



2 Current development plan tops that of previous year



15 Musk: Automaker Tesla to remain a public company



24 Egypt says no faults in hotel room of UK couple who died



26 Iran weightlifter sets eternal record, two Koreans in tears



More than 3,000 expat public sector employees terminated

Move part of Kuwaitization plans • Aviation authority issues ultimatum to airline

KUWAIT: Work contracts of 3,140 non-Kuwaitis serving in the public sector have been cancelled, Chairman of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) Ahmad Al-Jassar said yesterday. These contracts have been invalidated according to a CSC resolution with respect to personnel proportions stipulated for the 2017-2018 period, as part of the state's policy of replacing expatriates with nationals in the government sector.

The dismissed personnel served in various ministries, government departments and bodies of independent budgets, he said in a statement to Kuwait News Agency.

Jassar affirmed that these workers have been laid off in line with the state's policy of Kuwaitizing jobs in the sector, as stipulated by CSC decision 11/2017, which exempted jobs in the medical and health sectors.

The number of non-Kuwaiti civil servants subject to the commission's resolution amount to 44,572, including the dismissed ones. They serve in 46 government sectors, including 25,948 in teaching and training, 6,474 in services, 3,537 in law and Islamic affairs, 2,876 in engineering and 1,539 in social and educational services as well as sports. Moreover, 1,221 perform financial, economic and

commercial jobs, 1,130 are in the sector of administrative backup, 483 in information systems and technology, 377 in manual works, 308 in literature, media and public relations, 221 in forensics, 205 in agriculture and livestock, 212 in sciences, 37 in administrative development and statistics and five in marine tasks.

Separately, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) yesterday issued an ultimatum to Wataniya Airways to resolve problems such as recurring flight delays and cancellations. The DGCA warned in a statement that in case the company failed to fulfill its duties

properly, its permit would be suspended effective Sept 6 for three months as an initial penalty, while compelling it to fulfill its financial and legal liabilities toward passengers.

If Wataniya Airways fails again to tackle these problems, it will be stripped of the license permanently. The directorate said several warnings had been given to the company to no avail. It assured passengers that it would do its best to ensure their safety and rights, vowing to follow up on Wataniya's commitment to secure their return, either on its aircraft or planes of other companies. — KUNA

Palestinians slam 'cheap blackmail' after US cuts aid

RAMALLAH: US President Donald Trump's administration is resorting to "cheap blackmail" against the Palestinians, revealing its true intentions by cutting more than \$200 million in aid for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, senior Palestinian officials said yesterday. A US State Department official said Friday that the decision, made "at the direction of the president", came after a review of aid programs to the Palestinian territories. The funding would "now address high-priority projects elsewhere", it added.

Saeb Erekat, secretary-general of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), said the decision amounts to an "admission of the true intentions behind American aid policy of intervening in the internal affairs of other peoples". US aid "is not a gift to our people but a duty of the international community to take responsibility for the continuation of Israeli occupation, prevent-

ing the development of the Palestinian economy and society," he said. By slashing its aid to the Palestinians, the US "once again reaffirms its disregard for its international commitments", Erekat added.

Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the PLO's executive committee, accused the US of using "cheap blackmail as a political tool". "The Palestinian people and leadership will not be intimidated and will not succumb to coercion. The rights of the Palestinian people are not for sale," she said. The United States had already made drastic cuts to its contribution to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, in January. Relations between the US administration and the Palestinian Authority took a nosedive after Trump in December decided to recognize the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The Palestinians have suspended contacts with Washington and believe it can no longer be an impartial mediator in the Middle East peace process.

After the latest blow, Ashrawi insisted that Palestinians living under Israeli occupation would not be coerced into surrendering their rights. "There is no glory in constantly bullying and punishing a people under occupation," she said in a statement. "The US administration has already demonstrated meanness of spirit in its collusion

Continued on Page 24



GAZA: A Palestinian child plays in an impoverished neighborhood of the Khan Younis refugee camp yesterday. The US said it has cancelled more than \$200 million in aid for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. — AFP

News in brief

Fire kills 19 at China spa hotel

BEIJING: At least 19 people died and another 23 were injured when a fire ripped through a hot springs hotel complex in northeastern China yesterday, state media said. The blaze began in the early hours at the hotel and spa in Harbin, capital of the Heilongjiang province, the official Xinhua news agency reported. Blackened walls inside the hotel, which is part of a hot springs complex, could be seen in footage released by state broadcaster CCTV. The injured were suffering from burns or toxic smoke inhalation, CCTV said, indicating an investigation had been opened into the cause of the fire. Xinhua said the hotel's owner had been detained for questioning by police. — AFP

Egypt arrests ex-embassy, 6 others

CAIRO: Egypt's public prosecutor on Friday ordered the detention for 15 days pending investigation of a former diplomat and other opposition figures who have criticized President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the state-run MENA news agency reported. Masoum Marzouk, a former ambassador, and two other prominent opposition activists were arrested on Thursday. Marzouk had recently called for a referendum on Sisi's rule. Marzouk, academic Yahya Kazaz, Raed Salama and four other people, whom MENA did not name, face charges of joining a terrorist group and receiving funds for terrorism, it said. The standard fifteen-day detention can be renewed by authorities. — Reuters

Erdogan urges commitment

ANKARA: The commitment and determination of Turks is the guarantee needed to combat attacks on Turkey's economy, President Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday, in his first comments on the currency crisis in days. In two separate statements to commemorate the anniversaries of the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 and Victory Day, Erdogan said the unity of Turks against attacks targeting their political and economic independence would prevail. He added that nobody would keep Turkey from reaching its 2023, 2053 and 2071 targets, dates that mark the centennial anniversary of the Turkish Republic, the 600th anniversary of the conquering of Istanbul, and the 1000th anniversary of the Battle of Manzikert respectively. — Reuters

Rohingya mark first 'versary of crackdown

COX'S BAZAR: Tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees staged angry protests for "justice" yesterday on the first anniversary of a Myanmar military crackdown that sparked a mass exodus to camps in Bangladesh. Many wept as they recalled the brutal killings and rapes inflicted on the Muslim minority last year as 700,000 fled across the border. The biggest refugee camp in the world is rigidly controlled by Bangladesh authorities and the peaceful but charged Rohingya marches and rallies seen there were unprecedented.

A local police chief, Abul Khair, told AFP an estimated 40,000 refugees attended marches and rallies across the

camps. "We are Rohingya, we want justice," people chanted in the Kutupalong camp, where a giant banner proclaimed: "Never Again: Rohingya Genocide Remembrance Day, 25 August, 2018." In a different part of the camp, thousands of women and children marched behind a huge poster declaring: "365 days of crying. Now I am angry."

Rohingya militants staged attacks on Myanmar police posts on Aug 25 last year, sparking a bloody crackdown in Rakhine state. Nearly 7,000 Rohingya were killed in the first month, according to Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF). Refugees arrived in Bangladesh on foot or in flimsy boats. Many brought horrific stories of sexual violence, torture and villages burned to the ground.

Columns of people marching through the camp yesterday waved banners and chanted "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great). Tears flowed as one imam gave a sermon, saying "Please Allah, return to us

Continued on Page 24



KUTUPALONG, Bangladesh: Rohingya refugees attend a ceremony to remember the first anniversary of a military crackdown at this refugee camp in Ukhiya yesterday. — AFP

'Green hajj' slowly takes root in Makkah

MINA, Saudi Arabia: Thousands of cleaners were busy separating plastic from other rubbish as more than two million Muslims wrapped up a pilgrimage to Makkah that presents a huge environmental challenge for Saudi Arabia. The Mamuniya camp in Mina near the holy city is dotted with color-coded barrels - black for organic waste and blue for cans and plastics for recycling. It's all part of an initiative to reduce the environmental footprint of the hajj, one of the world's largest annual gatherings.

More than 42,000 tonnes of waste are produced during the pilgrimage to Islam's holiest sites, according to Mohammed Al-Saati, head of sanitation for the Makkah municipality. "We're facing some real challenges, primarily the sheer volume of waste produced ... along

with the number of pilgrims, the limited space around the holy sites, different nationalities and the weather," Saati told AFP. "Islam as a religion does not encourage excess," he added. "Pilgrims can be friends of the environment. It starts by raising awareness back home."

The hajj, which started on Sunday and ended on Friday, drew nearly 2.4 million Muslims from around the world this year, according to official Saudi figures. More than 13,000 sanitation workers and supervisors were hired during the pilgrimage season, which saw temperatures rise to 44 degrees Celsius last week.

A handful of camps in the town of Mina, the site of the symbolic stoning of the devil ritual during hajj, have begun to implement plans to turn "green", cutting back on waste and encouraging pilgrims to do their part. Banners hanging near the Kaaba, a black structure inside Makkah's Grand Mosque towards which Muslims around the world pray, also featured the recycle logo this year. Authorities aim to cut waste volumes by two-thirds by 2030, Saati said, with a

Continued on Page 24



MAKKAH: Sanitation workers collect litter during the annual hajj pilgrimage in this holy city on Aug 22, 2018. — AFP

Local

Strategic projects focus of 2018/2019 development plan

Current development plan tops previous year: Official



Kuwait City



The Silk City

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The report about the progress of projects listed in the annual development plan for the fiscal year 2018/2019 by the end of the first quarter prepared by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development revealed the most important results, spending percentages and levels of completion, while concentrating on strategic projects. The plan for 2018/2019 relies on seven basic pillars. There are 32 development programs, and each program has a bundle of harmonized projects. The projects are chosen according to their ability to improve Kuwait's international competitiveness to achieve the state's vision for Kuwait to become a financial and commercial center that attracts investments.

Through the pillar of effective government management, there are 16 projects with investments totaling KD 56 million being executed by 14 bodies with annual allocations of KD 9.6 million, of which 1.3 percent was spent in the first quarter of this year. They are related to e-government projects, development of the structural plan and institutional governance. Among the projects of this pillar that are in the implementation stage are the Public Anti-Corruption Authority, Capital Markets Authority, Public Authority for Handicapped Affairs, Kuwait Municipality, State Ministry for National Assembly Affairs, Foreign Ministry, Central Statistics Bureau, Interior Ministry, Commerce and Industry Ministry and Finance Ministry.

Besides projects related to a sustained and diversified economy, 27 projects are being handled by 13 government bodies with a total cost of KD 12.453 million and annual allocations of KD 2.578 million, of which 0.0 percent was spent in the first quarter. The projects of this pillar, which the government hasn't started yet, are the development of Silk City, Boubyan Island, Public Authority for Food and Nutrition, the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, technical agency for the privatization program, Kuwait Municipality, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate and the

Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources.

Promising results

Kuwait has seen better progress in terms of national development in the first quarter of this year as opposed to the same period in the previous year, Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Dr Khaled Mehdi confirmed in a statement yesterday. The 2017-2018 term remains the best as far as domestic expenditure goes with a spending level of 86 percent, Dr Mehdi said. "The promising results recorded in Q1 of this year possibly forebode that the 2018/2019 term could eclipse previous years," he said, citing that total government spending in Q1 hit \$159.9 million (\$527 billion) in an increase of 3.6 percent from last year.

Mehdi pointed out that 50 percent of development projects have gotten off the ground so far this year, while some 322 obstacles were surmounted in an auspicious start to the year. Pinpointing the oil industry as the sector with the most impressive performance, he revealed that total spending there spiked by 17.35 percent over the last month. In terms of private development expenditure during Q1, the Kuwaiti official named a biofuel project worth KD 112 million (369 million) and a KD 5.7 million (\$18.8 million) olefins project as

examples. Meanwhile, for the first time ever, nine development projects are currently ahead of schedule in a testament to the tangible progress Kuwait has made towards its national development goals, Mehdi explained. He also mentioned that the healthcare, agriculture and education sectors have also witnessed meteoric growth, in addition to an increase of 33.5 percent in professional development.

New system

In other news, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) is preparing to implement the new central system with regards to salaries of the public sector and some independent authorities on a new group of government bodies in the coming days. CSC's Assistant Undersecretary for Information Technology Affairs Sabeeka Al-

Wuqayan said the government bodies that will apply the new system are the Council of Ministers, Amiri Diwan, Crown Prince Diwan, State Audit Bureau, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ministry and the Agriculture and Fish Authority to join 10 bodies that have already begun implementing the system, bringing up the number to 16 out of 48 government bodies.

Wuqayan said the new system is related to employing and calculating the salaries of employees in the public sector, adding that the commission is keen on automating procedures related to civil service. She said the centralization of implementing this system is under the CSC, because it is the supervisory authority on applying the law's procedures and CSC decisions, and is the most capable to interpret decisions in the presence of a central automated system.

Health centers

In the meantime, Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah said health centers in Wafra residential area were built according to the program of the Public Authority for Housing Welfare. He said the date when the ministry will receive the health center depends on the authority's program and completing the power connection to each place. He said that it was coordinated with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare with regards to developing health services in Wafra residential area, so locations for two centers were allocated in addition to a main ambulance center. He said the government hospital that will be in Sabah Al-Ahmad City will serve residents of southern areas, including those in Wafra. He said the hospital's design is included in the health ministry budget with coordination with the finance ministry.

Food reserves

Separately, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry prepared a plan to raise the level of strategic food reserves by 100 percent above the current stocks, so that they are enough for one full year. This will be through a strategic plan that ensures economic security and sustained development. Sources said the government's plan includes securing the required needs of food along with guaranteeing the safety of animal wealth production and its sustainability through a government weekly program that will be launched in the coming days. The sources said the government calls for supporting the Livestock Company to take precautions against political tensions that the region is experiencing.



Plan to increase strategic food reserves

Undersecretary tours police stations



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Essam Al-Nahham tours a couple of police stations.



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Essam Al-Nahham continued his tour of the public security sector, starting with Salmiya, Nugra, Sharq, Salhiya and Industrial Shuwaikh police stations. He conveyed greetings of Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha and lauded their

presence at work away from their families.

Illegal filming

An Arab man was arrested for filming policemen on duty in Hawally governorate, which is against the law. Police on patrol spotted the man filming, so he was arrested. When asked why he did it, he said he thought it was a fight and wanted to share it on social media.

local spotlight

The Capital

By Muna Al-Fuzal



Muna@kuwaittimes.net

The Capital, or Al-Asimah, is one of the six governorates of Kuwait. While most countries pay huge attention and focus on the development of the capital as the heart of the country - which often has heritage sites - the Kuwaiti capital seems to be a place that no one wants to remember! Although it is still an important and essential area for expatriates and citizens, with business and government centers, banks, exchange shops, etc, every time I go to the capital, specifically Fahd Al-Salem Street, I find ugly scenes.

I wonder why everyone forgot that there is something called the capital of the country. Where are the plans to develop Kuwait City, or are they forgotten and neglected? What a waste! Fahd Al-Salem Street is one of the most famous roads in Kuwait. It is in the heart of the Kuwaiti capital and close to many hotels, shops and churches, but try to go to this street on Friday or Sunday evening and you will be shocked by the traffic jams. Look at the situation of the bus station, with no pedestrian bridge. It seems like an adventure for people and motorists. It is dangerous to cross the crowded road. Why no one sees or feels any threat?!

The Capital governorate is in the heart of the country, with old markets such as Souq Mubarakiya. This market reflects the tradition and history of Kuwait and is popular with many people, including expatriates and visitors. In recent years, it seems that some officials recognized the importance of this market and approved its modernization. So in a few years, it was developed and is now able to attract people. The spirit has returned to the heart of the capital with uniqueness in the provision of services. The market has now become the preferred place for young people to establish their small projects, because it is more profitable and less risky.

Several government agencies contributed to the development of Souq Mubarakiya, which has become a favorite spot for Gulf and Arab tourists. However, there are other archaeological sites in the heart of the capital that are neglected without being covered by the government's development plan.

The vice-president of the Municipal Council said that the capital is on the verge of major urban development at an estimated cost of about \$15.6 billion till 2020 to remove all obstacles. It is undoubtedly a good statement, but attention to old buildings needs to be on the top of the agenda, especially on Fahd Al-Salem Street.

It is known that the capital in all countries of the world is the center of the state and the main city where with all centers of interest that are important to the country, whether economic, cultural or touristic. It is very strategic in terms of location and services, so buildings here need restoration of their facades, especially buildings in the center of the city. Owners of real estate need to cooperate, and either restore the property or tear down the whole thing and build a new one, especially on Fahd Al-Salem Street.

Ministerial decision no. 206 of 2009 warns of legal action against buildings that distort the view, with fines between KD 800 to KD 1,000, until the status of the infringing property is changed. The world's cities are characterized by old and modern civilizations and heritage buildings that reflect the old urban style and history. There is no doubt that the transformation of Kuwait City will make it feature among the great cities and capitals of the region.

Local

Amir starts private visit to US



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is welcomed upon his arrival to the United States. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrived in the United States Thursday afternoon on a private visit. His

Highness the Amir was accompanied by Deputy Commander of the National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

They were received at the airport by Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Permanent

Representative at the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi and members of the Kuwait's UN mission. — KUNA

Hajj flights will arrive via Terminal 1: Kuwait Airways

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways said yesterday that all Hajj flights from Jeddah, Taif and Madinah will arrive via Kuwait's international airport (T1). Kuwait Airways affirmed on its official Twitter account the arrival of passengers coming from pilgrimage trips for yesterday and today only continues through the new Terminal 4 (T4). Flights departing to and from Dubai continue through the new T4, it added.

Kuwait Airways received the first Hajj flight carrying 317 passengers from Jeddah at the new Terminal 4 (T4) late on Thursday, Kuwait Airways, in cooperation with the General Administration of Civil Aviation, headed by Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah, was keen to receive the first group of pilgrims through the new passenger's Terminal 4 (T4), Kuwait Airways Board Chairman Yousef Al-Jassem said in a press statement. The arrival of the pilgrims to T4 stems from the interest of the state by its sectors to the pilgrims, and to make sure they arrive smoothly and comfortably, through easy and simple procedures, Jassem added.

These procedures are also part of the initial operating plan of the company (Incheon) in coordination with civil aviation, pointing out that this trip will be fol-

lowed by a number of trips (up to 12) in the coming days which will carry 3,800 Kuwaiti pilgrims, the Chairman said. Jassem affirmed the success of the initial operating plan through the new building, which will contribute greatly to increase the number of flights in the coming days in coordination with civil aviation and the operator company of the building. The Board Chairman congratulated Saudi Arabia on the success of the Hajj season this year.

Meanwhile, Acting Director of Civil Aviation Emad Al-Jalawi said that civil aviation is proud to operate T4 in record time, expressing the administration's pleasure in participating in receiving the first group of pilgrims coming to Kuwait through this building. T4 designed to facilitate the passage of passengers through easy services provided, said Chief Executive of Kuwait Airways Abdullah Al-Sharhan. The new building (T4) is located in the northern region of Kuwait International Airport and covers an area of about 55,000 square meters and includes 14 gates divided into nine bridges and five ground gates.


The new terminal aims to reduce the congestion of the current building. T4 accommodates about 4.5 million passengers annually. It also provides more than 2,000 parking spaces, 50 check-in counters and special-purpose counters as well as providing all services to travelers such as Duty Free and commercial services.

Kuwait Airways was established in 1953 as a private company under the name of Kuwait National Airlines Limited. The government of Kuwait acquired 100 percent of its ownership in 1962 and has around 40 destinations around the world. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways' officials welcome pilgrims who arrived from Jeddah at the new Terminal 4 (T4) on Thursday. — KUNA






Summer is waiting...

Subscribe now

or renew your subscription for 1 year


only K.D 30 & get K.D 39



4 Cards
FREE



4.750 KD each


+



4 Coupons
FREE

5.000 KD each



Enjoy

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait | Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7
Fax: 24835620 - 24835621 | E: info@kuwaittimes.net

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A confrontation between an eagle and a fennec fox in Al-Jahra Natural Reserve. — Photo by Jasem Al-Motar (KUNA)

Kuwait Times
ESTABLISHED 1961
THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

STAY CONNECTED

- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait
Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621
E: info@kuwaittimes.net

KFH organizes training program for new female recruits

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) organized a comprehensive training program for new female recruits who have recently joined 'KFH' in an attempt to improve their proficiency in banking transactions and financial services to better serve customers and cater for their aspirations. The pro-

gram was tailored to qualify employees to assume duties at KFH Call Center.

The one-month program included training courses and workshops on banking products, such as banking cards, bank accounts, deposits, letters of guarantee, and KFH eservices. In addition, the program tackled training courses on sharia basics, not to mention the call center: its equipment, role, and the services it renders.

Such training programs contribute to raise the bar of employees, enrich their banking knowledge and put them on track to be well equipped and prepared to assume the responsibility of serving clients and encounter any obstacle and challenge as per international standards of service quality.



KUWAIT: A group pic of the recruits.



The recruits attend a training session.

Local

Ancient mosques in Kuwait: Minarets of faith, knowledge

Bin Bahr Mosque was the first to be built in Kuwait



KUWAIT: Mosques are some of the most sacred buildings on earth; hosting seekers of worshipping His Almighty, knowledge and enlightenment on religious subjects. For hundreds of years, Kuwaitis have been building beautiful and simply designed mosques. In the old times, the ancestors used to erect them with mud, rock and cane. The roofs were made of Jindal wood. They used to reserve rainwater on mosques' roofs, with a network of metal pipes reaching an ablution chamber, called 'Al-Kro'. Minarets were of square shape, not too high and free of any ornamentation.

Ancient mosques in Kuwait were not only places for prayer, but were more like makeshift schools, where

sessions were held for memorizing the Quran. Moreover, scholars used to lecture about religious and scientific issues. Bin Bahr Mosque was the first one to be built in Kuwait back in 1670. It was situated opposite Seif Palace, according to the book, 'History of Ancient Kuwaiti Mosques', composed by Adnan Salem Al-Roumi. The one who laid the corner stone was Sheikh Ibrahim bin Abdullah Al-Bahr. It was renovated in 1745 and 1858. It was refurbished in 1956. In 2000, the Awqaf authority restored and expanded it, keeping its genuine features and designs.

One of the oldest mosques in Kuwait is Al-Adsani Mosque, founded in 1747 by Sheikh Mohammed bin

Abdulrahman Al-Adsani. Al-Adsani Mosque had an important role in the Kuwaiti society as it was one of the few mosques where Friday and Eid prayers were held. Researcher Aisha bint Saleh bin Abdulwahab Al-Adsani said in her book, 'Al-Adsani Mosque', that it was built by Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulwahab Al-Adsani, the third Kuwaiti to take charge of the judiciary in the country (1756-1783). Sheikh Mohammad had built it at a location opposite his house within Kuwait's first fence. It was home for Quranic studies, as well as classes to teach the locals scientific topics and Arabic language, before the emergence of modern schools. — KUNA



Kuwait continues aid in Eid

KUWAIT: The humanitarian aid provided by Kuwait is still helping to save lives across large swathes of the globe. In line with orders of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait has continued aiding the needy worldwide, especially during Eid Al-Adha last week. On Wednesday in Beirut, a team from the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) distributed humanitarian aid to hundreds of displaced Syrian families throughout Lebanon. Team leader Youssef Al-Naqi said that 400 food parcels were handed to some 200 families' eastern Lebanon, while 420 parcels more were the share of another 210 families in Mount Lebanon. He added that the team also help a recreational activity for Lebanese and Syrian orphans northern Lebanon, during which some 466 gift bags were given out.

Moreover, the team concluded its activity by distributing 550 Eid presents and 'sacrifices' to displaced families in refugee camps in Bekaa and Akkar. Naqi pointed out. To that, the KRCS announced last Thursday it is sending urgent food aid to 900 people in famine-stricken areas of Mauritania. Head of the Society's mission to the Arab country, Jassem Qambar, said that poverty, drought and floods, have hit hard in the eastern part of the country.

On Friday, Kuwait announced a donation of \$500,000 as aid to Vanuatu to face the wide damage caused by tropical cyclone 'Hola' and volcanic activities last March. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Al-



Kuwaiti Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Al-Bader meets with Charge d'Affaires of the High Commission of the Republic of Vanuatu Evaristo Chalet.

Bader forwarded the decision to donate to Charge d'Affaires of the High Commission of the Republic of Vanuatu Evaristo Chalet during their meeting. The Ambassador noted that the decision of the Kuwaiti government comes in response to the emergency appeal launched by the Republic of Vanuatu and its humanitarian action plan to respond to these two natural catastrophes in the Island of Ambae. The plan included an appeal for financial and in-kind aid from the international community to provide humanitarian assistance, including food and agricultural security, shelter, water, sanitation, logistics and protection for children and women.

Meanwhile, Chalet stressed his

country's great appreciation of Kuwait's contribution, which will further enhance the strong friendship between the two countries. He also confirmed his country's intention to name the projects after the State of Kuwait in recognition of the prominent role of the Kuwaiti leadership, government and people, as it continues to finance a number of development projects in the world, particularly in his country. He added that Kuwait provided last year a financial contribution for the construction of two educational projects with a total value of about \$509,335. He noted that Kuwait is the first country in the Middle East to build educational institutions in his country. — KUNA

Kuwait reiterates rejecting terrorism in all forms

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait has reiterated its firm stand of rejecting terrorism in all its forms, regardless of cause, motive and source. Such criminal act should not be associated with a certain religion, nationality or ethnicity, as fighting this phenomenon requires drumming up all international efforts, said Counselor Bader Al-Munayekh, deputy permanent representative of the Kuwaiti mission to the United Nations, in a speech late Thursday. His remarks came during a session on threats facing international peace and security.

Stressing that promotion of a culture of tolerance and coexistence among peoples and nations, Munayekh noted that the fight against terrorism requires concrete international efforts. The State of Kuwait, he pointed out, was keen to combat terrorism by ratifying majority of the relevant international conventions and regional agreements.

In this vein, Kuwait hosted a ministerial meeting of the



NEW YORK: Counselor Bader Al-Munayekh, deputy permanent representative of the Kuwaiti mission to the United Nations, delivers his speech. — KUNA

International Alliance against the so-called Islamic State (IS) group on February 13 this year, with the participation of 70 countries and four international organizations. The meeting aimed at setting strategies to counter and eliminate the threat and presence of IS in Iraq. Still, "social media remain a major platform for those groups to spread their extreme ideologies, which calls for global efforts to be exerted, especially on a cyber level," Munayekh said. — KUNA



#What_more_do_you_want?

1 + 1 is easy, but 2 + 2 opens a whole new world of opportunities! GUST's 2 + 2 program lets you begin your academic career here in Kuwait, before transferring to St. Louis to continue your degree. What more do you want?

gust_official gust_official gust_official gust_official

Accredited by:



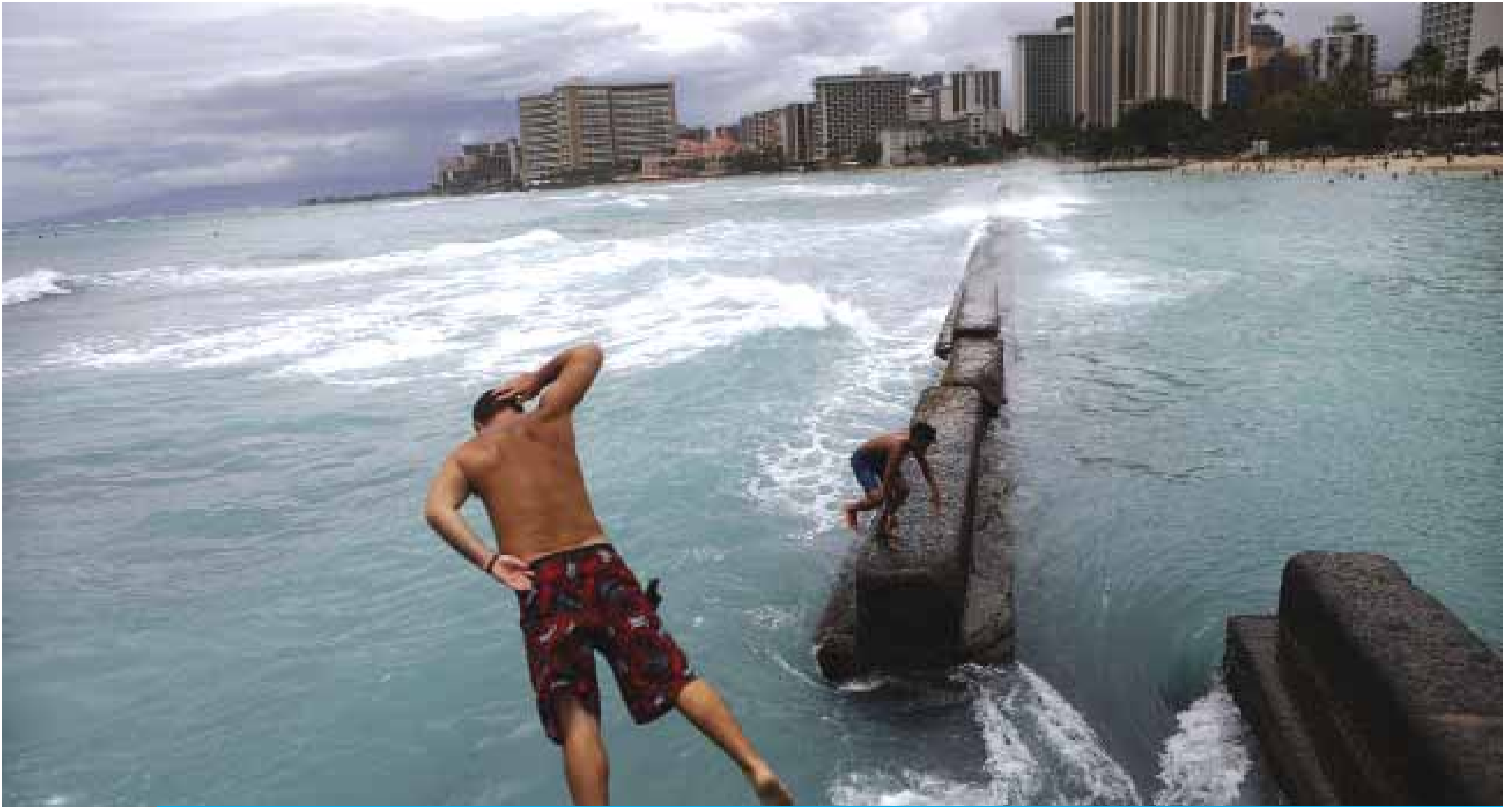


Police break up landmark Turkish mothers' protest

Italy threatens EU funding in migrant row

Page 8

Page 7



HONOLULU: A resident leaps off a jetty at Waikiki beach on Oahu Island in Honolulu, Hawaii. Weather conditions from weakening Tropical Storm Lane are expected to deteriorate on the island with heavy rain and wind in the evening. — AFP

Residents on edge as Lane hits Hawaii

Hurricane Lane triggers landslides and 'catastrophic' flooding

HONOLULU: Torrential rain pounded Hawaii yesterday as Hurricane Lane, now downgraded to a tropical storm, crawled toward the island state, triggering landslides and "catastrophic" flooding, and forcing thousands to seek emergency shelter. Lane, which was reclassified as a Tropical Storm at 0300 GMT yesterday, was located around 120 miles south of the capital Honolulu, slowly moving in a north-northeastward direction at just three miles per hour. Lane "weakens to a Tropical Storm south of Oahu, but rain bands will still bring more flooding and damaging winds to parts of the main Hawaiian islands," the Central Pacific Hurricane Center said. Lane, which packed still dangerous winds of 70 miles per hour, is forecasted to turn westward and away from the Pacific islands.

"Regardless of the hurricane track, life-threatening impacts will extend far beyond the center position as Lane approaches the islands," the National Weather Center said. "Excessive rainfall associated with this slow moving hurricane will continue to impact the Hawaiian Islands into the weekend, leading to catastrophic and life-threatening flash flooding and landslides." Brad Kieserman with the American Red Cross told reporters

more than 2,000 people were sheltering in 45 evacuation centers. "I would not be surprised to wake up tomorrow morning and see evacuation center populations at or above 2,500 or 3,000," he added.



Thousands forced to seek emergency shelter

Almost 25 inches of rain fell on the iconic Waikiki Beach in the last 36 hours, forcing its closure as hoteliers and store owners piled sandbags outside their businesses.

'Whiteout' conditions

The mainly-rural Big Island-home to the still-erupting Kilauea Volcano-has taken the worst hit so far, with more than 30 inches of rain in about 24 hours. Experts warned of "whiteout conditions"-steam loaded with particles and toxic gases produced when cool moisture hits lava-as the storm passes. Lane however should have little effect on the eruption "aside from minor rockfalls at the summit and increased steaming" from two vents, the US Geological Survey said.

However "whiteout conditions could occur... due to steam produced by heavy rain falling on still-hot lava flows," Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) chief Brock Long warned of major power grid disruptions. "We need to set the expectation that the power could go off for quite some time and the infrastructure is going to be heavily impacted," Long said. Residents across the state have been stocking up on water, food, gasoline and emergency supplies as Lane drew nearer.

Sea levels were expected to rise as much as two to four feet (60 to 122 centimeters) above normal tide levels, causing coastal erosion and prompting a storm surge and

'Destructive waves'

"large and destructive waves," forecasters said. United, Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines have canceled some or all international and domestic flights.

The US Coast Guard says 57,000 US military personnel stationed in Hawaii are ready to offer medical support and conduct search and rescue operations. "I've not seen such dramatic changes in the forecast track as I've seen with this storm," Governor David Ige said in a statement as he declared a state of emergency earlier this week on the Big Island. President Donald Trump called Ige, the White House said, to offer support and discuss preparedness and emergency measures.

The last major storm to strike Hawaii was nearly three decades ago, when Hurricane Iniki hit the island of Kauai, leaving six dead and causing billions of dollars in damage. Federal officials have been working with Hawaiian utility managers to monitor the power grid, a major vulnerability in Puerto Rico last year when it was hit by Hurricane Maria, a powerful Category Four hurricane. Hurricane-related deaths in Puerto Rico have been estimated at as many as 4,600 people, largely because prolonged and widespread power outages and washed out roads prevented access to health care, US researchers said. — AFP

Yemen: More than three years of war

SANAA: A Saudi-led coalition launched military operations in Yemen in 2015, helping the government to push back against rebels who had taken control of the capital and seized several provinces. The conflict has killed nearly 10,000 people, the vast majority of them civilians, and injured more than 55,000, according to the World Health Organization. More than 2,200 others have died of cholera and the conflict has triggered what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Saudi air strikes

The Saudi-led coalition launches air strikes on Shiite Houthi rebels in March 2015, who had taken Sanaa six months earlier and now controlled large swathes of Yemen. The coalition aims to restore to power the internationally-recognized government of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. In July, Hadi's embattled administration announces its forces have retaken the southern province of Aden in their first success since the coalition stepped in. Having lost Sanaa, Hadi makes Aden the country's de facto capital. By mid-August 2015, loyalist forces have retaken five southern provinces. In October, government forces reclaim control of the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, one of the world's busiest and most strategically sensitive shipping routes.

Rebels kill ex-president

Splits emerge in the rebel camp in 2017, resulting in the assassination of Hadi's predecessor and former Houthi ally, Ali Abdullah Saleh, by Houthi fighters in December. The rebels strengthen their grip on the capital. Splits also emerge in the government camp, with fierce clashes erupting in Aden in January 2018 between southern separatists and fighters loyal to Hadi.

Missiles on Saudi Arabia

From November 2017, the rebels intensify missile attacks on neighboring Saudi Arabia, which accuses its arch-foe Iran of supplying them with weapons. Iran denies the charge. Seven missiles are fired into the kingdom on March 25, 2018 alone, including three at Riyadh. On June 9, three civilians are killed in the kingdom's southern province of Jizan by a rebel missile. According to the coalition, in which the United Arab Emirates (UAE) also plays a key role, the rebels have fired 165 ballistic missiles.

Advance on aid port

In December 2017, government forces make a breakthrough in efforts to reconquer the key port of Hodeida when they drive Houthi fighters out of a town en route called Khokha. Hodeida-a vital entry point for the bulk of the country's food and aid-has been in rebel hands since October 2014, taken without opposition from government forces soon after rebels captured Sanaa. Government forces press their advance and in April the insurgents' second-in-command, Saleh Al-Sammad, is killed in a coalition air raid in the province. On June 13, government fighters, backed by Saudi and Emirati forces, launch an offensive on Hodeida city. On June 20, they say that they have taken control of Hodeida airport on the southern outskirts.

Heavy civilian toll

Civilians, in particular children, pay a heavy price during the conflict. Several raids blamed on the coalition have left civilian victims, including on a wedding hall in the town of Mokha in September 2015, killing 131 people. The alliance denies responsibility. In October 2016, a coalition air strike at a funeral in Sanaa kills 140 people. The coalition has admitted responsibility for certain raids, but accuses the rebels of using civilians as human shields. In July, Amnesty International says human rights violations in a string of Yemeni prisons run by the UAE could amount to war crimes, in a report rejected by Abu Dhabi. — AFP

Abuse victim urges pontiff to remove 'every rotten apple'

DUBLIN: Pope Francis should rid the Catholic Church of "every rotten apple" and announce concrete measures against sexual abuse by the clergy during his visit to Ireland, a prominent Irish victim said. Marie Collins, who resigned from a Vatican commission on child protection last year over its failure to take action, said in an interview that the pontiff had to tackle the issue "head on". "Every rotten apple should be got rid of and it should happen now," Collins said on the sidelines of the World Meeting of Families in Dublin, ahead of the pope's visit to Ireland which started yesterday.

Collins was assaulted by a priest as a 13-year-old while she was in hospital-one of thousands of victims in Ireland, where abuse scandals have badly dented the Catholic Church's standing. "Coming to Ireland, where we have such a history of abuse and so many have had their lives destroyed, it is important that while he is here this issue is addressed, and addressed face on, and we get clear words as to what he's going to do," said Collins, now 71. Many ordinary Irish Catholics were "waiting to see this whole issue dealt with properly" and if it is not, "more people are just going to give up in despair and walk away", she said.

'Fear of how deep it goes'

Collins welcomed a letter from Pope Francis this week condemning the "atrocities" revealed by a far-reaching US report into child sex abuse by priests in the state of Pennsylvania. But she said the words of the leader of the world's billion-plus Catholics did not go far enough. "It didn't give any concrete statements about what he was actually going to do," she said, calling for some "real sanctions" against those who perpetrate and cover up abuse. "The reluctance to look into things properly and to behave properly is the fear of how deep it goes, how far it goes

and how wide it goes. "There is this mistaken idea that if we don't look at it, it will go away," she said.

'He could do no wrong'

Collins had just celebrated her 13th birthday when she was assaulted by a priest, according to an account she gave at a Vatican symposium on abuse in 2012. The priest-"a skilled child molester" in her words-began visiting her in the evenings while she lay in a hospital bed in Dublin. "When he began to sexually interfere with me, pretending at first he was being playful, I was shocked and resisted, telling him to stop. He did not stop," she said. "While assaulting me, he would respond to my resistance by telling me he was a priest, he could do no wrong," she recalled.

"He took photographs of the most private parts of my body and told me I was stupid if I thought it was wrong. He had power over me. I did not know how to tell anyone. I just prayed he would not do it again-but he did. "Those fingers that would abuse my body the night before were the next morning holding and offering me the sacred host. "The hands that held the camera to photograph my exposed body, in the light of day were holding a prayer book when he came to hear my confession. "When I left the hospital I was not the same child who had entered," she said.

End Vatican 'resistance'

After years of treatment for mental illness brought on by feelings of guilt, Collins finally told a doctor about the abuse when she was 47. He persuaded her to tell the Church about it, but when Collins met with her parish priest, she says he refused to listen and blamed her. "He said he saw no need to report the chaplain. He told me what happened was probably my fault. This response shattered me," she said.

A decade later while reading news about a serial paedophile priest Collins realized that other children might have been damaged by the same priest who hurt her and she again spoke up. The priest was eventually prosecuted and jailed, and Collins has since become a leading voice in Ireland pushing for justice for victims. Collins on Friday said only the pope could end Vatican "resistance", even if this meant removing people in high office. "Every day children are being abused. — AFP

International

Ethnic unrest tarnishes new Ethiopian leader's reforms

Oromo youths seen taking revenge for marginalization

CHELELEKTU, Ethiopia: Shiburu Kutuyu, a 45-year-old Ethiopian maize and coffee farmer, was jolted awake by gunshots one night in June. He told his wife and seven children to flee. They returned to find their mud-walled home had been burned down, but no sign of Shiburu. Eleven days later, fellow farmers found his body hanging from a tree, his severed limbs strewn on the ground.

"A mob of Oromo youths killed him in the most gruesome manner," Shiburu's brother-in-law Mulugeta Samuel told Reuters from one of the dozens of camps in southern Ethiopia filled with people who fled violence between two ethnic groups: the Oromo and the Gedeo. A surge in ethnic violence, sometimes in the form of mob attacks, has displaced nearly 1 million people in the past four months in southern Ethiopia and is inflaming bad feeling between ethnic groups in other regions.

The violence threatens to undermine Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's calls for unity in one of Africa's most ethnically diverse countries. It also overshadows the popular liberal measures he has announced since coming to power in April. Some observers say young men from Abiy's ethnic group, the Oromo, have been emboldened by his rise and are attacking other groups in revenge for years of marginalization. Ethiopia's security apparatus is in a state of flux since Abiy announced reform plans, said Asnake Kefale, an assistant professor of politics at Addis Ababa University. "Some individuals have taken advantage of this state of affairs," he said.

On Thursday, Sorri Dinka, spokesman for the Oromiya Police Commission, said authorities are taking action

against individuals suspected of ethnically motivated crimes. He mentioned the so-called "qeerroo", a term used to describe young Oromo men involved in the protest movement over the past three years that culminated in former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn's resignation. Some people who fled their homes still feel federal government and local authorities are failing to halt violence against them.

Tihun Negatu escaped an attack on her village in June. She and her two children have been living in a school converted into a shelter, wearing the clothes they fled in. "The government is not willing to bring them to justice," she said of the Oromo men who chased her farming community off its land, and burned down her home and a bar she ran. The government denies turning a blind eye. Federal disaster management chief Mitiku Kassa said a committee of ministers and regional officials has been formed to oversee rehabilitation and reconciliation efforts.

He told Reuters nearly 400 people in Oromiya have been arrested on suspicion of inciting violence between Gedeos and Oromos. "If not stopped altogether, such incidents are very dangerous for the country as they may spread," he said. The government has urged elders in both communities to seek reconciliation. Townhall meetings have been taking place regularly though they have not halted the violence. Officials in camps visited by Reuters last week said about five children die every day due to illness and hunger. Plans to return displaced populations to their home areas triggered protests this month by people who said their safety was not guaranteed.

Changes

One of Abiy's boldest moves has been to loosen the grip of a state that had ruled with an iron fist. He has said security forces must be reined in, emergency rule has been lifted and thousands of political prisoners released. Abiy, 42, rode the wave of anti-government unrest that originated in his Oromiya region. He was appointed by the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) as it sought to ease ethnic tensions and appeal to disaffected youth. The sweeping changes, however, have lifted the lid on historic conflicts over land, resources and local power. Underlying ethnic divides have also flared. The Gedeo who have lived as minorities in modern-day Oromiya for generations say that although they have been subjected to violence by Oromos in the past, the worst attacks began a day after Abiy took office.

Since then, Abiy has toured Ethiopia extensively, but not visited the areas where the Gedeo and Oromo have been fighting. He says unspecified "forces with the goal of undermining peace and unity" are to blame for the violence. But some critics say he has avoided tackling the issue head on for fear of alienating his Oromo base. "It is difficult for the people to rely on your rhetoric unless you practically toil to bring lasting peace for all Ethiopians irrespective of their ethnic or religious background," a diaspora group of Gedeos wrote recently in an open letter to Abiy.

In a statement this week he acknowledged the mob nature of some of the violence: "Changes have ... brought mob justice, fuelled by some segments of the youth in some areas, undermining rule of law." The prime minister, who has a doctorate in conflict resolution, has enjoyed wide support since coming to office. Stickers bearing his face are plastered on many vehicles in Addis Ababa and other cities. "He will not want to rock that boat," said a Western diplomat in Addis Ababa, referring to the positive

response Abiy has received since taking office after three years of street protests in which security forces killed hundreds of people. "But he risks further destabilization if he does not lay down the law."

Risks

The violence in southern Ethiopia is one of several ethnic-based disputes nationwide. Tens of thousands remain displaced by violence along the border between the Oromiya and Somali regions. Oromos accuse a local Somali paramilitary force of atrocities. This month, mobs looted properties owned by minorities in the Somali region's capital Jijiga. The federal government said unrest had been stoked by regional officials who had fallen out with authorities in Addis Ababa.

Other incidents, though isolated, show the risks of mob retaliation. Earlier this month a man was lynched and left hanging upside down in a public square in the Oromiya town of Shashemene by a mob who wrongly suspected he was carrying a bomb. Police stood by idly, according to an eyewitness. In June in the southern city of Hawassa, several men from the Wolayta ethnic group were burned alive by members of the rival Sidama ethnic group. According to witnesses interviewed by Reuters, the men were targeted in a push by Sidamas to form their own region.

The violence raises questions about the structure of the state: a federal republic where regional boundaries were redrawn on ethnic lines in 1994. Seizing power after a long guerrilla war, the EPRDF said the arrangement it would empower marginalized ethnic groups after centuries of domination by Amharas. Critics say it has eroded national unity. "The ethnicized nature of our politics has emphasized our differences for the last 27 years," said opposition politician Lidetu Ayalew. "We have to find a way out of this if this country is to remain intact." — Reuters



Ethnic violence has displaced nearly a million

Police break up landmark Turkish mothers' protest

ISTANBUL: Istanbul police yesterday broke up a regular demonstration by Turkish mothers remembering the disappearance of relatives in the 1980s and 1990s, detaining over 20 people as participants marked the 700th such weekly protest. The mothers, known as the Saturday Mothers (Cumatesi Anneleri in Turkish), have met on Saturdays since May 27, 1995 in the heart of Istanbul, remembering relatives who disappeared allegedly at the hands of the state in one of modern Turkey's most turbulent periods.

Police used water cannon and fired tear gas canisters to disperse the protest, an AFP photographer said. Turkish media reports said that at least 23 people were detained, with protesters seen grabbed by the police and roughly taken away into waiting vans. Among those detained was veteran Saturday Mothers protest leader Emine Ocak, who reports said is aged 82. The crackdown by the police followed an announcement by the authorities of the central Beyoglu district where the rally is held that Saturday's demonstration would be banned.

It said that calls for the rally to take place had been made on social media accounts linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and no application for permission to hold it had been made. The disappearances happened at the peak of the PKK insurgency demanding self-rule in the Kurdish-dominated southeast. Tens of thousands have lost their lives in the conflict that began in 1984 and continues to this day. The country was also wracked by



ISTANBUL: Turkish riot police detains protesters of Saturday Mothers group demonstration yesterday in Istanbul. — AFP

political instability and violence following the 1980 military coup, with many detained for political activism.

Activists say the state has never properly investigated the fate of those who disappeared after being detained by the authorities. The Saturday Mothers group were unable to hold their protests for a decade from 1999 to 2009 due to repeated police interventions but they then resumed.

Police have since maintained a watchful presence at the protests but this was the first time in recent years the protest has been broken up. The forceful dispersion of the rally comes two months after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won a new mandate with enhanced powers which activists fear will be used to squeeze freedom of expression in Turkey. — AFP

One year on: Daily struggle makes Rohingyas forget wounds, worries

COX'S BAZAR: Rohingya labourer Jamal struggles to carry bricks in the Bangladesh camp that is now home, having lost an arm after being shot and left for dead fleeing an attack in Myanmar one year ago. But like many who fled the violent crackdown by Myanmar forces, the 20-year-old has strived to rebuild his life since joining a million other stateless members of the Muslim minority in the world's largest refugee camp.

"I try to make a habit of working with it but it's challenging without my hand," he told AFP, placing his checkered scarf over the scarred stump of his right arm. "I want to earn some money and support my family. It feels good," said the expectant father, whose name was changed to protect his identity. Many Rohingyas have opened small businesses or market stalls, or found work giving the makeshift hillside shanties in Cox's Bazar a greater sense of permanence in recent months.

The flimsy shacks and rancid toilets that overflowed as waves of desperate refugees started pouring into Bangladesh last August have been replaced by sturdier structures. Paved roads and drainage canals now cross the camps. For some, this has created opportunities for work and a new sense of purpose after the unspeakable horrors of Rakhine state in Myanmar.

Horror to hope

Juhara, whose name was also changed, passes her days carting water to thirsty bricklayers. She has just one hand - the other was cleaved off in a raid on her village after the August 25 clampdown started last year. Her husband and parents were killed. The 40-year-old said she ran for her life but was hunted down and savagely attacked. "I couldn't get away. I fell to the ground and they chopped me," she told AFP, gesturing to her arm and face, missing an eye and badly disfigured from a deep machete wound. In addition to her scars, she still suffers headaches in the monsoon heat. The work, however menial, has allowed her to support her niece and sister after losing her husband in the brutal Myanmar campaign in which entire villages



UKHIA: Rohingya refugee volunteers walk along Balukhail refugee camp in Ukhia district near Cox's Bazar. — AFP

were burned to the ground. The United Nations has likened it to ethnic cleansing. The violence drove Furiullah over the border, where he opened a barbershop in May, taking loans from friends to buy supplies and offering haircuts and shaves under a tarpaulin covering. His business grew quickly, and he built a concrete floor and installed a reinforced roof. But despite running a thriving outfit - an enviable position in a sea of destitution - the 32-year-old barber pines for home. "This is just temporary. I have no intention to stay here for any longer than I have to," he told AFP as he applied foam on a customer for a cut-throat shave. "If we have peace, then we will go back."

Touch of home

A year after the beginning of the worst refugee crisis in decades, boredom and idleness stalks the gigantic settlements in Bangladesh, where Rohingyas are barred from local schools and jobs. Hundreds of thousands of children have not seen the inside of a classroom since crossing into the country, putting them at huge risk of becoming a "lost gen-

eration", warns the UN child agency UNICEF. Arafat has been reading any English book he can get his hands on to try and keep up with his favourite subject. But the 18-year-old feels himself slipping behind, jeopardizing his dreams of becoming a teacher. "I would like learn, but there is no school. I do not know what will happen in the future," he told AFP, hanging out in an alleyway with his friends.

Military checkpoints surround the claustrophobic camps. More than 58,000 Rohingyas have been caught trying to leave since the August influx, local police said. Among them was Shamsu Alam, a 28-year-old farmer and father-of-three, desperate for work to supplement the handouts of rice and lentils his family scrapes by on. He tried to pick up casual work inside the camps but the competition was fierce, forcing him to break the rules. Alam was caught. "I have nothing to do here. We cannot go outside to work. I just want to do something," he complained.

Others have found purpose any way they can, small rituals to stave off boredom and distract from the misery that abounds in the sprawling camps. — AFP

Russia accuses Syria rebels of preparing a chemical attack

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday said Syrian rebels are preparing a chemical attack in Idlib province which will be blamed on Damascus and used as a pretext for Western powers to hit government targets in the war-torn country. Moscow's accusation comes after US President Donald Trump's national security adviser John Bolton this week said Washington will respond "very strongly" if Syrian President Bashar al-Assad uses chemical weapons in an offensive to retake Idlib, one of the last rebel held provinces in the country.

Russian defense ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said in a statement that the jihadist group Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham is "preparing another provocation of the 'use of chemical weapons' by Syrian government forces against the peaceful population of the Idlib province." He said the group delivered "eight chlorine tanks" to Jisr Al-Shughur town in order to "stage" the attack and that these were later taken to a village eight kilometers away. The statement also said a group of militants "trained in handling poisonous substances under the supervision of specialists from the private British military company 'Oliva'" arrived in the town a day earlier.

"The militants have the task of simulating the rescue of the victims of the chemical weapons attack dressed in the clothes of the famous 'White Helmets,'" it said. Konashenkov accused British special services of being "actively involved" in the "provocation" which will "serve as another reason for the US, the UK and France to hit Syrian government targets with air strikes." In April, the US, France and Britain launched joint missile strikes on Syrian targets in response to an alleged chemical weapons attack in the town of Douma that left scores dead.

Russian stuck by its ally Syria and angrily insisted the Douma attack was staged by the White Helmets volunteer rescue service.

In Jerusalem on Wednesday, Bolton said Washington was "concerned about the possibility that Assad may use chemical weapons again." "Just so there's no confusion here, if the Syrian regime uses chemical weapons we will respond very strongly and they really ought to think about this a long time," Bolton said. Speculation is increasing that there could be a Russian-backed government assault on Idlib, one of the so-called "de-escalation" zones set up as a result of talks by Russia, Turkey and Iran last year.

On a visit to Moscow on Friday, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu warned Russia that seeking a military solution in Idlib would be a "catastrophe" before meeting President Vladimir Putin. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the situation in Idlib is "multi-faceted" and called for separating out "the healthy opposition from terrorist structures." Damascus still holds the southeastern tip of Idlib, a strategically important province adjacent to Latakia on the Mediterranean coast that is home to Assad's clan. More than 350,000 people have been killed and millions displaced since Syria's war started in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests.

At least 27 people are being held by the Islamic State group in southern Syria, Human Rights Watch said yesterday as it deplored the hostage-taking as a "war crime". The group of mostly women and children were abducted by IS during a massive July 25 assault on the Druze community in Sweida, in which the jihadists killed more than 250 people.

They are being held by IS to use as leverage in negotiations with the Syrian government and its ally Russia, according to HRW. "Hostage-taking is a war crime," the rights group said. "Civilian lives should not be used as bargaining chips," said its deputy Middle East director Lama Fakih. Of more than 30 people taken hostage in the July offensive, at least two have since died. A 19-year-old male student was beheaded and a video circulated of the killing, which was not released on the jihadists' usual channels. — Agencies

International

Ecuador opens 'humanitarian corridor,' lifts passport measure on Venezuelans

Thousands reach Peru as border restrictions tighten

QUITO: Ecuador opened a "humanitarian corridor" yesterday and lifted its own entry restrictions on the masses of migrants escaping Venezuela's free-falling economy and streaming towards the Peruvian border, hours before Lima tightens its border controls. Ecuadorian Interior Minister Mauro Tasciani said there were currently 35 busloads of migrants on the move along the route authorities had opened to Peru.

"We are going to continue as long as we can," said the minister, whose country is being crossed by tens of thousands of Venezuelans seeking to join relatives and take up work opportunities in Peru, Chile and beyond. Peru is one of the region's fastest growing economies, projecting 4.7 percent growth next year. Venezuelans trying to cross the Peruvian border after a midnight deadline will be required to produce a passport; until then, an identity card will suffice. However, they will no longer need to produce a passport to enter Ecuador from Colombia.

Ecuador—where close to half a million people have fled this year alone—moved to ease the migrant crisis by lifting its week-long requirement for Venezuelans to produce a passport, which prompted Peru to announce its own identical measure. Peru's new passport rules threaten to leave tens of thousands of Venezuelans stranded in Ecuador and Colombia, who are already inundated with migrants from the crisis-ravaged country. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will set up a special UN team to ensure a coordinated regional response to the crisis, his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Friday.



Venezuelans flee amid deepening economic crisis

On the road

Venezuelans are rushing out of the country to join those who have already fled a deepening economic crisis, as regional governments struggle to cope with one of the biggest exoduses in Latin American history. Of the 2.3 million Venezuelans living abroad, more than 1.6 million have fled the country since 2015, when the oil-rich nation was plunged into a serious economic and political crisis, with acute shortages of food, medicine and other basic necessities, while public services have been failing. The pace of departures has accelerated in recent days, sparking a warning from the United Nations.

"It remains critical that any new measures continue to allow those in need of international protection to access safety and seek asylum," UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said on Thursday in a statement.

The UN said up to 4,000 people were arriving daily in Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Brazil, where migrants have been violently turned back by locals concerned by increasing crime. Ecuador will host a 13-nation regional summit next month to discuss the crisis. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela have been invited to the September 17-18 meeting in Quito, officials said.

Lines at Peruvian border

In Tumbes, on the Peruvian side of the border with Ecuador, lines of people waited to have their papers checked, sweating in the tropical heat. Only around half of



IPIALES, Colombia: Venezuelan migrant Mariangela Ascano (2nd left, behind) remains with relatives and friends at the Pan-American Highway in Ipiales, Colombia, on their way to Ecuador. Ascano, 21, mother of a two-year-old boy and with a pregnancy of two months, left Marçay 20 day ago with the goal of reaching Quito. — AFP

the Venezuelans fleeing their homes and the economic chaos there are carrying passports, according to Colombia's migration director, Christian Kruger. The other half have identity cards.

Like Colombia, Peru has been struggling to cope. Earlier this month, a record 5,100 people entered the

country in a single day. Peru's migration superintendent, Eduardo Sevilla, said on Thursday that "there are already 400,000" Venezuelans in the country and if they continue arriving at the same rate, there will be "half a million by the beginning of November." Many queuing at the border in Peru left Venezuela on foot weeks ago. — AFP

News in brief

Suicide attack kills two

JALALABAD: A suicide bomb blast killed at least two people yesterday outside an election commission office in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad, officials said. The latest attack in the war-torn country appeared to target a protest camp outside the building in Nangarhar province, where a group of people were rallying in support of a candidate disqualified from parliamentary elections due in October. The blast follows what has already been a bloody month in Afghanistan with the Taliban ramping up assaults on security forces across the country and the Islamic State group targeting Kabul, with hundreds killed according to estimates. — AFP

1 dead in Nepal protest

KATHMANDU: One person was killed and dozens injured in Nepal when police opened fire on protesters demanding action over the rape and murder of a 13-year-old girl, officials said yesterday. Angry crowds took to the streets in the country's remote west on Friday accusing police of protecting the person responsible for the brutal crime. Police officer Krishna Raj Ojha told AFP that 17-year-old Sani Khuna was killed "in firing to contain the violent protest". An indefinite curfew has been imposed in the area, he added. Schoolgirl Nirmala Panta went missing in late July and her body was found the following day in a sugar-cane field. — AFP

Cambodia king pardons MP

PHNOM PENH: An outspoken Cambodian opposition lawmaker was pardoned by royal decree and released yesterday, the first member of a now-dissolved political party to be freed a month after strongman premier Hun Sen won a virtually uncontested election. The lead-up to the July 29 poll—which Western democracies have slammed—was marked by a clampdown on activists, journalists and the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), paving a clear path for the authoritarian Hun Sen to extend his 33-year rule of Cambodia by another five years. Released yesterday was Um Sam An, a dual Cambodian-US national sentenced to two and a half years in prison in late 2016 over his criticism of Hun Sen's government for using contested maps as a guideline to demarcating the border with Vietnam. — AFP

IS beheading video

WASHINGTON: Three Southeast Asians who appeared in a 2016 Islamic State video showing the beheading of a captive were added to the US Treasury's sanctions blacklist Friday. The Treasury said Malaysian Mohammed Rafi Udin, Indonesian Mohammed Karim Yusop Faiz and Filipino Mohammad Reza Lahaman Kiram all took part in the June 2016 video made in Syria in which Islamic State members execute a prisoner. Sigal Mandelker, Treasury under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, said the video was "part of a propaganda campaign to attract radicals to join militant terrorist groups in Southeast Asia." — AFP

US health expert charged

NEW YORK: Tom Frieden, a leading public health expert instrumental in the US response to the Ebola crisis and to legislating against smoking, was arrested and charged with sexual harassment on Friday. The executive, who served as head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under president Barack Obama from 2009 to 2017, appeared before a Brooklyn criminal court and was released without bail, prosecutors said. He was arrested on charges of forcible touching, sexual abuse and harassment of a 55-year-old woman in upmarket Brooklyn Heights. — AFP

Litany of Catholic abuse scandals

LONDON: Accusations of wide-ranging abuse in Catholic institutions in Ireland, including but not limited to the sexual targeting of children by priests, date back several decades. In a sign of the scale of the abuse, 14,500 people applied for compensation through an Irish government scheme for those abused at juvenile facilities run by religious groups between 1936 and 1970. As Pope Francis prepares to meet some victims during a visit to Ireland this weekend, his first as pontiff, here are the most prominent cases to come to light:

Predator priests

Irish Catholic Church leaders are accused of having protected hundreds of predator priests suspected of sexually abusing thousands of children over decades. Allegations in Ireland began to emerge in the 1980s, among the first in an eventual avalanche of cases globally. They prompted criminal cases and Irish government enquiries in the following decades. The Church published a series of its own probes from 2008, which found sexual abuse allegations against at least 85 priests since 1975. It put in place detailed procedures for dealing with child sexual abuse in 1996. But the reviews by its National Board of Safeguarding Children found senior clergy had repeatedly failed to report abuse by priests and misled enquiries before and after that date. The most notorious case was that of Father Tony Walsh. A government commission estimated that Walsh had abused hundreds of children over a period of nearly two decades before he was cast out from the priesthood and imprisoned.

Magdalene Laundries

As many as 10,000 women were forced to work in "Magdalene Laundries" — penitentiary workhouses managed by the Catholic Church — over the last century. They suffered decades of physical and psychological abuse. Ireland's conservative society at the time ostracized "fallen women" who had become pregnant outside marriage, and they made up the bulk of the laundries' residents. Others

Italy threatens EU funding in migrant row

ROME: Italy's populist government warned it would pull European Union funding unless it agrees to take some of the 150 people stranded on an Italian coastguard ship Friday, sparking a fresh immigration row with the bloc. Dozens of people have been blocked at the Sicilian port of Catania on the Diciotti vessel since Monday night because the Italian government is refusing to allow them to disembark without commitments from the EU to take some of them in. But a high-level meeting of a dozen EU member states in Brussels on Friday, held to discuss what officials said was the broader issue of the disembarkation of migrants rescued at sea, failed to produce an immediate solution for the Diciotti migrants.

"The European Union has decided to turn its back on Italy once again," Deputy Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio wrote on his Facebook page, adding that his country had no choice but to "take a compensatory measure in a unilateral way... we are ready to reduce the funds that we give to the European Union." "They want the 20 billion euros (\$23 billion) paid by Italian citizens? Then let them demonstrate that they deserve it and that they are taking charge of a problem that we can no longer face alone. The borders of Italy are the borders of Europe," he added.

Di Maio had earlier warned that "if they decide nothing regarding the Diciotti and the redistribution of the migrants, I and the

whole Five Star Movement (his party) will no longer be prepared to give 20 billion euros to the European Union every year." Migration is a hot-button issue in Italy, where hundreds of thousands of people have arrived since 2013 fleeing war, persecution and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Under EU rules people must seek asylum in their country of arrival, but Italy's new government has increasingly barred boats from docking at its ports.

'Unconstructive comments'

Brussels quickly hit back at Di Maio's comments. "Unconstructive comments, let alone threats, are not helpful and they will not get us any closer to a solution," European Commission spokesman Alexander Winterstein told a briefing. "The EU is a community of rules and it operates on the basis of rules, not threats."

No deal was struck about the Diciotti migrants at the talks, as a source at the European Commission said "this was not a meeting where decisions were taken". However the source said they discussed "the need for a shared and rapid solution for the migrants on board of the Diciotti as well as those most recently disembarked in Spain and Malta." EU figures for 2016 say Italy contributed just under 14 billion euros to the EU budget—less than one percent of its gross national income—while the bloc spent 11.6 billion euros in Italy. Di Maio, who heads the anti-establishment Five Star, said Italy didn't want the "mickey taken out of us by the union's other countries" on the distribution of migrants.

"The EU was born of principles like solidarity. If it is not capable of redistributing 170 people it has serious problems with its founding principles," he said in an interview with state broadcaster RAI. Italian



DUBLIN: Protesters holding a banner demonstrate against abuse in the Catholic Church yesterday during the visit of Pope Francis to Ireland to attend the 2018 World Meeting of Families. — AFP

included rape victims, orphans, prostitutes and the disabled. They worked for no pay while the religious orders ran the laundries as commercial bodies. Irish authorities released a 1,000-page report on the laundries in 2013 and both then-prime minister Enda Kenny and those who ran the laundries apologized to the victims.

Mother and baby homes

Thousands of pregnant women were also sent to "mother and baby" homes, accused of being punishment hostels complicit in illegal adoptions and mistreatment. The Irish government in 2015 launched a commission to investigate 18 such homes — the last of which closed in

1996 — after revelations that up to 800 infants may have died over several decades at one site run by Catholic nuns.

Historians alleged that their remains were interred in an unmarked mass grave at the home, which was managed by the Sisters of the Bon Secours, in County Galway between 1925 and 1961. Death records showed that they died from malnutrition and infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and measles. In March the commission announced it had found "a significant number of human remains" at the site. The homes received public attention in 2013 when the story of Philomena Lee, who was forced to give up her baby for adoption, was made into the Oscar-nominated film "Philomena", starring Judi Dench and Steve Coogan. — AFP



CATANIA: Migrants gather on the deck of the Italian Coast Guard vessel 'Diciotti' in the Sicilian port of Catania, as they wait to disembark following a rescue operation at sea. — AFP

media reports that some of the migrants had started a hunger strike over their treatment. The coastguard told AFP they had "refused to eat breakfast" on Friday. Prosecutors from Sicily were travelling to Rome to question officials, including Italy's headline Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, about the illegal detention of those onboard. "If a judge wants to arrest me, I expect it, no problem," Salvini said Friday.

Salvini stopped the majority of the migrants disembarking from the ship after they were rescued on August 15. His only concession was to allow 27 unaccompanied minors off the boat Wednesday. Salvini said in an interview with Corriere

Della Sera that the only way the migrants would be let off the Diciotti was "with a nice big airplane from one Europe's capitals landing in Catania". He also echoed Di Maio's comments about EU funding on Friday, telling Italian radio: "If in Europe they pretend not to understand, given that we pay a lot, we will do what it takes to pay a little less." Opinion polls suggest that Salvini's stance has boosted his far-right League party's approval rating to around 30 percent—a more than 10 point jump from its showing in March's election—and is now level with the Five Star Movement with which it has governed Italy since early June. — AFP

International

China slams 'irresponsible' US accusations on N Korea

Trump calls off Pompeo's North Korea trip, blasts China

BEIJING: China yesterday called Donald Trump "irresponsible" after the US President cancelled his top diplomat's latest trip to North Korea and suggested Beijing was stalling efforts to disarm Pyongyang. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was due to return to North Korea next week for what he described as the next stage in ensuring the "final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea". But Trump-facing a slew of domestic problems and independent reports that North Korea has done little or nothing to roll back its nuclear program-vetoed the plan on Friday.

"Because of our much tougher trading stance with China, I do not believe they are helping with the process of denuclearization as they once were," despite UN sanctions against the nuclear-armed regime, Trump said. Beijing hit back at Trump's "capricious" accusations in a statement posted on the foreign ministry website. "The US statement is contrary to basic facts and is irresponsible. We are seriously concerned about this," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said in the statement. "All parties concerned should... show more sincerity and flexibility, instead of being capricious and put the blame on others," he said.

Pompeo's N Korea trip

Trump pulled the plug on his top diplomat's upcoming trip to North Korea and took a swipe at China over stalled efforts to disarm Kim Jong Un's regime. "I have asked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo not to go to North Korea, at this time, because I feel we are not making sufficient progress with respect to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," Trump said on Twitter. Pompeo was due to return to

Pyongyang next week for what he described as the next stage in ensuring the "final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea."

But Trump-facing a slew of domestic problems and independent reports that North Korea has done little or nothing to roll back its nuclear program-vetoed the plan. Pompeo and Trump met earlier Friday. White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said. Trump also stepped up his rhetoric against China, which has grown harsher as November congressional elections approach, with the world's top two economies now embroiled in an escalating trade war.

"Additionally, because of our much tougher Trading stance with China, I do not believe they are helping with the process of denuclearization as they once were (despite the UN Sanctions which are in place)," Trump said. In another tweet, the president added Pompeo would still head to North Korea "in the near future," saying this would likely occur when the US-China trading relationship is "resolved." "In the meantime I would like to send my warmest regards and respect to Chairman Kim. I look forward to seeing him soon!" Trump said.

'Largely solved'

The trip would have been Pompeo's fourth to North Korea, and the second since a historic summit on June 12 between Trump and Kim. Trump, who relishes unpredictability in negotiating, had at one point canceled that summit, citing North Korea's "open hostility." But he soon backtracked and the summit went ahead in Singapore. Trump had previously claimed that he had "largely solved" the North Korea nuclear prob-



PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (front line 3rd right) attends the state funeral for marshal of the Korean People's Army, Kim Yong Chun in Pyongyang. — AFP

lem. Despite that bold claim, the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency recently reported it had not seen any indication that nuclear activities in North Korea have stopped.

"The continuation and further development of the DPRK's nuclear program and related statements by the DPRK are a cause for grave concern," said a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), referring to North Korea's official name. North Korea is believed to be close to developing a miniaturized nuclear device and the ballistic missile capabilities to carry it anywhere in the continental United States. Evans Revere, a senior fellow at the

Brookings Institution, said it is time for a radical shift in the US approach.

"The Trump administration needs a 'plan B' to deal with the probability that Pyongyang is doing what it has done with every previous US administration: exploiting diplomacy and negotiations to buy time," Revere said in a recent report. Earlier this week, Pompeo named a Ford Motor Co. executive as special envoy for North Korea to try to get disarmament back on track. Stephen Biegun, 55, who is retiring as Ford's vice president for international governmental affairs, had been considered for the post of Trump's national security advisor before it went to John Bolton.—Agencies

Pakistan disputes US account of call between Pompeo and new PM Khan

KARACHI: Pakistan has disputed Washington's account of a phone call between new Prime Minister Imran Khan and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, denying that there was any discussion on militants operating in Pakistan. Pakistan's foreign ministry called for the United States to amend its statement, but US State Department said it stands by its account. The row comes ahead of a planned visit by Pompeo to Islamabad in the first week of September to meet with Khan, who was sworn in as prime minister last week. The US State Department readout of the call said Pompeo wished Khan success and also asked Khan to take "decisive action against all terrorists operating in Pakistan".

"...the impression, which was given... where they're saying that they mentioned terrorists' presence in Pakistan, that is against the reality," Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said on Friday. "I'm saying it with full confidence." US officials routinely raise the issue of Taliban and other militants operating from safe havens in Pakistan, where they plot attacks on US and Afghan troops across the border. Pakistan regularly denies that the Afghan Taliban operates from its soil. And overnight on Thursday, Pakistan's foreign ministry asserted that the issue of militants never came up in the phone call between Pompeo and Khan.—Reuters

26 kids killed by coalition strikes in Yemen: UN

UNITED NATIONS: Two Saudi-led coalition air strikes in Yemen have killed at least 26 children, UN officials said yesterday, renewing calls for an independent investigation of attacks targeting civilians in the three-year war. At least 22 children and four women died in an attack Thursday while fleeing fighting in the Al-Durayhimi district, south of the rebel-held city of Hodeida. UN aid chief Mark Lowcock said. In addition to that strike, four other children were killed in a separate air strike in Al-Durayhimi, also on Thursday. "This is the second time in two weeks that an air strike by the Saudi-led coalition has resulted in dozens of civilian casualties," Lowcock, the undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, said in a statement.

A coalition attack on a bus in the northern rebel stronghold of Saada on August 9 killed 40 children, prompting UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to call for an independent investigation. Lowcock renewed the UN appeal for "an impartial, independent and prompt investigation" and said "those with influence" over the warring sides must ensure that civilians are protected. The rebel-run Saba news agency said the air strike on Thursday hit a bus and a house but the United Arab Emirates, a key partner in the coalition, blamed the Houthis rebels for the attack.

Al-Durayhimi lies some 12 miles (20 kilometers) south of Hodeida, and has seen two weeks of fighting between the rebels and pro-government forces backed by the UAE. "I had hoped that the outrage that followed the Saada attack in Yemen two weeks ago would be a turning point in the conflict. Yesterday's reported attacks in Al-Durayhimi, killing 26 children, indicate that it was not," said Henrietta Fore, the director of the UN children's agency UNICEF. Fore urged the warring sides, their foreign backers and the Security Council to "take action and end this conflict once



AD DURAYHIMI: A TV grab shows men carrying covered bodies in Al-Durayhimi, some 20 kilometers south of Hodeida, after a missile strike. —AFP

and for all." After widespread condemnation of the August 9 bus attack, the coalition announced that it was opening an investigation, but rights groups insist any probe should be impartial. In a 90-page report, Human Rights Watch said the coalition had failed to properly investigate war crimes allegations stemming from attacks on civilian targets. HRW's Middle East director Sarah Leah Whitson said the coalition's investigators "were doing little more than covering up war crimes." The European Union urged Yemen's warring sides to "prioritize the protection of civilians in all instances" following the attacks in Al-Durayhimi and stressed the need to end the war, according to a statement from the EU foreign affairs spokesperson. UN-brokered talks between Yemen's government and the Houthis are to open in Geneva on September 6 - a first step toward resuming peace negotiations that broke down two years ago.

The Security Council has called for a "credible" investigation of the bus attack in Yemen, but did not demand an independent probe. Three of the five permanent council members - Britain, France and the United States - are supporting the coalition in its military campaign, while non-permanent member Kuwait is part of the coalition.—AFP

Australia's new PM kicks off with a call to Trump

SYDNEY: Australia's new prime minister began his first full day yesterday with a phone call to Donald Trump as he set about restoring faith in his "battered and bruised" government after a tumultuous week. Scott Morrison was sworn in as the country's 30th leader late Friday after a bitter Liberal Party revolt against moderate Malcolm Turnbull driven by a hard-line conservative faction. The former treasurer, a Turnbull ally who upset right-wing challenger Peter Dutton in the internal party ballot, said he had had a warm chat with the US president.

"Had a great discussion with @realDonaldTrump this morning," he tweeted. "We affirmed the strength of the relationship between the US and Australia." Morrison said he shared with Trump the story of Australian soldier Leslie "Bull" Allen "who is a symbol of our 100 years of mateship". Allen famously carried to safety 12 wounded Americans during an attack on Japanese positions at Mount Tambu in New Guinea during World War II in 1943. Trump also took to Twitter to congratulate Morrison. "There are no greater friends than the United States and Australia," he said.

With their pleasantries out the way, Morrison began work on nailing down a ministerial frontbench after a series of resignations as he looked to put a torrid week of political manoeuvring behind him.—AFP

To see your ad here, call: **+965 248 35 616 / 617**
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
ads@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

<p>SAVING BUNDLES August Bundles Offers</p>	<p>Panasonic TH-43FX430M</p> <p>4K Smart TV</p> <p>43"</p> <p>134 ريال قبل 189 ريال 55 ريال وفر</p>	<p>Panasonic TH-55FX430M</p> <p>4K Smart TV</p> <p>55"</p> <p>199 ريال قبل 299 ريال 100 ريال وفر</p>	<p>Panasonic TH-65FX430M</p> <p>4K Smart TV</p> <p>65"</p> <p>309 ريال قبل 499 ريال 190 ريال وفر</p>
<p>BestAIYouSifi @BestAIYouSifi alyouSifiBEST BestAIYouSifi</p> <p>Credit: Start from 5KD • Up to 48 month • Instant approval</p> <p>Shop Online www.best.com.kw Free Delivery</p> <p>1809 809</p>			

Analysis

Kuwait Times logo, contact info, and publication details.

Why no one thought to close Italy bridge

People living under the Italian bridge that collapsed last week with the loss of 43 lives had known for years it was crumbling...

Annoyed that noisy round-the-clock work was interrupting their sleep, they voiced their frustration to two officials from motorway operating company Autostrade per l'Italia...

Local politician Mauro Avvenente came closest to putting the big question at the meeting, asking, "Have you done an estimate of the remaining life of this bridge?"

As long ago as the 1980s, according to pensioner Salvatore Loreface, there was a form prepared for residents to claim compensation for damage to their cars from falling concrete.

Italy's new populist government, which has accused the previous administration of weak oversight of Autostrade, said the bridge's importance likely led its predecessor to consider closure or traffic restrictions as an extreme last step.

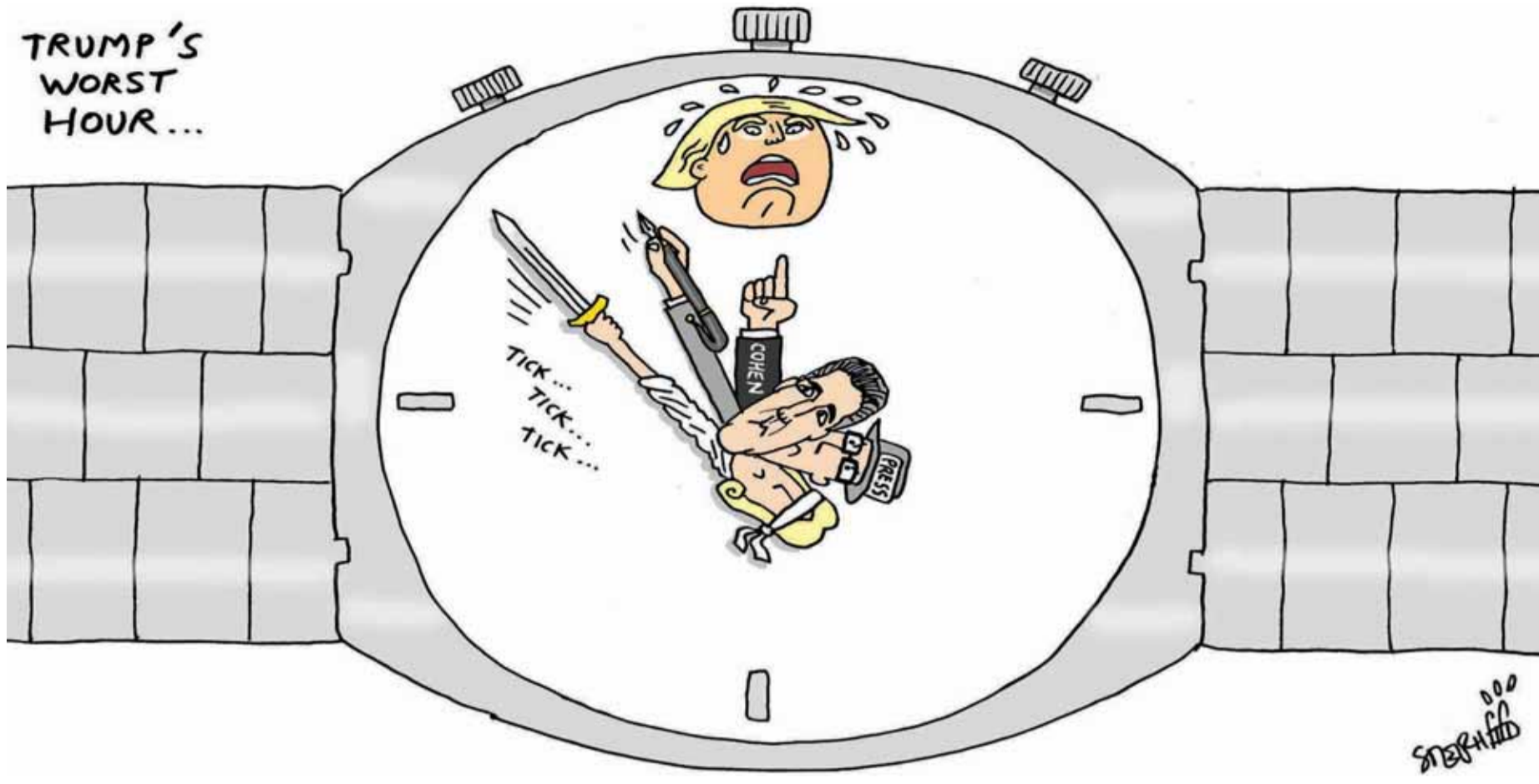
Heavy corrosion

Local resident Giusy Moretti, a residents' committee coordinator and among those evacuated from their homes after the disaster, said she and other residents trusted Autostrade when it said it was working to ensure the bridge's safety.

At the July meeting, Autostrade maintenance executive Mauro Moretti explained to residents how the sea air had eaten away at the structure, considered an avant-garde work of engineering and the pride of Genoa when it went up in the 1960s.

What they did not know was that by the time of the meeting, corrosion had already consumed 10-20 percent of some of the steel rods that held up the bridge's road surface...

The corroded stays have emerged as a focus of investigations into the disaster, which unfolded in heavy rain. Rainy cellphone footage appears to show one set of stays rupturing, sending a 200-metre section of roadway into the valley below.



Washington Watch

Lessons to learn, work to do

By Dr James J Zogby

Thirty years ago, I mounted the podium of the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia to open the first ever political party debate on Palestinian rights.

I began my remarks from the podium by noting: "We're making history today. Today the issue of Palestinian rights is being debated by our party."

I went on to criticize the existing Party platform language for its refusal to speak about Palestinians - ignoring "their right to freedom, to independence, and to statehood".

I concluded by recognizing that "there are those who seek to silence this debate, to pretend that it isn't happening. But pressure and intimidation work only in the short run."

In the next day's press coverage, one prominent pro-Israel Democrat was quoted as saying,

"I'm scared. Nothing like this has ever happened before...[We] went all out to keep this issue from being debated on the floor and we were unable to stop it".

I write this not to reminisce, for its own sake, but to recall an important moment in our history and to learn lessons from that period that can guide our work today.

Trump faces election and legal risks

President Donald Trump suffered twin setbacks on Tuesday with two ex-advisers facing prison sentences - and one of them saying Trump told him to commit a crime - possibly hurting his Republican Party's election prospects.

Cohen also testified that Trump directed him to commit a crime by arranging payments ahead of the 2016 presidential election to silence two women who said they had had affairs with Trump.

Arab Americans, and progressive American Jews; and the changes in US perceptions created by the inspiring sacrifices of young Palestinians who were in the midst of their Intifada.

The importance of building coalitions and mobilizing them in the political arena: Arab Americans had been mobilizing for years in defense of Palestinian rights and had succeeded in building coalitions with progressive Jewish groups and African American civil rights leadership.

We targeted 10 states and succeeded in passing pro-Palestinian statehood resolutions in every one of them. Without fail, party leaders and elected officials in each state tried to block these efforts, but they were unable to do so because our simple calls for justice resonated among the grass roots in the party.

The importance of leadership: It was Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign that empowered our movement and made it possible for our coalition to successfully

opinion and inspiring our efforts - from sit-ins in front of the Israeli Embassy (during which some of us were arrested) to the broader effort to bring the issue to the heart of the political process calling for a change in US policy toward the Palestinians.

Because the largely non-violent youth movement was changing US perceptions, we had wind in our sails. We didn't need to introduce people to the Palestinians and the injustices they were facing-they saw it on TV every night. That was then...



...and now: The last 30 years have been difficult ones for supporters of Palestinian rights. The Oslo process created expectations that "peace was at hand" and then, after a few years, dashed these hopes to the ground.

In spite of all this, the elements of a successful campaign for Palestinian rights are present and, in many ways, stronger than they were 30 years ago. What comes through clearly in polling on US public opinion is that there is a deep partisan divide on the Israeli/Palestinian issue.

At the same time, our capacity is greater than ever with stronger and better organized groups in the Arab, Jewish, Black, and student communities ready to act for Palestinian rights.

All that is left is a commitment and focused effort to bring our energy and our movement directly into the political arena and to embrace a strategy to move the Palestinian issue forward in 2020.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

Flashback 30 years

focus its efforts in the political arena, to win victories in state after state, and then to mobilize in Atlanta. He was consistent in his principled stance in favor of Palestinian rights and he withstood tremendous pressure from party leaders until the end.

Our negotiations with the party over the language of the platform had been difficult. They were unyielding in their opposition to even mentioning the word "Palestinian" in the document.

While we had the votes to insist on a minority plank, some within our group had become fearful of retribution and were pushing that we drop the whole issue. I insisted that we take the matter to Jackson. He stood firm, saying "we've come this far on principle. We won't back down now".

Changed perceptions made debate possible: The first Intifada played a significant role in changing US

Trump faces election and legal risks

Counsel Robert Mueller's inquiry into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election, whether Trump's campaign colluded with Moscow and whether Trump obstructed justice by firing then-FBI Director James Comey, who was formerly in charge of the investigation.

Trump has denied collusion, calling Mueller's probe a "witch hunt". Of the two latest developments, Cohen's plea deal was the more troublesome, said those around Trump.

they bolstered their argument that the Trump White House was weighed down by scandal. "The American people deserve answers regarding the president's role in these corrupt and criminal actions," said Democratic Representative Rosa DeLauro.

Rodell Mollineau, a senior Democratic strategist, said the news "adds to a constant drumbeat that will ultimately affect some independent voters" and help Democrats at the polls.

Loyal support

The long-term impact of the Cohen and Manafort cases will likely depend on how they affect the turnout of Republican and Democratic voters in November. While he undoubtedly had a bad day on Tuesday, some analysts said

Trump might be able to turn the setbacks to his advantage by reinforcing core supporters' views that he is under siege, said Andy Smith, director of the University of New Hampshire Survey Center. "In midterm elections, the president's party tends to be less interested and less motivated to vote. But one thing that will motivate people to get out and vote is if they believe the party is being attacked unfairly," he said.

At a rally in Charleston, West Virginia, on Tuesday night, a relatively subdued Trump did not mention either the Cohen or Manafort case. Instead, as supporters cheered him on, he made fun of his opponents' focus on the Mueller investigation, saying they were desperate to find collusion with Russians.

Business

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 2018

12 Boursa Kuwait turns bearish prior to Eid Al-Adha holiday**13** Norway's \$1tn wealth fund should keep oil stocks: Panel**15** Tesla CEO Musk drops pursuit of \$72 billion take-private deal

WASHINGTON, DC: Members of a Chinese delegation led by the Vice Minister of Commerce and Deputy China International Trade Representative Wang Shouwen (unseen, already in van) leave the building of the US Treasury after two days of talks with US representatives in Washington, DC on Thursday.—AFP

Much detail, little progress in US-China talks

US planning tariffs on \$200bn more worth of Chinese goods

BEIJING/WASHINGTON: US-China trade talks this week were heavy on details but short on progress as US negotiators outlined cases of American firms harmed by Chinese practices and China argued it was meeting its WTO obligations, people familiar with contents of the discussions said. The two days of talks in Washington led by mid-level officials did little to resolve a worsening trade spat between the world's two biggest economies and ended on Thursday without a joint statement.

Washington separately held hearings during the week on another round of proposed tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese imports that appear increasingly likely to take effect in late September or early October. And while factions on the US side have given conflicting signals on how hard to press Beijing during the trade dispute, officials from the Treasury Department, which led the talks, and the US Trade Representative, which has taken a harder line, were aligned in their messaging, the people said.

The talks took place as the two sides followed through on threatened tit-for-tat tariffs on \$16 billion worth of the other's goods. Beijing has filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization about the US duties.

During the talks, Chinese negotiators repeatedly invoked what they said was Beijing's compliance with WTO rules, an argument that did not impress the US side. One of the sources described the US response as: "We're not going to care about the WTO as you fuel overcapacity, wreck industries and steal IP (intellectual property). We're not going to sit on our hands." All of the sources declined to be identified given the sensitivity of the matter.

Washington is demanding Beijing improve market access and intellectual property protections for US companies, cut industrial subsidies and slash a \$375 billion trade gap. In a brief statement on Friday, China's commerce ministry said both sides had a "constructive" and "candid" exchange over trade issues, and will stay in touch

on the next steps. US officials, including President Donald Trump, had downplayed expectations for the talks.

No further talks have been announced. Chinese negotiators brought up the lack of US market access for items including Chinese cooked chicken, one of the exports that was agreed last year as part of a 100-day plan, demonstrating Beijing is still seeking some US concessions in the talks. "The Chinese are stuck in the mindset that they want something in return. That's not going to fly in Washington anymore," another source briefed on the talks said.

US negotiators brought up the case of Micron Technology, which was temporarily barred by a Chinese court in July from selling its main semiconductor products in China, citing violation of patents held by Taiwan's United Microelectronics Corp (UMC).

In December, Micron had filed a civil lawsuit in California accusing UMC and its state-backed Chinese partner of stealing technology. One of the people said the

talks focused on systemic issues related to Washington's "Section 301" probe into China's intellectual property and technology transfer practices.

There was little, if any, focus on more purchases by China of US commodities. During the previous round of talks, in June in Beijing, US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross unsuccessfully sought to secure major Chinese purchases of US soybeans and liquefied natural gas.

In an editorial late on Friday, the Global Times, a nationalist Chinese tabloid run by the ruling Communist Party's People's Daily, said it was clear that the two days of talks did not yield significant progress. "An escalation in the US-China trade war is becoming obvious," it said, citing US congressional elections in November as a key reason for the tough US stance. "So far, neither side shows signs of extending the trade war to other areas. We hope that both sides can stick to the 'rule' and keep the trade issue within limits," it said.—Reuters

Saudi reforms will boost growth: IMF

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia is moving ahead with economic reforms and growth in its non-oil economy will pick up this year despite any delay to a planned sale of shares in national oil giant Saudi Aramco, a senior International Monetary Fund official said on Friday.

"Aramco was one part of the reform program. Other parts are moving ahead pretty well," Tim Callen, the IMF's mission chief for Saudi Arabia, told reporters after annual consultations with the Saudi government.

He said the IMF's projections for Saudi economic growth to accelerate in coming years were based on expectations for a broad range of reforms to continue, and did not include the impact of the initial public offer of Aramco shares.

Industry sources told Reuters this week that the sale of a roughly 5 percent stake in Aramco, originally slated to take place this year and raise at least \$100 billion for the government, had been postponed indefinitely. The IPO, designed to raise money for reinvestment in non-oil industries, was one of the most prominent of the government's reform plans. It stalled when it became clear Riyadh might not achieve the valuation it wanted for Aramco, and that the company could face tough disclosure requirements if it listed overseas.

Callen, while stressing he could not comment on the

status of the government's plans for Aramco, said the fate of the IPO did not affect prospects for a much broader range of other reforms, including steps to improve the business environment, create jobs and strengthen state finances. "If it does those things, economic prospects will look positive," he said, adding that there had been progress in areas such as developing Saudi Arabia's capital markets and legal system.

Callen noted that any delay to the Aramco IPO would require the government to rethink how it finances its Public Investment Fund, which it wants to jump-start many economic development projects. The PIF may already have solved that problem. A source told Reuters this week that it had raised \$11 billion via its first commercial loan from banks, while it is also discussing the sale of a stake in petrochemical maker Saudi Basic Industries to Aramco that could raise \$70 billion.

An IMF report on the annual consultations predicted Saudi Arabia's gross domestic product would grow 1.9 percent this year, partly because of higher oil output, after shrinking 0.9 percent last year.

Non-oil GDP growth is projected to accelerate to 2.3 percent in 2018 from 1.1 percent in 2017. "Growth is expected to pick up further over the medium term as the reforms take hold and oil output increases," the IMF said. It also predicted a strengthening of Riyadh's state finances because of higher oil and non-oil revenues. The budget deficit is forecast to narrow to 4.6 percent of GDP in 2018 and 1.7 percent 2019 from 9.3 percent last year. In subsequent years, however, the deficit looks likely to widen back towards 3.6 percent of GDP in 2023 — instead of narrowing to zero in that year as Riyadh projects—as oil prices resume weakening, the IMF said. It advised the government to save rather than spend any windfall revenues from higher-than-expected oil prices.—Reuters

Will the stock market crash if Trump is impeached?

NEW YORK: Faced with new political turmoil, President Donald Trump warned in a television interview broadcast on Thursday that the economic consequences of his impeachment would be dire.

Which raises the question: is that possible or likely?

What did Trump say?

His comments came on the heels of Tuesday's conviction of Trump's former campaign chief Paul Manafort and a guilty plea by his former attorney Michael Cohen. The double-whammy events have boosted speculation that Trump could be impeached, especially if Democrats dominate the congressional elections in November.

"I will tell you what, if I ever got impeached, I think the market would crash. I think everybody would be very poor," Trump said in an interview on Fox network.

Is Trump right?

Analysts were skeptical, viewing his statements as hyperbolic. Still, they said there could be a hit to the stock market if Trump faced impeachment. CFRA chief investment strategist Sam Stovall predicted stocks could fall five-10 percent, or even up to 20 percent, but "we do not think it will lead to recession

and therefore will not result in a bear market."

Does Trump deserve credit for the bull market?

The S&P 500 stands within striking distance of its all-time high and on Wednesday marked the longest-ever "bull market" following a nine-year run without a major pullback. Although that included most of Barack Obama's presidency, Trump has claimed credit for the stock market's strength following tax cuts and regulatory rollbacks. Wall Street historian Charles Geisst agreed those policies have benefited stocks, but said Trump himself is not critical to their continuation because they are supported by Congress. "His statement assumes that he is indispensable to the markets. In reality, he is only coincidental," Geisst told AFP. "This is true of Trump certainly but many of his predecessors as well."

Risks to stocks from impeachment?

Under Trump's worst-case scenario, he could face eventual removal following an impeachment trial and decisive votes by both houses of Congress. He would be succeeded by Vice President Mike Pence, who is likely to be as supportive of market-friendly tax and regulatory policies as Trump and would probably back off Trump's trade policies that have worried Wall Street.

But the impeachment process itself could damage the economy if business and consumer sentiment takes a hit. Beyond that, investors are uncertain how Trump would respond in other market-moving domains where he has sometimes taken radical steps, such as his open criticism of Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell for raising interest rates, a departure from the norm that US presidents steer clear of commenting on Fed policy.—AFP

Business

Bayan Weekly Market Report

Boursa Kuwait turns bearish prior to Eid Al-Adha holiday

Strong selling pressure on listed stocks

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the red zone. The Premier Market Index closed at 5,381.57 points, down by 1.36 percent, the Main Market Index decreased by 1.39 percent after closing at 4,894.32 points, and the All-Share Index closed at 5,208.54 points down by 1.37 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 44.32 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching around KD 16.15 million, whereas trading volume average was about 93.17 million shares, recording a decrease of 38.79 percent.

The Boursa was affected mainly by the noticeable declines it witnessed at the beginning of the last trading week prior to the Eid holiday, as the strong selling operations over controlled the trading activity and the selling pressures that targeted many listed stocks of different sectors, caused its three indicators to decrease noticeably during the first and second sessions of the week. Also, despite the relative solidity of the market in the next two sessions, it could not succeed in compensating its previous sessions, and ended the week in the red zone.

The market capitalization of the Boursa recorded losses of around KD 250 million, as it reached by the end of the last week prior to the holiday about KD 29.03 billion, down by 0.85 percent compared to its level in the previous week, where it was KD 29.28 billion, to contract the Boursa gains since the application of the new market segmentation phase and reach KD 1.17 billion, or 4.22 percent. (Note: The market capitalization for the listed stocks in the Market is calculated based on the weighted average number of shares as per the latest available official financial statements).

Moreover, the number of the companies that disclosed its fiscal results for the first half period of 2018 reached 167 company, and its total fiscal profit exceeded the one billion KD level, after it reached approximately KD 1.09 billion, up by 11.64 percent compared to the same companies' results for the same period of 2017, which was then around KD 972.92 million.

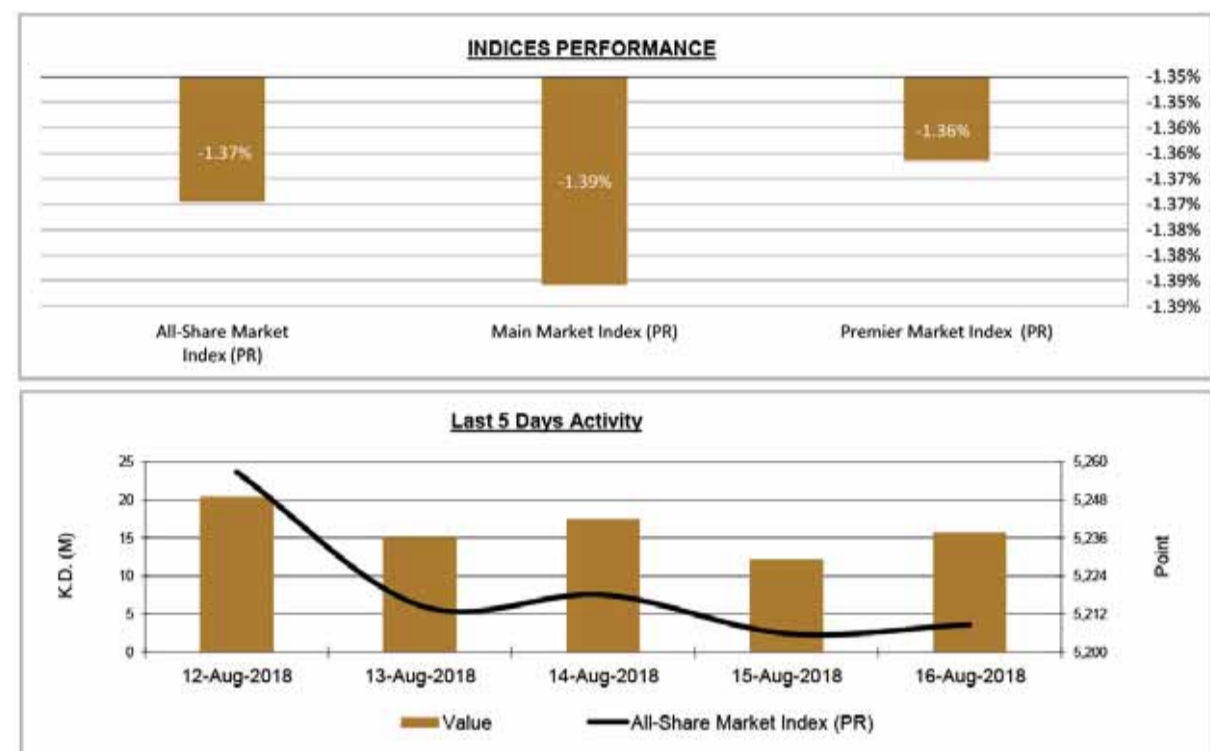
Last week witnessed trading over 164 stock out of 175 listed stock in the Market, where prices of 45 stock increased against prices of 94 stock decreased, and prices of 36 stock remained at no change.

Sectors' Indices

All of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the red zone, while the Health Care sector's index closed with no change from the week before. The Technology sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 11.85 percent to end the week's activity at 865.73 points, the Consumer Goods sector, was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 2.27 percent, closing at 888.31 points, followed by the Industrial sector, which index declined by 2.06 percent, closing at 1,014.33 points. The Insurance sector was the least declining as its index closed at 942.80 points with a 0.12 percent decrease.

Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 174.84 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 37.53 percent of the total market trading volume. The Banks sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 27.87 percent of last week's total trading



volume, with a total of around 129.82 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 40.84 million or 50.58 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Industrial sector

took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 16.79 million representing 20.79 percent of the total market trading value.

— Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

SECTORS TRADING ACTIVITY					SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %	Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Mkt Seg. to Date Change (%)
BANKS	129,817,713	27.87%	40,836,955	50.58%	BANKS	1,082.08	1,095.76	-1.25%	8.21%
BASIC MATERIALS	2,083,032	0.45%	940,885	1.17%	BASIC MATERIALS	1,133.78	1,147.87	-1.23%	13.38%
CONSUMER GOODS	846,624	0.18%	191,947	0.24%	CONSUMER GOODS	888.31	908.93	-2.27%	-11.17%
CONSUMER SERVICES	17,686,579	3.80%	1,307,880	1.62%	CONSUMER SERVICES	1,033.98	1,051.14	-1.63%	3.40%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	174,843,353	37.53%	10,729,528	13.29%	FINANCIAL SERVICES	1,004.74	1,015.07	-1.02%	0.47%
HEALTH CARE	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	HEALTH CARE	996.33	996.33	0.00%	-0.37%
INDUSTRIALS	43,283,677	9.29%	16,788,118	20.79%	INDUSTRIALS	1,014.33	1,035.71	-2.06%	1.43%
INSURANCE	106,532	0.02%	27,024	0.03%	INSURANCE	942.80	943.90	-0.12%	-5.72%
OIL & GAS	5,213,551	1.12%	188,052	0.23%	OIL & GAS	1,086.46	1,104.22	-1.61%	8.65%
REAL ESTATE	80,064,221	17.19%	4,492,042	5.56%	REAL ESTATE	1,010.68	1,020.32	-0.94%	1.07%
TECHNOLOGY	74,010	0.02%	9,474	0.01%	TECHNOLOGY	865.73	982.13	-11.85%	-13.43%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	11,850,605	2.54%	5,232,310	6.48%	TELECOMMUNICATIONS	944.91	964.12	-1.99%	-5.51%

Trump says trade deal with Mexico 'could be happening soon'

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump yesterday hinted that the US and Mexico were on the verge of finalizing a deal, as negotiators from both sides were holding talks through the weekend to revamp the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"Our relationship with Mexico is getting closer by the hour," the US president tweeted. "Some really good people within both the new and old government, and all working closely together....A big Trade Agreement with Mexico could be happening soon!" His tweet followed a similarly optimistic message from Mexico's Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo, who said on Friday that bilateral meetings with the US were "very far" along and that Canada was set to rejoin talks as soon as they were called.

Guajardo and Mexico's Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray have been shuttling back and forth to Washington for more than a month for meetings with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to try to iron out bilateral issues, such as rules for the auto market, before the end of August.

Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland of Canada—the third party to the trade pact—said earlier in the week that she was encouraged by the progress between Washington and Mexico City and would rejoin the talks once the bilateral discussions concluded.

Guajardo declined to go into detail on the topics remaining with the United States but said the agreement could happen at any time. "The idea is that we are staying because we know there are issues to resolve," he said. "And we have to make sure that everybody feels comfortable with this agreement."

A contentious "sunset" proposal by the United States—to require that the nearly 25-year-old trade pact be reauthorized every five years—is one that must include all three partners, Guajardo said.

Jesus Seade, an economic advisor to Mexico's incoming president, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, has been participating in portions of the NAFTA talks and said the sunset clause "is going out," according to press reports from Mexico City.

Guajardo and Mexico's Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray have been shuttling back and forth to Washington for more than a month for meetings with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer to try to iron out bilateral issues, such as rules for the auto market, before the end of August. But Guajardo told reporters that Canada's Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland was ready at any point to proceed with the NAFTA negotiations. "I have confirmation that she would be available the moment we believe we can enter into the trilateral" discussions, he said. — Agencies



MEXICO CITY: In this file photo, freight trucks snake through customs into California from Mexico at the Otay Mesa port of entry, as seen from above. US President Donald Trump yesterday hinted the US and Mexico were on the verge of finalizing a deal, as negotiators from both sides were holding talks through the weekend. — AFP

Turkish lira firms against dollar as US standoff drags on

ISTANBUL: The Turkish lira firmed against the dollar on Friday after weakening in thin holiday trade this week, as a bitter standoff dragged on between Ankara and Washington over the fate of an American pastor being tried in Turkey.

The lira firmed to 6.0550 against the US currency from a close of 6.0950, having weakened 1 percent on Thursday after Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan's spokesman accused the United States of waging "economic war". Trading volumes were thin and probably largely offshore as Turkish markets have been closed since Monday for the Muslim festi-

val of Eid al-Adha. They will reopen on Monday. The lira closed at 6.01 last week. "We do expect pressures to resume, most likely next week. This is the quiet before the storm," said Jakob Christensen, head of EM research at Danske Bank.

"We see the measures put in place ahead of the holiday last week as more like temporary relief measures rather than dealing with the symptoms of the crisis," he said. Despite central bank and banking watchdog steps to underpin the lira, it has weakened 37 percent against the dollar this year. The crisis is rooted in investor concern over Erdogan's influence on monetary policy and fuelled by the deepening row with the United States.

"We really need some more substantial measures from Turkey before we call the crisis as over," Christensen said. In a conference call last week, Finance Minister Berat Albayrak assured investors that Turkey would emerge stronger from the crisis, insisting its banks were healthy but being ready to provide support to the sector if needed. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL				
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL		
Europe				
British Pound	0.382219	0.396119		
Czech Koruna	0.005531	0.014831		
Danish Krone	0.042568	0.047568		
Euro	0.341664	0.355364		
Georgian Lari	0.137932	0.137932		
Hungarian	0.001146	0.001336		
Norwegian Krone	0.031950	0.037150		
Romanian Leu	0.065164	0.082014		
Russian ruble	0.004563	0.004563		
Slovakia	0.009088	0.019088		
Swedish Krona	0.029172	0.034172		
Swiss Franc	0.299589	0.310589		
Australasia				
Australian Dollar	0.214884	0.226884		
New Zealand Dollar	0.196249	0.205749		
America				
Canadian Dollar	0.227886	0.236886		
US Dollars	0.300050	0.305350		
US Dollars Mint	0.300550	0.305350		
Asia				
Bangladesh Taka	0.003004	0.003806		
Chinese Yuan	0.042929	0.046429		
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037004	0.039764		
Indian Rupee	0.003884	0.004666		
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023		
Japanese Yen	0.002671	0.002851		
Korean Won	0.000261	0.000276		
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070834	0.076834		
Nepalese Rupee	0.002630	0.002970		
Pakistan Rupee	0.001915	0.002685		
Philippine Peso	0.005748	0.006048		
Singapore Dollar	0.216739	0.226739		
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001564	0.002144		
Taiwan	0.010436	0.010616		
Thai Baht	0.008840	0.009390		
Arab				
Bahraini Dinar	0.791661	0.808161		
Egyptian Pound	0.014368	0.020086		
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086		
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260		
Jordanian Dinar	0.424685	0.433685		
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000		
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256		
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022483	0.046483		
Omani Riyal	0.783682	0.789362		
Qatar Riyal	0.079252	0.084192		
Saudi Riyal	0.080020	0.081320		
Syrian Pound	0.001289	0.001509		
Tunisian Dinar	0.106358	0.114358		
Turkish Lira	0.048173	0.059673		
UAE Dirhams	0.081384	0.083084		
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069		

Business

Norway's \$1tn wealth fund should keep oil stocks: Panel

Fund wants to remove oil, gas stocks from benchmark index

OSLO: Norway's trillion-dollar sovereign wealth fund should continue to invest in oil and gas companies, a government-appointed commission recommended on Friday, contradicting earlier advice from the central bank, and boosting the shares of oil firms.

A decision on whether to drop energy shares from the fund's benchmark index, and thus divest tens of billions of dollars from oil and gas stocks over time, is expected this autumn.

Shares of European oil and gas companies fell last November when the fund's manager, the Norwegian central bank, announced its proposal to cut the exposure of the fund - and thus the Norwegian government - to oil price fluctuations.

On Friday shares of European oil firms, including Shell and BP, rose on the news of the commission's advice. "To get that small insurance (against the fluctuation of the oil price by removing energy stocks), it would cost the fund a lot, as it would be less diversified," commission chair Oeystein Thøgersen told Reuters.

"Second, you would change an institution that has worked very well. And third, as the years go by, we have less and less oil risk," he said, referring to Norway's declining oil reserves.

The fund, the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, invests Norway's revenues from oil and gas production for future generations in stocks, bonds and real estate abroad. Energy stocks amounted to about 4 percent of

the value of the fund, or about 315 billion crowns (\$37 billion), at the end of 2017, the commission said. Finance Minister Siv Jensen, who will present the government's decision this autumn, did not signal on Friday which way a decision would go. "I look forward to reading the assessment," she said in a statement.

The fund is among the largest investors in a wide range of oil companies, holding stakes at the end of 2017 of 2.19 percent in Shell, 2.17 percent of BP, 0.94 percent of Chevron and 0.87 percent of Exxon Mobil. The fund also held 1.42 percent of Eni, 1.79 percent of Total and 0.22 percent of Lundin Petroleum, among others. "We have given our advice and we are now awaiting the government's decision," deputy central bank governor Egil Matsen said in an emailed statement to Reuters. In a scenario with sustained lower oil prices, the reduction of the government's net cash flow from petroleum activities would be substantial, according to the commission.

A sale of energy stocks would also challenge the investment strategy of the fund, with broad diversification of investments and a high threshold for exclusion, it added. "Should the owner seek any additional reduction in oil price risk, it is likely to be more effective to reduce the Norwegian state's direct ownership in Equinor or the state's Direct Financial Interest (state-owned oil firm Petoro)," the commission said. The Norwegian state owns 67 percent



Govt decision expected this autumn



HONOLULU, HI: Continuous lines of vehicles find gasoline at the Texaco station on Harding Avenue as they fill up in preparation for the possible impact of Hurricane Lane in Honolulu, HI. —AFP

of Equinor, formerly known as Statoil, and 100 percent of Petoro. Successive Norwegian governments have ruled out reducing the state's stakes in those companies. Some observers of the fund did not welcome the commission's findings. "This recommendation will prove to

be a failure and the Norwegian Government will be forced to change this as fossil fuel investments continue to drag down global investment indexes and the Norwegian economy," Tom Sanzillo, Director of Finance for US energy finance think-tank, IEEFA, said.—Reuters

Bayt.com weekly report

Mistakes to avoid in workplace communication

KUWAIT: In a friendly workplace environment, humor and office jokes are often present. However, while its all good fun and laughter, there are some things that every employee needs to be careful of and never say in front of an employer. As the list can be infinite, we can pay attention to the common wrong sayings. Sharing aggressive, offensive, or inappropriate information with your employer or any of your work colleagues is always a no and will probably not keep you on the safe side.

However, instead of emphasizing on the obvious things to avoid, Bayt.com's career experts have gathered all the overlooked communication faux pas that need to be mitigated always.

Before listing the mistakes and the situations to be wary of, you have to always remember that your manager is not really your friend. Perhaps you go out for coffee once a week or so, or maybe you've been to their place and they have served you the most delicious meal you've had in a while. This is all unrelated, because that person, regardless of the formality or friendliness between the both of you, will need to maintain their duties and demeanor as your manager first and foremost.

Here are the things you need to watch out for when

talking to your boss or employer:

1. Anger and losing temper: "You are wrong!"
As this may seem as an obvious point, but you can be surprised by how many experienced and talented individuals fall for this trap. What is said in a moment of anger can either cost you your job or can change your image as a professional and as a person in front of your coworkers and boss. In situations where you and your boss are in a disagreement, and no matter how irrational you think your boss is acting, you must keep your self-control at all times.

2. Threatening: "I have been offered amazing jobs but I stayed loyal to this company"
It is completely normal to receive job offers and seek other employment opportunities, however, the last person who should know about this is your employer. It is inappropriate to mention that you have many job offers, whether you are accepting them or not. You should be especially cautious not to bring it up during an intense conversation in a threatening kind of way.

3. Giving unconstructive criticism: "Our weekly meetings are chaotic"
Never mention a problem without being ready and prepared to address it and propose a solution. Create an action plan to improve the situation you are criticizing. Giving negative feedbacks without offering help is exactly the same as throwing a problem at someone to resolve on their own. Be the person who not only wants to see change within the team or the organization but is also willing to help make the change happen.

4. Hiding behind false truth: "I'm being honest"
Honesty is one thing that is everyone appreciates. However, there are always limits to everything, and the

same thing goes in regards to being honest. Being part of the workplace gossip, talking about the failures of coworkers you dislike, or undervaluing your team are some of the things that fall under this criteria.

You should utilize your working hours to performing your tasks and job responsibilities rather than joining discussions about other's lives and sharing pointless gossip.

5. Showing too much ego: "My idea was obviously better than X's idea"

No matter how many ideas you and your team has pitched in, at the end of the day, your boss will take the best idea that benefits the company to reach the targeted objectives. Focus on the positives of each person's idea and try to understand others' points of view. Doing the opposite action will only leave your boss dissatisfied by you and will more likely never give your idea a second thought.

Don't put anyone else down as a way to climb up. Always be respectful and mindful of everyone around you. Even if your ideas aren't chosen, try to understand why someone else's idea was better and what you could've done to improve yours.

Acting maturely and being considerate of everyone at the office will always play to your benefit and will substantiate your work ethics. Employers often seek the moderate person who is friendly with everyone yet minds their own business and has high ethics. There are always many situations that frustrate us or make us angry at work, but with clear thinking and understanding we could overcome all situations. Being that person in the office might give you the promotion you've always wanted and will help you fulfill your career trajectory.

US taps former prosecutor as watchdog over China's ZTE

WASHINGTON: A former US federal prosecutor will serve as the legal watchdog over Chinese telecoms giant ZTE, which narrowly avoided collapse after being hit with US sanctions, the Commerce Department announced Friday. The appointment comes as part of a controversial settlement with Washington after President Donald Trump in May personally intervened to rescue the company, which US officials accuse of repeatedly violating sanctions against Iran and North Korea. US authorities agreed to lift the export ban if the smartphone maker paid an additional \$1 billion fine-beyond the \$892 million penalty imposed in 2017 — dismissed its board of directors and allowed Washington to name a legal compliance expert to oversee operations.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced the selection of Roscoe Howard, who served as chief federal prosecutor for the District of Columbia under former President George W. Bush, to fill that role.

"Today's appointment is the continuation of the unprecedented measures imposed on ZTE by the Department of Commerce," Ross said in a statement.

Howard is "exceptionally well-versed in corporate compliance, having tried more than 100 cases as a federal prosecutor." —AFP

Burgan Bank holds training for girls and boys on modern banking

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, a sought-after career destination providing opportunities for young achievers to shine and progress, recently selected and trained 20 interns—girls and boys—from secondary school during the summer. Organized by Burgan Bank's Learning and Development Center, the annual summer training program for the year 2018, was an extensive two week course that included both practical and theoretical training aimed at equipping the youth with the necessary skills to advance in the world of banking.

Aside from other multifaceted and dynamic training exercises throughout the rest of the year, this ongoing summer educational initiative is centered on its corporate social responsibility to train high-caliber youth and facilitate their role in the Kuwaiti community as resourceful and efficient leaders. Burgan Bank remains committed to enhancing national talent by providing valuable exposure to internal best practices and insights into the modern aspects of banking as part of its long term objective to encourage more to join the private sector with special consideration to the banking and financial market after graduation. The bank is driven by its belief that capacity-building and mentoring projects at an early stage create seasoned and exceptional professionals.

Through Burgan Bank's two-week summer program that was designed for the secondary school students, aged 15-19 years, the 20 interns benefitted from real life lessons



through practical and theoretical knowledge-sharing by visiting the Burgan Bank branches. The field training was conducted under the supervision of the branch managers and staff, who also demonstrated the importance of team work, optimal level of customer service, different banking methods, ways to avoid possible issues and solution-driven methods.

In line with its annual corporate social responsibility strategy, Burgan Bank believes that empowering today's youth with a solid foundation in educational and first hand instructive experiences bridges gaps and makes them responsible members of the community.

Likewise, reinforcing its mission to build strong leaders of tomorrow, Burgan Bank has showcased its support through sponsorship of other similar several initiatives held under the umbrella of Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KIPCO), which entails meeting changing demands with innovative educational platforms to provide modern day expertise,

abilities and core competencies. Some of which were INJAZ-Kuwait, a private-sector driven non-profit NGO who with the help of qualified and dedicated volunteers works on developing and building business and entrepreneurial skills of private middle school, high school and university students. Followed by the Protege program which is a mentorship program dedicated to training young individuals aged 16 to 24 years with a combination of new types of lectures, seminars and trips that encourages them to discover their passions and help them excel in their future careers with the necessary tools to cope with challenges, while also making a positive contribution to society. Additionally, the bank was part of the Tamkeen Youth Empowerment conference which invests and facilitates aspiring young entrepreneurs to start small and medium size enterprises and benefit from networking with other likeminded individuals as well as from the experience of established industrialists and economists.

UK says Brexit could hit banks' stock of 'risk free' EU debt

LONDON: Britain could force European Union banks operating in London to start holding capital against inventory of riskier EU government bonds in the case of a 'no-deal' Brexit.

At part of preparations for Britain's departure from European Union next March, the finance ministry has published a "statutory instrument" or 'SI' to help transfer EU rules like financial regulation into national law to avoid a legal void on the first day of Brexit. Banks in the EU don't have to hold capital against holdings of their own government's bonds, a rule known as zero risk weight, as such domestic debt is considered "risk free".

The government said in its SI published on Tuesday that if Britain leaves the bloc with no transition deal next March, the EU would

automatically become a "third country". This means that the zero risk weight rule would no longer apply to EU banks in Britain. "Therefore, this SI will remove preferential treatment for EU27 exposures," the document said. The SI acknowledges that the same change would be made by the EU when regulating British banks operating in the bloc after Brexit. The finance ministry said it plans to put the SI to parliament in the autumn. "The intention of this SI is not to make policy changes, other than to reflect the UK's new position outside the EU, and to smooth the transition to this position," the finance ministry said.

The zero risk weight rule is based on a global standard from the Basel Committee of banking supervisors. It became discredited when a sharp deterioration in Greek, Irish, Portuguese and Spanish government bonds during the eurozone debt crisis showed that such debt can be risky and feed a "doom loop" to drag down lenders.

Efforts to change the rule at the global level have dragged on as the issue is seen as politically sensitive in the euro zone, where introducing capital charges could prompt lenders to ditch the bonds of governments with lower credit ratings to minimize capital requirements. — Reuters



BEIJING: Richard Burn (center), British Trade Commissioner for China, and British Secretary of State for International Trade Liam Fox (right) stand in front of a promotional billboard after a signing ceremony for memorandums of understanding in Beijing on Friday.—AFP

Business

Fed will do 'whatever it takes' for US economy, says Powell

FOMC challenges in setting rate in focus

WASHINGTON: Avoiding any direct reference to President Donald Trump's renewed criticism of the Federal Reserve's handling of the economy, Fed chief Jerome Powell said Friday the central bank would do "whatever it takes" to head off inflation or react to a new crisis.

Trump's latest attacks, delivered in an interview this week, meant politics cast a shadow over the highly anticipated speech, the highlight of the annual gathering of global central bankers in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, an idyllic setting in the American West for serious discussions on how to manage the economy.

In an address, Powell stayed resolutely focused on the policy debate and the challenges facing the Fed's rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) and made it clear officials were focused on the economic data. "I am confident that the FOMC would resolutely 'do whatever it takes' should inflation expectations drift materially up or down or should crisis again threaten," he said in prepared remarks.

However, he noted the US economy remained strong and anyone who wanted a job could find one, while prices were rising at about the Fed's target pace of two percent.

And "we have seen no clear sign of an acceleration above two percent, and there does not seem to be an elevated risk of overheating." As a result, "if the strong growth in income and jobs continues, further gradual increases in the target range for the federal funds rate will likely be appropriate," Powell said, echoing recent FOMC statements.

As the US economy has recovered, the Fed has raised the benchmark lending rate seven times since December 2015, twice this year under Powell, and is expected to hike again in September and December. But Trump has said rising interest rates—which tends to strengthen the dollar, making US exports more expensive—will slow the economy and offset the impact of the tax cuts he championed.

Trump has repeatedly said he is "not thrilled" with Powell's raising of interest rates.

Chief steers clear of Trump criticism

The president has also repeatedly hammered away at Fed policy for not supporting faster economic growth but he went even further this week when he declined to confirm his support for the central bank's independence, something that has the potential to worry financial markets. Questioning Fed actions is normally off limits for US politicians, since it could raise fears central bankers would feel political pressure and fail to act to head off rising inflation. Powell referenced that in his speech as well, stressing the importance of ensuring that businesses and consumers do not start to believe inflation will be allowed to accelerate, something central bankers call "anchoring" inflation expectations.

He said "one overwhelmingly important lesson for monetary policymakers: Anchoring longer-term inflation expectations is a vital precondition for reaching all other monetary policy goals."

So even if factors occur that push prices up or down, "people expect that inflation will return fairly promptly to the desired value," he said.

Fed independence

The Fed chief has addressed the issue of central bank independence various times, stressing the need for policy deliberations to be free of political considerations. Fed officials "don't take political considerations into account," he said in July. "I'm deeply committed to that approach."

Asked at the time another bout of Trump critiques, Powell said "no one in the administration has said anything to me that really gives me concern on this front." The Jackson Hole conference has taken on a mystique since past Fed chairs, and other central bankers, have occasion-



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, Jerome Powell arrives to take the oath of office as he is sworn-in as the new Chairman of the Federal Reserve (FED) at the Federal Reserve Building in Washington, DC. — AFP

ally used the event to signal a change in policy. But Powell's speech focused squarely on lessons learned in past economic eras and how to apply them to the current situation, which he called "challenging." He also did not reference Trump's many trade wars, which central bankers have pointed to as a potential "consequential risk" to the economy.

Trump's willingness to breach norms and attack the Fed directly worries economists, and prompted extra

scrutiny of the speech. "I was a little surprised that he left out trade tensions, explicit Fed independence and even a more detailed discussion of inflation or wage growth dynamics, instead focusing on long-term forecasting uncertainties," Greg Daco of Oxford Economics told AFP.

"His references to the 1970s & a de-anchoring of inflation expectations does however implicitly reflect upon the importance of an independent Fed." — AFP

Stocks rally after Powell speech, oil prices surge

NEW YORK: Global equity market rose on Friday after Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell expressed no surprises in a key speech outlining a steady course for monetary policy, while oil prices surged on signs Iran sanctions may constrain worldwide supply.

The benchmark S&P 500 and the Nasdaq hit all-time highs after Powell's comments at an annual meeting of central bankers did little to change market expectations of an interest rate hike in September and perhaps again in December.

The dollar weakened as Powell, speaking in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, said a gradual approach of raising rates remains appropriate to protect the US economy and keep job growth as strong as possible with inflation under control. The dollar index fell 0.58 percent, while the euro and Japanese yen rose against the greenback. MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe gained 0.55 percent while its emerging market index rose 0.33 percent.

The Fed is very confident in the US economy and Powell indicated there is no intention of slowing down the Fed's rate hikes, said Chris Zaccarelli, chief investment officer at Independent Advisor Alliance in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"We are seeing some of the more cyclical sectors like energy, materials, continuing to move higher on the expectation that the Fed is going to let the economy run a little hot," Zaccarelli said.

The energy sector jumped 1.19 percent, the most among the 11 S&P sectors. The materials sector gained 1.41 percent. In Europe, the pan-European FTSEurofirst 300 index of regional shares closed up a preliminary 0.12 percent.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 139.04 points, or 0.54 percent, to 25,796.02. The S&P 500 gained 16.57 points, or 0.58 percent, to 2,873.55 and the Nasdaq Composite added 66.29 points, or 0.84 percent, to 7,944.75.

Strong economic growth, strong earnings and low interest rates have combined to continue to move the US equity market higher, said Leo Grohowski, chief investment officer for BNY Mellon Wealth Management. "The market's not cheap, but it's not as demandingly valued as many think it should be given that we continue to reach new highs," he said. "I'm very encouraged by the market's ability to look through the disturbing political headlines of the week."

US Treasury prices gave back earlier losses after Powell made the case for further rate increases.

Benchmark 10-year US Treasury notes fell 2/32 in price to yield 2.828 percent, after rising to 2.850 percent before Powell's speech. The yield curve between two-year and 10-year notes narrowed to 20 basis points, the flattest since 2007. An inverted yield curve in the past has pointed to a recession will occur within two years. Oil prices surged, rising almost 2 percent, on signs that Iran sanctions may limit global supply and that a trade war may not curb China's appetite for US crude. — Reuters



NEW YORK: Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Friday in New York City. Led by gains in technology and energy companies, the Dow closed up 133 points or 0.5 percent for the day. — AFP

Rise in US business equipment orders points to firm investment

WASHINGTON: New orders for key US-made capital goods increased more than expected in July and growth in shipments held firm, signaling that business investment started the third quarter on a strong note. The Commerce Department said on Friday orders for non-defense capital goods excluding aircraft, a closely watched proxy for business spending plans, rose 1.4 percent last month after an upwardly revised 0.9 percent increase in June.

"That provides further reason to think that overall GDP has continued to expand at a healthy... pace," said Andrew Hunter, an economist at Capital Economics. Business spending on equipment is being supported by the Trump administration's \$1.5 trillion income tax cut package, which came into effect in January. But there are worries that trade tensions between the United States and its major



NEW YORK: US orders for non-defense capital goods excluding aircraft, a closely watched proxy for business spending plans, rose 1.4 percent last month after an upwardly revised 0.9 percent increase in June.

trade partners, including China, Canada, Mexico and the European Union, could offset the fiscal stimulus.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the so-called core capital goods orders rising 0.4 percent in July

after a previously reported 0.2 percent gain in June. Core capital goods orders increased 7.2 percent on a year-on-year basis.

Shipments of core capital goods rose 0.9 percent last month after an upwardly revised 0.9 percent gain in June. Core capital goods shipments are used to calculate equipment spending in the government's gross domestic product measurement, so the higher estimate for shipments in June could contribute to an upward revision of economic growth in the second quarter.

Yields on US government debt rose modestly after the data, with investors awaiting a speech by Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell. US stocks were trading higher while the dollar was down against a basket of currencies.

Business investment drove about a quarter of economic growth in the second quarter. The economy grew at its fastest pace in the April-June period as consumers boosted spending and farmers rushed shipments of soybeans to China before retaliatory trade tariffs took effect in early July.

The United States has slapped duties on \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods so far, eliciting the retaliation from Beijing. Overall orders for durable goods, items ranging from toasters to aircraft that are meant to last three years or more, fell 1.7 percent in July as volatile demand for civilian aircraft fell. — Reuters

US court orders seizure of Citgo shares unless PDVSA pays

WASHINGTON: A US federal court ordered the seizure of shares in Venezuelan-owned oil company Citgo, which will be sold to pay a \$1.2 billion settlement to a Canadian mining company unless Caracas puts up a bond. It was another blow to crisis-battered Venezuela, which depends on state oil company PDVSA, which includes Citgo, to fund government operations.

US District Court Judge Leonard Stark in an order issued Thursday said, notwithstanding Venezuela's appeal of the payment, "if PDVSA wishes to prevent execution" of the sale it must post a bond.

However, the shares will not be sold until the court issues a separate order to do so, according to the documents. The case dates from 2011, when the Venezuelan government seized a mine earlier awarded to Crystallex but failed to repay the company despite reaching a settlement through an arbitration panel. The judge rejected PDVSA's argument that it is separate from the government in Caracas and should not be held liable, referring to the company as an "alter ego" of the government.

The development is more bad news for embattled government of President Nicolas Maduro, who has overseen the collapse of the nation's once-thriving oil-based economy, which is now in default.

Thousands of Venezuelans flee the country daily, malnutrition is rife and the International Monetary Fund said inflation could reach one million percent this year. PDVSA, once the jewel in the crown of the nation's economy, has been hamstrung by debt and lack of investment that has shrunk output. Losing Citgo would dry up one of the last remaining sources of foreign revenue. And even that is already at risk since a nearly 50 percent stake in Citgo was used as collateral for a \$1.5 billion loan from Russia's Rosneft and the rest was used as collateral for government bonds which Rosneft holds.

In a letter to the court, lawyers for Rosneft said PDVSA's shares of Citgo were "100 percent encumbered." PDVSA's bonds represent 30 percent of Venezuela's external debt, which is estimated to be around \$150 billion. — AFP

Investors ignore Trump support for Italy, yield premium over Spain soars

ROME: Italian bond yields matched their highest level over Spain since 2012 on Friday as the economic and fiscal trajectories of the two countries diverge and investors ignored supportive comments for Italy from US President Donald Trump.

Concerns over Italy's burgeoning deficit have spooked bond investors and ratings agencies while Spain has made progress in controlling public finances.

On Friday, a flareup between Italy's government and the European Commission over migrants also renewed concerns about Rome's relationship with the EU.

Deputy Prime Minister Luigi Di Maio repeated threats to suspend EU funds over the distribution of migrants waiting to disembark from a ship docked in an Italian port.

Italy's bond yields rose 4-7 basis points across the curve with the 10-year government bond reaching 3.14 percent, its highest level in a week. Italian risk performance continues to diverge from the rest of southern Europe, and the spread of Italian 10-year bonds over Spain reached 174 bps, matching their highest level over Spain since 2012.

"Many investors fear the fiscal outlook for Italy will deteriorate, whereas for Spain it has brightened as seen in

Siemens denies plan for mass job cuts

FRANKFURT: German industrial conglomerate Siemens denied Friday a media report that it would cut thousands of jobs as part of a massive restructuring plan.

"The report claiming that 20,000 jobs are to be cut... is completely unfounded", the firm said in a statement. Business monthly Manager Magazin's online edition reported Thursday that Siemens chief executive Joe Kaeser had told an investors' roadshow this month that 20,000 administrative jobs could become superfluous under the group's "Vision 2020+" strategy.

"We do not follow the reasoning behind the figures

the ratings upgrades," said ING strategist Martin van Vliet. "It is also worrying that Salvini is talking about market attacks and economic attacks, it is reminiscent of (Turkish President) Erdogan," he added.

Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini said this week the government would stand up to any market attacks or debt downgrades that may come its way. The move higher in Italian yields follows a brief respite on Friday after a report that US President Donald Trump had offered Italy to help with its public debt.

Strategists struggled to make sense of Il Corriere della Sera's report that Trump had told Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte at a meeting in Washington in July that the United States was ready to help Italy with its debt next year.

"This is clearly dominating headlines this morning and it probably explains the pop at the open, but traders who look into the details of this should be quick to fade the move," said Commerzbank's head of rates strategy Christoph Rieger.

"I would be cautious though as the US has no sovereign wealth fund and neither the US Treasury nor the Fed have any mandate for such interventions."

Markets will listen closely to a speech by Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell later on Friday after minutes from the US central bank's most recent meeting showed that further interest rate hikes are likely soon.

But the anticipation of Powell's speech barely moved US Treasuries on Thursday as expectations that the Fed will hike rates in September remained stable. German bunds remain off recent lows at 0.35 percent after Eurozone PMIs failed to excite yesterday. Recent data has shown all sectors of the German economy grew in the second quarter. — Reuters

named in the magazine article. No statements of this kind were made," Siemens responded.

Under the Vision 2020+ scheme, individual businesses within the sprawling Siemens empire—whose products range from gas turbines and trains to industrial robots and medical scanners—will have more freedom to set their own priorities. The group hopes the plan will help boost revenue and profitability. "The newly formed Operating Companies are currently working on the detailed planning. There are no plans for a company-wide cost-cutting program initiated by Siemens headquarters," Siemens said.

Munich-based Siemens has already weathered outrage this year after announcing it would slash 7,000 jobs at its power and gas division. German workers successfully battled to save plants in the capital Berlin and in Goerlitz, on the border with Poland. As well as denying plans for mass layoffs, Siemens said it would add some 10,000 jobs to its Internet of Things unit by 2025. The group currently employs almost 380,000 people around the world. — AFP

Technology

Tesla CEO Musk drops pursuit of \$72 billion take-private deal

Decision raises new questions about Tesla's future

SAN FRANCISCO: Tesla Inc CEO Elon Musk said late on Friday he would heed shareholder concerns and no longer pursue a \$72 billion deal to take his US electric car maker private, abandoning an idea that had stunned investors and drawn regulatory scrutiny.

The decision leaves Tesla as a publicly listed company but raises new questions about its future. Its shares have been trading below their Aug. 7 levels, when Musk announced on Twitter he was considering taking Tesla private for \$420 per share, as investors wondered what the long-shot bid meant for Musk's ability to steer the company to profitability.

The move also leaves Musk and Tesla having to fend off a series of investor lawsuits and a US Securities and Exchange Commission investigation into the factual accuracy of Musk's tweet that funding for the deal was "secured". Musk said on Friday that his belief that there is more than enough funding to take the company private was reinforced during the process. He attributed his decision to abandon the bid to feedback he received from shareholders and on the effort proving to be more time-consuming and distracting than he anticipated. "Although the majority of shareholders I spoke to said they would remain with Tesla if we went private, the sentiment, in a nutshell, was 'please don't do this'," Musk wrote in a blog post on Friday.

Musk, who owns about a fifth of Tesla, had said earlier this month that he envisioned taking the company private without using the standard method of a leveraged buyout, whereby all the other shareholders would cash out and the deal would be funded primarily with new debt. Instead, two-thirds of company shareholders, according to his estimate, would have chosen an option

of "rolling" their stakes and continuing to be investors in a private company, rather than cashing out. This would significantly reduce the amount of money needed for the deal and avoid further burdening Tesla, which has a debt pile of \$11 billion and negative cash flow.

However, Musk said on Friday that a number of institutional shareholders explained to him that they have internal compliance issues that limit how much they can invest in a private company. He added that there is no proven path for most retail investors to own shares were Tesla to go private.

Musk had previously said that Saudi Arabia's PIF, which became a Tesla shareholder earlier this year with a stake of just under 5 percent, could help him fund the cash portion of the deal, though sources close to the sovereign wealth fund had played down that prospect. PIF is in talks to invest more than \$1 billion in aspiring Tesla rival Lucid Motors Inc, Reuters reported last Sunday. Six members of Tesla's board of directors said in a separate statement that they were informed on Thursday that Musk was abandoning his take-private bid. The board then disbanded a special committee of three directors it had set up to evaluate any offer that Musk submitted.

"We fully support Elon as he continues to lead the company moving forward," said the board statement.

Focus on Model 3

One of Tesla's biggest challenges now is ramping up production of its latest vehicle, the Model 3. Multiple "bottlenecks" at its Fremont factory and battery factory outside Reno, Nevada have delayed volume production. Tesla now aims to consistently build 5,000 Model 3s



The Tesla logo is seen outside of their showroom in Washington, DC. —AFP

per week, a target it says it has managed "multiple times" since first achieving it one week in June.

Musk has said repeatedly since April that Tesla has no need to raise new capital, and has promised to be profitable and cash-flow positive in the third and fourth quarters. But analysts expect Tesla will require billions of dollars more over the next several years to fund ambitious expansion plans and to develop new electric premium vehicles to take on German rivals.

Capital-intensive projects in the pipeline include a new Roadster, a Model Y SUV, and an electric big-rig. The company's Gigafactory is only partially complete, and Musk has said a European plant location will likely be announced this year. Financing for a new China

plant will come from local debt, he said.

The struggle to launch the Model 3 coincided with an escalating war between Musk and short sellers betting that Tesla's high-priced shares were bound to fall as the company burned off its cash reserves.

In explaining one of his reasons to take Tesla private, Musk cited short sellers earlier this month, stating that "being public means that there are large numbers of people who have the incentive to attack the company."

Citigroup Inc analysts wrote in a research note earlier this month that, if a go-private transaction is looking less likely, "it would be wise for Tesla to at least try to raise significant new equity capital sooner rather than later," so it can inspire investor confidence. —Reuters



Shareholders believe Tesla better off as public company: Musk

NASA spacecraft approaches asteroid, snaps first pic

TAMPA: Two years after launching from Florida, a NASA spacecraft is closing in on an ancient asteroid, Benu, for a sample of space dust that could reveal clues to the start of life in the solar system.

The spacecraft, OSIRIS-REx, has even snapped its first, blurry pic of the cosmic body, which is about the size of a small mountain, about 500 yards (meters) in diameter. The spacecraft is designed to circle Benu, and reach out with a robotic arm to "high-five" its surface, then return the sample it collects to Earth in 2023. The first images of Benu were taken on August 17 at a distance of 1.4 million miles (2.3 million kilometers) from the \$800 million spacecraft. "This is the closest we have ever been to Benu," said Dante Lauretta, OSIRIS-REx principal investigator at the University of Arizona, Tucson.

"This is significant in that we are now in the vicinity of the asteroid, closer than we have ever been during the close approaches of the asteroid to the Earth." Benu was chosen from the some 500,000 asteroids in the solar system because it orbits close to Earth's path around the sun, it is the right size for scientific study, and is one of the oldest asteroids known to NASA. Astronomers say it poses a slight risk—a one in 2,700 chance of colliding with Earth in 2135.

It is also a carbon-rich asteroid, the kind of cosmic body that may have delivered life-giving materials to Earth billions of years ago. The OSIRIS-REx mission is not the first to ever visit an asteroid and attempt a sample return—Japan has done it before and Europe has managed to land on a comet. But it is the first asteroid-sample-return mission for NASA, and it aims to bring back the biggest sample ever, on the order of 2.1 ounces (60 grams). —AFP

European wind survey satellite launched from French Guyana

KOUROU, Guyana: A new satellite that will use advanced laser technology to track global winds and improve weather forecasts has been successfully put into orbit, launch company Arianespace said.

The launch of the "Aeolus" satellite—named after the guardian of wind in Greek mythology—took place at 2120 GMT Wednesday, after a 24-hour delay due to adverse weather conditions.

Arianespace's light-lift vehicle "Vega" lofted its passenger during a flight lasting just under 55 minutes, with Aeolus placed into a Sun-synchronous orbit," the company said after the launch.

Sun-synchronous orbits allow satellites always to have view of the Sun, for example so their solar panels can always draw power. The satellite "will probe the lowermost 30 kilometers (18 miles) of the atmosphere in measuring winds around the Earth," Arianespace said. Aeolus is part of the Copernicus project, a joint initiative of the European Union and the European Space Agency (ESA) to track environmental damage and aid disaster relief operations.

The satellite is equipped with a single instrument: a Doppler wind lidar—an advanced laser system designed to accurately measure global wind patterns from space. "The LIDAR's near-real-time observations will provide reliable wind profiles, further improving the accuracy of



This handout image acquired from the European Space Agency (ESA), shows a digital representation of the Aeolus wind satellite as the rocket's fairing, which cocoons Aeolus during liftoff and ascent, opens. A satellite designed to measure Earth's global wind patterns was hoisted into orbit on August 21 from the Arianespace launch site in French Guiana. —AFP

numerical weather and climate prediction, as well as advance the understanding of tropical dynamics and processes relevant to climate variability," Arianespace said after the launch. It described the satellite as the world's first space mission to gather information on Earth's wind on a global scale. Tropical winds in particular are very poorly mapped because of the almost complete absence of direct observations.

The Doppler lidar transmits short, powerful pulses of laser light toward Earth in the ultraviolet spectrum. Particles in the air—moisture, dust, gases—reflect, or scatter, a small fraction of that light energy back to the

transceiver, where it is collected and recorded.

The delay between the outgoing pulse and the so-called "backscattered" signal reveals the wind's direction, speed and distance travelled.

Once per orbit, data is downloaded to a ground station in Svalbard, Norway. Aeolus is the fifth of the ESA's planned Earth Explorer missions. Others already completed or in operation have measured Earth's gravity and geomagnetic fields, soil moisture, ocean salinity and frozen expanses collectively known as the cryosphere. The new mission is also Arianespace's 50th launch for the European Space Agency. —AFP

Sony to release AI-infused robotic pups in the US

SAN FRANCISCO: Sony announced that its Aibo robotic dogs infused with artificial intelligence will be unleashed on the US market by the year-end holiday season, with a price tag of \$2,899.

The sixth-generation mechanical pup combines robotics with image sensors and artificial intelligence, enabling it to learn behaviors and recognize faces, according to the Japanese consumer electronics giant. Aibo robot personalities develop based on interactions with people, giving each a unique character depending on its human companions, Sony said. "This is truly a one-of-a-kind product designed to connect with its owners on an emotional level," Sony Electronics North America president Mike Fasulo said in a release. Similar to real-life dogs, Aibo can learn tricks and will seek out owners, reacting to words of praise or scratches on the head, according to Sony. Aibo will also play with toys, which Sony will sell you.

Unlike real-life dogs, Aibo has an application owners can use to adjust system settings or add new tricks, and can connect to the internet cloud to store memories.

Aibo owners will also be able to check on internet-linked canine companions while away from home, glimpsing life through their robotic eyes, according to Sony. Sony will begin taking US orders for "First Litter Edition" Aibo next month, with deliveries promised by the holiday season. Aibo became available in Japan early this year, more than a decade after it culled earlier models from its product line. —AFP



LAS VEGAS: Exhibition goes on at Sony Aibo robotic dogs during at the Las Vegas Convention Center during CES 2018 in Las Vegas. —AFP

Walmart teams with Rakuten on digital book shop

SAN FRANCISCO: Walmart launched a digital book shop in a collaboration with Japanese e-commerce powerhouse Rakuten's electronic book service Kobo.

The Walmart eBooks website boasting more than six million titles along with audiobooks competes head-on with a core offering of rival Amazon. Subscriptions to the Walmart audiobook service were \$9.99 monthly, compared to \$14.95 for a comparable Audible service at Amazon. "The launch of Walmart eBooks by Rakuten Kobo marks a milestone for our strategic alliance," Rakuten executive vice president Makoto Arima said in a release.

The ebook shop stemmed from a strategic alliance Walmart and Rakuten announced earlier this year, according to the companies. Digital books are available on Kobo eReaders and on applications tailored for mobile devices powered by Apple or Android software. "Working with Kobo enables us to quickly and efficiently launch a full eBook and audiobook catalog on Walmart.com alongside our assortment of physical books," said Walmart US e-commerce and entertainment general manager Mario Pacini. The move marks the latest effort by Walmart, the former number one US retailer, to counter the rise of Amazon. —AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- ◆ Diagnosis/ Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otolology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

@Malhajry

DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

- o Dermatology board certified.
- o Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- o Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- o Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

SPECIALIZED IN:

- o Dermatology & Cosmetic Treatments.
- o Laser Treatments.
- o Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- o Body & Face Contouring.
- o Injectable Fillers & Botox.

SHARQ, Ahmad Aljaber st., Building B8, Floor 13.
Tel.: (+965) 22060777
@Drbuhaimed, @Renovabb, @dardonnabb
Email: drbuhaimed@beautybeyond.com.kw
www.beautybeyond.com.kw

Global Medical Center Welcomes
Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader
Consultant vascular and general surgery

All general and specialized surgeries such as:

- All critical and non-critical arteries and veins surgeries
- All methods of treating varicose
- Special department for care of injured diabetic foot
- Carrying out delicate procedures such as removing the extra rib
- Treating excess perspiration
- AV connection for dialysis

**Global Medical Center, Bneid Al-Qar
Bour Saeed Street, Block-1, Building-128.**

Telephone: 1871111 @globalmedcenter
www.globalmed-center.com

Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

**مستشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555**

daralshifa

DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

- 1-Diagnosis and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty). Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4-Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

alsalam.int.hospital

Know your Doctor
Otorhinolaryngology (E.N.T)
Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

- ◆ Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
- ◆ Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the Eurpean Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

- ◆ Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
- ◆ Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

alsalam.int.hospital

INTERNATIONAL CLINIC
American Board Certified in General Surgery
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation
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 appendectomy
- ◆ 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

**مستشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555**

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
Laprosopic 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

Health & Science

India's devastating rains match climate change forecasts

Flooding caused by heavy rainfall claim 69,000 lives

PARIS: Once-a-century rains that have pounded the Indian state of Kerala and displaced 1.3 million people are in line with the predictions of climate scientists, who warn that worse is to come if global warming continues unabated. The monsoon rains upon which farmers in the southwestern state depend for their food and livelihoods dumped two-and-a-half times the normal amount of water across the state last week, according to Indian meteorologists.

It is difficult to attribute any single extreme weather event—such as the Kerala flooding—to climate change, said Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology in Pashan, near Mumbai. At the same time, “our recent research shows a three-fold increase in widespread extreme rains during 1950–2017, leading to large-scale flooding,” he told AFP.

Across India, flooding caused by heavy monsoons rainfall claimed 69,000 lives and left 17 million people without homes over the same period, according to a study he co-authored, published last year in Nature Communications. In Kerala, all 35 of the state's major reservoirs were brimming with rain water by August 10, forcing local authorities to open the sluice gates on the Idukki Dam for the first time in 26 years. “These floods that we are seeing in Kerala right now are basically in line with climate projections,” said Kira Vinke, a scientist at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.

“If we continue with current levels of emissions—which is not unlikely—we will have unmanageable risks,”

she said. The weather patterns behind these destructive downpours are well understood, even if the fingerprint of global warming is still hard to distinguish from what scientists call “natural variability”. Rapid warming in the Arabian Sea and nearby landmass causes monsoon winds to fluctuate and intensify for short spans of three-to-four days, Koll explained. During those periods, moisture from the Arabian Sea is dumped inland.

South Asia's hotspots

“Over the last decade, due to climate change, the overheating of landmass leads to the intensification of monsoon rainfalls in central and southern India,” said monsoon expert Elena Surovyatkina, a professor at the Russian Academy of Sciences, and a senior scientist at PIK. The changes observed so far have occurred after an increase in Earth's average surface temperature of only one degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. On current trends, India's average annual temperatures are set to rise 1.5 C

to 3 C compared to that benchmark by mid-century, according to a World Bank report entitled “South Asia's Hotspots”.

“If no corrective measures are taken, changing rainfall patterns and rising temperatures will cost India 2.8 percent of its GDP and will drag down living standards of half its population by 2050,” the World Bank said in a statement. The 196-nation Paris climate treaty calls for capping global warming at “well below” 2 C, and 1.5 C if possible. But voluntary national pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, even if respected, would still



KERALA: Indian men carry food and water aid distributed to those stranded by floods in Pandanad in Alappuzha District in the south Indian state of Kerala. —AFP



Monsoon hard to predict with traditional methods

see temperatures rise at least 3 C.

Flooding is not the only problem India's burgeoning and highly vulnerable-population will face as a consequence of global warming. “What we will see with climate change in India is that the wet season is going to be wetter and the dry season drier,” said Vinki.

“Already we are observing that the monsoon is becoming harder to predict with traditional methods.”

If manmade carbon emissions continue unabated, some regions in northeast India could literally become

unlivable by the end of the century due to a deadly combination of heat and humidity during heatwaves, recent research has projected.

Indeed, larges swathes of south Asia, including the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin, could approach the threshold for survivability outdoors. Coastal cities, meanwhile, are especially vulnerable to sea level rise, driven by melting ice sheets and expanding ocean water, on the one hand, and subsidence due to over-development and the depletion of water tables, on the other. —AFP

Benin community turns waste into biogas

HOUEGBO, Benin: Garbage has never smelled so sweet for a small village in southern Benin since it opened a pilot waste treatment centre to turn household rubbish into gas-and cash. “Our trash has become gold. We no longer throw it into the bush. We use it to make money,” beams Alphonse Ago, who lives next to the centre in Houegbo village. ReBin, a Swiss foundation for sustainable development, built the 1.3-hectare facility, which every week turns around six tons of organic waste into 200 cubic meters of biogas—saving some 164 tons of wood from being used to make charcoal.

The centre, which opened late last year, also plans to produce around 400 tons of organic fertilizer per year. So far, around 100 households in the area have signed up to the scheme to deposit their waste at the centre on a daily basis. Every 10 kilograms of waste fetches 250 CFA francs, paid either in cash or credit-to buy biogas. The fuel is a precious commodity in a rural region where electricity remains scarce. Agnes Avoce, a shopkeeper and mother of five, proudly straps a large plastic bag of the gas onto her back. Biogas, she says, is much cleaner and more efficient for cooking than charcoal—which “darkens the pots and makes me sick”—and she is more than happy to make the switch. Avoce is not alone: five other women are waiting to pick up gas. “There are queues here since we opted for biogas,” another customer says.



TOFFO, Benin: Employees work on the ground of the ReBin Benin Foundation in Toffo. —AFP

Goldmine

Symphorien Adonon, 35, drops off a week's worth of carefully sorted waste, smiling as he pockets his cash payment. “Now I have enough to do the shopping for dinner,” says Adonon, who drives a motorcycle taxi. The centre has treated more than 20 tons of waste since it began operations late last year. In addition to the customers' household waste, there is also rubbish collected by a local non-government organization, Astome.

The NGO's chief, Florent Gbegnon, says he used to collect it on a push cart, but he now uses a tricycle provided by the centre. “It's a huge relief,” he says as he dumps a load of pineapple skins. “Pushing the cart was a real burden.” It was the massive amounts of

waste such as pineapple skins that originally caught the attention of ReBin's founder, Mark Giannelli, and inspired him to set up the treatment centre in Houegbo. “I saw this not as a problem, but as an opportunity, and I thought it was a goldmine,” Giannelli told AFP.

Benin is Africa's fourth-biggest exporter of pineapples. And in Houegbo, which has one of the busiest markets in the region, local sources estimate that more than a tonne of waste is generated every day from that fruit alone. Giannelli said that he had been searching for a potential site for his project in Benin's West African neighbors Ghana and Togo. But it was the enthusiasm with which the locals embraced his idea that finally convinced him to set up the waste treatment centre here, he said. —AFP

Scientists track how yellow fever raced through Brazil

WASHINGTON: The yellow fever virus lurked deep in the Amazon jungle until around July 2016 when it leapt toward the highly populated south of Brazil, carried by monkeys and the mosquitoes that liked to bite them. At a speed of about two miles per day, the virus made its way to the outskirts of the big cities of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, places it had not circulated in decades, and where more than 35 million people were not vaccinated against the illness.

Two years later, 676 people were dead in the worst epidemic of yellow fever in Brazil in a century. Yellow fever can kill a person in less than 10 days, wreaking havoc on the body with symptoms like jaundice, abdominal pain, vomiting, and bleeding from the mouth, nose, eyes and stomach. Now, for the first time, the virus's path has been retraced in detail by an international team of scientists, and experts say this new genetic and geographic mapping could help fight future outbreaks of the disease.

“This is the first time that we are able to estimate how rapidly the virus is moving in space and time,” said Nuno Faria, professor in the zoology department at Oxford University, co-author of the study in the journal Science. Their work rules out the long-feared hypothesis that yellow fever was jumping from person to person—via the bites of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes—in an urban environment. Instead, the latest outbreak was carried to people by wild jungle mosquitoes that had previously bitten contaminated monkeys.

Great potential

The people infected — 85 percent of them men in their 30s, 40s and 50s-lived or worked within a few miles of the jungle habitat of these monkeys. Researchers tracked the movements of the virus by noting when and where monkeys, and then people, began to be contaminated and turn up dead. Cases among monkeys tended to precede



SAO PAULO: In this file photo a nurse prepares a vaccine against yellow fever at an outpatient clinic in Sao Paulo, Brazil. —AFP

humans by about four days, they found.

But the virus moved even faster than the monkeys did, which suggests that people had a role in moving the disease to new areas, such as by illegally trafficking monkeys or driving vehicles in which mosquitoes had hitched a ride. Analyzing the genomes of people and monkeys that were infected confirmed the source of the epidemic.

Researchers say this combined method could help better tailor real-time responses to future outbreaks. “It's high-end work,” David Hamer, professor of global health and medicine at Boston University, told AFP. “Their approach is intriguing and has great potential, although it requires a lot of data,” added Hamer, who was not involved in the study.

That means the findings are not likely to help much in poor countries in Africa, where yellow fever often strikes, because they do not have the infrastructure necessary to create such a surveillance system or alert network, Hamer said. —AFP

French tomato grower takes on Monsanto over weedkiller

CELLES-SUR-AISNE, France:

Weaving through the aisles of his greenhouse in northern France, Jean-Claude Terlet, a retired farmer who grows tomatoes for local markets, seems to be brimming with energy. “That's a beef tomato, they're delicious,” he says, showing off his produce which, he stresses, is 100 percent organic. But since he was treated for prostate cancer in 2017, the 70-year-old says he feels constantly exhausted and has to deal with a host of other problems.

“No sex life, that's over. And I am completely incontinent and have to wear pads that I change two or three times a day... On a market that's pretty uncomfortable. I feel really diminished,” he said. Convinced his illness was caused by exposure to chemicals, he asked for urine tests as soon as he was diagnosed. Despite his hunch, the results still came as a shock.

They detected glyphosate, the chemical used in US biotech giant Monsanto's flagship weedkiller Round Up which some studies and the World Health Organization have labeled carcinogenic. “I'm convinced that that's what caused my cancer,” Terlet told AFP, saying the chemical was found at levels of 0.25 micrograms per liter of blood and that the tests showed up no other chemicals or traces of medication.

Terlet has joined thousands of people around the world, most of them in the US, who are taking legal action against Monsanto for failing to warn users about the risks of using

glyphosate. The compensation bill could be steep. In a landmark ruling earlier this month, a California jury awarded a dying groundskeeper damages of almost \$290 million after finding Round Up caused his non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

Monsanto's German parent company Bayer has vowed to appeal the ruling, saying it was “at odds with the weight of scientific evidence”. But the victory of plaintiff DeWayne Johnson, feted by Monsanto's critics as a modern-day David battling a corporate Goliath, has heartened Terlet, who is hoping for a similar finding by a French court. The French government, which has vowed to ban glyphosate by 2021, also hailed the “historic” ruling and called on the US and other EU countries to join the “war” against dangerous chemicals.

Miracle chemical

Terlet, a father-of-three from the village of Celles-sur-Aisne near Reims, a city in northeast France, was a devotee of Round Up—the world's most widely-used herbicide—for three decades. He used it to kill weeds pushing up through the stubble left in his fields after the harvest. “At the time, they presented glyphosate as being a miracle product. Everyone was buying it!” he said. While spraying his fields he wore only a cheap mask and gloves that failed to protect him from the fine mist that seeped into the cab of his tractor.

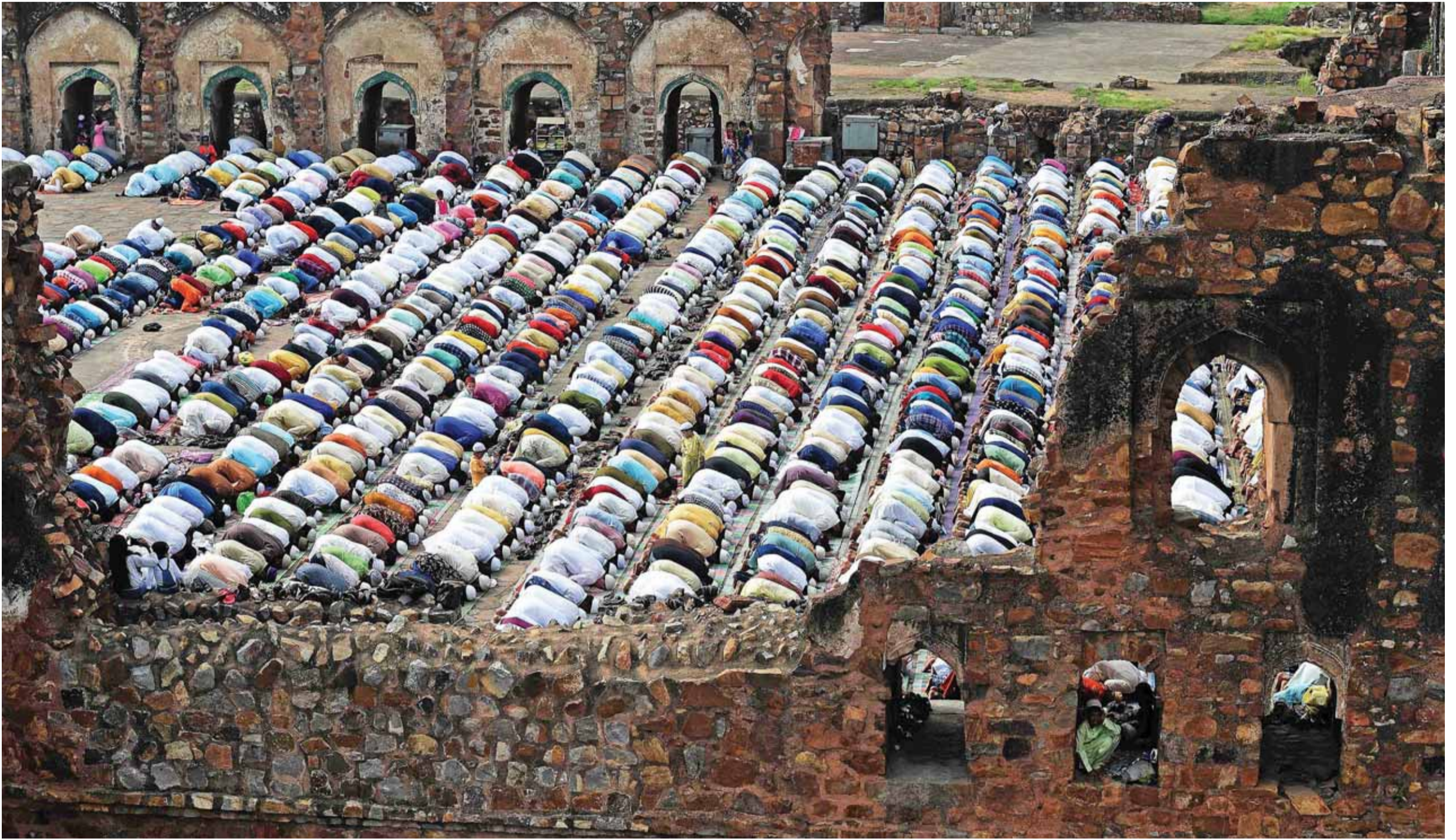
“We didn't realize the effects it could have in the medium- and long-term. And now we're seeing them,” he said. In May 2017, his lawyers filed a complaint with prosecutors in the southern city of Lyon, where Monsanto's parent company Bayer has its French headquarters, accusing it of “poisoning” the pensioner. Next month, he will undergo tests to try establish whether his cancer is indeed linked to his use of the herbicide. —AFP



CELLES-SUR-AISNE, France: Farmer and greengrocer Jean-Claude Terlet poses in his tomato greenhouse in Celles-sur-Aisne, northern France. —AFP

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 2018



Indian Muslims offer Eid al-Adha prayers amongst the ruins of the Feroz Shah Kotla fort and mosque in New Delhi. — AFP

Syrian torture chambers brought to life in haunting drawings

Najah Albukai's head is filled with the dead and disappeared of Syria's civil war. The prisoners with whom the 49-year-old art teacher shared a cell in Syria fill two black ink drawings hanging on the wall in the living room of his French apartment where he lives in exile with his wife and teenage daughter. One of them shows row upon row of hunched naked men with dark, sunken eyes, their arms shielding their genitals.



Artist Abdallah al-Harith, 21, paints in the Yarmuk Palestinian refugee camp.

In another, they look down on stacks of jumbled emaciated corpses, as if contemplating their fate. "In prison you're suspended between life and death. It's an apocalyptic time. You feel as if you're in a nightmare," Albukai said in an interview. Three years after his escape from the homeland, Albukai's experiences in the regime's torture chambers continue to explode on to his sketchpad.

Dozens of drawings, which he has exhibited across France, depict the horrors he witnessed, from prisoners being hung by their wrists from the ceiling to being folded in two in a wooden contraption nicknamed the "Flying Carpet". Another prop used by the torturers of President Bashar al-Assad was called the "German chair", which saw prisoners lashed to the back of a chair and stretched to breaking point. "I will draw this German chair until the end of my days to denounce this form of torture," said the artist with a piercing gaze, whose bookshelf contains works by Jean-Paul Sartre and Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Flying carpet

Like many in the Damascus suburb of Jdaidet Artuz, near the town of Daraya, a longtime rebel stronghold, Albukai was infected by the revolutionary fervor that swept Syria in early 2011. But it was only when the government's crackdown on the peaceful protests left 55 dead that he and his wife Abir joined the protests. In 2012, he was arrested on a bus on his way to work and taken to military intelligence centre "227" near Damascus where he was interrogated and beaten for "weakening national morale".

"They would interrogate several people at the same time and while others beside you are being tortured you have to answer questions," he said of the sessions, during which the prisoners were blindfolded. Held with 70 others in a cell measuring five by three meters, he found it nearly impossible to sleep and illnesses such as scabies and diarrhea spread quickly.

Even while behind bars, Albukai found an outlet in art, trying to imagine the horrific scenes on canvases. "I tried to find comparisons with paintings by Goya, or the Raft of the Medusa by (French Romantic painter Theodore) Gericault, which shows a group of people trying to escape," he said.

Carrying down the dead

After a month he was released when his wife paid 1,200 euros (1,400 dollars) to have a judge drop the case. Using a pseudonym on Facebook he continued to post about abuses by government forces online, but he tried to keep a low profile, fearing he could be arrested again at any time. In late 2014, he tried to flee to Lebanon, but was caught on the border and returned to centre 227. By now, nearly four years into the war, "even the walls were diseased" and the bodies were piling up.

Albukai saw several people die from torture or common diseases like diabetes left untreated. The centre also acted as a sort of "temporary depot" for bodies collected from other military intelligence centers, with prisoners called on every night to unload bodies from trucks for storage in the basement. "Some had weak necks

as if they had been strangled and most were very thin and bore signs of illness," he said. Each had a number inscribed on the head or chest with a marker. He remembers two: 5535 and, 60 days later another: 5874.

The pen as weapon

Tens of thousands of people are missing, believed to be in government jails across Syria, where authorities have recently begun updating civil records to mark detainees as "deceased". In a 2016 report, Amnesty International estimated that 17,723 had died in custody between March 2011 and December 2015. Were it not for his wife, Albukai might have been another name on a list of the deceased. A French teacher with

a salary of 80 dollars a month, she sold their car and enlisted help from abroad to cobble together 20,000 dollars in bribes to win his freedom after around 10 months in detention.

In October 2015, the pair managed to reach Lebanon with their daughter and applied for asylum in France, where they now live in a quiet suburb south of Paris. As government forces step up their bombardments of Idlib province, the last region still in rebel hands, Albukai is prepared to admit that "maybe we've been defeated and the revolution failed." But drawing what he witnessed helps keep the flame alive, says Albukai, who has received offers to publish his output. "It is a way of not giving in, of not laying down arms," he said. — AFP



Artists paint in the Yarmuk Palestinian refugee camp.



An artist holds a painting in the Yarmuk Palestinian refugee camp on the southern outskirts of the capital Damascus. — AFP photos



This picture shows statues of saints displayed in a Chinese-style pavilion in the Holy Spirit Church in Yanshui, about an hour's drive from the southern city of Tainan. — AFP photos



Worshippers attend mass in the Holy Spirit Church in Yanshui.

Dragons and steamed buns at Taiwan's temple-like church

With a cross rising from a red pagoda roof and two lion statues guarding the entrance, a Catholic church in southern Taiwan could easily be mistaken for one of the ubiquitous temples dotting the island. Taiwan embraces freedom of religion and has one of the highest densities of temples in the world, with close to 70 percent of the population believers in Taoism, Buddhism, and Chinese folk traditions. About six percent of Taiwan's 23.57 million population are Christian, with 300,000 of those Catholic.

There are more than 1,000 churches across the island but the Holy Spirit Church is particularly unique. Located on a quiet road in the rural town of Yanshui, about an hour's drive from southern Tainan city, it started life as a simple wooden structure, built by a German missionary more than six decades ago.

However, in 1986 it was reconstructed by Chinese pastor Li Shaofeng who had a very different vision, melding features of a typical Chinese temple into the design, including lanterns, red pillars, and painted dragons motifs. "The pastor thought of building a more Chinese-style church to adapt to the local environment," said Joseph Chung, the church's

current pastor. "He built this church hoping to attract more followers," said Chung, 67.

Blessed place

Several other churches in Taiwan incorporate some temple-like characteristics, but none to the

“The essence is the same”

same extent. Murals cover almost all of the interior walls of the Holy Spirit Church, depicting teachings from the Bible, but with a twist—most of the figures look Asian and wear Chinese-style clothing. Even the bread in the church's mural of "The Last

Supper"—the famous Leonardo da Vinci painting of Jesus and his apostles—is replaced with baozi, Chinese steamed buns.

At the back of the main hall, next to the confessional, is a shrine with candles and a Chinese incense bowl to commemorate the church's late pastors. Burning incense is a common Chinese tribute to deities or ancestors. Chung says the number of regular followers attending services has dropped in recent years as Yanshui residents move to bigger cities. But masses are still held daily, with special events drawing believers from all over southern Taiwan.

The music for the services is performed by Catholic nuns from the attached Monastery of St Clare, which was started in 1990. Churchgoer Cecilia Huang has been a regular visitor to the Holy Spirit Church for 20 years and says she particularly likes praying with the nuns. Huang says she appreciates the church's design aesthetic and says it does not change the nature of her religion. "The essence is the same," said Huang, 66. "It's only the appearance that looks like it's integrated into Taiwan's environment, bringing blessings to this place." —AFP



Priest Claudio Pegoraro, left, swings an incense holder as he prays to a saint's statue.



A worshipper receives holy communion during a Catholic mass.



#MeToo takes a hit in Asia Argento underage sex case

The #MeToo campaign has proved an irresistible force since emerging from the carnage of Hollywood's abuse and harassment scandal-dominating the conversation on sexual misconduct. But it finds itself facing its own backlash following abuse claims against Italian actress Asia Argento, one of its leaders and an early accuser of disgraced Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein. The New York Times reported on Sunday that Argento, 42, paid actor Jimmy Bennett \$380,000 in hush money after having sex with him in Los Angeles hotel in 2013, when he was only 17 — and still underage.

Argento has denied the allegations, dismissing them as part of "a long-standing persecution," but faces the possibility of losing her job as a judge on TV talent show "X Factor Italy." The case has cast a pall over #MeToo, already under fire from those who say it has ruined the lives of numerous powerful men on the basis of accusations that are rarely vindicated by the judicial process. Argento became a powerful #MeToo voice after accusing Weinstein of raping her when she was 21 in his hotel

room in 1997 during the Cannes film festival.

Tarana Burke, founder of the movement named by Time magazine as its 2017 "Person of the Year," is acutely aware of the tricky terrain #MeToo now finds itself negotiating. "People will use these recent news stories to try and discredit this movement—don't let that happen," she tweeted.

No model victim

She said there was no such thing as a "model survivor," adding: "We are imperfectly human and we all have to be accountable for our individual behavior." Actress Rosanna Arquette, another early Weinstein accuser, called for understanding for Argento, appearing to believe that the Italian could be both victim and aggressor. She called the timing of the story "suspect" but added that it did not take away the fact that "Asia was still raped by Harvey Weinstein."

"I know many many rape and trauma survivors who act out sexually. The wounds they carry run deep. I pray for them," Arquette tweeted. Argento is seen as a controversial figure, with a complex personal story and a traumatic recent history marked by the suicide in June of her partner, celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain. Monica Hesse, who specializes in gender issues, wrote a commentary for the Washington Post positing a disparity between the real-life complexity of sexual abuse and the stories we tell that often reduce the players to "victim," "attacker," "innocent" or "monster." "Punish Argento, if the legal system requires it. Ask difficult questions regarding how



Italian actress Asia Argento

to think about victims who are also abusers," Hesse wrote. "But let the stories be complicated, because that messiness isn't a bad thing. It's actually the only thing. It's the only way to acknowledge there aren't neat labels in these cases, only broken humans."

Good news for Weinstein?

It is probably too early to know if #MeToo will emerge unscathed from Argento scandal, but that hasn't stopped vested interests capitalizing with their own spin

on the facts. "This development reveals a stunning level of hypocrisy by Asia Argento, one of the most vocal catalysts who sought to destroy Harvey Weinstein," the mogul's lawyer Ben Brafman said. He expressed shock at the "sheer duplicity" of Argento's conduct, arguing that it demonstrated how poorly the allegations against Weinstein had been vetted.

This leading light of the New York bar has been making the case that the scandal weakens the Manhattan prosecution of his client for rape and other sex crimes against three women. Bennett Gershman, a law professor at Pace University and a former prosecutor, thinks Brafman is getting carried away. He argues that while the Argento case is "interesting and thrilling"—and could even cause problems for #MeToo—it has nothing to do with Weinstein.

Gershman said he expected the lawyers going after the veteran producer to be especially careful, following the embarrassment of the failed Dominique Strauss-Kahn prosecution. A controversial French politician and former managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Strauss-Kahn was accused of sexual assault and attempted rape by a hotel maid in 2011.

The charges were dismissed at the prosecution's request after serious doubts emerged over the alleged victim's credibility and inconclusive physical evidence. "They would not want that to happen again and my guess is that they have been extra careful in their investigation and in examining the background of their accusers," Gershman said. —AFP

Lifestyle | Features

PRISTINE NO MORE: CRUISE SHIPS, CROWDS SWAMP MONTENEGRO



This picture shows the bay of Kotor. — AFP photos



Tourists glance at souvenirs for sale under arches as they visit the medieval city of Kotor.

Montenegro's medieval walled city of Kotor, an Adriatic seaport cradled in a spectacular fjord-like bay, has survived centuries of weather and warfare. Now it is facing a different kind of assault, that of gargantuan cruise ships disgorging throngs of tourists threatening a place that was only a few years ago commonly described as a "hidden gem". The coastline the poet Lord Byron called the "most beautiful merging of land and sea" is now one of unbridled real estate development.

With rocky slopes jutting into azure waters, Kotor's bay and its white-stone old town have been hailed as an alternative for travelers looking to avoid the mass tourism choking Dubrovnik some 70 kilometers up the coast in Croatia. Last year the hugely popular Dubrovnik-like Kotor, a medieval walled city and a UNESCO World Heritage site—became synonymous with the global "overtourism" scourge, showing up on lists of destinations to avoid.

Dubrovnik has seen a marked surge of visitors since scenes of the HBO series "Game of Thrones" were set

there. Now there are fears Kotor could meet a similar fate. "Kotor was once known for being more authentic (than Dubrovnik), but now we're in the same place," said Sandra Kapetanovic from Expedito, a local architecture group that advocates sustainable development.

"We are being transformed into a city of souvenir shops," she said, noting that rising prices have forced out a library, hair salon, market and shoemaker in the past year. Last week a Lonely Planet travel writer tweeted a photo of a massive cruise ship moored in Kotor, which welcomes up to four of them at once, contributing to some 10,000 daily visitors at the height of the season.

Tipping point?

"There were 3 of these obnoxious giants clogging up the bay yesterday," wrote Peter Dragicovich. "They've killed #Venice and #Dubrovnik. Here's hoping they don't kill #Kotor as well." UNESCO, which named Kotor a World Heritage site in 1979, has been warning for years that rampant construction in the bay is threat-

ening its main appeal—the city's "harmony" with the natural landscape. In 2016 the UN cultural body threatened to revoke Kotor's heritage status—a wakeup call for the Montenegro authorities, who imposed a temporary moratorium on construction last year. "The question is what happens next?" asked Ana Nives Radovic, head of Kotor's local tourism body. "We are witnessing an era where we either make big changes, or we will be completely devastated if we just choose some profit from investments," she warned.

Montenegro was once a magnet for the glitterati, drawing American movie stars like Elizabeth Taylor and British royalty like Princess Margaret in the 1960s. But the tourism industry collapsed with the wars leading to the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. After the tiny country of just 600,000 people declared independence in 2006, it went on a construction spree. Foreign investors—mostly Russians—drove a property boom that saw apartment complexes blight the coast.

Tourism was largely spared the ravages of the 2008 global financial crisis, and today accounts for nearly a

quarter of Montenegro's gross domestic product. The annual influx totals around two million visitors—mostly in summer, and mostly on the coast. During that time, tourism puts "great pressure on cities, on the area, on communal infrastructure," said Damir Davidovic, a senior tourism ministry official.

Authorities are "analysing" the situation to find the right balance, he told AFP. One key concern is the rise of private accommodation—a model that hurts hotel operators and is changing the character of communities, as many locals evacuate for the summer to rent their homes. The explosion of online rental platforms like Airbnb has only amplified the problem.

"It is really a serious issue," said Davidovic, estimating that more than half the private accommodation for tourists operate in a "grey zone", with owners evading taxes by not registering their properties. Rade Ratkovic, a professor of tourism in nearby Budva, another hotspot marred by over-construction, said the town was being "attacked by huge buildings". — AFP

Sofia theatre group explores 'invisible hands' of recycling

In a neighborhood in downtown Sofia, theatergoers are looking for entertainment among the city's rubbish—quite literally. As night falls, spectators are led from one garbage bin to another, listening to the untold stories of the Bulgarian capital's army of unofficial refuse collectors. "You can tell a home by its rubbish. Show me people's rubbish and I can tell you who they are," says one actor dragging a cart, while another describes a collector's daily routine while sitting on top of a full garbage container.

The unusual joint performance by environmental pressure group Za Zemiata and the Vox Populi documentary theatre group presents verbatim some of the accounts of the 5,000 or so people who eke out a living in Sofia's ever-growing rag-and-bone trade. Za Zemiata, in addition to combating the stigma that brands them "vagrants", also wants to highlight the crucial role these unofficial collectors play in helping Sofia meet an EU target of recycling 50 percent of its rubbish by 2020.

Indeed, according to field studies by Za Zemiata, they handle between 70,000 and 100,000 tons of recyclables every year, accounting for between 41 and 57 percent of such material collected in the capital. Most of the collectors are middle-aged or elderly, with two-thirds of them working seven days a week, carrying huge loads on foot or with small makeshift carts, and earning less than 10 leva a day. That amounts to a monthly income that hovers below Bulgaria's official poverty line of 321 leva.

Making ends meet

While collectors are happy to tell their stories, only a few agree to give their names or be filmed by journalists. One of them is former secretary Penka. At 63, she gets by collecting nylon and cardboard and handing it over to her local recycling depot in return for enough money to buy food for herself and her cats. "Seven days a week, 2.50 leva per day makes around 20 leva per week but I am grateful," the haggard woman told AFP outside the depot, clutching her daily haul of coins in her hand.

Near a rubbish container on a central boulevard, Boryana, 62, is also finding what she needs to make ends meet, carefully arranging bottles, cans and paper in separate sections of her small cart. "I am not a pensioner yet. My husband died, I have no children but somehow I don't want to die yet," she said. In recent years, people like Penka and Boryana have become a common sight in the capital of the EU's poorest member state. But according to Za Zemiata, they have remained largely invisible to the authorities and have often been unjustly vilified. **Ambitious targets**

"These people do what most of the others do not. Let us stop pre-



This picture shows artists during a performance organized by environmental pressure group Za Zemiata and the Vox Populi documentary theater group in Sofia. — AFP photos

tending they are not there," said Za Zemiata activist Evgenia Tasheva. A recent national poll showed that 68 percent of the population do not recycle—which is not obligatory in Bulgaria. Several schemes backed by city authorities to sort waste using different-colored containers have also fallen flat, with the result that less than one-third of the city's waste is recycled.

A further 16 percent of the city's rubbish ends up in landfill, while the rest is converted to fuel, with city authorities recently green-lighting a new power plant to burn it. Za Zemiata has protested against the plant, saying the authorities should focus instead on integrating collectors like Penka and Boryana into the waste disposal system as a way of boosting recycling.

'We separate, like ants'

But any such move would likely face stiff opposition from the contractors who run the city's official recycling schemes and who accuse the unofficial collectors of "hindering" their work by rummaging through their bins. "Piles of litter are left around the containers, which discourages people from taking part in the separation system," one such company, Ekobulpack, said in comments emailed to AFP.

Za Zemiata has also raised the alarm over a recent official decision to move the depots where unofficial collectors hand in their materials to the outskirts of the city as of next year, citing complaints about pollution and noise. The organization fears the decision could push collectors like Penka and Boryana even further into poverty. "We collect, separate like ants—to earn our living. But I think we are also doing good. If that ends, I'll put out a hand, if someone drops something in it..." a 60-year-old recycler shrugged as he turned in a huge pile of refuse paper to earn his wage for the day. — AFP

AT VINTAGE DRIVE-IN THEATERS, ROMANCE ISN'T YET DEAD



People attend a drive-in movie screening at Family Drive-in in Stephens City, Virginia. — AFP photos



Once the quintessential spot for young love, the drive-in movie theater has by and large gone the way of the record player, a vestige of retro nostalgia. But despite the popularity of "Netflix and chill" at-home streaming sessions, some film-goers say the romance is far from dead: at one rural spot in Virginia, moviegoers looking for a trip down memory lane can get their fill of popcorn while enjoying a double feature under the stars.

Patrons can view the big screen from the privacy of their cars—perfect for the yawn-and-stretch move-or outside for a "tailgate" party of the sorts that sees adults chit-chatting over snacks as kids romp on the playground. The Family Drive-In Theater in Stephens City — 84 miles (135 miles) west of Washington—is one of just 300 drive-ins still in operation stateside, down from 4,000 such cinemas in the 1960s when the concept peaked, becoming intrinsic to the fabric of classic Americana.

Two films cost eight dollars and kids get in half-price at the dog-friendly venue, which opened in 1956 and is now the only drive-in left in the region. "This is very financially beneficial for us as a family," said Debbie Williams, who came to the show with a pack of kids. "Plus it's different," she said. "It's being outdoors, it's the fresh air, looking at the stars and not being in a crowded place." Owner Jim Kopp says he's added contemporary features like FM stereo sound and digital projection to bring his Virginia drive-in in step with the times. Traditionally a mainstay of the countryside, drive-ins have also started carving out a niche in urban areas. Once a month Washington's Union Market caters to those looking to scratch a nostalgic itch, screening films for people with cars as well as viewers with picnic blankets.

The shows even feature waitresses on roller skates who glide through the crowds serving concessions. For teenager Josephine Crittenden, the drive-in was a relic she had only seen in mid-century films like Grease, which includes a classic date between the main characters that goes awry when Danny gets fresh with Sandy. Perched on her family's 1968 Bronco truck for a showing of "Black Panther," Crittenden says heading to the drive-in "seems like a special occasion." For her, the experience is all about the charm: "It kind of makes me feel like it's the old days." — AFP





This photo shows Sarah Freeman, founder of the Clothes Library store in Sydney.—AFP photos



This photo shows clothing on sale at the St Vincent de Paul Society, a major charity recycling clothes, in Sydney.

Australian

eco-friendly 'Clothes Library' fights fast fashion

In a small shop along one of Sydney's busiest streets, Sarah Freeman is encouraging Australians to slow down and break their addiction to fast fashion. Shocked by the speed at which Australians buy and throw away cheap garments, she is trying to harness an ancient concept—libraries—to persuade shoppers to rent instead of purchase clothes.

"Today's society just seem to wear clothes like condoms. They wear them once and they throw them away," the passionate vintage garment aficionado told AFP at her Clothes Library in the inner suburb of Potts Point. "That's not how clothes are supposed to be designed. The clothes nowadays are manufactured for six wears, I think, which is terrible."

Globally, clothing production doubled from 2000-14, with the number of garments bought each year by consumers soaring by 60 percent, according to consulting firm McKinsey & Company. A booming part of the industry, including in Australia, is fast fashion, which quickly turns catwalk designs into apparel sold at low or ultra-low prices and easily accessible via online sites. In Australia, where the demand for textiles is one of the highest per capita in the world, the fast fashion sector grew by 19.5 percent over five years to Aus\$1.8 billion (US\$1.4 billion) in

2017-18, research firm IBISWorld reported. A recent YouGov survey also found that almost a quarter of Australians have thrown away an item of clothing after wearing it just once, and four in 10 admitted they had binned unwanted garments, adding to landfill. "They don't always see it as something that is a valuable product to keep in your wardrobe," Alison Gwilt, a sustainable fashion expert and researcher at the University of South Australia, said.

"So already the mindset from the very beginning when you buy that type of product is that you think of it as something that's short-lived." At the Sydney distribution centre of St Vincent de Paul Society, a major charity recycling clothes, manager George Blakely has seen the longevity of some donated items decline in recent years. "Some products only last two or three washes, which is not favorable... The volume they get through here is usually increasing, because people are turning over products in their own home more quickly," Blakely said.

Low prices, high costs

The rock bottom prices for consumers contrast with the high cost paid by the environment. Tons of cheap clothes are churned

out every year in developing countries, using up copious amounts of energy and resources and polluting waterways near factories with toxic chemicals. The materials used are often synthetic and non-biodegradable, meaning even washing can be hazardous, with some textiles shedding plastic micro-fibers that make their way to water catchments and oceans in consumer countries like Australia.

In recent months, the devastating impact of waste has made headlines after China, Australia's biggest market for recycling waste, cracked down on foreign imports. Beijing's restrictions on "contaminated" recycled materials including fabric has forced Australians to think about how much waste they produce and galvanized efforts to explore more sustainable approaches. Producers have been proactive with natural fibers—Australia is a key supplier of wool and high-quality cotton—Australian Fashion Council chief executive David Giles-Kaye said. Retailers including major player Cotton On are pledging to make their manufacturing chains transparent and ethical. At Melbourne's Deakin University, researchers won support from Swedish mega-retailer H&M to develop "circular denim", where old jeans are used to color new ones, reducing the impact on landfills and of dye

run-off. St Vincent's has joined the efforts at the recycling level, examining better ways to sort donated clothes into different fiber types and repurpose garments to extend their life-cycle.

"We have to become a lot... smarter and really use technology to try and break things down into their base form so that things can actually be reused and we can become a true circular economy," the charity's retail development manager Jacqui Dropulic said. Although the efforts could lead to significant change within the fashion industry, Giles-Kaye believes the key to solving the issue ultimately lies with consumers and their desire for even quicker and cheaper clothing.

"It's still very much a fringe movement... When consumers continue to want more product at a lower price it really drives the producers into less sustainable areas of manufacturing," he said. Freeman is convinced that if concepts like hers allowing shoppers to borrow and return quality secondhand clothes for a small monthly subscription fee take off, people power can make a difference. "Hopefully it will catch on and people will start being more conscious and just make an effort to not go out and purchase the fast fashion items," she said. "I mean if we stop demanding it, then they (retailers) have to stop supplying it."—AFP



Hans Reschreiter, chief archeologist at the Museum of Natural History in Vienna, is pictured in Hallstatt, Austria, beside well-preserved remains of a prehistoric miner, found in 1734 at the Hallstatt salt mine.—AFP photos



This picture shows the remains of a 3,000-year-old prehistoric wooden staircase.



This picture shows the well-preserved remains of a prehistoric miner.

Ancient Austrian mine holds Bronze Age secrets

All mines need regular reinforcement against collapse, and Hallstatt, the world's oldest salt mine perched in the Austrian Alps, is no exception. But Hallstatt isn't like other mines. Exploited for 7,000 years, the mine has yielded not only a steady supply of salt but also archaeological discoveries attesting to the existence of a rich civilization dating back to the early part of the first millennium BC.

So far less than two percent of the prehistoric tunnel network is thought to have been explored, with the new round of reinforcement work, which began this month, protecting the dig's achievements, according to chief archeologist Hans Reschreiter. "Like in all the mines, the mountain puts pressure on the tunnels and they could cave in if nothing is done," Reschreiter said. Hallstatt was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1997 and the work aims to protect it for "future generations", said Thomas Stelzer, governor of Upper Austria state where the mine is located. Towering over a natural lake—today frequented by masses of tourists, particularly from Asia, who come to admire the picture-perfect Alpine scenery—the Hallstatt mine lies more than 800 meters above sea level. The vast deposit of sea salt inside was left by the ocean that covered the region some 250 million years ago.

3,000-year-old stairs

Among the most striking archaeological discoveries was that of an eight-meter-long wooden staircase dating back to 1100 BC, the oldest such staircase found in Europe. "It was so well preserved that we could take it apart and reassemble it," Reschreiter said. Other items date back much further. Excavated in 1838, an axe made from staghorn dating from 5,000 BC showed that as early as then, miners "tried hard to extract salt from here," Reschreiter said. In the mid-19th century, excavations revealed a necropolis that showed the site's prominence during the early Iron Age. The civilization became known as "Hallstatt culture", ensuring the site's fame. "Thousands of bodies have been excavated, almost all flaunting rich bronze ornaments, typically worn by only the wealthiest," Reschreiter said. "The remains bore the marks of hard physical labor from childhood, while also showing signs of unequalled prosperity."

Priceless 'white gold'

Salt—long known as "white gold"—was priceless at the time. And Hallstatt produced up to a tonne every day, supplying "half of Europe", he said, adding that the difficult-to-access location "became the continent's richest, and a major platform for trading in 800 BC". Testifying to this are sword handles made of African ivory and Mediterranean wine bowls found at the site. A second series of excavations—started by Vienna's Museum of Natural History some

60 years ago—produced more surprises.

In tunnels more than 100 metres below the surface, archaeologists discovered "unique evidence" of mining activity at an "industrial" scale during the Bronze Age, Reschreiter said. As well as revealing wooden retaining structures more than 3,000 years old which were perfectly preserved by the salt, the excavation unearthed numerous tools, leather gloves and a rope-thick as a fist—as well as the remains of millions of wooden torches.

Continuously active

Also used by Celts and during the Roman era when salt was used to pay legions stationed along the Danube River—it is the origin of the word "salary"—the mine has never stopped working since prehistoric times. Today, about 40 people still work there, using high-pressure water to extract the equivalent of 250,000 tons of salt per year. "Salt doesn't have the same value as in antiquity anymore. But some of its new uses, such as in the pharmaceutical and chemical industries, are still highly profitable," said Kurt Thomanek, technical director of salt supplier Salinen Austria. Tourism linked to the archaeological discoveries is also "a pillar of our activities", Thomanek added. Last year, some 200,000 people visited the Hallstatt mine.—AFP



This picture shows a salt-mountain railway car.



This picture shows Lake Hallstatt in Austria.



A typical flat-bottomed boat called 'Plaette' crosses Lake Hallstatt in Austria.



A Sri Lankan street vendor hangs kites for sale in Colombo on Friday. — AFP

Egypt says no faults in hotel room of UK couple who died

HURGHADA, Egypt: Engineers have found no fault in the air conditioning unit or any other equipment in the Egyptian hotel room of a British couple on holiday who died within hours of each other, the public prosecutor said yesterday. Tour operator Thomas Cook has moved all its customers from the hotel in the Red Sea resort of Hurghada after the couple died in what their daughter on Friday called "suspicious" circumstances. The company said it was unclear what had caused the deaths on Tuesday of the Britons, identified as 69-year-old John and Susan Cooper, 63, from Burnley in northern England.

Experts from the engineering faculty of Ganoub el-Wadi University were called in to inspect the room at the plush Steigenberger Aqua Magic Hotel, Egypt's public prosecutor said in a statement. "They examined and carefully checked all devices present in the room, especially the air-conditioning," which British media have said could have resulted in carbon monoxide poisoning through a gas leak, it said. "The committee (of experts) documented in its report that all the appliances were safe and that no leakages or any poisonous or dangerous gases were present". The prosecutor's office added that it was still awaiting the forensics' report of samples taken from the couple.

A medical source in Hurghada told AFP that the bodies were being kept in a local hospital and doctors were waiting for authorization from prosecutors to release them to relatives or UK diplomats. Investigators

from the local prosecutor's office have already examined both bodies and the couple's hotel room and found nothing abnormal, a judicial source said Friday. "An (initial) autopsy found no signs of criminal violence or of a struggle," according to the prosecutor general's office. "The necessary samples were taken so laboratory tests can be run to determine the cause of death."

Their daughter, Kelly Ormerod, said both her parents fell ill suddenly, and her father had died in his hotel room while her mother passed away hours later in hospital. "They had no illness, no stomach upset, no vomiting, no illness whatsoever - they were in perfect health when they went to bed," she told Sky News. "I believe something suspicious has gone on... something has happened in that room and caused them to be taken away from us."

The tourism ministry has said a medical examination showed that John Cooper "experienced an extreme drop in the blood circulation and a sudden stop of the heart muscle". A security official said he died "of a heart attack", while the cause of his wife's death was reported as "halt of blood circulation and her respiratory functions". Thomas Cook said Thursday it had received reports of "a raised level of illness" among some of its other 300 customers at the Steigenberger. But the hotel management told AFP there were "no indications to support allegations of an increased incidence of illness". — AFP



HURGHADA, Egypt: The Steigenberger Aqua Magic hotel is seen in this Red Sea resort yesterday. — AFP

Under fire, Rouhani calls for unity

TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called for unity yesterday in the face of criticism from all sides of his handling of an economic crisis and tensions with the United States. "Now is not the time to unload our burdens on to somebody else's shoulders. We must help each other," Rouhani said in a televised speech at the shrine of late revolutionary leader Ruhollah Khomeini. "The country's problems and resisting foreigners' conspiracies is the responsibility of every one of us."

With rapidly rising food prices, a dramatic currency collapse and the reimposition of US sanctions after it abandoned a 2015 nuclear deal, many Iranians are in a bleak mood. Much of his electoral base among reform-minded urbanites has lost faith in him, while working-class areas have seen months of sporadic strikes and

protests that have occasionally turned violent. Some of the most virulent criticism has come from the headline religious establishment who long opposed Rouhani's efforts to rebuild ties with the West.

On Aug 16, an image went viral of a protest by seminary students in the shrine city of Qom, at which one placard warned Rouhani would meet the same fate as former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who was found dead in a swimming pool last year. Rouhani sought to play down the differences, saying: "The clerical, religious institutions and the government are alongside each other." But he added a typically cryptic warning: "No one can walk into the sea and not expect to get his feet wet."

Hardliners have been blamed for stoking economic protests that have sometimes turned against the Islamic system as a whole. Rouhani still has the support of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who says he must remain in power to avoid further disorder. But Khamenei has also blamed government mismanagement, rather than foreign hostility, for the current crisis. "We are aware of people's pain, suffering and problems and all our efforts are geared at reducing these problems," Rouhani pledged. — AFP



TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visits the shrine of revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini yesterday. — AFP

'Green hajj' slowly takes...

Continued from Page 1

plan that speaks to both environmental ethics and religious belief. Sorted waste collected from the pilgrimage sites will be sold to companies that handle recycling. All proceeds will be given to charity in standing with the Muslim belief in "sadaqah", or voluntary donations.

Palestinians slam 'cheap blackmail'...

Continued from Page 1

with the Israeli occupation and its theft of land and resources," she said. "Now it is exercising economic meanness by punishing the Palestinian victims of this occupation."

The Islamist movement Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, also denounced the aid cut. Facing "the American policy of blackmail" necessitated "unifying the Palestinian ranks", spokesman Fawzi Barhoum told AFP. In an initial reaction on Friday, the PLO's representative in Washington, Husam Zomlot, told the US administration was "dismantling decades of US vision and engagement in Palestine". He said Friday's move was "another confirma-

Workers in bright green vests made their way across the streets and alleys, picking up soda cans and plastic water bottles as pilgrims packed their things to return home. Signs encouraging pilgrims to sort their waste could be seen across the Mamuniya camp - along with signs reading "Sadaqah, not litter." "The idea of an environmentally friendly camp is really important to us, to preserve the sanctity of the site," said Hatem Mumena, the camp's general manager. But he admits there is still far to go, as the numbers of pilgrims attending hajj is expected to rise. Saudi Arabia hopes to welcome some 30 million pilgrims per year by 2030. "This is just the beginning," Mumena said. — AFP

tion" that Washington was "abandoning the two-state solution and fully embracing (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu's anti-peace agenda."

The decision to cut Palestinian funding comes as a humanitarian crisis deepens in Gaza, which has seen a surge of violence since Palestinian protests erupted in March. At least 172 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire, the vast majority of them during demonstrations near the border.

Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy accused the White House of engaging in a "series of provocative and harmful acts" instead of coming up with a coherent policy to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Trump has tasked his son-in-law Jared Kushner and lawyer Jason Greenblatt to draft the peace proposals, saying earlier this week that there would be something "very good" for the Palestinians. The Palestinians see the eastern part of Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. J Street, a liberal pro-Israel group, called the Trump administration's move a "moral outrage and a major strategic blunder". — Agencies

Rohingya mark first 'versary...

Continued from Page 1

our homeland. Let us see our parents' graves. We left them back in Myanmar." Mohammad Ayub, a 28-year-old refugee who joined a march, said many Rohingya had lost loved ones in the violence and still mourned for them. "We remember them on this day. It is a black day," he told AFP.

Myanmar authorities, who insist their forces only targeted insurgents, have made an agreement with Bangladesh to repatriate refugees but only a handful have gone back. Rohingya leaders say the exiles will not return home unless their safety is guaranteed. Myanmar's civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi this week said it was up to Bangladesh "to decide how quickly" repatriation of the refugees can be accomplished. She said the "terrorist threat" posed by Rohingya militants remains "real and present".

The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, which has been blamed for attacks in Myanmar, issued an anniversary statement in which it condemned Myanmar's "terrorist government and genocidal military". ARSA said it would "continue our struggle for our right to exist". The group had "come to existence only to defend, salvage and protect Rohingya people" from the Myanmar government and military, it said in a statement attributed to its chief, Ata Ullah, and posted on a Twitter account previously used by it.

Mohammad Hossain, a 40-year-old protester at Kutupalong, said: "We are here remember to August 25. We want justice. We want them (Myanmar) to recognize us as Rohingya. We are very sad because we are not in our native land." The Rohingya were stripped of their citizenship

decades ago by Myanmar and have been chased from the country in successive convulsions of violence. About 300,000 were already in the camps in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district and the latest arrivals pushed numbers to one million. The Rohingya and aid agencies are most worried about the uncertain future of the refugees, who are stateless and seemingly unwanted in Bangladesh while conditions in their Rakhine homeland remain dangerous.

International Red Cross Committee president Peter Maurer, who visited the camps and Rakhine in July, said in an anniversary statement that Rohingya in both places were "living in misery". "Unfortunately, since my visit we have not seen tangible improvements for those displaced or the few who remain in Rakhine." The Red Cross chief called for urgent "sustainable solutions" for "safe, dignified and voluntary returns as soon as possible". He said this must include "political steps" in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

While the Rohingya exodus from western Myanmar continues, with refugees still trickling over the border, the United Nations and international rights groups say conditions are not ready for their return. "It may be decades until they can safely return to Myanmar, if ever," said MSF head of mission in Bangladesh Pavlo Kolovos in a statement. Humanitarian agencies spearheading the relief effort in Bangladesh say just one-third of the roughly \$1 billion needed for the refugees until March has been raised.

Calls have mounted for Myanmar's military to be held responsible for the campaign and the United States has sanctioned two army brigades and several commanders who oversaw the expulsion. In a statement ahead of the anniversary, 132 sitting parliamentarians from five other countries in Southeast Asia issued a statement calling for Myanmar officials to face trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC is currently considering whether it has jurisdiction in the crisis. Bangladesh is a member of the court, but Myanmar is not. — Agencies

Sports

Emery gets first win as Arsenal battle back against West Ham

West Ham's third successive defeat under new manager Pellegrini

LONDON: Arsenal won for the first time under new manager Unai Emery as they came from behind to clinch a 3-1 victory against West Ham yesterday. Emery's side had lost the first two games of the post-Arsene Wenger era against Manchester City and Chelsea in the club's worst start to a Premier League campaign since 1992.

They were on the verge of more unwanted history after Marko Arnautovic gave West Ham a surprise lead at the Emirates Stadium. A defeat would have made this the first Arsenal side to lose their opening three fixtures for 54 years. But, while Emery's team were dismal in defence, they possessed just enough attacking quality to stage a much-needed fightback. Nacho Monreal equalised before half-time and West Ham defender Issa Diop deflected influential substitute Alexandre Lacazette's shot after the interval.

Danny Welbeck came off the bench to wrap up the points in stoppage-time. Emery was relieved to see Arsenal finally get points on the board, but their inconsistent performance suggests the former Paris Saint Germain boss still has much to work on as he aims to restore his new club to the top four after last season's sixth place finish.

West Ham's third successive defeat under new manager Manuel Pellegrini makes it the worst start by a Hammers boss since Avram Grant lost his opening four league games of the 2010-11 season. Pellegrini's side sit bottom of the table and have only themselves to blame after wasting several chances to seize control. Arsenal were without Mesut Ozil, who was reported to be suffering from the flu after missing training on Friday, but the German midfielder's absence couldn't be blamed for his team's erratic efforts at the back. There was an early warning for the creaky Arsenal defence as Hammers captain Arnautovic fired into the side-netting.

Pellegrini's men snatched the lead with a 25th minute goal that showed Emery hasn't curbed the defensive woes that ailed Arsenal in last years of the Wenger era. When Felipe Anderson

took possession in midfield, he was able to advanced unchecked towards the Arsenal penalty area, where he fed a pass into Arnautovic. Aided by the lethargic reaction of Arsenal defenders Shkodran Mustafi and Sokratis Papastathopoulos, Arnautovic had time and space to drill a low drive past Petr Cech from the edge of the area.

REVITALISED

Jolted into action by that shock setback, Arsenal were level within five minutes. Hector Bellerin's dashes forward from right-back were causing West Ham defender Arthur Masuaku all kinds of problems and the Spaniard was the catalyst for Arsenal's equaliser as the climax of a fine 17-pass move. Breaking onto Henrikh Mkhitaryan's pass down the right flank, Bellerin whipped over a cross that ran through to Monreal at the far post, where the left-back lashed home from close-range. Emery admitted this week that Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has been suffering from a confidence crisis after the Arsenal striker failed to score in the opening two games. Aubameyang was subdued again, the Gabon international threatening just once from long-range, and when Alexandre Lacazette came on to play alongside at half-time, the French forward immediately looked more dangerous than his team-mate.

Benefitting from more astonishingly slack defending, Robert Snodgrass should have put West Ham ahead when he ran clear on goal, but the midfielder let Arsenal off the hook with a tame effort. Crucially, Arnautovic squandered two chances to restore West Ham's lead with sloppy finishes early in the second half. Lacazette's introduction had revitalised Arsenal and he drew a good stop from Lukasz Fabianski with a stinging strike. Arsenal's pressure was rewarded in the 70th minute when Lacazette controlled well on his chest and swivelled for a shot that cannoned off Diop and into his own net. Arsenal finished well on top and Welbeck tapped in from Bellerin's pass with the Hammers defence in tatters. — AFP



LONDON: Arsenal's Greek defender Sokratis Papastathopoulos (R) challenges West Ham United's Mexican striker Javier Hernandez (L) during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and West Ham United at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

United were vulnerable in defence at times but were unstoppable in attack against an overwhelmed Norwich. Bolton lost ground in the title race after slipping to their first defeat of the season as Sheffield United emerged 3-0 winners at the University of Bolton Stadium.

Mark Duffy, Kieron Freeman and John Fleck were on target in a victory as comprehensive as the scoreline suggests. Under-pressure QPR boss Steve McClaren was thrown a lifeline with a 1-0 victory over Wigan at Loftus Road. Tomer Hemed's first-half goal secured Rangers' first points of the season following a run of four straight defeats that had rooted them to the foot of the table. Sam Baldock salvaged a point against Aston Villa after his injury-time penalty secured an unexpected 1-1 draw for Reading.

Villa lost playmaker Jack Grealish to a first-half injury but that did not prevent them from opening the scoring

through Ahmed Elmohamady and they looked comfortable until Baldock intervened.

Brentford dropped out of the play-off places after Kasey Palmer gave Blackburn a 1-0 victory at Ewood Park. Derby surged up the table after strikes from Mason Mount and Richard Keogh completed a 2-0 win against struggling Preston.

Lucas Joao plundered the opener and winner as Sheffield Wednesday overcame Ipswich 2-1. Stoke claimed their first win of the season after James McClean scored and Mame Biram Diouf's effort looped into the bottom corner after deflecting off Tigers defender Jordy de Wijs for a 2-0 victory.

Andreas Weimann found the net after 31 seconds but that was the only goal as Bristol City prevailed 1-0 at Swansea. — AFP

Leeds top Championship table as Bolton slip up

LONDON: Leeds stormed back to the top of the Championship yesterday, leapfrogging local rivals Middlesbrough with a 3-0 victory against Norwich. The Canaries have painted the away dressing room pink in the hope of lowering the testosterone levels of their opponents but the ploy failed to deter Marcelo Bielsa's men as two first-half goals in six minutes swept them clear.

Mateusz Klich and Ezgjan Alioski pounced to reward Leeds' early dominance before the outstanding Pablo Hernandez added a third in the 67th minute following some individual wizardry from the Spanish playmaker.

Brazil's tainted former soccer chiefs enjoy safe haven

SAO PAULO: When the former boss of Brazilian football was arrested in Zurich in a 2015 graft case that would see him sentenced to prison, his successor in the job didn't lose a minute - he got on the first plane to Rio de Janeiro and didn't look back.

That was three years ago, and since then Marco Polo Del Nero has seen FIFA's top brass toppled in a scandal that has disgraced the world's biggest sport, including ex-Brazil football chief Jose Maria Marin who was sentenced in New York on Wednesday to four years in prison for taking \$6.6 million in bribes.

Del Nero, former head of the Brazilian Football Confederation, is wanted for trial in the same case and in April received a life ban from FIFA. But in his native Brazil, Del Nero is safe from extradition, which is only permitted in narco-trafficking cases. Also sheltering here is Ricardo Teixeira, who likewise headed the Brazilian Football Confederation-in his case for 23 years-and stands accused in the same bribery case.

Both were accused by US authorities in December 2015. By then, though, they were safely in their Rio residences. Their homes echo the years when Del Nero and Teixeira were allegedly milking the system by taking bribes from sports marketing companies in exchange for broadcast contracts at major soccer tournaments. That was a period when the duo, now in their 70s, lived rock star lives, surrounded by models, yachts, and the trappings of stardom. Today they continue to enjoy the high life even though they cannot travel for fear of arrest. "They avoid showing themselves, but in no way have they lost the standard of living they used to have," said Brazilian Juca Kfour, who has written about his country's scandal-ridden football chiefs for years.

Teixeira had already stepped aside when the bribery case broke, abruptly leaving the Brazilian confederation three years earlier under a cloud of scandals and no longer protected by his ex-father in law, the late former FIFA president Joao Havelange.

In his place came Marin, and then in 2015 Del Nero. Neither the arrest of Marin, nor his eventual trial, nor even a Brazilian Senate probe headed by ex-footballer Romario could derail Del Nero. He has too many powerful friends in Brazil's establishment. — AFP



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's French forward Kingsley Coman (r) is fouled by Hoffenheim's Bosnian defender Ermin Bicakcic during the German first division Bundesliga football match FC Bayern Munich v TSG 1899 Hoffenheim at the Allianz Arena in Munich, southern Germany on Friday. — AFP

Bayern star Coman 'out for weeks' after second ankle injury

BERLIN: France winger Kingsley Coman faces another lengthy spell on the sidelines after tearing ligaments in his left ankle for the second time this year during Bayern Munich's win on the opening weekend of the new Bundesliga season.

Bayern has confirmed that the 22-year-old needs surgery after suffering a fresh injury in a foul during the first half of Friday's 3-1 home victory against Hoffenheim. Bayern expect him to be out for "several weeks". Coman has suffered the same injury that sidelined him from February to May, an absence which cost him a place in France's World Cup-winning squad.

"Of course we are very sad that Kingsley has suffered the same injury as before," said Bayern head coach Niko Kovac after yesterday's training session. "Fingers crossed that the operation goes well, so that he can come back quickly and can play Bundesliga football again."

area. VAR chaos in Wolfsburg comes after defending champions Bayern Munich beat Hoffenheim 3-1 on Friday with the help of a controversial penalty despite the referee consulting VAR. Wolfsburg took the lead when Maximilian Arnold's corner drifted to the back post and was headed into the top corner by burly centre-back Brooks on 33 minutes.

The American defender then gave away a late penalty for a kick on Schalke's Swiss striker Brael Embolo. Ex-Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Bentaleb, who had just come off the bench, fired home the 85th-minute spot kick before Ginczek struck.

Elsewhere, Nuremberg suffered a 1-0 defeat at Hertha Berlin on their return to the Bundesliga after a four-year absence. Hertha captain Vedad Ibisevic

slammed home the first-half winner at Berlin's Olympic Stadium. Eintracht Frankfurt, under new coach Adi Huetter, made up for their shock German Cup defeat to fourth-tier minnows Ulm last weekend with a 2-0 win at Freiburg as strikers Nicolai Mueller and Sebastian Haller scored. Werder Bremen were held to a 1-1 draw at home to Hanover 96 with Hendrik Weyand's goal for the visitors cancelled out by a late header by Bremen's Czech defender Theodor Gebre Selassie.

Augsburg enjoyed a 2-1 come-back win at newly-promoted Fortuna Dueseldorf thanks to Andre Hahn's late header after Austria defender Martin Hinteregger levelled following Benito Raman's first-half goal for the hosts. — AFP

Live **Matches on TV** (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

- Watford v Crystal Palace 15:30
- beIN SPORTS HD 2
- Newcastle United v Chelsea 18:00
- beIN SPORTS HD 2
- Fulham v Burnley 18:00
- beIN SPORTS HD 9

SPANISH LEAGUE

- RCD Espanyol v Valencia 19:15
- beIN SPORTS HD 1
- Sevilla v Villarreal 21:15
- beIN SPORTS HD 7
- beIN SPORTS HD 1 FR
- Girona v Real Madrid 23:15
- beIN SPORTS HD 3
- beIN SPORTS HD 1 FR

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

- spal v Parma Calcio 1913 19:00
- beIN SPORTS HD 4
- beIN SPORTS MAX 4 FR
- Fiorentina v Chievo Verona 21:30
- beIN SPORTS HD 8
- beIN SPORTS MAX 6 FR
- Internazionale Milano v Torino 21:30
- beIN SPORTS HD 4
- beIN SPORTS HD 2 FR
- Udinese Calcio v Sampdoria 21:30
- beIN SPORTS HD 1
- beIN SPORTS MAX 5 FR
- Genoa CFC v Empoli 21:30
- beIN SPORTS HD 9
- beIN SPORTS MAX 8 FR
- Cagliari Calcio v Sassuolo Calcio 21:30
- beIN SPORTS HD 12 EN
- beIN SPORTS MAX 6 FR
- Frosinone Calcio v Bologna FC 21:30
- beIN SPORTS HD 13 EN
- beIN SPORTS MAX 7 FR

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

- FSV Mainz 05 v VfB Stuttgart 16:30
- beIN SPORTS HD 5
- beIN SPORTS HD 2 FR
- Borussia Dortmund v RB Leipzig 19:00
- beIN SPORTS HD 5
- beIN SPORTS HD 2 FR

FRENCH LEAGUE

- LOSC Lille v EA Guingamp 16:00
- beIN SPORTS HD 6
- beIN SPORTS HD 1 FR
- Girondins de Bordeaux v AS Monaco 18:00
- beIN SPORTS HD 6
- beIN SPORTS HD 1 FR
- Olympique Marseille v Stade Rennais 22:00
- beIN SPORTS HD 6

Schalke crash at Wolfsburg amid VAR chaos

BERLIN: A dramatic late Daniel Ginczek goal sealed Wolfsburg's shock 2-1 win over Schalke yesterday as video assistant referee (VAR) interventions dominated the opening weekend of the Bundesliga season.

After Nabil Bentaleb's penalty cancelled out Wolfsburg's first-half goal by US defender John Anthony Brook, Ginczek sealed a dramatic win by

sweeping home the 94th-minute winner. However, the game was dominated by chaotic scenes midway through the second-half at Wolfsburg's Volkswagen Arena as VAR interventions led to a flurry of card reversals. Schalke were reduced to 10 men when defender Matija Nastasic was sent off for going in studs up on Wolfsburg's Dutch striker Wout Weghorst on 66 minutes. A VAR ruling meant the yellow card he was initially shown was upgraded to a red by referee Patrick Ittrich.

Weghorst was then sent off moments later for barging Schalke forward Guido Burgstaller. However, his red card was downgraded to a yellow after the video assistant spotted that Burgstaller, who was subsequently booked, had shoved the Dutchman over in the penalty

25 Brewers outlast Pirates with 15th inning walk-off from Orlando Arcia



26 Iran's Sohrab Moradi breaks weightlifting's world record



27 Emery gets first win as Arsenal battle back against West Ham



City fight back for 1-1 draw at Wolves

Champions equalise with Aymeric Laporte's header



WOLVERHAMPTON: Wolverhampton Wanderers' French defender Willy Boly (L) tackles Manchester City's Portuguese midfielder Bernardo Silva (2L) during the English Premier League football match between Wolverhampton Wanderers and Manchester City at the Molineux stadium in Wolverhampton, central England yesterday. — AFP

WOLVERHAMPTON: Manchester City had to battle back from behind to earn a 1-1 draw against Premier League newcomers Wolverhampton Wanderers who ruined the champions' 100 percent record and gave them a real test at Molineux yesterday.

Last season's Championship winners showed no inferiority complex as defender Willy Boly put them ahead with a controversial 57th-minute diving header which TV replays showed may have been offside and actually went in off his arm.

City, who had largely controlled proceed-

ings but were vulnerable to Wolves' bold counter-attacks, equalised with Aymeric Laporte's first goal for the club, a header from Ilkay Gundogan's free kick, 12 minutes later.

In a high-quality game, City, who have seven points from three matches, hit the post twice in the first half, through Sergio Aguero and Raheem Sterling, and the in-form Argentine Aguero also struck the bar with a superb free kick in the dying seconds. Though the champions, who had won their first two games of the season in handsome fashion, will be frustrated at their dominance not being rewarded, Wolves

deserved their second league point and never stopped striving for a late winner. "It was a good game. We created enough chances to win the game but it is a good point," City manager Pep Guardiola told Sky Sports. "Wolves deserve credit, of course. We play at the same level as we did last season. We tried but we will improve because defensively we were not solid like we normally are."

On Boly's handball goal, and whether the introduction of a video assistant referee would have ruled it out, Guardiola shrugged: "It is none of my business. The Premier

League will decide when they decide that VAR will be here." Wolves had been impressive from the start and midway through the first half, Raul Jimenez's strike looked to have put them ahead only for the goal to be ruled out for a narrow offside.

That prompted an instant City response, Aguero's snap shot hitting the post before Sterling's thunderous effort was tipped at full stretch on to the woodwork by a brilliant Rui Patricio save. The Wolves goal may have had a fortunate ending but it was set up superbly from Joao Moutinho's pinpoint cross and City's

response was that of champions. They could have gone ahead from a point-blank Gabriel Jesus header that again forced fine work from Rui Patricio and felt a foul on David Silva should have drawn a penalty. "A lot of people are going to drop points here. They deserved the point," City defender Kyle Walker said.

Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo demanded that his players remain "humble" after their excellent result. "We played in the shape and style we believe in. It's an identity you want to create," he said. — Reuters

Salah strike sinks Brighton, sends Liverpool to top spot

LIVERPOOL: Mohammed Salah's 23rd-minute strike was enough to earn Liverpool a 1-0 win over a dogged Brighton and Hove Albion and give them an early top spot in the Premier League with three wins out of three. Jurgen Klopp's side made a strong start, and Brighton's Australian keeper Mathew Ryan did well to keep out a Roberto Firmino header before Trent Alexander-Arnold rattled the crossbar with a 15th-minute free kick.

The breakthrough came when James Milner robbed Yves Bissouma as Brighton tried to play the ball out from the back and a quick exchange of passes from Sadio Mane and Firmino ended with a clinical finish from Salah, last season's top scorer with 32 league goals.

Brighton, who beat Manchester United last week, defended with determination, frustrating Liverpool but creating little until a Pascal Gross header in the 88th minute forced a good save out Liverpool keeper Alisson Becker. — Reuters



LIVERPOOL: Liverpool's English midfielder James Milner (C) controls the ball during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Brighton and Hove Albion at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

Ronaldo makes winning home debut as Juventus beat Lazio

TURIN: Cristiano Ronaldo made a winning home debut for Italian champions Juventus with Miralem Pjanic and Mario Mandzukic scoring in a 2-0 win over Lazio yesterday. Ronaldo, 33, played a role in Mandzukic's second goal of the night on 75 minutes after Pjanic put the hosts in front at the Allianz Stadium.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner joined the Serie A champions from Real Madrid on July 10 in a 100-million-euro deal but has yet to score his first competitive goal. Juve have now won their opening two games after last weekend's 3-2 success against Chievo in Verona.

Lazio—fifth last season in Serie A—have had their worst start to the season in over a decade following last weekend's 2-1 defeat at home against Napoli. In the first home game for the seven-time defending champions, Paulo Dybala and Douglas Costa started on the bench, with coach Massimiliano Allegri opting for Federico Bernardeschi and Mandzukic to spearhead the frontline with Ronaldo.

Simone Inzaghi's Lazio had ended Juventus's two-year unbeaten home Serie A run last year, but apart from a Luis Alberto shot after an hour they failed to threaten. Germany international Sami Khedira rattled the woodwork after 19 minutes for the home side, with Lazio goalkeeper Thomas Strakosha diving to keep out a Bernardeschi angled drive. But the hosts broke through on the half-hour when Mandzukic knocked down a cross for Pjanic to power a half-volley into the corner. Lazio's Marco Parolo missed a chance to equalise when his header flew over the bar just before the break.

Ronaldo came close after 63 minutes but headed just wide after connecting with a Joao Cancelo cross and again threatened on 71 minutes but Strakosha tipped over. Cancelo then set up Ronaldo for what looked destined to be his first goal for his new club, but the Portuguese star failed to control the ball in front of goal and Mandzukic fired home.

It was the first time that Ronaldo has not scored at the Allianz Stadium, having found the net three times for Real Madrid against the Italians. Ronaldo's next chance for his first goal will come against promoted Parma next Saturday. Meanwhile, Carlo Ancelotti faces an emotional home debut as Napoli coach against old club AC Milan later. Ancelotti spent most of his career at AC Milan with the 59-year-old winning three Serie A and four European titles as a player and coach with the northern giants. — AFP