

Storied Malaysian newspaper abruptly shuts after 80 years

Rihanna blasts Trump in new Vogue interview

NEW YORK: Rihanna speared President Donald Trump as perhaps "the most mentally ill human being in America" over his position on gun rights in a candid Vogue interview published yesterday that also touched on immigration and racism. Asked about the back-to-back shootings earlier this year in the US cities of El Paso and Dayton, the superstar performer who recently cemented her place in the upper echelons of the fashion industry with her own luxury line called the gun violence plaguing American society "devastating."

After the August shootings Rihanna had decried Trump's classification of the violence as the result of a "mental illness problem." "People are being murdered by war weapons that they legally purchase. This is just not normal. That should never, ever be normal," Rihanna told the fashion magazine that featured her on its cover for the sixth time.

"And the fact that it's classified as something different because of the color of their skin? It's a slap in the face. It's completely racist. Put an Arab man with that same weapon in that same Walmart and there is no way that Trump would sit there and address it publicly as a mental health problem," the 31-year-old continued. "The most mentally ill human being in America right now seems to be the president."

Earlier this year Rihanna removed her catalogue from the blanket "political entities license" agreement that had allowed the president to play her songs during his rallies. The native of Barbados has used her massive social media platform - she boasts 75.9 million followers on Instagram alone - to urge US citizens to vote, including in last year's midterm election. Rihanna also confirmed reports that she had turned down the National Football League's offer to play the coveted Super Bowl halftime show in solidarity with former player Colin Kaepernick.

Kaepernick, who has not played in the NFL since opting out of his contract with the San Francisco 49ers in March 2017, began kneeling in protest of social injustice and racial inequality during pre-game renditions of the US national anthem three years ago. "I couldn't dare do that. For what? Who gains from that? Not my people. I just couldn't be a sellout. I couldn't be an enabler," she said of the opportunity.

Turning to the subject of immigration, Rihanna said the controversies surrounding the issue in recent



Donald Trump



Rihanna

years have made her "sick to my stomach". Currently the world's richest female musician, Rihanna has centered her focus on fashion in recent years, making history by becoming the first black woman to head a fashion house for the French powerhouse LVMH, which owns legacy brands including Fendi and Givenchy. She has also made waves with her inclusive lingerie and make-up lines that offer a wide range of sizes, styles and skin colors. Rihanna's fierce fan base has been clamoring for her ninth album, "R9," however, which she said will be "reggae-infused" and hinted is nearly finished. — AFP

3D printer makes meat...

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provided by Israeli and US food-tech companies. "Thank God the experiment went successfully... All the cells showed a good result in space," he added.

Astronauts eat meat on board that is vacuum-packed or dried on Earth but this technology could ultimately be necessary for long voyages into deep space, said veteran cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko. "If we're going to fly further from Earth to other planets in

the solar system, we can't take that volume of food with us," he told AFP. "In any case we will have to grow and produce food onboard the spaceship. I think progress is developing very quickly, science and knowledge, and I think this will be within our lifetimes," he said.

Creating larger amounts of meat in the Russian segment will need more complex equipment than the current printer, said Khesuani. "Then we can create not just small objects but big ones, made of a large mass of cells. I hope we will continue these experiments." Other space agencies are also carrying out experiments in this area as making human tissue in space is easier than in conditions of gravity. An American 3D printer launched to the station in July can manufacture human tissue and is also being used for experiments by the European Space Agency. — AFP

Hashem welcomes 100% hike in...

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Hashem referred to, such as elderly laborers and teachers and staff members working in private schools other than their sponsors. "Deportation will also include the deportee's family members," the sources stressed. However, the sources said limiting expats' residency in Kuwait to five years renewable once for a maximum of five more years is an impractical proposal as it would lead to losing well-experienced and trained workers.

In another development, MP Ahmad Al-Fadhl yesterday denied a newspaper report that the finance ministry has completed plans to impose taxes and charges on many public services. The lawmaker said he contacted officials at the ministry, who said apart from two laws imposing value added tax (VAT) and selective taxes on cigarettes and energy and soft drinks, the ministry has no plans to impose any other taxes. Fadhl however said the finance minister had informed the National

Assembly that the country's fiscal position has been deteriorating and that in the best-case scenario, the state's reserve fund will run out of money by 2023 and Kuwait will only be left with assets in the future generations fund.

In the meantime, MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei yesterday warned the interior ministry against taking any action against a senior officer at the ministry following a stand-off with a member of the ruling family. Head of the traffic licenses department Maj Salah Al-Rashed posted on social media a phone conversation in which the ruling family member insulted him and warned him of disciplinary action after he refused to accept an illegal transaction to renew registration of vehicles the sheikh owns. Tabtabaei warned that if the ministry harms the officer, he will use his constitutional tools.

Later yesterday, Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah ordered filing a case against the ruling family member and prosecuting him for insulting a police officer on duty. The interior ministry noted on its Twitter account that it is investigating the audio circulating on social media, adding it reserves the right to take all legal actions in such cases. Notably, the accused sheikh had been previously imprisoned for two years for slandering III the Amir before he apologized and was released.

10 trillion dollars into the global economy, productivity-enhancing investments such as new infrastructure, R&D and skills development in the current and future workforce have been suboptimal.

As monetary policies begin to run out of steam, it is crucial for economies to rely on fiscal policy, structural reforms and public incentives to allocate more resources towards the full range of factors of productivity to fully leverage the new opportunities provided by the Fourth Industrial Revolution," Schwab writes.

Improving Kuwait's competitiveness has been a key focus of government policy in recent years, with a slate of initiatives aimed at easing investor access to local markets, reforming the bourse and establishing entities like KDIPA (Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority) to facilitate and promote foreign investment in the country. At the same time, the government has set up 'business centers' aimed at reducing bureaucracy in starting new businesses.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's oldest Malay-language newspaper, Utusan Malaysia, yesterday abruptly ceased publication and placed more than 800 employees on leave, citing declining readership and advertising revenue. Utusan was founded during British colonial rule in 1939 by Yusof Ishak, who later became Singapore's first president. The paper played an important role in the formation of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), a political party that would rule Malaysia for more than six decades after independence in August 1957.

UMNO, which took a controlling stake in Utusan in the 1950s, was ousted in a shock election defeat last year. Utusan's board agreed on Monday to undertake a voluntary liquidation as it was no longer able to pay salaries or clear its debts, chief executive Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir said yesterday in a memo to staff and seen by Reuters. "This step had to be taken as the board of directors is of the opinion that the company is no longer solvent to continue business," Abdul Aziz said, adding that all staff had been put on leave until Oct 31.

Mohamad Taufek Abdul Razak, chairman of Utusan's press union chapter, confirmed the authenticity of the memo. Utusan's management had not informed employees beforehand of the sudden closure and would only address questions over termination,

delayed salaries, and compensation on Oct 30, Mohamad Taufek said. "It was a spineless move by Utusan's management," he told reporters at the newspaper's Kuala Lumpur headquarters. Utusan employees, some in tears, were seen carrying their belongings out of the building yesterday. Local media reported that staff were asked to clear the company's office and it was sealed off. A total of 862 staff were affected by the closure, said Mohamad Taufek.

Utusan Melayu (Malaysia) Berhad was listed on the Malaysian bourse in 1994, and the daily hit a peak of 350,000 copies sold a day during the decade. But in recent years, Utusan's finances have been hurt by a sharp decline in circulation and revenue, which were compounded by UMNO's loss of power in May 2018. The paper has also been accused of stoking racial sentiment in the multiethnic country, due to its strong Malay nationalist editorial stance. Ethnic Malays make up about 60 percent of Malaysia's 32 million people, with the rest are mostly ethnic Chinese and Indians.

In August, Utusan raised the prices of its newspapers in a bid to keep the firm afloat. It was delisted on Aug 30 after missing a deadline for a regularization plan, citing ongoing losses, cash flow constraints, and lack of investors. As well as Malay-language newspapers, Malaysia also has English-, Chinese- and Tamil-language publications. — Agencies

Trio wins Nobel for developing...

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Goodenough built on Whittingham's prototype, substituting a different metal compound and doubling the potential energy of the battery to four volts. This paved the way for far more powerful and durable batteries in the future. In 1985, Yoshino instead used a carbon-based material that stores lithium ions, finally rendering the battery commercially viable. The culmination of the trio's research resulted in the most powerful, lightweight and rechargeable battery ever seen.

"This is such a wonderful thing, and I am very surprised," Yoshino told reporters in Tokyo. He said he had only got a cell phone in recent years. "I have long felt a bit of rejection towards mobile phones, so I have never had one until recently. I know the lithium-ion battery really benefited mobile phones," he said, adding he did "not really" feel that he had helped make a product that benefited his life. For Yoshino, a good scientist needed two qualities. "One thing is that you have to have a flexible brain. Flexibility. The other is tenacity. You stay persistent and never give up."

Goodenough, who was in London when he received the news, said he, like Yoshino, didn't expect to be honored, but expressed more pride in the worldwide impact of his work. "I'm extremely happy that my discovery has been able to help communication through the world. We need to build relationships, not wars. I am happy if people use this for good, not evil," he told reporters during a press conference.

Whittingham, 77, said he was "overcome with grati-

Turkey launches Syria push with...

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residential areas, the source said. A Reuters cameraman in the Turkish town of Akcakale saw several explosions across the border in the Syrian town of Tel Abyad, where a witness reported people fleeing en masse. Large explosions also rocked Ras al Ain, just across the border from the Turkish town of Ceylanpinar, a CNN Turk reporter said. The sound of planes could be heard above and smoke was rising from buildings in Ras al Ain, he said. The SDF said military positions and civilians in the city of Qamishli and the town of Ain Issa - more than 30 km inside Syria - had been hit, and said there were initial reports of civilian casualties. Turkish media said mortar and rocket fire from Syria struck the Turkish border towns of Ceylanpinar and Nusaybin. There were no immediate reports of casualties there.

World powers fear the action could open a new chapter in Syria's eight-year-old war and worsen regional turmoil. Ankara has said it intends to create a "safe zone" in order to return millions of refugees to Syrian soil. In the build-up to the expected offensive, Syria had said it was determined to confront any Turkish aggression by all legitimate means. It was also ready to embrace "prodigal sons", it said, in an apparent reference to the Syrian Kurdish authorities who hold the northeast.

Turkey views Kurdish YPG fighters in northeast Syria as terrorists because of their ties to militants waging an insurgency inside Turkey. An influx of non-Kurdish Syrians would help it secure a buffer against its main security threat. Amid deepening humanitarian concerns, Germany said Turkey's action would lead to further instability and could strengthen Islamic State, which the US-armed SDF helped defeat in Syria.

The SDF halted operations against Islamic State because of the Turkish offensive, two US officials and a Kurdish source said. One of the officials said US training of stabilization forces in Syria had also been affected. The United Nations Security Council will meet today at the request of European countries, who expressed alarm at the offensive, and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said that the bloc would not fund Ankara's plans in the region. "If

tude at receiving this award". His research "has helped advance how we store and use energy at a foundational level, and it is my hope that this recognition will help to shine a much-needed light on the (US) nation's energy future," he said on the website of Binghamton University in New York where he is a professor. Yoshino, 71, works at the Asahi Kasei Corporation in Tokyo and is a professor at Meijo University in Nagoya, Japan, while Goodenough holds the Cockrell Chair in Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin.

The trio will receive the prize from King Carl XVI Gustaf at a formal ceremony in Stockholm on December 10, the anniversary of the 1896 death of scientist Alfred Nobel who created the prizes in his last will and testament. Last year, the honour went to US scientists Frances Arnold and George Smith and British researcher Gregory Winter for developing enzymes used for greener and safer chemistry and antibody drugs with fewer side effects.

Arnold was just the fifth woman to clinch chemistry's most prestigious honor since Marie Curie in 1911. This year's Nobel season kicked off on Monday with the Medicine Prize, followed by the Physics Prize on Tuesday. The Literature Prize will follow today, with two laureates to be crowned after a sexual harassment scandal forced the Swedish Academy to postpone the 2018 award, for the first time in 70 years.

Names creating a buzz ahead of this year's literature prize include Canadian poet Anne Carson, Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Romanian poet and novelist Mircea Cartarescu and Polish writer and activist Olga Tokarczuk. Tomorrow the action moves to Norway where the Peace Prize is awarded, with bookies predicting a win for Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. The Economics Prize will wrap up the Nobel prize season on Oct 14. — AFP

the plan involves the creation of a so-called safe zone, don't expect the EU to pay for any of it," he told the EU parliament.

Kurdish-led forces have denounced the US policy shift as a "stab in the back". Trump denied he had abandoned the forces, the most capable US partners in fighting Islamic State in Syria. The Kurdish-led authority in northern Syria declared a state of "general mobilization" before the looming attack. "We call on all our institutions, and our people in all their components, to head towards the border region with Turkey to fulfill their moral duty and show resistance in these sensitive, historic moments," it said in a statement.

Erdogan's communications director Fahrettin Altun said Turkey had no ambition in northeastern Syria except to neutralize the threat against Turkish citizens and to liberate the local people from what he called "the yoke of armed thugs". Turkey was taking over leadership of the fight against Islamic State in Syria, he said. YPG fighters could either defect or Ankara would have to "stop them from disrupting our counter-Islamic State efforts", he wrote in a tweet and in a column in the Washington Post.

Turkey's Demiroren news agency said Syrian rebels had travelled from northwest Syria to Turkey in preparation for the incursion. They will be based in Ceylanpinar, with 14,000 of them gradually joining the offensive. "Strike them with an iron fist, make them taste the hell of your fires," the National Army, the main Turkey-backed rebel force, told its fighters in a statement.

Russia, Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's strongest foreign ally, urged dialogue between Damascus and Syria's Kurds on solving issues in northeast Syria including border security. "We will do our best to support the start of such substantive talks," Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters during a visit to Kazakhstan. Another Assad ally, Iran, urged Turkey to show restraint and avoid military action in northern Syria, although it said Turkey was "rightfully worried" about its southern border.

On Monday, Erdogan said US troops started to pull back after a call he had with Trump, adding that talks between Turkish and US officials on the matter would go on. Trump's decision to pull back troops has rattled allies, including France and Britain, two of Washington's main partners in the U.S.-led coalition fighting Islamic State. Senior Republican senator Lindsey Graham addressed a tweet to the Turkish government saying, "You do NOT have a green light to enter into northern Syria. There is massive bipartisan opposition in Congress, which you should see as a red line you should not cross." — Agencies

Kuwait leaps ahead in WEF...

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"The Global Competitiveness Report is designed to help policymakers, business leaders and other stakeholders shape their economic strategies in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution," writes WEF founder Klaus Schwab in the report's preface. Performance of economies across the globe, however, received mixed ratings and the WEF report notes that changes to fiscal policy and other political tools may be needed in the coming decade to exploit the disruptions created by the technological and digital revolutions.

"The report demonstrates that 10 years on from the financial crisis, while central banks have injected nearly