

NEWSIN brief

US efforts to split EU 'are in vain': Juncker

AFP, Brussels

European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker said US efforts to split the EU on trade "are in vain," in a message yesterday to President Donald Trump before their talks in Washington next week. Juncker will visit the White House on July 25 to try to convince Trump to drop tariffs on metals and avoid further duties on cars.

Air strikes kill 12 in Syria rebel holdout

AFP, Beirut

Unidentified air strikes have killed 12 civilians in a rebel-held pocket of southern Syria as regime ally Russia presses talks for Damascus to retake the area, a monitor said yesterday. The deadly strikes late Tuesday hit Nawa, the last town under rebel control in the southern province of Daraa, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Delhi building collapse kills five, 12 missing

AFP, New Delhi

More than 100 Indian rescue workers were yesterday using steel cutters and drills to try and free a dozen people feared trapped under the rubble of a collapsed six-storey building outside Delhi. Five bodies have been pulled so far from under tonnes of concrete and metal from the building, which was still under construction when it gave way late Tuesday in Greater Noida.

Skin cancer may be detected early

AFP, Sydney

Australian researchers said yesterday they have developed a blood test for melanoma in its early stages, calling it a "world first" breakthrough that could save many lives. The scientists, from Edith Cowan University, said the new test could help doctors detect the skin cancer before it spreads through a person's body.



Twelve Thai boys and their football coach, rescued from a flooded cave after being trapped, attend a press conference in Chiang Rai following their discharge from the hospital yesterday. The young footballers and their coach appeared healthy when they appeared before the media for the first time.

PHOTO: AFP

'It is a miracle' Thai cave boys speak of rescue after hospital discharge

AFP, Chiang Rai

Twelve boys and their football coach who were rescued after being trapped for over a fortnight in a flooded Thai cave spoke publicly of their incredible ordeal for the first time yesterday at a press conference beamed around the world.

The "Wild Boars" team members looked healthy and happy as they answered questions about the nine days they spent in the dark before being discovered by members of an international rescue team.

A packed crowd greeted the youngsters -- some of whom were trapped in the cave for 18 days -- after they were discharged from hospital in Chiang Rai, and watched as they played with footballs on a small makeshift pitch before taking their seats.

"It is a miracle," Wild Boars footballer Adul Sam-on, 14, said of the rescue, as the boys were gently quizzed about their terrifying experience.

The team had no food at all until they were found deep in the complex, surviving only on water that dripped down the side of the cave.

"We tried to dig out as we thought we cannot only wait for authorities to get us," coach Ekkapol Chantawong told reporters.

But doctors said all 13 were in good physical and mental health after recuperating in hospital.

The briefing was tightly controlled, with experts warning of possible long-term distress from the more than two weeks they spent trapped inside a cramped, flooded chamber of the Tham Luang cave in northern Thailand.

The public relations department in Chiang Rai solicited questions from news outlets in advance, which were forwarded to psychiatrists for screening.

No 'time limit' for N Korea

Trump eases pressure on Pyongyang to give up its nuke quickly

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump said Tuesday there is no hurry to denuclearize North Korea under his accord with Kim Jong Un -- a shift in tone from when the US leader said the process would start very soon.

"Discussions are ongoing and they're going very, very well," Trump told reporters.

"We have no time limit. We have no speed limit."

Trump said he discussed North Korea with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday at their summit in Helsinki.

"President Putin is going to be involved in the sense that he is with us," Trump said.

The Republican president met with Kim on June 12 for an unprecedented summit in Singapore during which the North Korean leader pledged to work toward denuclearization of the peninsula.

But the accord did not spell out a timetable for the process or say how it would be carried out. Diplomats are now expected to hammer out the details.

More than a month later, no concrete progress has been reported and North Korea has complained the Americans are making unilateral demands, reported AFP.

"Russia has agreed to help with North Korea, where relationships with us are very good and the process is moving along," said Trump on Twitter yesterday. "There is no

rush, the sanctions remain! Big benefits and exciting future for North Korea at end of process!"

Before the Singapore summit, the Trump administration said denuclearization should start "without delay," and after the meeting, it spoke of the process beginning "very quickly."

A day after the meeting, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the bulk of North Korea's denuclearization should be completed by the end of Trump's term in 2020.

The White House has hailed the summit between Kim and Trump in Singapore as a major breakthrough toward dismantling the isolated, nuclear-armed North in exchange for easing of sanctions and other help with economic development.

Pompeo met with Kim's key aide this month during his latest trip to Pyongyang but as soon as he left, the North's foreign ministry berated him over his "unilateral and gangster-like" demands.

Trump last week signaled optimism however, unveiling a letter from Kim in which the young leader hailed the "start of a meaningful journey" and tweeting "Great progress being made!"

A senior US defense official said on Tuesday the United States hopes North Korea will return the remains of about 50 American Korean War dead within two weeks, reported Reuters.

However, the timing of the handover and the number of sets remains to be returned is still uncertain, in spite of two days of talks between US and North Korean officials on Sunday and Monday, said the official, who did not want to be identified.

Russia has agreed to help with N Korea: Trump

North is expected to hand over 55 American Korean War dead by next week



Indian PM to face his first no-confidence motion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will face his first no-confidence motion tomorrow sponsored by the opposition parties since assuming power more than four years ago.

However, the no-trust motion does not threaten the stability of the Modi government which enjoys favourable arithmetic in the Lok Sabha, the lower House of parliament, with the support of 273 lawmakers, much more than the majority mark.

The Lok Sabha would take up the debate on the no-confidence motion against the Modi government brought by the Telugu Desam Party, a regional outfit which quit BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in March this year, and other opposition parties, with Speaker Sumitra Mahajan admitting the notice.

"The House will take up the debate (on the motion) on Friday, July 20th. The discussion will be held for the full day, followed by voting on it," Mahajan announced in the House when it reassembled after the

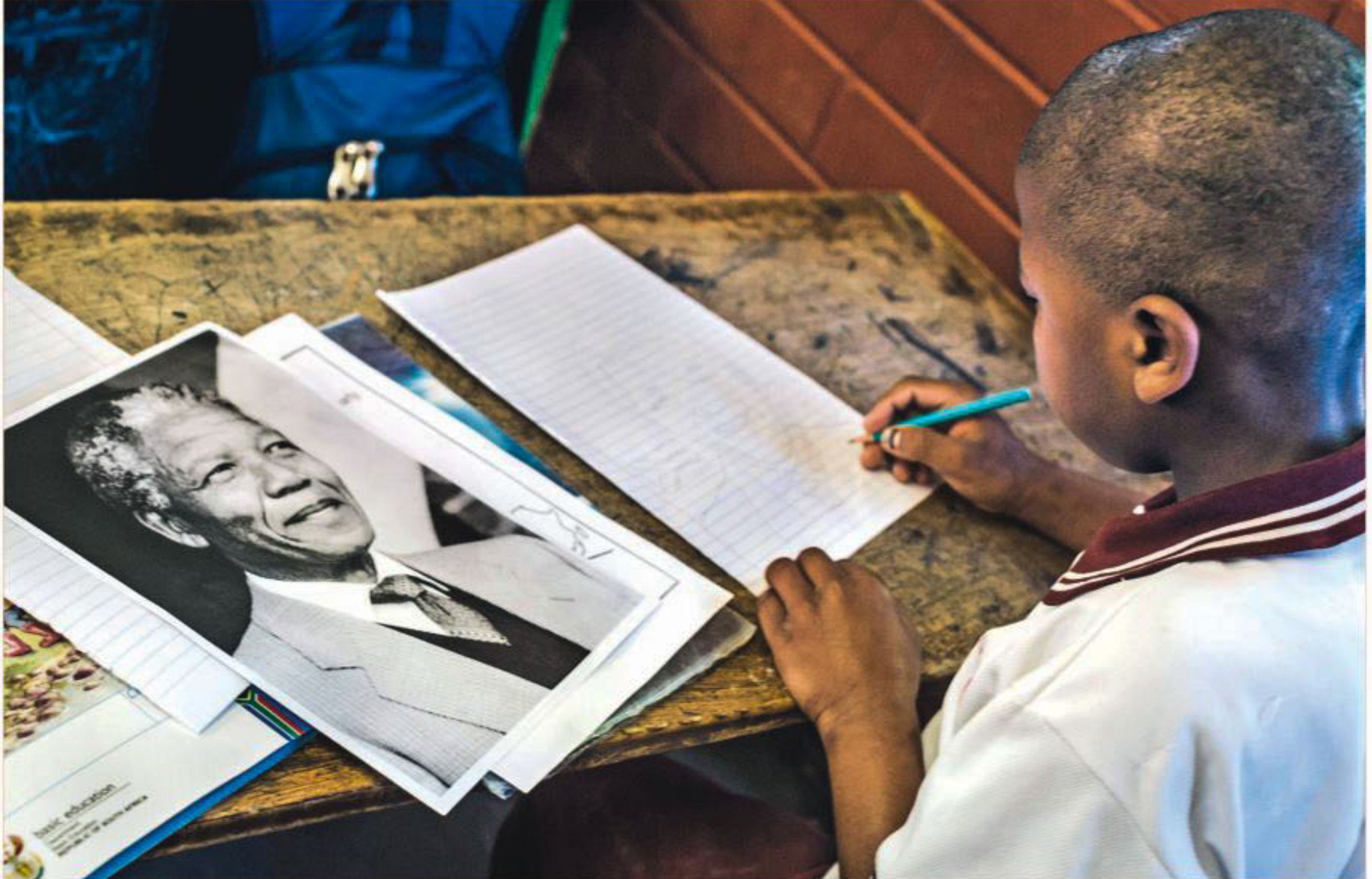
lunch break on the first day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament.

She also said that there will be no Question Hour on that day and the Lok Sabha would have no other business, barring the discussion on the no-confidence motion.

Mahajan said "more than 50 lawmakers are supporting the no-confidence motion, so the leave is granted (to bring in no-confidence motion)."

Under India's Constitution, a no-confidence motion can be moved by any lawmaker and it can be moved only in the Lok Sabha and not Rajya Sabha, the upper House because it is the Lok Sabha which is directly elected by the people.

Rule 198 of the Rules of Procedure and conduct of Lok Sabha specifies the procedure for moving a no-confidence motion. The member has to give a written notice of the motion before 10 am which will be read out by the Speaker in the House. A minimum of 50 members have to accept the motion and accordingly.



A child from Northlen Primary school draws to commemorate the life of former South African President Nelson Mandela in Durban yesterday. July 18 marks 100 years since the birth of Mandela in 1918 and the centenary is an occasion to reflect on his life and legacy.

PHOTO: AFP

ANDROID ANTITRUST VIOLATIONS

EU slaps record 4.3b euro fine on Google

AFP, Brussels

The European Union yesterday slapped Google with a huge 4.34-billion-euro fine for abusing the dominance of its Android operating system in the biggest antitrust penalty in the bloc's history.

EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said the US tech giant illegally used Android's near-monopoly to boost usage of its own search engine and browser.

The decision, which follows a three-year investigation, comes as fears of a transatlantic trade war mount due to President Donald Trump's decision to impose tariffs on European steel and aluminium exports.

"Today the commission has decided to fine Google 4.34 billion euros (\$5 billion) for breaching EU antitrust rules," Vestager told a press conference in Brussels.

"Google has engaged in illegal practices to cement its dominant market position in internet search."

Vestager, who has taken on a string of Silicon Valley titans as EU antitrust chief, said Google "must put an effective end to this conduct within 90 days or face penalty payments" of up to five percent of its average daily turnover.

Boss gives car to employee after his 20-mile walk to work

STANDARD.CO.UK

A young man from Alabama who walked 20 miles to make it on time for his first day of work was personally gifted a new car by his boss.

Walter Carr was forced to make the commute on foot after his car broke down on route to his new job at removal firm Bellhops.

He was due to help Jenny Hayden Lamey and her family move from Pelham, Alabama, on Saturday.

Four hours into his journey, Carr met with a police officer who took him for breakfast and then onto Lamey's house, where he got straight to work.

And after Lamey shared the young man's story online, he was handed the set of keys for a 2014 Ford Escape by the chief executive of his firm.

Lamey wrote on Facebook that she and her husband woke early on Friday as a removals team were due to arrive at around 8:00am.

But their doorbell rang at 6.30am and she met Carr, who was accompanied by a police officer from the Pelham police force.

"He proceeded to tell us that he had picked up 'this nice kid' in Pelham early this morning," said Lamey.

She continued: "He walked all night to get from Homewood to Pelham. Because he needed to get to work. For those reading this that are not local, that's over 20 miles.

Lamey's post has been shared nearly



2,000 times and she has started a GoFundMe campaign to help Carr fix his car, which has raised more than \$10,000.

And Carr was also praised by Luke Marklin, CEO of the moving company, who drove from Tennessee to meet with his new employee.

The young man broke down in tears when Marklin gifted him a new car.

Saudi intercepts Yemen rebel missile

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia yesterday intercepted a missile fired from rebel-held territory in neighbouring Yemen, where a Riyadh-led coalition is fighting the insurgents, state media said.

The ballistic missile was fired from the northern Yemeni province of Saada towards the southern Saudi city of Najran, but no casualties were reported, said a coalition statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency.

The Iran-backed Huthis have ramped up missile attacks against Saudi Arabia in recent months, which Riyadh usually says it intercepts.

Yesterday's attack brings the tally to 162 rebel missiles launched since 2015, according to the coalition, which that year joined the Yemeni government's fight against Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels.

In 2014, the Huthis overran the Yemeni capital and seized control of much of northern Yemen as well as a string of ports on the Red Sea.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and their allies intervened in the conflict the following March, aiming to push back the Huthis and restore the internationally recognised government to power.

Riyadh accuses its regional rival Tehran of supplying the Huthis with ballistic missiles, a charge Iran denies.

EU MIGRANT CRISIS

19 drown, 30 missing as boat sinks off Cyprus

AFP, Istanbul

At least 19 refugees were drowned and around 30 missing yesterday after their boat sank in the Mediterranean off the north of Cyprus, Turkish state media reports said.

The boat was carrying 150 people when it went down off the village of Yeni Erenkoy in the breakaway Turkish Cypriot-controlled portion of the island, which is only recognised by Ankara.

Over 100 people were rescued in a joint operation by Turkish Cypriot and Turkish coastguards after the boat sank off the village of Gialousa (Yeni Erenkoy in Turkish) on the panhandle Karpas peninsula, reports added.

Search efforts were under way to recover the missing with commercial vessels also taking part, the reports added.

Turkey's DHA news agency said that the refugees were Syrians seeking to go to Europe but this has yet to be confirmed.

Cyprus, some 160 kilometres (100 miles) from Syria's coast, has not seen the massive inflow of migrants experienced by Turkey, Greece and Italy although asylum applications have been rising sharply.

The island has been divided since 1974 when Turkish troops invaded and occupied the northern third of the island in response to a Greek military junta-sponsored coup.

Turkey has however been one of the hubs for refugees fleeing Syria and other trouble spots like Afghanistan and Iraq.

Over a million people, many fleeing the war in Syria, crossed to European Union member Greece from Turkey in 2015 after the onset of the bloc's worst migration crisis since World War II.