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Riyadh to admit Iran envoy to head office in kingdom

Revolutionary Guards hold Gulf drills as US tensions rise

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia has agreed to admit an Iranian diplomat to head an office representing Iranian interests in the kingdom, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported yesterday, in a rare move after the rivals broke off relations in 2016. "An informed diplomatic source said yesterday that Saudi Arabia had agreed to grant a visa to the head ... of Iran's interests section," IRNA reported. "Observers saw this ... as a positive diplomatic step in Tehran-Riyadh relations." The office is expected to be set up within the Swiss diplomatic mission in Saudi Arabia, based on an agreement signed in 2017. There was no immediate official Saudi reaction to the Iranian report.

The kingdom, the regional rival of mostly Shiite Iran, presents itself as the guardian of Islamic orthodoxy and custodian of its holiest places in Makkah and Madinah. Riyadh severed diplomatic relations after Iranian protesters stormed the Saudi Embassy in Tehran following the execution of a Shiite cleric in Saudi Arabia in Jan 2016. Both countries agreed to Switzerland's offer of its traditional policy of good offices and to act as a diplomatic channel between the two countries. Saudi Arabia

welcomed President Donald Trump's decision in May to withdraw the United States from an international nuclear agreement with Iran and to re-impose economic sanctions on Tehran.

In an interview published on the Iranian Foreign Ministry's website, the ministry spokesman said there had been a "breakthrough" in relations between the two regional rivals. "Up until two weeks ago, no visa had been issued for the names that we had submitted a long time ago," spokesman Bahram Qasemi said. "But within the last week or two, there has been a breakthrough and I think there are indications that the office for the protection of interests will be opened," he added. Tension between the two countries have surged in recent years, with Saudi Arabia and Iran supporting opposite sides in wars in Syria and Yemen and rival political parties in Iraq and Lebanon.

Separately, Iran's Revolutionary Guards confirmed yesterday it had held war games in the Gulf over the past several days, saying they were aimed at "confronting possible threats" by enemies, IRNA reported. US officials told Reuters on Thursday that the United

States believed Iran had started carrying out naval exercises in the Gulf, apparently moving up the timing of annual drills amid heightened tensions with Washington. "This exercise was conducted with the aim of controlling and safeguarding the safety of the international waterway and within the framework of the program of the Guards' annual military exercises," Guards spokesman Ramezan Sharif said, according to IRNA.

The US military's Central Command on Wednesday confirmed it has seen increased Iranian naval activity. The activity extended to the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway for oil shipments the Revolutionary Guards have threatened to block. Guards commander Mohammad Ali Jafari "expressed satisfaction over the successful conduct of the Guards naval exercise, emphasizing the need to maintain and enhance defense readiness and the security of the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz and to confront threats and potential adventurous acts of enemies," IRNA quoted Sharif as saying.

One US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said possibly more than 100 vessels were involved in the drills, including small boats. US officials, speaking to

Reuters on condition of anonymity, said the drills appeared designed to send a message to Washington, which is intensifying its economic and diplomatic pressure on Tehran but so far stopping short of using the US military to more aggressively counter Iran and its proxies.

Iran has been furious over Trump's decision to pull out of the nuclear agreement and re-impose sanctions on Tehran. Senior Iranian officials have warned the country would not easily yield to a renewed US campaign to strangle Iran's vital oil exports. But Iran did not appear interested in drawing attention to the drills. Iranian authorities had not commented on them earlier and several officials contacted by Reuters this week had declined to comment.

Last month, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei backed President Hassan Rouhani's suggestion that Iran may block Gulf oil exports if its own exports are stopped. Rouhani's apparent threat earlier in July to disrupt oil shipments from neighboring countries came in reaction to the looming US sanctions and efforts by Washington to force all countries to stop buying Iranian oil. — Agencies

US denies role as Maduro escapes 'assassination' bid

CARACAS: The United States yesterday denied involvement as Nicolas Maduro blamed the opposition and Colombian counterpart Juan Manuel Santos for an alleged "assassination" attempt on the Venezuela president. Venezuela's far-left government said seven soldiers were wounded by the alleged attack using explosive-laden drones during a military parade in Caracas on Saturday.

Maduro pointed the finger at outgoing Colombian President Santos and "the ultra-right wing," a term he uses to describe domestic opposition, as a mysterious rebel group claimed responsibility. US national security advisor John Bolton insisted there was "no US government involvement" and even suggested that the incident could have been "a pretext set up by the regime itself".

Venezuela has already reacted to Saturday's events with a series of arrests as Attorney General Tarek William Saab, who was also present at the parade, warning: "There will be a ruthless punishment." Saab

said the names of those arrested would be revealed today. Once safely entrenched back in the presidential palace, Maduro barked out a defiant message to his detractors in a national address.

"Justice! Maximum punishment! And there will be no forgiveness," he warned, sparking fears of an anti-opposition offensive in a country already reportedly holding some 248 political prisoners. "I am fine, I am alive, and after this attack I'm more determined than ever to follow the path of the revolution," added the successor to the late author of Venezuela's socialist revolution, Hugo Chavez.

State television images showed Maduro looking up disconcertedly in the middle of a speech, having heard a bang, before members of the country's National Guard lined up in the parade suddenly scattered. "It was an attack to kill me, they tried to assassinate me," Maduro said. Communication Minister Jorge Rodriguez said there was "an explosive charge... detonated close to the presidential podium" and in several other spots along the parade held in central Caracas. Saab told CNN he saw a drone filming the event explode.

No drones could be seen in the television broadcast, which showed bodyguards jumping in front of Maduro to protect him with flexible ballistic shields. The broadcast was quickly cut.

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CARACAS: A screengrab taken from video shows Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, his wife Cilia Flores and military authorities reacting to a loud bang during a ceremony to celebrate the 81st anniversary of the National Guard on Saturday. — AFP

Indonesians and Joko go loco for poco-poco

JAKARTA: Indonesian president Joko Widodo led some 65,000 of his compatriots in a mass dance through the streets of Jakarta yesterday to promote the Asian Games and try to set a world record along the way. Jakarta and the city of Palembang on Sumatra will jointly host Asia's biggest sporting event from August 18 but President Widodo has previously complained about the lack of promotion and enthusiasm in the country. In a bid to drum up support ahead of the games authorities turned to the poco-poco, a traditional line dance from North Sulawesi province.

Dressed in white and red - the color



JAKARTA: Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Vice President Jusuf Kalla take part in a mass dance through the streets of Jakarta to promote the Asian Games yesterday. — AFP

of the Indonesian flag - President Widodo, his wife Iriana, and several high ranking officials led tens of thousands of Indonesians in a long, snaking line of dancers through the capital.

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Hackathon seeks high-tech fixes to hajj calamities

JEDDAH: Fuelled by caffeine, pizza and adrenaline, sleep-deprived programmers in a marathon Saudi contest this week explored high-tech solutions to prevent a repeat of past calamities in the annual hajj pilgrimage. In a cavernous hall in the Red Sea city of Jeddah, thousands of software professionals and students competed in the kingdom's first-ever hackathon, a coding festival ahead of the world's largest pilgrimage later this month.

The hajj, expected to draw more than two million pilgrims to Makkah this year, represents a key rite of passage for Muslims and a massive logistical challenge for Saudi authorities, with colossal crowds cramming into relatively small holy sites. Launching headlong into 36 hours of software development, the



JEDDAH: Participants including Saudi women attend a hackathon on Aug 1, 2018 prior to the start of the annual hajj pilgrimage. — AFP

participants from across the globe battled sleep deprivation to crowd source answers to a key question that has long vexed hajj organizers - how to avert future deadly disasters.

A group of five Saudi, Yemeni and Eritrean women, all in their 20s and covered head-to-toe in the Islamic niqab, hunched over their

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News in brief

52 militants killed in Sinai

CAIRO: Egyptian troops and security forces have killed at least 52 suspected militants in recent days, the army said in a statement yesterday. Troops and security forces also destroyed 15 vehicles laden with weapons and ammunitions while trying to infiltrate the western border, and 17 more in the southern military region. In Sinai, the statement said that 13 "extremely dangerous takfiris" were killed in an operation by security forces in the city of Al-Arish, the capital of North Sinai province. The remaining 39 militants were killed in various military operations across northern and central Sinai, the military statement added. More than 300 militants and at least 35 soldiers have been killed since the military launched the operation. — Reuters

WWII plane crash kills 20

FLIMS, Switzerland: Twenty people died after a vintage World War II aircraft crashed into a Swiss mountainside at the weekend, police said yesterday. "The police have the sad certainty that the 20 people aboard perished," police spokeswoman Anita Senti told a news conference. There were 11 men and nine women aboard, including an Austrian couple and their son, she said. The German-built Junker JU52 HB-HOT aircraft, dating from 1939 and nicknamed "Iron Annie", was a collectors' aircraft. It crashed into Piz Segnas, a 3,000-m peak in the east of the country on Saturday at an altitude of 2,540 m on the mountain's western flank, Senti said. "The plane turned 180 degrees to the south and fell to the ground like a stone," a witness said. — AFP

Shark kills Czech tourist

CAIRO: A Czech tourist was killed by a shark while swimming in the Red Sea off the coast of Egypt, authorities said yesterday. The man died 20 km north of Marsa Alam city as "a result of an attack by a shark", city council chairman General Atef Wagdy told AFP. The health ministry is coordinating handing over the body to the Czech embassy, Wagdy said. Local media reported on Friday that human remains were found on a beach in Marsa Alam. Marsa Alam attracts divers who explore coral and other marine life, including fish and sharks. "There is no problem in diving" around Marsa Alam, but people who swim on the surface in deep waters beyond the coral can be vulnerable to attack, Wagdy said. — AFP

Local

Amir receives senior state officials, former Iraqi minister

Amir offers condolences to Russian, Afghan, Swiss presidents



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Odeh Al-Rowaie.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with former Minister of Finance in the Republic of Iraq Hoshiyar Mahmoud Zebari.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Acting Speaker of the National Assembly Dr Odeh Al-Rowaie. His Highness the Amir then received Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and the former Minister of Finance in the Republic of Iraq, Hoshiyar Mahmoud Zebari, on the occasion of his visit to the country. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Deputy Foreign

Minister Khaled Sulaiman Al-Jarallah. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also met separately with the Zebari, in presence of senior foreign ministry officials.

Condolences

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to the Russian President Vladimir Putin offering his condolences to the victims of a helicopter crash in the Krasnoyarsk region of Siberia. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the Russian President.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent a

cable of condolences to the President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani over the death of citizens in the suicide bombing, targeting a mosque in Gardez district, in Paktia province. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister addressed cables of identical content to the Afghan president.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to President of the Swiss Federation Alan Beerse on the victims of the twin aircrafts crash near Nidwalden and Graubunden in the Swiss Alps. The incidents claimed the lives of all people onboard. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister addressed cables of identical content to the Swiss president. — KUNA



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with former Minister of Finance in the Republic of Iraq Hoshiyar Mahmoud Zebari.

FM discusses regional developments with Zambian counterpart

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met yesterday with the visiting Zambian Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Malanji, to discuss bilateral ties between the two countries. The meeting also tackled the latest developments regionally and internationally. Foreign Ministry senior officials attended the meeting.

Separately, Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Lt Gen Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah discussed yesterday with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman a number of issues of mutual interest and ways of bolstering cooperation in the security sphere between the two countries. The Interior Ministry's Department of Relations and Security Media said that the minister asserted during the meeting the deep-rooted ties between Kuwait and the US. Meanwhile, the US Ambassador praised the role of the State of Kuwait in substantiating peace and security in the region, underscoring significance of the issues that were discussed during the meeting in strengthening ties between the two countries. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Zambia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Malanji. — KUNA photos



Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Lt Gen Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman.

Kuwaiti mountaineer reaches highest volcanic peak in Oceania

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti mountaineer Yousef Al-Refai reached the highest volcanic peak in the continent of Oceania, part of a mountain range in Papua New Guinea. Refai said that he planned this trip for a whole year after inquiring from the locals about the natural structure, which stands 4,367-meters above sea level. The mountaineer added that a guide from the natives accompanied him on this epic odyssey, which lasted eight days with two spent in a rainforest.

Refai, 21, said that he started mountaineering in 2015 to try out a new adventure, but he fell in love with the sport ever since. He also said that he had climbed a number of mountains, the first of which was Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa, in December 2015 and Russia's highest mountain Elbrus in July 2017. Papua New Guinea is located in the southeast of the Pacific Ocean on the continent of Oceania near Indonesia. Its inhabitants, who were completely isolated from the outside world, were discovered in 1983. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti mountaineer Yousef Al-Refai raises Kuwait's flag on the highest volcanic peak in the continent of Oceania. — KUNA



Assembly records highest response rate since 1981

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of State for National Assembly Affairs said yesterday that the Kuwaiti government achieved at the end of the second session of the 15th legislative term of the National Assembly the highest rate of response to parliamentary questions since the fifth legislative term in 1981, a percentage of 90 percent.

The ministry said in a press statement that the government's achievement of this percentage confirms its positive cooperation with the National Assembly in accordance with the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The

total number of questions included at the end of the second session of the fifteenth legislative term of the current National Assembly amounted to 2,595 questions, while total responses of ministers reached 2,346 answers, response rate of 90 percent, the ministry said.

The total questions in 1981 Council's fifth term amounted to 1,094 questions with 988 answers, response rate of 90 percent, the ministry added. The total questions in the previous 2013 Council amounted to 3,148 questions with 2,706 answers, response rate of 86 percent. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFS) visited staff sergeant Nayer Nasser Al-Ajmi from Um Al-Halman fire center who was injured on his way to work and was admitted to Adan Hospital. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun



Local

Lawmaker to grill minister over financial, administrative violations at Kuwait Airways

Expat secretary obstructs Kuwaitis' appointment at investment authority: MP

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: MP Khalid Al-Otaibi announced yesterday that he plans to file a grilling motion against Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf over financial and administrative violations at Kuwait Airways. The grilling is expected to be submitted at the start of next term, Otaibi said, noting that all supervisory means have been exhausted since Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf took over supervision of Kuwait Airways. He said Hajraf has a golden opportunity until October to deal with the Kuwait Airways violations, which "we informed him about and asked him to seriously deal with and stop wasting time without doing anything." Otaibi said Kuwait Airways' situation has gone beyond financial and administrative violations, reaching appointments and signing direct contracts in violation of the law, arguing that the misconducts could be affecting aviation and passenger safety as well as Kuwait's reputation due to the wrong policies in the absence of competent leaders.

Meanwhile, MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei asked Minister Hajraf about the salaries of employees at Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), adding that an expatriate secretary at the director general's office prevents Kuwaitis from being appointed alongside her. Tabtabaei wanted to know the number of expat workers at the authority, their posts, salaries and incentives, besides plans to 'Kuwaitize' the authority's employees. He also wanted to know about the only secretary at the director general's office, adding that no Kuwaitis were appointed there because she is in control and keeps Kuwaitis from working with her. He asked for a copy of her contract, her salary and all rewards she received since her appointment until now.

Tabtabaei wanted to know whether the KIA managing director and one of the executives there are

related, and the measures taken to guarantee professionalism and neutrality of decisions taken. He also wanted to know the degrees the director of the training department has and whether they were approved by the ministry of higher education. He asked for the financial incentives the director received after receiving his academic degree. He wanted to see degrees of all KIA workers who received them while at work and whether they were approved or not. Tabtabaei also wanted to know the number of KIA employees who graduated from Egyptian universities - both Kuwaitis and expats - and their jobs, salaries, allowances and incentives.

Domestic helpers

MP Mohammad Al-Dallal proposed allocating a building near or inside the airport to examine domestic helpers or any laborers who enter the country, particularly those who leave then return again. The proposal also calls for not renewing residency permits until the helper undergoes a medical test.

MP Thamer Al-Suwai asked the health minister about the number of cancer cases in previous years including the number of affected males, females, age groups and the number of advanced cases in all Kuwaiti hospitals and the cancer center.

Expat advisors

Head of Fatwa and Legislation Department Salah Al-Musad said the department has not signed any contracts with new expat advisors since Oct 24, 2017, in an answer to a question by MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari about terminating all expat law experts. The question was whether Musad issued a decision to terminate all expats appointed as legal researchers and sent a letter to the Civil Service Commission about the decision, and whether



MP Khalid Al-Otaibi



Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf



MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei



MP Mohammad Al-Dallal

the fatwa and legislative department denied this.

Musad said no statement was made about terminating the services of all expats who are working as legal experts, but as a letter from the CSC recommended the appointment of an expat as a specialist legal expert, a letter was sent to the head of CSC to inform him that the department had decided not to appoint non-Kuwaitis. He said the department sent a letter on March 12, 2018 to the state minister for Cabinet affairs to discuss the renewal of loaning 10 advisors due to the department's need for their accumulated expertise. He said it is not right for the question to interfere in what is related to the work of the executive branch, which is something that clashes with the principle of separation of powers.

Sleeping in mosques

Minister of Justice, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fahd Al-Afasi said there should be no sleeping in mosques by any groups, adding that he referred the incident concerning a number of persons who were found sleeping inside a mosque's women's praying

area for investigation. He said in an answer to a parliamentary question with regards to banning the Tabligh group from entering mosques until after receiving official approval, adding "the ministry does not allow any individual or group to give lectures or speeches without prior permission and under its supervision". He said mosques cannot be used for sleeping and decisions were issued to the assistant undersecretary for mosque affairs to not allow any individual to sleep in mosques or hold any activity not approved by the department the mosque belongs to.

Public schools

Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi said that the number of students in public high schools is 84,485. He said in an answer to a question from MP Jamaan Al-Harbash that the number of Kuwaitis in the secondary stage for the year 2017-2018 was 73,932 of both genders, while non-Kuwaitis made up 10,553. He said Ahmadi education zone has the largest number at 17,055 students, while the lowest number is in Mubarak Al-Kabeer with 6,626 students.

Child's play leads to attempted murder

KUWAIT: A fight between children in Dhaher almost led to the killing of one parent, who received a bullet in his left foot as two more bullets missed him. The deputy attorney general ordered the case be considered as that of attempted murder and possession of an unlicensed firearm. Interior ministry records revealed the fugitive suspect has a criminal record, and detectives are working on his arrest.

Physical assault

A bedoon man complained to police against two Afghan mechanics who beat him when he did not like the way they repaired his car, as they repaired the engine and damaged something else. The victim asked the mechanics to repair the damage but they refused. When he refused to pay, they beat him up. Separately, a citizen accused his neighbors of beating and insulting him in front of his house. A security source said the citizen handed them a medical report stating that he sustained various bruises and

grazes. Police are looking for two brothers. Meanwhile, Ahmadi police are looking for two citizens who beat a bedoon with a steel pipe and broke his nose at the camel stables. They also beat and kicked him to settle a score with him. The victim gave the police details of the suspects. The prosecutor considered the case a felony and police are looking for the suspects.

Fight

Abu Halifa detectives are looking for five persons following a fight with two brothers in a park. The brothers were beaten badly and knives were pulled in their faces. The brothers were stopped by the five for no apparent reason. They attempted to avoid them, but the five started beating them with sharp objects and sticks - they then escaped.

Robbery

A man claiming to be a detective robbed an Indian mandoob (representative) of a mobile, electronic payment device and a wallet containing KD 350 after beating him in Jahra. The fake detective told the Indian he was a policeman, and when the victim attempted to fend him off, he beat him before escaping in an SUV. Detectives are working on the case.

— Translated from the Arabic press



KUWAIT: Jahra Municipality public cleanliness and road occupancy department carried out an inspection of the feed market located on Salmiy Road, resulting in issuing 25 citations and removal of six mobile grocery stores. Acting director of the department Meshaal Al-Daihani said 29 cu m of food was also removed. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Central Bank denies expats bad debts report

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has denied a report published in Kuwait Times on July 19, 2018 captioned '\$1.8 billion bad debts for laid off expatriates'.

In a statement to the press, the Central Bank of Kuwait "assures that all the figures contained in that report are altogether incorrect whether at the level of numbers of debt classification, and that it had not published any data or information in this regard, except what is published in its quarterly statistics as part of its reporting on indicators of the financial soundness including the non-performing loan ratios that reveal a significant improvement of a meager 1.4 percent, which proves the financial soundness and strength of the Kuwaiti banking sector."

The statement continues: "Furthermore, the data published by the Central Bank of Kuwait in this regard do not relate to the bad debts owed to banks or financing companies by a specific category of customers.

Therefore, the Central Bank of Kuwait underlines the importance of referring to its official reports and periodicals for the correct financial and economic information particularly since they are precisely developed and posted on public domain to provide accurate information and figures.

The Central Bank of Kuwait would like to seize this opportunity to call upon the press and media agencies to exercise caution when speaking on any information attributed to the Central Bank of Kuwait since publishing any false or misleading information may adversely affect the financial and economic conditions of the country."

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Kuwait City during sunset. — Photo by Hassan Bushihri (KUNA)

LOYAC empowers young people, develop their skills



KUWAIT: LOYAC trainees in a bakery learning to prepare and decorate cakes. — KUNA



LOYAC trainees working in a hotel's reception desk.



LOYAC trainees working in a hotel's reception desk.

KUWAIT: Many companies and institutions welcome and recruit a large number of LOYAC trainees to develop their skills and to enable them become more capable of working in their future jobs. It is worth mentioning that these courses are coordinated twice a year, six hours a day, depending on the job requirements. LOYAC trainees wishing to enroll in hotel management must possess majors like accounting, reception, cooking, room service, maintenance, engineering, human resources, public relations, marketing and sales. The trainees are also trained on operating and dealing with large appliances, providing best services to customers, helping children and make them comfortable. — KUNA



A LOYAC trainee in an arcade facility learning to operate games.



LOYAC trainees assist children in an arcade facility.



KUWAIT: A team from the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently conducted a field tour to the Jahra Medical City; a project that the bank has financed in cooperation with the First Abu Dhabi Bank and the Ahli Bank of Kuwait.

KFH: 10 customers win KD 250 each in 'Hesabi' for youth draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the winners of the second draw of 'Hesabi' for Youth. The draw took place under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The draw is part of Win with Hesabi campaign that offers 2 BMW 4 Series Coupes and 120 cash prizes worth KD250.

The winners of the KD 250 prize are as follows: Iman Alomran, Najwa Ebrahim, Bashayer AlAzmi, Bandar Almutawtah, Hessa Obaid, Hamad AlAjmi, Sara AlAzemi, Abdulaziz Alhadiya, Abdullah AlAzmi and Talal Albajeri.

KFH offers 'Hesabi' for Youth with a variety of privileges as part of its continued endeavor to provide adequate customer care, innovate new prod-



KUWAIT: KFH representatives after the draw.

ucts and services and fulfill the needs of all customers of various age categories and interests. Services and products are tailored to suit customers' needs and provide distinguished serve as per global standards in regard to quality, accuracy and speed. Hesabi program has been designed to meet the needs of youth and aspire for their active life style. This program presents for youth many exclusive offers and a wide range of privileges including Hesabi ATM card with a unique design, eligibility to issue Hesab prepaid card (as per credit regulations of KFH), distinguished offers and discounts etc.

KFH continues to launch marketing campaigns to reward youth customers in Hesabi campaign namely 'On My Account' campaign which has met with wide acceptance among program owners, thus offering exclusive offers and many privileges to suite their expectations. Hesabi for Youth represents the ambitions and expectations of youth category and copes with KFH aspirations to attract the largest portion of youth who represents the major part of Kuwaiti society. Also, the account represents KFH initiative to diversify banking services and products.

Ancient petroglyphs in Kuwait tell historical tale

Cuneiform script among rock inscriptions recently unearthed in Kuwait



KUWAIT: National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters' director of the department of archaeology Dr Sultan Al-Duweish (right) and Mohammad bin Ridha, the annual summer expo's chief organizer, inspect an item at the exhibition. — KUNA photos



A wide shot of the exhibition.



A display of Cuneiform script.

KUWAIT: Venerable rock inscriptions recently unearthed in Kuwait indicate that civilizations dating back centuries had at one point in time thrived in the Gulf state, said a Kuwaiti official yesterday. Chief among the inscriptions is one written in the Cuneiform script, which first emerged in the year 2300 BC, the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters' (NCCAL) director of the department of archaeology Dr Sultan Al-Duweish revealed in a statement. Speaking on the sidelines of an exhibition on petroglyphs in Kuwait, he said that some rocks also featured inscriptions in Aramaic, which first appeared in Failaka Island.

Meanwhile, Duweish explained that other rocks are emblazoned with the Greek writing, which made its way to Kuwait concurrently with the arrival of Alexander the Great. Rock inscriptions bearing an ancient Arabic calligraphy were also among the discoveries, demonstrating the transformation of the Arabic language over the years, he added. Mohammad bin Ridha, the annual summer expo's chief organizer, said that the four-day event is part of a festival that depicts Kuwait's illustrious history and the vast civilizations that existed on its soil. He added that the festival is stacked with a plethora of cultural festivities, including workshops, musical performances and seminars. — KUNA



A stone with inscriptions from the Hellenistic period.



Greek writing stand.

Kuwait University officials inspect preparations at Shadadiya University



By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait University assistant secretary general for administrative affairs Ali Al-Ustath visited Sabah Al-Salem University City in Shadadiya to inspect buildings and open yards. He was accompanied by director of general services Sanabel Al-Duwaisan and other employees. Ustath said the visit aimed at checking buildings that will be ready during February and September of 2019.



'Shot like a dog':
Zimbabwe buries
post-election dead

A decade after Russia war, plight of Georgian refugees continues



DHAKA: Bangladeshi students shout slogans as they march along a street during a student protest in Dhaka yesterday following the deaths of two college students in a road accident. — AFP

Bangladesh PM urges protesters to go home

Internet services have been shut down for 24 hours

DHAKA: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged students yesterday to go home as police fired tear gas during an eighth day of unprecedented protests over road safety which have paralyzed parts of Dhaka. Students in their tens of thousands have brought parts of the capital to a standstill after two teenagers were killed by a speeding bus.

The unrest quickly spread beyond the capital. Authorities have shut down mobile internet services across swathes of the country, officials and local media said. On Saturday the protests took a violent turn in Dhaka's Jigatala neighborhood, with more than 100 people injured as police fired rubber bullets at demonstrators. A car carrying US ambassador Marcia Bernicat was also attacked by "armed men" but she escaped unscathed, the embassy said.

The violence continued yesterday with police firing tear gas into a large crowd marching toward an office of the ruling Awami League party, an AFP correspondent said. Hasina warned yesterday that a "third party" could sabotage the protests and put the safety of demonstrators at risk. "That's why I request all guardians and parents to keep their children at home. Whatever they have done is enough," the prime minister said from her office.

Some youngsters were rushed to hospital on

Saturday after being attacked, allegedly by pro-government activists, witnesses said. Hasina's warning came as protesters marched towards the scene of Saturday's clashes chanting "We want justice!" Police denied they fired rubber bullets or tear gas at the protesters. However hospital staff said dozens of people had been injured, some seriously, and injuries were consistent with rubber bullets.

The Awami League has denied allegations that its officials beat up students. On Saturday, US ambassador Bernicat's vehicle was set upon by a mob. "As she was leaving about 11pm and getting into her car, a group attacked her car," said rights activist Badiul Alam Majumder, who was hosting the ambassador for dinner. The US embassy confirmed an official vehicle "was attacked by a group of armed adult men" but the envoy and her team departed unharmed.

Internet shutdown

The country's biggest-circulation newspaper

Prothom Alo said 3G and 4G internet services have been shut down for 24 hours since late Saturday, shortly after the violence broke out. Social media has been filled with comments from Bangladeshis unable to access the internet via their phones, although wireless and wired networks appear to be unhindered. The Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission said it would comment later yesterday.

Anger could spark anti-government protests

students. Images and photos of the attacks on students allegedly by ruling party activists have flooded social media, prompting renewed anger.

Bangladesh's transport sector is widely seen as corrupt, unregulated and dangerous. As news of the

teenagers' deaths spread rapidly on social media they became a catalyst for an outpouring of anger against the government. Hasina's government has ruled Bangladesh since 2009, but in recent months it has been shaken by separate mass protests demanding an end to a decades-old system of discriminatory civil service recruitment.

Several powerful ministers have pleaded with students to return to their classes, amid fears the unprecedented teen anger could spark widespread anti-government protests before a general election due later this year. But their pleas have had little effect. An insensitive comment by Shajahan Khan, a government minister with ties to powerful transport unions, fuelled the flames last week.

Khan questioned why there was such an uproar over the two Dhaka children but no reaction when 33 people were killed in an Indian bus crash the day before. There have been widespread social media demands for the minister's resignation despite his subsequent apology. High schools were shut on Thursday as officials promised students their demands for road safety reforms would be considered. The embassies of the US and Australia warned of significant delays and disruptions as a result of the protests across Dhaka, which already suffers from daily gridlock, and elsewhere in the country. — AFP

IS kills one of dozens of hostages in south Syria

BEIRUT: The Islamic State jihadist group has executed one of dozens of Druze hostages abducted from Syria's southern province of Sweida last week, a journalist in the area and a monitor said yesterday. IS went on a rampage in Sweida on July 25, killing more than 250 people — mostly civilians — in the deadliest attack ever to target the mostly government-held province and its Druze religious minority.

The jihadists also kidnapped more than 30 people, most of them women and children, from a village in the province, which had previously remained largely isolated from Syria's seven-year civil war. On Thursday, IS killed a 19-year-old male student who was among the hostages, the head of the Sweida24 news website Nour Radwan told AFP. Quoting relatives, Radwan, who was speaking from Sweida, said the young man was taken from the village of Al-Shabki on July 25 along with his mother.

His family received two videos, the first showing him being decapitated and the second of him speaking before being killed as well as images of his body after his death, Radwan said. Sweida24 posted online part of a second video, which was seen by AFP, showing a bearded young man who appeared to be sitting on the ground in a landscape of grey rocks. He is wearing a black T-shirt and tracksuit bottoms, and his hands are tied behind his back. The video could not be independently verified. IS has not claimed the kidnappings and did not publish the video on its usual channels.

'Failure of talks'

IS jihadists have lost much of the territory they once

controlled in Syria after overrunning large swathes of it in 2014, but they retain a presence in the east of the country and in the vast Badiya desert that sweeps through its south. The regime has been fighting in recent weeks to expel IS fighters from a patch in the neighboring province of Daraa.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, said the young man's execution was the first since the kidnappings. The execution came "after the failure of talks between IS and regime forces over the transfer of IS fighters from the southwest of Daraa province to the Badiya" desert, said the Observatory. It also follows the execution of 50 IS fighters and civilians in Daraa province earlier this week at the hands of rebels, according to the monitor, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria. On Friday, a top Druze religious leader said Syrian regime ally Russia was in talks with the jihadists over the release of those abducted in Sweida. Sweida24 said the oldest woman seized was 60. Druze, which made up three percent of Syria's population before 2011, are considered Muslim but IS sees them as heretics.

'Red lines'

Syria expert Khattar Abu Diab said that the events of July 25 in Sweida marked a turning point for the country's Druze community. "For this ancestral community, the abduction of women oversteps all red lines," he said. "Their reaction will depend on the outcome of negotiations but if all the hostages were killed" the Druze could directly intervene to expel IS from the desert, he said.

Regime forces have in recent weeks ousted IS from all of the towns and villages in the Yarmuk Basin in the northwest of Daraa province. Syria's state media have said regime troops are pursuing the last remaining jihadists who fled to nearby valleys. In areas it has retaken from rebels and jihadists in recent years, the Russia-backed regime has sometimes negotiated to take back control of land in exchange for the transfer of fighters to other parts of Syria. — AFP

Iraq election commission ignored warnings on voting machines

BAGHDAD: Iraq's election commission ignored an anti-corruption body's warnings about the credibility of electronic vote-counting machines used in May's parliamentary election, according to investigators and a document seen by Reuters. The devices, provided by South Korean company Miru Systems under a deal with the Independent High Elections Commission (IHEC), are at the heart of fraud allegations that led to a manual recount in some areas after the May 12 election.

The results of the recount have not yet been announced and political leaders are still trying to form a government. Concerns about the election count centre on discrepancies in the tallying of votes by the voting machines, mainly in the Kurdish province of Sulaimaniya and the ethnically-mixed province of Kirkuk, and suggestions that the devices could have been tampered with or hacked into to skew the result.

Iraq's Board of Supreme Audit (BSA) expressed reservations about the vote-counting system in a report it sent to the IHEC on May 9, three days

before the election. The BSA said in the report, seen by Reuters, that the IHEC had not responded to 11 concerns it had raised — including over contractual procedures, the inspection of company documents and a failure to properly examine the devices for any flaws.

"Hereby, we found that ignoring and not responding to the report's findings is considered a clear legal violation contributed to the passage of the electronic vote counting devices despite its unsuitability and easiness of being tampered," the BSA said in the report. The report also referred to a letter from the Iraqi embassy in South Korea saying Miru Systems had assembled but not manufactured the equipment sent to Baghdad, and suggesting the price tag should have been lower.

The IHEC's failure to act on the report's findings could fuel calls for the election to be rerun, a concern for populist cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr, leader of the political bloc that won on May 12. IHEC officials declined to comment. A Miru official who spoke on condition of anonymity dismissed the assertion in the letter, saying the company had manufactured the equipment. He also said the "equipment does not lie" and that he and five other Miru employees had travelled to Iraq to examine the machines and found no evidence of hacking.

"We have checked our election device provided to Iraq after the fraud allegation erupted, and found out that there has been no malfunction in the device nor its system," he said. "We have already submitted the report to Iraq's national election commission after making a thorough check on the device." — Reuters

International

A decade after Russia war, plight of Georgian refugees continues

Authorities in Tbilisi believe 126 ethnic Georgians were detained

KHURVALETI: Standing in a meadow in the sweltering heat and amid the chirping of grasshoppers, 84-year-old Dato Vanishvili looks through a barbed wire fence and sighs: "It's like living in a prison, here." Around five years ago, the farmer woke up one morning to strange sounds outside his house. When he looked out, he saw Russian soldiers erecting a barbed wire fence across his property, as the breakaway region of South Ossetia was physically separated from the rest of Georgia.

Vanishvili was trapped on the side of his village, Khurvaleti, that fell under the control of separatist South Ossetian authorities. And ever since that morning in 2013, he has been unable to cross into Georgia. Five years prior to that, in August 2008, Russia and Georgia had fought a five-day war over South Ossetia, a tiny enclave where Russia maintained a military base. Georgia had launched a large-scale military operation against separatist forces who had been shelling Georgian villages in the region.

And over the five days that followed, Russia defeated Georgia's small military, sweeping into the Black Sea nation of four million people, bombing targets and occupying large swathes of territory. Russia then officially recognized South Ossetia, alongside another secessionist Georgian region, Abkhazia, where Moscow similarly had a military base.

'Ethnic cleansing'

Following the Russian invasion, Human Rights Watch accused Moscow of overseeing the "wide-scale pillaging and burning of Georgian homes and the killing, beating, rape and threatening of civilians" by South

Ossetian forces. Vanishvili is one of the few Georgians to remain in South Ossetia after the bloody conflict, as most of his family and relations were forced to flee in what the EU has described as "ethnic cleansing".

"Eighty Georgian families lived here before the war, only me and my grandson stayed," he said. "Ossetians told my grandson that if he tried to cross the border, they will catch him, take him to Russia and throw him in jail." It's a threat that appears to be very real. Authorities in Tbilisi believe 126 ethnic Georgians were detained by separatist forces last year alone. In February, one of the detainees, a 35-year-old vegetable seller Archil Tatumashvili, was tortured to death in a South Ossetian prison. His mutilated body was only returned to his family after weeks of diplomatic negotiations by Western countries.

Turning up the heat

Prosecutors from the International Criminal Court — which in 2016 opened an investigation into war crimes committed during the conflict — estimate that up to 18,500 ethnic Georgians were forcibly displaced from South Ossetia. Despite fierce opposition from Moscow, the UN General Assembly has adopted 10 resolutions calling for their "safe and dignified return to their homes."

But a decade after the war, they still live in settlements built for them across Georgia. And they blame Russia for their plight. "Russia invaded Georgia to prevent us from becoming a member of the European Union and NATO, to keep the Caucasus in its claws," said 54-year-old refugee Gennady Zaridze. He now lives in Tserovani, a windswept settlement built in



A picture taken with a drone on July 25, 2018 shows a refugee settlement in the village of Khurvaleti. —AFP

eastern Georgia for 2,000 families displaced from South Ossetia's Akhlagori district. Speaking to AFP, Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili said he was constantly urging Tbilisi's Western allies to step up pressure on the Kremlin to "end the occupation of Georgian soil."

But countless rounds of internationally-mediated

talks launched in October 2008 in Switzerland to resolve the conflict have so far brought little, if any, progress. Margvelashvili stressed that Georgians "must not lose hope". That is "exactly" what Russia wants them to do, he said. "They tell us: 'Whatever you do, your fate will be decided in Moscow.' My answer is: this is not the case." —AFP

Water scarcity stirs debate over who owns Brazil's rivers

PEDERNEIRAS: "Tiete river, I count on you for a lifetime" — stirring words from the anthem of Pederneiras city that show the near-sacred status of a waterway that helps power Brazil's entire economy. Be it generating electricity or transporting crops, the river is key. But acute water shortages have sparked a dispute over who has more right to exploit it — and experts say the government must tackle the issue as shortages grow ever worse.

Water scarcity is a "new regular scenario, not an emergency", Munir Soares, an energy expert at research institute Instituto de Energia e Meio Ambiente (IEMA), told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. One of Brazil's key transport corridors for soybeans, corn, fertiliser and other farm products, it was closed for 20 months between 2014-2016 due to drought and the diversion of water for electricity, with an estimated loss of \$270 million to shipping companies and 1,600 jobs.

As the waterway in the state of Sao Paulo — engine of the nation's economy — threatens to close again due to erratic rainfall, experts have urged policymakers to define more clearly who can exploit the river, and when. Agriculture and agribusiness accounted for about a quarter of Brazil's gross domestic product in 2017, according to farm lobby CNA. The country is the third biggest electricity producer in the Americas, according to the Energy Information Administration.

Yet despite the existence of a national policy regulating the use of water resources, there is a "grey zone" that triggers conflict between transport and energy companies, said Soares. The law does not clearly define who should enjoy priority access to the river, which is rich in rapids and punctuated by steep falls, in times of water scarcity, he added. In cases of erratic rainfall, national grid operator ONS requests more water from the river to power hydroelectric dams located nearby — which can prevent barge trains from passing down the waterway, Soares explained. If the river is to be used primarily for electricity in times of water scarcity, that needs to be made clear by regulators and shipping companies must have other alternatives if they are grounded, Soares said. "If transportation companies cannot honour their contracts, they will have problems."

Adalberto Tokarski, head of Brazilian government agency Antaq, said transportation companies had filed lawsuits over the 2014-2016 costly waterway closure. "The law is very clear but it is not respected due to the power of interference of the electric sector. The law does not give supremacy to the electric sector. It guarantees the multiple uses of water and there has to be a balance," Tokarski said.

Race for resources

Competition over use of the Tiete-Parana waterway goes back over a decade, when the country faced an electrical crisis due to low rainfall and the waterway was almost closed. In 2014, water that could have helped maintain Tiete-Parana's levels was used instead for electricity due to rising energy demand and the delay of giant new power projects.

In 2014, Brazil was also hosting the World Cup. Sao Paulo, South America's largest city, came critically close to running out of drinking water. Lower river levels force barge trains to reduce the amount of exports they carry on the waterway, or even prevent them from using the corridor completely, said Raimundo Holanda, head of the National Federation of Waterway Navigation Companies (Fenavega).

In 2017, the Tiete-Parana waterway transported a record high of 8.91 million tons of cargo, compared to 6.3 million in 2013, the waterway department of Sao Paulo state said by email. But that may change if the river's water is again used to power hydroelectric dams — in a country that sources about two-thirds of its energy from hydropower, said Tokarski. The decision to close the waterway lies with national water agency ANA. In 2017, ANA launched a "crisis room" once shortages were underway, gathering ONS, Antaq and transport representatives to assess navigation conditions and the water levels of dams. —Reuters

Europe sizzles in heatwave as wildfire hits Portugal

MADRID: Europe sweltered through an intense heatwave yesterday, with soaring temperatures contributing to forest fires, nuclear plants closing and even threatening the Netherlands' supply of fries, although some countries experienced a slight respite. Here is a roundup:

Spain: Fire under control

A top of 42 degrees Celsius (107 degrees Fahrenheit) was forecast in the southwest region of Extremadura yesterday, where a wildfire in San Vicente de Alcántara has been brought under control by firefighters, the local fire service said. The mercury had reached 44 C in the country's south on Saturday, the Spanish Meteorological Agency said. The rise in temperatures has already claimed the lives of three people who died of heatstroke this week.

Portugal: 45 C forecast

The mercury was expected to climb to 45 C in some parts of Portugal yesterday, but would not go above the 46.8 C recorded the day before in Alvega, 150 kilometers north of Lisbon, the Portuguese Institute for Sea and Atmosphere (IPMA) said. Records in several cities were broken on Saturday, but none reached the nationwide record of 47.3 C in the southern village of Amareleja in 2003.

However a forest fire continued to rage on two fronts in Monchique in the country's south yesterday. Nearly 780 firefighters, supported by 200 vehicles and 10 water-dropping planes and helicopters were working to put it out, the civil protec-

tion agency said. The heat, wind and difficulty in accessing some areas has complicated efforts to bring the fire under control, and a hundred people have been evacuated as a precaution. Another forest fire, in central Estremoz, has left six people wounded, two in serious condition.

France: 'Recklessness' warning

In France, 67 out of 101 departments were on heatwave alert with temperatures in the south of the country expected to again peak near 40 C. Saturday was the hottest day in the country since the infamous heatwave of 2003, in which thousands of people died, many of them elderly people living on their own.

The emergency services complained that, despite public health warnings about keeping cool and hydrated, there was "still quite a lot of recklessness" — citing the example of an elderly man in Lyon who suffered heart problems while mowing his lawn under the merciless afternoon sun. Four nuclear reactors remained closed yesterday over the blazing temperatures. Power company EDF said the measures were taken to avoid temperature hikes in rivers from which water is drawn to cool the reactors.

Italy: Tornado spotted

Several thunderstorms flooded streets in Sicily and Sardinia in the south of Italy yesterday, cooling down a heatwave that has caused traffic problems on the country's busiest summer weekend on the roads. Tourists on the Italian island of Pantelleria, near Tunisia, said they had seen a tornado

Argentina corruption scandal built on 8 spiral notebooks

BUENOS AIRES: A businessman who has admitted paying "contributions to election campaigns" during the presidencies of Nestor and Cristina Kirchner could testify in a major corruption case roiling Argentina's political and business worlds. Juan Carlos de Goycochea, who once headed the construction and energy group Isolux Corsan in Argentina, surrendered to police on Friday and asked for protection under an "accused collaborator" program requiring an admission of having paid bribes.

According to judicial sources quoted in the local press, he said the Planning Ministry — which oversaw public works during the successive Kirchner governments, from 2003 to 2015 — applied "pressure to contribute to election campaigns." But the amounts involved, he insisted, were much lower than the \$12.8 million cited by presiding judge Claudio Bonadio. Isolux fired de Goycochea in March 2017, after an internal investigation of alleged irregularities.

Prosecutors say the alleged bribes — paid by businessmen in an elaborate collection system that funneled money to the Casa Rosada, home to the executive mansion and offices, or to the Quinta de Olivos presidential residence — could total \$160 million. Since the investigation came to light on Wednesday, 16 businessmen and ex-officials have been detained in dozens of raids. They face charges of conspiracy in a bribery and kickback

scheme that is being compared to Argentina to the far-reaching Car Wash investigation in Brazil.

The key evidence in the Argentine case, involving a total 36 defendants, lies in eight modest spiral notebooks crammed full of minutely detailed notations. They were kept over a decade (2005-2015) by Oscar Centeno, a retired army officer who served as a driver for Roberto Baratta, a former No. 2 at the Planning Ministry who is now under arrest. The 29-page indictment states that businessmen made illicit payments totaling some \$35.6 million between 2008 and 2015.

Centeno's notes describe his many trips with Baratta to deliver bags full of dollars to destinations including the residence of Cristina Kirchner. She has been summoned for questioning on August 13. Centeno was arrested Wednesday but freed Friday after entering the "accused collaborator" program, which would provide legal protection for him, his partner and their 13 children.

Centeno has admitted being the author of the eight notebooks, though he told the judge that he burned the originals last May on a backyard grill, according to the press. The judge obtained copies from Diego Cabot, a journalist with the newspaper La Nacion, who had temporary access to the originals after a friend, retired policeman Jorge Bacigalupo, handed them to him. —AFP



MONCHIQUE: A man watches the progression of a wildfire in Monchique in the Portuguese Algarve. —AFP

off the coast on Saturday. Media had previously reported on Saturday that a woman had died from apparent heatstroke on a beach in the northwestern Liguria region.

Germany: Rain brings relief

Isolated showers and thunderstorms brought some relief from the heat in parts of Germany this weekend, particularly in the south. However temperatures are expected to climb again to as high as 39 C in the east on Wednesday. Sweltering Germans have been flocking to open air swimming pools across the country, and many pools are expecting record visitor numbers this summer, DPA news agency reported.

Britain: Hot until Tuesday

The heat also slightly abated in Britain

yesterday, with the high of just over 30 degrees expected in the south of England, according to the Met Office, which predicted the heatwave would continue until Tuesday. Public Health England told those in the southeast to take stay in the shade and drink lots of water.

Netherlands: Shortage of fries?

While the temperature was down to a near-seasonal 25 C in the Netherlands yesterday, the country's drought continues to wreak havoc on crops. Farmers are working night and day to save what they can, the Dutch broadcaster NOS reported, with potato and corn yields hit particularly hard. Producers have warned that a potato shortage could affect the supply of fries, a Dutch favorite. —AFP

Earthquake rocks Indonesia's Lombok island

LOMBOK: A powerful earthquake rocked Indonesia's Lombok yesterday, sending people running from their homes and triggering a tsunami alert, just a week after a quake killed 17 people on the holiday island. The latest tremor had a magnitude of seven and struck just 10 km underground according to the US Geological Survey. It was followed by two aftershocks. Officials issued a tsunami warning, which was later cancelled.

"Please go to a place with higher ground, while remaining calm and not panicking," Dwikorita Karnawati, head of the agency for meteorology, climatology and geophysics, told local TV. Seawater had entered two villages as high as 10 cm and 13 cm (4-5 inches), Karnawati said later. Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, spokesman for Indonesia's disaster mitigation agency, said many buildings were thought to have been damaged in Lombok's main city of Mataram. "They are mostly buildings with weak construction material," Nugroho said.

Residents in Mataram described a strong jolt that sent people scrambling out of buildings. "Everyone immediately ran out of their homes, everyone is pan-

icking," Iman told AFP. Another resident Rita Siswati, 47, said the quake knocked out electricity and patients were evacuated from the main hospital. The epicentre was in the sea 18 km northwest of Lombok, the USGS said, far from the main tourist spots on the south and west of the island.

The USGS reported two aftershocks, one with a magnitude of 5.4. The quake was felt some 100 km (60 miles) away from the bustling resort island of Bali, and there were early reports of damage including to Ngurah Rai International Airport. Agung Widodo, a resident of Bali's main town of Denpasar, said he felt two strong tremors. "The first one lasted quite a while, the second one was only about 2-5 seconds. The first one was the bigger one," he said.

People could be heard screaming as locals and tourists ran onto the road. The tremor came a week after a shallow 6.4-magnitude quake hit Lombok, killing 17 people and damaging hundreds of buildings. It triggered landslides that briefly trapped trekkers on popular mountain hiking routes. Indonesia, one of the most disaster-prone nations on earth, straddles the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide and many of the world's volcanic eruptions and earthquakes occur. In 2004 a tsunami triggered by a magnitude 9.3 undersea earthquake off the coast of Sumatra in western Indonesia killed 220,000 people in countries around the Indian Ocean, including 168,000 in Indonesia. —Agencies

International

'Shot like a dog': Zimbabwe buries post-election dead

'Ishmael was a vendor, he wasn't a political activist'

CHINAMHORA: The four children of a fruit-seller gunned down by Zimbabwean soldiers in post-election violence wept uncontrollably at the sight of their father lying in a casket under a baking sun. Ishmael Kumire, 41, was one of the six victims of Wednesday's bloody chaos, sparked when troops fired on opposition activists protesting alleged electoral fraud. The father of four, known as "Shuz", was buried Saturday in the village of Chinamhora, 45 kilometers north-east of Harare, watched by 200 mourners.

His fellow vendors swept into the yard of his home, packed into a minibus emblazoned with the words "I am blessed", alighting drumming and dancing. Women hunched over large cooking pots balanced on fires, preparing food for the mourners. Kumire's death carries a bitter irony. According to his brother Steven Matope, the fruit-seller was not among the opposition protesters angrily claiming that the ruling ZANU-PF had stolen the election.

Instead, he was caught up in the violence because he had stayed at the scene of the protest to protect his fruit. "Ishmael was a vendor, he wasn't a political activist," Matope said. "He supported the ruling party—but then, it's the same ruling party that has killed him." His funeral came a day after ZANU-PF's President Emmerson Mnangagwa was declared the winner of Zimbabwe's historic elections, the first since veteran autocrat Robert

Mugabe was ousted by the military last year. Mnangagwa had hailed the polls as a chance to consign to the past Mugabe's repressive 37-year rule, but Wednesday's crackdown was a brutal reminder of the violence of his era.

'Killing for no reason'

"If the ruling party is killing the people it is supposed to govern, I don't know who it is going to rule. That's very painful," Matope added. "He was just selling his tomatoes," he said of his brother. Kumire's brother-in-law Ignatious Neshava, who witnessed the shooting, told AFP how soldiers swooped on them as they stood guard over his wares, fearing that \$700-worth of freshly-purchased produce would be looted amid the chaos.

"He was standing five meters from me... and suddenly I heard gunshots. I thought they were firing rubber bullets," said Neshava. "I turned around and saw Ishmael on the ground, face-down. I saw a cartridge next to him and then, as I tried to turn his body, a soldier came and pointed a gun to my head. "By that time, Ishmael was bleeding profusely." Neshava was sure he was going to be killed too. "How can they deploy soldiers in town, killing people for no apparent reason?" he asked, as the wooden casket was lowered into the ground.

Local leader Backshow Matope was also in

Harare when the violence flared. "I saw one woman being shot dead along Samora Machel Avenue," the 62-year-old said. "It is very painful that this happens shortly after we voted—what's the point of voting if as soon as you finish voting, your relative is killed?" Kumire's widow Suspicious Ziyambe, 35, described her husband as a doting father. "I have nothing that I'm able to do, I'm unemployed. He didn't want me to work, saying he was able to take care of his family," she said, sobbing.

"I can't even take over his job. How am I going to look after these children? Tell me, how? He used to do everything for his children." Kumire's brother Douglas said civilians in Zimbabwe were "like animals in a game park." "We are not protected," the 54-year-old said. "The same soldiers who removed Mugabe and we celebrated are now being sent to kill people after we voted."

As opposition leader Nelson Chamisa pressed on with his claim that the election was rigged, Bishop Guide Makore of the Christian Marching Church prayed for divine intervention. "There is a crisis in Zimbabwe. Lord hear our situation, speak to Zimbabwe, speak to the executive, to the judiciary," said the clergyman. "We are appealing to the African Union, to the Southern African Development Community, to the Commonwealth to help come to our rescue." In Harare, Jinty Rubenstein was mourning her



HARARE: Relatives and friends mourn on August 4, 2018 at the end of the funeral gathering for Silvia Maphosa, shot during the post election violence in Harare on August 1, the day after the nation went to the polls in national elections. — AFP

brother Gavin Charles, who leaves behind a 13-year-old daughter. "My brother was shot twice, in the arm and in the pelvis—he was shot like a

dog," she said. "He wouldn't hurt a fly. My family fought for this country and they shoot my brother like a dog." — AFP

Afghan suicide blast kills 3 Czech soldiers

KABUL: A suicide bombing claimed by the Taliban killed three Czech soldiers on patrol in eastern Afghanistan yesterday, the deadliest assault on NATO troops for many months. "Three Resolute Support service members were killed by a suicide bomber during a combined, dismounted patrol with Afghan forces in eastern Afghanistan," NATO's Resolute Support mission said in a statement. In Prague, the military said the dead soldiers were Czech.

A US member of the patrol and two Afghan soldiers were wounded, NATO added. The attack by a lone bomber on foot happened at 6am in the city of Charikar in Parwan province 60 kilometers north of Kabul, said provincial governor's spokesman Wahida Shahkar. The Taliban in a statement claimed responsibility, saying they killed or wounded eight American soldiers in a "tactical explosion." The Czech army said in a statement that three of its soldiers, a staff sergeant and two corporals, were killed in the explosion. "The tragic death of our three soldiers has struck me deeply, and I wish to express my

deepest condolences to their families," said Defence Minister Lubomir Metnar. Thirteen Czech soldiers have now been killed in Afghanistan. The NATO force largely ended its combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014 and pulled out the bulk of its troops. A 16,000-strong residual force remains for training and counter-terrorism operations.

Of these, the US accounts for 13,000 soldiers, about 2,000 of whom are assigned to anti-terror combat missions. Last month a US soldier was killed and two others wounded in an "apparent insider attack" in southern Afghanistan. Casualties among the NATO force have fallen dramatically since most were withdrawn from combat. But the Taliban and the Islamic State (IS) group have recently stepped up their attacks against government and civilian targets. On Friday two suicide bombers dressed as women struck a Shiite mosque in Gardez, the capital of Paktia province, while it was crowded with worshippers for weekly prayers. Thirty-five were killed and more than 90 wounded.

The burqa-clad attackers shot at the mosque's security guards before opening fire on worshippers and then detonating their explosives. Last month an IS suicide bomber blew himself up near Kabul international airport, killing 23 people including AFP driver Mohammad Akhtar. Both attacks were claimed by IS, which is trying to make inroads in Afghanistan. — AFP



KINSHASA: Congolese opponent Jean-Pierre Bemba (C) speaks to the press after applying to be a candidate for next presidential elections of December 23, at the office of the Independent Electoral Commission. — AFP

DR Congo tense as presidential challengers line up

KINSHASA: The Democratic Republic of Congo was headed Sunday into a crucial week, with President Joseph Kabila set to declare whether he will run again in elections as one key challenger returned home and another was banned. The DRC was thrown into a crisis nearly two years ago when Kabila refused to step down.

And it has been further roiled by the return of former vice president Jean-Pierre Bemba, 55, freshly acquitted of war-crimes convictions in The Hague, who flew back to Kinshasa for a brief visit to lodge his candidacy for the December 23 elections. He is due to head back to Europe this week. Another key rival is Moïse Katumbi, a powerful former governor of mineral-rich Katanga province—who has been living in self-imposed exile after falling out with Kabila.

But his supporters are incensed after authorities twice barred him from returning, and said he could be arrested if he sets foot in the country. "Katumbi tried to come back, no-one can criticize him for doing what he needed to do, we are now waiting to see what happens on Wednesday," said a diplomatic source in Kinshasa who doesn't believe Kabila will reveal his plans by the set deadline.

"Katumbi is seen as the main challenger because he is from the east of the country, like Kabila, and can galvanise support there," said

Georges Kapiamba, human rights lawyer and president of the Congolese Association for Access to Justice. He said the 53-year-old would likely join forces with another major political player, Felix Tshisekedi, 55 — an alliance that would pose a hefty threat to Kabila or his chosen successor. The DRC is one of the world's most volatile countries and worries about the elections run deep, with many observers fearing it could spiral once more into bloodshed. The vast country has never known a peaceful transition of power since it gained independence from Belgium in 1960. In the space of one generation, it was gripped by two wars that sucked in countries from around the region.

Many provinces are already in the grip of armed conflict and millions have had to flee their homes, many flocking to Uganda, Tanzania, Angola and Zambia. A regional summit has been scheduled for mid-August, and the DRC elections are likely to dominate the agenda. Last month, the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, warned of "numerous violations of human rights norms and principles" in the DRC, raising "serious doubts about the credibility of the country's long-delayed elections". The level of anxiety today is "the worst in 20 years", said the head of a political NGO who has lived in the DRC for two decades.

Kabila, who took the helm in 2001 from his assassinated father, Laurent-Désiré Kabila, was meant to step down at the end of 2016 at the end of his second mandate. But he has stayed in office, invoking a constitutional clause to stay in power until a successor is elected, and provoking protests that have been suppressed with deadly fire. — AFP

Kenya, Tanzania mark bombings which introduced Al-Qaeda

NAIROBI: Kenya and Tanzania tomorrow mark 20 years since the devastating US embassy bombings that thrust Al-Qaeda onto the global stage and went on to shape how a generation thinks about personal security. It was mid-morning on August 7, 1998, when the first massive blast hit the US embassy in downtown Nairobi, followed minutes later by an explosion in Dar es Salaam, killing a total of 224 people and injuring around 5,000 — almost all of them Africans.

With two monster bombs loaded onto the back of trucks and a trail of carnage in east Africa, the world was introduced to Osama bin Laden three years before the September 11 attacks in New York would make him a household name. "It wasn't the first time Al-Qaeda had carried out an attack, but in terms of the spectacular, catastrophic nature of the incident, they really announced their entry onto the world stage," said Martin Kimani, head of Kenya's National Counter Terrorism Centre. "When 9/11 happened it was shocking and surprising, but a precedent had been set here in east Africa."

According to "The Looming Tower", a Pulitzer Prize-winning book on the rise of Al-Qaeda, bin Laden gave various reasons for targeting the embassies, such as the deployment of American troops to Somalia and a US plan to partition Sudan, where he had lived for five years until being expelled in 1996. However, author Lawrence Wright concluded that the main goal was to "lure the United States into Afghanistan".

Boosting Al-Qaeda's image

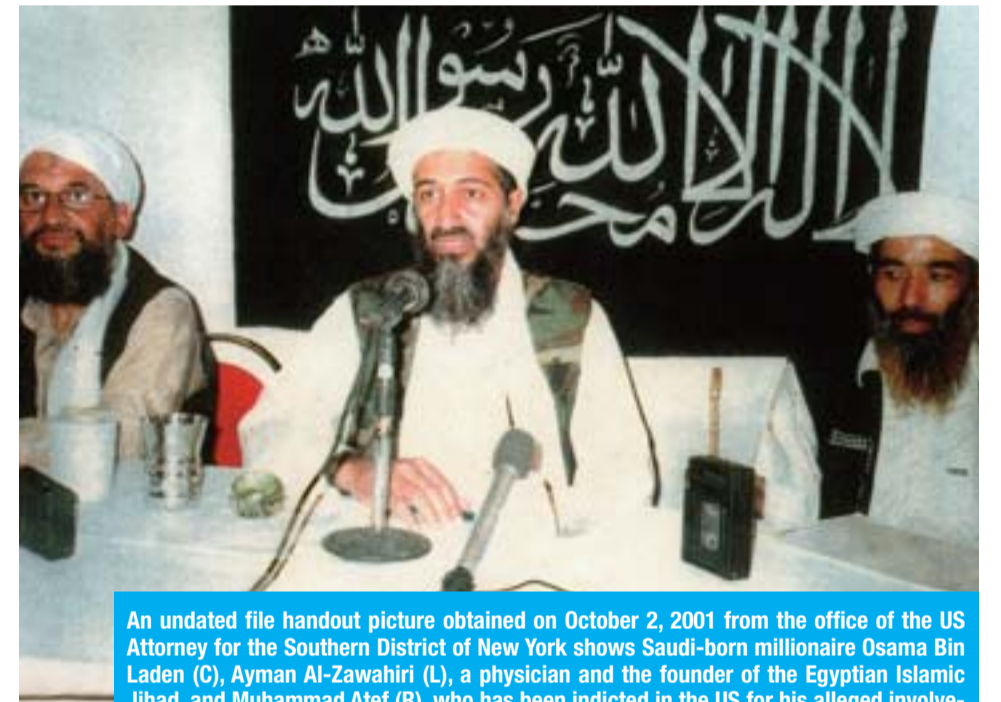
This aim was achieved, in the aftermath of the attacks, with the US launching strikes on Sudan and Afghanistan that were "largely seen as ineffective", said Daniel Byman, a counterterrorism expert at the Brookings Institution. The strikes led the Taliban in Afghanistan to "embrace the group more closely", he said, and also boosted the image of a group seen as standing up to the United States in the Muslim world. Byman said the attack was the first to show that Al-Qaeda

HK press club pressured by Beijing to cancel talk

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's leader joined mainland China yesterday in urging the city's Foreign Correspondents' Club to cancel a planned speech by a Hong Kong independence advocate whose party is threatened with a ban. "We respect the international media and respect the Foreign Correspondents' Club's activities in Hong Kong," said Hong Kong chief executive Carrie Lam, expressing "regret" at the planned event.

"I hope our friends in the FCC will also respect that the Hong Kong SAR is an inseparable part of the People's Republic of China," she said, noting that its historic club building was government-owned. Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Special Administrative Region of China, enjoys freedoms unseen on the mainland under a handover agreement signed by Britain and China. But concern is growing that these freedoms including freedom of speech are being eroded by an increasingly assertive China.

The FCC is due to host a talk by Andy Chan, convener of the tiny pro-independ-



An undated file handout picture obtained on October 2, 2001 from the office of the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York shows Saudi-born millionaire Osama Bin Laden (C), Ayman Al-Zawahiri (L), a physician and the founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and Muhammad Atef (R), who has been indicted in the US for his alleged involvement in the 1998 bombings of US Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya. — AFP

"had tremendous reach and it can do sophisticated operations".

"It showed Al-Qaeda that international terrorism could generate tremendous attention, and not just attention from its adversaries... it was a form of advertising in a way." The years since 9/11 have been shaped by the so-called "war on terror" and the proliferation of American military operations — notably in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan.

At the same time, Al-Qaeda went on to inspire affiliates around the globe, carrying out attacks across the Middle East as well as from Bali to Madrid, London and Paris. Islamist insurgencies have wreaked havoc in the Sahel, Nigeria and Somalia, and — on several bloody occasions since the 1998 bombings — Kenya. "Kenya itself was not primarily the target but of course we ended up with the majority of fatalities and consequences of that attack," said Kimani. "We continue to be on the frontlines of this struggle."

'Dealing with terrorism'

Two years after Kenya sent troops across the border into Somalia to fight the Al-Qaeda-linked Al-Shabaab — which had been carrying out attacks on its soil — the group killed 67 people in an attack on the Westgate shopping centre in Nairobi in 2013. Then in 2015, a Shabaab attack on the Garissa University in eastern Kenya left 148 dead.

However, Kimani said counterterrorism efforts by Kenya had proved successful, confining Shabaab attacks to remote areas in recent years as a result of new anti-terror legislation and improved co-ordination between different security forces. He said efforts to build trust with communities where jihadists hide out, and understanding how recruitment happens to nip it in the bud has also been key.

"The threat is still there, believe me, but 20 years later we have become much better at dealing with terrorism than we used to be," he said. "Globally terrorism has left a deep, deep social imprint. It has changed the way people think about security. Here in Kenya there are guards at malls and hotels and that is replicated in many parts of the world."

Kimani said governments need to focus on improving livelihoods and providing basic services to erase the "pockets of desperation" that prove so fruitful for recruitment. In recent years, attention has swung away from Al-Qaeda to its rival Islamic State (IS) group which formed in 2013, captured swathes of territory and inspired numerous so-called "lone wolf" attacks from afar. However, experts warn that while IS has since lost its territory and reach, Al-Qaeda has been quietly rebuilding. "Their ideological ability to be grafted onto local grievances continues to make them a threat," said Kimani. — AFP

sides of the political debate," FCC vice president Victor Mallet told AFP. "We of course have often had Chinese officials and others making their case at the club, but also their opponents. And this applies to every country, not just China," Mallet added. Hong Kong's former leader Leung Chun-ying — whose administration faced down major youth-led democracy protests in 2014 — weighed in on Facebook, saying that discussion of Hong Kong independence "is an absolute and clear red line".

In a separate post addressed to Mallet, Leung wrote: "We ought to be gravely concerned if this is the policy of your Club because before long you will invite advocates for Taiwan independence to speak publicly at your Club." Perched on the slopes of downtown Central and housed in a colonial-era building, the FCC has served as a venue for debates and media gatherings since its arrival in the city in 1949.

Hong Kong police last month sought to ban China's party — which promotes the city's independence from China but only has a core membership of around a dozen people — citing it as a national security threat. The city's security chief had said he was considering the police's request while the party was given a few weeks to make representations. — AFP

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

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Post-Mugabe euphoria fades with elections

When Robert Mugabe's brutal rule finally came to an end, millions in Zimbabwe dreamed of a brighter future - but many fear his freshly-elected former ally Emmerson Mnangagwa will simply offer more of the same. In a Harare store specializing in decorative copper products, manager Christine said many Zimbabweans "want to run away" after a deadly crackdown on protesters alleging rigging in the first elections since Mugabe's ouster last year. "It's really hard having your friends, having your relatives being shot while they are minding their own business," she said.

Mnangagwa, chosen to lead the ruling ZANU-PF party after the military intervention that brought down Mugabe, was declared the winner Friday with 50.8 percent of the vote. It was just enough to avoid a run-off round with opposition leader Nelson Chamisa, who has rejected the results as fraudulent and vowed a legal challenge. Mnangagwa has hailed the election as a fresh start for Zimbabwe after years of repression and economic mismanagement under Mugabe. His promise to entice back investors is appealing in a country with wrecked public services, mass poverty and mass unemployment.

But while Mnangagwa has promised an investigation into the post-election killings, rights groups worry the crackdown was a sign of more Mugabe-style repression to come. "The same soldiers who removed Mugabe and we celebrated are now being sent to kill people after we voted," said Douglas Kamire, whose brother Ishmail was one of the six people killed. On the night after Mnangagwa's victory, Christine said she saw troops beating civilians in Chitungwiza, a dormitory town south of Harare.

"I don't even know why they were beating those people - they haven't done anything wrong," she said. "It was the soldiers, they are still out there. We are even scared of going out." A woman passing by the shop, who said one of her domestic staff lived in the town, was aghast at news of the beatings. "It's horrible. But I didn't think this sort of thing would end when Mugabe went, no," said the pensioner, who declined to be named. For Christine, Mnangagwa - nicknamed "The Crocodile" - is "the most dangerous one", perhaps more so than Mugabe. "When he came, people knew it was the change of the bus driver - but the bus was the same," she said.

'At a standstill'

Chamisa, a 40-year-old lawyer and pastor, campaigned hard among young and urban electorates and won more than twice as many votes as Mnangagwa in Harare, where many professionals dream of better opportunities. Businessman Emmanuel Masvikieni, 46, said people were "pessimistic, disappointed" about how events have unfolded since Mugabe's departure. "I think Zimbabwe needs to reclaim its place in Africa, in the world. Right now we are at a standstill," he said as he left a church service. "I just hope the political leadership can come together for the sake of people, for the sake of Zimbabwe," he added. "I think if they put us first rather than personal egos, then we will move forward."

Bitterness

Corruption is a fact of life in Zimbabwe where a small elite drive powerful sports cars and eat in high-end restaurants while the majority struggle with chronic poverty. "The new president has promised a new future but some people are still afraid, we're not sure," said Rhodes, a driver originally from Malawi. "As a father, now I don't see there's a future here for my kids - especially if I see people shooting each other," said the 42-year-old. Maryann, a bookseller, was cautious as she bagged customers' purchases. "Let's see what happens," she said.

She showed a customer a roll of freshly-printed bond notes, a little-trusted token currency introduced two years ago. Supposedly they trade at parity to the US dollar, but actually change hands for a discount of around one third. "They gave me brand new notes at the bank today - that's not good that they're still printing," she said. The Zimbabwean dollar collapsed and in 2009 was abandoned for the US dollar and the South African rand because of rampant hyperinflation caused by excessive cash printing. Christine said it was economic desperation that had pushed young protesters onto the streets on Wednesday, only to meet with army gunfire. "They're just so bitter," she said. — AFP



Where next for Trump's Iran strategy

A wave of US sanctions kicks in against Iran tomorrow, cementing Washington's hard line against Tehran after President Donald Trump pulled out of the 2015 nuclear pact. Already facing broad economic fallout as their currency implodes, Iranians are wondering how the next phase of the crisis in US relations will play out - and what, exactly, America's long-term strategy is toward their country. At least for now, the US is fixated on bringing as much diplomatic and economic pressure to Iran as possible - though it is not clear where things are headed, or if there is an increased risk of conflict.

The US walked out of the 2015 nuclear deal in May and is bringing back "maximum pressure" sanctions for most sectors on August 6, and the energy sector on Nov 4. As of 0401 GMT Tuesday, the Iran government can no longer buy US banknotes and broad sanctions will be slapped on Iranian industries, including its rug exports. After months of fierce rhetoric, Trump surprised observers last week when he offered to meet with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani "any time" - and without preconditions.

The dramatic about-face, which Secretary of State Mike Pompeo quickly tamped down, came just days after the enigmatic US president and Rouhani traded barbs. Trump at one point unleashed a Twitter tirade in which he blasted, using all caps, Rouhani's "DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE". He was responding to a July 22 warning from Rouhani that the US should not "play with the lion's tail" and warned that any conflict with Iran would be the "mother of all wars".

Trump's offer for dialogue came after Pompeo seemed to suggest support for a change in Iran leadership, telling an audience of Iranian expats in California that the regime had been a "nightmare". And John Bolton, the president's national security advisor, is a well-known Iran hawk who

has advocated for regime change. "For Bolton and others, pressure is an end in and of itself," Suzanne Maloney, deputy director of the foreign policy program at the Brookings Institution, told AFP. For the administration, "if it leads to a wholesale capitulation fine, if it leads to regime change, even better," she added.



Pressure appears to have had some results

Under pressure
Trump's pressure campaign appears to have had some results. For instance, US officials in recent years have accused both the regular Iranian navy and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps of routinely harassing American warships in the Gulf. But this year, to the surprise of some military officials, there have been no such incidents. If Iran senses "American steel they back down, if they perceive American mush they push forward - and right now they perceive steel," said Mark Dubowitz, chief executive of Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a Washington think tank that lobbied for a renegotiation of the Iran nuclear deal.

Dubowitz, who noted that Iran has tested fewer missiles of late, said Trump's rhetoric and position on Iran actually

lowers the risk of escalation toward conflict. "He's assuming that if he talks tough, that will bolster the credibility of American military power," Dubowitz told AFP. Both Trump and Rouhani are due to address the United Nations General Assembly in New York next month. It's not inconceivable a meeting on the sidelines could occur then - Tehran will be looking anxiously to a November deadline for oil buyers to stop purchasing Iranian crude.

Over the weekend Trump once again floated the idea of meeting, tweeting "I will meet, or not meet, it doesn't matter - it is up to them! Iran, and its economy, is going very bad, and fast!" he said in the same missive. US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said on July 27 there was no policy that had been put in place with the goal of collapsing or changing the Iranian regime. "We need them to change their behavior on a number of threats they can pose with their military, with their secret services, with their surrogates and with their proxies," Mattis told Pentagon reporters.

Experts see a number of possible outcomes for the current US policy toward Iran. Sanctions and diplomatic pressure could pile enough pressure on the regime that it comes to the negotiating table - something Trump has advocated for. The financial crisis in Iran could worsen to the point that mass protests make it impossible for the regime to hold on to power - though economic pressures risk galvanizing growing anti-American sentiment and support for hardliners.

Or the regime could start to address what America calls its "malign influence" in the region, including its support to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and threats to shut down the strategic Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping lane for international oil supplies. "I think (the Trump administration) would be pleased with any one of those end states," Dubowitz said. — AFP

How an app and database served up Khan's win

A phone app and a database of more than 50 million voters were key weapons in the successful campaign of cricket legend Imran Khan in last month's general election, though rivals allege Khan also received clandestine aid from Pakistan's powerful military. How Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party used the database and the associated app represents a sea change in the antiquated way in which Pakistan's biggest parties conduct elections, from pre-poll targeting of voters to on-the-day mobilization of supporters.

PTI was secretive about the technology plan ahead of the July 25 poll, fearing rivals could copy it, but several party workers showed Reuters how the app transformed their campaign and gave them an edge. The phone app proved especially useful in getting supporters to the polls when the government's own telephone information service giving out polling place locations suffered major problems on election day, leaving other parties scrambling.

It partly explains why Khan's party managed to win tight-margin races in the nuclear-armed nation of 208 million people, though Khan's rivals allege he also benefited from the powerful military's support - an allegation he staunchly denies. "It's had a great impact," said Amir Mughal, tasked with using the app and database, known as the Constituency Management System (CMS), to elect Asad Umar, a lawmaker who won his seat in Islamabad and will be Khan's new finance minister.

The small CMS unit led by Mughal, Umar's personal secretary, was typical of how Khan's party set up teams in con-

stituencies across Pakistan to mine the database, identifying voters by household, zeroing-in on "confirmed" PTI voters, tagging them on the app, and ensuring they turned out on election day. "Work that would take days of weeks is being completed in one to two hours," Mughal told Reuters in Umar's office minutes after the polls shut.

Khan's PTI surpassed expectations to scoop about 115 seats out of 272 elected members of parliament, while the party of ousted and jailed premier Nawaz Sharif trailed in second with 64 seats. Developed by a small tech team, the CMS was a key response to Khan's bitter complaints after the 2013 poll loss that his party failed to translate mass popularity into votes because it did not know the "art of winning elections".

Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) ran a more erratic campaign, hurt by divisions within the party and the loss of key leaders who were either disqualified or in case of Sharif and his daughter, jailed. Weeks before the elections, Khan sent out a video via WhatsApp urging PTI candidates to embrace CMS. "I have seen and experienced how it works and I'm using it in all five constituencies I am contesting," Khan said in the video message, seen by Reuters. "The faster you apply this system, the easier your life will become," Khan added.

'Villains'

Created by former US-based real estate businessman Tariq Din and Shahzad Gul, a tech consultant, the early version of the system was not immediately embraced by PTI. But Umar, the incoming finance minister, and wealthy politician Jahangir Tareen Khan, a close Khan ally, were among the first to see its potential. After the software helped deliver strong results in the 2015 local elections, the party was won over, according to senior PTI officials who work on the CMS software.

For the national election PTI focused on 150 constituencies it felt it had the best



chance of winning. Party workers said they used scanning software to digitize publicly-available electoral voter lists to create the database. By typing in a voter's identity card number into the app, PTI workers could see details such as family home address, who else lived in the same household, and where they needed to vote. It became so crucial to the PTI campaign that when on election day the program went down for an hour, it triggered some panic in the party's ranks.

A senior CMS official showed Reuters WhatsApp messages that flooded in when the system ground to a halt under the weight of database searches, which totalled 20 million on election day. "What the hell is going on?," inquired one of Khan's closest allies. This politician then called the CMS team and made his feelings clear, saying: "If the system doesn't work, we will lose the elections and you guys will be the vil-

lains." When CMS came back up, Khan's ally messaged again: "Thank God". CMS architects say the system's power was only partly utilized as there was not enough time to train workers across the country and some politicians resisted using it.

Advantages

In the run up to election day, PTI workers were also able to print out "parchis", or slips, that voters needed to enter the polling station. PML-N workers had to help voters fill the paper slips with a pen. In a large nation where illiteracy hovers above 40 percent, that meant PML-N workers had to write out millions of slips for the 12.9 million voters who backed Sharif's party, stopping those workers from canvassing or doing other vital work. "It's a paradigm shift," said another senior CMS operator. "We changed the party, turning social media popularity into reality." — Reuters

Business

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12 NBK-Egypt achieves EGP 988.8m in net profits for first half 2018**13** How far can Venezuela go in raising price of cheapest gas?**14** Panasonic introduces large capacity commercial refrigerator to Kuwait

JINJIANG: Workers at a swimwear factory in Yinglin town in Jinjiang, in China's eastern Fujian Province. — AFP

China says won't accept US 'blackmail'

Trump says trade tariffs 'working far better' than anticipated

BEIJING/SINGAPORE: China's state media said the government's retaliatory tariffs on \$60 billion of US goods showed rational restraint and they accused the United States of blackmail.

Late on Friday, China's finance ministry unveiled new sets of additional tariffs on 5,207 goods imported from the United States, with the extra levies ranging from five to 25 percent on a total value of goods less than half of that proposed by US President Donald Trump's administration.

The response follows the Trump administration's proposal of a 25-percent tariff on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports. "China's countermeasures are rational," the Global Times, a tabloid run by the official People's Daily, said in a commentary.

"China will not rush to compete with US numbers," it said, echoing comments made by state television.

The United States and China implemented tariffs on \$34 billion worth of each others' goods in July. Washington is expected to soon implement tariffs on an additional \$16 bil-

lion of Chinese goods, which China has already said it will match immediately. "The White House's extreme pressure and blackmail are already clear to the international community," said a state television commentary. "Such methods of extreme blackmail will not bear fruit against China."

Trump touts

In a series of tweets on Saturday, Trump disagreed. "Tariffs are working far better than anyone ever anticipated," he claimed, citing a big drop in China's stock market. "They are really hurting their economy." Trump also claimed that China was talking to the United States about trade, but he provided no details. He said his administration would continue to employ tariffs if other

nations were unwilling to come to the table on trade. "We are using them to negotiate fair trade deals," Trump said.

China has now either imposed or proposed tariffs on \$110 billion in US goods, representing the vast majority of China's annual imports of American products. Last year, China imported about \$130 billion in goods from the United States. Trump has ultimately threatened tariffs on over \$500 billion in Chinese goods, covering virtually all US imports from China. "The US has repeatedly resorted to threatening and deceitful routines, trying to force China to compromise, both overestimating its own bargaining power and underestimating China's determination and ability to defend its national dignity and the interests of its people," said a commentary in the

official Xinhua news agency. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, however, remained staunch on Washington's push for fairer trading conditions with China. "President Trump inherited an unfair trade regime where American workers and American companies were not treated reciprocally or fairly by the Chinese, and the efforts of the Trump administration are to right that, to correct that," Pompeo told reporters on the sidelines of a regional forum in Singapore. Pompeo added that he had discussed trade issues with Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi on Friday. Wang said on Friday they did not get into details. Malaysian Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah said he met Pompeo in Singapore and that his message was clear.

"My objective was quite straightforward: I think I need to inform him that we are very concerned," said Saifuddin. Countries like Malaysia form an integral part of Chinese exporters' supply chains, and analysts have warned a trade war could knock billions of dollars off their economic growth in coming years. — Agencies



Chinese media say tariff response restrained

IranAir gets 5 more ATR regional planes before sanctions

DUBAI: IranAir took delivery of five more ATR turboprop aircraft, Iranian state media said yesterday, shortly before Washington imposes new sanctions on Iran after exiting a nuclear pact between Tehran and major world powers. All five new ATR 72-600 planes landed in Tehran's Mehrabad airport after leaving Toulouse, France, where they were built, and refueling in Urmia in northwestern Iran, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported.

US President Donald Trump's decision in May to pull the United States out of a 2015 deal requires most companies to complete ongoing business with Iran before US sanctions are reimposed after a wind-down period which expires on Aug 6. ATR - co-owned by Airbus and Italy's Leonardo - has been pressing US authorities to allow it to deliver aircraft it built for Iran.

After the signing of the accord to reopen trade links in return for Tehran curbing its nuclear activities, IranAir ordered a total of 200 aircraft from Western planemakers including 20 from ATR, which is based in Toulouse, France.



An ATR 72-600 aircraft, operated by Nordica operated by Nordica.

But few have been delivered and planemakers say they are unable to use the wind-down period because Washington has also revoked export licenses needed by all Western planemakers due to their heavy use of US parts. ATR - which had delivered 8 planes to Iran under the deal and started building another 12 - has been lobbying the US Treasury to allow it to take advantage of the normal wind-down period for Iran business by giving it temporary new licenses.

Asghar Fakhrieh-Kashan, an adviser to Iran's transport minister, was quoted by the semi-official news agency ILNA as saying that Iran had paid for the five planes on Friday, a day before the planes left France. "The delivery of these five aircraft is a sign of Europe's commitment to the nuclear accord," Fakhrieh-Kashan told ILNA. ATR declined to comment on Saturday. Industry sources said the final number of planes to be delivered would be known in coming days. — Reuters

Battery of complaints against Tesla in Norway

OSLO: "I've had the car for eight months and it ran fine for four days," says Yngve Solberg, who like many Norwegians is fed up with the slew of problems his Tesla X has given him. Tesla has sold more cars per capita in Norway than any other country in the world thanks to the government's generous measures in favor of electric cars including tax exemptions, free city tolls and public parking.

More than 26,000 Tesla S and X models are registered in Norway, according to the website. But Tesla has struggled to provide after-sales support that matches the soaring demand for its high-end electric cars. As a result, Tesla owners in Norway face long waits for repairs, a shortage of spare parts, difficulty reaching customer services, leading-unsurprisingly-to oodles of complaints.

In the first half of the year, Tesla

became the company with the fourth-highest number of complaints registered with the Norwegian Consumer Council. In 2017, it held the 24th spot.

A car enthusiast, Solberg has had a long series of woes with his new Tesla X. Among the problems he has faced were malfunctioning rear doors and a faulty suspension system. And each time he has faced trouble, it has taken him several months to get an appointment for repairs.

"Because of the doors, I couldn't park next to other cars for three months, neither at my work garage nor in my parking spot outside my home. All this with a car that costs 1.1 million kroner (115,000 euros, \$133,000)," he bristled.

On an online forum for the Norwegian Association of Electric Cars, another Tesla owner said he was so frustrated he ended up taking his car to Danish capital Copenhagen to replace a faulty suspension arm. He has also been waiting for new seats for 13 months.

These are not isolated cases. A survey conducted by the Tesla Owners Club Norway indicates that 38 percent are dissatisfied with the company's after-sales support, compared with 57 percent who are satisfied. "Norwegians are right to be upset with Tesla," admitted Tesla chief executive Elon Musk. — AFP

Business

Markaz: GCC aggregate bonds and sukuk market increased 10% in H1

CBK raised 48.59% of the total GCC CBLI issuance

KUWAIT: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz", in its recent research report titled GCC Bonds & Sukuk Market Survey, has highlighted the trends pertaining to bonds and sukuk issuances in the GCC region during the first half of 2018. The report stated that the aggregate primary issuance of bonds and sukuk by GCC entities, including Central Banks Local Issuances, GCC Sovereign and Corporate Issuances, totaled \$95.25 billion in H1 2018, a 9.64 percent increase from the total amount raised in H1 2017. Qatar led the GCC issuances in terms of total value raised.

Central Bank Local Issuances are Fixed Income securities issued by GCC central banks in local currencies and with short maturities for the purpose of regulating levels of domestic liquidity. During H1 2018, a total of \$32.77 billion was raised by the GCC central banks, namely by the Central Bank of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman. (The only publically available information is from the Central Bank of Bahrain, the Central Bank of Kuwait, the Central Bank of Oman, and the Central Bank of Qatar). The Central Bank of Kuwait raised the highest amount with KD 4.77 billion (\$15.88 billion), representing 48.59 percent of the total amount raised by CBLIs through 22 issuances, followed by the Central Bank of Bahrain, which raised a total of BHD2.99 billion (\$7.95 billion).

GCC bonds and sukuk market

The GCC bonds and sukuk market is composed of bonds and sukuk issued by GCC. Sovereign, corporate entities and financial institutions, for financing purposes in local and foreign currencies. A total of \$62.57 billion was raised in the GCC bonds market in H1 2018, a growth of 33.27 percent from \$46.95 billion raised in H1 2017.

Geographical Allocation: Qatari issuers led the GCC in H1 2018, raising a total of \$19.97 billion through 47 issuances and representing 31.9 percent of the total value raised in the GCC.

Saudi Arabian entities raised \$17.37 billion from 10 issuances, up by 68.4 percent as compared to \$10.31 billion raised in H1 2017, making up 27.76 percent of the market. The UAE based issuers raised \$15.39 billion during H1 2018, up by 21.9 percent as compared to \$12.6 billion raised in H1 2017 and represented 24.6 percent of the total market. Total issuances by Kuwaiti entities dropped to \$0.20 billion representing 0.3 percent of the total market as compared to \$10.50 billion raised in H1 2017 or 22.4 percent of the total market.

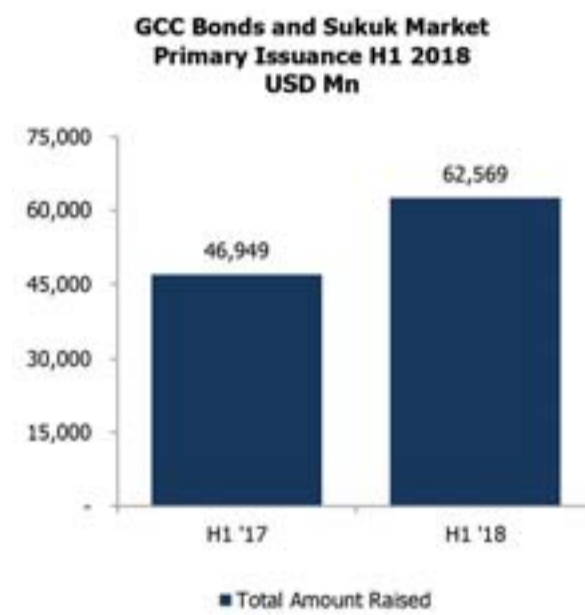
Omani issuances raised a total of \$8.63 billion through 7 issues representing 13.8 percent of the market and 13.2 percent above \$7.62 billion raised in H1 2017. Bahraini entities represented 1.6 percent of the total issuances, raising \$1 billion through a single issue.

Sovereign Vs. Corporate: Sovereign issues continued to dominate the GCC bonds and Sukuk market in H1 2018 contributing 60.2 percent to the overall market with a total value of \$37.68 billion as compared to \$24.0 billion in H1 2017. Total value raised by corporate entities in H1 2018 increased by 8.45 percent, to \$24.89 billion in H1 2018 from \$22.95 billion in H1 2017. Saudi Arabia Government raised a total of \$16.87 billion out of which SAR29.99 billion (\$5.87 billion) were through domestic bonds and \$11 billion were through US dollar denominated bonds and sukuk. Qatar, Oman, Sharjah and Bahrain governments raised \$12 billion, \$6.5 billion, \$1 billion and \$1 billion respectively. Kuwait was the only GCC sovereign entity not tapping the international bond markets in H1 2018.

Conventional vs sukuk

Conventional issuances raised \$50.17 billion, or 80.19 percent of the total amount raised in GCC bonds and sukuk market during H1 2018. Sukuk raised \$2.39 billion, 30.84 percent lower as compared to \$17.93 raised in H1 2017 and represented a share of 19.81 percent of the market in H1 2018.

Sector Allocation: Government sector accounted for



the largest amount raised during H1 2018, with \$37.68 billion representing 60.2 percent of the total amount raised as compared to \$24.89 billion issued in H1 2017. The financial sector followed with \$18.29 billion representing 29.26 percent of total market raised through 140 issues.

Maturity profile

Issuances with tenures of less than five years raised the highest amount, \$25.7 billion, through 132 issuances, representing 41.1 percent of the total amount raised. Maturities of 11-30 years raised \$18.65 billion representing 29.8 percent of the market.

Issue size profile

GCC bonds and sukuk issuances during H1 2018

had issue sizes ranging from \$1 million to \$6 billion. Issuances with principle amounts greater than or equal to \$1.0 billion raised the largest amount of \$41.83 billion, representing 66.85 percent of the total value.

Currency profile

US dollar denominated issuances lead the GCC Bonds and Sukuk market, raising \$52.58 billion (84.19 percent of the total amount raised) by 113 issuances. Followed by Saudi riyal raising \$5.87 billion (9.38 percent of the total amount raised) through 6 issuances.

Rating: During H1 2018, a total value of 85.2 percent of Sovereign and Corporate issuances, were rated by either one or more of the following rating agencies:

Moody's, Standard & Poor's, Fitch, and Capital Intelligence out of which 94.6 percent issuances had investable grade ratings.

Listing: During H1 2018, 42 percent of the total issuances or 99 GCC Bonds and Sukuk issuances, with an aggregate value of \$54.14 billion were listed on exchanges. Listing on international exchanges accounted for 96 percent with Dublin accounting for the listing of 35 of such issuances.

Bonds and sukuk total amount outstanding in GCC

As of 30 June 2018, the total amount outstanding of corporate and sovereign bonds and sukuk issued by GCC entities was \$463.29 billion. Government issuances made up the majority of the total amount outstanding with \$236.02 billion, or 50.9 percent of the total amount. Financial sector led the corporate sector with a total amount outstanding of \$104.37 billion, or 22.5 percent of the total amount.

Of the amount outstanding as of 30 June 2018, \$179.03 billion, or 38.60 percent were issued by Saudi Arabian entities. Bonds and Sukuk by Kuwaiti entities represented \$19.66 billion, or 4.24 percent of the total amount outstanding.

How far can Venezuela go in raising price of world's cheapest gas?

CARACAS: In Venezuela's inflation-hit economy, a single US dollar can buy 3.5 million liters of gasoline—an absurdity that the government says it will tackle with a hike in the cost of state-subsidized fuel. But just how far can President Nicolas Maduro go without getting his fingers burned?

Subsidized gas

Maduro announced on July 29 plans to adjust the price of gasoline and regulate sales based on the so-called "fatherland card," an electronic card that provides access to subsidies. As a first step the government began a census of motor vehicles, set to end on Sunday.

A liter of 91-octane gasoline currently costs one bolivar, while 95-octane gas costs six. By contrast, a single egg in Venezuela's hyperinflation ravaged economy—estimated by the IMF at one million percent in 2018—costs 200,000 bolivars.

A dollar on the country's black market is currently

trading at 3.5 million bolivars. Experts say the retail price of gasoline covers just between two and four percent of its cost of production. Maduro has kept details of the fuel price adjustment under wraps, but he said that "we are paying to throw it away ... we need to move to a rational usage."

Yet talking openly about cutting the gasoline subsidy has been a taboo since the 1989 riots known as the "Caracazo," which were triggered by a rise in fuel prices and left 300 people dead in Caracas and towns surrounding the capital.

Even though the iconic late leader Hugo Chavez questioned the rock-bottom prices of state-subsidized fuel during his term in office between 1999 and his death in 2013, even he never touched them.

In 2016, Maduro authorized the first price hike in 20 years, but only by between 1.328 percent and 6.566 percent, which made no impact on the derisory prices.

The new adjustment will come at a time of profound stagnation, in an economy that has not stopped shrinking since 2014.

Inflationary subsidies

Fuel subsidies have cost the Venezuelan government \$10 billion a year since 2012, petroleum expert Luis Oliveros told AFP. That has created a such a gaping hole in the budget that the government has tried to fill by printing more money, which in turn has created even higher inflation, Oliveros said.

"It is a lie that increasing the price of fuel is an infla-

tionary measure," he said. "The subsidies are hyperinflationary." The situation has only been worsened by the drop off in oil production from 3.2 million barrels a day in 2008 to 1.5 million in 2018.

That is why the operating capacity of refineries has fallen and gasoline imports have risen.

In a perverse twist, there has been a decrease in the demand for fuel because 90 percent of Venezuela's public transport vehicles are out of operation because there cannot buy spare parts to keep them on the road, according to unions. Venezuela imports 33,600 barrels of gasoline and 36,000 barrels of diesel a day from the United States, according to the US Energy Information Agency.

Maduro has yet to explain what happens to consumers who do not have a state-issued "fatherland card." With wages ravaged by hyper-inflation, it is unlikely prices will get anywhere near international levels. If they did, however, filling a gas tank would cost a Venezuelan two years of their minimum-wage income.

"Prices are so far behind that no matter how big the increase in terms of percentage, they will still remain low," said Henkel Garcia, director of the Econometric consultancy group.

Social 'blackmail'

Economist Luis Vicente Leon said the government will use greater subsidies in the "fatherland card" system to ensure that fuel is affordable for all cardholders. According to the opposition, this card is designed



CARACAS: A liter of 91-octane gasoline in Venezuela costs one bolivar — but an egg in the hyperinflation ravaged economy costs 200,000 bolivars, and one US dollar trades on the black market at 3.5 million bolivars. — AFP

for the Socialist government to broaden its support base, which has been weakened by the economic crisis and longstanding shortages of food, medicine and basic goods. The 12 million Venezuelans with the cards—a third of the population—systematically receive food vouchers.

"If they are already using food and medicine as a form of blackmail, then why not gasoline?" said Oliveros. — AFP

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Business

Panasonic introduces large capacity commercial refrigerator to Kuwait

Reliable and energy-efficient food storage solutions for F&B market

KUWAIT: The energy saving inverter K series model boasts advanced cooling performance, and is designed to provide reliable food storage solutions for the country's booming food and beverage industry.

The K series, available in 1087 L and 1343 L capacities, is unique with its beautiful combination of design and technology. It offers generous storage space for food and beverage of all sizes, thanks to its minimized space for the cooling fan and refrigeration unit. Built with auto-closing door, the appliance provides high airtightness, helping keep food fresh for longer.

Boosting its high-usability quality is the ergonomic design handle for easy grip, stainless internal cabinet, as well as anti-bacterial treated handle, shelves and door packing. For easy maintenance and cleaning, swing up front grill, detachable condenser filter and refrigeration unit, refrigerant charge port and stain-resistant surface door are installed.

This appliance has been engineered with innova-

tive features that will raise the bar on food storage for the commercial sector. With Kuwait's world food capital vision 2030 in place, we are happy to be a



Panasonic to be part of Kuwait's world food capital vision 2030

part of this, offering cutting edge products and solutions to businesses, helping them provide their customers with high-quality products."

Complementing the K series' well-thought design is its unmatched Japanese technology for an efficient and reliable performance. It has an advanced cooling system that guarantees food freshness and helps prevent bacteria from growing, thus delaying the risks of any food spoilage. It is also equipped with Panasonic's patented intelligent ECONAVI sensing technology that guarantees optimum energy savings of up to 40 percent. The ECONAVI sensors detect lighting conditions, frequency of door opening, as well as internal and external temperature levels, and adjust the refrigerator's internal temperature accordingly for greater energy saving. In addition to this intelligent feature, it is engineered with inverter compressor, automatic frame heater and an automatic condensing fan speed control to further increase its energy efficiency capability.

This Panasonic K series Refrigerator is available at all BEST Al-Yousifi Electronics showrooms in Kuwait.



Al-Sayer announces winners of final draw, grand prize winner of 2018 Toyota Camry

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons Co (MNSS) Group Spare Parts Division, a subsidiary of ALSAYER Holding, held the third and final electronic raffle draw on 24 July 2018 at the Ministry premises to select the winners of Toyota Genuine Parts special promotion as well as the grand prize. The special promotion from Toyota Genuine Spare Parts was valid between 16 April and on 15 July 2018.

Names of the winners of iPhone x 64 GB from the third raffle are as follows:

First prize — Mamdouh Al-Fhadli, second prize — Majidi Shahat Shaker, third prize — Faraj Soud Al-Mutairi, fourth prize — Rashed Mohammad Ali.

On this occasion, Desmond Lew, Business Director, Parts and Group Logistics, handed over the keys of the brand new Camry to the winner of the grand prize at a special ceremony held at Canada Dry Spare Parts outlet.

Winner of Toyota Camry 2018 grand prize from the final draw was: Ali Afeef Shabani.

All winners can collect their prizes from Group Marketing Department located at Toyota New Cars



Delivery Center in Ardiya by presenting the official letter from Ministry. Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer continues to guarantee highest level of customer satisfaction through quality assured genuine products at fair

competitive prices. Al-Sayer Toyota Genuine Spare Parts operates 17 exclusive outlets across Kuwait to offer an enhanced customer experience through better accessibility and convenience.

Lufthansa provides passengers with new in-flight VR prototype experience

KUWAIT: Lufthansa passengers flying from Frankfurt to Dubai on flight LH630 were the first to experience the airline's new prototype "VR Moving Map", while on board the Airbus A330.

Passengers wearing special VR glasses were able to view the moving landscape below them as a 3D map and even take part in 360° virtual excursions as they immersed themselves in places of interest. As the aircraft flew over Vienna, some passengers virtually rode the Prater Ferris Wheel or even had the chance to virtually attend one of the city's famous classical concerts. The prototype was developed by Lufthansa in cooperation with 3spin, Lufthansa's lead agency for virtual and augmented reality.

"Gazing out of the window, I have often thought to myself: Where are we and what is going on down there... Our idea is based on that thought. In order to help passengers experience the world below we have developed the VR Moving Map in collaboration with the Lufthansa Customer Experience Team," said Thomas Hoyer of 3spin. Paul Sch'n, Passenger Experience Designer for Lufthansa said: "VR is a growing trend for destination experiences and we wanted to



help inspire our passengers while they were in the sky. The Frankfurt to Dubai flight was a first-time test for our new VR prototype, which was designed to further enhance the passenger experience. I'm pleased to say this virtual exploration trip was very positively received by the participating passengers."

Previously, this VR technology was offered to customers on the ground. By giving passengers on this flight the chance to enjoy 30 minutes of virtual reality

content, the airline aims to understand passenger interest in this topic and gather their feedback on the trial. Passengers trialing the VR experience on board all found the technology to be a welcome addition to the existing In-Flight entertainment program. The airline will continue testing various possible applications of VR and AR with customers to evaluate together with relevant stakeholders which prototypes could be developed further.

Remit to Egypt and travel anywhere with Al Mulla Exchange

KUWAIT: Al Mulla Exchange and Al Mulla Travels are joining hands to bring out an exclusive and exciting marketing promotion for Al Mulla Exchange customers sending money to Egypt. The marketing promotion which was launched on August 2 and will run for two months has a winner selected every day from the 81 branches of Al Mulla Exchange.

On the occasion of launching the "Remit and Travel to" promotion, R Shankar, General Manager of Al Mulla Exchange said: "We are extremely happy to offer this promotion for Al Mulla Exchange's customers sending money to Egypt. We are always known to bring out promotions that are innovative and exciting for customers. This promotion will see a winner every day at Al Mulla Exchange for the next

two months which means that an overall 61 customers will get to benefit from the marketing promo. The voucher is valid for a year and customers can use the vouchers as and when they please during this one year period."

Among the company's many unique services are free insurance, loyalty points and programs, SMS confirmations on all transactions along with fast and secure transactions from home or office through the website or Al Mulla Exchange Apps. As one of the pioneers in remittance industry, Al Mulla Exchange recently set a new landmark in the remittance landscape by being the first in Kuwait to launch a Remittance Application. Within a short span of time, the App has soared to be one of the most downloaded App on the Android and iOS platforms. The application which is very simple to use has been interlaced with a very interactive user interface as well as easy maneuverability. The online platform, www.almullaexchange.com, which was launched a couple of years back also went through a major revamp and is in sync with the App as well. The online platforms therefore boasts a very elegant look and feel with robust security features. With this, customers will be able to transact even when they are travelling and anywhere across the globe.



The charismatic SUV Renault Koleos can be yours today!



KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Renault in the State of Kuwait welcomes its customers to experience the powerful and refined SUV model at Renault Store Al-Rai.

The charismatic SUV is finely tuned with the Middle Eastern requirements backed by a local product range. The vehicle was specifically designed after having undergone extensive road testing in real-world conditions over several million kilometers during its course of development. In keeping with Renault's design strategy, the Koleos exterior holds a taste for adventure all that is expected of a D-segment SUV.

Its robust and muscular features amplifies the athletic exterior design with door protective moldings, large diameter two-tone alloy wheels, alloy roof rails, shark antenna, fender chrome lines and silver front skid. The four wheel drive technology, all-terrain ability, engine and transmission line-up has been tailored to meet the needs and expectations of the Kuwaiti market. The 2.5-litre petrol engine is also an atmospheric, four-cylinder, power is 170hp (126kW) at 6,000rpm, with peak torque of 233Nm at 4,000rpm.

Ensuring equal appeal internally, it is embedded with comfortable seats including technology and design amongst the very best in its category, class-leading cabin space, including 289mm of rear knee room, 8.7" touchscreen tablet with R-LINK 2 multimedia & navigation system. Koleos drivers can indulge in the Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as Easy Park Assist and Blind Spot Warning. Renault Al-Babtain encourages Renault fans to stop by the showroom situated in Al-Rai to view the dynamic model for themselves.

Al-Babtain Group was founded in 1948 to present a model of honesty, integrity and total dedication and to gain bright reputation in Kuwait and the Middle East area. Today Al-Babtain Group has licensing rights for some of the world's leading brands stretching the globe from the USA to the Far East. For 70 years Al-Babtain Group has experienced continued success, and large measure of this success came from the Group's advanced flexible management style and long term vision. These astounding results were achieved due to a versatile strategic formula focusing on growth amongst its sphere of activities; including automotive, technology, investment, information, industrial and Finance.

Technology

Huawei unveils AI enabled smartphones in Kuwait

By Islam Al-Sharaa

KUWAIT: Huawei Consumer Business Group (CBG) held a media roundtable in Kuwait to discuss the key innovations the brand is driving in the consumer smartphone industry, both globally and regionally, and announced the launch of its new HUAWEI nova 3 and HUAWEI nova 3i in Kuwait. The brand has been leading a new era of smartphone innovation since it launched its Kirin 970 Chipset powered by AI.

With continuous strides at path-breaking innovations, Huawei CBG is bringing Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance consumers' experience through its rich portfolio including revolutionary smartphones such as Huawei P20 Pro series and today with Huawei nova 3 series. The Huawei nova 3 and Huawei nova 3i are innovative AI powered devices with dual front-facing cameras with a 24MP primary sensor and a 2MP sensor that are designed to offer users the best-in-technology 'selfie' that a smartphone can offer.

"We are delighted to announce the launch of Huawei nova 3 and Huawei nova 3i in Kuwait. Both these smartphones have unparalleled AI capabilities when it comes to the dual front camera features that capture every detail beyond the face in a selfie. It introduces AI background scene recognition in front camera and has the ability to recognize age, gender and skin tone to capture perfect AI selfies. Selfies, these days, are a self-expression of our confidence, our bravery and our passion, especially amongst the younger generation. We are confident that the launch of the new HUAWEI nova 3 series will be a success amongst the selfie lovers in Kuwait," said Peter Wu, Director of Huawei CBG Kuwait.

"With phenomenal smartphone and internet penetration, Kuwait is one of the most crucial markets for Huawei and over the last couple of years, we have grown from strength to strength, focusing on improving the quality of our products, services and market performance. In addition, we are constantly developing meaningful ways to connect with the region's tech-savvy consumers and our esteemed brand rankings year on year are a testimony to the brand evolution in Kuwait," added Wu.

Huawei nova 3 series is designed with the younger and trendier consumers in mind, for whom a smartphone is not just part of their lifestyle but also represents their personal style. The series is designed to offer an AI-enhanced lifestyle, which includes a huge focus on an outstanding selfie experience with its AI beautification features and front camera that allows one to capture perfect selfie in one click. Previous HUAWEI nova 2 and HUAWEI nova 3e had received substantial success across the region and the latest HUAWEI nova 3 series is a step further and a breakthrough in smartphone camera industry.

Huawei CBG has globally led the AI-powered smartphone category

based on its industry research and development over the last year and has reflected its innovations across all its product categories.

AI-enhanced dual front cameras

The intelligent smartphone is equipped with a 24MP camera both in the front and at the rear to capture the best-looking selfies. The AI enhancements will create selfies at the first click by capturing both the face and the surroundings. The new f/2.0 wide aperture lens on the 24MP high-resolution front camera is joined by a 2MP broad spectrum color sensor that captures depth-of-field information for authentic bokeh effects.

AI scene recognition

HUAWEI nova 3 series features AI scene recognition enabled with over 200 different scenarios across eight unique categories that include blue skies, beaches, plants, night, stage performances, flowers, rooms and snow. Hence, the AI powered phones will recognize the background by it a plant, a room, etc and capture every detail to create an enhanced selfie that offers best color optimization features.

AI enabled beauty algorithm

HUAWEI nova 3's camera has a set focal length of 35mm for selfies providing the best-in-technology to capture a stunning AI selfie. The AI enabled beauty algorithm offers seven skin tones and textures for users to choose from and customize their selfies to create their own definition of beauty.

The third-generation intelligent device also supports real-time High Definition Range (HDR) footage preview and recording, in addition to studio-quality lighting options. Further, it accurately maps the five facial features of a subject and develops a 3D model in order to identify areas that require additional lighting or beautification. This would also work well with 3D Qmoji, a fun feature that digitally transposes the face of a user onto a digital avatar.

AI capability

HUAWEI nova 3 runs on Kirin 970 with up to 4GB memory and the newest EMUI 8.2 to offer a flagship-class experience to users and HUAWEI nova 3i is equipped with a Kirin 710 AI processor with up to 4 GB memory and EMUI 8.2 for flagship performance.

Price and Availability in Kuwait

Both the HUAWEI nova 3 and nova 3i will be available for pre-order from August 1, 2018, at the across select retailers in Kuwait, and will be on shelf from August 16, 2018. The HUAWEI nova 3 will be available in Iris Purple, Airy Blue and Black colors at price of KWD 144.9 and the Huawei nova 3i will be available in Iris Purple, Pearl White and Black colors at KWD 99.9.

“ Selfies, a self-expression of our confidence ”



Peter Wu, Director of Huawei CBG Kuwait



Muhammad Awais Sheikh, Marketing Director

INTERVIEW

Huawei to open service centers in Kuwait

By Islam Al-Sharaa

In an interview with Kuwait Times Huawei's General Manager Peter Wu discussed about the various new features and the unparalleled AI capabilities of the new series.

Kuwait Times: As the General Manager of Huawei Consumer Business Group, you are responsible of guiding the group's brand strategy in Kuwait. How do you look at your experience in enhancing distributor partnerships and driving service localization ever since the establishment of the Experience Center in 2016?

Peter Wu: We put efforts in enhancing business with independent retailers offering them business solutions to improve the user experience. Recently in late July, we held the channels partners summit in China and invited key retailers from Kuwait to attend the summit in Shenzhen. At Huawei we also tailor programs to work hand in hand with retail partners in Kuwait closely and more effectively.

Increasing manpower in retail shops in local countries has also been one of the brand priorities, this not only contributes to creating more job opportunities within the retail industry, but also helps grow and achieve success together with local strategic channel partners.

KT: Can you elaborate a little bit on the customer-centric policy of the group in building long-term relationships with the customers?

PW: Huawei CBG Kuwait plans to add more dedicated service centers to ensure its world class customer service and innovation in the region, and upgrade its experience shops with innovative and ultimate concepts

KT: What are the strategic initiatives of the group in ensuring greater value and quality as you introduce the latest technological advances via Huawei products in the country?

PW: We are very proud to say one of our strongest partnership is with Porsche. A partnership that reflects both brands' philosophy that superior design is just as important as performance and we are very proud to have achieved both. We know Kuwait is one of the markets that appreciates innovation and craftsmanship and just as Huawei is known for its innovative and intelligent devices, Porsche is also renowned for its high horsepower and design standards, making this the perfect partnership to develop a unique, luxurious and brilliant model.

Another interesting topic we will be talking about next year in the industry is 5G, as the next decade will witness 4G evolution to 5G, 5G technologies will usher in a fully-connected, intelligent world, in which there will be a faster and more extensive industrial revolution as we strive to build a better-connected world to our users.

As also mentioned in today's roundtable, Huawei had partnered with Saad Club, Kuwait & Kuwaiti Celebrity Photographer Abdullah Al-Shayji to launch smartphone photography workshops that focuses on empowering young Kuwaiti photography enthusiasts with the latest skills to allow them to take perfect pictures from their mobile phones and also to explore the breakthrough camera technology used by Huawei across its devices.

We remain focused on providing our consumers access to best-in-class technology, innovative devices and exceptional quality products, to develop more meaningful ways to stay connected. We will continue to focus on expanding our investment in R&D, innovation and building brand awareness in markets around the world.



Peter Wu



Facebook fakers get better at covering tracks

WASHINGTON: Creators of fake accounts and news pages on Facebook are learning from their past mistakes and making themselves harder to track and identify, posing new challenges in preventing the platform from being used for political misinformation, cyber security experts say. This was apparent as Facebook tried to determine who created pages it said were aimed at sowing dissension among US voters ahead of congressional elections in November. The company said on Tuesday it had removed 32 fake pages and accounts from Facebook and Instagram involved in what it called "coordinated inauthentic behavior."

While the United States improves its efforts to monitor and root out such intrusions, the intruders keep getting better at it, said cyber security experts interviewed over the past two days. Ben Nimmo, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Digital Forensic Research Lab, said he had noticed the latest pages used less original language, rather cribbing from copy already on the internet. "Linguistic mistakes would give them away before, between 2014 and 2017," Nimmo told Reuters.

"In some of these newer cases it seems they've caught on to that by writing less (original material) when posting things. With their longer posts sometimes it's just pirated, copy and pasted from some American website. That makes them less suspicious." Facebook's prior announcement on the topic of fake accounts, in April, directly connected a Russian group known as the Internet Research Agency to a myriad of posts, events and propaganda that were placed on Facebook leading up to the 2016 US presidential election.



PARIS: In this file photo in Paris shows the logo of the social network Facebook on a broken screen of a mobile phone. — AFP

This time, Facebook did not identify the source of the misinformation. "It's clear that whoever set up these accounts went to much greater lengths to obscure their true identities than the Russian-based Internet Research Agency (IRA) has in the past," the company said in a blog post on Tuesday announcing the removal of the pages. "Our technical forensics are insufficient to provide high confidence attribution at this time."

Facebook said it had shared evidence connected to the latest flagged posts with several private sector partners, including the Digital Forensic Research Lab, an organization founded by the Atlantic Council, a Washington think tank. Facebook also said the use of virtual private networks, internet phone services, and domestic currency to pay for advertisements helped obfuscate the source of the accounts and pages. The perpetrators also used a third party, which Facebook declined to name, to post content. Facebook declined to comment further, referring back to its blog post.

US President Donald Trump's top national security aides said on Thursday that Russia is behind "pervasive" attempts to interfere in November's elections and that they expect attempts by Russia, and others, will continue into the 2020 elections. They say they are concerned that attempts will be made to foment confusion and anger among various

political groups in the United States and cause a distrust of the electoral process.

Two US intelligence officials who requested anonymity told Reuters this week there was insufficient evidence to conclude that Russia was behind the latest Facebook campaign. However, one said "the similarities, aims and methodology relative to the 2016 Russian campaign are quite striking."

Previous mistakes

Experts who track online disinformation campaigns said the groups who launch such efforts have changed how they post content and create posts. "These actors are learning from previous mistakes," said John Kelly, chief executive of social media intelligence firm Graphika, adding they do not use the same internet addresses or pay in foreign currency. "And as more players in the world learn these dark arts, it's easier for them to hide among the multiple actors deploying the same playbook," he said.

Philip Howard, an Oxford University professor of internet studies and director of the Oxford Internet Institute, said that suspicious social media accounts like those taken down this week were once more easily identifiable because they shared the same information from high-profile publications like RT, the Russian English-language news service, or Breitbart News Network. — Reuters

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
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Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendicectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com
Tel: 1886677 ic_kwt

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

daralshifa
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368
Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member .
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com
Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228
Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

What's On

Jumeirah Kuwait appoints new Director

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, Kuwait's idyllic resort, has appointed Georges S Akar as its new Director of Sales and Marketing. Akar joins Jumeirah Group from the Four Seasons Hotel in Beirut following his recent post as Director of Sales & Marketing. He brings with him almost 20 years of industry experience and will oversee the Sales & Marketing operations for Kuwait's luxurious property.

General Manager Savino Leone said, "We are very pleased to welcome our new Director of Sales & Marketing, Georges Akar, to our passionate team. Behind every great resort is a dynamic leader whose expertise in developing and executing Sales & Marketing initiatives play a significant role in maintaining the positioning of Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa as a market leader.

Prior to joining, Akar's globe-trotting two-decade career encompassed many of the world's leading hotel and hotel management brands. He had filled numerous directorial positions ranging from Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts in Beirut, Riyadh and several regions of Thailand, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group in Kuala Lumpur, as well as Movenpick, Rotana and InterContinental Hotels and Resorts in Beirut.

Akar obtained his Bachelor's Degree in the Science of Business Studies in Hospitality Management from the

Lebanese American University in Beirut. With multi-market experience leading teams in properties from around the world, Akar will now lead a dedicated Sales & Marketing team at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, managing the resort's business strategies through sales, conference & events, reservations and marketing while continuing to develop the luxury property as one of the leading resorts in Kuwait.

The Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa offers 407 rooms including 79 residential suites, two royal suites and 12 private luxurious villas. The resort is also home to the relaxation haven, Talise Spa as well as seven unique dining venues. The landmark is nestled in the secluded beachfront area of Messilah along the shores of the Arabian Gulf, with easy access to Kuwait's Central Business District, airport and other major attractions.



Georges S Akar

McDonald's unveils MacCoin

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Big Mac, McDonald's unveiled the MacCoin, a limited edition global currency backed by the internationally iconic Big Mac that fans across the world can get their hands on starting August 4. Customers can share, collect and redeem for a free Big Mac at participating McDonald's restaurants in more than 50 participating countries. Big Mac fans from around the world will be able to receive MacCoins through a variety of exciting giveaways with each participating country celebrating the arrival of the MacCoin in its own unique way.

In its 50 years, the legendary taste of the Big Mac has helped it achieve universal recognition and a lasting legacy. No matter where they live in the world, Big Mac fans recognize the two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles and onions on a sesame seed bun as the iconic burger with a flavor combination that's just as craveable and delicious as the day it was introduced. It has become such a global icon that The Economist even used the price of the Big Mac to create the Big Mac Index, an economic tool that compares the purchasing power of different international currencies year after year. This global connectivity of the Big Mac inspired the creation of the MacCoin.

"Since it was introduced at a family-owned McDonald's restaurant 50 years ago, the Big Mac has traversed the globe and is enjoyed in cities from Kuwait to Chicago, providing delicious, feel good moments to people all over the world," said McDonald's President and CEO Steve Easterbrook. "So we wanted a global celebration as unique as the burger itself. The MacCoin transcends currencies to commemorate our global iconic burger while giving customers all over the world a chance to enjoy a Big Mac on us," he added.

More than 6.2 million MacCoins will be distributed globally in more than 50 countries while supplies last. These commemorative coins feature five unique designs, each representing a decade of the Big Mac. Each MacCoin design pulls in elements from that time in history, nodding to art, music and pop culture, while the front-side of the MacCoin celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Big Mac. The MacCoin highlights the '70s, showcasing the decade's flower power, and the '80s alludes to pop art.

Bold, abstract shapes defined the '90s and trans-



late on the MacCoin design, and the early '00s specifically focuses on the technology that was at the forefront of the turn of the century. The '10s MacCoin celebrates the past 10 years and calls attention to the evolution of communication. Additionally, the seven languages featured across the various designs represent many of the countries participating: Arabic, English, Indonesian, Mandarin, Portuguese, French and Spanish.

"When my great-grandfather Jim Delligatti invented the Big Mac at his grill in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, he just wanted to make his local customers happy," said Nick Delligatti, fourth-generation McDonald's owner-operator and great-grandson of Jim Delligatti, the inventor of the Big Mac. "August 2 would have been my great-grandfather's 100th birthday, and I believe he would be very proud knowing his humble sandwich has made such a lasting impression that people all around the world can enjoy it wherever they find a McDonald's."

On his part, Senior Director of Marketing at McDonald's Kuwait, Sherif Coutry said: "2018 is definitely the year of the Big Mac, and we are thrilled to be feting one of our most beloved creations of all time. This classic sandwich has arguably become symbolic of the McDonald's brand, and it continues to be one our best-selling products worldwide."

Coutry further added: "The MacCoin was especially created to celebrate five decades of the Big Mac. With every purchase of a Big Mac Large Extra Value Meal, customers will receive a MacCoin, each worth one Big Mac. Available for a limited time only, each MacCoin is redeemable for a free Big Mac sandwich at any McDonald's restaurant in participating countries all around the world till December 31st, 2018." The MacCoin will be available in Kuwait starting August 4, 2018 only with in-store, drive-thru and car service orders.

Turkish Airlines launches new in-flight safety video

Turkish Airlines, the airline that flies to more countries and international destinations than any other airline, launches a new animated safety video, complete with familiar LEGO mini figures in surprising new roles. The custom-animated safety video for Turkish Airlines was created by the teams who assembled "The LEGO Movie", "The LEGO Batman Movie", "The LEGO NINJAGO Movie" and the highly anticipated sequel "The LEGO Movie 2" due in cinemas beginning February 2019, which reunites the heroes of the first film in an all new action-packed adventure. In partnership with Warner Bros. and featuring the popular characters from The LEGO Movie franchise, the safety video will be shown on all flights starting today and will also debut online.

The safety video, which is the first LEGO safety video ever made, demonstrates step-by-step safety procedures to passengers in a fun, unique style - com-

plete with sensible airline-approved humor, celebrity cameos and an unforgettable song and dance number. Turkish Airlines is proud to have one of the youngest fleets in the world and strives to achieve the best in aviation safety standards. Whether frequent travelers or first-time fliers, the video aims to inform and entertain passengers, alongside an extensive selection of movies, TV shows, music and games available in different languages on the in-flight entertainment system.

The safety video will kick off the "biggest partnership with the smallest cast ever assembled", hinting there is much more to come from the Turkish Airlines and LEGO Movie franchise alliance. Leading up to the worldwide release of "The LEGO Movie 2", Turkish Airlines will roll-out a global TV campaign, film themed wrapped airplanes, in-flight and in-airport activations and even a second safety video. A partnership sure to entertain and delight!

M Ilker Ayci, Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee commented: "As a leading global airline with an emphasis on safety, we are excited to partner with Warner Bros. and The LEGO Movie franchise for this video. We are both brands that are enjoyed around the world, bringing together generations and cultures everywhere. We hope that our passengers can enjoy this new video, which has something for everyone."

JOYALUKKAS OPENS NEWEST SHOWROOM IN KUWAIT AT FARWANIYA

Kuwait, August 2018 - Residents of Kuwait's most populous city now have more reason to rejoice with the arrival of the world's favourite jeweller. Joyalukkas Farwaniya is the newest showroom in Kuwait that offers the Brand's signature world-class jewellery and award winning service.

The showroom was inaugurated by Mr. Mohammad Ismael Safar Bahzad, Director, Joyalukkas Kuwait led by no other than the visionary entrepreneur and Joyalukkas Group CMD Mr. Joy Alukkas along with top Joyalukkas Group executives, local dignitaries and VIPs.

A bright new addition to the Brand's ever-growing network of jewellery showrooms around the world, Joyalukkas Farwaniya features new collections set in spacious, brightly lit interiors offering the pure joy of jewellery shopping with every visit.

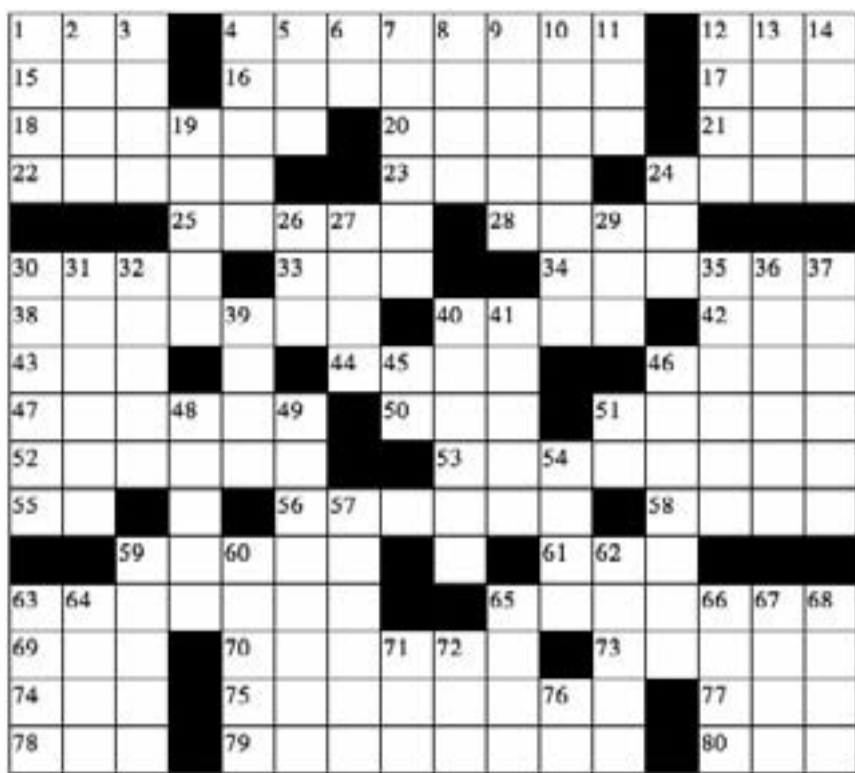
"It is a delight to continue to grow in Kuwait," said Mr. Joy Alukkas, Joyalukkas Group CMD. "And it is all because of the loyal support of its residents. I will be personally welcoming everyone as we open our doors in Farwaniya and look forward to offering our best here, from products to services, every day for years to come."

Joyalukkas Farwaniya, Kuwait will feature over a million jewellery designs showcasing a mix of traditional, ethno contemporary and international influences. It will carry an exclusive line of Joyalukkas brands, such as Veda Temple Jewellery, Pride Diamonds, Eleganza Polki Diamonds, Masaaki Pearls, Zenina Turkish Jewellery, Li'l Joy Kids Jewellery, the Apurva Antique collection & Ratna Precious Stone Jewellery, as well as brand-new diamond collections 7 Wonders Daily Wear and Iris Colorful Diamond Jewellery.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1978



ACROSS

- 1. An acute inflammatory disease occurring in the intestines of premature infants.
4. Small genus of deciduous trees of tropical America and Asia.
12. Nocturnal mouse-like mammal with forelimbs modified to form membranous wings and anatomical adaptations for echolocation by which they navigate.
15. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
16. (Welsh) The farmer god.
17. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
18. One of a family of granular intrusive rocks.
20. The mother-in-law of Ruth whose story is told in the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament.
21. An undergarment worn by women to support their breasts.
22. A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria and closely related to Hausa.
23. Lacking in liveliness or charm or surprise.
25. Water accumulated in the bilge of a ship.
28. A cord that is drawn through eyelets or around hooks in order to draw together two edges (as of a shoe or garment).
30. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
33. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
34. Dignified and somber in manner or character and committed to keeping promises.
38. Having a play of lustrous rainbow-like colors.
42. Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
43. A resource.
44. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
47. Someone who puts text into appropriate form for publication.
50. A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
52. Of or relating to a directionless magnitude.
53. Born out of wedlock.
55. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
56. Someone who cuts and delivers ice.
58. A hardy cabbage with coarse curly leaves that do not form a head.
61. The residue that remains when something is burned.
63. A woman's large folded hooded hood.
69. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
70. Of or relating to or characteristic of religious rituals.
73. The basic unit of money in Nigeria.
74. A mature blood cell that contains hemoglobin to carry oxygen to the bodily tissues.
75. Extinct order of jawless vertebrates.
77. A unit of length equal to one thousandth of an inch.
78. Liquid excretory product.
79. A great raja.
80. Seed of a pea plant.

DOWN

- 1. Kamarupan languages spoken in north-eastern India and western Burma.
2. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
3. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
4. A member of a monotheistic sect of Zoroastrian origin.
5. The United Nations agency concerned with international maritime activities.
6. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
7. Cause to become.
8. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
9. Full of submerged reefs or sandbanks or shoals.
10. A port city in southern Kenya on a coral island in a bay of the Indian Ocean.
11. Black tropical American cuckoo.
12. A small cake leavened with yeast.
13. A city in northern India.
14. An official language of the Republic of South Africa.
19. A confusion of voices and other sounds.
24. A logarithmic unit of sound intensity equal to 10 decibels.
26. A local computer network for communication between computers.
27. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
29. Payment due by the recipient on delivery.
31. To or from every one of two or more (considered individually).
32. A genus of Placoidae.
35. Any plant of the genus Eryngium.
36. Of or relating to the region of Mongolia or its people or their languages or cultures.
37. Be in contradiction with.
39. A ruler of the Inca Empire (or a member of his family).
40. A soft suede leather formerly from the sheep of the chamois antelope but now from sheepskin.
41. (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
45. 1,000,000,000 periods per second.
46. A member of a South American Indian people in Peru who were formerly the ruling class of the Inca empire.
48. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
49. Parasitic nematode occurring in the intestines of pigs and rats and human beings and producing larvae that form cysts in skeletal muscles.
51. A metallic element of the rare earth group.
54. The act of catching an object with the hands.
57. Long-legged spotted cat of Africa and southwestern Asia having nonretractile claws.
59. A point located with respect to surface features of some region.
60. Leave immediately.
62. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
64. A French abbot.
65. English essayist (1775-1834).
66. Lacking in strength or firmness or resilience.
67. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
68. The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
71. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
72. The month following March and preceding May.
76. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if you are entering a period of emotional change. You may have mixed emotions about some situations in your life, but you are torn between right and wrong and good and bad. You feel a great need to make some kind of changes in your lifestyle. The only thing that is bringing you any sense of peace is staying on the go and keeping your mind preoccupied to prevent dwelling on the problems at hand. Do whatever you need to do to keep peace in your world and stress at arm's length. This may be a time you have a great desire to further your education and gain as much knowledge as possible. We have always been told knowledge is power and it seems you long for power now. Spend your time taking in all this world brings your way.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a great time to surround yourself with friends. You may find much encouragement and the support you are needing to move forward towards your goals. Others may begin to show much admiration toward you. You are noticed for your ambition and drive. You may find that others begin to come to you for advice. This is very flattering to you. They say imitation is the most sincere form of flattery and you are flattered that your peers seek your advice to become more like you. You may find yourself having a great appreciation of your thoughts and ideas. This is a great time to put some of this down on paper. Whether keeping notes or beginning a blog, keep a record of the thoughts that are running through your mind now. This may be very profitable for you in the future.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may experience dissatisfaction with what you have or the people you are surrounded right now. Love may be absent from your vocabulary today. You may feel unloved or unloving. This is a time you feel as if you could escape to a desert island and no one would miss you. You feel as if there is no one you would miss either and the thought actually sounds appealing to you. We all need breaks and escapes from time to time and today is your time for that feeling.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You seem to have a desire to become more involved with friends, family, and your neighbors. Exchanging stories and life experiences with each other seem to really satisfy a need for gaining knowledge. You may feel as if communicating your feelings to others and the support you receive is very rewarding for you now. You may find yourself more understanding of the "why's" and "how's" of the world around you. Knowing what makes me people tick and what emotions they are hiding beneath the surface seems to intrigue you. Once you open up and let your walls down for love ones you may find they are more open with you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

It seems like you have a few skeletons in your closet. Things could come back to haunt you from your past. You may find yourself realizing the past is just that. The past. Leave it where it belongs. You may find yourself emotional. Be sure to not let past experience prevent you from moving forward and bettering yourself. You deserve the best and now is a time to believe in yourself and move forward.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Being the center of attention may be very appealing to you today. Romance is in the air for you also. Remember the memories you make today can be looked back on for years to come with pride and adoration. Be sure and keep your emotions in check today and practice a bit of self-control when it comes to dealing with others. You may find it difficult to relax to day but take a deep breath and always remind yourself actions have consequences. Take each problem you encounter today and chalk it up to a new lesson learned. Today's issues may be best handled in a conservative manner even if that means taking some time to regroup and reorganize. Virgo, this small effort could help your day run more smoothly.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may find yourself feeling a bit left out. For a short period, you may find yourself feeling a sense of isolation. Your standards are high, and you may not approve of all that goes on within your social circle and may find that rather than face that disapproval your friends may recently be excluding you. This feeling won't last long, however, you may want to surround yourself with a group you fit in with. You may find that tension is high at this time and could easily find yourself surrounded by conflict. Isolation may be a positive thing in your world for now, Libra. This is a good time to silence the noise and clear your head.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

When it comes to fitting in with the younger crowd, you don't! You may find yourself at odds with a younger group. Wisdom is gained through experience. You know all too well until you have lived it you can not understand. How many times have you said, "If I knew then, what I know now?" No one could have convinced you back then. You have to realize you are speaking to deaf ears when giving advice to the younger generation. This could cause frustration but remember, it is through your mistakes that you gained your wisdom. Let them live. Let them learn.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You tend to live one day at a time with little thought for the future. It works for you. But, it may cause conflict with someone you care about who is a controller and needs structure and long-term planning. If you need that person in your life, you may want to consider compromise. (It's not an ugly word.) Don't expect too much. Controllers rarely make major changes. You adapt more easily. You could consider asking what you can do to make the relationship work better. That may mean adjusting your schedule occasionally, even when it is inconvenient.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Eternity is a measure of time you can not even begin to understand. Your thoughts are drawn to an imaginative and dreamy state. Your mind is a million miles away. The future is where you are focused. You want to know what tomorrow brings. You actually want to know you have total control of what tomorrow brings. To ensure a stable future you also know you need to make amends with your past. Your focus may drift to mending fences and repairing relationships. This is a very spiritual time in your life, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You may be feeling two ways at once, you may not be truly sure just how you feel. There is a blur between right and wrong and you may not be able to tell the difference. You may feel a deep need for change. This may be a time you start to focus on developing new healthy habits. You may find yourself full of energy and drawn to see all the world has to offer. You are hungry for knowledge and may start to consider enrolling in classes or starting online studies. You are ready for a new venture. A new outlook and a new adventure may be about to begin for you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You feel as though there is a place for everything and everything has a place. Anything out of place seems to really bother you. You are organized and not only able to organize things, but you really have a knack for organizing people. Your management skills are high. You know just the right person for the job. You are ambitious and determined to get things done. You have no shortage of self-respect. This is a time you seem to demand respect from others. You may find yourself torn between two worlds now. You can use these organizational skills to find a peaceful balance between your career and home life. Remember, happiness will begin at home.

Wordsearch Puzzle

World Currencies

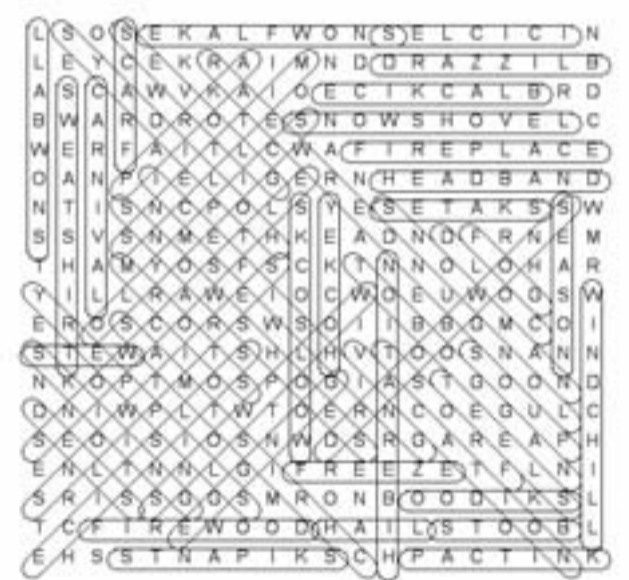
Find and circle all of the world currencies that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a John Paul Getty quotation.



- AFGHANI, AKSHAY, BAHIT, BALBOA, BIRL, BOLIVAR, BOLIVIANO, BOLIVIANO, COLON, SALASI, DENAR, DENAR, DOLLAR, DREAM, ESCUDO, EURO, FORINT, FRANC, GOLD DORADO, GUARANI, GUARANI, HRYVNA, KUNA, KORUNA, KRONA, KRONE, DOLLAR, KUNA, KWACHA, KWANZA, KYAT, LEMPIRA, LEONE, LLANGUNI, LIBA, LITAS, LOTI, MANAT, HETICAL, NAIRA, KRONE, NEW CEE, NEW DONG, NEW KIP, NGULTRUM, OUGUIYA, PATACA, PESO, ROURD, PULA, QUETZAL, SAND, TENGE, REAL, TOLAR, VATU, RINGGIT, RYIAL, YEN, YUAN RENMINBI, ZLOTY, RUPEE, RUPIAH, SELLING, SDH, SUCRE, SYU, TAKA, TALA, TENGGE, TOLAR, WON, YEN, YUAN RENMINBI, ZLOTY

Yesterday's Solution

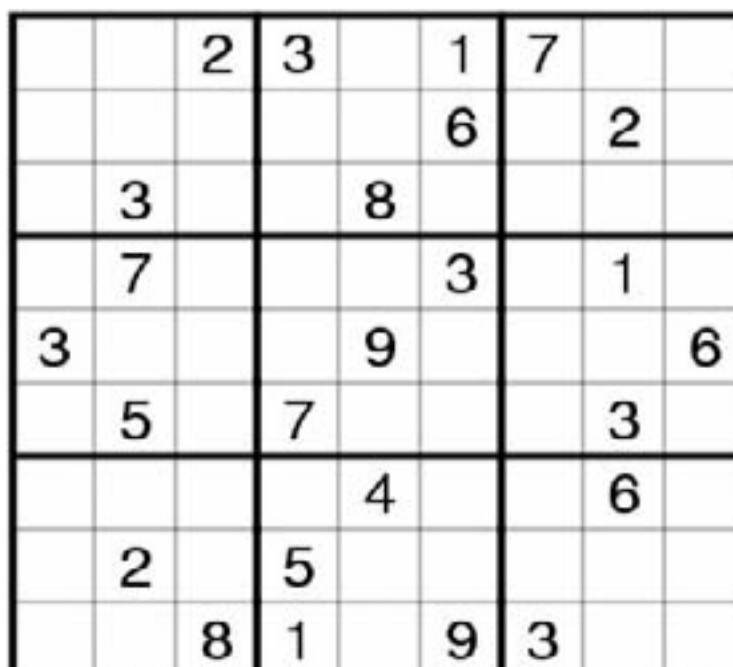
Winter



- BLACK ICE, BLIZZARD, BOOTS, CARNIVAL, CHRISTMAS, COLD, EGG NOG, FIREPLACE, FIREWOOD, FOG, FREEZE, FROST, GLOVES, HAIL, HEADBAND, HIBERNATION, HOCKEY, HOLIDAYS, ICE FISHING, ICICLES, KNIT CAP, LONG UNDERWEAR, MITTENS, OLYMPICS, PAKKA, SCARF, SEASON, SKATES, SKI DOO, SKI FANTS, SKIING, SLED, SLEET, SLIPPERY, SNOW CASTLE, SNOWFLAKE, SNOWMAN, SNOWSHOES, SOLSTICE, SOUP, STEW, STORM, SWEATSHIRT, TOBGGAN, VACATION, WIND CHILL, SNOWBALL, WOOL SOCKS

The hidden sentence is: ONE KIND WORD CAN WARM THREE WINTER MONTHS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, AUGUST 6, 2018



This photo shows women helping each other adjust their costumes before performing a traditional dance during a press conference in Narathiwat to promote the Peace Cup football tournament being held between the four southernmost Thai provinces. — AFP

PLAYING WITH HISTORY: CORSICA'S PLAYMOBIL HOMAGE TO NAPOLEON



Creator of the Naporama museum Frederic Pierrot poses with playmobils depicting Napoleon Bonaparte's life.

Tucked away on a side street near the Corsican home where Napoleon Bonaparte was born, a mini museum invites young minds to relive the French emperor's story—through scenes painstakingly built from hundreds of Playmobil figurines. Frederic Pierrot, a 53-year-old IT entrepreneur, came up with the idea a few years ago as a way to pay homage to the Mediterranean island's most famous son while "rediscovering the historical reconstructions I did when I was 10 years old." "I wanted an original idea, far from all the digital technology offerings," he said, of his Naporama museum in the island's capital, Ajaccio.

Using pieces from his vast Playmobil collection, he began customizing the figurines with



Kids look at scenes depicting Napoleon Bonaparte's life made with playmobil painted by Frederic Pierrot, at the Naporama museum in Ajaccio, on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica. — AFP photos

“ I wanted an original idea, far from all the digital technology offerings ”



Details of scenes depicting Napoleon Bonaparte's life made with playmobil painted by Frederic Pierrot at the Naporama museum in Ajaccio, on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica.

paper, raffia and even handmade accessories to create historically accurate scenes and characters. For 20 euros (\$23) fans can buy their own made-to-order Napoleon or his wife Josephine. Giving guided tours, Pierrot sharpens his visitors' curiosity with little known anecdotes while sketching out the events which changed the course of history. "When he was 13 years old, Napoleon organized a snowball fight which lasted three days at the Brienne military school" in northeast France, he said, during a recent visit. "For historians, these days already gave a hint of the future chief's character."

Next up are reconstructions, beginning with the 1793 Siege of Toulon, where the young general showed his strategic flair, and ending with his crowning as emperor in 1804. The tone is unabashedly upbeat—there is no reproduction of

his disastrous final defeat at Waterloo, for instance—with tales of courage, friendship and a bit of coquetry. "It's funny when we see (Emmanuel) Macron and his wife today," Pierrot says, referring to the age difference between the French president and his wife, Brigitte, 25 years his senior. "But for their civil wedding, Josephine de Beauharnais declared herself five years younger than her real age, while Napoleon made himself older so they could hide their (six-year) age difference."

'A child's dream'

The episode leads to the tale of Napoleon's coronation, when a rushed church wedding had to be arranged after Josephine informed the pope that they were not yet married in the eyes of God. Napoleon was so annoyed that he made sure only civil weddings had any legal foundation in French law when he laid out what would become known as the Napoleonic Code. Pierrot also has another trick to keep visitors on their toes. Hidden among the Playmobil models are characters who don't belong: Harry Potter, Yoda, Sherlock Holmes, a Pokemon...

"All right kids, learn how to keep your eyes peeled," he tells them. "That's what I liked best," says Maxence, a seven-year-old from the French city of St. Etienne visiting his grandmother. Madeleine, a 13-year-old who spends each summer in Corsica, has visited dozens of times, and has even given Pierrot her old Playmobil figures so that he can build new scenes. And it's not only

young people who emerge from the visit as enthusiastic fans. "It's amazing, like a child's dream," said Simon Mattens, a 25-year-old Belgian. "I did the same, creating my own little battles, when I was young—this is better, of course, because he makes stuff himself," he said.

And when Robert Dabrowski, originally from Poland but living in Britain, visited with his wife and children, Pierrot gave his 20-minute tour in English. "For the children it was good to present this story this way—toys are involved so they are a little bit more involved too, rather than with dry history," Dabrowski said. Entry to the museum, which opened in July 2016, costs three euros for visitors 10 and older, helping to offset the 10,000 euros invested by Pierrot. "Playmobil has approved my project but they don't finance it," he said. — AFP



Creator of the Naporama museum Frederic Pierrot explains Napoleon Bonaparte's life with playmobil installation at the Naporama museum in Ajaccio, on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica.



A woman with kids enters the Naporama museum, defuncting Napoleon Bonaparte's life with playmobils in Ajaccio on the French Mediterranean island of Corsica.

Lifestyle | Features

Lebanon's glamorous music festivals, struggle in tough times

Sakira and Elton played one-off concerts in Lebanon in recent months but the summer music festivals that helped make the country a cultural lodestar for the Arab world are struggling. In the 1960s and 1970s, jazz legends such as Ella Fitzgerald, Nina Simone and Miles Davis, and the greatest Arab singers, Um Kulthoum and Fairouz, performed at ruined Roman temples during the Baalbek festival or at pretty seaside towns. Elite tourists from the Gulf came to watch and spend big in the country and the festivals helped bring ordinary Lebanese people together.



French-Italian singer Carla Bruni performs her fifth album 'French Touch', at the Beiteddine Palace in Lebanon's Chouf mountains, south of the capital Beirut, during the Beiteddine International Art Festival. — AFP photos

That pre-war heyday is long gone

"We worry that we will get to the point where we cannot go on," said Nora Jumblatt, head of the Beiteddine Art Festival. While this year's festivals are putting some well-known singers on stage, regional instability, Lebanon's economic malaise and a funding crunch have hit organizers.

Years of political sclerosis have played havoc with fiscal policy, aggravating one of the world's highest rates of public debt. As the government began tightening its belt, it cut subsidies for festivals and increased the taxes they pay. "We call on the Lebanese government not to reduce its help, not to increase taxes," said Nayla De Freij, chairwoman of the Baalbek International Festival.

Gradual economic decline has hit private sponsorship. And fear of the Syria war spilling over, as well as Lebanon's growing entanglement in a power struggle between Iran and Saudi Arabia, have kept away Gulf tourists. But after a deal in 2016 that led to the first parliament elections for nine years in May, and as warfare in Syria has moved away from Lebanon's borders, politicians have started to speak of recovery. "Today we are at a crossroads in Lebanon. We are starting to move



Lebanese musicians perform at the opening of Baalbek International Festival, in Baalbek, Lebanon.

towards rebuilding infrastructure in Lebanon and at the same time its economic vision is being formed," said caretaker economy minister Raed Khoury.

History, pride

Whether that can help the festivals, or bring back Gulf tourists, is uncertain. The main winners in May's elections were allies of the Iran-backed Hezbollah - which Gulf states see as a terrorist group and a threat to their citizens. "What affected us is the absence of all the Arab brothers who came from their countries. We used to get a very big number and some of them used to fly in to watch one concert," said Elham Kallab, head of the cultural board of Byblos International Festival. The Byblos festival takes place on the ancient city's seafloor, near the old city, with its Phoenician temple, Roman theatre, Crusader castle and winding souk. "The stage, with the

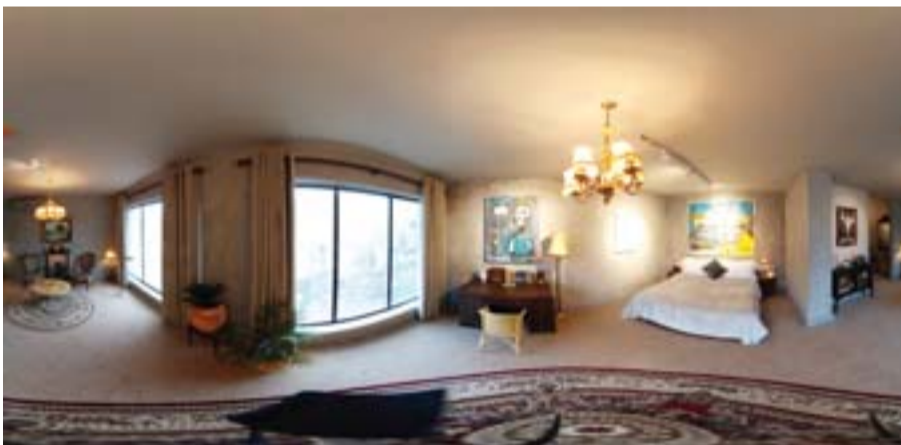
Mediterranean in front of it, and dozens of civilizations behind it, when we stand and look at it, we feel so much pride to be in Byblos," said Kallab.

The stage of the Baalbek International Festival - Lebanon's oldest festival - has been started in 1956 - is even more spectacular, wedged between the temples of Jupiter and Bacchus, among the largest and best preserved Roman temples in the world. But it, too, faces economic pressures. Like the other festivals, its revenue comes from ticket sales, sponsorship and government subsidy - all under pressure. "There are challenges and we have to fight, but it's very important that we preserve the standard of the festival," said De Freij.

Festival organizers - and many politicians - see the events as important not only for the tourists they bring but because they portray Lebanon as a safe, stable and attractive place to visit. "They show this open, cultural

image of Lebanon to the world," said Jumblatt, recalling the first Beiteddine festival during the civil war year of 1986 as an event that brought people together.

That festival takes place in the elegant Ottoman-era palace of Beiteddine located in the Chouf mountains, where her husband Walid Jumblatt is a major dynastic political leader. But for all their importance to the tourism sector and even, for some people, to Lebanon's image of itself, the festivals remain in difficulty. "I don't want to be pessimistic, but this year is the toughest for the festivals yet," said Zalfa Bouez, head of the Zouk Mikael International Festival. — Reuters



The 'scenic' bedrooms provide a direct view of the Israeli barrier from every window in the Walled Off hotel in the West Bank city of Bethlehem. — Reuters



Above one of the guest beds, a mural features an Israeli soldier and a masked Palestinian youth having a pillow fight in the Walled Off hotel in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.



The 'budget' bedroom features a shared living arrangement composed of multiple bunk beds in the Walled Off hotel in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.



Banksy's art lines the walls of the stylized piano bar in the Walled Off hotel in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.



Cultural summer festival

A cultural summer festival organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature at its 13th session of 2018 celebrated the producer of the film "The Squadron of Hammam" Sheikha Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and the film director Ramzan Khosroh.

The film was shown during the activities of the festival to coincide with the new show of the brutal occupation of Kuwait, at the Grand Cinema and Fox Cinema on Thursday, August 2, 2018.



Banksy's subversive art draws tourists and locals in Paris

British graffiti artist Banksy, known for his politically charged sketches on walls from London to New York to Gaza City, has descended on Paris, painting a series of murals that are sparking debate among residents and tourists. The satirical images, tackling issues such as migration and poverty, began popping up late last month. The secretive artist has since posted photographs of them on his Instagram account and added comments, confirming his authorship.

One mural, on a street in northern Paris where migrants often sleep rough, shows a black girl spray-painting pink wallpaper over a swastika. The painting has since been defaced to make it look like she is drawing the swastika herself. Others depict rats, a common Banksy motif, including one flying through the air on the back of a champagne cork, and a pair walking under a parasol near the Eiffel Tower. One of the most provocative, painted near the

Sorbonne, on the trendy Left Bank, shows a stern man with a hand-saw hidden behind his back offering a bone to a pleading dog that has had part of its front leg sawn off.

Vincent, the director of an art foundation in Paris, stopped to take a picture as he headed for lunch. "This painting is of an unspeakable cruelty which is representative of the times in which we live, times of wantonness," said the 49-year-old. "The man's stare is empty and cold, while the dog is weak and full of humanity. I think it is a clear representation of the European context and the migration crisis."

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the May 1968 uprisings, when French students and unionists mounted violent protests across Paris and its surrounding area, bringing much of the country to a standstill for weeks. Referencing the anniversary, Banksy painted a picture of a rat holding a stencil pen and wearing a bandana over its

face on the side of a building near the Pompidou Centre. Another showed a rat dressed as Mini Mouse perched on the numbers 1968.

While two of the nine murals have been defaced, most of the others have been covered by plexiglass to protect them. Banksy concluded his series with a mural on an emergency escape door to the Bataclan, the music venue where 89 people were shot dead by Islamist militants in November 2015. The image depicts a woman in mourning, wearing what looks like a hijab, the head scarf worn by Muslim women, although the picture also has echoes of Mother Theresa. "This one is my favorite," said an American tourist. "I can feel that her sadness is deep and palpable." — Reuters

Lifestyle | Features

CHIP LABOR: ROBOTS REPLACE WAITERS IN CHINA RESTAURANT

The little robotic waiter wheels up to the table, raises its glass lid to reveal a steaming plate of local Shanghai-style crayfish and announces in low, mechanical tones, "Enjoy your meal." The futuristic restaurant concept is the latest initiative in Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's push to modernize service and retail in a country where robotics and artificial intelligence are increasingly being integrated into commerce. Raising efficiency and lowering labor costs are the objectives at Alibaba's "Robot. He" diners, where waiters have been replaced by robots about the size of microwave ovens, which roll around the dining room on table-high runways.

pers fill their "carts" on a mobile app and have the merchandise brought to them at checkout via conveyor tracks on the ceiling, or delivered straight to their homes.

Alibaba now has 57 Hema markets in 13 Chinese cities, all of which will eventually feature the robotic restaurants. Industry experts say they serve more as showcases of Alibaba's tech prowess than a serious business model in a country where labor costs are relatively low. But the restaurants also typify the rapid adoption of new technologies in a country where the government is increasingly using facial-recognition technology to police streets and identify law-breakers.



This photo shows a man (right) taking pictures of robots at the ROBOT.HE restaurant in Shanghai. —AFP photos

restaurants by 2020 in which food will be prepared and served by robots.

JD.com and others are also working to incorporate airborne drones into their delivery networks. The movement could help companies reduce costs as growth rates in China's e-commerce boom begin to plateau.

"Before, everyone was all going for rapid expansion. Now the growth is gone and everyone has to focus on improving their operations," said Jason Ding, a China retail expert with Bain & Company.

"Operation is all about cutting costs and providing better service. So these automated machine technologies, in the right place, can play a role there." At Robot.He, customers book tables and order entrées via apps, and the diner's novelty often draws long queues.

Ma Yiwen, 33, brought nearly a dozen colleagues with her. "We are all foodies and we use our lunch time to try good food near our office. The idea of a robot delivering food to our table is very innovative so we wanted to see it ourselves," she said. The restaurant says automation helps keep costs down, an additional lure for 20-year-old customer Ma Shengpeng, who comes once a week.

"Normally for two to three people, a meal costs about 300-400 yuan, but here, all this table of food is just over 100 yuan," he said. Chinese AI advocates predict robots will someday perform a range of mundane duties as living standards rise, from delivery to sweeping floors and providing companionship, particularly as China's labor force has shrunk due to the recently relaxed one-child population control policy.

But it's a delicate issue for Chinese policy-makers due to the potential for human job losses, and the government is in the midst of a long-term push to develop the country's services industry partly as a job creator, as manufacturing increasingly becomes mechanized. Wang Hesheng, a robotics professor at Shanghai's Jiaotong University, said the cost of robots remains too high for widespread consumer use and that many companies were merely jumping



People eating food at ROBOT.HE restaurant in Shanghai.



A robot arm transferring food at ROBOT.HE restaurant in Shanghai.

"In Shanghai, a waiter costs up to 10,000 yuan (\$1,500) per month. That's hundreds of thousands in cost every year. And two shifts of people are needed," said Cao Haitao, the Alibaba product manager who developed the concept. "But we don't need two shifts for robots and they are on duty every day." The diners are attached to Alibaba's new Hema chain of semi-automated supermarkets, where grocery shop-

Automation nation
With digital payments via mobile phone already now rivaling cash for many purchases, growing numbers of pharmacies, bookstores and other retailers have dispensed with cashiers, allowing customers to order and pay for their desired merchandise, which is often handed over by a robot. Alibaba's e-commerce rival JD.com has announced plans to open 1,000



A staff member placing food on a robot at the ROBOT.HE restaurant in Shanghai.

on the government's high-tech bandwagon. But robotics could spread if China labor costs continue to grow, he said. "Maybe when labor costs rise higher and higher, robots will balance out with humans," he said. —AFP



A man walking into the ROBOT.HE restaurant in Shanghai.



A man getting food from a robot at the ROBOT.HE restaurant in Shanghai.



A QR code for payment on a smartphone and a receipt with booking information at the ROBOT.HE restaurant in Shanghai.



A woman booking a table by scanning a QR code with her smartphone at the entrance of the ROBOT.HE restaurant in Shanghai.



A man (right) getting food from a robot at the ROBOT.HE restaurant in Shanghai.

Minnelli auction fetches superstar prices



Singer Liza Minnelli arrives at the 86th Academy Awards. — Reuters

Liza Minnelli's signature "Cabaret" bowler hat, boots and halter top vest fetched \$81,250 at a Los Angeles auction, while her hand-annotated shooting script for the 1972 movie sold for \$15,000, organizers Profiles in History said on Wednesday. The three-day "Love, Liza" auction in Los Angeles, coming from the vast personal collection of the actress and singer, raised more than \$1.2 million, with some items selling for more than triple their pre-sale estimates.

The more than 1,700 lots included items belonging to Minnelli's parents - actress Judy Garland and film director Vincente Minnelli - and hundreds of the singer's hats, scarves and Halston designer outfits from the 1970s. Garland's blond Dorothy wig from "The Wizard of Oz," which was later replaced by simply brown braids, went for \$17,500 - 16 times the original estimate. Vincente Minnelli's photo collection spanning his film career fetched \$11,875.

Profiles in History declined to release information on the buyers. Memorabilia from "Cabaret," which brought Minnelli an Oscar for her performance as Berlin nightclub singer Sally Bowles and sent her career rocketing, attracted some of the fiercest bidding. Her shooting script for the musical was estimated to fetch just \$2,000 ahead of the sale, while her iconic boots and bowler hat costume had an estimate of \$6,000.

Minnelli, 72, said earlier this year that she wanted to downsize her life and sell off the collection she had amassed over decades and kept in more than six locations. "I woke up one day and thought, 'Honey, you ain't gonna wait till you've bought the farm and leave your life on someone else's doorstep.' So it was time to go there, and I have, and it feels good," she is quoted as saying in the auction catalog. — Reuters

'Make it so': Stewart to reprise Star Trek role

Actor Patrick Stewart delighted fans Saturday by boldly going back to his role as Jean-Luc Picard, which he said he will reprise in a new Star Trek series. The British actor, 78, said he would return to the iconic role during a surprise appearance at the annual Star Trek convention in Las Vegas, said "it is an unexpected but delightful surprise to find myself excited and invigorated to be returning to Jean-Luc Picard and to explore new dimensions with him."

"Seeking out a new life for him, when I thought that life was over." The new series, which the CBS All Access streaming service will carry, is to center on Picard's life post Star Trek: Next Generation. That series ran from 1987 to 1994 with 178 episodes, and spawned several films, the last in 2002. "I will always be very proud to have been a part of the Star Trek: The Next Generation, but when we wrapped that final movie in

the spring of 2002, I truly felt my time with Star Trek had run its natural course," Stewart said.

"It has been humbling to hear stories about how The Next Generation brought people comfort, saw them through difficult periods in their lives or how the example of Jean-Luc inspired so many to follow in his footsteps, pursuing science, exploration and leadership," he continued. "I feel I'm ready to return to him for the same reason - to research and experience what comforting and reforming light he might shine on these often dark times." Star Trek, a multi-billion-dollar cultural phenomenon beloved by fans worldwide, turns 50 years old in 2016. Details on the new series, including title or release date, remain under wraps. — AFP



In this file photo British actor Patrick Stewart arrives for the 90th Annual Academy Awards in Hollywood, California. — AFP



Itzel Suarez (left) and Angnel Perez Andrade, from San Bautista Tuxtepec, pose during a rehearsal for the Guelagueta traditional festival in Oaxaca, Mexico.



Itavivi Mendez (right) and Jesus Guzman, from Santiago Juchtlahuaca, rehearse the "Dance of the Blondes".



Luis Cardozo, from San Bartolo Coyotepec, poses during a rehearsal of the "Feather Dance". — AFP photos



Diana de Jesus Ramirez (left) and Erick Pacheco, from Loma Bonita, rehearse for the Guelagueta traditional festival.

IN SOUTHERN MEXICO, DANCING TO FORGET THE EARTHQUAKES

After the earthquake that devastated Juchitan in southern Mexico in September last year, Jorge Jimenez and his dance troupe sprang into action. The 8.2-magnitude quake—the most powerful ever recorded in the country—killed at least 96 people in the area. Entire families were buried, and the town hall was split in two. Streets were left strewn with debris, and residents had no water or electricity. "We helped to find survivors and distributed food," recalls Jimenez, the director of Juchitan de Zaragoza, a traditional dance troupe.

"Then after a while, we decided to dance because the population needed some distraction to overcome the shock." But the many festivities that are a usual part of life in the community were all cancelled in the wake of the earthquake. "We are still in mourning," says the 33-year-old Jimenez. The dancers nevertheless decided to go to Oaxaca, the capital of the state of the same name, to take part in Guelagueta, the biggest traditional Mexican festival. "We want to thank the country for its support" and proclaim "to the world that 'Juchitan lives, and long live Juchitan!'" Jimenez says.

'Deep cultural traditions'

The large Guelagueta gathering, which means "offering" in the native Zapotec language, was itself founded after an earthquake that devastated Oaxaca in 1931. Following the quake, locals decided to create a celebration bringing together the many local cultures "to pray to the Virgin and express solidarity," said Alfonso Martinez, the spokesman for Oaxaca state. Much more than just a festival, Guelagueta has been a must on the region's social calendar for 86 years, and showcases the variety and richness of what Martinez calls the country's "deep cultural traditions."

Every year, 30 troupes present their unique culture in a parade and performance before 12,000 spectators, dancing in colorful costumes—some with a pineapple or even a vase in hand, others wearing demon masks and cracking a whip. The event, broadcast on local television, has achieved great success, attracting more than 110,000 visitors to Oaxaca for the annual festivities. For the capital of the second-poorest Mexican state, the economic benefits are significant, estimated at over \$16 million, according to local authorities. The Guelagueta festival is also a link between the numerous communities, which are sometimes isolated in a mountainous state where agrarian conflicts sometimes lead to violence. On July 16, 13 people were killed in a clash between groups of farmers in the south of the state.

Traditional culture still alive

Participating in Guelagueta is a time-honored for the many communities of this region of four million inhabitants. The selection committee is made up of 10 former dancers whose average age is 75 — but whose judgment is sharp. "We traveled 29,000 kilometers (18,000 miles) last year," says Margarita, the 82-year-old chair of the selection committee, which is also known as the "authenticity committee." The committee

members roam remote villages and select the very best troupes. "We evaluate the quality of the dance, the clothing, the hairstyle, the chemistry between the couples," she says.

The stakes are high—if a certain community is not selected, its members sometimes go so far as to protest in the capital or complain to the media. "Participating is a great pride for us," says Nivardo, 34, the director of another troupe. The state of Oaxaca is home to "the most indigenous communities: 16 lan-



Jesus Guzman, from Santiago Juchtlahuaca, rehearses the "Dance of the Blondes".

“ These cheerful rhythms define us—it’s our culture ”



Ana Cinthia Quintana, from Asuncion Ixtaltepec, poses during a rehearsal for the Guelagueta traditional festival.



Ana Cinthia Quintana (left) and Antonio Perez, from Asuncion Ixtaltepec, pose during a rehearsal.



Regional dancers perform at the Guelagueta festival in Zaachila, Oaxaca, Mexico.

guages are listed," says Martinez. There is no question of wearing a redesigned dress, or introducing a dance inspired by Beyonce. Here, each costume tells a story.

A pattern on a dress "symbolizes the mountains that overlook the village," while embroidery can represent a river that crosses the hamlet, or even the underworld, says Nivardo. From an early age, children are immersed in their local culture. Some young people listen to hip-hop, but they never get away from their cultural roots, says Graciela, 31, a dancer from Santa Maria Tlahuitoltepec. "We learn music before we even know how to write," she says. "These cheerful rhythms define us—it's our culture." — AFP



Royer Pacheco (left) and Aranza Medina, from Ejutla de Crespo, rehearse for the Guelagueta traditional festival.



Regional dancers perform at the Guelagueta festival in Zaachila, Oaxaca, Mexico.



Guadalupe Hernandez (right) and Ruben Silva, from Santa Maria Huatulco, rehearse for the Guelagueta traditional festival.



Nizarindani Ruiz (left) and Nayely Chacon, from Villa de Zaachila, rehearse the "Feather Dance".



Alex Schenck carries a water bucket while fighting to save his home as the Ranch Fire tears down New Long Valley Rd near Clearlake Oaks, California on Saturday. The Ranch Fire is part of the Mendocino Complex, which is made up of two blazes, the River Fire and the Ranch Fire. — AFP

Refusing to be cowed, Somali opens first dairy

MOGADISHU: Starting a dairy in Mogadishu was not an obvious choice: Bombs go off with startling regularity, electricity is patchy and expensive and most Somalis don't even drink fresh cow's milk. But Abdulkadir Mohamed Salad, 40, who spent most of his life as a refugee in Britain where he worked for a dairy, is convinced the business can work in his home country, where cattle abound yet tons of powdered milk are imported every year. "It is very difficult to invest in a hostile environment like Somalia in the first place and secondly, people here know very little about the dairy business," Salad told AFP at his small factory, where a stainless steel machine pumped milk into blue sachets.

As a result of unsanitary handling of milk in the past, many in the country believe that cow's milk is dangerous for their health and prefer to drink camel milk or powdered milk. Salad left his country shortly after the fall of president Siad Barre's military regime in 1991 which plunged Somalia into civil war and anarchy, destroying state institutions and the economy. He worked as a taxi driver before getting a job at a dairy in Leicester. His wife and three children remained behind in the United Kingdom as he returned to try and start a business in his home country.

Surprised by the amount of cattle in the country, and the fact that aside from a few farmers selling raw, untreated milk, there was no proper factory treating the product, he and two colleagues decided to set up their own, called Irman Dairy, in 2017. "Livestock is one of the economic resources of Somalia ... but tons of powdered milk are imported every year while our resources are wasted here, and few are benefiting," said Salad.

Located in southern Mogadishu, Irman has to contend with the constant security challenges in the capital, which affects both production and distribution. The city is hit by regular car and suicide bombings by the Al-Qaeda-linked Shabaab group which has been fighting to overthrow the government for over a decade. Sometimes their small distribution van, brightly painted with a giant cow on the side, returns without having delivered anything, due to road closures when there is an attack or security concerns.

"There are days when we don't start the factory because of the security situation in town, this affects our business since we have staff and need to pay their salaries and other administration costs," said Salad. "The production capacity of our factory is 10,000 litres per day, but we can only produce 2,000 litres a day currently because of constraints, including the lack of a market," he said.

The factory's owners have on several occasions considered throwing in the towel, especially because of the high cost of electricity. However, this problem was solved when the company received a donation of a solar energy system under a US-funded project to encourage entrepreneurship. "We are very lucky that we got the solar system to run the factory now, otherwise we could have closed it down because energy is big issue here," said Salad.

Irman distributes to various supermarkets in the city,

selling each 500-millilitre sachet of milk for one dollar. "Some members in my family think fresh cow milk is not good for your health and they instead consume powdered milk," said Abdurahman Ali, who was buying a sachet at a local supermarket. "But for the past few months I have been using the milk produced by Irman Dairy and I really like it, now my whole family has grown to like it." Sayid Ali, who owns a supermarket in Mogadishu said he was happy to finally have locally produced milk on his shelves. "We used to sell milk from various brands imported from outside the country but now we also have Irman Dairy produced locally, the

number of people who are interested is also increasing," he said.

Despite being one of the most dangerous capitals in the world, new businesses have been popping up all over Mogadishu in recent years with both local traders and members of the diaspora opening supermarkets and small factories. Most commodities are imported. "The government needs to encourage local production otherwise there will not be local investors like the Irman Dairy, my family is now using this fresh milk which I know is coming from our local cows," said Omar Ahmed, a Somali politician. — AFP



MOGADISHU: A worker prepares dairy products at the Irman milk factory on the outskirts of Mogadishu on July 13, 2018. — AFP

Indonesians and Joko go loco...

Continued from Page 1

Organizers hope to break the world record for the largest number of people performing the traditional dance in one place and said 65,000 people took part in Jakarta. "Poco-poco is the original culture of Indonesia and it's a native dance, so we are now performing a mass Poco-poco dance with 65,000 people setting the world record show-

ing and reiterating Poco-poco belongs to Indonesia," police chief Tito Karnavian who took part in the event said.

Police and military staff, members of parliament, students, members of fitness centers as well as 120,000 inmates in more than 500 jails across Indonesia all showed their best poco-poco moves at the same time. "This is a very good opportunity to show that Indonesia is conserving its traditions," high school student Raja Farid Akbar said. "I am happy that I can help promote a tradition that could have been forgotten." About 11,000 athletes and 5,000 officials from 45 Asian countries are expected to flock to Jakarta and Palembang for the Aug 18 to Sept 2 Games, the world's biggest multi-sport event behind the Olympics. — AFP

US denies role as Maduro escapes...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, a policeman who requested anonymity told AFP that drones may have been released from a nearby apartment that suffered a fire after one exploded. However, other accounts attributed the fire to the accidental explosion of a gas cylinder.

Late on Saturday, a civilian and military rebel group calling itself the "National Movement of Soldiers in T-shirts" claimed responsibility in a statement passed to US-based opposition journalist Patricia Poleo, who read it on her YouTube channel. "We cannot tolerate that the population is suffering from hunger, that the sick do not have medicine, that the currency has no value, or that the education system neither educates nor teaches, only indoctrinating communism," said the statement, accusing the regime of having "made public office an obscene way to get rich."

Maduro, though, blamed neighboring Colombia: "I have no doubt that the name Juan Manuel Santos is behind this attack." Santos, a Nobel Peace Prize winner who negotiated a historic peace accord with Marxist guerrillas FARC, is due to hand over power to the hard-line right-wing Ivan Duque, a vocal critic of Venezuela's regime, tomorrow. The Colombian foreign ministry denied involvement, saying the allegations were "absurd" and "lacked any foundation".

Maduro said investigations pointed to financial backers who "live in the United States, in the state of

Florida. I hope that President Donald Trump is ready to fight these terrorist groups". Speaking on "Fox News Sunday", Bolton said that if Venezuela had "hard information" of a potential violation of US law, "we will take a serious look at it".

Elsewhere, Maduro's allies Cuba and Bolivia condemned the incident. In a statement, the Russia foreign ministry said: "We are convinced that settling political differences must be carried out exclusively in a peaceful and democratic way." Iran's foreign ministry decried "a step towards causing instability and insecurity in Venezuela," while Syria called for "respect of the country's sovereignty and no interference in its internal affairs."

The parade Maduro attended marked the one-year anniversary of the Constitutional Assembly, a legislative body packed with loyalists that arrogated powers from the opposition-ruled National Assembly. Maduro has remained in power in oil-rich Venezuela despite a collapsing economy and a long-running political crisis. Hundreds of thousands have fled due to food and medicine shortages and hyperinflation that could reach one million percent this year, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Maduro, a 55-year-old former bus driver, has effectively sidelined the fractured opposition through control of the courts and the electoral body - and unflinching support from the military, which holds key posts in his government. After Saturday's explosion, he ordered the military to be on "maximum alert". Maduro often accuses the opposition and the United States of working together to foment a "coup" to topple him. This year he brought forward to May presidential elections - boycotted by the opposition - which handed him a new six-year term. — AFP

Hackathon seeks high-tech fixes...

Continued from Page 1

laptops to design an app for paramedics to speedily reach people in need of medical attention using geo-tracking technology. If multiple emergencies arise at once, the women hoped their app would help prioritize the most pressing cases.

Two Pakistani professionals paired up with two East Asian students to develop a "virtual leash" application to locate relatives lost in the sea of humanity by using Bluetooth wristbands. Four Saudi men sought to design sensors for garbage bins that would alert cleaners when they are full to avert any hygiene scare. And another group of Saudi women scrawled algorithms and programming codes on a whiteboard to design an app to help non-Arabic speakers translate instructions into multiple languages without an Internet connection.

With nearly 3,000 programmers - who ate and slept at the venue - organizers said Saudi Arabia had broken the Guinness World Record for the largest number of participants at a hackathon. While their solutions are still untested, the event, which ended on Friday and offered cash prizes of around two million riyals (\$533,000), was billed as an invention marathon by organizers. "We aim to upgrade the experience of hajj for all pilgrims from all over the world," said Nouf Al-Rakan, chief executive of the Saudi Federation for Cyber Security and Programming, which organized the event. "This (hackathon) will enrich that experience, will give us plenty of solutions and ideas that we can actually adapt and invest in," she told AFP.

Saudi Arabia's custodianship of Makkah and Madinah

- Islam's two holiest sites - is seen as the kingdom's most powerful form of political legitimacy. But a series of deadly disasters over the years have prompted criticism of the kingdom's management of the annual pilgrimage, most notably from archival and Shiite powerhouse Iran. In Sept 2015, a stampede killed up to 2,300 worshippers - including hundreds of Iranians - in the worst disaster ever to strike the pilgrimage. Earlier that month, 100 people were killed when a construction crane toppled into a courtyard of Makkah's Grand Mosque.

"I imagine the Saudi authorities are very anxious to avoid a repeat of past mishaps that could reflect badly on the 'modernizing' narrative around Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman," said Kristian Ulrichsen, a fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute in the US. Prince Mohammed's Vision 2030 reform plan seeks to shift the economy of Saudi Arabia - the world's top crude exporter - away from oil dependency towards other sources of revenue, including religious tourism. The scheme for the post-oil era aims to draw six million hajj pilgrims annually. Additionally, the kingdom hopes to attract another 30 million pilgrims to umrah, a lesser pilgrimage to Makkah that can be completed during the rest of the year.

Last October, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund announced plans to set up two investment companies to develop infrastructure in Makkah and Madinah, in a bid to accommodate the increasing numbers of Muslim pilgrims. Last year's hajj passed without major health or safety upsets, but a politicization of the hajj remains a concern amid regional rivalries. Saudi Arabia and its allies are also embroiled in a political boycott of neighboring Qatar, which denies accusations of fostering close ties with Iran and backing extremism. "For the Saudi ruling elite, its custodianship of the two holy sites is arguably more sensitive this year in the wake of the heightened tension in the region," Ulrichsen said. — AFP

Sports

Astros hit 3 HRs in 14-0 blowout of LA Dodgers

Martinez, Eovaldi lead Red Sox past sinking Yankees

LOS ANGELES: Marwin Gonzalez had a solo home run in the second inning and Josh Reddick added a three-run homer in a seven-run eighth as the visiting Houston Astros rolled to a 14-0 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers on Saturday night. Jake Marisnick tacked on a ninth-inning homer, while Yulieski Gurriel and Martin Maldonado each had two-run doubles as Astros won the first two games of the 2017 World Series rematch. They will try for a three-game sweep on Sunday afternoon.

The Dodgers have scored just one run with seven hits in the two games against the Astros, after collecting 21 runs with 18 hits in a victory Thursday against the Milwaukee Brewers. The Dodgers have not scored in 17 consecutive innings. The Astros improved to a major league-best 39-17 on the road, while winning their fourth consecutive game following a five-game losing streak. Astros starter Lance McCullers pitched well, but left after four innings following a visit from a member of the Houston medical staff. He was diagnosed with right elbow discomfort.

Red Sox 4, Yankees 1

JD Martinez homered over the Green Monster, Nathan Eovaldi pitched eight scoreless innings and Boston survived a rough outing by closer Craig Kimbrel to hold on for a victory over visiting New York. The Red Sox won for the 22nd time in 27 games and moved a season-high 8 1/2 games ahead of the Yankees. They have outscored the Yankees 23-9 in winning the first three games of the series. The Yankees have lost a season-high four straight games. Martinez hit his major league-leading 33rd homer in the fourth inning and gave the Red Sox a 3-0 lead when he lifted a 1-1 fastball from Yankees rookie Chance Adams (0-1) over the left-field fence. Martinez's latest homer upped his major league-leading RBI total to 91.

Phillies 8, Marlins 3

Zach Eflin pitched a season-high eight innings, and Philadelphia supported him with four home runs to defeat visiting Miami. Eflin (8-3) gave up three runs, four hits and no walks while striking out six. Nick Williams hit a three-run homer in the first inning. Asdrubal Cabrera and Cesar Hernandez each added two-run blasts, and Carlos Santana chipped in with a solo shot in the Phillies' fourth straight win. Marlins starter Jose Urena (3-11) gave up six runs, eight hits (including three of the home runs), and two walks while striking out three in five innings. Miguel Rojas hit a two-run blast and Justin Bour added a solo homer for the Marlins.

Reds 7, Nationals 1 (Game 1)

Phillip Ervin hit a three-run homer and drove in four overall, and Anthony DeSclafani threw seven strong innings as Cincinnati won at Washington in the first game of a day-night doubleheader. Ervin's three-run homer gave the Reds an early 4-0 lead and was his first this season. He finished 2-for-2 with those four RBIs, two walks and two runs scored. Brandon Dixon also homered (his second this year) and drove in two runs for the Reds, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Washington starter Gio Gonzalez (6-8) never found his way. The left-hander allowed six runs (five earned) on 10 hits in 3 2/3 innings and struggled with his command throughout—a big reason Gonzalez threw 94 pitches in less than four frames.

Nationals 6, Reds 2 (Game 2)

Matt Adams homered and knocked in two runs, and Anthony Rendon and Wilmer Difo each added two RBIs as Washington defeated visiting Cincinnati and earned a split of its day-night doubleheader. Adams (2-for-3), Rendon (3-for-5) and Difo (2-for-4) led the way on offense as each knocked in two runs. Juan Soto also helped by going 2-for-4 with three runs scored.

Nationals star outfielder Bryce Harper was pulled in the top of the seventh after being hit on the right leg/shin by an Austin Brice pitch in the sixth. Harper appeared to be limping or in pain while running for Mason Williams' double that started the seventh, and manager Davey Martinez replaced him with Adam Eaton.

Diamondbacks 9, Giants 3

Shortstop Nick Ahmed had three hits, including his second career two-homer game, and four RBIs, while Steven Souza Jr. doubled, tripled and drove in three runs as Arizona beat visiting San Francisco. Ahmed scored three runs, Ketel Marte had two hits, including a homer, and Paul Goldschmidt also had two hits as the Diamondbacks won for the third time in four games and sixth time in their last eight. Andrew McCutchen had five hits, including a homer and two RBIs, and Steven Duggar hit his first career homer for the Giants, who have lost two in a row after winning four straight.

A's 2, Tigers 1

Matt Chapman and Khris Davis homered, and host Oakland continued to dominate punchless Detroit. Edwin Jackson (3-2) gave up one unearned run on five hits in 6 1/3 innings while collecting the victory. Blake Treinen pitched the ninth and recorded his 28th save for the Athletics, who have won five straight during their sustained push for a playoff spot. Detroit is 0-6 against the Athletics this season after dropping the first two games of the series, including a 1-0, 13-inning loss on Friday. Dating back to last season, the Tigers have lost 11 straight to Oakland.

Cardinals 8, Pirates 4

Jedd Gyorko and Jose Martinez each hit two doubles and combined for four RBIs, and Matt Carpenter homered as visiting St. Louis won at Pittsburgh. The Cardinals broke a 4-4 tie with two runs in the fifth and another in the sixth, all against reliever Alex McRae (0-1), making his second major league appearance. The teams have split the first two games of the series and have identical 57-54 records, tied for third in the National League Central. David Freese homered and Adam Frazier hit a two-run double for the Pirates.

Blue Jays 5, Mariners 1

Marco Estrada allowed one hit in seven-plus innings as Toronto won at Seattle. Estrada (5-8) took a no-hitter into the seventh before Mitch Haniger doubled with one out. The right-hander walked two and struck out four. Aledmys Diaz hit a home run for the Blue Jays, who have won the first three games of the series and will go for the sweep Sunday afternoon. The Mariners, who matched their season-high with their fifth consecutive loss, had only one baserunner through the first six innings as Nelson Cruz walked on a 3-2 pitch leading off the second.

Mets 3, Braves 0

Zack Wheeler continued his resurgence, as the right-hander earned his fourth straight win by tossing seven scoreless innings as New York beat visiting Atlanta. The Mets ended a four-game losing streak and won for only the second time in eight games. The Braves had their five-game winning streak snapped and fell 1 1/2 games behind the Philadelphia Phillies in the National League East. Wheeler (6-6), whose name was bandied about in rumors leading up to Tuesday's trade deadline, allowed just three hits and issued one walk while striking out nine. The Braves only got one runner beyond first base against Wheeler, whose winning streak is the longest by a Mets pitcher since Jacob deGrom won eight straight starts last season.

Indians 3, Angels 0

Corey Kluber threw a three-hit shutout to lead



LOS ANGELES: Tyler White #13 of the Houston Astros hits a two RBI double past a diving Chris Taylor #3 of the Los Angeles Dodgers in the sixth inning at Dodger Stadium on August 4, 2018. — AFP

Cleveland to victory over visiting Los Angeles. It was Kluber's second complete game of the season and his first shutout, and he finished strong by retiring the final 10 batters he faced. He struck out seven and walked one while making 98 pitches, and improved to 14-6, tied for the American League lead in victories. Angels starter Felix Pena matched Kluber zero for zero through five innings. Though he walked the first two batters of the game and another in the fourth, he didn't allow a hit through five innings. But Pena allowed a leadoff homer to Leonys Martin to begin the sixth as part of a decisive two-run inning.

Brewers 8, Rockies 4

Travis Shaw hit a grand slam as part of a six-run first inning and Milwaukee beat visiting Colorado. Hernan Perez and Ryan Braun also homered while Freddy Peralta continued his mastery of Colorado with another strong outing. Peralta (5-2) gave up two runs on two hits and struck out eight in six innings. Milwaukee has won two straight to keep pace with first-place Chicago in the NL Central. Trevor Story homered twice for Colorado, which has lost four straight after going 17-6 in July.

White Sox 2, Rays 1

Tim Anderson scored from second base when third baseman Matt Duffy threw wildly to first on Leury Garcia's bunt single in the ninth inning, sending visiting Chicago to a win at Tampa Bay, spoiling All-Star Blake Snell's return from the disabled list. Carlos Rodon limited the Rays to one unearned run in six innings and three relievers pitched hitless ball the rest of the way, allowing the White Sox to record a second straight one-run win in the three-game series. Snell, out since July 12 because of fatigue in his left (throwing) shoulder, went the first four innings after being reinstated from the disabled list. He held the White Sox to one run and three hits. He walked two and struck out three in his 59-pitch outing.

Cubs 5, Padres 4

Kyle Schwarber and Anthony Rizzo homered during

a five-run second inning, and Cubs relievers retired 10 straight to end the game as Chicago held on for a second straight game to defeat visiting San Diego. Walker Lockett (0-2) allowed six hits and all five runs in the Cubs second to take the loss. In the other four innings he worked, Lockett allowed no runs on three hits and two walks. With the wind blowing out, Schwarber opened the second with his 20th homer of the season, a full-count line drive to right-center to break a scoreless game. Rizzo then homered in a second straight game, his drive to center making it 4-0 on his 17th homer of the season.

Twins 8, Royals 2

Max Kepler hit a go-ahead two-run homer in the fourth inning, Jose Berrios pitched seven effective innings and Minnesota beat visiting Kansas City. After the Twins inducted left-hander Johan Santana in their Hall of Fame in a pregame ceremony, Kepler produced his fourth three-hit game of the season and 12th of his career. He sandwiched two singles around his 14th homer, a drive to right field off Burch Smith (1-3) that put Minnesota ahead 3-2. Berrios (11-8) allowed three runs on five hits, all singles, and completed seven innings for the 12th time. The right-hander struck out six, walked three and improved to 17-3 at home since the start of last season. Eddie Rosario reached 20 homers for the second straight season for the Twins.

Rangers 3, Orioles 1

Joey Gallo spoiled Dylan Bundy's Southwest homecoming with a two-run home run, sending Texas to victory over visiting Baltimore. Left-hander Mike Minor (8-6), who couldn't get out of the third inning in a loss at Baltimore last month, won a pitchers' duel over Bundy after the Rangers had slugged their way to 17-8 and 11-3 victories in the first two games of the four-game series. Bundy (7-10), the Gatorade National Athlete of the Year as a senior in 2011 at Owasso High near Tulsa, was making his first major-league start at the site about 250 miles from his childhood home. He allowed seven hits in six innings, one being Gallo's 29th home run of the season.— Reuters

Paris hosts Gay Games

PARIS: Athletes from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Russia were among the thousands of people who convened in Paris on Saturday for the opening ceremonies of the 10th Gay Games, which aim to raise awareness about gay and transgender rights. Over 12,700 participants from 91 countries are expected during the one-week contest, which features a variety of athletes - young and old, male and female, straight and gay.

Fifty-eight sportspeople are from Russia, which in 2013 passed a law banning "propaganda for non-traditional sexual relations," while one athlete holds a passport from Saudi Arabia, where homosexuality is punishable by death. Egypt and other Muslim countries where gays have been arrested and sent to jail will also be represented in one of the 36 sporting disciplines, spanning from soccer to swimming, volleyball and sailing.

France itself has been grappling with a recent surge in anti-gay acts as it eyes legalizing assisted reproduction for gay women in 2019 - a campaign promise by centrist French President Emmanuel Macron. According to French gay rights charity SOS

Homophobie, the number of physical attacks due to homophobia jumped by 15 percent from 2016 to 2017. The country legalized same-sex marriage in 2013, after a bitter and divisive debate in which some former conservative members of Macron's current left-and-right government opposed the legislation.

Economic gains

Gay Games organizers have said they expected the gains for the local economy to amount to 58 million euros (\$67 million). The event has received broad support from the French government, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo and is sponsored by several large corporations including the country's largest bank BNP Paribas, carmaker Renault and General Electric.

The opening ceremony on Saturday night will take place in Jean Bouin stadium in western Paris, featuring circus and dancing shows, as well as Ada Vox, the first drag queen finalist in US singing competition series "American Idol." Paris was selected in 2012 over seven cities including Amsterdam, London and Rio de Janeiro to host the games, held every four years since they debuted in 1982 in San Francisco. The Federation of Gay Games (FGG) selected Hong Kong for the 11th edition of the event last year, over 17 cities that included Tel Aviv, Cape Town and several large US cities.— Reuters

Kenya dominate African women's 10,000

ASABA, Nigeria: Commonwealth Games silver medalist Stacy Ndiwa led a 1-2 Kenyan sweep in the women's 10,000 for her country's fifth gold medal at the African Championships in Asaba, Nigeria on Saturday. Ndiwa outdistanced compatriot Alice Nawowuna on the final lap to win in a lifetime best 31 minutes, 17 seconds. Defending champion Nawowuna took silver in 31:36.12. "We decided to work together so we could break away from the others, because we weren't sure about their kick," the 25-year-old Ndiwa told IAAF.com. "I didn't have a good kick there so I've been working a lot on my speed since then. It paid off."

African indoor record holder Hugues Zango of Burkina Faso pulled a surprise in the men's triple jump, bounding a lifetime best 17.11 meters to outdistance South Africa's Godfrey Mokoena (16.83m), and Antonio Alkana of South Africa repeated as African champion in the 110m hurdles, winning in 13.51 seconds. Nigeria's Kelechi Nwanaga (women's javelin, 56.96m), Egypt's Mostafa Al Gamal (hammer throw, 73.50) and Tunisia's Mohamed Romdhana (pole vault, 5.20m) also won gold medals.

South African Olympic and world champion Caster Semenya eased through the heats of the women's 800m, finishing second to



ASABA, Nigeria: Kenyan Winnie Chebet (right) placed first to clinch gold followed by silver medalist, Moroccan Aarfi Rababe (center) and bronze medalist, Moroccan Malika Akkoui in the Women's 1500 meter final at the ongoing Africa Athletics Championship at the Stephen Keshi Stadium in Asaba, Delta State. — AFP

Uganda's Winnie Nanyondo. Semenya, who on Friday set a national 400m record, clocked 2:02.90 to Nanyondo's 2:02.66. The South African will be seeking her 27th consecutive 800m finals victory on Sunday. Her last loss at the distance came in 2015. Ivory Coast's Marie Josee Ta Lou, already the African 100m cham-

pion, led semi-finalists in the women's 200m in 23.34 seconds and Zimbabwe's Tatenda Tumba was the fastest in the men's semis in 20.72. The championships ended yesterday with winners throughout the five-day competition qualifying for next month's Continental Cup in Ostrava, Czech Republic.— Reuters

Sports

Alvarez shocks Kovalev in 7th round to claim title

Unbeaten Alvarez captures light heavyweight title

NEW YORK: Unbeaten Eleider Alvarez stunned Sergey Kovalev on Saturday, knocking the Russian champion down three times in the seventh round to capture the World Boxing Organization light heavyweight title. Alvarez hit Kovalev with a powerful combination that sent him to the canvas for the final knockdown of the fight at 2:45 of the seventh to give the Colombian his first world title. "I just can't describe how I feel," Alvarez said. "I wanted to show him that I am strong, I have a good chin and am ready for big things."

The 35-year-old Kovalev was trying to re-establish his dominance in the light heavyweight division in his first real boxing test since losing in back-to-back fights to Andre Ward in November 2016 and June 2017. Kovalev was the more aggressive of the two boxers and was winning the majority of the rounds heading into the seventh. But then he let his guard down and Alvarez seized the opportunity to land a barrage of heavy punches and go on to win the fight in one of the biggest boxing upsets of the year. He knocked Kovalev down the first time with an overhand right to the side of the head and the second time with a left hook and a straight right to the forehead. He then finished him off with a right hook and left uppercut combination and at that point the referee stepped in with 15 seconds before the bell in front of a crowd of 5,600 at the Hard Rock Hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Kovalev was taken to the hospital after the fight to receive medical treatment. "I feel OK. Thank you everyone, thank you very much to all the fans around the world for your

support," Kovalev said. "I love you, and I'm fine." It may have hurt Kovalev that his two most recent fights - after losing his titles to Ward - were victories over weak opponents. With this loss he drops to a record of 32-3-1, while Alvarez, who is based in Montreal, Canada, improved to 24-0 with 12 knockouts.

Seized the moment

The opportunity to win his first title is something the heavy underdog Alvarez, 34, has been awaiting for a long time. The 2008 Colombian Olympian had to go through plenty of adversity to finally become a boxing champion. He was the mandatory challenger for WBC titleholder Adonis Stevenson for more than two years.

But Stevenson kept side stepping Alvarez and that left him with the next best option: to make a fight with the dangerous power puncher Kovalev. Kovalev displayed some of that might early in the bout but Alvarez waited patiently for his chance, biding his time with a steady right jab, then unleashing the more vicious shots in the seventh round. The ending was all the more shocking as Alvarez was not known for his punching power coming into the fight. "We slowed him a bit and I felt his punches weren't as hard as they were at the beginning of the fight," Alvarez said. "That was a two-punch knockout. We practiced that punch in training camp."

Meanwhile, the result derails plans for a light heavyweight unification bout between Kovalev and Dmitry Bivol, who retained his World Boxing Association belt with a unanimous decision over Isaac Chilemba on the



NEW JERSEY: Eleider Alvarez (left) and Sergey Kovalev exchange punches during the WBO/IBA Light Heavyweight Title bout at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City in Atlantic City. — AFP

same card. Bivol controlled the early and middle rounds but seemed to tire near the end as Chilemba started to win some rounds. Bivol did enough to win but failed to

get the knockout that many had predicted before the fight. One judge scored the fight 116-112 for Bivol, while the other two had it 120-108. — AFP

Phatlum retains one-stroke lead at British Open

LYTHAM ST ANNES: Thailand's Pornanong Phatlum finished the third round as she started it, with a one-stroke lead at the Women's British Open in Lancashire on Saturday. Phatlum carded a composed three-under-par 69 at Royal Lytham & St. Annes, while England's Georgia Hall matched the score by sinking a 10-foot birdie at the last. Phatlum, who has never won in nearly a decade on the LPGA Tour, will head into Sunday's final round at 13-under 203. Hall is alone in second place on 12 under, with former women's world number one Ryu So-yeon of South Korean on 11 under after a 67. Australian Minjee Lee and Japan's Mamiko Higa both bogeyed the last to card 71 and slip three strokes off the pace, where they were joined by South Korean Park Sung-hyun (69).

Fiji title - India's Bhullar

In another development, India's Gaganjeet Bhullar chipped in from off the green to record an eagle on the 17th hole to propel himself to a one-shot victory in the Fiji International over Australia's Anthony Quayle at the Natadola Bay Championship Golf Course on Sunday. The 30-year-old's eagle gave him the lead over the Queenslander, who shot an impressive nine-under 63 while playing with South African great Ernie Els. Bhullar made par on the final hole, leaving his birdie putt a matter of inches short, to finish with a six-under 66 and 14-under total of 274 to give him his ninth win on the Asian tour. Quayle finished on 275, while Els shot a seven-under 65 to tie for third with New Zealand's Ben Campbell. Both finished on 12-under 276.

"I was in basically the same place on day two and the flag was on the same side of the green so I had a little bit of an idea that the chip would run a lot," Bhullar said of the tournament-winning shot on the par-five 17th. "It wasn't an easy chip. I could have settled for an up and down ... but I knew that I would need to go birdie-birdie to have a chance to push for a playoff. 'I think the chip in ... closed the deal.'" Bhullar had held a one-stroke lead heading into the final round and started solidly with three birdies in his first four holes but then said he was struggling as he approached the turn in difficult, windy conditions.

Despite making his fourth birdie of the round on the par-five ninth, he was forced to save par on the 10th hole that he felt arrested what could have been a slide downhill on the back nine. "Things were a little bit tough for me but I managed to make a really good par save on 10 and that gave me a really big boost and a lot of confidence," he said. "After that it was just one shot at a time." The right-hander, who has also won nine titles on the Indian Tour, then sunk his fifth birdie on the 13th before his chip on 17 gave him the one-stroke cushion over Quayle. "I knew somebody would go low," Bhullar said.

Barracuda Championship

Also, Andrew Putnam stayed aggressive for a second straight day to surge to the top of the leaderboard at the Barracuda Championship in Reno on Saturday. Putnam finished with back-to-back birdies to seize control with a total of 38 points in the modified Stableford event. The format awards eight points for an albatross, five for eagle, two for birdie, none for par, and subtracts a point for bogey and three for double-bogeys or worse. Putnam, three points clear of fellow American Sam Saunders who made a pair of eagles on his back nine, will be looking for his first ever PGA Tour victory.

He held a share of the 54-hole lead with world number one Dustin Johnson at the FedEx St Jude Classic in June. Putnam stumbled to a final-round 72 while Johnson won with a 66. "That will be important, having that experience," Putnam told reporters. —Agencies

Dovizioso wins duel of Ducatis in Brno

BRNO: Italian Andrea Dovizioso celebrated his 100th race for Ducati by holding off teammate Jorge Lorenzo to claim his second win of the season at the Czech MotoGP in Brno yesterday. Dovizioso had the Spaniard 0.178sec behind him at the line with defending world champion and series leader Marc Marquez (Honda) third at 0.368. Italian veteran Valentino Rossi (Yamaha) finished fourth at nearly three seconds behind after enjoying a strong start from second in the grid behind Dovizioso. Dovizioso, 32, started on pole position for the first time since 2016. By the end of a thrilling race held in sweltering temperatures, Dovizioso handed Ducati their first win in Brno since Australian Casey Stoner in 2007.

Notably missing from the top five finishers during the past five editions in Brno, Dovizioso capitalized on his strong start to stay at the head of the pack for most of his near 42-minute spell on the circuit. At first put under pressure by Rossi before the Italian veteran dropped off the pace, Dovizioso kept his composure during the crucial, final laps where he held firm to keep challenges by Lorenzo and Marquez at bay. "I really didn't expect to be so fast today," said Dovizioso, who also claimed victory in the season-opener at Qatar. "I'm very happy for the whole team." Marquez's third place means he remains top of the standings on 181 points and a 49-point lead on Rossi and 68 on Dovizioso. "It's good," said Marquez. "I need to finish all the races now, this is the key." He added: "I was happy with my speed, I could follow Dovey ... but the problem is fighting against the Ducati guys. They have such a strong acceleration." Portugal's Miguel Oliveira, on a KTM, claimed his sec-



BRNO: Andrea Dovizioso of Italy (right) leads a pack during the MotoGP competition of the Grand Prix at Masaryk Circuit yesterday in Brno, Czech Republic. — AFP

ond win of the season to take command of the Moto 2 series lead. Oliveira started from fourth on the grid but after a thrilling duel with Luca Marini (Kalex), who started on pole, the Portuguese got his nose over the finish line to beat the Italian by just 0.070secs.

Another Italian, Francesco Bagnaia (Kalex), was third at 0.525. In the Moto 3 category, Italian Fabio Di Giannantonio, riding a Honda, held off Spaniard Aron Canet

to claim his maiden professional win. Di Giannantonio, 19, started fifth "but pushed his bike all the way" on his way to beating teammate Canet by 0.112sec. Czech racer Jakub Kornfeil (KTM), who had started on pole, finished third. Italian Marco Bezzecchi (KTM), who finished sixth, now leads the standings after 10 races with a three-point lead on Spain's Jorge Martin, who pulled out on Friday due to a fracture in his left hand. — AFP

Redemption for Japan's history-maker Momota

NANJING: Kento Momota dedicated his world title yesterday to those who stuck by him when a gambling scandal threatened to wreck the history-maker's budding career. The explosive 23-year-old convincingly defeated China's highly promising Shi Yuqi 21-11, 21-13 in Nanjing, becoming the first Japanese man to win the World Championships. Carolina Marin claimed her own slice of history as the Spaniard became the first woman to win three badminton world crowns with an emphatic victory over PV Sindhu of India. Momota's career descended into controversy in 2016 when Japanese badminton chiefs suspended him for more than a year for visiting an illegal casino, denying him a place at the Rio Olympics.

Momota, number two in the world at the time, has been working his way back to the top ever since and was the pre-tournament favorite in Nanjing. After dismissing Shi, Momota was coy about his temporary absence from the sport, but said after a pause: "There was a time when I was away. 'But I got a lot of help and support from many people, this title is a good reward for them.'" Momota, now seventh in the rankings, said he wanted to emulate greats Lee Chong Wei and Lin Dan, two super stars who have reigned over badminton for well over a decade. Lee missed the tournament because of illness and Lin was well beaten by Shi in the third round.

"They have had long and successful careers and like them, I want to give the audience enjoyment," said Momota, whose championship-winning point was a huge anti-climax—the shuttlecock hitting the top of the net before falling in his favor. The Japanese immediately apologized to Shi, who was playing in front of his home-province crowd and appeared nervous, making numerous errors. The third seed, 22, defeated compatriots Lin and Olympic champion Chen Long on the way to the final to confirm a changing of the guard in Chinese men's badminton. "That is why they call me the



NANJING: Kento Momota of Japan hits a shot against Shi Yuqi of China in the men's singles final during the badminton World Championships in Nanjing, Jiangsu province yesterday. — AFP

hope of Chinese badminton, but I need to improve on all fronts," he said modestly.

More heartbreak for Sindhu

There were tears of joy from the 25-year-old Marin after her victory over the unfortunate Sindhu in the women's final. The aggressive Marin is now the reigning world and Olympic champion thanks to a ruthless 21-19, 21-10 win. The all-action Spaniard adds the 2018 world crown to her titles in 2014 and 2015, and the Olympic gold she won at Sindhu's expense at Rio 2016. "I feel really happy, I cannot describe my emotions now, I have so many inside," said Marin, who was imperious all week despite being a modest seventh in the seedings. Third seed Sindhu, 23, well known for her never-say-die spirit, has now suffered a string of near-misses.

As well as disappointment at Rio, Sindhu was beaten in last year's World Championships final by Japan's Nozomi Okuhara and had to settle for silver at this year's Commonwealth Games too. Sindhu said she could not live with the pace of Marin. "She has that speed. Today she started fast and I was prepared for everything," said the Indian, who owes her athleticism to volleyball-playing parents. She described another finals defeat as "frustrating and quite sad". "But I need to come back stronger," she said. Aside from Marin, Japan and China dominated the last day of action. —AFP

Kuznetsova mauls Petkovic to breeze into the WTA final

WASHINGTON: Former champion Svetlana Kuznetsova dropped just four games to reach her first WTA final in over a year as the Russian defeated Germany's Andrea Petkovic 6-2 6-2 in the semi-finals of the Citi Open in Washington on Saturday. Kuznetsova, the former world number two, said she was surprised how well she played as she continues to comeback from last November's wrist surgery. "I didn't expect such a good result so fast, because I haven't been playing so well after my injury, after my surgery, so it took me some time to get back," Kuznetsova, who was injured at last year's US Open, told WTAennis.com.

"I did some good preparation before this tournament, and I'm feeling great."

Kuznetsova, who won the Washington tournament in 2014, will meet Donna Vekic in Sunday's final. Vekic turned back China's Saisai Zheng 7-5 6-3. Both winners endured long days as they were forced to play quarter-final matches earlier on Saturday in the rain-hampered tournament. Kuznetsova turned back Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan 6-2 6-2 while Vekic knocked off Magda Linette 6-1 7-6(0). Petkovic got off to a quick start in her semi-final with Kuznetsova, the German winning 10 of the first 11 points.

But she did not win another game in the set as Kuznetsova took advantage of 15 unforced errors by the German to win six consecutive games and took three of four break point chances. The Russian never trailed in the second set. Kuznetsova, who last reached a final at the BNP Paribas Open in March of 2017, said that she originally came back too soon from injury but now feels in form. "I think I did rush (back) a little bit. I got injured almost a year ago at the US Open, and after that, it took me time to decide to get my first surgery, and after my surgery, it took me time to recover," she said. "I wasn't ready 100 percent, and I'm just starting to build my fitness and my game now." —Agencies

Sports

Asensio scores twice as Real Madrid topple Juventus 3-1

First defeat of the pre-season for Italian team

LOS ANGELES: Substitute Marco Asensio made an immediate impact by scoring two early second-half goals as Real Madrid rallied to beat Juventus 3-1 in a pre-season exhibition contest on Saturday. Asensio entered the game at the start of the second half and scored less than two minutes in before adding another in the 56th minute with both goals being assisted by teammate Vinicius Jr. It was the first defeat of the pre-season and the final match of the International Champions Cup campaign for Italy's Juventus. The Serie A champions now open up their title defense at Chievo on August 18. They were without new signing Cristiano Ronaldo, who did not make his debut against his former team. The Portuguese superstar skipped the club's US tour because he was recovering from his World Cup performance.

Gareth Bale also scored for the European champions as the Welshman served notice that he is going to produce despite the loss of Ronaldo. Bale hit a stunning shot from 20 yards out in the 39th minute to level the score at 1-1 in the front of the crowd of 60,000 at

FedEx Field in Landover, Maryland. Bale finished with 16 La Liga goals last season and is in his fifth campaign with Real Madrid. Asensio subbed in after half-time and wasted no time getting on the board. He finished off a drive by side-footing a shot home in the 47th minute on a rush with Vinicius, who also entered the game at half-time.

The pair combined again just nine minutes later to make it 3-1 for Real Madrid on another unselfish pass from Vinicius. This time, Asensio's shot deflected off the right arm of Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny and trickled into the net. Juventus' lone score came in the 12th minute on an own goal by Real Madrid defender Dani Carvajal. Carvajal was trying to corral Joao Cancelo's left side cross when he deflected the ball into his own net. It was the first pre-season defeat for Juventus, who were without many of their key attackers for their US tour, including Douglas Costa, Paulo Dybala and Mario Mandzukic. In earlier matches, Juventus beat Bayern Munich, Benfica and the Major League Soccer All-Stars.—AFP



LANDOVER: Nicolò Fagioli #44 of Juventus and Javier Sanchez #32 of Real Madrid collide in the second half during the International Champions Cup 2018 at FedExField on August 4, 2018.—AFP

Chelsea's ex-striker Demba Ba at centre of China racism row

SHANGHAI: Senegalese striker Demba Ba found himself at the centre of a racism controversy in China over allegations that an opposing Chinese player hurled insensitive comments at him during a match Saturday night. The former Chelsea forward, now with Shanghai Shenhua, became embroiled in a heated exchange with Changchun Yatai midfielder Zhang Li late in their 1-1 Chinese Super League draw after Ba collided with one of Zhang's teammates. Various Chinese media reports said a furious Ba later claimed that Zhang made racially

insulting remarks. In a post-match press conference, Shenhua coach Wu Jingui condemned the incident. "Later, I learned that a Yatai player used insulting language toward him (Ba). Around the world, it has been stressed that there should be no insulting speech toward black athletes," Wu said, in comments posted on a team social media account.

"The Chinese Super League has players of many different skin colors. We should respect our opponents and there should be no discrimination." Following the match, many postings on Chinese social media as well as news media reports called for an investigation. Ba also retweeted on his Twitter account a posting calling for "serious disciplinary actions" over the incident. Ba, a Senegalese international, had played for Shenhua in 2015-2016 before being sidelined by a broken leg. Brief spells with Turkish sides Besiktas and Goztepe followed before Ba returned to Shenhua in June during the summer transfer window.—AFP



Senegalese striker Demba Ba

Woakes replaces Stokes as England drop Dawid Malan

BIRMINGHAM: England recalled Chris Woakes in place of Ben Stokes and brought in Ollie Pope to replace the dropped batsman Dawid Malan when they named a 13-man squad yesterday for next week's second Test against India at Lord's. Stokes took three wickets on Saturday, including the prize scalp of India captain Virat Kohli, as England won a thrilling first Test at Edgbaston by 31 runs to go 1-0 up in a five-match series. But England have long known they would likely be without Stokes at Lord's because of his trial on a criminal charge of affray that starts in Bristol today - just days before the second Test gets underway on Thursday.

They have now replaced Stokes with fellow pace-bowling all-rounder Woakes, who missed out on a Test at his Warwickshire home ground because of concerns he had not then bowled enough overs following a return from a knee injury. Middlesex batsman Malan was omitted after managing just 74 runs in five Test innings this season. At Edgbaston, he was out for eight and 20. He also twice dropped Kohli in the slips before the India skipper had got to three figures in his first-innings 149 - the star batsman's maiden Test century in England. Off-spinner Moeen Ali and uncapped Essex paceman Jamie Porter were retained in the squad after being left out of England's XI in Birmingham.

Pope, who in common with county team-mate Sam Curran - the man-of-the-match at Edgbaston after starring with both bat and ball - is aged just 20, has been in fine form for Championship leaders Surrey this season. He has scored 684 Championship runs at a huge average of 85.50, including three centuries and a top score of 158 not out. He also made an unbeaten fifty for the second-string England Lions in a 253-run win over India A in a first-class fixture at Worcester last month. "Ollie Pope has made an exceptional start to his first-class career," said England national selector Ed Smith.

"He has reached a 1000 first-class runs in just 15 matches and is the first division's stand-out batsman this season with 684 runs at 85.50. The selection panel believe that Ollie's performances and character suggest he is well suited to international cricket." Former England batsman Smith added: "Dawid Malan drops out of the squad for Lord's. 'David has not found his best rhythm this season, and it may be that his game is better suited to overseas conditions.' Turning to Woakes's inclusion, Smith said: "Ben Stokes is unavailable, but Chris Woakes, with some extra matches and practices under his belt, can now return to the England squad after injury."—AFP

Kenny seals European track title

GLASGOW: Laura Kenny won her second track cycling European championship gold medal yesterday, adding the women's elimination race to the team pursuit title she won on Friday. The 26-year-old quadruple Olympic gold medalist secured her 12th career European medal defeating Germany's Anna Knauber over the final two-lap shoot-out, with Russia's Evgenia Augustinas taking bronze. For Kenny, who resumed competitive riding earlier this year, the win brought with it the added bonus of being able to return home and present her one-year-old son with another 'Bonnie the seal', the Glasgow 2018 official mascot, after the dog got the first one.

"I was thinking I didn't want to leave Albie for nothing because he wasn't very happy this morning. I'm glad I've got another medal to take home to him-and he needed another seal mascot because the dog got the last one," Kenny, who is married to men's track cycling star Jason, told the BBC. Albie is perhaps fortunate to be the beneficiary of the mascot having given his mother a turbulent time on the eve of the race itself. "I was up five times last night-and he didn't actually fall asleep until nine o'clock, the little sod," she said laughing.

Kenny, who got married after the 2016 Olympics, said rustiness in the event after her self-imposed sabbatical had made her more on edge than usual. "To be honest, I didn't feel good out there," she told the BBC. "It was much faster at the beginning than I expected it to be. Before I came into it I wasn't sure if I'd be able to do it because it's been a year since I raced one of these and I was so nervous before it. "It's unbelievable, I'm just so happy." Kenny will try and add a third European crown when she competes in the Madison with Katie Archibald tomorrow.—AFP

Jordan backs LeBron as Trump questions player's intelligence

WASHINGTON: NBA legend Michael Jordan and US athletes rallied to LeBron James' defense on Saturday after US President Donald Trump questioned the star player's intelligence in a tweet. "I support LJ. He's doing an amazing job for his community," Jordan, now owner of the National Basketball Association's Charlotte Hornets, told NBC News through a spokesperson.

The comment by Jordan and others came after Trump had tweeted: "LeBron James was just interviewed by the dumbest man on television, Don Lemon. He made LeBron look smart, which isn't easy to do. I like Mike!" Trump was

referring to an interview CNN's Lemon did in the days after James, who now plays for the Los Angeles Lakers, and his foundation had opened a public school for some of the most disadvantaged children in his hometown of Akron, Ohio. The president's "I like Mike!" comment apparently was Trump stating his opinion on the debate of whether six-time NBA champion Jordan or James, the four-time league most valuable player and three times champion, is the NBA's best all-time player.

Even the president's wife was supportive of James' work with children. "It looks like LeBron James is working to do good things on behalf of our next generation and just as she always has, the First Lady encourages everyone to have an open dialogue about issues facing children today," Melania Trump said in a statement issued by her spokeswoman. NBA player Karl-Anthony Towns added in a tweet: "So let me get this straight: Flint, MI has dirty water still, but you worried about an interview about a man doing good for education and generations of kids in his hometown?"—Reuters



LeBron James

Saudi gamer wins FIFA eWorld Cup final and \$250,000

LONDON: Saudi Arabia's Mosaad Aldossary saw off Belgian adversary Stefano Pinna 4-0 on aggregate in the two-legged FIFA eWorld Cup Grand Final on Saturday to walk away \$250,000 richer. The 18-year-old gamer, who competes as 'MSDossary', also collected an invitation to the world soccer body's Best FIFA Football awards in September and a gleaming new trophy.

"I'm really proud that I made my country proud," said the Saudi after winning each leg 2-0 on PlayStation and Xbox consoles while a frustrated Pinna failed to find a way through on goal. The two men faced each other on a central stage at London's O2 Arena, separated only by their screens. "This is my second event in the UK and second win so I think this is my second home. I hope every year I am the champion again," said the teenager, who had a

cousin sitting with him as coach.

Regarded as one of the best defensive players, Aldossary also won the FUT Spring Cup in Manchester on his way to the 32-player finals. He had one glaring missed opportunity in the first leg when one-on-one with the goalkeeper but a brace from former Brazilian World Cup star Ronaldo on the PlayStation side and then goals from Thierry Henry and Ruud Gullit in the Xbox leg settled matters. Pinna also had former Dutch international Gullit in his virtual side, prompting the curious commentary line: "Gullit on Gullit, and he's lost out."

"It was difficult for me, especially on the Xbox side," said 20-year-old Pinna, who recently signed for PSV Eindhoven's esports side. "On the Playstation side I didn't score my chances and he did well. "He didn't let me play my game style because of his pressure. His defense is amazing." The Grand Final, live-streamed around the world on Twitch, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and FIFA's own platform, was the culmination of a virtual championship that started out with a global pool of 20 million entrants. Last year's winner, 21-year-old Spencer Ealing from England who plays under the nickname 'Gorilla', went out in the knockout stages to Malta's Kurt 'Kurt0411' Fenech.—Reuters



LONDON: Player Mosaad Aldossary competes in the group stages of the FIFA eWorld Cup Grand Final, at the O2 in London.—AFP

African champions Cameroon appoint Seedorf as coach

YAOUNDE: Former Dutch international midfielder Clarence Seedorf has been unveiled as the new coach of Cameroon and will be assisted by former team mate and compatriot Patrick Kluyvert, according to local reports. The duo's appointment was announced by Cameroon's Minister of Sport and Physical Education, Pierre Ismael Bidoung Mkpatt, at a news conference on Saturday and comes after talks with former England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson failed to reach an agreement. Seedorf takes over from the Belgian Hugo Broos, who led the side to a surprise victory at the 2017 African Nations Cup finals but was axed in November after failing to win a place at the World Cup in Russia.

Alexandre Belinga had been acting as caretaker coach since. Cameroon will defend their Nations Cup title on home soil in June next year, a first major finals test for the new management team. Seedorf, 42, will take on his first national team job having had limited experience in coaching following brief spells with AC Milan, Chinese side Shenzhen and Deportivo La Coruna. He led those teams in a total of 52 games, but is revered for an illustrious playing career, most notably at Ajax Amsterdam, Real Madrid and AC Milan, winning the Champions League with each club.

He was also capped 87 times by the Netherlands between 1994 and 2008. Former striker Kluyvert's playing career also included Ajax, where he was a Champions League winner with Seedorf.—Reuters

25 Astros hit 3 HRs in 14-0
blowout of LA Dodgers



26 Dovizioso celebrates 100th
race, wins duel of Ducatis



27 Asensio scores twice as Real
Madrid topple Juventus 3-1



City cruise to victory in Community Shield

City back in the groove as Aguero ruins Sarri's Chelsea bow



LONDON: Manchester City's Belgian defender Vincent Kompany lifts up the FA Community Shield as Manchester City players celebrate their victory on the pitch after the English FA Community Shield football match between Chelsea and Manchester City at Wembley Stadium in north London yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Sergio Aguero spoiled Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri's first taste of English football as the Argentine's double gave Manchester City a stylish 2-0 victory in the Community Shield yesterday. Blues boss Sarri, hired to replace the sacked Antonio Conte last month, endured a miserable debut in the prestigious friendly at Wembley as lacklustre Chelsea were swept aside by Premier League champions City.

Picking up where they left off in their record-breaking campaign last term, Pep Guardiola's team took an early lead through Aguero, who rewarded City's dominance with a second goal after the break. The last side to win the Community Shield and then go on to clinch the Premier League title were Manchester United in 2010-11. On this evidence, City could follow in their arch rivals' footsteps at the end of the season.

City's German winger Leroy Sane was forced off injured at half-time, giving Guardiola a scare ahead of their Premier League opener at Arsenal on August 12.

But that was the only sour note for City as they got back in the groove in impressive style. While the Community Shield serves as the curtain raiser to the new season, City and FA Cup holders Chelsea have very different ambitions for the Premier League campaign, which kicks off on Friday. City are favourites to defend the title and among the top Champions League contenders after becoming the first English top-flight team to secure 100 points last season.

In contrast, Chelsea are starting from scratch after chain-smoking former banker Sarri was hired from Napoli as an antidote to his antagonistic predecessor Conte. But healing the wounds of Conte's fractious two-year reign—which ended with Chelsea 30 points behind City in fifth place—won't be easy for Sarri, as this spluttering performance underlined. Sarri and Guardiola are close friends and dined together on the eve of the Community Shield, yet this first experience of Chelsea's reduced status

must have left a nasty taste for the Italian.

Aguero milestone

Consigning Conte's favored 3-4-2-1 formation to the bin, Sarri sent Chelsea out in a 4-3-3 system that malfunctioned from start to finish. Sarri has brought Italy midfielder Jorginho with him from Napoli to serve as the pivot for his manager's attacking gameplan. But Jorginho made an underwhelming start, repeatedly giving the ball away in dangerous areas. Phil Foden drove at the heart of the Chelsea defence to set up City's 13th-minute opener with little resistance from Jorginho or anyone else. Foden's incisive run ended with a simple pass to the unmarked Aguero, who applied the finishing touch with a fine low strike from the edge of the area.

It was Aguero's 200th City goal-making the Argentina striker the first player to reach that milestone for the Eastlands outfit. Foden's contribution was the highlight of an assured display from the 18-year-old midfielder that

belied his tender age and showed why he is hailed by City staff as the 'Stockport Iniesta'. After 10 appearances for City last season, when he also inspired England's Under-17 World Cup triumph, Foden could be on the brink of a breakthrough campaign. In the absence of Eden Hazard, still resting after the World Cup, Chelsea unveiled a precocious talent on their own in Callum Hudson-Odoi.

The 17-year-old winger gave a glimpse of his blistering pace and nimble footwork when he cut in from the left flank to bring City goalkeeper Claudio Bravo into action with a stinging drive. Hudson-Odoi was a rare bright spot for Chelsea, with subdued Spain striker Alvaro Morata offering little evidence he can make amends for last season's flop. Inspired by Aguero, City could have won by five but they settled for one more in the 58th minute. Aguero made a clever run to meet Bernardo Silva's pass with a clinical finish that flashed past Willy Caballero as the champions showed Sarri the size of the task ahead of him.—AFP

Hendricks lifts South Africa to ODI series win

PALLEKELE: Batsman Reeza Hendricks smashed a century on his one-day international debut to set up South Africa's series-clinching 78-run victory over Sri Lanka in the third match in Pallekele yesterday. Hendricks made 102 off 89 deliveries to help South Africa post 363-7 and then bowl out the hosts for 285 in 45.2 overs. They took an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

Dhananjaya de Silva tried to keep the chase alive with a career-best 84 but Sri Lanka's batting crumbled under the ever-increasing run-rate. Fast bowler Lungi Ngidi claimed four wickets while fellow paceman Andile Phehlukwayo took three. But it was Hendricks, a right-hand batsman who has played 12 Twenty20 internationals, who set

up the win for his side that had been swept aside in the two Tests.

The 28-year-old became only the third South African batsman to register a hundred in his first ODI. Colin Ingram and Temba Bavuma are the other two. Jean-Paul Duminy's 92 off 70 balls, and half-centuries by Hashim Amla and David Miller, also contributed to South Africa's imposing total after being put into bat first. "Brilliant today. Once again, the batting was fantastic. We played aggressive," said skipper Faf du Plessis, who injured his shoulder while attempting a tough catch in the 10th over and stayed away for the rest of the game.

"And obviously, for a debutant to play that freely was great to see. Every game, there's one or two guys putting their hands up," du Plessis said of Hendricks. Amla gave South Africa a brisk start with his run-a-ball 59 before being bowled by medium-pace Thisara Perera, who returned impressive figures of 4-44. Hendricks, who has been around since 2014 when he first played a T20 against Australia, built crucial partnerships including a 78-run fourth-wicket stand with Duminy. Hendricks celebrated his

century in just 88 balls with a boundary off paceman Lahiru Kumara, but was dismissed on the very next delivery.

Duminy blitz

Duminy, who got his second fifty of the series to lead the batting chart with 177 runs, maintained the momentum with a blazing knock laced with eight fours and four sixes. Duminy got support from fellow left-hander Miller as the two put on 103 for the fifth wicket to pulverize the bowling. Miller's quickfire 51 and Phehlukwayo's unbeaten 24 off 11 balls gave South Africa 98 off the last seven overs. Sri Lanka were never in the hunt with South African bowlers getting wickets at regular intervals.

A 95-run, seventh-wicket partnership between de Silva and Akila Dananjaya, who scored 37, raised the hosts' hopes of making a go of their target. But Phehlukwayo broke the dangerous-looking stand, dismissing Dananjaya and then having de Silva caught behind. Sri Lankan captain Angelo Mathews saw several positives - "Dhananjaya batted well, some bowlers bowled well." "But credit to Reeza and Duminy. We need to think out

SCOREBOARD

PALLEKELE, Sri Lanka: Final scoreboard of the third one-day international between Sri Lanka and South Africa in Pallekele yesterday:

South Africa		Sri Lanka	
H. Amla b T. Perera	59	N. Dickwella c du Plessis b Ngidi	10
Q. de Kock K. Perera b Kumara	2	K. Perera lbw b Phehlukwayo	27
R. Hendricks b Kumara	102	K. Mendis c Mulder b Ngidi	31
F. du Plessis c Lakmal b T. Perera	10	T. Perera c de Kock b Mulder	16
JP Duminy c de Silva b T. Perera	92	D. de Silva c de Kock b Phehlukwayo	84
D. Miller c de Silva b T. Perera	51	A. Mathews lbw b Shamsi	32
A. Phehlukwayo not out	24	A. Dananjaya c Ngidi b Phehlukwayo	37
W. Mulder b Dananjaya	2	S. Lakmal c and b Ngidi	12
Extras (b4, lb3, w13, nb1)	21	P. Jayasuriya b Shamsi	0
Total (7 wickets, 50 overs)	363	L. Kumara not out	7
Extras (w10) 10		Total (all out, 45.2 overs) 285	
Did not bat: K. Rabada, T. Shamsi, L. Ngidi		Fall of wickets: 1-20 (Dickwella), 2-37 (Tharanga), 3-63 (K. Perera), 4-81 (T. Perera), 5-124 (Mendis), 6-155 (Mathews), 7-250 (Dhananjaya), 8-273 (de Silva), 9-275 (Jayasuriya), 10-285 (Lakmal)	
Bowling: Lakmal 9-1-59-0 (nb1, w2), Kumara 10-0-67-2 (w6), Dananjaya 10-0-81-1 (w5), T. Perera 10-0-7-4, P. Jayasuriya 6-0-42-0, De Silva 5-0-32-0.		Bowling: Rabada 8-0-34-0 (w1), Ngidi 8.2-0-57-4 (w2), Phehlukwayo 9-0-74-3 (w4), Mulder 6-0-34-1 (w1), Shamsi 10-0-62-2 (w2), Duminy 4-0-24-0.	
Sri Lanka		Result: South Africa won by 78 runs	
U. Tharanga c Millder b Ngidi	19	Series: South Africa lead the five-match series 3-0	

of the box if we need to win away. I know we aren't doing well, but we need to play on good wickets to develop. We're playing for

pride and we want to finish the series off well." The fourth match is slated for Wednesday at Pallekele.—AFP