent over the corresponding period last year.

Afghan forces backed by US air strikes have mounted a new offensive to flush out Taliban insurgents encircling the capital of southern Uruzgan province, officials said Sunday, days after militants stormed into the city.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani meanwhile offered Eid greetings to the nation and said that a peace deal with Hezb-e-Islami, the country's second-biggest Islamist group that has been dormant for a number of years, was imminent.

"Peace is the desire of Afghan nation, and the Afghan nation has consensus for peace. The peace agreement will be finalised very soon," he said.

Pakistan, the world's second most populous Muslim nation, will celebrate Eid Al Adha today because of differences in interpretation of the lunar date.

Around 0.8m refugees in Pakistan under 18: Unicef

Internews

ISLAMABAD: One in six Asian migrants is a child, with Pakistan ranking among the top 10 countries hosting child refugees in Asia, according to a United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) report.

The report titled 'Uprooted: The grooming crisis for refugee and migrant children' revealed that Asia is home to two in five of the world's child migrants, nine out of 10 refugees from Asia find refuge within Asia. Pakistan is closely followed by Afghanistan, Turkey, Myanmar, India, Azerbaijan and Bangladesh.

More than 19 million people have been internally displaced by conflict in Asia. A total of 1.5 million were displaced in Pakistan as of last year.

There were close to 300, 000 refugees originating from Pakistan in 2015. Children accounted for 58 percent of all Pakistani-origin refugees, the highest proportion in the region.

"Many of the youngest refugees have known only conflict and deprivation in their short lives," states Unicef executive director Anthony Lake in the report.

"If we fail to provide them — and all child refugees and migrants — with opportunities for education and a more normal childhood, how will they be able to contribute positively to their societies? What price will we collectively pay for that failure?"

Among the top 10 countries hosting the largest number of international migrants under 18 years, Pakistan ranks fifth with around 0.8 million international migrants under the age of 18 years and some 1.6 million in total.

Messengers of peace



An Afghan boy feeds pigeons at the Hazrat-i-Ali shrine in Mazar-i-Sharif yesterday.

Musharraf defends backing US-led Afghanistan war

Anatolia

KARACHI: Pakistan's former military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf has given a passionate defence of his decision to join the US-led war on terror, saying his country was left with no other option.

"The whole world had supported the US invasion of Afghanistan after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Pakistan alone could not oppose that," Musharraf, who had toppled the previous government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 1999 , said in an interview with local *Dunya TV* on the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, which killed around 3,000 people.

The attacks led to the war in Afghanistan to oust the Taliban government, which was protecting since-slain Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden.

"We had taken the right decision, keeping the post-9/11 circumstances in view", Musharraf said rebutting an oft-cited notion that he had surrendered to a US threat of sending Pakistan to the stone age.

"This is absolutely wrong to say that I had surrendered to a telephone call made by Colin Powell [US secretary of state at the time]. We simply joined the war against terrorism as it was in our own interest," said Musharraf who was forced to resign in 2008 amid an impeachment threat by parliament.

He also claimed that rival India was ready to provide bases to US forces for the Afghan war.

"The US would have invaded Afghanistan from India even if Pakistan had refused to do that [provide bases to the US]. But [then] we would have been completely isolated," he added. The 72-year-old former army chief is currently living in London, and has recently been declared an absconder in a string of cases against him.

Snow leopards' return brings hope to remote Afghan region

AP

WAKHAN, AFGHANISTAN: In a picturesque corner of Afghanistan, a unique conservation effort has helped bring the elusive snow leopard back from the brink and given hope to one of the poorest and most isolated communities on earth.

The leopards range across the snowy mountains of a dozen countries in Central and South Asia, but their numbers had declined in recent decades as hunters sought their spotted pelts and farmers killed them to protect livestock. Now they appear to be thriving, thanks to a seven-year programme and a newly declared national park. Scientists who have been tracking the shy leopards estimate there are up to 140 cats in the Wakhan National Park, established two years ago across 1 million square hectares. Stephane Ostrowski, a specialist with the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society, says that's a healthy and sustainable number, and indicates that other species like the Siberian ibex and golden marmot — the leopards' main prey — are also doing well.

The WCS believes global leopard numbers could be much higher than a previous upper estimate of 7,500, after data gathered by Ostrowski and others showed there could be more than 8,000 in just 44 percent of the animal's known range. The World Wildlife Fund lists the species as "endangered."

His findings are the result of research carried out in one of the most hard-to-reach places on earth. The Wakhan corridor is nestled high in the Hindu Kush mountain range and cut off by snow for most of the year. The 15-year-old war with the Taliban rages 30 kilometres (18 miles) to the south, and the nearby borders with Tajikistan, Pakistan and China are usually closed.

The United Nations Development Program funds and oversees all the WCS activities in the Wakhan, and will provide $3m for the snow leopard project over the next two years.

Ostrowski and the other foreign and Afghan scientists camp in yellow tents in the Sarkand Valley for months on end, monitoring and maintaining a far-flung network of cameras and traps. In just one year, they collected around 5,000 images of 38 individual cats. They managed to capture four leopards — one of them twice — and were able to fit them with collars and track them with GPS. They hope to catch another two by the end of the year.

They've learned that snow leopards range widely. Like house cats, they mark their territory by spraying and scratching the ground, but unlike their distant relatives, they don't mind getting wet.

"These cats can cross big rivers and swim in extremely cold water," Ostrowski said. One female crossed the Amu Darya river into Tajikistan, stayed a couple of weeks and then returned.

The snow leopards have benefited from conservation programmes going back to 2009, when the WCS began building enclosed corrals with mesh roofs to protect the sheep, goats and cows that are the backbone of the local economy. It was the first step toward bringing modern conservation techniques to Wakhan, where the population of around 17,000 lives off of subsistence farming.

Violence & arson in Karnataka over Cauvery water

The Supreme Court modified earlier order and asked Karnataka to release 12,000 cubic feet of water per second daily from the river to Tamil Nadu until September 20.

IANS

BENGALURU: Widespread violence broke out in southern Karnataka yesterday over the Supreme Court order to release Cauvery river water to Tamil Nadu, with angry Kannadiga protesters torching over 30 buses of a Tamil-owned bus depot in Bengaluru.

The KPN bus depot at the Kengeri yard glowed orange as flames leapt up and smoke engulfed the sky as the buses were gutted. A few hundred protesters entered the bus depot and reportedly manhandled the drivers and other employees.

Rajesh Natarajan, Managing Director of Salem-headquartered KPN Tours and Travels Limited claimed that 40 buses were set on fire.

A dozen trucks bearing Tamil Nadu registration were smashed and their goods thrown on the streets.

A woman TV journalist and her cameraman were also beaten up by protesters in the tech city.

Bengaluru City Police clamped prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code as a preventive measure in the evening.

About 10 platoons of Rapid Action Force and Central Reserve Police Force were deployed in sensitive areas across the city to prevent protesters from damaging public property, including vehicles bearing Tamil Nadu registration numbers.

"We have taken about 200 protesters into custody on the charges of rioting, arson and resorting to violence to damage public property and causing unrest in the city," State Home Minister G. Parameshwar said.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has called an emergency Cabinet meeting today morning to discuss the Cauvery issue.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh spoke to Siddaramaiah and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa about the tense situation, over phone.

Siddaramaiah said he has requested the Centre for additional security forces.

Pro-Kannada protesters also pelted stones at lorries bearing Tamil Nadu registration numbers near Hubli Bypass and vandalised many vehicles.

Hundreds of pro-Kannada activists demonstrated in many areas of the city, protesting against attacks on Kannadigas and Karnataka-registered buses in Chennai and some parts of Tamil Nadu.

In view of the brewing tension, inter-state buses with Tamil Nadu registration suspended services to the neighbouring state. Trucks and other vehicles also withdrew operating in the city.

Offices and eateries were shut as panic spread after the Supreme Court order.

Within hours of the court order to release 12,000 cusecs of the river water daily until September 20, protesters took to streets and targeted initially trucks bearing Tamil Nadu registration numbers and attacked hotels and shops in localities where more Tamils reside across the city.

As per the 2011 census, around 2.5 million of the 10 million people in the city are Tamils, constituting the second largest community after Kannadigas.

Vehicular traffic on the busy 150km Bengaluru-Mysuru state highway came to a standstill as hundreds of protesters staged demonstrations at Ramanagaram, Kengeri, Mandya and Srirangapatna against the apex court's order.

In Tamil Nadu, security was beefed up for business establishments owned by Kannadigas and outside the homes of noted Kannada personalities, police said.

A group of unidentified assailants attacked the New Woodlands Hotel, owned by a Kannadiga, in Mylapore and police said action had been taken against the assailants.

A hotel employee confirmed the incident, adding that no one was injured.

A bench of Justice Dipak Misra and Justice Uday Umesh Lalit gave the direction for 12,000 cusecs of Cauvery water release, modifying its September 5 order by which it had asked Karnataka to release 15,000 cusecs of water every day for the next 10 days. It also rejected Karnataka's plea to keep the September 5 order in abeyance.

The court directed the next hearing of the matter on September 20.

Expressing disappointment over the order, Parameshwar said the government would again approach it to modify the latest order due to water shortage in the reservoirs.



People watching a truck from neighbouring Tamil Nadu state burns after it was set alight by pro-Karnataka activists in Bengaluru yesterday.

Panel fails to reach deal on water-sharing

IANS

NEW DELHI: No agreement could be reached between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu on water-sharing at a meeting of the Cauvery Supervisory Committee yesterday.

It was decided that the Central Water Commission will draw up a new protocol for online collection of data related to rainfall and flow of water on real time basis in the river, which may be shared simultaneously with all the states concerned, said a statement.

The panel had met to decide on the quantum of Cauvery water to be released to Tamil Nadu and other states. The committee took a detailed presentation from the chief secretaries of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Puducherry and the representative from Kerala.

"It tried to reach to a conclusion but Tamil Nadu and Karnataka did not agree to a particular figure of release of water which was based on scientific facts," the statement said. It said during discussions, it was found that information related to unauthorised withdrawal of water at a time when it is not permitted was not available and that the committee did not wish to pass an order not backed by data.

The panel will met again on Monday.

Kashmir Valley to be under curfew on Eid; mobile and Net services barred

SRINAGAR: Curfew will be imposed across Kashmir Valley on Eid today while all mobile phone services, save BSNL post-paid connections, and Internet services have been suspended, officials said.

Curfew will be in place in all 10 districts of the valley.

All phone services were suspended yesterday evening even as the shutdown continued for the 66th day and later broadband Internet facility on fixed landlines was also stopped.

Internet facilities on mobile phones and other appliances have been suspended since the current spell of violence broke out in July.

Separatists have appealed to locals to celebrate Eid with austerity as a mark of respect for the victims of ongoing unrest, sparked by the July 8 killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani.

They have also called for march to the office of United Nations Military Observers Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in Sonwar area of Srinagar.

Though some areas on Srinagar's outskirts had some shops selling essentials ahead of the festival, mutton and breads remained largely unavailable to the people.

The authorities' decision to impose curfew aims at preventing the march. Shops, businesses, schools, colleges, petrol bunks and offices remained shut on a call by separatists, now extended to September 16. Security personnel have been deployed in Srinagar and other places in the valley.

Restrictions have been imposed in Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama districts, Khanyar, Nowhatta and M R Gunj police station areas of Srinagar city.

Meanwhile, one person was killed and 17, including seven policemen, injured as militants lobbed a grenade at Sherbagh Police Station in Anantnag town.



A man in a balaclava jumps over burning debris during a protest against the recent killings in Kashmir, in Srinagar, yesterday.

UK website's claims on Netaji's death rejected

IANS

KOLKATA: Nixing the "disclosures" of a Britain-based website that had quoted an "ad interim report" sent by Japan confirming the "death" of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in a 1945 plane crash in Taiwan, a section of the revolutionary leader's family, researchers and admirers yesterday said the report had been placed before the Justice M. K. Mukherjee Commission probing his disappearance.

The "much-hyped discovery" of Bosefiles.Info "had found its way into the public domain in 2002. The Commission had numbered it as JMCI exhibit No. 227 series in 2004", said Chitra Ghosh, Netaji's nice and deponent in the Commission.

The Commission, contradicting two earlier panels that looked into Netaji's disappearance, for the first time debunked the air crash theory, affirming the ashes at the Tokyo temple are not his.

"When Justice Mukherjee wrote to Taiwan asking for information about the air crash, the Taiwan authorities wrote back saying there were no reports of any air crash on August 18, 1945, or seven days before or after that date," said Ghosh.

Ghosh said it was significant that there were no photos of Netaji's last hours. "Normally, when a great man passes away, we usually have at least one photo of his death. But that's not the case with Netaji."

Ghosh said with the Narendra Modi government starting the process of declassifying the secret files on Netaji, albeit "very slowly", "we have to wait until all files are classified. Then we will get replies to a lot of questions".

Netaji researcher Purabi Roy said the leader had not died in the crash, and it was stage-managed to enable him to escape to Russia. Members of the Netaji Bhabna Manch, which ordered the media meet, sought to know the fate of the Indian National Army treasury, including gold Netaji carried with him.

NEWS BYTES

President removes Governor of Arunachal Pradesh

NEW DELHI: President Pranab Mukherjee yesterday removed Arunachal Governor Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa from his post, a Rashtrapati Bhavan communique said.

Meghalaya Governor V. Shanmuganathan has been given additional charge of the state, it added. "The President has directed that J. P. Rajkhowa shall cease to hold the office of the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh and has appointed V. Shanmuganathan, Governor of Meghalaya, to discharge the functions of the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh, in addition to his own duties, until regular arrangements for the office of the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh are made," said the communique.

Extradition deal with Afghanistan

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet yesterday approved the inking of an Extradition Treaty between India and Afghanistan.

A Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the signing and ratification of the treaty, said an official statement.

According to the government, the treaty would provide a legal framework for seeking extradition of terrorists, economic offenders and other criminals from and to Afghanistan. The cabinet nod comes ahead of Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani's two-day visit to India from tomorrow.

Deal on 36 Rafale jets in final stage

IANS

NEW DELHI: The deal for buying 36 Rafale jets from France is in final stage, with some "finetuning" going on, Defence Ministry sources said yesterday.

The deal for combat jets in flyaway condition was inked during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France in April 2015.

Sources said some points are being worked upon with regard to the agreement.

A team from France is in the national capital, and both sides are keen to conclude the deal soon.

The Prime Minister's Office has pushed for concluding the deal soon, after over a year's negotiations, in which price had been a major sticking point. While the final price after the negotiations has not been announced, India has bargained for bringing the price close to $8bn.

In April this year, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party claimed in a post on social media that the deal has been finalised at $8.8bn.

However, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar later clarified that it was not an official figure.

In 2012, India decided to ink a deal for 126 jets. As it could not be worked out, the deal for 36 jets came last year.

Both sides also agreed to conclude an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for supply of the aircraft after which a negotiating team was constituted. In May, Parrikar had said the deal is in the final stage and would be concluded in "a couple of months".

Boat race ahead of Onam



Oarsmen row a serpentine boat in unison as they compete in the Mahatma Boat Race at Pamba River ahead of Onam celebrations, at Chengannur, near Allepey district in southern Kerala, yesterday.

Austria delays presidential election re-run

The postponement, to December 4, drew swift criticism, with the FPO calling the government incapable of holding a vote.

Reuters

VIENNA: Austria yesterday delayed a re-run of a presidential election as faulty glue on postal ballots scuppered its second attempt to organise a ballot that could give the European Union its first far-right head of state.

The result of the first election in May, which Norbert Hofer of the anti-migrant Freedom Party (FPO) came within 31,000 votes of winning, had already been scrapped due to irregularities in counting the postal ballots — heightening the embarrassment.

The postal votes, which accounted for around 16 percent of the total votes, were the crucial factor for Alexander Van der Bellen, an independent, to win in May. The postponement, to December 4, drew swift criticism, with the FPO calling the government incapable of holding a vote and a commentator saying it had made Austria a subject of mockery.

In delaying the election from Oct. 2, Interior Minister Wolfgang Sobotka said yesterday that there was a risk votes could be tampered with due to the faulty glue on a "defective envelope". The FPO's secretary, Herbert Kickl, said it showed the government was "incapable of ensuring a proper election".

The delay also put attention back on an election that has polarised opinion at home and across a continent where the impact of mass immigration driven by war and poverty in the Middle East and Africa is starting to dominate the debate.

Hofer's near-victory in a country at the sharp end of the immigration crisis reflected a rising tide of populism in Europe that spread to Britain with June's vote to quit the European Union - an outcome some believe will buoy support for him.

Opinion polls have given him the edge in the ballot for a role that is largely ceremonial. A win for the FPO would be of huge symbolic significance in an anti-establishment political climate and with parliamentary elections due in 2018.

Asked at a news conference if the double setback might damage Austria's reputation, Sobotka said: "The laugh is always on the loser." Van der Bellen, a former Green Party leader, won May's vote by less than 1 percentage point from Hofer.

The FPO then successfully challenged the result in the constitutional court, citing procedural irregularities, forcing the re-run.

The delay was "unfortunate but correct", van der Bellen told a news conference, urging supporters to "move on and win together on December 4". For some, however, the prospect of another delay or contested result was too much. "It's terrible. I really wonder if it's worth bothering to vote again, if we even need a president," 50-year-old office worker Margit Freudenthaler said.

Independent political consultant Thomas Hofer said: "A democracy that had been portrayed as stable and a bulwark against crisis now shows itself not even able to organise elections properly. "Once again, Austria is a laughing stock." However, political analyst Peter Filzmaier said that, while the postponement was an embarrassment, discovery of the faulty ballot forms had left the government with no other option.

The Human Hand



French fashion designer and sculptor Nicole Farhi poses with 'Last Chord' during a photocall to promote her new sculpture exhibition 'The Human Hand' in London yesterday.

Opposition wins parliament seat in Belarus for first time since 1996

Reuters

MINSK: Lawmakers loyal to hardline Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko retained power in an election on Sunday, but the opposition's win of a seat for the first time in 20 years could help the ex-Soviet nation further improve ties with the West.

The opposition, which has not been represented in the 110-seat parliament since 1996, had not been expected to gain any seats, but in a concession to Western calls for greater transparency its candidates were able to register more easily. External monitors were also given access to the vote count.

Lukashenko, in power since 1994, has kept Belarus in a close strategic alliance with Moscow. However, some cracks appeared in the relationship following Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and since then Minsk has made overtures to the West.

Anna Konopatskaya, a member of opposition party United Civil Party, won a place in parliament, election results showed. Independent candidate Elena Anisim, who has links to the opposition, was also elected.

The presence of the opposition in parliament will not change the political landscape, but it shows the authorities are willing to make some adjustments in the interests of boosting Western ties.

"We've done everything so that there aren't complaints from the Western side. We accommodated their requests," Lukashenko told journalists after casting his vote in Minsk.

Relations between Minsk and the West have warmed since recession-hit Belarus held a peaceful presidential election last October.

The release of political prisoners and Lukashenko's role in hosting Ukraine-Russia peace talks also eased international criticism of the veteran leader, who the United States once said ran Europe's last dictatorship.

The European Union ended five years of sanctions against Belarus in February. The United States has also relaxed some of its restrictions on Minsk and said the authorities' handling of Sunday's vote would be a factor in an upcoming review of sanctions.

"For the Belarussian authorities, this election is more an issue of foreign than domestic policy," said Denis Melyantsov, senior analyst at the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies.

Opposition groups did not stage a mass boycott or protests like those held over previous elections. Instead they decided to take part in the hope of boosting their support.

Italian quake town may sue *Charlie Hebdo* over 'lasagne' cartoon

Reuters

ROME: An Italian town is pursuing legal action against French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo for a cartoon showing victims of an earthquake there as types of pasta, and another suggesting the mafia was to blame for the death toll of almost 300.

One cartoon, entitled "Earthquake Italian Style", captioned drawings of a bloodied and bandaged man "Penne in tomato sauce", a scratched and swollen woman "Penne au gratin", and a collapsed building with blood and feet emerging from it "Lasagne".

After Italians responded angrily, the magazine, famed for its provocative, taboo-busting cartoons, published a second one, showing a person half-buried under rubble saying: "Italians ... it's not Charlie Hebdo who built your homes, it's the mafia!"

Amatrice, the home of "amatriciana" pasta sauce, was flattened by the quake on August 24. The local government called the cartoons "a macabre, senseless and absurd insult to the victims," Mario Cicchetti, a lawyer for Amatrice city hall, said.

It has asked a local prosecutor to investigate Charlie Hebdo for "aggravated defamation", a crime for which the town would seek civil damages.

Even though the cartoons were published in France, Cicchetti said the legal case could be brought in Italy because they had been widely seen and shared there.

The construction sector in Italy has long been plagued by inattention to regulations, and both regular building work and post-disaster reconstruction has at times been infiltrated by organised crime.

It is now up to the magistrates in Rieti, near Amatrice, to decide whether to take up the investigation against the cartoonists and the magazine's director, Cicchetti said. Charlie Hebdo declined to comment.

Oxford English Dictionary gets an update

Reuters

LONDON: You know, some yogalates could tackle those splendiferous moobs. Confused? Then turn to the Oxford English Dictionary which has included the words among more than 1,000 revisions and updates for its latest update.

Splendiferous, meaning full of or abounding in splendour, joins yogalates, a fitness routine combining pilates exercises with the techniques of yoga, and moobs, unusually prominent breasts on a man, as new entries to the 150-year-old dictionary's collection of 600,000 words.

Other words and phrases in the latest edition include the "Westminster Bubble" of supposedly insular British politicians and civil servants, "gender-fluid", meaning a person with a fluid or unfixed gender identity, and "YOLO" - an acronym for "you only live once".

The Oxford English Dictionary is updated every three months, and September's revamp marks the centenary of the birth of children's book author Roald Dahl.

It is littered with vocabulary described by newly added word: "Dahlesque".

Besides "splendiferous", Dahl-inspired vocabulary in the new edition includes an updated entry for the word "gremlins", the meddlesome imps that sabotaged aaroplanes in Dahl's first children's book in 1943, and "human bean" - a humorous alteration or mispronunciation of human being.

Eid prayer in Moscow



Muslims attend Eid Al Adha mass prayer near Moscow's grand mosque, in Russia yesterday.

German govt says still able to act despite row over migrants

Reuters

BERLIN: The German government dismissed charges yesterday that it has become "incapacitated" because of its failure to agree on a strategy on the refugee question that has sent Chancellor Angela Merkel's approval ratings falling to five-year lows.

Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert acknowledged she and her conservative ally Horst Seehofer, leader of the Christian Social Union (CSU) sister party, had not bridged their differences at a two-hour meeting on Sunday over his demand for refugee limits.

But he brushed aside a chorus of complaints from the opposition Greens and Left parties that the government was rudderless because they were unable to find common ground on the explosive issue that has hurt the conservatives at the polls.

Seehofer wants a law limiting the number of refugees coming to Germany each year to 200,000. Merkel refuses any limits. Their dispute has festered for nearly a year in which more than a million refugees fleeing war and poverty arrived in Germany.

"The government was always fully capable of acting on this issue and it is still capable of acting," Seibert told a regular government news conference after being grilled about the divisions in Merkel's conservative bloc. "We're in the middle of an arduous and formidable process," he said. "We accomplished a lot but have a lot of work to do." The CSU has long criticised Merkel's liberal refugee policy and on Saturday Seehofer said the two conservative parties face election defeats if they remain at odds over migration.

In a regional vote on September 4, Merkel's CDU came in third place, behind the anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD) - a shock result that Merkel has acknowledged was a result of her party's pro-refugee stance. The AfD is also expected to perform well in a regional vote in Berlin next Sunday.

Croatia coalition wrangling starts

Reuters

ZAGREB: Croatia was preparing for tense coalition talks yesterday after weekend elections put the conservatives unexpectedly ahead, but short of the seats needed to form a government.

A surge in support for leftist populists saw the Social Democrats, who were widely expected to come out with the largest number of seats, lose ground in a poll where the turnout was a fifth lower than in the last one just 10 months ago.

This reflected popular anger at politicians who are seen to have exploited nationalist rhetoric rather than tackle the country's economic woes, with the populist left Zivi Zid (Human Shield) alliance rising from one to eight seats on promises to be tough on banks and corrupt politicians. Most opinion polls had suggested the Social Democrats would win around 60 seats, and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) would be behind. This was actually the reverse in the election.

Led by former diplomat Andrej Plenkovic, the HDZ won 61 seats in Zagreb's 151-seat parliament and will now need to move quickly to avoid further anger from a disillusioned public. Unemployment is at 13 percent and European Union authorities are urging Croatia to address public debts that eat up 3.5 percent of economic output in interest payments alone.

Plenkovic helped the HDZ win back ground it lost to rivals after its previous government collapsed in June after only five months in power amid rows over political appointments with its coalition partner. The HDZ beat the Social Democrat-led alliance, which won 54 seats. "We are the party that will have the privilege of forming a stable government," Plenkovic said as he claimed victory early yesterday.

SDP leader Zoran Milanovic, a former Prime Minister, said he would not stand as leader in the next party election which will take place in the coming months, but did not resign with immediate effect as some had expected after the result.

Plenkovic's more moderate tone might make for a more stable coalition, although the Most ("Bridge") party, the likely kingmaker with 13 seats, showed little sign of compromising.

Among Most's initial demands were changes to the financing of political parties, lower taxes for businesses and an Adriatic economic zone - a bold proposal that would likely require extensive consultation with Croatia's European Union partners.

"The SDP is realistically too far behind to be in the race to form a future cabinet and if Plenkovic manages to establish a reasonably good cooperation with Most, the government could be stable," said political analyst Ivan Rimac.

But any government will struggle to deliver reforms being urged by the EU, which is monitoring Croatia's debt-burdened economy and an investment environment it sees as business-unfriendly. "(HDZ) would need to strike an agreement with a diminished Most and at least one more small party," said Otilia Dhand, an analyst at risk consultancy Teneo, highlighting the risk that the new cabinet could be as fractious as the old one.

3 French women & youth in court over terror plots

The women are suspected of having planned to strike a train station in the Paris area or to target police.

AFP

PARIS: Three French female radicals arrested on suspicion of planning further attacks after a failed bid to blow up a car in Paris were taken to court yesterday to be charged, prosecutors said.

The women, who are believed to have been spurred by repeated calls by the Islamic State group for attacks in France, are suspected of having planned to strike a train station in the Paris area or to target police.

The three were brought before anti-terrorism judges. They face charges of involvement in a terrorist conspiracy and attempted murder. Sources close to the investigation said they had discussed obtaining suicide belts or ramming cars filled with explosives into buildings.

One of the women was found in possession of a letter professing her allegiance to IS, which ordered or claimed several attacks in France over the past year, including the carnage in Paris in November that left 130 people dead.

A 15-year-old boy arrested in eastern Paris at the weekend was also brought before investigating magistrates Monday to be charged with conspiring to commit attacks.

The youth had written to contacts on Telegram—the encrypted messaging app widely used by jihadists in France — of his plans to carry out a knife attack, sources said. France is on heightened alert after two grisly attacks in July—one in the Riviera resort of Nice, where a truck driver crushed 86 people to death and another in Normandy, where two men slit the throat of an elderly priest.

Prime Minister Manuel Valls on Sunday said the terror threat was at a "maximum" and that the authorities were foiling attacks and smashing jihadist networks "every day". The three women in court Monday were arrested last week as part of an investigation into an alleged plot to blow up a car found abandoned near Notre Dame cathedral on September 4.

They have been named as Ines Madani, 19, Sarah H, 23 and Amel S, 39. The two younger women were known to police for their links to Islamist radicals. Sarah H's current boyfriend, 22-year-old Mohamed Lamine A., was also arrested and brought before judges to be charged on Monday.

Police alerted last week to the Peugeot 607 found in the middle of one of Paris's busiest tourist spots found five gas cylinders, three bottles of diesel and a half-smoked cigarette inside.

A fourth woman, Ornella G, who has been charged with terrorism over the find, told police she and Madani had tried to set the vehicle alight but fled when they saw a man they believed to be a police officer approach. Investigators moved quickly to arrest her suspected accomplices, believing them to be on the cusp of staging an attack.

During their arrest in the southern Paris suburb of Essonne, Sarah H stabbed a policeman, injuring him in the shoulder. Madani was shot in the leg after she also charged at an officer armed with a knife.

Dutch police unveil latest recruits against drones

AFP

OSSENDRECHT, NETHERLANDS: Dutch police are adopting a centuries-old pursuit to resolve the modern-day problem of increasing numbers of drones in the skies, becoming the world's first force to employ eagles as winged warriors.

"It's a low-tech solution to a high-tech problem," police spokesman Dennis Janus said as officers and their feathered friends gave their first public demonstration of their birds' prowess.

A series of tests have been organised since early 2015, and the Dutch forces announced Monday that the results had been good.

The eagles will now be launched whenever drones are believed to be posing a danger to the public, such as during sensitive state visits or if the remote-controlled tiny craft are flying too close to airports. The aim of the tests was to determine the best way to bring down the drones.

"None of the eagles were hurt, but as for the drones, none of them survived," said Janus, brushing aside concerns from animal rights groups.

"The eagles see the drones as prey and intercept them as they are flying, before landing where they feel safe with the drone still in their claws."

Dutch police have now purchased their own birds, which have reached five months old, and will be deployed as needed alongside more traditional four-footed recruits, dogs and horses.

About 100 police officers will be trained in working with the eagles, and the Dutch "flying squad" with its own birds of prey could go into action next summer.

In the meantime, the police will be using birds supplied by a specialist company Guard From Above.

As in other countries, increasing numbers of drones are invading Dutch skies raising concerns in places like airports and restricted, sensitive areas.

"We haven't found any other method to intercept the drones, but we are continuing to explore other possibilities," Janus said, pointing to such things as nets or finding ways to electronically take the drones over.



A young eagle trained to catch drones displays its skills during a demonstration organised by the Dutch police as part of a programme to train birds of prey to catch drones flying over sensitive or restricted areas, at the Dutch Police Academy in Ossendrecht, yesterday.

'Fictional' domestic abuse case hits home in Britain

AFP

LONDON: The verdict in a British domestic abuse case on Sunday prompted a flurry of charity donations and captured front pages — despite being fictional.

The character of Helen Titchener reached beyond the realm of radio this week, as the fictional domestic abuse victim, played by Louiza Patikas, went on trial in "The Archers" programme on BBC Radio 4.

The long-running series usually depicts life in rural Britain but on Sunday found itself at the centre of a nationwide debate on domestic violence, with Titchener found not guilty of attempted murder after stabbing her abusive husband Rob.

"Archers fans weep tears of joy as Helen is found NOT GUILTY," read the Daily Mail front page, while the Guardian wrote: "Helen not guilty in Archers drama that gripped listeners".

The storyline, in which Titchener was emotionally abused by her husband, sparked fervent discussion under the Twitter hashtags #FreeHelen and #TheArchers, and highlighted British courts' approach to controlling or coercive behaviour in relationships.

Jo Stevens, Britain's shadow justice minister, praised the programme's makers on Twitter for their "brilliant scripted/acted" story of domestic violence and women in prison.

A fundraising page titled "The Helen Titchener (nee Archer) Rescue Fund" has raised over £150,000 ($199,000) for the Refuge charity which helps victims of domestic violence. More than 7,600 people have donated to the JustGiving page, with many sharing their personal experiences. "Because I was lucky and got away," wrote one anonymous donor of their reasons for giving, while many others described childhood experiences. "Because my mum was Helen and I couldn't do anything," another wrote.

Hairdresser fined for turning away client in hijab

AFP

OSLO: Norway hit a hairdresser with a roughly €1,000 fine yesterday after she was convicted of discrimination for turning away a Muslim client wearing a headscarf.

Merete Hodne had risked up to six months in prison for religious discrimination for turning Malika Bayan away from her hair salon in Bryne, a small town in southwestern Norway, in October last year.

"The court... has no doubt that the defendant acted intentionally, that she deliberately discriminated against Bayan by expelling her from the salon because she is Muslim," the court ruled.

It imposed a fine of 10,000 kroner ($1,200) and also ordered her to pay 5,000 kroner in court costs. Hodne intends to appeal the decision, her lawyer told news agency NTB. The 47-year-old hairdresser had told the court she saw the headscarf as a political symbol representing an ideology that frightens her, rather than as a religious symbol.

"I see it as a totalitarian symbol. When I see a hijab, I don't think of religion, but of totalitarian ideologies and regimes," she told the judges, cited by daily Verdens Gang. According to the charge sheet, Hodne told Bayan "she would have to find someplace else because she didn't accept (clients) like her."

The hairdresser initially refused to pay a fine of 8,000 kroner for religious discrimination, and the case therefore went before the Jaeren district court on Thursday. While Hodne acknowledged that she could have turned Bayan, 24, away more courteously, she denied the charge of religious discrimination.

Lagarde to go on trial in December

PARIS: IMF chief Christine Lagarde will go on trial in France on December 12 over a massive state payout to tycoon Bernard Tapie when she was finance minister, the court hearing the case said yesterday. Lagarde, 60, will be tried for negligence by the Court of Justice of the Republic—a tribunal that hears cases against ministers accused of wrongdoing in the discharge of their duties. The trial could last until December 20.

The IMF boss, who has repeatedly protested her innocence, risks up to a year in prison and a fine of €15,000 ($16,850) if found guilty. The case stems from Lagarde's handling of a dispute with Tapie who claimed he was defrauded by a state bank in its sale of sportswear giant Adidas.



Refugees and migrants make their way at the Souda municipality-run camp, on the island of Chios, Greece.

Long wait for asylum is 'like death' for refugees in Greece

Reuters

CHIOS: Life in Greece has become so difficult for Amir and Walaa, teachers from Syria, that they sometimes think about returning to the home they risked everything to flee.

"I know in Syria we have war and bombs every day," says Amir, visibly exhausted. But there, "every Syrian dies once. Here we die every day. Every day is bad."

For the past six months, home is a bleak tent on the Aegean island of Chios, pitched in a dusty medieval castle moat, where they wait without work or money for a verdict on their asylum claims.

Until then, they are prevented from going beyond Greece, or even Chios, under a deal agreed in March between the European Union and Ankara that will see those who do not qualify for asylum sent back to Turkey, from where they arrived.

They are among thousands in the same predicament. Conditions at the Souda camp, as well as on other two sites on the island, deteriorated over the summer as the migrant population swelled to three times the capacity. A fire tore through tents during a protest in June, and brawls are frequent at night.

The couple fled the wrecked city of Homs for Europe and arrived in Greece on March 19 — a day before the EU-Turkey deal was implemented — but were barred from leaving the island. Since then, they have been interviewed twice, but have yet to be given any information on their fate, they said.

The process — which includes thorough identity checks, interviews and an assessment of whether Turkey is safe or not for a particular individual - can take weeks. Applicants can appeal a negative decision, prolonging the procedure.

In nearly six months since the EU-Turkey accord was agreed, just over 500 people have been ferried back to Turkey. Each day, she checks a board for when their number — 10,624 — will be called. But they are not called in any particular order, so it's anyone's guess when that may be - "maybe tomorrow, maybe after one week," authorities say.

For everyone in the camp, the days are long. "Five months and 11 days," says Daud, a 45-year-old Syrian, when asked how long he has been in Greece. "Every day there is a fight," he says. After three interviews, he has yet to be told what will become of him and his wife.

Asked what will happen if they are ordered back to Turkey, he replies without hesitation: "No. I will go to Syria and die in Syria."

UK Labour leader set to win despite dire polls

AFP

LONDON: Britain's Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn may be crashing in opinion polls one year after taking charge yesterday — but still looks set to sweep to victory in a leadership contest.

Corbyn, a 67-year-old socialist known for his anti-war, anti-austerity campaigning and opposition to the party's former centrist leader Tony Blair, won a crushing leadership victory exactly 12 months ago. While his left-wing policies are popular with many grassroots supporters, they do not impress most of the party's more moderate lawmakers, who say such views cannot win general elections.

The rebel lawmakers are supporting a leadership challenge by MP Owen Smith and the result will be announced at the party's annual conference on September 24. Corbyn is tipped to win big again due to support from activists and trade unions.

But critics fear that this could extend Labour's period in the electoral wilderness as new Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May consolidates her grip on power. "Mr Corbyn has tapped a huge well of political energy and dissatisfaction," the Guardian, a broadsheet popular with Labour voters, said in an editorial last month.

"But he also has some of the most dismal ratings among Labour voters and the general public of any Labour leader ever, and these ratings are in decline."

The party of Blair and Gordon Brown, which lost power in 2010, is trailing May's ruling Conservatives by an average of 11 points, according to the Nuffield series of British General Election studies.

No Labour party has faced such a deficit 12 months after electing a new leader since modern polling began in the 1950s, according to a Press Association analysis. A poll at the end of August found only 19 percent of Britons thought Corbyn was the right person to lead the government, compared to 51 percent for May.

Over a summer of strife, around 20 members of his shadow cabinet resigned and 172 out of the party's 230 MPs voted that they had no confidence in his leadership.

Many were disillusioned with what they considered a lacklustre performance by Corbyn in trying to persuade voters to stay in the European Union in June's referendum. A wave of Labour-dominated areas were among those to back Brexit.

He has also faced claims of anti-Semitism in the party. An internal inquiry in June found Labour was not overrun by anti-Semitism but reported an "occasionally toxic atmosphere". Labour's most senior elected figure, London Mayor Sadiq Khan, is among those opposed to Corbyn's leadership. "Jeremy's personal ratings are the worst of any opposition leader on record and the Labour party is suffering badly as a result," Khan wrote in The Observer newspaper last month.

"He has lost the confidence of more than 80 percent of Labour's MPs in parliament—and I am afraid we simply cannot afford to go on like this," he added. However, Corbyn's position remains solid thanks to the backing of powerful trade unions and his vociferous grassroots supporters. Labour's membership has topped a record 500,000 under him.

According to a YouGov poll, he is expected to win a crushing victory against Smith of 62 percent to 38 percent. This would put mean Corbyn would win by an even bigger margin than in last year's vote, which he took with 59.5 percent support.

Hillary diagnosed with pneumonia

Both candidates have now pledged to release additional details on their health in the coming days, as the race for the White House heats up with eight weeks to go until Election Day.

AFP



US Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton waves to the press as she leaves her daughter's apartment building after resting in New York.

WASHINGTON: Hillary Clinton's campaign sought to draw a line Monday under her health scare, stating she has no medical ailments other than pneumonia and that the Democratic presidential nominee will return to campaigning as early as mid-week.

The statements came one day after Clinton, 68, fell ill at a 9/11 memorial event in New York and was seen stumbling as she was helped into her vehicle, forcing her campaign to disclose she had been diagnosed with the acute respiratory infection.

The incident — captured on amateur video — gave her rival Donald Trump, 70, a new opening to question her fitness for the nation's highest office. Both candidates have now pledged to release additional details on their health in the coming days, as the race for the White House heats up with eight weeks to go until Election Day. "There's no other undisclosed condition. The pneumonia is the extent of it," Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon told MSNBC.

"I expect that by the middle to the late of the week she'll be back out there on the campaign trail," following a scrapping of her California fundraising trip Monday and Tuesday, he said. "If it was up to her, she would be out there today."

In his first public comments since Clinton abruptly left Sunday's ceremony at Ground Zero, an unusually subdued Trump offered her his wishes for a rapid recovery.

But he also suggested that the former secretary of state's health issues were of longer standing than admitted. "Something is going on but I just hope she gets well and gets back on the trail, and we'll be seeing her at the debate" in two weeks, the Republican candidate told Fox News.

The unexpected turn of events has turned a conservative angle of attack into a serious line of questioning about Clinton's health and why it took two days to reveal the pneumonia diagnosis.

"Antibiotics can take care of pneumonia. What's the cure for an unhealthy penchant for privacy that repeatedly creates unnecessary problems?" asked David Axelrod, a former White House aide to Barack Obama, on Twitter. Fallon admitted: "I think in retrospect we could have handled it better in terms of providing more information more quickly."

But Clinton's communications director Jennifer Palmieri noted: "It is a fact that public knows more about HRC than any nominee in history."

The episode has fuelled fresh speculation and conspiracy theories on the internet, already awash with unsubstantiated rumors Clinton may have a brain tumor, Parkinson's or dementia. #HillarysBodyDouble was trending on Twitter Monday.

The root of persistent claims about Clinton's health lies in 2012, towards the end of her tenure as secretary of state. A stomach virus and dehydration prompted her to faint, causing what her doctor said was a concussion. Doctors said they found a blood clot on the brain. Clinton later received the all-clear.

Fallon assured that "there was nothing here in terms of anything that was caused by what happened in 2012." He also said Clinton's team would be releasing medical records "in the next few days" in order to "further put to rest any lingering concerns about what you saw yesterday."

The former first lady has dismissed rumors about her health, but Trump has repeatedly raised doubts about Clinton's stamina and physical strength, and yesterday questioned her campaign's account of the current episode. "They say pneumonia on Friday, but she was coughing very, very badly a week ago and even before that if you remember, and this was not the first time," he told CNBC.

Drawing a contrast, Trump told Fox he had a physical last week and would release the details once test results are back.

"I think they are going to be good. I feel great but when the numbers come in, I'll be releasing very, very specific numbers," said the real estate mogul, who was in Washington on Monday for the soft opening of his new hotel.

Forced to cancel a California fundraising trip, Clinton was recovering at her home in Chappaqua, New York.

She "continues to feel better, but intends to remain at home today, following her doctor's recommendation to rest," said spokesman Nick Merrill.

What happens if a poll candidate drops out?

AFP

WASHINGTON: What happens if a candidate for the White House is forced to quit the race? Who steps up to fill their shoes?

It's a question suddenly under the spotlight yesterday as Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton battles a case of pneumonia that left her feeling so poorly she abruptly left a high-profile 9/11 memorial ceremony a day earlier.

The former secretary of state, 68, was resting at home in Chappaqua, New York and cancelled appearances at events scheduled for yesterday and today in California.

"(Clinton) continues to feel better, but intends to remain at home today, following her doctor's recommendation to rest," campaign spokesman Nick Merrill said. The US Constitution gives no guidance on instances when a candidate is unable to finish a political race.

The procedures are found by delving into the internal regulations of the political parties.

Article two, section seven of the Democratic Party bylaws states that "a special meeting to fill a vacancy on the National ticket shall be held on the call of the Chairperson."

Republican Party regulations describe a similar procedure.

At the Democratic Party gathering, the decision would be based on a majority vote by those present.

But there's little precedence to guide their choices.

Although Clinton is expected to make a full recovery from what appears to be a routine illness, analysts have floated names of those who could take on the party mantle should she be forced to drop out.

They are: Clinton running mate Tim Kaine, grassroots darling and Clinton's primary challenger Bernie Sanders, and current Vice President Joe Biden.

David Lublin, a professor of government at American University, said Democratic party officials could choose anyone who meets the criteria to serve in the nation's highest office.

"It would certainly would be uncharted territory," he said, adding that in his opinion, the most logical choice would be Kaine, followed by Sanders and the popular Biden.

Jeanne Zaino, a professor of political science at Iona College in New York, said the parties have kept the process "purposely vague because it gives them the opportunity to make the best decision, rather than tie their hands with some kind of process that would give them a nominee they will not be comfortable with."

Both experts were doubtful that Clinton would exit the race over health concerns. "I don't expect Clinton to step down. She has an illness that is treatable," Lublin said.

Added Zaino: "This has been such a crazy election season, I wouldn't been surprised if anything happened, but that is something I am not expecting at all unless her health is far worse than we have been led to believe."

Clinton's departure from the 9/11 ceremony at New York's Ground Zero on Sunday, captured on amateur video, showed her wobbling and being held up by members of her entourage as she got into a vehicle.

The episode has fueled fresh speculation and conspiracy theories on the internet, already awash with unsubstantiated rumors Clinton may have a brain tumor, Parkinson's or dementia. The root of the persistent claims about Clinton's health lies in 2012, towards the end of her tenure as secretary of state.

A stomach virus and dehydration prompted her to faint, causing what her doctor said was a concussion. Doctors said they found a blood clot on the brain.

Clinton later received the all-clear. In recent US presidential history, there's been only one case of a candidate dropping out. Senator Thomas Eagleton, who was the running mate of Democratic nominee George McGovern in the 1972 race, was forced to quit after it was revealed that he suffered from depression.

Top black writer blasts US 'Third World' police

AFP

PARIS: The United States is cursed with "Third World police" which has led to "almost state-sanctioned" killings of people from minority groups, one of the country's leading black writers said Sunday.

Marlon James, who won the prestigious Man Booker Prize last year for his epic novel "A Brief History of Seven Killings", told a literary festival in Paris that some officers thought themselves above the law, comparing them to death squads during the "dirty war" run by Argentina's military rulers in the 1970s.

"What people like me find alarming is there is almost state-sanctioned violence in America, particularly with the police," said the Jamaican-born novelist, who has lived in the US for more than two decades.

"America has developed a weird kind of Third World police, which horrifies people like me and my friends from Kenya or Nigeria.

"The whole idea that you are beyond the law you are serving and protecting, and that killing people will not have consequences, is something that we who migrated to America thought we had got away from," he told an audience at Festival America.

"This sort of unquestioned authority, straight up killing people is why Black Lives Matter happened," he added, referring to the protest movement that sprung up out of a series of high-profile police killings of black men. "The way that kind of violence is protected... means it is state-sanctioned violence and that is no different to Argentina during the dirty war."

James, 45, whose parents were both police officers in Jamaica, said Americans had to look hard at themselves as well as at their police.

"I don't think it is something that Americans realise because it is mostly a minority that is victimised by it. We are naive in that we never pay attention to violence until it affects us.

"And that is a problem because when it finally does come to us nobody is going to be protecting us. It will end up endlessly repeating itself unless we stop it at some point," he warned.

James' virtuoso Man Booker-winning novel follows a group of people involved in the attempted assassination of the reggae legend Bob Marley in Kingston just before he was to appear at a political rally.

The ironically-titled "A Brief History of Seven Killings" runs to nearly 700 pages, with the New York Times calling it "epic in every sense of that word: sweeping, mythic, over-the-top, colossal and dizzyingly complex".

The writer, who teaches literature at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, was the first Caribbean writer to win one of literature's most prized awards since V S Naipaul in 1971.

Chile unrest



Demonstrators clash with police as human rights activists march in Santiago, Chile, commemorating the 43rd anniversary of the military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet that deposed President Salvador Allende.

Miss Arkansas is Miss America 2017

Reuters

NEW YORK: Savvy Shields **(pictured)**, a college student from Arkansas, won the annual Miss America pageant on Sunday after impressing judges with a jazz dance routine and her answer to a question about her take on presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Shields, a native of Fayetteville and student at the University of Arkansas, was one of seven finalists given 20 seconds to answer highly topical questions on some controversial issues, such as immigration and Clinton rival, Donald Trump. Asked what her take was on Clinton, Shields offered that "if you're trying to be leader of the free world, everything you say and do matters."

She noted that the media has sensationalised the campaign so that it was "hard to tell what is truth and scandal," then added that "both these candidates have done a great job, but they also need to watch what they're doing." Shields, who adopted "eat better, live better" as her platform for the competition, earlier performed a jazz dance.



Leader of Rousseff impeachment drive Cunha could lose own Brazil seat

AFP

BRASÍLIA: Eduardo Cunha, Brazil's scandal-plagued former congressional speaker who spearheaded the drive to remove president Dilma Rousseff from office, could be stripped of his seat if his peers vote him out.

Cunha, who is often compared to the dark, manipulative hero Frank Underwood of the hit Netflix series "House of Cards," used his position as speaker of the lower house to put Rousseff on an unstoppable path to impeachment.

But the 58-year-old conservative lawmaker allied with Congress's Evangelical Christian wing resigned from his position as speaker in July amid swirling accusations of corruption linked to the huge state oil company Petrobras.

Cunha is being prosecuted for allegedly taking millions of dollars in bribes. He will face the music in Congress for having "lied" to other lawmakers about his possession of secret Swiss bank accounts. Cunha denies all wrongdoing.

Cunha was first suspended in May, less than a month after lawmakers voted to open impeachment proceedings against Rousseff. Rousseff was definitively removed from office on August 31, and replaced by her center-right vice president Michel Temer.

Cunha has used a variety of stalling tactics to slow the proceedings that could lead to his ouster from Congress. Analysts say he will play his final card Monday by asking his peers to delay a vote on his fate until after October municipal elections.

He may also argue for a simple suspension, rather than the loss of his seat.

As a last resort, he could also ask that lawmakers allow him to keep the right to hold public office — a right Rousseff also kept after being stripped of her job, despite the country's constitution calling for lengthy bans.

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★ 8/22

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 8/21

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Yesterday's answer

Conceptis Sudoku: Conceptis Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9×9 grid. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3×3 box contains the same number only once.

MEDIUM SUDOKU

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

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

Yesterday's answer

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Diamond arbiters
5 Soda
8 Dr. McGraw
12 Author Bellow
13 Carnival city
14 Billions of years
15 Beige
16 PC key
17 Slightly
18 Become enraged
20 Small pie
22 University teachers
26 Donnybrook
29 Triage ctrs.
30 24 horas
31 Saharan
32 Snoop
33 Probability
34 Belief
35 Wrigley product
36 Void
37 Rosters of "A" students
40 False god
41 Sweet drink
45 Oil cartel
47 Golf peg
49 Incite
50 Wife of Jacob
51 Khan title
52 Oboe insert
53 Flintstones' pet
54 Physique, for short
55 Canadian gas brand

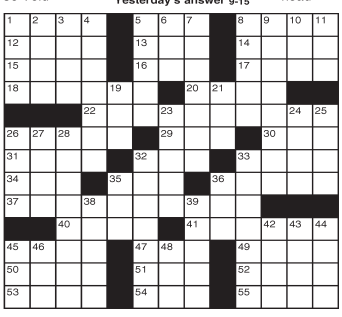
DOWN

1 Exploits
2 Spiked club
3 Chaste
4 Ate soup noisily
5 Madrid museum
6 Tin Man's need
7 Clayware
8 Compote fruits
9 Winter quaff
10 — pickle
11 Leary's drug
19 Before
21 Ninny
23 Physicist Enrico
24 Disencumbers
25 Lip
26 Hotel worker
27 Gaelic
28 Succotash morsel
32 Beer can opener
33 Little-known
35 Cookie-selling org.
36 Packed away
38 Chip choice
39 Golf great Sam
42 "— chic!"
43 Mellows
44 Make over
45 Vintage
46 Architect I.M.
48 Swelled head

Solution time: 25 mins.

		B	O	B			O	R	E			
	A	L	V	A		S	M	E	L	T		
A	W	E	E	K		M	A	R	L	E	E	
C	H	A	R	L	I	E	H	U	S	T	L	E
H	O	T		A	S	L	A	N		H	A	G
		O	V	A	L			F	E	N	G	
	M	I	L	A	N		T	I	R	D		
E	I	N	E			M	O	O	T			
T	S	P		C	R	O	A	T		O	W	N
C	H	A	R	L	E	S	D	A	R	W	I	N
	A	R	O	U	S	E		N	O	L	T	E
		T	U	N	E	S		I	C	E	S	
			E	K	E			C	A	T		

Yesterday's answer 9-15



9-15 CRYPTOQUIP

CJPW-LCLGODF MCOORACCE DPUFWXX AMC ADX CGUXUDJEHJV DU AHWOEHJV D ODXXC: FHDUD MDRACFUM.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN MY HUBBY RIDES DOWN THE AVENUE IN THAT OLD HORSE-DRAWN CAB, HE'S SUCH A HANSOM DEVIL.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals A



Today in History

September 13, 2001

▲ U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell named wealthy Saudi exile Osama bin Laden as the prime suspect behind the terror attacks on New York and Washington

1966: John Vorster was sworn in as prime minister of South Africa

2003: Sweden voted emphatically to reject the euro in a referendum

2006: The solar system's largest dwarf planet, previously designated 2003 UB313, was officially named Eris and its moon was called Dysnomia

2007: The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly

Picture: Associated Press © GRAPHIC NEWS

ALL IN THE MIND

R	E	E	B	R	E	G	N	I	G	Y	E	C	I	U
J	D	B	E	R	U	E	U	Q	I	L	A	L	A	S
R	A	M	R	E	T	A	W	K	L	I	M	V	E	N
I	W	A	S	R	A	E	R	E	E	B	V	E	G	A
R	E	V	E	B	O	N	L	C	P	P	H	C	N	U
P	C	O	R	D	I	A	L	A	N	W	C	I	E	O
D	E	V	E	E	S	I	H	E	K	T	E	P	F	I
L	O	F	R	X	D	S	N	L	A	C	N	D	T	R
E	I	A	S	C	F	H	P	N	H	N	G	V	N	T
O	I	E	S	T	Q	N	C	E	C	R	O	E	O	R
A	J	G	V	O	G	T	I	I	E	U	E	T	E	U
R	L	E	D	P	T	R	D	A	D	R	R	R	N	C
I	S	H	R	P	T	V	A	M	N	I	L	E	E	D
C	A	I	A	S	L	Y	G	T	P	A	V	A	I	A
L	P	W	J	Y	G	M	Q	O	O	V	A	I	I	R
A	S	H	M	A	A	K	C	A	J	E	L	P	P	A
B	B	B	N	S	C	C	O	C	C	O	C	K	T	A
I	L	T	C	O	R	E	C	H	S	I	I	U	L	T
G	O	E	G	G	E	B	R	U	A	L	O	N	H	N
V	D	Z	A	U	R	C	D	I	D	S	E	R	N	I
T	A	A	O	R	V	E	O	R	O	A	O	T	N	O
A	B	D	X	C	P	N	T	C	T	T	R	A	E	T
E	A	M	D	M	O	Y	I	H	P	D	S	T	I	R
I	P	S	T	S	V	M	A	I	N	D	R	N	S	Y

ALE, APERITIF, APPLEJACK, BEVERAGE, BITTER, BOURBON, CAPPUCCINO, CHAMPAGNE, CIDER, CLARET, COCKTAIL, COCOA, COFFEE, CORDIAL, CREAM, ELIXIR, EXPRESSO, GIN, JUICE, LAGER, LIQUEUR, MARSALA, MARTINI, MILK, MINT JULEP, NIGHTCAP, OUZO, PERNOD, PILSNER, PUNCH, RETSINA, SANGRIA, SCHNAPPS, SCOTCH, SHANDY, SHERRY, SODA, PIRITS, STOUT, TEA, TEQUILA, TODDY, TONIC, WATER.

TV LISTINGS

ALJAZEERA

08:00 News
08:30 Counting the Cost
09:00 Al Jazeera Investigates
10:00 News
10:30 Inside Story
11:00 News
11:30 The Stream
12:00 News
12:30 My Cuba
13:00 NEWSHOUR
14:00 News
14:30 Inside Story
15:00 Pricing The Planet
16:00 NEWSHOUR
17:00 News
17:30 The Stream
18:00 NEWSHOUR
19:00 News
19:30 TechKnow
20:00 News
20:30 Inside Story
21:00 NEWSHOUR
22:00 News
22:30 The Stream
23:00 Al Jazeera World

ZEE TV

12:00 Yeh Vadaa Raha
12:30 Sanyukt
13:00 KumKum Bhagya
13:30 Ek Tha Raja Ek Thi Rani
14:00 Jamai Raja
14:30 Tashn E Ishq
15:00 Vishkanya
15:30 Jamai Raja
16:00 Yeh Vadaa Raha
16:30 Ek Tha Raja Ek Thi Rani
17:00 KumKum Bhagya
17:30 Vishkanya
18:00 Tashn E Ishq
18:30 Kaala Teeka
19:00 Sanyukt
19:30 Yeh Vadaa Raha
20:00 Ek Tha Raja Ek Thi Rani
20:30 Jamai Raja
21:00 KumKum Bhagya
21:30 Tashn E Ishq
22:00 Vishkanya
23:00 Brahmarakshas

ANIMAL PLANET

10:00 My Cat From Hell
10:55 Gator Boys
11:50 River Monsters
15:25 Wildest Africa
16:15 Gator Boys
17:02 Deadly Islands
17:49 My Cat From Hell
18:36 Call Of The Wildman
19:00 Call Of The Wildman
19:25 Groomer Has It
20:15 My Cat From Hell
21:10 Deadly Islands
22:05 Tanked
23:00 Groomer Has It
23:55 Bondi Vet
00:50 My Cat From Hell
01:45 Gator Boys
02:40 Deadly Islands
03:35 Tanked
04:30 Wildest Africa

DISNEY

11:10 Hank Zipzer
11:35 Binny And The Ghost
15:15 The Hive
16:35 Binny And The Ghost
17:00 Violetta
17:45 The Hive
17:50 Mouk
18:00 Jessie
19:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
19:20 Liv And Maddie
19:45 Bunk'd
20:10 Austin & Ally
20:35 Shake It Up
21:00 A.N.T. Farm
21:50 That's So Raven
22:40 Good Luck Charlie
23:30 Jessie
23:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
00:00 The 7D
00:40 Hank Zipzer
01:35 Austin & Ally
02:00 Liv And Maddie





NOVO

Ben-Hur (2D/Action) 10:00am, 2:20, 6:40 & 11:10pm
3D 12:05, 4:20 & 8:40pm
Pete's Dragon (2D/Adventure) 12:15, 4:35 & 9:00pm
Taht El Tarabiza (2D/Arabic) 11:00am, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50pm & 12:00midnight
Pete's Dragon (3D/Adventure) 10:00am, 2:15, 6:35 & 11:00pm
Ben-Hur (2D/Action) 12:05, 4:20 & 8:40pm
Lights Out (2D/Horror) 11:30am, 1:15, 2:30, 3:00, 4:45, 6:30, 8:15, 10:00, 11:00, 11:30 & 11:45pm
Bilal (2D/Animation) 10:00am, 12:10, 2:20, 4:30, 6:40, 8:50 & 11:00pm
Baar Baar Dekho (2D/Hindi) 11:00am, 2:00, 5:00, 8:00 & 11:00pm
Sheep & Wolves(2D/Animation) 10:00am, 12:00noon, 2:006:4:00pm
Ashan Khargeen (2D/Arabic) 11:30am, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 6:00, 7:30, 8:00, 9:30, 10:00, 11:30pm & 12:00midnight
Mechanic: Resurrection (2D/Action) 10:00am, 2:00, 6:006, 10:00pm
Blood Father (2D/Action) 12:00noon, 4:00, 8:00pm & 12:00midnight
Sully (IMAX/Drama) 10:00am, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 10:00pm & 12:00midnight **Taht El Tarabiza (2D/Arabic)** 12:00noon, 4:30 & 9:00pm

MALL

Pete's Dragon (2D/Adventure) 9:30am, 3:45, 5:30 & 7:15pm
Freaky Ali (2D/Hindi) 3:00pm
Sheep & Wolves (2D/Animation) 10:30am, 1:30 & 3:15pm
Janaan (2D/Comedy) 12:30pm **Actor In Law(2D/Comedy)** 11:15am
Bilal: A New Breed of Hero (2D/Animation) 12:30pm
Baar Baar Dekho (2D/Hindi) 5:00 & 9:00pm **Ann Maria (2D)** 1:30pm
Ben-Hur(2D/Drama) 7:30 & 11:30pm
Sully(2D/Drama) 8:00 & 11:30pm **Taht El Tarabiza(2D/Arabic)** 9:30pm
Ashan Khargeen (2D/Arabic) 9:30pm **Light's Out (2D/Horror)** 9:45pm
Iru Mugan (2D/Tamil) 9:45am, 5:15 & 11:15pm

ROYAL PLAZA

Sheep & Wolves (2D/Animation) 10:00am, 2:00 & 3:45pm
Ben-Hur (2D/Drama) 9:45am, 9:00 & 11:30pm
Bilal: A New Breed of Hero (2D/Animation) 10:00am
Sully (2D/Drama) 7:45 & 11:30pm
Actor In Law(2D/Drama) 12:00noon
Pete's Dragon (2D/Adventure) 11:45am, 5:30 & 7:15pm
Baar Baar Dekho (2D/Hindi) 3:30 & 7:30pm
Taht El Tarabiza (2D/Arabic) 1:30 & 9:30pm
Light's Out (2D/Horror) 6:00 & 10:00pm
Ann Maria (2D/Malayalam) 3:00pm
Freaky Ali (2D/Hindi) 5:30pm
Ashan Khargeen (2D/Arabic) 9:30pm **Iru Mugan (2D/Tamil)** 12:15 & 1:00pm

ASIAN TOWN

Iru Mugan (Tamil) 7:30, 8:45, 10:30 & 11:45pm
Baar Baar Dekho (Hindi) 5:30 & 11:00pm
Ann Maria (Malayalam) 5:30 & 8:00pm
Pretham (Malayalam) 6:30 & 8:30pm

AL KHOR

Iru Mugan (3D/Tamil) 10:30am, 4:15 & 10:00pm
Pete's Dragon (3D/Adventure) 11:00am, 1:15, 3:30 & 5:45pm
Baar Baar Dekho (3D/Hindi) 12:00noon, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00pm & 12:00midnight **Anna Maria (Malayalam)** 1:30, 7:15pm & 01:00am
Sully (Drama) 8:00, 10:15pm & 12:30am

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PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR	04.02 am	ZUHR	11.30 am	MAGHRIB	05.43 pm
SHOROOK	05.19 am	ASR	02.58 pm	ISHA	07.13 pm

WEATHER Minimum: 30° C Maximum: 38° C

HIGH TIDE 01:15 - 14:45
LOW TIDE 07:00 - 22:00

Hazy to misty at places at first becomes hot daytime with some clouds, relatively humid by night.



ONLINE CHART BUST

www.thepeninsulaqatar.com

MOST READ

1. Arsenal: 5 major talking points from the club's win over Southampton
2. Oil prices suffer fresh losses in Asian trade
3. BMW wheelchairs, high-tech bikes: life in the Paralympic fast lane

TWEET OF THE DAY



INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY



The Alaadin show as part of the Eid Al Adha celebration at the Pearl-Qatar. Photo: Kammutty VP

Pakistani community marks Eid with concert

The Peninsula

DOHA: Lights, colours, music and zealous participation of the crowd through dancing to the beats constituted the Eid gala of Pakistani community at Al Wakrah Stadium yesterday.

On the first day of Eid Al-Adha, the community celebrated the festival with a concert organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior.

Pakistan's Ambassador to Qatar Shahzad Ahmad and Col Abdullah Khalifa Al Muftah, Director, Public Relations at the ministry, were present, along with a large number of community members.

Artistes from Pakistan with their marvellous performance enthralled the fans who celebrated the festival away from their kith and kin.

More than 3,000 people attended the event and hundreds were waiting outside the auditorium.

All participants celebrating Eid were apparently immersed in happiness and joy but in the back of their minds rested homesickness.

"Definitely nothing can beat the Eid one spends with his family and kids... but this event has somewhat made us forget our pain and homesickness," said Zamurd Khan from Peshawar who is a cab driver in Qatar.

Singer Maria was visiting Qatar for the first time. "I have performed in Bahrain but it is my first live concert in Qatar," she told *The Peninsula*.

With a six-year singing background, Maria performs in Urdu and Pashto. In the past, she also tested her mettle in acting. "I started my showbiz career with Pakistan Television as an actress and then switched to singing," she said.

The concert was an open feast for all and present were nationals from other Asian countries.

Haseebur Rehman from Bangladesh was at the event with a friend from Pakistan. "I cannot understand Pashto, but I am enjoying the concert," he said. Another singer Rizwana Khan was from Islamabad. With a masters' degree in political science, she selected the career of singing and sings very well and that too in languages, including Pasthto, Urdu, Seraiki, Punjabi and Potohari, among others. Rizwana trained under Ustab Fateh Ali Khan.

Waheed Achakzai, a prominent Pashto singer from Pakistan also performed. His performance thrilled the audience, prompting them to dance in traditional Pashto style. "I have composed some new songs for this event. I am performing for the second time in Qatar... the love I get from this crowd is matchless," he said.





Pakistan's Ambassador to Qatar Shahzad Ahmad (left) with other officials at the event. (RIGHT) Artistes from Pakistan performing at the concert at Al Wakrah Stadium yesterday.
Pics: Abdul Basit / The Peninsula

Janan Bngash, leader of Pakistani community and the man behind the show, said he was happy with organising such a splendid concert.

"We are thankful to the ministry for granting permission and allocating space," he said, adding he would continue organising such functions in future.

Eid prayer



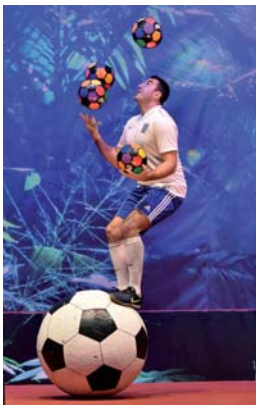
Eid prayer at Omar Bin Al Khattab Mosque at Madinat Khalifa. Pic: Baher Amin / The Peninsula



Picture courtesy: Qatar Tourism Authority







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BUSINESS
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PAGE | 18

'Asset management' is essential: Deutsche Bank CEO

▼ QE	10,534.10	-100.8 PTS
▲ DOW	18,288.29	+202.84 PTS
▼ FTSE100	6,700.90	-76.05 PTS
▲ BRENT	$46.26	+$0.38

PAGE | 19

Tata Steel posts third straight quarterly loss on UK unit



TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2016 • 11 DHUL HIJJA 1437

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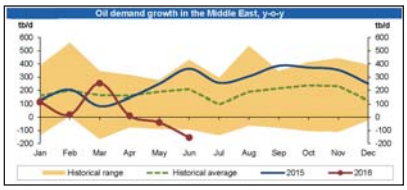




Mideast oil supply to increase this year: Opec

The partial re-start of production in Yemen is the main factor behind the upward adjustment.

By Satish Kanady
The Peninsula



DOHA: Opec has revised the supply of non-Opec countries up 0.35 million barrels per day (mb/d) to show growth of 0.20 mb/d to average of 56.52 mb/d in 2017. The projected growth is mainly due to new production from Kashagan field in Kazakhstan — and a lower-than-expected decline in US shale output.

According to Opec's September report released yesterday, the Opec Reference Basket or ORB rose 42 cent to $43.10/b in August. ICE Brent ended up 62 cent at $47.16/b, while NYMEX WTI was unchanged at $44.80/b. The Brent/WTI spread widened further to $2.36/b in August. Crude price rose on signs of an improving supply/demand balance and US dollar weakness, although a surprise build in US crude stocks, increasing supplies and worries about Chinese demand pressured prices at the end of the month.

Middle East oil supply is estimated to increase by 10,000 b/d in 2016 over the previous year to average 1.28 mb/d, revised up by 20,000 b/d from Opec's August report. The partial re-start of production in Yemen is the main factor behind the upward adjustment.

The ORB recovery in August as supported by a brief rebound in the oil market, which was triggered by speculation that oil producers might agree to curb output at an upcoming September meeting in Algeria. Oil prices were also supported by forecasts that the oil market would tighten in H2, 16, amid an expected healthy draw in global oil stocks and a more balanced market in the next few months, thereby helping to ease excess supply.

The short-lived rally was further driven by short covering by speculators, including hedge funds and other money managers, who had amassed record short positions. In addition, a weak dollar provided support to oil. Nevertheless, the ORB value is still some 9 percent below its last peak in June, as full storage tanks and production that exceeds consumption weigh on markets. Poor refining margins, despite relatively cheap crude feedstock prices, also pressured the oil market as refiners continued to pump more fuel than the market could absorb, resulting in overflowing storage tanks around the world.

In Saudi Arabia, despite increasing transportation fuel requirements, total product consumption declined in July for the fourth consecutive month. Oil demand contracted by 87,000 b/d, with total product consumption at 2.66 mb/d. Oil demand in Saudi Arabia follows a certain pattern, which tends to push oil demand higher in the summer due to additional air conditioning usage, however, the substitution with natural gas, particularly after the commencement of the Wasit gas plant, caused direct crude for burning to drop sharply by more than 0.15 mb/d, or about 17.8 percent, y-o-y, pressuring the overall consumption figures of the country. Total demand of direct crude for the purpose of burning was at 0.70 mb/d in July.

In 2017, oil demand growth is foreseen to rise over the levels see this year as economic momentum gains pace. Saudi Arabia is expected to be the oil demand growth driver in the region with transportation fuels and petrochemical feedstocks projected to be contributing to product growth. However, subsidy reductions, substitution towards natural gas and geopolitical concerns are expected to weigh on product demand growth in 2017.

Opec points to larger 2017 oil surplus as rivals keep pumping

Reuters

LONDON: Opec raised its forecast of oil supplies from non-member countries in 2017 as new fields come online and US shale drillers prove more resilient than expected to cheap crude, pointing to a larger surplus in the market next year.

Demand for crude from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will average 32.48 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2017, Opec said in a monthly report yesterday. That is down 530,000 bpd from the previous forecast. The prospect of a larger surplus than expected adds to the challenge of Opec and non-members such as Russia, who are making a renewed attempt to restrain supplies. Oil LCOc1 is trading at $47 a barrel, half its level of mid-2014, as a supply glut that Opec hoped cheap oil would banish sticks around.

Opec revised up its 2016 and 2017 non-Opec supply forecasts, citing factors including the start up of Kazakhstan's Kashagan oilfield and a lower-than-expected decline in US shale output, and said the immediate outlook was for more production. "It is expected that there will be higher non-Opec production in the second half of 2016 compared to the first half," Opec said in the report.

Opec expects non-Opec supply to rise by 200,000 bpd in 2017, versus a previously forecast 150,000 bpd decline. The revision is mostly due to Kashagan, Opec said, as the long-delayed giant field finally starts up.

On top of that, the forecast for this year was revised up by 180,000 bpd.

QP may join ExxonMobil's Mozambique plan

Reuters

LONDON/DOHA: Qatar Petroleum is interested in the Mozambique gas business of Italian energy group Eni and could opt to join ExxonMobil in buying a multibillion-dollar stake, sources familiar with the matter said.

State-controlled Eni is looking to reduce a 50 percent stake in its giant Mozambique gas acreage as part of plans to sell €5bn of assets over the next two years.

Last month sources said Exxon had reached a deal that could give it an operating stake in the onshore liquefied natural gas (LNG) export plant, while leaving Eni in control of the Area 4 gas fields feeding it.

QP is in talks with Exxon and Eni on some kind of involvement in Mozambique which could involve a joint investment with the US major, one senior QP source said, adding the deal was not a classic joint venture structure.

A second Doha-based source, who declined to be named as not authorised to speak publicly, said QP had been looking at Eni's Area 4 field as well as adjoining acreage of Anadarko Petroleum Corp but added the focus was on Eni. "The expectation is that Qatar Petroleum and Exxon will go in on this together," the source said, adding a QP delegation planned to visit Mozambique before the year end.

The sources cautioned no decision had as yet been taken by the Qatari company.

QP did not respond to requests for comment and Exxon and Eni declined to comment.

Saad Al Kaabi, Qatar Petroleum CEO, recently confirmed the group was looking at assets in Africa.

Located in Mozambique's Rovuma Basin, Eni's Area 4 is one of the biggest discoveries of recent times, holding about 85 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Eni CEO Claudio Descalzi, who has spoken of selling a stake of up to 25 percent, said earlier this month a detailed agreement had been reached with a partner.

In 2013 Eni sold 20 percent of Area 4 to China's CNPC for $4.2bn but since then oil and gas prices have dropped by more than half.

A banker with knowledge of the matter said a 25 percent stake in the field could be worth in the region of €2bn.

Exxon and QP are already close business partners in Qatar. Both companies have jointly moved to exploit international LNG growth opportunities, including plans to build the Golden Pass liquefaction plant in the United States and bidding for exploration acreage in Cyprus.

"The (Mozambique) gas will go east and so having Qatar on board with all its experience makes a lot of sense," a banker with knowledge of the matter said.

Son on board as Note 7 crisis deepens

Bloomberg

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics Co nominated Lee Jae-yong **(pictured)** to its board in a move that allows the son of its ailing chairman to take a more active role just as Korea's largest company faces its deepest crisis in years. Samsung has lost $22bn in market value over two days as the fallout widens over faulty batteries in its Note 7 smartphone. Regulators, airlines and the company itself have warned customers to stop using the devices immediately, while Samsung races to procure replacements. Lee, now co-vice chairman, would be formally elevated to the nine-person board after a shareholder vote in October.

The stock drop suggests the damage to Samsung's brand could go well beyond the early analyst estimates of $1bn for a single product's recall. The company has spent heavily on marketing its name in past years, and had hoped to get a head start on Apple by unveiling the device weeks before the new iPhone emerged. That advantage has now disappeared.

"This is a signal that Samsung needs strong leadership in the midst of risk and uncertainty," said Park Jugun, president of corporate watchdog CEOSCORE in Seoul. "By showing the markets that he's assuming responsibility, Lee Jae-yong may be seeking to take a step forward in the succession."

The 48-year-old known as Jay Y has been taking a larger role since his father Lee Kun-hee was hospitalised in 2014 after a heart attack. While he has taken on more responsibilities, South Korean cultural norms dictate that he doesn't succeed his father while the 74-year-old is alive.

With the board nomination, he will become more involved in strategic decision making, including mergers and acquisitions, the Suwon, South Korea-based company said in the statement yesterday. "This is a highlight of Samsung Group's succession process," said Chung Sun Sup, CEO of Chaebul.com, which researches Korea's family-run conglomerates. "And one last step remaining before Lee Jae-yong is to be given the title of chairman."



A woman walks past billboards of Samsung Galaxy Note 7 at a mobile phone shop in Seoul yesterday.



Samsung shares have plunged 11 percent since Friday, the biggest two-day decline since 2008, after US regulators joined the company in cautioning users to power down their Note 7s and refrain from charging them. The company has said about 2.5 million had been shipped before the recall, including those in the hands of consumers and carriers. Note 7s with new batteries are due to become available on September 19.

Before the problems with the Note 7, Samsung had been experiencing a recovery in sales and earnings that had driven its shares to a record. The recall came just days before new iPhones were unveiled and opens more of the field to Apple in the market for high-end devices.

The Lee family controls the company and about 60 affiliates through a raft of cross-shareholdings. Samsung is the largest of the family-controlled conglomerates, commonly known as chaebols, that dominate South Korea's business landscape.

Creditors back in Greece as reforms delayed

IMF and EU creditors resumes audit of the country's finances.

AFP



ATHENS: Greece's creditors yesterday resumed an audit of the stricken country's finances, a day after Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras **(pictured)** said an EU-IMF rift was delaying progress.

Greece's finance ministry said the meetings, interrupted by the summer break, would begin with talks on a revamped privatisation fund which will be outside Greek state control.

Leftist-led Greece must deliver fresh reforms to unlock $3bn in pending bailout loans and, more crucially, launch negotiations on debt relief later in the year.

Tsipras has made debt solution a top priority, and on Sunday he complained that European Union-International Monetary Fund disagreement over Greek fiscal targets was holding up the talks.

"We are closer than ever before to a solution to this crisis. What is delaying the effort of regaining the trust of the markets is the constant disagreement between the European institutions and the IMF," Tsipras told a news conference at the Thessaloniki international fair.

The Washington-based IMF, a key player in Greece's three bailouts, has said it won't give a penny to the latest one until it sees a concrete plan from the Europeans to substantially cut Greece's massive debt burden.

The IMF and EU creditors disagree on how much Athens can improve its finances through ongoing reforms.

"The IMF has set a deadline for the end of this year... A country that has gone through such a harsh adjustment can't wait any longer. Its people are entitled to a fair solution of the debt issue," Tsipras said.

The Greek premier added that Greece should have already been included in the European Central Bank's quantitative easing programme — a monetary policy used by central banks to stimulate the economy when standard monetary policy has become ineffective.

Eurogroup head Jeroen Dijsselbloem warned Athens on Friday to swiftly deliver as its programme shows signs of lagging behind again.

"The pressure is back on. We really need some progress. The summer is over, pack up the camping gear, get back to work," Dijsselbloem told reporters.

Athens has committed to deliver on the reforms by the end of the month. They include the long delayed launch of the new privatisation fund and reforms in the highly sensitive energy sector.

The EU's Economic Affairs commissioner Pierre Moscovici said Greece must deliver on 15 reforms, with only two of those achieved so far.



Pedestrians walk past an electric quotation board displaying the Nikkei key index of the Tokyo Stock Exchange yesterday.

World stocks spooked by US interest rate hike prospects

AFP

LONDON: European stock markets slumped yesterday, spooked by the prospect of a US interest rate hike as early as this month, and mirroring earlier falls in Asia. Speculation that the Fed may tighten rates in September also weighed on New York, but bargain-hunting lifted Wall Street into mildly positive territory after a weaker start.

This, in turn, helped European markets also bounce off early lows.

Eurozone markets in particular were also worried by signs that the European Central Bank has become less aggressive in its support for the economy, including with its huge quantitative easing programme.

"The market is continuing the trend seen at the end of last week after the ECB met. It believes that the bank does not want to go further with its accommodating policy," IG France analyst Alexandre Baradez told AFP.

A September rate rise in the US had appeared to be off the table following a string of weak data.

But on Friday, US Federal Reserve Bank of Boston President Eric Rosengren renewed speculation of a hike when he said in a speech that higher rates were needed to prevent the economy from overheating.

"While this doesn't necessarily mean that rates will go up in September it still causes uncertainty which historically stocks rather dislike," said Markus Huber, a trader for City of London Markets.

In addition to the comments by Rosengren, a usually dovish Fed Governor, Daniel Tarullo, also signalled his openness to a 2016 increase in a television interview. "There is a consistent undertone building among the Fed Board that delaying rate hikes will hinder rather than assist the economic recovery," said Stephen Innes, senior trader at OANDA.

Leading markets in Europe and Asia fell more than one percent after two Fed officials on Friday suggested the US central bank could lift rates as soon as this month.

US stocks also opened lower, but soon went positive, suggesting some investors seized a buying opportunity after Wall Street equities shed more than two percent on Friday.

About 35 minutes into trade, the Dow Jones Industrial Average stood at 18,092.47, up less than 0.1 percent.

The broad-based S&P 500 rose 0.2 percent to 2,131.11, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index gained 0.3 percent to 5,140.85.

In London, the banking sector led the way down on the prospect of higher rates, with Royal Bank of Scotland losing 3.4 percent and Lloyd's just under four percent.

Mining stocks also dropped as commodities prices fell, with BHP and Rio Tinto both shedding over two percent.

In Frankfurt, Linde shares fell seven percent after the German gas giant and US peer Praxair ended merger talks, leaving intact the number one spot in industrial gases for France's Air Liquide, which fell one percent in Paris.

FTSE 100 closed down 1.1 percent at 6,700.90, while Frankfurt DAX 30 closed 1.3 percent down at 10,431.77 and Paris CAC 40 lost 1.2 percent at 4,439.80.

In Asia, Tokyo Nikkei 225 idex closed down 1.7 percent at 16,672.92 and Shanghai Composite lost 1.9 percent to close at 3,021.98The Hang Seng index lost 3.4 percent at 23,290.60.

IMF weighs lifting funding freeze on Guinea-Bissau

Reuters

ABIDJAN: The International Monetary Fund could lift a suspension on payments aimed at helping Guinea-Bissau emerge from years of political turmoil following an evaluation mission this week, the institution's country representative said yesterday.

The IMF agreed a programme with Guinea-Bissau last year after 2014 elections drew a line under a coup two years earlier —one of a succession that have spawned chronic instability and helped make the West African country a haven for South American cocaine traffickers.

Disbursements were suspended in June, however, after the government took on 34bn CFA francs ($58.3m) in bad loans from two private banks. Donors followed suit and suspended budget support for 2016 equal to around 2.1 percent of GDP.

IMF representative Oscar Melhado said that the Fund welcomed a government decision to cancel the bailouts, whose value amounted to around 5.5 percent of GDP. "The only remaining obstacle is the refusal of the banks to accept the bad portfolio back into their books," he said.

The IMF had argued the bailouts benefited the wealthiest citizens and foreign investors. Authorities had said they were needed to shield the private sector from bankruptcy. Yesterday was a public holiday and the banks, Banco da Africa Ocidental and Banco da União, were not available for comment.

Melhado said the government should also commit to implementing prudent macroeconomic policies and key structural reforms during the visit due to begin today, which constitutes the first and second reviews of the IMF programme.

Disbursements worth 4.1bn CFA could still be made this year if the reviews are approved by the IMF's board in December.

Total donor contributions, including direct budget support and financing for targeted sectors and projects, typically make up around 80 percent of Guinea-Bissau's budget. After the IMF freeze, Finance Minister Henrique Horta described the economic situation, including a budget deficit amounting to about 3.5 percent of GDP, as "catastrophic".

The government of Guinea, which is helping to mediate in its smaller Portuguese-speaking neighbour, said earlier this month that Guinea-Bissau would not be able to pay the salaries of civil servants and the security forces from October.

"We hope that donors will resume support following the IMF. It would depend on each donor's policy," Melhado said.

The IMF visit comes days after an agreement to form a new government, ending a year-long political crisis that has paralysed state institutions.

Swiss bourse looks for alternative EU gateway after Brexit

Reuters

ZURICH: Switzerland's stock exchange is in talks with financial regulators in a number of European countries about opening a new gateway to the EU's single market once Britain leaves the bloc, it said yesterday.

The talks highlight how the City of London's role as the region's leading financial hub is likely to be eroded to some extent as companies seek alternative centres to guarantee access to the European Union come what may.

Like many foreign financial firms in London, the SIX Swiss Exchange uses the British capital as a base for business across the European Union, given that Switzerland is not a member of the 28-nation bloc.



A general view shows the Swiss stock exchange, operated by SIX Group in Zurich.

"We are in discussions with a number of regulators in order to help us to continue to access markets in Europe and the UK," a spokesman for the Zurich-based bourse said yesterday.

"Both markets are key for SIX in both the trading and the clearing business. Over half of our members come from outside of Switzerland," he said.

The *Financial Times* reported earlier on Monday that the Swiss exchange was in talks with Germany's BaFin markets watchdog about access to the EU market.

Britain's exit from the EU, known as Brexit, is forcing many financial companies that use London as a springboard to the EU market to rethink their business models.

London-based Bats Europe, the biggest stock exchange in Europe, has said it may open a base in Dublin to have guaranteed access to the bloc's single market.

To get access to another EU country, the Swiss exchange will have to show a regulator within the bloc that Zurich's share trading regulations are similar, or "equivalent" to EU rules.

The equivalency regime is an open-ended process financial firms in Britain can also try to exploit if country's membership of the single market ends following Brexit.

Tesla driverless car to use updated radar technology

AFP

WASHINGTON: Electric carmaker Tesla announced it was upgrading its Autopilot software to use more advanced radar technology. In a teleconference, Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk said the update, which should be downloadable in two weeks for models delivered after October 2014, "very likely" would have saved the life of a Florida driver who died in May after colliding with a truck.

With the latest update, the system would have identified a "large metal object across the road," Musk said. The Florida tragedy — the first deadly crash with a driverless system — took place after Autopilot failed to detect the truck due to poor weather and low luminosity.

The radar technology — which will now be used as a primary control sensor, rather than relying on the standard camera system —easily sees through fog, dust rain or snow. "It should work for something like a moose, because a moose is quite a big mass, but it may not work for something like a small deer," Musk said.

Tesla explained that "the net effect of this, combined with the fact that radar sees through most visual obscuration, is that the car should almost always hit the brakes correctly even if a UFO were to land on the freeway in zero visibility conditions."

'Asset management' is essential: Deutsche Bank CEO

Bloomberg

LONDON: Deutsche Bank AG Chief Executive Officer John Cryan **(pictured)** said the asset-management business will remain an "essential part" of the company, responding to media reports that the German lender is considering selling the division to shore up its capital.

"Do not allow yourself to become distracted by speculation about alleged mergers or sales plans," Cryan said in a letter to employees on Monday. "There is one rumour in particular that I would like to dispel by making it unambiguously clear that Deutsche Asset Management is, and will remain, an essential part of our business model."

Cryan, 55, is seeking to restore investor confidence as mounting legal costs and restructuring charges undermine earnings and capital. The CEO said last month that he's not looking for a tie-up with German rival Commerzbank AG and is instead shrinking the company, eliminating thousands of jobs as part of a plan unveiled last year. "It would be a clear sign of weakness if they'd sold asset management," said Andreas Plaesier, an analyst at Warburg Research with a hold recommendation on the shares. "It has a relatively good reputation and this could prove to be a good asset in a world with growing wealth."



The shares fell about 4 percent to €13.11 at 11:01 am in Frankfurt. They have dropped about 41 percent this year, making the lender the fourth-worst performer on the Bloomberg Europe Banks and Financial Services Index, which slipped 22 percent.

The asset-management division reported a 35 percent drop in pretax profit to €171m in the second quarter from a year earlier. The company's profit was almost wiped out by a slump in trading in the period.

"The business environment is challenging, with persistent low interest rates and ever increasing regulatory requirements," Cryan wrote. "Within the bank, we are not yet where we want to be. We therefore have no time to waste."

Cryan has already said that 2016 will be the peak restructuring year and that he aims to settle major outstanding legal issues. Deutsche Bank had €5.5bn set aside for settlements and fines at the end of June, with Chief Financial Officer Marcus Schenck saying that the lender will probably face "material" litigation charges in the second half.

Germany's biggest bank is nearing a settlement with US authorities on an investigation into the sale of residential mortgage-backed securities, Manager Magazin reported on Friday.

Potash Corp & Agrium to merge to create $36bn firm

The combined entity would be largest crop nutrient company in the world.

Reuters

NEW YORK: Canada's Agrium Inc and Potash Corp of Saskatchewan Inc agreed to combine in a deal that would create a fertiliser giant with an enterprise value of about $36bn but also draw scrutiny from US regulators.

Potash Corp, the world's biggest crop nutrient company by capacity and Agrium, North America's largest farm retailer, said the combined entity would be largest crop nutrient company in the world.

Potash and Agrium said last month they were in talks to merge. The merger will create a company dominant in North America, controlling nearly two-thirds of potash capacity, 30 percent of phosphate production capability and 29 percent of nitrogen capacity, National Bank analyst Greg Colman had said at the time.

The deal would be the latest in a string of agriculture merger attempts, including potential combinations of seed giants Monsanto Co and Bayer AG, and ChemChina and Syngenta.

Fertiliser companies have suffered lower profits as crop nutrient prices have tumbled due to excessive supply and weak demand.

Crop prices have also been hurt, with corn and wheat at seven-year and 10-year lows respectively, giving farmers less incentive to maximise production with fertiliser.

Potash Corp shareholders will get 0.400 common shares of the combined company for each share they hold and Agrium shareholders will get 2.230 common shares for each share they own, the companies said yesterday.

Potash Corp's US-listed shares were up 2.2 percent at $17.35 in light premarket trading. Agrium's US-listed shares, which closed at $95.21 on Friday, were untraded Potash Corp shareholders will own about 52 percent of the new company, with Agrium shareholders owning the rest after the deal closes, which is in mid-2017.

The combined company would have had 2015 net revenue of about $20.6bn and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) of $4.7bn before synergies, on a proforma basis, the companies said. The companies expect annual operating synergies of up to $500m from the merger, primarily from distribution and retail integration, production and SG&A optimisation, and procurement.

Agrium Chief Executive Chuck Magro will lead the combined company. Potash Corp CEO Jochen Tilk will be its executive chairman. "Other than the trotting out the usual banalities of 'pre-eminent low-cost producer,' there is little to substantiate how $500m in synergies will be achieved," said independent analyst and investor Chris Damas, noting that Russian rival Uralkali has a lower cost of potash production than even that of Potash Corp's largest mine.

"This is more Agrium buying Potash Corp than vice versa," he added in a note, pointing out that Magro —a protégé of the Agrium's long-time former CEO Mike Wilson — will be calling the shots at the combined entity.

Following the close of the transaction, the new company will be headquartered in Saskatoon, with Canadian corporate offices in both Calgary and Saskatoon.

Barclays Capital Inc and CIBC Capital Markets are Agrium's financial advisers, while BofA Merrill Lynch and RBC Capital Markets are Potash Corp's financial advisers.

Morgan Stanley & Co LLC is serving as joint financial adviser to Agrium and Potash Corp.

Stikeman Elliott LLP and Jones Day are serving as legal advisers to Potash Corp. Agrium's legal advisers are Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP, Norton Rose Fulbright Canada LLP, and Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP, and Latham & Watkins LLP.

ABN Amro announces up to 1,375 job cuts

AFP

THE HAGUE: The Netherlands' third largest bank ABN Amro yesterday it will slash up to 1,375 jobs over the next three years partly for cost-cutting and to move more towards digitalisation of banking services.

"In order to save costs some 650 to 975 full-time jobs will be cut in 2017, running to between 975 to 1,375 jobs by 2020," ABN Amro said in statement to employees, which was also released to the press.

The Amsterdam-listed ABN Amro announced in August it wanted to shave some €200m annually off its €800m budget set aside for non-core support services, a spokesman said.

Around a quarter will be slashed from funds for so-called "out-of-pocket" services such as external employees and hiring outside consultancy and communications firms, the bank added. "The rest will come from downsizing regular jobs," it said.



The ABN Amro logo outside its office in London.

This will come from the bank's own support service departments such as risk, finance, human resources, legal and communications, ABN Amro spokesman Jeroen van Maarschalkerweerd said.

"It will now be up to the different departments to come up with where exactly the cuts will be made," he said.

ABN Amro is also simplifying its systems as banking becomes more digital and clients demand greater speed in handling their financial affairs, he added.

"We want less bureaucracy, less doubling up of jobs, more digitalisation with investment in IT and a number of growth initiatives in the bank in energy, transport and commodities," Van Maarschalkerweerd said.

Seven years after it was nationalised in the wake of the 2008 banking crisis, ABN Amro made a record return to the Amsterdam bourse in December in what has been regarded as one of the largest IPOs by a European lender since the crisis.

With the IPO, the Dutch government, which bailed out the bank at the time, is now hoping to recover some of the 22 billion euros spent propping up the bank.

The announcement was criticised by Dutch employers' unions who said although the cuts did not come as a surprise, clarity over exactly where they will fall showed "lack of vision" from management.



The headquarters of EON in Essen, Germany.

EON's spin-off Uniper makes market debut

AFP

FRANKFURT: German energy giant EON's non-renewables spinoff Uniper made its debut on the Frankfurt stock exchange yesterday, with traders putting its worth at around four billion euros, far below the value estimated by the parent company.

Uniper began trading with an opening price of 10.02 euros that climbed to 10.58 by 1430 GMT, putting the company's market value at just under $4.4bn. The division's first day of trading was in line with analyst expectations, although EON itself has valued Uniper's assets at around €12bn. "We are not foreseeing any huge jump in Uniper stock and therefore expect a multi-billion euro depreciation of EON's remaining 46.65-percent stake in Uniper," DZ Bank said in a research note.

EON created Uniper to take over its fossil fuel operations so it could focus on renewable energy and nuclear power as part of Germany's transition to cleaner forms of electricity generation.

The spin-off also comes at a time when the gas and coal industry is suffering heavily from low wholesale electricity prices and competition from government-subsidised renewables.

First-half results published by Uniper last month as if it had already been operating as a separate entity showed it would have booked a loss of €3.9bn, in part due to big writedowns on the value of its fossil-fuel plants.

Tata Steel posts third straight quarterly loss on UK unit

Bloomberg

MUMBAI: Tata Steel Ltd posted a third straight quarterly loss on account of a global supply glut that pressured prices and discontinued operations at its long product business in the UK.

The Mumbai-based company's net loss widened to Rs31.8bn ($475m) in the three months through June from a restated Rs3.17bn loss a year ago. This includes net loss from discontinued operations of Rs33.6bn in the latest quarter, according to a company statement yesterday. Sales for the quarter slipped to Rs264.1bn, missing analysts' estimates.

China, maker of half the world's steel, has flooded markets from Europe to India with cheaper supplies, forcing competitors to lower prices and eroding their profits. While India's government has imposed import curbs, Steel Authority of India Ltd., the nation's biggest mill, still reported a fifth consecutive quarterly loss last week, even as it increases capacity to meet government infrastructure spending plans.

Tata Steel put the for-sale sign on its UK business in March, after years of losses, before suspending the process in the wake of Britain's decision to quit the European Union. It discontinued operations of its long product business in the UK and completed its sale to Greybull Capital on May 31, it said in the statement.


Koushik Chatterjee, Group Executive Director of Tata Steel, at a news conference in Mumbai yesterday.

Samsung sells printing unit to HP for $1.05bn

AFP

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics will sell its printer business to US computer maker HP, the companies said yesterday, as the South Korean giant accelerates restructuring efforts amid a generational power transfer in the founding Lee family.

HP said it will buy the unit for $1.05bn and that the deal will boost growth opportunities in the copier segment, while Samsung made clear the transaction was "part of the company's efforts to concentrate on its core business areas".

Samsung's printing unit has 6,000 employees and posted total revenue of 2 trillion won ($1.8bn) in 2015, the company said in its statement yesterday.

Samsung Electronics — the world's largest smartphone maker that also produces home appliances and memory chips — is a flagship unit of the Samsung Group.

The group, currently chaired by Lee Kun-Hee, has merged, broken out or newly listed some of its key units in recent years as Lee prepares to hand over the reins to his son and company Vice-Chairman J Y Lee.

Recent health problems concerning the senior Lee, currently bedridden after suffering a heart attack in 2014, have prompted the business to step up these efforts.

"More than two years after the hospitalization of Chairman Lee... the board of Samsung... believes that the time is now right to nominate Jay Y Lee as a member of the board to allow him to take a more active role in the Company's strategic decision-making," the statement said.

The sale of the printing business and Lee's nomination were approved by the board Monday but remain subject to shareholder approval in October.

Despite effectively controlling the Samsung Group in recent years, the younger Lee has so far not taken any official board seat, maintaining a relatively low profile. The group, comprised of dozens of units ranging from electronics to hotels, posted total revenue of $287.8bn in 2014, making it South Korea's largest business group.

Linde and Praxair halt merger plans

AFP

FRANKFURT: German industrial gas supplier Linde and US competitor Praxair said they had abandoned plans for a merger that would have created the world's biggest firm in the sector.

"Shareholder representatives in the supervisory board of Linde AG recommend... to terminate the preliminary talks with Praxair, Inc about a potential merger," the company said in a statement.

Chief executive Wolfgang Buechele and the rest of the supervisory board agreed with the decision, the statement said. "While the strategic rationale of a merger has been principally confirmed, discussions about details, specifically about governance aspects, did not result in a mutual understanding," it added.

Praxair confirmed the halt to the talks in a one-line statement of its own.

Shares in Linde took a tumble as the Frankfurt stock market opened on Monday, losing 7.8 percent, while the DAX index of 30 leading companies fell 2.0 percent by just after 1000 GMT.

The statements by the two companies came just one month after they were forced to confirm they were in merger talks following leaks in the press. Major stumbling blocks in the talks included the questions of where the merged group should be based and how management should be structured, a person familiar with the discussions said on condition of anonymity.

Where Linde hoped to maintain its decentralised structure and for the merged group to have dual headquarters — including its traditional home in Munich — Praxair insisted on central management and a US base, the person said. The end to the talks is likely final for the foreseeable future, they added.

A merger between Linde and Praxair could have allowed the German firm to overtake historic French rival Air Liquide as the world's biggest industrial gas supplier, with estimated annual revenues of more than $30bn.



Logo of German industrial gas maker Linde in Munich, southern Germany.

Air Liquide inked a deal to take over US-based Airgas in May, boosting its revenues to more than $22.4bn a year and overtaking Linde's 18 billion turnover. But a Linde-Praxair tie-up would also have been subject to close regulatory scrutiny, as the number of large players in the market would have shrunk to three.

"There is no need for a merger at this scale in our view," analyst Peter Spengler of DZ bank said.

"We were not convinced that the merger would be beneficial for Linde shareholders."

Myanmar bets on hydropower in new energy plan

By **Shwe Yee Saw Myint** and **Antoni Slodkowski**
Reuters

Electricity-starved Myanmar is looking to overhaul its long-term power strategy, aiming to hike the planned share of hydropower in its energy mix at the cost of polluting coal as it tries to attract foreign investment.

The new democratically-elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi has made job creation one of its top priorities in what is Asia's sixth-poorest country. However, with half of its people without access to electricity and major cities experiencing blackouts, finding investors is tough. Even tougher is getting them to back coal-fired plants given environmental concerns.

Myanmar's initial plan was to boost coal's share to a third by the end of the next decade from just 3 percent now and to slash the contribution of hydro to 38 percent from 63 percent, according to the plan shown to Reuters by officials at the Ministry of Electricity and Energy.

But most people are "reluctant to implement coal-fired power plants, that's why we won't be able to implement the planned coal power plant projects," said Aung Ko Ko, director of hydro and renewable energy planning branch at the ministry.

"Hopefully hydropower will be the majority in the new plan," he said, estimating its share at 50-55 percent by 2030-31. Imports of LNG could make up for some of the drop in coal use, Aung Ko Ko added.

Nine key ministries, including energy, industry and mining, have met in the capital of Naypyitaw to coordinate their energy strategy with the aim to have a draft master plan ready by the end of the month, and under scrutiny are 49 hydropower projects approved by the previous government.

Myanmar is reviewing these to see how quickly - if at all -they can be completed, how many more would be needed and how to secure funds, as it seeks to boost its power capacity to make the most of an unprecedented economic revival after 49 years of military rule that ended in 2011 and to sustain an economic growth rate of about 8 percent - one of the world's fastest.

"The new government realises these projects should be prioritized. She (Suu Kyi) allowed us to talk with potential international lending facilities like the ADB," a senior official at the department of hydropower implementation of the Ministry of Electricity and Energy said, referring to the Japan and US-led Asia Development Bank.

Several dams and power plants in Myanmar have until 2011 been financed by China and, while the West has since shown eagerness to provide financing for electricity projects in the country in a bid to increase its influence there, experts say shifting away from Beijing will not be easy.

Of the projects under review, some 31 include Chinese investment and involve 11 Chinese companies. It lists names such as Beijing-based conglomerate Hanergy Holding Group Ltd and state-owned CPI Yunnan International Power Investment Co that is behind the controversial $3.6bn Myitsone megadam project.

The 2011 cancellation of the Myitsone remains a sore point between the two countries. Myanmar suspended the project citing environmental worries, but the decision was also seen as an attempt to distance itself from Beijing, an uncertainty that has stymied subsequent investment decisions.

China has been asking to restart Myitsone, and finding a solution is crucial for Suu Kyi as she needs China's help in talks with ethnic minority armed groups, many of whom operate on the border between the two countries. A resolution could also help unlock more Chinese funds.

"In my opinion, the developers of these projects (on the list) cannot get loans from Chinese banks because of the problems with Myitsone," said the energy ministry official at the department of hydropower implementation.

Five projects on the list that are sponsored from Myanmar's budget have faced delays because the country does not have enough money to finance them, the official said. Seven others are being built by local firms. The rest will need to be financed by cooperation with foreign investors.

For some of the long-stalled hydropower projects, Myanmar may open fresh tenders and seek loans from international lending facilities, the official said, adding that the World Bank and ADB, among others, were interested in supporting electricity and energy projects in the country.

Global bonds and stocks lashed by policy rethink



Various banknotes at a currency exchange counter.

By **Ayai Tomisawa, Saikat Chatterjee** and **Dhara Ranasinghe**
Reuters

A sudden surge in government borrowing rates across the world has jarred global markets, reflecting mounting investor anxiety that central banks have run out of both tools and ideas to stimulate economies on their own.

Eight years after the credit bust and banking crash forced them to flood the world with cheap cash to refloat the global economy, central bank success in preventing a protracted recession has been soured by a failure to get growth and inflation back to pre-crisis levels.

A slow-growth world of flat wages, over-inflated asset prices and falling projected returns has since become entrenched, and electoral protests from angry citizens quizzing the benefits of globalisation and capitalism are rife. Britain's June vote to leave the European Union is a prime example, but so is support for populist policies and parties across Europe and in the US presidential election. Investors sense a rethink of macroeconomic policymaking will result from the political quakes, and this may put hopes of ever-easier central bank credit policies on hold while governments consider possible solutions from adjustments to spending and taxation. "There is an injection of uncertainty over whether monetary policymakers are at a turning point," said Mizuho strategist Pater Chatwell.

Eight years after the credit bust and banking crash forced them to flood the world with cheap cash to refloat the global economy, central bank success in preventing a protracted recession has been soured by a failure to get growth and inflation back to pre-crisis levels.

The idea of a policy turning point, fostered by signs of hesitation at European and Japanese central banks and warnings by the US Federal Reserve of the need to nudge interest rates higher for the second time in 12 months, has unnerved financial markets that have long been priced for many more years of paltry growth and inflation but relentless central bank support.

Deutsche Bank's annual report on world asset returns last week said the current constellation of economics, policy and markets marked an inflection point. "We're about to see a reshaping of the world order that has dictated economics, politics, policy and asset prices from around 1980 to the present day," said the report. "Extrapolation of the last 35 years could be the most dangerous mistake made by investors, politicians and central bankers."

According to Deutsche, the common themes over the next 35 years will include: lower real growth, higher inflation, less international trade, more controlled migration, lower corporate profits as a share of gross domestic product and negative real returns in bonds.

In just three days of trading, near record-low, or in some cases negative, long-term interest rates in Europe, Japan and the United States rose between a quarter and a third of a percentage point.

Long-term Japanese bond yields hit their highest levels in six months on Monday, while equivalents in the United States, Britain, Germany, France and Italy spiked to some of their highest levels since the 'Brexit' vote. With equities increasingly priced to reflect superior yields versus bonds and drawing investment flows to keep them near record highs, ructions in the bond market have a ripple effect. The world's most-watched stock volatility index .VIX, reflecting options taken out on Wall St's S&P500 index of blue-chip stocks, topped 20 percent for the first time since late June.

The S&P500 index .SPX lost 2.5 percent on Friday — its biggest fall in nearly three months. Europe's STOXX 600 was down 1.8 percent in a broad-based selloff while Asia bourses fell more than 2 percent earlier, with Hong Kong .HSI sliding 3.4 percent in its biggest one-day drop in 7 months. "Today has become a bit of a perfect storm for selling," said Gavin Parry, Hong Kong-based managing director at brokerage Parry International Trading Ltd.

One trigger for last week's selloff is hard to pinpoint.

The European Central Bank's policy review last Thursday failed to hold out any extension of its bond buying program after next March. Hawkish comments from Fed officials kept the outside chance of a rate hike next week on the table when many had assumed it was on hold until after the US election. And reports the Bank of Japan was about to take action to steepen its yield curve fueled a rethink of Tokyo's policy direction.

All played into the idea that the days of ever-easier monetary policy may be over shortly after last week's G20 summit spoke of better use of government fiscal policies where possible. Euro group finance ministers also discussed various aspects of collective and national spending on infrastructure and other projects, while even Germany flagged tax cuts next year.

Some investors see the thinking at the Bank of Japan, one of the earliest adopters of unorthodox monetary policy, as a bellwether for other central banks. The practical limits Tokyo faces in buying government bonds and stocks and driving interest rates into negative territory are seen as a warning for policymakers and investors alike.

"It's a natural situation when we don't know what central banks will do," said the chief portfolio manager of a Tokyo-based fixed-income fund.

BoJ sources have said the central bank is thinking up ways to steepen the yield curve as a means to reduce short-term costs for businesses while protecting Japanese banks. "We have been here before, though markets are increasingly looking at the probability that central banks may be running out of ammunition to help the global economy," said Nicholas Yeo, head of Chinese equities at Aberdeen Asset Management in Hong Kong.

Google car project loses advantage as rivals gain

By **Alistair Barr**
Bloomberg

Chris Urmson, the mild-mannered robotics expert who ran Google's self-driving car project, used to say that when his son reached driving age in 2019 the technology would be available so the teenager wouldn't have to take a driving test.

In August, less than a year after auto industry veteran John Krafcik took the helm of the project, Urmson left with much work remaining. Google has yet to launch an autonomous vehicle service for the public.

Other top technologists have also departed and progress has been slow. Once considered a leader in the field, Google has lost its first-mover advantage to other companies pursuing more practical, less-ambitious self-driving car services, said former members of the project and other people familiar with the situation. They asked not to be identified because details of the effort are private. "They need a partner, a sales force, a strategy," said Roger Lanctot, associate director of Strategy Analytics' Global Automotive Practice.

Once considered a leader in the field, Google has lost its first-mover advantage to other companies pursuing more practical, less-ambitious self-driving car services.

Google's project started in 2009, long before carmakers and most other companies seriously considered the technology. But when Singapore unveiled the first autonomous taxi service in August, Google wasn't involved. Instead, a small startup called nuTonomy provided the technology. Uber Technologies Inc, founded in 2009, will soon let users of its popular ride-sharing app hail autonomous Volvo SUVs in Pittsburgh.

Google has driven more than 1.8 million miles in tests on public roads in a bid to perfect its software to handle difficult situations, such as driving in snow. Tesla Motors already offers partially autonomous features in more than 70,000 of its electric cars, and Otto, a startup run by former Google car project members, is developing a self-driving system for trucks on highways, an easier technological challenge than the one Google faces. Uber acquired Otto in July.

"Google still has an imperfect system and no clear path to go to market," said Ajay Juneja, chief executive officer of Speak With Me Inc, which offers voice recognition and related technology for cars, watches and other connected devices. "How exactly would they have shipped something by now?"

This is part of a broader challenge Google parent Alphabet Inc faces turning research projects into profitable businesses. The company is more cautious about rolling out new technology early, after its Glass internet-connected eye wear flopped, according to one of the people. There's also a higher bar now for projects as Chief Financial Officer Ruth Porat has said she requires clearer paths to profitability before approving more funding or expansion.

Possibly the biggest drag on program is the sheer scope of Google's ambitions. Its aim is to revolutionise transportation through full autonomy. The software must be trained thoroughly to handle all eventualities. Meanwhile, there are already methods to make self-driving cars good, rather than perfect. That has helped companies including Uber, Daimler's Mercedes-Benz, Tesla and Volvo Car Group catch up with Google, Juneja said.

Uber's service, which is tied to the smartphones of drivers and passengers, can generate a lot more driving data, an essential ingredient to quickly train the artificial intelligence software needed to guide self-driving vehicles, Morgan Stanley analysts said in a recent research note. "Uber logs as many miles in 24 minutes as Google's autonomous cars have logged in their existence," they wrote. "While none of these miles are fully autonomous today, we just point out the scale of experience that can accelerate the development of the AI, mapping and learning for autonomous cars."

Tesla, with thousands of internet-connected cars on the road, has a similar data advantage, one former member of the Google car project said.

The two main ways for Google to commercialize the technology are by including Chauffeur, the name for its self-driving software, in cars made in high volume by existing auto manufacturers, or through a popular ride-sharing service that could slowly replace a human-driven fleet with automated vehicles, industry experts said. Google has neither of these yet. It struck a deal in May with Fiat Chrysler, but only to put its software in 100 minivans. Talks with other car companies, such as Ford, have yet to produce high-volume deals. And many car companies are pursuing their own self-driving strategies.

India retain Rohit and Dhawan for New Zealand Test series

All-rounder Binny, seamer Thakur dropped, series begins in Kanpur on September 22

Reuters

MUMBAI: India retained opener Shikhar Dhawan and middle order batsman Rohit Sharma yesterday for their three-Test home series against New Zealand beginning in Kanpur later this month.

The selection committee reposed faith in 15 of the 17 players picked for the tour of West Indies with all-rounder Stuart Binny and seamer Shardul Thakur being the players to miss out.

The 29-year-old Rohit is an automatic choice in India's limited-overs sides but has failed to replicate that form in the five-day format, averaging 32.62 with the bat in 18 Tests.

SQUAD

Shikhar Dhawan, Murali Vijay, Lokesh Rahul, Virat Kohli (captain), Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Rohit Sharma, Wriddhiman Saha (wicketkeeper), Ravichandran Ashwin, Amit Mishra, Ravindra Jadeja, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar.



India's Ravichandran Ashwin (centre) celebrates during day four of the Test match against West Indies at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in St John's, Antigua, in this July 2016 file photo. Ashwin will lead India's spin attack in New Zealand series.

"Rohit is a fabulous player and has got immense talent but he hasn't got a longer run in test cricket," chairman of selectors Sandeep Patil told reporters.

"He is picked for one test match then rested for say entire season and then picked again. "So we feel that whoever, I am not saying only Rohit, will be picked will be given a fair amount of chances here onwards." Rohit scored nine and 41 in the third Test in West Indies at Gros Islet and did not get a chance to bat in the final match of the series at Port of Spain, which was washed out with the visitors winning 2-0. Left-handed opener Dhawan's place was also under scrutiny after he was dropped for the fourth Test against West Indies following scores of 27, 26 and one in his three previous innings in the Caribbean. The emergence of Lokesh Rahul, who was named in the 15-member squad, as an opener has put further pressure on Dhawan to perform after the 24-year-old right-hander scored two hundreds and a fifty in four innings against West Indies in Tests and a Twenty20 international.

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who also scored two centuries against West Indies after being promoted in the batting order, will lead India's slow-bowling attack, aided by leggie Amit Mishra and left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja.

Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav were the three pacemen in India's squad.

"India had a good series in West Indies and it's not that we have not discussed the other names," Patil said. "But we have stuck to the combination which has done very well abroad.

"Not many times we see the Indian team doing well when we tour... we were of the opinion that this is the best combination against New Zealand."

The series will mark the start of a bumper home season for India during which they will play a total of 13 Test matches.

The second-ranked Test side in the world will next host England for five tests before Australia tour the country for four test matches. Bangladesh will also play their maiden test in India next year.

Kanpur hosts the first match from September 22, followed by Tests in Kolkata (from September 30) and Indore (from October 8).

KANPUR TO HOST FIRST TEST



Eoin Morgan

Morgan and Hales pull out of Bangladesh tour

Reuters

LONDON: England's one-day international captain Eoin Morgan and batsman Alex Hales will not tour Bangladesh due to security concerns, the England and Wales Cricket board (ECB) announced yesterday.

A recent risk assessment by ECB's security delegation deemed that the South Asian country was safe for the five-week tour to proceed, after concerns were raised following an attack by gunmen on a cafe in Dhaka which killed 22 people in July.

England are due to arrive in Bangladesh on September 30 for three-one day internationals and two Tests.

"Whilst we understand and respect Eoin and Alex's decision, we are disappointed that they have made themselves unavailable for selection for the Bangladesh tour," director of England cricket Andrew Strauss said in a statement.

"We have had open and honest conversations with all the players about the security arrangements in Bangladesh and at this stage we are not expecting any other individuals to withdraw from the tour.

"Final selection for the Bangladesh tour will now take place on Friday."

Wicketkeeper Jos Buttler will lead the ODI side in Morgan's absence, the statement added.

After the Bangladesh series, England travel to India in early November for a five-test series.

Fast bowler Stuart Broad also committed to touring Bangladesh.

"It has been a really difficult decision about whether to tour Bangladesh but on balance I believe it's the right thing to do and I have told the ECB that I am ready to go," he said in his column in the *Daily Mail*.

"It's been on all of our minds since July when the attack happened in Dhaka and none of us have taken our decisions lightly."

Last year, Australia pulled out of their tour to Bangladesh over security concerns and did not compete in the under-19 World Cup hosted in the South Asian country for the same reasons.

Amir relieved on clearing England tour

AFP

KARACHI: Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir breathed a sigh of relief yesterday after clearing a "tough England cricket tour" without any major problems, saying fans were welcoming and players were supportive.

It was a complete contrast from his tour of England six years ago, which ended in a spot-fixing case resulting in five-year bans on him and fellow players Salman Butt and Mohammad Asif.

"There was a huge media hype around me, fears in my mind and the pressure of doing well, but I am relieved on clearing one of the toughest exams of my life with the support of my team and fans," Amir said.

The ban had derailed the fast-rising careers of all three players who were jailed by a UK court in 2011, though Amir's guilty plea helped him gain public sympathy.

He was allowed to feature in domestic matches six months before his ban was lifted after the International Cricket Council (ICC) relaxed certain conditions of his ban through an amendment to its code of conduct.

Amir was also the only one of the three players selected for Pakistan's tour of New Zealand in January this year.

But the latest tour saw him play his first Test match since the ban, with the teams drawing the four-match series 2-2.

Pakistan won the only T20 game, while England were victorious in the five-match ODI series, with a 4-1 win.

Amir said the crowd at the Lord's -- the same place he bowled deliberate no-balls in the 2010 Test in return for money -- were supportive of his return.

"I was ready for anything including rants but when I went out to bat at the Lord's the crowd clapped for me and it helped me relax.

"None of the England players said anything untoward and I thank them for that. Moeen Ali was the best, he advised me to forget the past and concentrate on the future."

Amir said good team management, as well as support from Test skipper Misbah-ul-Haq and fans also eased the pressure. "Most of the British fans were welcoming and whenever I had the chance of going out they took pictures with me. One father and son came to the team hotel in Leeds and when they met me they described it as a 'lifetime opportunity and best day of their lives'".

Despite the hype Amir's performance was below expectations on the field, with him taking just 12 wickets in the Test series.

He also had seven dropped catches off his bowling.

"It could have been a different scenario... but drop catches are part and parcel of the game. My captain and coach were both satisfied."

Amir said he will improve gradually, with a series of three Twenty20 and as many ODIs and Tests in the United Arab Emirates starting later this month.

"The best part was that I didn't have any fitness issues," he said.



Mohammad Amir

Quiet please, that's Paralympic football going on!



Action from the 5-a-side Preliminaries Pool B match between China and Mexico at 2016 Rio Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday.

AFP

RIO DE JANEIRO: Bite your nails, bury your face in your hands -- do anything but react as the excitement heats up.

Crowds at the Rio Paralympics delight in making noise but when it comes to blind five-a-side football, the whole point is to stay silent so that players can track the ball by sound.

That can be hard, especially when it's Brazil playing on home soil and in front of crowds more used to the usual 11-a-side, able-bodied variety of football -- and its screaming fans.

"Brazil, Brazil!" they chanted around the packed arena just before a game started against Turkey on Sunday. From the noise and the blaze of yellow Brazilian team shirts, it seemed unlikely these fans would be the quiet types.

But front row spectators Wagner Goulart, 30, and Luciana Vargas, 34 -- decked out in full Brazil fandom gear and armed with a trumpet and a maraca -- promised to behave.

"We only get going when the game stops or when there's a goal, of course," Goulart said.

And when the whistle blew, the only sound coming from the crowd was a group "shhh."

Paralympic 5-a-side is a version of the world's most popular sport for the blind or visually impaired.

To even things, all the players wear eye shades so that none can see anything. It's the sound of the ball, which contains bells, that they follow, as if seeing via their ears.

For 50 minutes the battle rages, with only the two goalkeepers allowed to see and to act as a guide. Clearly any noise from the crowd could ruin a play or even the match.

But Brazil's 2-0 win, securing a place in the semi-finals, was a tough test for Katia Brum, 38. She watched Brazil's star, Ricardinho, move from the left corner to shoot and felt herself tense up. She put her hand to her mouth, desperately restraining the urge to yell and encourage and advise the player.

"It's too hard. It's the first time we've come to see a game with the blind and emotions run high. I could never bring my dad -- he'd have a heart attack," she said. "We're used to helping, shouting, being that 12th man. I'm going to crack up."

For the players, the struggle in the stands has mixed blessings. They require silence, but love the energy.

"It's very important. People get motivated. It gives us extra gas. It may disturb us but we know it's important," said striker Nonato.

"I hope it continues like that," Ricardinho said. "I hope it's packed and that the fans can celebrate another title with us."

Paralympic 5-a-side made its debut at the Athens 2004 Games and Brazil has cleaned up on the gold medals ever since.

As on the regular football pitch, Brazil's big rivals are Argentina, which lost to Brazil in 2004 and won bronze in 2008. This year they are favorites to reach the final for another showdown.

Argentina's captain Silvio Velo, known as the Messi of 5-a-side, sympathizes with the crowd's noise-control issue.

"It's wonderful to play with fans, although sometimes it can work against us, because we know that football brings out a lot of emotion. But how are you meant to control that?" he asked after another game Sunday. "When you're in a game and people start making noise, this could lose you the match. At the same time it could be your motivation," he said.

Expect some quiet -- and very nervous -- Brazilians if that final against Argentina takes place.

In-form Johnson clinches BMW title

Reuters

NEW YORK: Dustin Johnson joined elite company with his three-stroke victory over Paul Casey at the BMW Championship in Indiana on Sunday.

Johnson collected his 12th PGA Tour title since joining the tour in 2008, a record bettered only by Tiger Woods.

Woods has 18 victories in that period, while Rory McIlroy also has 12.

Not that Johnson was thinking about his place among the elite as he recovered from a faltering start in the final round at Crooked Stick in Carmel.

It took him only three holes to give up his three-shot lead to Casey but four birdies in the next five holes re-established his advantage and he was never headed again.

The U.S. Open champion continued the best year of his career, carding 67 to finish at 23-under-par 265.

"I hit a lot of good shots, a couple of bad misses but other than that played really solid all week," Johnson, 32, said in a greenside interview.

"I got a lot of confidence in every part of my game, especially all the work I've put in on my wedges has really paid off this year, and this week I (used a) new putter and it really worked."

Englishman Casey also shot 67 for second place on 20 under, his second consecutive runner-up finish, with American Roberto Castro (67) another three shots back in third place. Johnson finished 11 strokes clear of fourth place.

With his third win of the year, Johnson jumped to top spot on a FedEx Cup points list as the top 30 players advance to the season finale Tour Championship in Atlanta in two weeks.

Among notables to fall outside the top 30 and miss out on a chance at the $10m jackpot were American Rickie Fowler, Spaniard Sergio Garcia, American Brooks Koepka and Swede Henrik Stenson. Fowler, who finished 59th in the 69-man field on Sunday, is among those hoping to be named on Monday among US Ryder Cup captain Davis Love's three wild-card picks for this month's event against Europe.

Love will make his fourth and final pick after the Tour Championship.

Johnson said he was "frustrated" by his poor start to the final round -- bogeying the second and third holes -- but was confident he was playing well enough to turn it around in his 200th start on tour.

"I hit a couple of squirrelly shots there," he said. "It was nice to make a birdie on four ... and then hit some really nice wedge shots after the first few holes."

World number one Jason Day withdrew on the ninth hole with what his agent described as "a pinched joint in his lower back capsule with muscle spasm."

WORLD RANKINGS

1. (1) Jason Day (Australia) 14.18
2. (2) Dustin Johnson (US) 11.87
3. (3) Rory McIlroy (Britain) 10.32
4. (4) Jordan Spieth (US) 10.00
5. (5) Henrik Stenson (Sweden) 9.03
6. (6) Adam Scott (Australia) 7.41
7. (7) Bubba Watson (US) 6.51
8. (8) Patrick Reed (US) 6.29
9. (9) Rickie Fowler (US) 6.06
10. (10) Justin Rose (Britain) 5.74
11. (11) Danny Willett (Britain) 5.60
12. (12) Sergio Garcia (Spain) 5.36
13. (13) Branden Grace (South Africa) 5.24
14. (14) Phil Mickelson (US) 5.15
15. (15) Jimmy Walker (US) 4.89



Dustin Johnson poses with the Western Golf Association Trophy after winning the BMW Championship at Crooked Stick in Carmel on Sunday.

Man United earn more than £500m in a year

AFP

LONDON: Manchester United became the first British football club to earn more than half a billion pounds in a single year after announcing yesterday total revenue of £515.3m ($683.5m, 608.9m euros) for the year ending June 30, 2016.

The Premier League giants also declared a record operating profit of £68.9m.

Their figures also saw United return to the black, following a net annual loss of £900,000, with a net profit of £36.4m.

However, United's annual revenue figure was still shy of the 679m euros (£570m, $762m) declared by Barcelona in July.

United's continuing financial success, despite not winning the Premier League last season and failing to qualify for Europe's lucrative Champions League, allowed new manager Jose Mourinho to splash out a world record £89m on signing midfielder Paul Pogba from Italian side Juventus during the recent transfer window.

Although United won the FA Cup, a fifth-place finish in the 2015/16 Premier League season saw Dutch manager Louis van Gaal sacked and replaced by former Real Madrid and Chelsea boss Mourinho.

United's revenue is forecast to rise to between £530 to £540m at the end of the next financial year and executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward said: "Our record fiscal 2016 financial performance reflects the continued underlying strength of the business and the club is on target to achieve record revenues in 2017, even without a contribution from the Champions League.

"This strong financial performance has enabled us to invest in our squad, team management and facilities to position us to challenge for, and win, trophies in the coming years."

Retail, merchandising, apparel and Product licensing revenue was £97.3m, an increase of £65.7m, or 207.9 percent, over the previous year, mainly as a result of the start of a new kit agreement with Adidas that guaranteed United more money than their previous deal with rival sportswear giants Nike.

Broadcasting revenue, boosted by a new Premier League deal, rose more than 30 percent to £140.4m, with matchday revenues at Old Trafford totalling £106.6m – an increase of over 17 percent.



Manchester United become the first British football club to earn more than half a billion pounds in a single year.



Barcelona's coach Luis Enrique attends a news conference in Barcelona, yesterday.

Enrique plays down talk of Barcelona rift

Coach hopeful his team will bounce back from Alaves upset in Champions League opener

Reuters

BARCELONA: Barcelona coach Luis Enrique has played down talk of a rift with his squad after their surprise home defeat by Alaves and is hoping to put things right in their Champions League opener against Celtic today.

Spanish sports website *Diario Gol* reported yesterday that some players responded to a telling off following the 2-1 La Liga reverse on Saturday by questioning Luis Enrique's decision to make eight changes to the team.

"We talk after every game to correct things and to reinforce other aspects but what happens in those meetings is only important for the players and staff," he told a news conference yesterday.

THE CATALANS MEET CELTIC TODAY

"We always talk with the players to try and put them on the right track to win the game but it is not an exact science."

The Catalans' defeat was their first in 12 competitive matches and Luis Enrique said it was good for the players to be back in action so soon after losing to La Liga newcomers Alaves.

"This team has a great recent history, two great years with us in charge, and it appears we can't fail but it happens," he added in reference to their treble success in his debut campaign and La Liga-King's Cup double last season.

"The team has reacted well. They are annoyed obviously because they don't like losing and are not used to losing at home.

"We have the shortest turnaround you can have between games. The players are ... desperate to compete and play again at the Nou Camp."

Barca beat Celtic 3-1 in a pre-season friendly in July and are facing them for the third time in four years.

Brendan Rodgers has reinvigorated the Glasgow club since taking over from Ronny Deila in the close season, qualifying for the group stages after a two-year absence and overseeing a 5-1 thumping of fierce local rivals Rangers on Saturday.

"There were a lot easier teams than Celtic but we welcome the challenge of playing against a historic club," said Luis Enrique as he spoke of his admiration for former Liverpool coach Rodgers.

"He loves good football, he likes to play on the front foot, take the game to the opposition and you can see that already in his short time at Celtic.

"He has made good signings, players that will cause us problems. I like Rodgers and his idea of how to play football."

Man United write off £6.7m Schweinsteiger

AFP

LONDON: Manchester United have written off Bastian Schweinsteiger as an "exceptional" multi-million item in their latest published accounts, even though the Germany international has been sidelined by manager Jose Mourinho.

The 32-year-old joined United from Bayern Munich before the start of last season when former manager Louis van Gaal was still in charge at Old Trafford.

But he has fallen out of favour under new boss Mourinho and his chances of making a comeback under the Portuguese coach looked even less likely after the club published its annual accounts on Monday.

Under the "exceptional items" section of the annual report, it listed a sum of £6.7m ($8.9m, 7.9m euros) "related to a registrations' impairment charge regarding a reduction in the carrying value of a player no longer considered to be a member of the first team playing squad".

It is widely understood Schweinsteiger is that individual and could not be included as an asset as it may give an unfair impression to investors.

The former Germany captain was omitted from United's Europa League squad but included in the equivalent Premier League group, although that was compulsory under league guidelines.

United's figures also indicated that van Gaal and his coaching staff were paid £8.4m in compensation after leaving the club in May.

The Dutch manager's time at Old Trafford ended with the club lifting the FA Cup, but he was replaced by Mourinho just days later.

FIFA gives Platini green light to attend key UEFA meeting

AFP

PARIS: World football's governing body FIFA has given the green light for disgraced former UEFA President Michel Platini to address tomorrow's UEFA Congress in Athens, triggering anger in Germany.

A source close to Platini, currently serving a four-year ban, said last week he would attend the meeting of European football's governing body, when the UEFA executive committee will vote on his successor.

"The FIFA Ethics Committee has informed UEFA that Michel Platini will be allowed to address the 12th Extraordinary UEFA Congress in Athens on 14 September," UEFA said in a statement. "A request for Mr. Platini's attendance had been recently made by UEFA and we welcome this decision."

The decision did not sit well with Reinhard Grindel, president of the German football federation.

"The UEFA Congress should showcase the programme of its new president and not the mistakes of his predecessor," Grindel told German news agency *DPA*.

"I would have preferred Michel Platini not to have put in an appearance. This Congress must focus on the future, not the past," he added.

The former French international, a three-time European footballer of the year, is a key figure in the scandal that brought down FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

Platini was on the receiving end of a suspect two-million-Swiss-franc ($2m, 1.8m euros) payment that Blatter authorised in 2011.

FIFA has said the payment amounted to an ethics violation and has suspended both men for six years.

Blatter and Platini insist it was a legitimate payment for an unpaid balance that FIFA owed the then-UEFA boss for consulting work done a decade earlier.

Platini lost his CAS appeal against his FIFA ban earlier this year, but the court cut his suspension to four years.

In Athens, the 55 UEFA member federations will vote between two candidates to succeed Platini: Aleksander Ceferin of Slovenia and Dutchman Michael van Praag.



Former UEFA President Michel Platini gets FIFA's go ahead to address tomorrow's UEFA Congress in Athens.

There's no 'Big Five', says Wawrinka

AFP

NEW YORK: Stan Wawrinka has won as many Grand Slam titles as Andy Murray, but even after capturing the US Open the 31-year-old insists his record does not bear comparison with tennis' 'Big Four'.

That exclusive club of Novak Djokovic, Murray, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal have won 42 of the last 47 Grand Slams.

The only men to break that stranglehold are Juan Martin del Potro and Marin Cilic at the 2009 and 2014 US Open tournaments respectively...and Wawrinka.

The unassuming Swiss has won all three major finals in which he has appeared -- the 2014 Australian Open, the 2015 French Open and now the 2016 US Open, secured with a four-set win over Djokovic on Sunday.

Djokovic believes world number three Wawrinka should be treated as a genuine heavyweight of the men's game.

"He deserves to be in the mix, no doubt about it. Stan has won three Grand Slams now and three different ones; Olympic medal," said the Serb.

"Been around for so many years, and he plays best in the big matches. I mean, he definitely deserves to be mentioned in the mix of top players."

But Wawrinka says he's happy with his status in the sport and that talk of a 'Big Five' does not stack up.

"Novak is always so nice with me. I love him. He's a good friend. He always say a lot of nice thing about me," said Wawrinka.

"The Big Four, I'm really far from them. Just look at the tournaments they have won, how many years they've been there.

"If you look, yes, I have three Grand Slams. How many Masters 1000 has Murray? They have been there since ten years.

"They have not only been winning, but being in semi-finals, final every time. That's why I'm not there. I don't want to be there. For me, there is no question about that."

Wawrinka may be right to be reluctant to class himself in the elite if the cold facts and figures are any guide at all.

He has three majors but only one Masters amongst his 15 career tiles.

Brilliant Wawrinka stuns World No.1 Djokovic to win US Open

Third seeded Swiss star bags third Grand Slam title with a 6-7 (1/7), 6-4, 7-5, 6-3 win in the final

AFP



Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland poses with the championship trophy after defeating Novak Djokovic of Serbia in their 2016 US Open Men's Singles final match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on Sunday.

NEW YORK: Stan Wawrinka became the oldest US Open men's champion in 46 years when he defeated world number one Novak Djokovic to claim a third Grand Slam title on Sunday.

The oldest winner of the men's tournament since 35-year-old Ken Rosewall in 1970 said a taste for pain helped him to victory and admitted he was shaking and at one point burst into tears before the match.

"You have to accept to suffer and you have almost to enjoy to suffer. Because I think this Grand Slam was the most painful, physically and mentally, that I ever played," said the 31-year-old from Switzerland.

Wawrinka, seeded third, triumphed 6-7 (1/7), 6-4, 7-5, 6-3 after almost four hours of high intensity tennis.

"I was feeling cramp coming in the third set. In the fourth set I had some pain, but the most important thing was not to show anything."

"I'm not that young anymore," he added.

It was Wawrinka's first New York title, following his breakthrough 2014 Australian Open triumph and 2015 Roland Garros crown.

On both those occasions, Djokovic had been the fall-guy, losing in Melbourne in the quarter-finals and ending as runner-up in Paris.

"If you want to beat the No. 1 player in the world, you have to give everything," said Wawrinka who has won his last 11 finals.

"I was shaking in the locker room," he said, adding that during his last minute discussions with coach Magnus Norman, "I started to cry".

Djokovic, the 2011 and 2015 champion, had been seeking a third Slam of the year and 13th major of his career.

But the 29-year-old Serb finished runner-up in New York for the fourth time after paying a heavy price for converting just three of 17 break points.

Wawrinka, who had to save a match point to beat unheralded Dan Evans in the third round, committed 51 unforced errors but crucially smashed 46 winners past his opponent.

Djokovic, playing in his 21st Grand Slam final and seventh in New York, was quickest out of the blocks.

He broke for 2-0 having won the first point of the game with two extreme, against-the-odds retrievals. Trailing 2-5, Wawrinka, who had spent the best part of nine hours more than Djokovic getting to the final, saved two set points.

The Serb was made to pay for his wastefulness as the Swiss suddenly found his range, breaking back in the ninth game off a Djokovic double fault.

But Djokovic glided untroubled through the tie-break as Wawrinka's serve fell apart.

Wawrinka is used to chasing lost causes against Djokovic, coming back from losing the first set to win their 2014 Australian Open quarter-final and again at Roland Garros last year.

Calling on that expertise, he broke for 3-1 in the second set, recovered from handing the advantage back in the seventh to level the final when Djokovic unleashed a wild forehand on set point in the 10th.

Frustrated, Djokovic demolished his racquet, collecting a code violation from umpire Ali Nili.

Wawrinka saved three break points in the opening game of the third set, which featured a 28-shot exchange, broke in the second and saved another break point in the next for a 3-0 lead.

But at the sixth time of asking in the set, Djokovic clawed his way back with a break for 2-3.

Wawrinka, however, kept up the attack and on set point in the 12th game slotted a backhand deep and into the corner which Djokovic could only push wide.

The world number one looked spent. He appeared to start cramping in the fourth set as he quickly slipped 0-3 down.

Much to Wawrinka's irritation, at 1-3 Djokovic called the trainer and took a medical timeout for treatment for blisters.

Djokovic apologised, claiming he needed attention as he couldn't stand. At 2-5, the trainer reappeared but Wawrinka saw the job through leaving Djokovic to finish a Slam runner-up for the ninth time.

My nerve failed me, says Djokovic

AFP



Novak Djokovic of Serbia reacts against Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland during their Men's Singles Final Match of the 2016 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York City on Sunday.

NEW YORK: Novak Djokovic admitted on Sunday that his nerve failed him as he slipped to a 6-7 (1/7), 6-4, 7-5, 6-3 defeat to Stan Wawrinka in the US Open final.

The 29-year-old world number one, who was chasing a third New York title and 13th career major, suffered his ninth loss in 21 Grand Slam finals.

In a final which lasted almost four hours, Djokovic converted just three of 17 break points.

"I lost my nerve in the important moments. He kept his cool," said the 2011 and 2015 champion.

"I think that's what decided the match. I guess sometimes it happens, even though you have the experience and know what to do.

"Just the heat of the moment and importance of the match, I guess, you know, was too strong for me at certain periods of the match. Just if you lose your cool, the match can go away."

The Serb star also admitted that he came close to skipping the tournament as a serious wrist injury threatened to compromise his assault on a third major title of the year. Physical problems plagued the world number one throughout the two weeks, a right shoulder injury giving way to problems with his toes as his hopes of a third US Open slipped away.

"Some other injury was very serious at the time. I really didn't know whether or not I'm going to come, to be honest," said the 29-year-old Djokovic who ended the Grand Slam season with a sixth Australian Open and a maiden Roland Garros.

Djokovic caused controversy at 1-3 and 2-5 down in the fourth set when he was allowed a medical timeout for treatment on his feet.

Wawrinka was angry that Djokovic had been granted permission to call the trainer and doctor while he was about to serve.

Djokovic apologised to his opponent as he sat courtside, claiming he couldn't stand as a consequence.

"It was just the toenails were off and bleeding. Yeah, it was quite painful to move around," he said later. But he insisted that he was not trying to gain an advantage by forcing Wawrinka to wait to serve at a crucial part of the final.

"Why would I be surprised if I was allowed?," he snapped at a reporter, adding that it was medical necessity."

"I made a lot of double faults throughout this tournament. I was struggling with the motion, with the movement and on the serve, with the technique.

"I was working a lot on it and trying to find that rhythm, but my body has kind of compensated and made some different things to protect the problem I had with the arm.

"Unfortunately the serve wasn't there when it was needed."



Winner of La Vuelta 2016, Movistar's Colombian cyclist Nairo Quintana raises is trophy as he celebrates on the podium of the last stage of the 71st edition of "La Vuelta" Tour of Spain on Sunday.

Vuelta winner Quintana targets Tour de France

AFP

MADRID: After five Grand Tours and much Tour de France heartache, Nairo Quintana finally looked down on Chris Froome from the top of the podium in Madrid on Sunday, having claimed his first Vuelta a Espana.

Quintana's win was his second Grand Tour title following the Giro d'Italia in 2014, but his ultimate dream of becoming the first South American to win the Tour de France has been denied by Froome.

Three times Quintana has made the podium of La Grande Boucle, in the three years when Froome has kept the yellow jersey to himself in 2013, 2015 and 2016.

"It is a dream I have that continues in my mind and I hope one day will come true," said Quintana of his Tour de France ambitions.

For now he has the satisfaction of finally getting one over on Froome and the confidence that will bring for a fascinating showdown between the two at the Tour in 2017.

"It signifies the growth of Nairo Quintana and the ability to compete with the best riders in the world," added the Colombian.

Froome's respect was also won as Quintana got the better of their personal duel in a gruelling three-week slog that included 10 summit finishes in searing Spanish summer heat.

The Brit sportingly applauded as Quintana crossed the line on the penultimate stage two seconds ahead of him on Saturday to extend his overall advantage to 1min 23sec.

"He is the greatest rival there is at the moment," continued Quintana. "He made me suffer at the Tour and here I have won."

Froome will be stronger come the Tour next year, not least because he will have a far better Sky team around him than the one that accompanied him in Spain.

Quintana's decisive early attack on stage 15 left Froome isolated without a single teammate for company for most of the day in which he lost 2min 37secs.

Yet, Quintana's rising star, backed by one of the few teams that can compete with Sky when it comes to resources in Movistar, could be hard to stop.

Formed in the Colombian Andes, Quintana's penchant for the mountains was developed by cycling 16 kilometres a day to and from school and to help sell fruit and vegetables in local villages to keep his family afloat.

His determination has been hardened by that difficult upbringing and even near disaster.

Quintana suffered from a mysterious childhood illness and at 15 he was in a coma for five days after being hit by a taxi in a training incident. However, his father, Luis, spotted his potential at a young age, stretching the family funds to buy a racing bike for his young protege.

"I was in a coma in the hospital for five days. I was very lucky to survive," he told Cycling Weekly in 2014.

"Thinking about the past helps me to realise how hard everybody worked in my home so I can be where I am now."

His Giro and Vuelta wins mean Quintana can become just the seventh rider in history to win all three Grand Tours if he succeeds in his Tour de France dream.

"Nairo, despite his airs and graces and apparent calm, is a unique predator," said Movistar team director Eusebio Unzue.

A victory passage down the Champs-Elysees in July remains the goal for Quintana to write his legend into cycling history.

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PAGE | 21
Amir relieved on clearing England tour

PAGE | 22
FIFA gives Platini green light to attend key UEFA meeting





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PSG, Arsenal eye elusive Champions League title

The Qatari-owned club face Arsenal while five-time winners Barcelona host Celtic

AP

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain coach Unai Emery and Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger are on opposite trajectories when the Champions League resumes for their teams today at the Parc des Princes.

It will be Emery's first Champions League game as the Qatari-owned club's coach, while Wenger is starting a 19th consecutive campaign in Europe's most prestigious competition.

On the Champions League opening day, five-time winners Barcelona hosts Celtic — a team it inflicted six goals on the last time they played in the group stage — and Bayern Munich takes on Russian newcomers Rostov.

Unlike his former great rival Alex Ferguson, who turned Manchester United into a European powerhouse, Wenger has not tasted Champions League success since he was appointed Arsenal's manager 20 years ago.

Despite qualifying for the lucrative tournament for an English record 19 consecutive seasons, Arsenal has never won Europe's biggest prize, losing to Barcelona in the 2006 final. The Gunners, who have won their last seven Champions League games in France, are looking to get beyond the last 16 for the first time since 2010.

Emery's record in the Champions League is quite disappointing compared to what he achieved with Sevilla in the Europa League. Emery, who replaced Laurent Blanc this summer, guided Sevilla to a third consecutive Europa League title last season but led his various teams to just eight Champions League wins in 25 games.

Arsenal, a team that has long had a heavy French influence, could be spearheaded by a France international for its trip to Paris with striker Olivier Giroud pushing for his first start of the season.

Benfica and Besiktas meet for the first time in European competition with the group looking wide open. Benfica lost to Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals last season and Besiktas is looking to make it to the knockout round for the first time.

Hosting Napoli in the group's other match, Dynamo Kiev has a poor record against Italian sides, having won just twice in 20 matches with Italian opposition.

Barcelona and Manchester City, two of the top candidates for the European Cup, start their respective campaigns against more accessible opponents before their highly anticipated clash in the group stage.

Barcelona hosts Celtic, while City welcomes Borussia Moenchengladbach.

The good news for Celtic is that, despite its star power, Barcelona is beatable, as seen when recently promoted Alaves pulled off a 2-1 shocker at Camp Nou on Saturday.

The bad news is that Barcelona was playing without Lionel Messi, Andres Iniesta and Luis Suarez until the last half hour.

After a 5-1 win over fierce rival Rangers on Saturday, Celtic can look back to its win over Barcelona in the 2012 group stage.

Pep Guardiola goes into his first Champions League campaign as City manager having won all six of his games in charge.

Five-time champion Bayern Munich survived a scare on Friday to maintain coach Carlo Ancelotti's perfect start before turning attention to Champions League debutant Rostov.

The Champions League is uncharted territory for Russian runner-up Rostov, which has never before played in the group stage of a UEFA competition.

In the group's other game, 2015 runners-up Atletico Madrid and PSV Eindhoven are no strangers. Atletico needed to a penalty shootout to eliminate PSV from the round of 16 last season after both legs ended in a 0-0 stalemate.



Paris Saint Germain's players Serge Aurierand and Blaise Matuid in action with team-mates during a practice session at the Ooredoo Training Centre in Saint Germain-en-Laye, France yesterday.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GROUP STAGE FIXTURES

MAIN TOURNAMENT - GROUP STAGE - (GMT)

Group A
Today
FC Basel (Switzerland) v Ludogorets (Bulgaria) (1845)
Paris St Germain (France) v Arsenal (England) (1845)

Group B
Today
Benfica (Portugal) v Besiktas (Turkey) (1845)
Dynamo Kiev (Ukraine) v Napoli (Italy) (1845)

Group C
Today
Barcelona (Spain) v Celtic (Scotland) (1845)
Manchester City (England) v Borussia Moenchengladbach (Germany) (1845)

Group D
Today
Bayern Munich (Germany) v Rostov (Russia) (1845)
PSV Eindhoven (Netherlands) v Atletico Madrid (Spain) (1845)

Group E
Tomorrow
Bayer Leverkusen (Germany) v CSKA Moscow (Russia) (1845)
Tottenham Hotspur (England) v Monaco (France) (1845)

Group F
Tomorrow
Legia Warsaw (Poland) v Borussia Dortmund (Germany) (1845)
Real Madrid (Spain) v Sporting (Portugal) (1845)

Group G
Tomorrow
Club Bruges (Belgium) v Leicester City (England) (1845)
Porto (Portugal) v FC Copenhagen (Denmark) (1845)

Group H
Tomorrow
Juventus (Italy) v Sevilla (Spain) (1845)
Olympique Lyon (France) v Dinamo Zagreb (Croatia) (1845)



El Jaish players in action during a practice session in this file photo.

Al Nasr forfeit puts El Jaish in box seat

Agencies

DOHA: A controversy related to United Arab Emirates' Al Nasr's striker Wanderley's passport has put Qatar's El Jaish in the box seat in tomorrow's return leg of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League Quarter-finals.

"The AFC disciplinary committee has ordered the Champions League quarter-final first-leg match El Jaish vs Al Nasr forfeited," an AFC statement said.

Deliberating the case , the Committee determined that Al Nasr (UAE) violated Article 57.1 of the AFC Disciplinary Code by fielding an ineligible player, Santos Monteiro Junior Wanderley, during the match, AFC reported.

Article 24.6.3 of the competition regulations provides that a player is deemed ineligible if the AFC determines that any document submitted during registration is false. The Committee held, on the basis of information received from various state authorities and after analysing the case file, that the Indonesian passport submitted to register Wanderley was false.

Wanderley was provisionally suspended by the Chairman of the AFC Disciplinary Committee on September 2, 2016, for a purported violation of Article 62 (forgery and falsification) of the AFC Disciplinary Code.

The investigation into the parties responsible for the forgery or falsification of the passport is continuing. Further information shall be provided in due course. Al Nasr were also ordered to pay a fine of USD1,000.

Wanderley scored Al Nasr's opener in their 3-0 win over El Jaish, but the Asian Football Confederation named him as an ineligible player and effectively reversed the result. The decision came ahead of today's encounter which will be played at the Al Maktoum Stadium in Dubai, UAE, with a semi-final awaiting against either UAE's Al Ain or Uzbek side Lokomotiv.

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTER FINAL FIXTURES

QUARTER-FINALS - SECOND LEG MATCHES
(ALL TIMES IN GMT)
TODAY:
Chonbuk (Korea) v Shanghai SIPG (China) (1000)
Lokomotiv Tashkent (Uzbekistan) v Al Ain (United Arab Emirates) (1400)
QUARTER-FINALS, SECOND LEG MATCHES TOMORROW
Shandong Luneng (China) v FC Seoul (Korea) (1130)
Al Nasr (United Arab Emirates) v Al Jaish (Qatar) (1645)

Al Shaqab Racing's Al Mourtajez wins Qatar Cup in Chantilly

The Peninsula

DOHA/CHANTILLY: The Al Shaqab Racing owned Al Mourtajez cruised to victory in the Qatar Cup – Prix Dragon (Gr1 PA), at Chantilly, France on Sunday. Always in front, the Thomas Fourcy trained horse, ridden by jockey Julien Augé, easily outplayed others to closs the finish line first, creating a seven length gap.

His trainer, Thomas Fourcy said: "I'm not sure he has three or four gears more than the others but he is above the norm. I am not the right person to say who could beat him in the Qatar Arabian World Cup. But the way that he is running at the moment, I don't see how he can be beaten, unless the race has no pace like last year. The horse is a lot more relaxed this year, as he had a tendency to be very keen and use up a lot of gas during the race. Last year, he was ill, and we have looked after him this year, so that we don't make the same mistakes. He is fit and in form, and we just need to keep him there. He has a green light."

The two Umm Qarn owned horses complete the podium, Majeed and TM Thunder Struck, respectively finished second and third.

The Arc Trials day at Chantilly was opened with the Qatar Prix du Petit Couvert (Gr3), a race for sprinters in which the Robert and Nina Bailey owned horse, Just Glamorous imposed himself very easily from pillar to post.

The first preparatory race to the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe was the Qatar Prix Niel (Gr2) and it was taken home by the Japanese horse Makahiki.

Al Shaqab Racing's Doha Dream finished third, very close to the first ones. Rupert Pritchard-Gordon explained: "Doha Dream runs very well. He is improving. It is nice to have a very regular horse like him. He could run the Qatar Prix Chaudenay or the Prix du Conseil de Paris. He is not entered in the Arc. We will see with his trainer and the team what we will do next."

The Qatar Prix Vermeille (Gr1) was won by the three year old Left Hand. After travelling in the middle of the lot, the Wertheimer and Frère owned filly managed to come back up on the outside of the lot.

She fought with her two closest rivals Endless Time and The Juliet Rose to impose herself.

Trainer Carlos Laffon-Parias, explained about Left Hand's performance: "We weren't worried about the distance, I always knew she would be better over 2,400 metres. In the morning, she has a hard time passing her leader! It is why we put sheep pieces and is better coming up on her rivals. Sure enough, when you win like that, you want to go on the Arc! But she is also entered at Ascot, two weeks after. If we see she needs more time to recover, we will have this option."

The haras de Saint Pair bred and owned colt, Vadamos, imposes himself with class in the Qatar Prix du Moulin de Longchamp (Gr1). After following Zarak who took the lead at first, Vadamos switched places with him in the middle of the race. In the final phase, he easily accelerated and was only pushed forward by his rivals.

The Hspirit representative, Silverwave, imposed himself easily in the Qatar Prix Foy (Gr2). The Aga Khan owned horse Vazirabad did not disappoint in the Qatar Prix Gladiateur (Gr3). Ridden by Christophe Soumillon, he travelled at the back of the field, hidden. The race was animated by Nahual, who was very courageous in the final phase, fighting against the winner for victory. It is finally the Alain de Royer Dupré trained Vazirabad who took the advantage at the very end.



Jockey Julien Augé astride Al Shaqab Racing owned Al Mourtajez, winning the Qatar Cup - Prix Dragon (Gr1 PA) at Chantilly racecourse in Chantilly, France on Sunday.