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Kuwait hospitals on 'alert' amid food poisoning cases

287 suffer food poisoning after consuming 'tainted falafel'



BEIJING: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrives in China on an official state visit yesterday. — KUNA

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Health Ministry (MoH) has set up an emergency response plan after 287 people suffered food poisoning after consuming 'tainted falafel' served by a local restaurant in Hawally. The number of people poisoned from the food sold by the restaurant in Hawally area has risen to 287. Ministry of Health confirmed yesterday.

The MoH said that 192 people were admitted in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, 21 in Al-Amiri Hospital, 23 in Farwaniya Hospital, 17 in Al-Jahra Hospital, six in Al-Sabah Hospital, six in Al-Adan Hospital - while private hospitals received 22 people. As per the Ministry's emergency response plan, she said that all specialists and physicians have been called in to provide urgent medical care to the patients - none of whom appear to be in critical condition.

Furthermore, Dr Ali Al-Allanda, the director of Amiri hospital said that the medical facility has taken all the necessary measures to treat the influx of food poisoning cases and ensure the safe discharge of the

patients. The Health Ministry's Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha also confirmed yesterday that more cases were admitted at the Farwaniya Hospital.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition has closed down the restaurant following the poisoning of citizens and expats who ate meals from the facility. Deputy Director for Inspection and Supervision Department Dr Amal Al-Rashdan issued the closing order. The restaurant was closed at 1:00 am after the first 33 poisoning cases were reported.

Diovan 'ok'

In another development, Kuwait's health ministry said yesterday that a widely used blood pressure drug known by the trade name 'Diovan' is safe for consumption, refuting recent information alleging the medicine "could cause cancer." All registered pharmaceuticals available in Kuwait are totally safe, the ministry's assistant undersecretary for food and drug safety Dr Abdullah Al-Bader said in a statement, advising patients to be wary of false news and alerts.

Pope voices concern over Christians in Middle East

BARI: Pope Francis yesterday voiced concern that Christians will disappear from the Middle East amid "murderous indifference," as church leaders from Syria and Lebanon called on Western states to help return Syrian refugees. The Argentine Pope was addressing the leaders of almost all the Middle Eastern churches gathered in the port city of Bari to pray for peace in the region.

"The Middle East has become a land of people who leave their own lands behind," Francis said. "There is also the danger that the presence of our brothers and sisters in

the faith will disappear, disfiguring the very face of the region. "Indifference kills, and we desire to lift up our voices in opposition to this murderous indifference." Lebanese cardinal Bechara Rai, the patriarch of the Maronite Church, said governments should from now on encourage Syrian refugees to return to their country, because "bombings are extremely localized".

States must "financially help people driven from their lands to repair their homes," he said, instead of "repeatedly saying that there is no peace". More than 350,000 people have been killed since Syria's brutal civil war began in 2011, with millions more displaced. Lebanon, a country of cultural and religious diversity, has taken in some 1.75 million refugees. Yesterday, a ceasefire deal in the south between the government and rebels allowed thousands of displaced Syrians to return home. The accord follows a string of similar deals with rebels for other areas of Syria, Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said.

The Melkite Greek Catholic archbishop of Aleppo Jean-Clement Jeanbart said he has launched a campaign to return Syrians, called "Aleppo is waiting for you" funded by Swiss benefactors. Of the 170,000 Christians in the city before the war, around 60,000 remain, he said. Those who have sought refuge in neighboring countries are expected to return, unlike those who have fled to the West.

"Now that security has returned, help us at home," he said, adding that the Syrian regime is "credited with emphasizing secularism, diversity and equality for all citizens". The only alternative is a fundamentalist Islamic regime, he warned. The Syrian-Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem II, who lives in Damascus, echoed that "our greatest fear is to replace a secular regime with probably an Islamic one". According to the Chaldean bishop of Aleppo, Antoine Audo, half of Syria's 1.5 million Christians have fled the country since the unrest broke out. Churches have been damaged or destroyed, and large numbers of

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BARI: Pope Francis (left) watches as Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros (Theodoros) II releases a dove after a meeting with other religious leaders at the Pontifical Basilica of St Nicholas in Bari yesterday. — AFP

Sudden shift in Iran; hardliners back president

TEHRAN: Frequently a target of attack by hardliners, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani is benefiting from a sudden surge in support from his former critics, a week after he called for national unity. The apparent sea-change in conservative rhetoric follows hawkish comments by the president himself following Washington's unilateral May withdrawal from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal. Visiting Europe to seek economic guarantees, Rouhani lashed out at Israel in the Swiss capital Bern on Tuesday, saying Iran "sees the Zionist regime as an illegitimate regime".

And he has questioned the American government's ability to make good on threats to prevent other countries buying Tehran's oil. The latest evidence of the domestic shift came on Wednesday, in a letter by prominent General Qassem Soleimani to the moderately conservative president. Soleimani-head of the elite Revolutionary Guards' foreign operations-thanks the president for his "wise and appropriate" words on Israel and the US, in the letter published by Fars news agency. Rouhani's remarks were "a source of pride", wrote the general.

Rouhani is the main Iranian architect of the July 2015 nuclear accord with world powers, under which his country agreed to rein in its nuclear program in exchange for easing multilateral sanctions which had strangled the economy. Some Iranians have interpreted Rouhani's recent hawkish comments as meaning he could be open to blocking the Strait of Hormuz-a threat Tehran has brandished during past bouts of regional tension.

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49 killed and 48 missing; record rain hits Japan

TOKYO: Forty nine people have been killed and 48 are unaccounted for in western and central Japan as torrential rain pounds the area, public broadcaster NHK said yesterday, with more than 1.6 million evacuated from their homes. Japan's Meteorological Agency retained special weather warnings for three prefectures in the main island of Honshu, down from five, and urged vigilance against landslides, rising rivers and strong winds amid what it called "historic" rains.

Helicopter footage showed people on

their roofs waving for help in Kurashiki, and Japanese soldiers rescuing children by boat from a flooded river in Hiroshima. In Motoyama, a town on Shikoku island, about 600 km from the capital Tokyo, 583 mm of rain fell between Friday and yesterday morning, the agency said. Although a weather front had settled between western and eastern Japan, there was a risk heavy rains would continue as warm air flowed towards the front, it added, with already-saturated areas facing more rain today.

Among the dead were a man who fell from a bridge into a river in western Hiroshima city, and a 77-year-old man in Takashima, 56 km east of the ancient capital of Kyoto, who was swept into a canal as he worked to remove debris, NHK said. Four people in Ehime, Hiroshima and Yamaguchi prefectures

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HIROSHIMA: Photo shows an aerial view of collapsed houses following heavy rain in Hiroshima yesterday. — AFP

England clinch WCup semis



SAMARA: Sweden's forward Ola Toivonen falls during the Russia 2018 World Cup quarter-final football match between Sweden and England at the Samara Arena yesterday. — AFP (See Page 28)

African meals and football for ICC inmates

SCHEVENINGEN: Deep in the heart of a Dutch prison a group of international detainees finish their African-inspired meal before settling in front of a television to watch the latest World Cup football match. Welcome to another day at the red-bricked Building 4, Scheveningen prison complex-the cell block for those accused of committing the world's worst crimes. Three weeks ago Congolese politician Jean-Pierre Bemba became one of the few to leave through the block's heavy green door,

after being acquitted of war crimes by judges at the International Criminal Court.

The Congolese warlord-turned-politician spent 10 years as the ICC's "guest" at the detention unit, situated inside the Dutch prison in The Hague's seaside suburb of Scheveningen, a stone's throw from the North Sea. "When a new detainee first arrives, we sit him down and have a chat. I tell him: 'A-you're safe here and B-you'll be treated with respect,'" says Paddy Craig, the weathered and grey-haired ICC chief custodial officer. "But I also tell them we expect respect in return. We are open, but this is after all a detention centre," adds Craig, a former Royal Marine with 27 years of policing experience.

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Kuwait's State Audit Bureau celebrates 54th anniversary

Founded to provide and propose solutions to dilemmas of financial nature

KUWAIT: The State Audit Bureau of Kuwait (SAB) marked yesterday its 54th anniversary of establishment as an entity in charge of monitoring public wealth. The SAB was founded on July 7, 1964 to be the chief audit authority to provide and propose solutions to dilemmas of financial nature for state and government bodies. According to the SAB, Kuwait has established a number of institutions for the purpose of implementing a clear-cut methodology towards targeted development, operating within the domain of the State's economic and social policies. The former ruler of Kuwait, the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah had commanded the formation of the Supreme Executive Committee as a higher institution overseeing public departments.

The committee later issued a decree for the establishment of an audit bureau that monitors and manages public accounts. The decree was issued in the committee's fourth meeting which was held on July 22, 1954,

and in its seventh meeting the committee issued another decree (7/15) delegating Ali Tawfiq Hajjaj, a technical expert in Accounting and Monetary Affairs, to utilize his expertise for the formation of the audit bureau and the regulation of the State's accounts.

At the dawn of independence, the Amiri decree no. 12 was issued on August 26, 1961 calling for the election of the Constitutional Council. Thereby, the first public elections took place on December 30, 1961 to form the council whose objectives were to establish the permanent constitution of the modern State of Kuwait, in addition to issuing laws and legislation and overseeing the performance of ministries.

In January 10, 1962, the Constitutional Council commenced its activity, where writing a permanent constitution along with an explanatory memorandum was on the top of its priorities. The constitution was later ratified on November 11, 1962. There is no doubt that the

constitution of Kuwait was a crucial turning point in the establishment of the political and social existence of the State of Kuwait. It represents a big progressive leap in the history of Kuwait as its articles emphasize fundamental principles and trajectories towards national development, which have become the basis for the formation of policies in all public domains whether economic, social, political, or civil.

These assets have consequently factored in steering the efforts towards the establishment of Kuwait as a State of laws and institutions. One of the most momentous articles of the constitution is Article no.151, which states that a financial control bureau is to be established by a decree. The article also specifies that the bureau's independence must be legally warranted, and it should be appended to The National Assembly.

As for its purpose, the article mentions that the bureau is to assist the government and the National

ديوان المحاسبة
State Audit Bureau

Since 1964 م. الكويت، الكويت



Assembly in monitoring the collection of the State's revenues and the settlement of its expenses within the specified budget.

Also, the bureau is obligated to submit to both the government and the National Assembly an annual report enclosing its tasks and observations. Subsequently, Law no.30 for the year 1964 was accordingly issued declaring the establishment of the State Audit Bureau. — KUNA

local spotlight

Marine life's safety



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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The issue of environment in Kuwait is serious, especially when it comes to marine life. While everyone agrees with the importance of protecting marine life from pollution, the issue in the end represents a shared responsibility, and it needs firm decisions and continuous follow-up, away from courtesy or 'wasta'.

We know that there are many reasons for what causes pollution. For centuries, humans have depended on fish as an important source of food. Meanwhile, the marine environment has throughout history suffered from manmade problems, including overfishing, dropping chemical waste in the sea, climate change, as well as radioactive and oil pollution.

In recent years, fishkill has been a major concern in the region, especially with the pictures of dead fish going viral online. Those huge amounts of dead fish have represented a danger to the population if they consume it by mistake or leave it rotting on the beach.

There were concerns about the percentage of pollution in the country, with about 95 percent of drinking water coming from desalination plants. In 2017 a statement from the Environment Public Authority said that the fishkill phenomenon happens due to the high concentration of phosphates in the Gulf waters, as well as bacteria and petroleum hydrocarbons in the sea at high rates.

But a number of state institutions had rejected the accusations that were made by the Environment Public Authority, such as the Ministry of Public Works; and even the fishermen who were also accused of overfishing in Kuwait.

The fishkill phenomenon has happened repeatedly in Kuwait since it was first detected in 1999, and many reasons have been blamed for causing this problem, including the disposal of sewage as well as industrial waste and chemicals in the sea, Kuwait's parliamentarians expressed concern over the subject, as the death of fish requires a responsible position through an investigation by the Parliamentary Environment Committee, in order to reveal the real reasons for the recurrence of this phenomenon, which threatens the country's fisheries and raises concerns about the presence of toxic and harmful substances to the environment and human health. I believe that the Environment Public Authority is doing its best but, there are still more efforts that are needed to support its mission.

The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has joined the United Nations in celebrating the occasion of the World Day of Oceans on June 8, with the aim of advocating for the preservation of oceans, because of their role in daily life, and as a major source of food and water for many arid countries.

Experts say that the death of fish in Kuwait is linked to the degradation of proteins and industrial detergents emitted with sewage, which have not been treated efficiently or have not been removed at all, which led to the formation of layers of algae.

I believe that the efforts of the Environment Public Authority must be taken into account, and it should be supported with effort from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and others in this field. It is necessary to enforce control and punish anyone whose irresponsibility damages the marine and land environment.

We really need effective action to focus on scientific research, as well as effective planning, strategy and strict law enforcement. Furthermore, we need administrative policies, work plans and promotion of public awareness regarding environment protection. The public should not be allowed to throw garbage and trash on the beach, and the environment police should be given more power and support to monitor those ill acts.

I believe that environmental control is a joint responsibility of all state institutions and the public. There is a need for continuous coordination with state bodies, especially the Ministry of Public Works, which has field teams that carry out daily and periodic tours, in cooperation with the environment police and the Environment Public Authority, to check rainfall outlets, and monitor their illegal use to discharge sewage and other waste.

Kuwaiti minister visits health office in Washington DC

WASHINGTON: Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah visited Friday the Kuwaiti Health Office in Washington, DC where he was briefed on the mechanisms in which Kuwaiti citizens received treatment in the US. Sheikh Dr Bassel said in a statement that during the visit, he went to a meeting where he listened to the obstacles facing a number of patients and plans to avoid these problems in the future. The health office will take all measures to enable patients to overcome dilemmas and problems, he affirmed. Sheikh Dr Bassel's visit to Washington also includes taking field trips to some hospitals to meet with Kuwaiti patients. — KUNA



WASHINGTON: Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah meets with citizens during his visit to the Kuwaiti Health Office in Washington, DC. — KUNA



Kuwait hands over Yemen's aid to int'l organizations

GENEVA: Kuwait will begin handing over its Yemen humanitarian commitments to international humanitarian organizations as of this week, said Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN and International Organizations in Geneva Jamal Al-Ghunaim yesterday. This step was in accordance with the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and Kuwait's pledge to the Yemen Support Conference called by the UN last April, Ghunaim added. Kuwait hopes that this support will contribute to alleviating the suffering and shortage of humanitarian needs facing Yemeni people in the face of imminent famine, he noted.

Ghunaim explained that Kuwait would cooperate with a number of international humanitarian organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) in order to halt the cholera epidemic, rebuild the health sector as well as agriculture through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Kuwait will also cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Ghunaim pointed out. — KUNA



Jamal Al-Ghunaim

PAAAFR chief, info minister agree on combating corruption

KUWAIT: Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Chairman Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah said Friday that he agreed with Information Minister and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri on combating corruption. Sabah added in a press statement that they also agreed to develop and upgrade action so as to achieve the desired goals of the authority.

All points of disagreement have been settled, he stressed, noting that he obtained a full backing from the minister to fight any corruption at the authority. Sabah pointed out that the directives of the minister were clear regarding the empowerment of the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) to achieve its mission, uncover any corruption at PAAAFR and punish the culprits. He thanked Jabri for his support to the authority, lauding measures taken to upgrade and raise efficiency of the PAAAFR. —KUNA



Bringing war criminals to justice important: Diplomat

NEW YORK: Governments, groups, or individuals who commit human rights violations and war crimes should be brought to justice as a vital step to prevent such corruptions from spreading worldwide, said a Kuwaiti diplomat late Friday.

Delivering Kuwait's speech to a meeting on relations between the UNSC and International Criminal Court (ICC), second secretary at the Kuwaiti permanent mission to the UN headquarters in New York Mohammad Al-Ajmi said that though Kuwait did not sign the 1998 ICC's Rome Statute, it believed in the agreement's stance against genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. He indicated that his country is truly committed to the notion that justice and peace were interconnected; affirming that applying justice on every single dilemma in the world would achieve global peace.



Mohammad Al-Ajmi

The ICC managed to put an end to the chapter in human history concerning acts of war crimes and genocide in the former Yugoslavian republic, said Ajmi who commended the ICC for bringing those responsible to such heinous crimes to justice. He added that the world now needed to address new challenges posed by the acts of genocide committed against the Rohingya Muslim minority of Myanmar, urging world countries to take firm action against those committing grave violations against innocent people. The Syrian crisis, entering its eighth year, is another crime that went beyond its boundaries, said the Kuwaiti diplomat who called on the world to end the suffering of the people in Syria and bring criminals to justice. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of Kuwait National Guard Lt Gen Hesham Al-Rifale received a team from the Kuwait Sports Club for the Deaf, and the two sides discussed cooperation regarding the inclusion of sign language into the training plan for new guard recruits.

Local

Amir's visit to China to set roadmap for future strategic relation with Beijing

His Highness heads to China on official state visit

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah left Kuwait yesterday heading to the People's Republic of China on an official state visit. His Highness the Amir was seen off at the airport by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and top state officials.

The delegation accompanying His Highness comprises of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, Minister of commerce and industry Khaled Al-Roudan and Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Bakheet Al-Rashidi. The delegation accompanying His Highness also includes, Chief of Staff of His Highness the Amir's Office Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, Advisor at the Amiri Diwan Dr Yousef Hamad Al-Ibrahim, Amiri Diwan advisor Muhammad Abdullah Abu Al-Hasan, Chief of Amiri Protocols Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah and Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah.



Visit shows flourishing ties

tribute in setting a roadmap for future strategic relation with Beijing, a Kuwaiti senior diplomat said Friday. The visit would give more oomph to cooperation in many crucial domains, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said. He indicated that such visit comes amidst "highly complicated and sensitive" regional and global times and circumstances, which require the wisdom-imbued consultation and coordination between the two political leaderships. Strategic partnership with China went a long way thanks to the astute vision of His Highness the Amir, which clearly manifested in joint mega projects, he noted. The Amiri visit started yesterday and runs until July 10, with His Highness Sheikh Sabah leading the highest-level delegation in history since the first visit to China that was made by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in 1965. His Highness will also be a guest of honor at China-Arab States Cooperation Forum as the first Arab leader to deliver a speech with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, in the presence of Arab foreign ministers.

Flourishing ties

His Highness the Amir's state official visit to China will represent a new flourishing period of relations between the two countries, Kuwaiti Ambassador to China Samih Johar Hayat said on Friday. The visit will cement the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two sides, he added in a statement.

"The Kuwaiti-Chinese ties are deep-rooted and strong. And the two leaders are keen on developing and promoting them to serve interests of the two nations in all fields and on all levels," he said. Kuwait-China ties are a unique example of the fruitful bilateral relations based on the strategic partnership, he stressed.

The trip will witness the signing of several agreements and memoranda of understanding in varied fields that will be added to the 50 ones inked over the last 50 years, he indicated. Such agreements and memoranda of understanding aim to promote partnership and cooperation between the two countries, and open new horizons of the joint action in different sectors, he said, affirming that this materializes the



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen off at the airport as he prepares to leave Kuwait, heading to China on an official state visit. —KUNA

desire of the two countries' leaders.

Choosing His Highness the Amir as a guest of honor of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum shows the strength of the Kuwaiti-Chinese relations, he said, referring to the shared conviction of the importance of the bilateral ties and the need to develop them continuously. On the Belt and Road Initiative launched by China in 2013, Hayat reiterated the importance of strengthening economy between the two countries and reviving the ancient Silk Road, which will contribute to the prosperity of the world economy due to the lack of Central Asian countries of seaports.

Silk Road project

He affirmed that Kuwait's participation in the Silk Road project shows His Highness the Amir's strategic vision aiming to transform the country into a financial, commercial, cultural regional and international hub. Reviving the Silk Road project will help the State of Kuwait restore its leading role in the commercial and economic fields in the region as it enjoys a distinct geographic location, Hayat said.

He pointed out that there is a consensus between Kuwait 2035 vision and China's Belt and Road Initiative to revive the Silk Road and establish a vital commercial area that serves the world's countries by land and sea, and to contribute to the prosperity of the world economy. He stated that senior Chinese officials are showing full and clear cooperation on how to benefit economically from the Kuwaiti islands.

Kuwait is the first Arab and Gulf country seeking to sign a memo on promoting cooperation with China on the Belt and Road Initiative, he made clear. He referred to Kuwait's announcement that it would support the initiative. "We share China's deep confidence and deep aspirations for the success of the official talks to be held between His Highness the Amir and his Chinese counterpart on pushing forward cooperation and coordination in reviving the historic Silk Road, which has a key role in linking different societies in terms of religions and culture," Hayat said. The two countries' leaders have been supporting and sponsoring the historic friendly relations to achieve strategic cooperation in all fields, he reaffirmed. —KUNA

Macron affirms support to Amir's GCC mediation

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron stressed on Friday his backing to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's mediation to resolve the Gulf crisis. Macron's announcement came during a news conference with visiting Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim Al Thani that was held after a meeting between them. During the meeting, the two leaders discussed bilateral relations and several issues of common concern.

Macron said that Qatar is a key partner to achieve peace in several areas in the Middle East region and Africa. He added that Qatar also was a leading country in measures taken to counter terrorism and extremism. Macron commended the depth of ties with Qatar in all fields. Meanwhile, Sheikh Tamim said Qatar is exerting big efforts to achieve peace in the region, affirming the depth of ties between Qatar and France. He noted that



French President Emmanuel Macron

he and Macron focused on several issues of common concern, including the Gulf crisis, and the Palestinian and Syrian dossiers. —KUNA

Saudi-Kuwaiti committee eyes closer cooperation

JEDDAH: The Supreme Security Committee of the Saudi and Kuwaiti Interior Ministries held its first meeting in Jeddah on Thursday. The committee dis-

cussed ways and means of promoting and developing existing cooperation between both sisterly nations' interior ministries, the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said.

Also considered during the meeting was the development of procedures for the sharing of security expertise and information between both sides, the agency added. The event was chaired by Saudi Deputy Minister of Interior Nasser bin Abdulaziz Al-Daoud and Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior's Undersecretary Issam Salem Al-Nahham. —KUNA



JEDDAH: Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior's Undersecretary Issam Salem Al-Nahham (left) and Saudi Deputy Minister of Interior Nasser bin Abdulaziz Al-Daoud sign an agreement between the two countries. —Interior Ministry photo

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: People walk at the Shaheed Park in Sharq as Kuwait City's skyscrapers can be seen in the background. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

KU accepts 6,186 Kuwaiti undergrads for 2018-19

KUWAIT: Kuwait University announced it had accepted 6,186 Kuwaitis across its various undergraduate programs for the 2018-19 academic year, including 5,209 and 977 in the first and second semesters respectively. This number does not include those receiving overseas and home-bound state-sponsored scholarships, the public university's act-



ing head of registration Reem Al-Jarallah said in a statement. As for those wishing to register from private English language schools, she urged them to hand in their original graduation certificates no less than two working days after receiving the document. Competition for places was fair and non-discriminatory in regards to gender, she added, after applicants achieved the minimum grades required. The first semester is expected to commence on January 27, 2019. — KUNA

Burgan Bank puts a smile on children's faces

KUWAIT: As one of the leading Kuwaiti financial institutions contributing in society, Burgan Bank reiterated its support to the Kuwait Association for Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) by visiting the children this season, as part of its 17 year-long commitment to supporting the organization. Burgan Bank Public Relations representatives, staff and volunteers visited the children's section of Al-Razi Hospital as part of the Bank's community program entitled 'ENGAGE' together to be the change. This visit is part of a series of visits organized by the Bank throughout the year as part of its social responsibility program aimed at contributing to the welfare of the community.

Stemming from its firm belief that compassion and inclusion spread joy and aid healing, the bank's representatives spend valuable time

with and distributed exciting gifts to the children at KACCH. As the children try to restore their health and live normally, during the heartwarming visit, Burgan Bank conveyed messages of encouragement to help every child feel better and sent notes of positivity that drew smiles on the faces of the children. Loulwa Abdulla Al-Ayoubi, Acting Group Head of Investor and Corporate Communications said: "We are proud to be the principal supporter of the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) that provides psychosocial support to hospitalized children. Since its inception, Burgan Bank has been a loyal and committed supporter for over 17 years as it believes in the ever growing role that KACCH plays in the Kuwaiti society, and their contribution in providing optimal care for children. Today, corporate social responsibility has become a national duty for the advancement and sustainability of the society. The bank will continue to create a positive difference in the local communities by endorsing similar initiatives that support social welfare."

Burgan Bank's participation and support provided to KACCH falls under its strategic vision to reflect the bank's values of commitment, trust, integrity and importance of valuable engage-

ment supporting community causes.

KACCH is a non-profit organization that operates Child Life Programs supported by Child Life Specialists and Play Leaders across six government hospitals in Kuwait. KACCH staff work closely with nurses, doctors, and other healthcare professional to reduce the negative impact of hospitalization and create a happier experience for sick children and their families.

Ensuring holistic support to the children and their families, Burgan Bank has been a long standing supporter and advocate of Kuwait Association for Care of Children Hospital (KACCH) through its many noble initiatives and financial contributions.

Burgan Bank's support to this initiative falls under its recently launched full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.

NBK sponsors KALD

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsors the Kuwaiti's Association for Learning Differences (KALD) as part of its commitment toward corporate social responsibility. Shaikha Al-Bahar, NBK Group Deputy Chief Executive Officer received KALD Chair-woman Amaal Al-Sayer and expressed NBK's utmost support for KALD in its efforts to help the Children.

"NBK's sponsorship is part of its ongoing drive to fulfill its corporate social responsibilities with sustainable initiatives", said Bahar. "We are proud to be one of the first organizations in Kuwait to measure our social initiatives performance in accordance to sustainability measurements."

Bahar added "NBK's sponsorship and support to KALD for years comes in line with the bank's customary and ongoing spirit of corporate citizenship as well as the vital role it plays in supporting all students, youths and educational issues."

"NBK is determined to align our social goals with the sustainability goals. Toward this end, we work closely to support Kuwait's vision. We are committed to becoming a leading advocate of these practices", noted Bahar.

In her turn, Sayer expressed her sin-

cere thanks to NBK for sponsoring all of its youth activities. "we are proud of this ongoing sponsorship that results in supporting and investing in our students and youths." Commenting on the aims of setting up special activities for the youth, Sayer said: "Activities like camps, carnivals and talent shows are great opportunities for the youth to show their capabilities and talents, to strengthen their self-esteem and to develop their social skills."

NBK has a long tradition supporting social and community oriented activities. NBK's corporate social responsibility programs cover a range of education, environment, and health, philanthropic, social and sports-related initiatives.

The Kuwaiti Association for Learning Differences (KALD) is a non-profit organization that collaboratively works towards helping all individuals, especially students in private schools and special education in Kuwait, who have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Learning Difficulties and works towards identifying and developing the capabilities of these students and to support them academically, psychologically and socially through awareness, training, and entertainment programs for the students, their families and their schools.



Local

Retirees' health insurance program to cover new treatments

Written exam required for MPW vacancies

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The health insurance program that the health ministry offers for retired citizens will cover new treatments when the new tender is awarded later this year. The ministry had started last year a program that covers medical expenses for retirees at private clinics. The program, dubbed 'Afiya', covers basic treatments, but the list was expanded to include new services such as dental treatment and teeth implant, removing benign and malignant tumors, and cardiac surgeries, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Subscribers will start benefiting from the new services once the ministry signs a contract with the insurance company that wins a tender placed to provide treatments included in the program, after the original contract expired last year. The tender was supposed to be awarded earlier this year, but Minister of Health Dr Bassel Al-Sabah had decided to reoffer it for public bidding due to irregularities in the original bidding process. The new tender does not cover any new categories of patients, said the sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity. The total number of Afiya health insurances cards issued for Kuwaiti retirees has increased to 123,000, the sources said.

In other news, the Ministry of Health is expected to announce soon the opening of the Khairan polyclinic after providing the needed medical and nursing staffs, said well-informed sources, noting that the clinic might be opened within two or three weeks at most.

The sources added that clinic would include all



Panel yet to receive 'sustainability report'

basic medical services through general medicine, dentistry, diabetes clinics, nursing, preventive medicine, lab and pharmacy to serve the area residents. "Khairan is located 85 kilometers south of Kuwait City and has 355,330 housing units," the sources added.

Written exams

The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) plans to have candidates undergo written exams, in addition to personal interviews, after they apply for supervisory positions' vacancies starting next month. There are 45 employees nominated for positions that include managers and head of departments, according to ministry sources. On another concern, the sources said that upon direct instructions from Minister Hussam Al-Roumi, MPW was currently preparing lists of employees who had been in service for 32 years pending referring them to retirement.

Sustainability report

Rapporteur of the parliament's financial affairs committee MP Saleh Ashour said that he sent a letter to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, notifying him that the government had not sent its financial and economic sustainability report to the committee yet. Ashour also said that he was surprised to learn that the committee was actually expected to discuss the program without receiving it. "We need to review the government's economic plans," he underlined.



University project

An annual report released to follow up the 2017-2018 development plan shows that 42 percent of Sabah Al-Salem University project has been completed. The report also notes that the project would enhance higher education's capacity, as it includes 12 sub-project with a total cost of KD 225.5 million.

Six rescued from Khaitan fire



KUWAIT: A picture taken from the scene where a fire was reported in Khaitan.



Fire engines and ambulances wait outside a warehouse in Jahra where a fire was reported.



Firemen tackle a blaze inside a perfumes' warehouse in Jahra.



A fireman is treated inside the warehouse.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firemen rescued six persons who were trapped behind flames and thick smoke at their residence in Khaitan. The fire started in several rooms made of corrugated galvanized iron, and set up on the roof of a

building. The fire was put out before the flames spread further. In a separate case, firemen tackled a blaze that was reported in a nine-story building in Salmiya yesterday. The fire was located in a second floor apartment. The building was evacuated, and no injuries were reported. Meanwhile, firemen from four fire station bat-

tled a blaze that erupted in a perfumes' warehouse in Jahra. The firefighters prevented the flames from spreading to other stores. Separately, fire engulfed a truck that was parked in an open yard in Farwaniya. The fire was put out without injuries. Meanwhile, two persons were slightly injured in a fire reported in a Hawally Mall.

Crimes

Patient detained after losing temper at clinic

KUWAIT: A dispute between a female doctor and a patient escalated and needed police's intervention to be stopped. The patient, an Egyptian man, had lost his temper while waiting for his turn at a medical center, and when the doctor asked him to wait, he kept arguing with her and the two engaged in a heated verbal exchange. Police apprehended the patient for questioning after the doctor accused him of insulting her during the quarrel.

Drug overdose

A citizen was found dead in Adan Hospital's parking lot. Police responded to an emergency call about a man found motionless inside a vehicle. Paramedics were summoned to the scene, and they pronounced the man dead. The coroner later determined that the death was caused by a drug overdose. Concerned authorities are investigating.

Physical assault

An Indian man lodged a complaint against his friend, saying that he beat him up and caused him several injuries over a financial dispute. The victim submitted a medical report stating that he sustained a number of 'severe' injuries. Police are investigating, bearing in mind that the suspect is the victim's roommate.

Fugitives caught

A fugitive was apprehended after he attempted to use his brother's ID to escape arrest. The man had stopped at a checkpoint in Jahra when police grew suspicious of the ID he produced, noticing that he looked different compared to the picture in the card. They performed a fingerprint identity check which revealed his true identity, along with his criminal record. The man was taken to the proper authorities pending procedures to be sent to the Central Prison to serve a six-year sentence. In a separate case, a citizen was sent to the Drugs Control General Department (DGCA) as police found him in an abnormal condition, then found drugs and syringes on him. He was also found to be wanted by authorities to serve a three-year jail sentence. He was sent to concerned authorities. — *Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa*

Scores arrested in crackdowns around Kuwait

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Traffic General Department carried out several campaigns around Kuwait which resulted in 14 traffic citations, impounding 11 vehicles and arresting 12 people. The crackdowns took place at the Gulf Road, Second Ring Road, Damascus Street, Maghrib Expressway, Ibrahim Al-Muzayyen Road, and Jahra Road, the Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

In other news, the department denied social media reports which claimed that authorities banned a number of British lawyers from entering Kuwait, adding that the visitors obtained visas on arrival at the airport and accessed the country without problems.



KUWAIT: These photos released by the Interior Ministry yesterday shows vehicles impounded during recent crackdowns around Kuwait.



Divers pull 41 bodies after Thai boat sinks

South Korea women protest 'spycam porn' in mass rally

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PYONGYANG: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, right, and Kim Yong Chol, left, North Korean senior ruling party official and former intelligence chief, return to discussions after a break at Park Hwa Guest House in Pyongyang. —AFP

N Korea slams US 'rapacious' demands

Pompeo insists North Korea talks 'very productive'

PYONGYANG: North Korea slammed the United States for making "rapacious" demands during critical denuclearization talks yesterday, after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had earlier described them as "productive". The North's foreign ministry said the "extremely regrettable" US attitude during the meeting violated the spirit of the agreement reached between leader Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump last month at their historic summit in Singapore.

"The US attitude and positions at the high-level talks on Friday and Saturday were extremely regrettable," the North's Foreign Ministry said in a statement, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency. It lashed out at the US for its "unilateral and rapacious demands for denuclearization". This came just hours after Pompeo had characterized the meeting as a success, but critically without giving many new details as to how North Korea would honor its commitment to "denuclearize" in exchange for US security guarantees.

"These are complicated issues, but we made progress on almost all of the central issues, some places a great deal of progress, other places there's still more work to be done," he said. Pompeo was speaking after emerging from more than eight hours of talks over two days with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's right-hand man Kim Yong Chol in a Pyongyang diplomatic compound.

Last month, Kim agreed to "work towards complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula" in return for security guarantees and an end to a dangerous stand-off with US forces. Trump hailed this as a successful resolution of the crisis, but the short joint statement was not a detailed roadmap to disarmament and it fell to Pompeo to follow up and put meat on the bones of the sparse commitment. "We talked about what the North Koreans are continuing to do and how it's the case that we can get our arms around achieving what Chairman Kim and President Trump both agreed to, which is the complete denuclearization of North Korea," he said.

"No-one walked away from that, they're still equally committed," he said, just hours before the North issues their own, less optimistic, view of the negotiations. In practical terms, Pompeo mentioned only that officials from both sides would meet on July 12 as a working group to discuss the repatriation of the remains of some US soldiers killed during the

1950-1953 Korean War. And he said some progress had been made towards agreeing "the modalities" of North Korea's destruction of a missile facility.

Tring to 'get upper hand'

The North's statement said officials had presented Pompeo with a personal letter to Trump to convey hopes that the "magnificent relations and feelings of trust" between the two leaders would be reinforced in further talks. Professor Yang Moo-Jin at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul told AFP that Pyongyang was "separating US bureaucrats from President Trump, expressing trust in him".

"This is not to break the talks. The North is trying to get an upper hand in further negotiations," he explained. "North Korea expected Pompeo to bring a concrete proposal for security guarantee but it was disappointed as the US side reiterated the old demand that the North should denuclearise first before the US gives it

anything in return," he said. Pompeo, who was on his third visit to Pyongyang, began the outreach when he was still Trump's CIA director and remained the pointman on negotiations after the process became public and he became secretary of state. In comparison to past international nuclear disarmament negotiations, the discussions between Washington and North Korea on thawing ties and dismantling the North's arsenal appear to be proceeding in reverse. Rather than the two leaders crowning years of detailed negotiation with their one-on-one meeting, the short statement marked instead the start of a diplomatic long slog, and Trump earned the scorn of Korea watchers and non-proliferation experts when he declared the crisis over.

International monitoring

The task of establishing the disarmament program now falls to Pompeo, who is seeking a formal declaration by the North of the size of its nuclear program as well as an eventual timetable for it to be ended under international verification and inspection. Many experts doubt Kim's sincerity—a nuclear deterrent to US intervention has long been a strategic goal of his isolated, autocratic regime and few expect this to be a quick process, even if Washington wants results within a year. —AFP



US attitude 'extremely regrettable'

California wildfire claims season's first fatality

LOS ANGELES: Crews fighting a fast-moving Northern California wildfire on Friday discovered the charred remains of a person apparently caught in the flames, sheriff's officials said, marking the first fatality in a particularly intense fire season across the state. Investigators were trying to identify the person found in the debris of a home burned to the ground by the Klamathon fire, which broke out Thursday near the Oregon border during a blistering heat wave and quickly blackened more than 8,000 acres.

"We don't know who it is, we're trying to do best we can to identify the person," said Lieutenant Jeremiah LaRue of the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Office. Governor Jerry Brown has declared a state of emergency for Siskiyou County, where flames have destroyed homes, forced the evacuation of some 400 people, knocked out power and temporarily forced the closure of Interstate 5, a major north-south artery running the

length of California.

"I find that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property exists in Siskiyou County," Brown said in his proclamation, which frees up state resources to be devoted to fighting the wildfire. The Klamathon is one of three dozen major wildfires that firefighters were battling across the US West as the region bakes under triple-digit temperatures that shattered records, strained power grids and prompted the National Weather Service to issue warnings.

Downtown Los Angeles set a record for July 6 when temperatures reached 95 degrees Fahrenheit by 10:15 a.m., before climbing to 106 degrees shortly before 3 pm. Fires have raged through more than 2.8 million acres in the United States this year through Thursday, above the average of about 2.4 million acres for the same period over the last 10 years, according to the National Interagency Fire Center. Fire-fighting efforts across the Southwest have been hampered by the scorching heat, low humidity and erratic winds. —Reuters

Elsewhere in Northern California, crews have cut containment lines around an estimated 37 percent of the County Fire in Yolo County, which has burned across some 135 square miles (350 sq km), destroying nine structures and putting 100 homes in danger. That blaze, which broke out on Saturday in steep,



CALIFORNIA: In this file photo firefighters scramble to control flames surrounding a fire truck as the Pawnee fire jumps across highway 20 near Clearlake Oaks, California. —AFP

inaccessible terrain about 45 miles (72 km) northwest of Sacramento, has so far largely burned away from populated areas. In San Diego County, a blaze dubbed the West fire that broke out near the community of Alpine on Friday, was spreading quickly. Sheriff's officials said multiple structures had been burned and urged immediate evacuations for at least one neighborhood.

In southern Colorado, a steady rain overnight slowed the growth of the largest wildfire in the state, which allowed

crews to carve containment lines around 35 percent of the blaze. The Spring Fire has blackened nearly 106,000 acres and destroyed at least 141 buildings since it ignited on June 27. It is the second-largest wildfire on record in Colorado. Authorities have accused a Danish national of setting the blaze. Improved conditions have allowed some evacuation orders to be lifted and a mountain pass road that was closed when the fire erupted will re-open on Saturday, state officials said. —Reuters

Iran executes 8 over deadly IS attacks

TEHRAN: Iran has executed eight people convicted over two deadly attacks claimed by the Islamic State group in Tehran last year, the judiciary's news agency said yesterday. The Iranian men were convicted of collaborating directly with the IS jihadists who carried out the attacks on June 7, 2017. Mizan Online reported. "They supported them financially and procured arms, while being informed of the aims and the intentions of the terrorist group," the agency said.

It did not specify when the executions took place, but the Tasnim news agency said the sentences were carried out yesterday. IS claimed responsibility for the dual attack on Iran's parliament and the shrine of revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini that killed 17 people and wounded dozens. The assault was the first and only claimed by the Islamic State group in Tehran. Iran was targeted for supporting Iraqi and Syrian authorities in their fight against IS and other jihadist groups. Five assailants died, either in suicide bombings or killed by Iranian security forces. Legal proceedings continue for others allegedly involved in the attacks, Mizan Online said. —AFP

International

Mission window opens as cave rescuers battle water and time

Boys communicate with relatives by letter

CHIANG RAI: A rescue mission for a young Thai soccer team and their coach trapped in a flooded cave can expect its best chance yet of success in the next three or four days, its leader said yesterday. But rescuers were also waging a "war with water and time" before expected heavy rains. Narongsak Osottanakorn's cautious message of hope came a day after the death of a Thai rescue diver, a grim turn in what began two weeks ago as a celebration of one of the boys' birthdays at the Tham Luang cave complex in the northern province of Chiang Rai.

For the first time since they were found, the boys communicated by letter with their relatives - many camped outside the cave's entrance - with both homesickness and humor. At the sprawling cave mouth, lines of frogmen and soldiers with torches could be seen emerging from the darkness, as generators chugged and pumped water out from blue nylon pipes. Dozens of Royal Thai Army soldiers rested on rocks outside the cave, with two of them saying they had been told by superiors that the rescue operation would likely begin Sunday or the day after.

Authorities tightened a security cordon, draping plastic sheets around the approach to the cave, further giving the sense that a rescue might be imminent. This could not be independently corroborated by Reuters, but Narongsak, a former provincial governor, told reporters earlier yesterday that the next three to four days was "the best and most ideal time for the rescue operation." "The current situation, with the air and water levels and the boys' health, is the best yet," he added. "We're still at war with water and

time. The discovery...was just a small victory."

Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk tweeted yesterday that he had heard "some good feedback from cave experts in Thailand" and that an "escape pod" and inflatable tube he was developing might be used to help get the boys out. He gave no details. Several monks in orange robes sat at a small shrine with two golden deer statues near the cave mouth, chanting, as a middle-aged woman knelt and prayed before them. An assistant told Reuters the ceremony was to "open up" the cave mouth to allow for an easy and safe return for the boys.



Rescuers eye best chance to free group before rains

'Double Positive'
Ivan Katadzic, a Danish diving instructor who has been ferrying oxygen tanks into the cave, said after a dive on Friday he was "double positive" about the mission because the water level had dropped considerably. Katadzic has not dived the final kilometer to where the boys are stranded on a muddy bank, the most dangerous part of the dive, during which rescuers have to hold their oxygen tanks in front of them to squeeze through submerged holes.

Alternative rescue plans include stocking the cave with supplies and an oxygen line to keep the boys alive for months until Thailand's monsoon season ends, or drilling a shaft down from the forest above. Narongsak said the drills would have to pierce 600 meters of fragile limestone rock to reach the boys and rescuers were discussing drilling angles. Besides looking for possible holes from above, the team on the hill above is trying to block holes and divert streams that channel water into the cave before the weather turns.

"Everything is a race against time," said Kamolchai



CHIANG RAI: This undated handout photo taken recently shows Thai Navy soldiers in the flooded Tham Luang cave during rescue operations for the 12 boys and their football team coach trapped in the cave at Khun Nam Nang Non Forest Park in the Mae Sai district of Chiang Rai province. — AFP

Kotcha, an official of the forest park where the cave complex is located. His team would camp out on the hill to try and finish its work before the rain came, he said. Growing international interest in the rescue has spurred help from

countries including Australia, Britain, China, Japan and the United States. "It's only natural for us to offer our help," Meir Schlomo, Israel's ambassador to Thailand, told Reuters at the scene. — Reuters

Divers pull 41 bodies after Thai boat sinks

PHUKET: Recovery divers have pulled 41 bodies from the sea off the Thai holiday island of Phuket, officials said yesterday, 48 hours after a boat capsized in rough waters killing dozens of Chinese passengers. Many of the dead were found drifting in the sea, still wearing life jackets, several kilometers from where the Phoenix went down after being hit by five-meter high waves in a storm on Thursday evening.

It is one of the worst boat disasters in the recent history of Thailand, a nation with a poor health and safety track record despite being heavily dependent on tourism. The death toll rose to 41 yesterday, with 15 still missing, according to the Phuket province public relations department. Seventeen Chinese divers joined the operation yesterday to recover bodies as conflicting figures emerged about the number of dead.

Phuket Governor Norraphat Plodthong had earlier said that five bodies were found yesterday, in addition to 37 bodies recovered on Friday. The triple decked Phoenix was carrying 105 passengers, mostly Chinese tourists, when it sank on the way back from a popular snorkelling spot. The Phuket provincial government has said the island's morgue is full, with Chinese authorities requesting 40 further refrigeration units.

Weather warning

Some 48 people-passengers and crew-were rescued on Thursday, while a Chinese woman was plucked from the churning waters Friday and rushed to hospital in Phuket after spending the night in the water. Divers on Friday reported seeing "over 10 bodies" floating inside the hull of the boat, which is submerged 40 meters below the surface of the Andaman Sea.



PHUKET: A helicopter and rescuers search an area near Phuket as rescue operations continue for missing tourists following a boat accident. — AFP

Thai navy Rear Admiral Charoenphon Khumrasee has said hopes are now dwindling of finding more people alive. "Of course we'll continue searching but the chances of survival are low. We will wait for the bodies to float to the top on their own," he said yesterday. China's ambassador to Thailand, who travelled to Phuket, said Beijing had sent two search and rescue teams to help the Thai authorities. "We aim to find the missing as soon as possible, as well as provide assistance to the injured, and family members of those involved, as well as help them make preparations for the next step," he said.

The Phoenix was among several boats that appeared to

have ignored a warning in place since Wednesday against taking passengers on day-trips to the islands that dot the seas off the tourist magnet of Phuket. It sank in rough weather a few kilometers off the coast of Koh He, an islet known for its coral formations. Several other vessels hit trouble late Thursday, but all of their passengers were rescued. Thailand is already in the global spotlight for a dramatic rescue mission in the north of the country, after 12 boys and their football coach were trapped in a cave complex. Last year 9.8 million Chinese tourists visited Thailand, with five million more arriving between January and May this year. — AFP

Thousands head home in south Syria after deal

DARAA: Thousands of displaced Syrians were heading home yesterday after rebels and the government reached a ceasefire deal in the south following more than two weeks of deadly bombardment. Under the agreement announced Friday after talks between rebels and regime ally Moscow, opposition fighters will hand over territory in the southern province of Daraa near the Jordanian border.

Daraa is seen as the cradle of the uprising that sparked Syria's seven-year war, and the government retaking full control of it would be a symbolic victory for President Bashar Al-Assad. A Russia-backed regime offensive in Daraa has displaced more than 320,000 people since June 19, the United Nations says, including tens of thousands who fled south to the sealed border with Jordan. Calm reigned over the region yesterday as the two sides finalized the ceasefire deal, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group.

"People have started to return to their homes since yesterday" from the Jordanian border, Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. "More than 20,000 people have set off for home so far, heading to areas for which an accord has been reached in the southeastern Daraa countryside," he said. But others "are scared to return to regime-controlled areas, fearing their children will be arrested," Abdel

Rahman said. More than 150 civilians have been killed in the regime bombing campaign on Daraa since June 19, the Observatory says, and trust in the government does not run high.

'No safety'

Osama Al-Homsi, 26, said he was hesitant to return to his hometown of Jeeza in southeastern Daraa after the deal. "Of course I support the agreement to stop the fighting and bloodshed," said the young man, who sought shelter from the bombardment in a field to the south of Daraa city. "But what is frightening is that it comes with no UN guarantees... The Russian and the Syrian regime offer no safety," he said.

Only when it is clear the ceasefire has really been implemented and "if we are guaranteed that no one will pursue us, will we want to return," Homsi said. Friday's accord follows a string of similar deals with rebels for other areas of Syria, which have seen the regime retake more than 60 percent of the country, according to the Observatory. It caps a series of government victories nationwide since Russia intervened in 2015 on Assad's side, including for the former rebel bastion of Eastern Ghouta outside Damascus earlier this year.

Under the accord, rebels are expected to hand over their heavy weapons, while those who reject the agreement will be bused with their families to opposition-held areas in the north of the country, state media has said. An Islamic State jihadist group affiliate, which holds a small pocket in the southwest of Daraa, is excluded from the deal. Government forces will also take over "all observation posts along the Syrian-Jordanian border", state media said on Friday, hours after the regime regained

control of the vital Nassib border crossing with Jordan.

'What Assad wanted'

Yesterday, an AFP correspondent saw Syrian army forces and Russian military police deployed at the crossing after more than three years under opposition control. One of the arches of the key frontier post was damaged, mangled metal wires sprouting from the concrete structure. The agreement is expected to be implemented in three stages, rebel spokesman Hussein Abazeed said, first for eastern Daraa, the provincial capital and then the west of the province.

"Assad got what he wanted from the deal," analyst Nick Heras said. He obtained "control over the Syrian-Jordanian border areas in Daraa, the gradual disarmament of the rebels' heavier weapons, and the opportunity to rebuild his government's

influence in southern Syria," the analyst at the Washington-based Center for a New American Security said. Daraa lies in a wider southern region that Assad aims to retake, including the neighboring province of Quneitra to the west, which borders the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

But "taking Quneitra will be complicated", said Sam Heller, an analyst at International Crisis Group (ICG). "The government will have to figure out how to advance without agitating the Israelis and triggering destructive Israeli military action," he added.

The ICG said in a recent report that Israel had supported fighters in southern Syria since 2013 or 2014, apparently to "secure a buffer zone on its border". More than 350,000 people have been killed and millions displaced since Syria's war started in 2011 with a brutal crackdown on anti-government protests. — AFP



DARAA: Syrian government soldiers burn an opposition flag while flashing the victory gesture at the Nassib border crossing with Jordan in the southern province of Daraa. — AFP

France girds for long fight against Islamists in Sahel

PARIS: Days before French President Emmanuel Macron visited West and Central African leaders this week to talk security, Islamist fighters sent a defiant message—a suicide attack on the headquarters of a five-nation force that is supposed to take the lead in fighting terrorism in the region. Last year Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger agreed to set up the 5,000-member force dubbed the "G5 Sahel", urged along by pledges of training and support from France.

The countries have been hit by jihadist attacks that have steadily worsened in the past two years, claiming hundreds of lives and displacing hundreds of thousands of people—prompting many to seek refuge in Europe. Macron's trip was aimed at bolstering the fledgling multinational effort in order to reduce the role played by French troops in fighting jihadists and criminal smuggling groups in the vast and arid Sahel region. Around 4,000 French troops, known as the Barkhane deployment, have been pursuing insurgents since 2014 across the desert expanse, an area half the size of the United States.

The G5 Sahel force is also expected to eventually replace the UN's MINUSMA peacekeeping mission in Mali, which has deployed 15,000 military personnel and police since 2013. Although French officials avoid any mention of a quagmire, analysts say the increase of deadly and more elaborate strikes has cooled any hopes of a quick return for the French soldiers. "It's a reconstruction effort of their armies, but getting there is going to take a long time, at a time when the security situation is getting worse," said Alain Antil, head of the African Studies Centre at the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI).

But the few missions carried out by the G5 Sahel so far have not been encouraging, not least because of real-time communication problems between the multiple forces. Its full operational launch has also suffered several delays due to financial problems: little of the nearly 420 million euros (\$490 million) of promised funding has been received. In the meantime, the French troops based mainly in Mali carry out relatively short operations from bases which regularly come under attack, their convoys at risk of landmines hidden along their routes.

Despite successes in neutralizing small groups of jihadists and taking back control of some areas, they have so far been unable to curtail the threat of Islamist violence. And French officials are well aware that the longer their soldiers stay in the countries, the risk that locals will begin to resent their presence will grow. "The United States tried this all-security approach in Afghanistan, and the Taliban are now stronger than ever," said Bakary Sambe, a researcher at the Timbuktu Institute in Dakar. "The French are doing the same in northern Mali, and the jihadists have not disappeared but are multiplying," he said.

'Hardly satisfactory'

G5 Sahel leaders have vowed to press ahead after last Friday's attack on the force's base in Sevare, central Mali, where a suicide bomber used a vehicle painted in UN colors to strike the building's entrance, killing three including two soldiers. It was one of five separate attacks in Mali and neighboring Niger which have killed 25 people in a week, as Macron was meeting with the leaders of the G5 nations in Nouakchott, Mauritania, on the sidelines of an African Union summit. "They don't have the capabilities to take control of territory, but they are able to inflict damage," Antil said of the jihadists. The French army's chief of staff, Francois Lecointre, had already warned in February that it would require at least 10 to 15 years to rebuild the Malian army alone.

"The situation developing in Mali is hardly satisfactory and we won't be leaving tomorrow, though that doesn't mean we're in a quagmire," he said. Yet without sustained funding, even G5 leaders say the force will struggle to become an effective element in ridding the region of jihadists as well as the violent gangs of drugs and people-smugglers. — AFP

International

French police on manslaughter charge as shooting sparks riots

Two off-duty officers, a husband and wife attacked

NANTES: A French policeman who shot dead a young black man in western France, sparking four nights of rioting, has been charged with manslaughter, his lawyer said as clashes between youths and police raged into yesterday. The unrest has shone a light on tensions in deprived urban areas of France, where local youths often complain about heavy-handed policing and brutality. The officer had initially claimed he acted in self-defense while trying to arrest the 22-year-old in the city of Nantes on Tuesday, but later told investigators he had fired his weapon by accident. "He recognizes he made a statement that did not conform with the truth," his lawyer Laurent-Franck Lienard said.

The victim, identified as Aboubakar Fofana, died from a single bullet wound to the neck on Tuesday evening after police stopped him in his car in the Breil neighborhood of Nantes-home to a large public housing estate with a history of gang violence. Police initially said that Aboubakar, who was under surveillance for suspected drug trafficking, had resisted arrest and tried to reverse his car into an officer. But a witness who spoke to AFP said the car was stationary when the policeman opened fire. The policeman, who has been granted conditional release, told the IGPX police oversight body under questioning that "it was an accidental shot" that killed Aboubakar.



Some 35 more vehicles torched in Nantes

Some 35 more vehicles were torched in Nantes before dawn yesterday in the fourth night of rioting, after gangs of youths set fire to 52 cars-including the

Tensions

mayor's personal vehicle-and several buildings overnight Thursday-Friday. Security services fired tear-gas yesterday in two suburbs after coming under Molotov cocktail fire. Calm was restored before first light, AFP reporters said. There have been more than a dozen arrests over the violence, including in Garges-lès-Gonesse, the Paris suburb where Aboubakar grew up. Three men were given suspended four-month prison sentences on Friday for taking part in the violence after the shooting.

In a separate development, two off-duty officers, a husband and wife, were attacked Wednesday night in front of their three-year-old daughter in a northeastern suburb of Paris shortly after leaving a dinner party. French security forces are frequently treated as targets and they struggle to combat violent drug-dealing gangs. A police source said the attackers recognized the policewoman because she had recently stopped them for an ID check in the crime-ridden area of Aulnay-sous-Bois. President Emmanuel Macron denounced the attack as an "appalling and cowardly act" and vowed the suspects would be "found and punished". One of them has been arrested while the second remains on the run.

'Justice for Abou'

In a bid to defuse tensions, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe visited Nantes on Thursday where he promised "the fullest transparency" about the circumstances of the young man's death. On Thursday evening, around



NANTES: Firefighters work to put out a fire as cars burn in the Le Breil neighborhood of Nantes. —AFP

1,000 people marched in Nantes calling for "justice for Abou" and demanding clarity about the circumstances of his death. There have been fears that the unrest could spread. In 2005, riots erupted across the country following the deaths of two black teenagers who were

electrocuted in a Paris suburb while hiding from the police. Anger over policing bubbled over again last year when a young black man in another Paris suburb suffered severe anal injuries caused by a truncheon during his arrest. —AFP

As UK ban looms, gay 'conversion therapy' still haunts subjects

LIVERPOOL: Peter Price was 18 when he underwent conversion therapy, which was intended to "cure" his homosexuality but instead left him deeply damaged. "I thought I was going mental. I wasn't worried about getting cured, I was worried about getting out alive," he said. The British government this week announced its intention to ban the practice, as part of a new action plan to tackle discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities. But Price, now 72 and a radio presenter in Liverpool, northwest England, is astonished it has taken so long. For many years he refused to talk about his experience, but broke his silence in the hope that no one else need endure what he called "torture".

Aversion therapy

Price agreed to treatment at the Diva Hospital, a psychiatric institution in the state-run National Health Service (NHS), under pressure from his mother. She had been "distracted" when he told her he was gay-it was 1964 and homosexuality was illegal in England. "We went to the doctor and the doctor told me there was a cure, aversion therapy," he recalled. This consisted of five days of treatment, intended to create a negative response to sexual stimulation by men. Hour after hour in a windowless room, Price listened to a tape recording of someone describing sexual acts in explicit detail. —AFP

Spanish PM meets Catalan president to defuse tensions

MADRID: Spain's new leader Pedro Sanchez tomorrow meets separatist Catalan president Quim Torra for the first time in a bid to kickstart dialogue after the region's failed attempt at secession which sparked the country's worst crisis in decades. Sanchez has been in power for a month after overthrowing his conservative predecessor Mariano Rajoy in a key parliamentary vote he won with the help of Catalan separatists.

Sanchez has urged Catalan separatist leaders to "turn the page" after Torra said he wanted another referendum on independence. At the start of this month, six of the nine Catalan leaders held near Madrid were transferred to Catalonia to ease tensions ahead of tomorrow's talks in Madrid. They include former Catalan vice president Oriol Junqueras, Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Cuixart of two pro-independence associations and Raul Romeva, the former Catalan government's international affairs chief.

Accused of rebellion along with deposed Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont for their role in the region's proclamation of independence in October 2017, they face up to 25 years in jail. Torra said the aim of the talks was to "find out the Socialists' view on the right of self-determination for Catalans." The government has already rebuffed this with spokeswoman Isabel Celaa responding that the "right to self-determination does not exist in the constitution". But a senior Catalan government official told AFP that they would bring this up at tomorrow's meeting, which starts at 0930 GMT. —AFP

1 gored, 4 hurt on day one of famed Spanish bull run

PAMPLONA: One person was gored and four others injured yesterday at the first running of the bulls in this year's San Fermin festival at Pamplona, one of Spain's best-loved traditions. The week-long event kicked off on Friday with the midday firing of the traditional chupinazo firework rocket on the city hall balcony as revellers descended on Pamplona in the northern Navarra region for an event dating back more than 700 years.

But the first run-where bulls charge runners through narrow cobbled streets-only began yesterday morning and already five were wounded, Red Cross officials said, adding that one of them was gored. The streets were slippery due to overnight showers and some bulls became separated from the herd and took other paths. The bulls completed the 848-metre run from the corral to the bull-ring in just under three minutes.

Inigo Plaza, a tall 29-year-old automobile worker who took part in the run, said: "The important thing is to finish in one piece and to be here again tomorrow." "To have an animal weighing 600 kilos behind you and with all these people in the streets it's an indescribable feeling of adrenaline and excitement," he gushed. The festival claims scores of

casualties every year. In 2017, there were more than 17,000 participants and 64 were wounded. Seven of the injured had been gored. Since 1910, 16 runners have died-the last one in 2009.

'Lot of risks'

"It's taking a lot of risks for nothing," said Raul Plaza, 37, who has run more than 130 times at San Fermin. The run-up to this year's event has been overshadowed by reminders of the gang rape of a woman during the 2016 edition. Sexual assaults also marred previous contests. In the central Plaza del Castillo square, town hall publicity material bore the slogan "Pamplona, a city free of sexist assaults" and city officials have launched a mobile phone app for women to use if they believe they are in danger.

Municipal employees and members of feminist associations handed out red badges shaped like hands to participants, to raise awareness of sexual violence. This year's campaign comes in response above all to the incident that sparked national outrage two years ago when five men calling themselves "The Pack" filmed themselves having sex with an 18-year-old woman. Thousands of Spaniards protested in April after a court sentenced them for "sexual abuse" rather than the more serious offence of "sexual assault", a category that includes rape.

A decision to free the assailants on



PAMPLONA: A reveler is tossed by a heifer bull during festivities in the bullring on the first day of the San Fermin bull run festival in Pamplona, northern Spain. —AFP

bail pending an appeal just prior to the start of the festival, meaning they could in theory return this year, was widely condemned. At the 2013 San Fermin festival photos emerged of women festival-goers being groped by men. To try to stamp out such problems this year a phone number is available 24/7 for people to report sexual violence and police will have CCTV footage to help identify the perpetrators. Some lament that the assaults have tarnished the reputation of the whole city, taking

the gloss off an event supposed to be a heap of fun washed down with large quantities of sangria.

"Elsewhere, they see us as a lawless city," said Leire Delgado. "There are rapes in Tenerife, in Seville ... it's just that elsewhere people say nothing. In Pamplona nothing goes hidden," she said. Feminist collectives have tried to avoid overly focusing on the 2016 case. "Zooming in on a sole case renders invisible other assaults," they suggested in a pre-festival statement. —AFP

After Brexit deal, May to persuade MPs and Brussels

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa has persuaded her eurosceptic ministers to back a plan for closer ties with the EU after Brexit, but some MPs expressed alarm-and she must still sell it to Brussels. After marathon talks at her country retreat on Friday, May secured the agreement of her divided cabinet for a new "free trade area" where Britain would accept EU rules for goods in order to provide "frictionless" trade.

There had been talk of resignations over the plan by ministers who want a clean break with the bloc, such as Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson. But they failed to materialize and May now has something to offer Brussels, which has warned time is running out to secure a deal before Brexit in March. The EU's chief negotiator Michel Barnier said the bloc would assess the plans when they are fleshed out in a policy paper next week, to "see if they are workable and realistic."

Uniting her cabinet was a big win for May, after two years of very public splits. In a letter to members of her Conservative party, she said she had allowed ministers to speak out before but "collective responsibility is now fully restored". Several eurosceptic ministers on Saturday publicly backed the premier, including leader of the

House of Commons Andrea Leadsom and Transport Secretary Chris Grayling.

Pro-European MPs who had previously rebelled against May also offered their support for the plan, with Anna Soubry saying it "delivers a business friendly Brexit". Perhaps surprisingly, Douglas Carswell, who co-founded the official Brexit campaign in the 2016 EU referendum, gave his backing. "Read the detail and ask if this allows us to take back control. It does. Incrementally," he tweeted. "A deal that guarantees us access to the (EU's single market) until such time as we chose regulatory divergence?... Sounds ok to me."

Brexit in all but name

But Nigel Farage, the founder of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and a key player in the Brexit vote, dismissed the plan as a "sell-out". "Brexit did not mean keeping the 90 percent of our economy that does not export to the EU trapped by their laws," he tweeted. Taking aim at eurosceptic ministers, he said: "No resignations means that the so-called Brexiteers in cabinet don't have a principle between them." Veteran eurosceptic MP Bill Cash also told the BBC he was "deeply disappointed". Jacob Rees-Mogg, the leader of the eurosceptic European Research Group (ERG) of Conservative MPs, refused to condemn the plan outright. But he told the BBC: "If, when we get the detailed legislation, it turns out that it is a punishment Brexit, that it is keeping us in the European Union in all but name, I... will not vote for it."



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May speaks to assembled guests as she hosts a reception to mark the 70th Anniversary of the NHS, at 10 Downing Street, in central London. —AFP

Cherry-picking?

Any final deal must be agreed in the House of Commons, where May has only a slim majority dependent on the pro-Brexit Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). But before that, it must be agreed with the European Union, which has repeatedly warned it will not accept "cherry-picking" elements of its single market. Britain's plan would maintain EU rules on goods but adopt greater flexibility on services and end free movement of people.

May met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel the day before the

cabinet talks, where she reportedly showed her a draft of the proposal. She has also held talks in recent days with EU president Donald Tusk and Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, who said he was also briefed on the plans. Ireland is important because May has promised to avoid border checks between that country and British Northern Ireland, to protect the peace process. Deputy prime minister Simon Coveney tweeted that the plan "deserves detailed consideration", adding: "Lots of work ahead." —AFP

International

Japan on alert after execution of doomsday cult founder Asahara

Authorities monitor followers of executed Aum leader

TOKYO: Japan was on alert yesterday amid fears that the executions of the former leader and members of a doomsday cult behind the deadly Tokyo subway sarin gas attack in 1995 could spark acts of retaliation by supporters or newly formed groups. Japan hanged Shoko Asahara on Friday and six other members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult, which killed 13 people in an attack that shattered the country's myth of public safety.

Police and the Public Security Intelligence Agency were collecting intelligence and monitoring followers of Asahara, Kyodo news agency said on Friday, citing warnings by a senior police official that Aum followers remained active. The agency said it searched 16 facilities belonging to three groups across Japan on Friday, including those of the cult's formal successor and a splinter organization launched by a former Aum spokesman, Kyodo reported.

The executions led domestic media to examine how Aum was able to recruit its followers - many of whom were young and highly educated - and whether its offshoots or other newly formed groups could do

the same. The Nikkei business daily said in an editorial the influence of Aum remained and that cults were still looking to recruit young people. "From street corners, universities, and the world of the internet,



Security agency searches Aum successor and splinter group

cult-like groups that target young people have not disappeared," it said.

"The conditions for young people to fall into the darkness of Aum - isolation, dissatisfaction with the

state, and dissemination of extreme ideas - are actually becoming stronger." Others questioned the ability of cults or similar groups to recruit followers on the scale achieved by Aum, let alone reach the level of organization and equipment needed to stage major attacks. Aum, which mixed Buddhist and Hindu meditation with apocalyptic teachings, had at least 10,000 members in Japan and overseas at its peak, including graduates of some of the country's top universities.

Hirohito Suzuki, a professor of sociology at the Graduate School of Project Design in Tokyo, said a combination of greater surveillance of Aum's offshoots and greater societal awareness meant it was now difficult for groups to obtain weapons or carry out military-style training. Individuals who identify with the cult or Asahara were more likely to launch attacks, he said. "There is a possibility that people who have sympathies with Asahara could launch acts of violence in towns, or near stations," Suzuki said. "It's very difficult for authorities to monitor those lone-wolf individuals." —Reuters



KAMIKUIISHIKI, Japan: This file photo shows top chemist of the Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth) sect, Masami Tsuchiya, surrounded by police as he is escorted into a police van following his arrest at the cult's facilities in Kamikuiishiki, Yamanashi prefecture. —AFP

Landmines arrive with the summer thaw in Kashmir

NEELUM VALLEY: As the summer sun warms the verdant valleys of Pakistan-held Kashmir, its snow and glaciers begin to melt, and the deadly landmines buried within them slowly begin to shift downstream towards the villages below. Laid by troops along both sides of the highly militarized Line of Control (LoC), the de-facto border dividing the contested Himalayan region between India and Pakistan, the landmines are believed to kill and maim dozens of villagers each year. "It is a hilly area. Our village is located at the bottom, and the enemy posts are at the top," explains Muhammad Sulaiman, a 72-year-old resident of the village of Bugna, in the steeply sloped Neelum Valley.

When the snow melts, he says, the mines "flow from the top to our village". Villagers routinely ford the many small streams criss-crossing the valley as they go about their daily business. "They are hit by landmines, and they become victims," Sulaiman says. Nobody knows how many landmines flow into populated areas this way each year. The area is vast, and villagers do not always report what has happened. The Pakistan Red Crescent Society does not have access to parts of the LoC itself, and says it does not have proper data.

But it is enough that in winter the villagers feel safe, many told AFP, while rising temperatures bring increased nervousness. Like Sulaiman, Salima Bibi lives in Bugna, a village of 1,500 people that has only enough electricity for lights-not heat or cooking-and is just yards (metres) from the LoC. Pakistani and Indian troops are deployed on the heights above it. Last September she, like many other women of Bugna, was cutting grass for livestock, foraging for wood for cooking and heating, and bringing drinking water from the stream.

"I was walking through a small stream," Salima says. "All of a sudden there was a blast. I fell down on the ground, I was bleeding." She was rushed to the capital of Pakistani-held Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, and remained there for two months as doctors fought to save her mangled leg. Eventually, it was amputated, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) providing her with a prosthetic. Bibi, a mother of three clad in a traditional shalwar kameez, wrings her hands sadly as she tells AFP how difficult it is to carry out routine chores and care for her children. "I don't want what happened to me to happen to others," she says in an interview at her home.



BANDI ABBASPUR, Pakistan: This picture shows an official of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) leading an awareness campaign for landmines to local residents in Abbaspur Sector on the Line of Control in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. —AFP

Fighting back

So she is joining forces with the Red Crescent, which has been carrying out a landmines awareness campaign in the region since 2011. The organization has provided her with posters and pamphlets showing the different shapes of mines and other unexploded ordnance, such as mortar and artillery shells, to help villagers recognize the danger and avoid it. The mines are often small and sometimes camouflaged, the color of stones and lying half-buried in the grass along the streams, underscoring the program's push to educate Kashmir residents on what they look like. They are hoping to save people like Muhammad Rafiq, a carpenter from the village of Polas near the LoC, who was going to a forest to cut wood when he stepped on a mine and lost his foot.

The 46-year-old now takes jobs as a day labourer to put food on the table for his five children. "I had no difficulty when I had two real legs," he tells AFP. The Red Crescent volunteers are going door to door to spread the word, and say they have spoken to more than 200,000 people. Yasir Arafat Kazmi, the program's project manager, says they have seen a decrease in the number of victims they have been able to trace since the campaign began—from 61 in

2015 to 13 last year. The organization has also referred some 250 victims of mine blasts to rehabilitation centers providing them with artificial limbs since 2011.

At risk

But there has been a surge of shelling along the LoC in recent months as tensions between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan rise, and the violence is hitting the campaign. The two countries have disputed Kashmir since independence from Britain in 1947, and fought two of their three wars over the territory.

Cross-border clashes recently reached the highest levels in 15 years, figures from both sides show. Earlier in June both militaries pledged to respect the ceasefire, but the vow was broken within days. In the Neelum Valley, Kazmi of the Red Crescent warns that the shelling is preventing them from carrying out their mission of educating people about landmines. "Our field teams are not visiting the areas on the LoC as their own lives are at risk," he says. Meanwhile the sun beats down and the streams course through the valleys, many carrying their treacherous cargo from the militarized heights above. —AFP

S Korean women protest 'spycam porn' in mass rally

SEOUL: Tens of thousands of South Korean women yesterday angrily urged the government to crack down on secretly-filmed spycam pornography in one of the biggest-ever female-only protests in the country. So-called spycam videos have become increasingly common in the South, where men caught secretly filming women-in schools and workplaces, toilets and changing rooms-make headlines on a daily basis. Distributing pornography is illegal in South Korea, but such videos are widely shared on porn sites and Internet chat-rooms or used in adverts for websites promoting prostitution and gambling.

"Those men who film such videos! Those who upload them! Those who watch them! All of them should be punished sternly!" the protesters chanted in unison at the rally held in central Seoul. Many held banners reading "My life is not your porn" and "We're humans, not a

sexual object for your sick fantasy". Organizers said around 55,000 women took part in the demonstration but police put the estimate at about 20,000. Most of the protesters were teenagers or those in their 20s—a demographic seen as the main target of the spycam epidemic.

"I and my friends always look around to see if there are any suspicious holes on a wall or a door whenever we walk into a public toilet stall," a 22-year-old protester who declined to be named told AFP. "What kind of country has South Korea become? A country where women can't even pee without having to worry about having their butts filmed in secret?" South Korea takes pride in its tech prowess, from ultra-fast broadband to cutting-edge smartphones. About 95 per cent of its 50 million people possess smartphones—the highest in the world.

But its technological advances have also given rise to an army of tech-savvy peeping Toms in a male-dominated country with a poor record on women's rights. The number of spycam crimes surged from about 1,100 in 2010 to more than 6,500 last year, but most offenders were fined or given suspended jail terms described by many women's rights groups as a mere slap on the wrist. The offenders—mostly men—have included college professors, school teachers, doctors, church pastors, public servants,



SEOUL: Female protesters call for South Korea's government to crack down on widespread spycam porn crimes during a rally in Seoul. —AFP

police officers and even a court judge.

Such practices have become so rampant that all manufacturers of smartphones sold in the South are required to ensure the cameras on their devices make a loud shutter sound when taking photos. But many use special smartphone apps that disable the mandatory

sound or use high-tech spy cameras hidden inside eye glasses, lighters, watches, car keys and even neckties. South Korean President Moon Jae-in said in May that the spycam epidemic had become a "part of daily life" in the country and urged tougher punishments for offenders. —AFP

Philippines official killed in ambush, 3rd in less than a week

MANILA: Gunmen killed a city vice mayor in the Philippines yesterday, police said, less than a week after two mayors were shot dead in separate incidents, including one President Rodrigo Duterte said may have had links to illegal drugs. The latest attack brought to 15 the number of mayors and vice mayors killed since Duterte unleashed his deadly anti-narcotics campaign when he came to power in 2016, according to CNN Philippines, citing a tally of its own research team.

Duterte has a watchlist of local officials suspected to have links to illegal drug trade. The daughter of one of the other victims this week said her father was not involved in drugs and police investigators said they had not received any information linking the other to the trade. Police have killed more than 4,200 suspected drugs dealers and users since Duterte came to power. Several thousand more have been murdered by unknown gunmen, described by authorities as vigilantes or rival gang members.

Police have denied the allegations by rights groups and critics of the campaign that some of the killings were summary executions, saying they had to use force because the suspects, who were armed, had violently resisted arrest. Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the "worrisome incidents of violence involving local politicians" must end and police must "spare no effort in getting to the bottom of this latest crime".

Alexander Lubigan, vice mayor of Trece Martires City in Cavite, south of Manila, was in a sports utility vehicle when unidentified gunmen aboard another SUV opened fire, police said. His bodyguard was also killed. The motive and identities of the gunmen in the latest killing are still being investigated, Chief Superintendent Edward Carranza, a police regional director, said. On Monday, Mayor Antonio Halili of Tanauan City in Batangas, south of Manila, was hit by a bullet in the chest during a flag-raising ceremony. —Reuters

Indian army kill three in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Troops shot dead three stone-throwing protesters including a 16-year-old girl in Indian-administered Kashmir yesterday, as tensions rose ahead of the anniversary of the death of a popular rebel commander. Witnesses said soldiers opened fire in the southern Kashmiri district of Kulgam after hundreds of people angry at an army search operation for suspected militants gathered to protest, some hurling objects.

A government doctor told AFP that the dead included two men aged 20 and 22 years and a 16-year-old girl. "The three had bullet injuries and succumbed soon after their arrival at the hospital," the doctor at a sub-district hospital in Kulgam said on condition of anonymity. Police chief SP Vaid confirmed the deaths to AFP but did not reveal any more details.

The killings come on the eve of the second anniversary of the death of Burhan Wani, a charismatic 22-year-old rebel killed by government forces two years ago on July 8. Separatist leaders have called for a shutdown today to commemorate the slain militant. Wani's killing has triggered a sustained wave of violent protests that have so far claimed the lives of at least 100 civilians, with last year the deadliest in the region for the past decade. Thousands of others were injured by shotgun pellets fired by the Indian army.

Kashmir has been divided since the end of British colonial rule in 1947 but both New Delhi and Islamabad claim the former Himalayan kingdom in full. India has about 500,000 soldiers in the part of Kashmir it controls, where armed groups are fighting for independence or a merger with Pakistan. Last month, the UN human rights chief released a report, calling for an investigation into alleged abuses perpetrated by Indian security forces in Kashmir. India rejected the report, blasting it as "fallacious" and "tendentious". —AFP

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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Weapons of trade war: What might China have up its sleeve?

The first shots have been fired in a trade war between China and the United States that experts say could be damaging for the world economy. The two superpowers on Friday imposed tit-for-tat tariffs on billions of dollars of cross-border trade. While US President Donald Trump has brushed off warnings that trade frictions with powerful partners like China could harm the US, Beijing has other weapons in its arsenal beside tariffs to cause damage in a fight.

Cruising for a bruising

Tom Cruise films, Starbucks coffee, the iPhone X and the Buick are all best-sellers in China and authorities could find all sorts of ways to make life difficult for them, says Louis Kuijs, Asia analyst at Oxford Economics. China "has less ammunition left in terms of imposing tariffs but history shows that there are various other measures it could take to inflict pain on US companies," said Kuijs. He cited "scaled-up health, safety and tax checks, delaying the import of goods and boycotts of US goods." Chinese port officials have already started upping inspections of American pork and cars, causing severe delays.

Buick boycott

General Motors now sells more cars in China than it does in the US—and many other iconic American brands now derive a large proportion of revenue from the fast-growing Chinese market. China could either tie up these firms in red tape or encourage an effective boycott by Chinese consumers, experts said. Mark Williams, chief Asia economist at Capital Economics, said Beijing could arrange a "propaganda campaign, which allows officials to remain at arm's length from the resulting disruption to sales."

"In the past, these have proved both effective and fast," said Williams, noting that similar campaigns against South Korea and Japan at times of political tension "led to 50-percent falls in car sales by those countries' firms in a single month." Last year, Chinese consumers suddenly turned against South Korean retailer Lotte, which was forced to shut three-quarters of its shops in China after providing Seoul with land to deploy an American anti-missile shield that Beijing opposes.

School's out

China may start limiting the number of big-spending tourists and its 350,000 students that head to the US each year, which would have a big impact on the American market. "Chinese spending on travel and education in the US is similar in size to its spending on US soybeans and aircraft—the two largest goods purchases," said Williams. China has previously limited tour groups to pressure Taiwan and South Korea, noted the expert. However, he added: "China may feel that US universities have limited leverage over the Trump administration and limiting student numbers could undermine efforts to upgrade China's technical and scientific capabilities."

Boeing blow-out

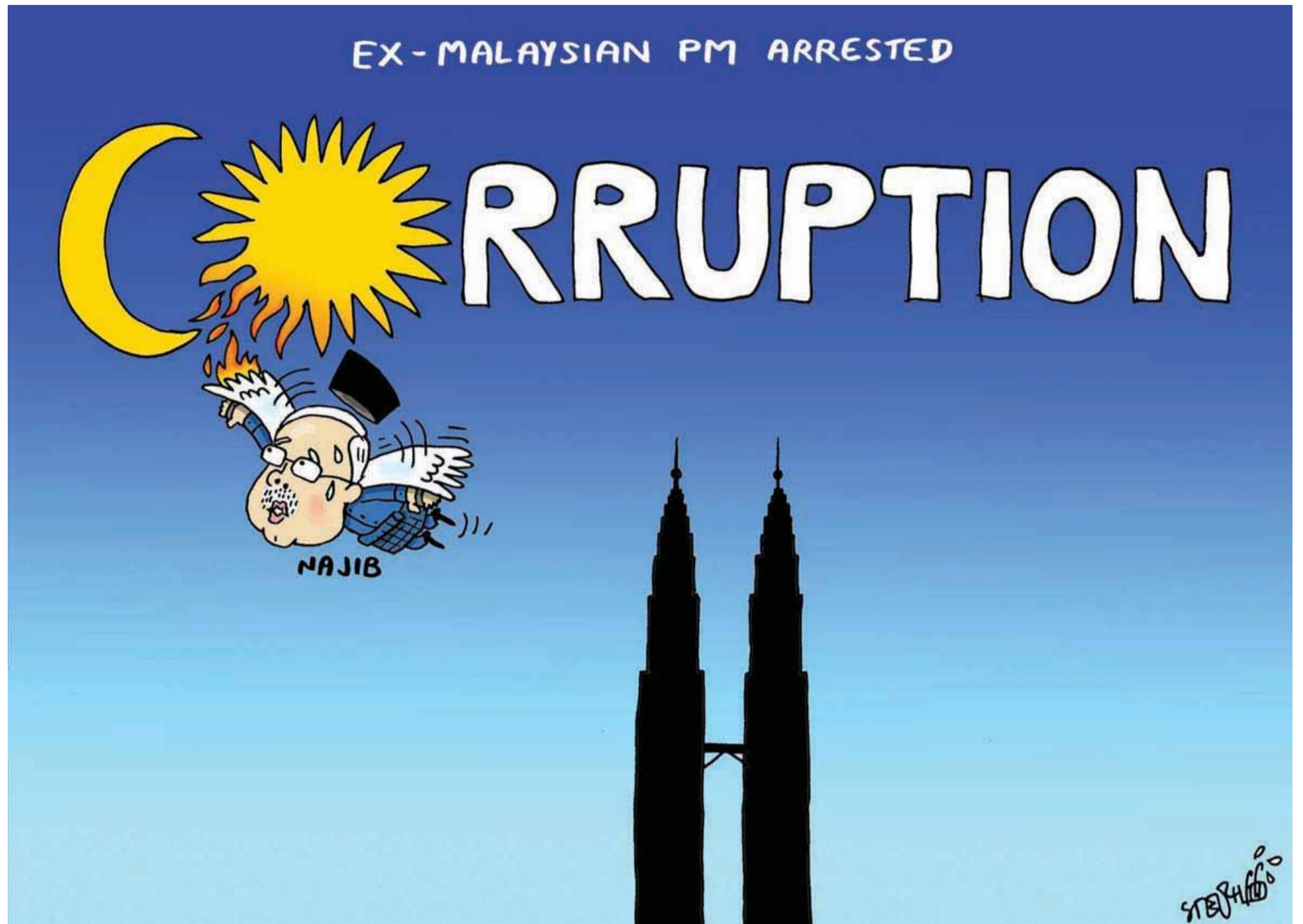
Boeing sells a quarter of its planes in China, the second-biggest market in the world, and the US aerospace giant is neck-and-neck with European rival Airbus. This could be another pressure point, as most Chinese airlines are under state control with their orders strictly piloted by Beijing. Even though orders are planned for the next five years, nationalistic state-run tabloid Global Times has already sounded a warning, saying Beijing could "adjust the sales volumes."

Debt and devaluation

With its enormous currency reserves, China holds some \$1.2 trillion in US treasury bonds and officials have reportedly started to slow or halt their purchases. While some see this as a powerful bargaining chip with Washington, it is a double-edged sword for Beijing as dumping the bonds would cause self-inflicted losses. Another weapon at Beijing's disposal is the yuan, tightly controlled by the central bank, which it could depreciate to bolster exporters. But again, this could be a self-inflicted wound since it might provoke sizable capital outflows out of China. Julian Evans-Pritchard from Capital Economics said: "While a weaker currency could offset some of the economic damage done by US tariffs, the wider risks to financial stability would not be worth taking."

Korean co-operation

If economic weapons don't work, Beijing could turn to politics. Trump relies heavily on Chinese cooperation to rein in the nuclear ambitions of North Korea's Kim Jong Un—especially in terms of maintaining sanctions. Trump may suddenly find China less accommodating on this explosive dossier if the trade war expands. — AFP



In Bosnia, young man's death stirs nationwide protest

When the body of a 21-year-old student was found in a stream in March, police said it was an accident. But his family cried foul, unleashing a wave of protests unseen in Bosnia since 2014. Until his disappearance, David Dragicic had been just an ordinary youngster studying technology in the small town of Banja Luka in northern Bosnia. But his death has transformed him into the symbol of a civil protest movement against injustice and corruption in high places, which has rapidly gathered pace ahead of Bosnia's general election in October.

Dragicic's death has dominated political discourse in Republika Srpska, the Serb-run entity of Bosnia, whose capital is Banja Luka. The protests have also drawn support from Croats and Muslims, all of whom are expected to attend a major rally on Saturday. Such unity is extremely rare in the nation of 3.5 million people where politics have long been divided along ethnic lines since the 1992-1995 war that claimed 100,000 lives.

A catalyst

When Dragicic's body was found six days after he went missing, police wrote it off as an accident, initially suggesting he had been involved in a burglary, then later referred to him as someone who smoked cannabis and used LSD. But such claims have outraged his family, who remain convinced he was killed. His father Davor, 49-year-old waiter, has repeatedly demanded that justice be done.

The case has become a catalyst for a wave of public protest in a country where resentment has long simmered over perceived corruption in the ruling classes, from the police to the judiciary to Bosnia's politicians. Since the end of March, hundreds of protesters have gathered in Banja Luka every day to demand "truth" and "justice", many wearing black T-shirts emblazoned with an image of the young man who had dark hair and dreadlocks.

Gathering at a site now dubbed "David's Square", they listen to a song he wrote which has since been recorded by Dubioza Kolektiv, one of Bosnia's biggest bands that has often been the voice of social or political struggle, notably in 2014. And every day, Dragicic's father is there, accusing the police and magistrates, whom he names, of "complicity". "Criminals, assassins! The hand of justice will get you!" he shouts, his fist raised in the air. "Murderers!" the crowd chants.

Crossing the ethnic divide

Two months ago, Davor Dragicic went to Sarajevo to meet up with another grieving father, a Bosnian Muslim called Muriz Memic who also claims his son was murdered in a case he says was sidelined by the police and justice system in 2016. Police say 22-year-old Dzenan Memic was killed in a car accident. Both fathers came together at a rally in Sarajevo of mostly Bosnian Muslims, where protesters waved placards demanding justice for the two

young men. "I am Serb, Orthodox Christian. The murderers of my son are Serbs... These criminals and murderers have neither religion nor nationality, just their own interest," Dragicic told them. Political analyst Tanja Topic said such a rare show of solidarity had unnerved the authorities as they did not know to control an event that "crosses ethnic and religious divisions, something which by no means suits all ethnic-nationalists in power".

Corruption rife

In Bosnia, there is a crippling lack of trust in politicians, which has contributed—along with poverty—to at least 150,000 people leaving the country over the past five years, figures from the Union for Sustainable Return and Integration charity show. Anti-corruption organization Transparency International ranked Bosnia in 91st place, behind Kosovo, in its latest annual global corruption perception index.

And a recent European Union report also noted corruption was widespread in Bosnia, notably in the judiciary where it "still needs to be more forcefully addressed."



Demonstrators gather in Banja Luka city center during the 100th day of a demonstration asking for justice for David Dragicic, a student found dead in a stream in March. — AFP

Reporting Hate Crimes: The Arab American Experience

Dr James J Zogby
President Arab American Institute

Next week, the Arab American Institute Foundation will release a comprehensive study on anti-Arab hate crimes in the US. The result of eight months of work, "Underreported, Under Threat: Hate Crime in the United States and the Targeting of Arab Americans," fills a gap in available research on hate-based crime. More than just a compilation of acts of violence or threats against persons of Arab descent, the AAIF study also reviews the history of how law enforcement agencies have dealt with (or rather has not dealt with) anti-Arab hate crimes.

The report then rates the performance of all 50 states and the District of Columbia as to whether or not they have hate crime and data collection statutes, and require and provide appropriate law enforcement training. It concludes with recommendations for national and local governments to assist in improving their reporting and performance in dealing with these crimes.

Among the report's findings we learn that while pervasive negative stereotypes and political exclusion have increased the vulnerability of Arab Americans, actual threats and incidents of violence against members of the community have "historically intensified in the wake of developments in the Middle East or incidents of mass violence"—whether or not the perpetrator was of Arab descent. The study notes with concern that this "backlash" effect has "increased in the current political climate."

As the report makes clear both federal and state governments have, to varying degrees, been negligent in addressing this problem. The FBI started collecting data on hate crimes, including those targeting Arab Americans, after Congress passed the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990. But in 1992, the federal government told the FBI it was not allowed to publish statistics on anti-Arab hate crimes, and the category used to report anti-Arab hate crimes was removed from the FBI's data collections. This did not stop local law enforcement agencies from reporting hundreds of incidents under this category until 2003, when the FBI told agencies that it would start rejecting "improperly coded data."

Even though the category was reintroduced in 2015, the AAIF study shows that federal anti-Arab hate crime statistics are still deficient. One indication is that state governments report a greater number of anti-Arab hate crimes in their own publications than federal statistics. In the case of nationwide data targeting all communities, comparing hate crimes compiled by state governments with federal data reveals "thousands of hate crimes were reported at the state level but not published in federal sta-

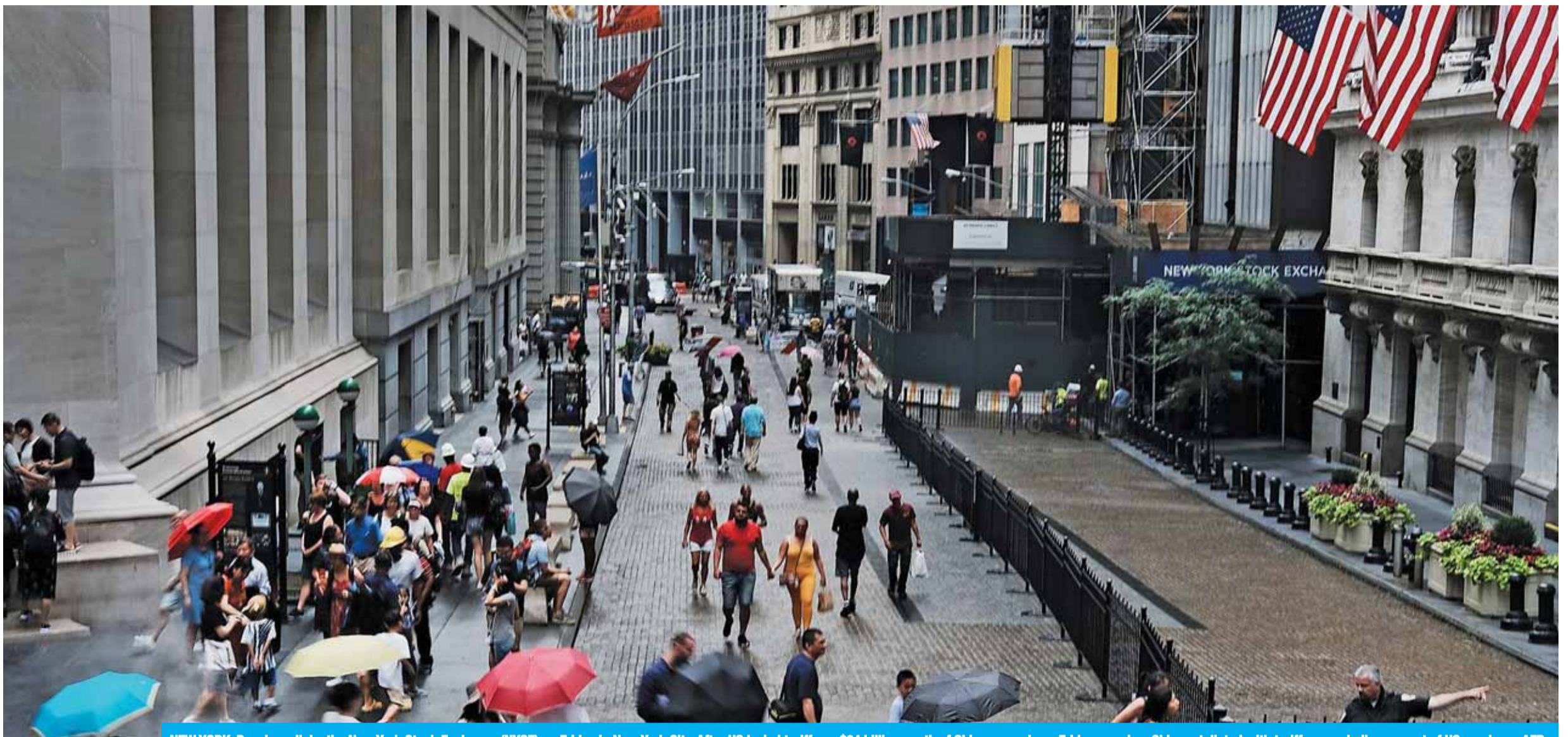
tics." For me, this issue is deeply personal. I know from experience how dangerous and painful anti-Arab hate can be. I received my first death threat in April of 1970 in the form of a letter stating, "Arab dog, you will die..." In 1980, my office was fire-bombed and I continued to receive threats throughout the next two decades. After repeated threats, a colleague and friend in California, Alex Odeh, was murdered when his office was bombed in 1985. And since September 11, 2001, three individuals have gone to prison for threatening my life and the lives of my children and staff.

In all of this, I have observed several patterns. In most instances, these hate crimes were politically motivated and were tied either to the perpetrator's racist assumption that all Arabs were responsible for violent events in the Middle East or here at home. Or they were an effort to silence me and other Arab Americans from speaking out on issues of concern. While it is not the focus of the AAIF report to discern the motives of the perpetrators of bias-motivated incidents, my experience dictates the "why" is worth noting.

As I observed in Congressional testimony in 1985, in too many instances the threats against us were preceded by incitement. As I noted, "These acts of violence and threats of violence against Arab American(s) are but part of a larger picture of discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. We can document numerous instances of active political discrimination against Arab Americans, 'blacklisting' of Arab American political activists and spokespersons, and efforts to bait or taint Arab American leaders and organizations as terrorists or terrorist supporters."

Business

SUNDAY, JULY 8, 2018

12 Boursa Kuwait notches up major gains since market segmentation**13** Kuwait's revenues for fiscal year put at KD 15bn**14** The new Mercedes-Benz G-Class arrives in style to the Middle East

NEW YORK: People walk by the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) on Friday in New York City. After US levied tariffs on \$34 billion worth of Chinese goods on Friday morning, China retaliated with tariffs on a similar amount of US goods. — AFP

China hits back at US as trade war rages

Countries slap tit-for-tat tariffs on cross border trade

WASHINGTON: China on Friday struck back against US President Donald Trump's trade offensive, intensifying the expanding and unpredictable dispute between the world's two largest economies. Late Friday, China announced it was expanding its existing complaint against the United States at the World Trade Organization, hours after the countries slapped tit-for-tat tariffs on billions of dollars of cross-border trade. Beijing called the new stage of the confrontation—which began when Washington pulled the trigger on 25 percent duties on \$34 billion annual imports of Chinese machinery, electronics and other goods—"the largest trade war in economic history."

And China's foreign ministry said retaliatory tariffs of equal size and scope had taken effect "immediately." There was confusion about exactly what US products would be hit in the initial wave of tariffs as China's Commerce Ministry had not published an updated list.

Economists have warned escalating trade frictions could throttle global growth and strike at the heart of the world trading system, causing economic shockwaves and potentially disrupting years of global growth.

US trade data released Friday showed exports hit a record, as importers bumped up purchases, particularly of tariff-targeted US soy beans, to build up supplies before the new duties hit. Analysts said this was the quiet before the storm, with US exports likely to fall off in the third quarter as both sides feel the effects of worsening trade relations. The new tariffs could just be the opening skirmish in the trade war, as US President Donald Trump has vowed to hit as much as \$450 billion in Chinese goods, the vast majority of that country's imports. That would add to disputes underway with Canada, Mexico and the European Union, which could worsen if he goes ahead with threatened tariffs on autos.

China's government also announced it was adding this round of US tariffs to an existing complaint filed with the WTO in April shortly after Washington unveiled the threat to punish Beijing for its policies on intellectual property.

Economic threat

Months of dialogue between the two economic superpowers, including in the WTO, appeared to have failed, with Trump warning just hours before the tariffs came into effect that Washington was ready to escalate the dispute with duties on hundreds of billions of dollars more in Chinese imports.

Trump repeatedly has slammed what he describes as Beijing's underhanded economic treatment of the United States. The US trade deficit in goods with China ballooned to a record \$375.2 billion last year, stoking his ire.

US officials accuse China of building its industrial dominance by stealing the "crown jewels" of American technological know-how through cyber-theft, forced transfers of intellectual property and state-sponsored corporate acquisitions.

A US court on Friday imposed the maximum \$1.5 million fine for theft of trade secrets by the Chinese company Sinovel in a case that typified Washington's complaints about Beijing's conduct. Prosecutors said AMSC lost 700 jobs and more than \$1 billion in shareholder equity after Sinovel stole technology, including software, used in producing and operating wind

turbines. Sinovel has agreed to pay AMSC a total of \$52.5 million in restitution. Despite dire warnings about the impact on the US, Trump believes the robust American economy can outlast its rivals in the current battle. But China also believes its economy, with a greater focus on domestic demand and a reduced dependence on exports, can ride out the storm.

China central banker Ma Jun said the first punches will have only a "limited impact" on the nation's economy, trimming GDP growth by 0.2 percentage points.

With only \$130 billion in US imports to retaliate against, Beijing has said it will take "qualitative" and "quantitative" measures against the US, triggering fears it could cripple the operations of US multinationals operating there.

Russia joins the fray

China's Premier Li Keqiang said on a visit to Sofia that "A trade war benefits no-one because it hurts free trade and the multilateral process." Global markets initially wobbled at the news but soon forged higher with Wall Street finishing up solidly on bullish employment numbers while Asian and European stocks also cast aside their worries, at least for now. On the streets of Beijing, there were some concerns that prices would rise due to the tariffs but also a determination to support the Beijing authorities in the trade war. "I will try my best to support domestic products. I think products made in China are the best," said one shopper in a Beijing grocery store, who gave his name as

Yang. Moscow also announced Friday it had slapped 25 percent tariffs on some US goods, joining the global push-back against Trump's offensive.

New partners

China remains open for trade with foreign partners and can only benefit from an economically strong Europe, its leader said yesterday as he pressed for expanded ties with the continent's eastern wing while waging a tariff war with Washington. Premier Li Keqiang told a summit with central and eastern European leaders that China would stick to the path of opening its markets and other reforms that had fuelled its economy, providing opportunities for EU members and aspirants in the bloc's poorer half. "It is two-way traffic," Li said through an interpreter. "...Opening up has been a key driver of China's reform agenda so we will continue to open wider to the world, including widening market access for foreign investors." Li's attendance at the seventh "16+1" summit in Sofia coincided with the firing of the first salvos in what risks becoming a protracted global trade war as Washington and Beijing slapped tariffs on \$34 billion worth of each others' goods.

Doubts have been growing in some participating countries of the value of the annual meetings, and China has come under pressure to reassure that its courting of individual countries from the Baltics to the Balkans would not hurt the European Union as a whole. "If Europe is weakened, it will only be bad news for China, not the other way around," Li said. "This platform needs to stay open. It needs to be transparent."

Officials from the EU, World Bank, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development were invited and Li said those organizations were welcome to jointly fund projects in the region. — Agencies

Iran says Trump 'destabilizing' oil market

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday accused US President Donald Trump of destabilizing the oil market with his flurry of tweets taking aim at the OPEC cartel. "These days... the price is dependent on the behavior of Mr Trump," Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said on state television.

"Every day, Mr. Trump has a new message or remark that causes concern in the market, or he gives OPEC members orders that are very insulting," or demands other countries increase their production, Zanganeh said. "It's an insult to the people and national sovereignty of these countries and it also destabilizes the market," he added. In his latest tweet on the subject on Wednesday, Trump said that the "OPEC Monopoly must remember that gas prices are up & they are doing little to help".

He has repeatedly urged the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) — which includes

key US ally Saudi Arabia—to raise its production. OPEC and other producers including Russia agreed last month to boost output by around a million barrels a day, reversing course after supply cuts that cleared a global glut and boosted prices. The move came as Iran—an OPEC member—faces renewed sanctions over Trump's decision to quit the international nuclear deal with Tehran, which has added to supply concerns on world markets.

Meanwhile, Global stock markets advanced Friday, overcoming earlier wobbles prompted by China and the United States firing opening salvos in a trade war that pits the world's two biggest economies against each other. Wall Street gained on the back of a solid US employment report that was strong enough to reassure investors of the health of the economy, but did not exhibit robust enough wage growth to suggest the Federal Reserve will need to raise interest rates more aggressively. All three major US indices ended higher, with the Nasdaq chalking up its second straight gain of more than one percent.

"Trump is bringing the world close to a genuine trade war," said Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg. But in the end, European and US markets followed the example of Asian markets which gained as investors went bargain-hunting, dealers reported. — AFP



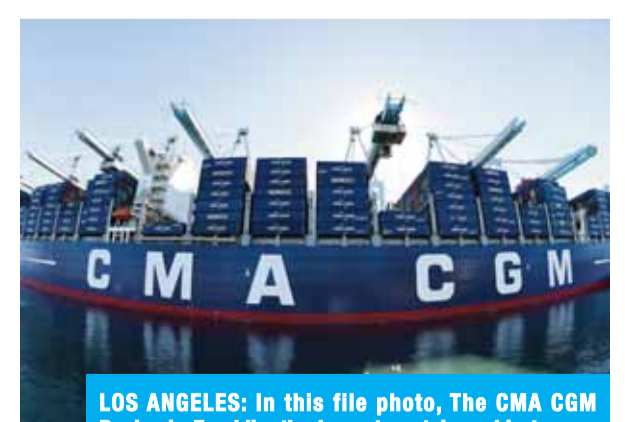
Beijing says open for trade with east Europe

French shipping firm drops Iran over US sanctions threat

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, France: The world's third largest shipping container group, the French-owned CMA CGM, has decided to withdraw from Iran over the threat of US sanctions, its chief executive said yesterday. "Because of the Trump administration, we have decided to end our service to Iran," Rodolphe Saade told an economic conference in Aix-en-Provence in southern France.

"Our Chinese competitors are hesitating a bit, so they may have different relationships with the Trump administration." In 2016 the company signed a memorandum of understanding with the Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines allowing it to lease spaces for vessels, operate joint shipping lines and cooperate on the use of port terminals.

US President Donald Trump announced in early May the unilateral withdrawal of the US from the landmark Iran nuclear deal and the reinstatement of sanctions against the



LOS ANGELES: In this file photo, The CMA CGM Benjamin Franklin, the largest container ship to ever call at a North America port, is docked at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro, California. — AFP

country, as well as against foreign companies who do business with it.

Washington said the sanctions would be immediate for new contracts and gave companies already working there up to 180 days to cease trading. — AFP

Business

KFIC Monthly Market Report

Kuwait's revenues for fiscal year put at KD 15 billion

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance and Investment Company (KFIC) announced its report for June 2018 which discusses the status of local and international markets.

International Economic Overview

Global equity markets strengthened during the Quarter as the MSCI World Index increased by +1.09 percent. In developed markets, FTSE 100 index was the best performing index followed Japan's Nikkei 225 index. Despite concerns over US international trade relations, the S&P 500 rose +2.93 percent. U.S. hiring rose more than forecast in May, wages picked up and the unemployment rate matched the lowest in almost five decades, indicating the strong labor market will keep powering economic growth. In the UK, FTSE 100 surged by +8.01 percent mainly due to a sharp decline in the pound, weakening against the euro and dollar. The FTSE 100 tends to rise when the sterling falls, as multinational companies on the index generate the bulk of their earnings and revenue overseas. In Europe, Germany's DAX index and France's CAC 40 surged by +1.73 percent and +3.02 percent respectively, as the European union announced plans on imposing tariffs on \$3.2 billion worth of goods imported from US, in response to US imposing respective tariffs on aluminum and steel imports from Europe. China's Shanghai SE composite down by -10.14 percent. As investor concerns on an ongoing trade tensions between china and US. Slowing domestic economy has also let to concern among investors as china is easing monetary policy to support economic growth by lowering

its reserve requirement ratio for banks.

In Japan, Nikkei 225 increased by +3.81 percent investors were relieved that no new US demands on trade came out of this during the summit meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President Donald Trump. In commodities, Oil prices as represented by Brent reached \$79.2 bb/l which rose by +16.67 percent and WTI closed at \$74.2 bb/l rising by +15.79 percent. Crude climbed after an industry report was said to show the biggest drop in US crude stockpiles since September 2016. Furthermore, Iran's position in the oil market is looking weaker than ever as a result of tightening US sanctions as the US has pressed China, India and other allies to end all imports of Iranian oil by a Nov 4 deadline. In other commodities, Gold prices declined by -5.42 percent as investors favored the dollar and Treasuries instead as they weighed the uncertainties surrounding the impact of a US-China trade war on global growth.

GCC Economic Overview

Saudi Arabia has been upgraded by MSCI to its Emerging Market (EM) index. MSCI will reclassify Saudi Arabia with implementation of its indexes starting June 2019. According to Al-Rajhi Capital Co Saudi's inclusion in MSCI will boost/prompt large global investors to invest in the Kingdom. Furthermore, MSCI announced that Kuwait will be included in its 2019 annual market classification review, potentially reclassifying it from Frontier Markets to Emerging Markets status. Kuwait's revenues for the fiscal year ending March 31 are estimated at KD 15 billion including KD 13.3 billion in oil income.

Meanwhile Kuwait's parliament approved state budget projected spending increase of 8 percent to KD 21.5 billion. The government renewed forecasting that the country's General Reserve Fund continues to be depleted. The deficit, which will be covered from state reserves, is estimated at KD 7.9 billion after deducting 10 percent of revenue for future generation fund. UAE cabinet approved a full foreign ownership of companies and grant long term visas to investors by year-end. According to Moody's, UAE sector outlook for banks remains stable as faster economic growth in UAE is expected to support credit growth.

In Qatar, Fitch has revised Qatar's outlook to Stable from Negative and affirmed its rating at AA-. According to Fitch, the economy reconfigured its supply chains and continues to grow at a strong pace. Oman's government's deficit fell to OMR 268.3 million from OMR 997.8 million a year earlier as a rise in oil prices boosted export revenues, government revenues rose by 17.2 percent to OMR 1.13 billion. Bahrain is set to receive financial aid from GCC neighbors KSA, Kuwait, and UAE to support fiscal stability and economic reform. Earlier in July, the yield on Bahrain's dollar-denominated bonds maturing in July 2022 rose to a record 9.26 percent in July as the absence of any signal of financial aid from Bahrain's neighbors sent the kingdom's credit risk rising the most in emerging markets this month.

GCC Equities Review

GCC equities, as measured by the MSCI GCC IMI Index Increased by +3.54 percent QTD. Saudi Arabia's Tadawul Index was the top



Iran's weakening position in the oil market

performing index, followed by Qatar QE Index. Saudi Arabia's Tadawul index rose by +5.63 percent with mainly due to increases in Media +23.85 percent, Banks +13.48 percent and Telecom Services +10.97 percent. Kuwait's all share index increased to +3.27 percent MTD, Kuwait's Premier Market increased to 4.57 percent MTD and Kuwait's Main Market surged +0.98 percent MTD. Dubai's DFM index fell -9.25 percent with decrease in sector performance witnessed in Services -17.64 percent, Real Estate -15.48 percent and Transport -12.04 percent. Abu Dhabi's ADSM index dropped -0.55 percent QTD with negative performance was

witnessed in Finance Services & Investments -18.86 percent, Telecom -8.50 percent and Real Estate -6.42 percent. Qatar's QE index increased by +3.81 percent with positive performance coming from Consumer +14.06 percent, Banks and Finance Services +12.42 percent and Transportation +7.45 percent. Oman's MSM index fell by -4.23 percent with sharp declines from Industrials and Services -7.49 percent and -5.02 percent respectively. Bahrain's BB All Share index declined by -0.56 percent with negative contribution coming from Banking -6.15 percent and Hotels & Tourism -0.68 percent.

KD 25,000
TUNE IN TO FIND OUT THE WINNER OF THE QUARTERLY KUWAITI SALARY DRAW
9 July
FM 88.8
Diwanat Al-Yaqout & Al-Ansari
From 1:30-2:30 PM

Lucky Gulf Bank draw winner to claim KD 25,000 on July 9

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced the second quarterly salary account draw of the year, where a lucky winner will claim KD 25,000, will be held tomorrow on 9 July 2018, and will be broadcast on the Kuwait Pulse (88.8FM) radio program "Diwanat Al-Yaqout & Al-Ansari" at 1:30 pm.

The salary account offer is tailored for Kuwaiti customers, allowing them to benefit from a number of unique offers when they transfer their salaries through Gulf Bank.

The salary account gives new customers the opportunity to either receive a KD 100 cash gift

upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank or an interest-free loan. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and be fully eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank. Customers can also enjoy a one year free of charge Visa or MasterCard credit card, as well as a chance to apply for loan up to KD 70,000, or a consumer loan up to KD 15,000.

Existing and new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank are automatically enrolled in the quarterly draws and have the chance to win valuable cash prizes, including three quarterly prizes of KD 25,000, in addition to Kuwait's largest salary prize of KD 250,000 in the last draw. The Gulf Bank's third quarterly salary account draw date is scheduled on 8 October 2018 for the prize of KD 25,000, while the final salary's draw for the largest prize of KD 250,000, will be held on 7 February 2019.

To find out more about Gulf Bank's salary account, customers can visit one of the Gulf Bank's 58 branches, or log on to www.e-gulf-bank.com.

CBK receives 'Your Salary and More' prize winner

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently received the winner of the 'Your Salary & More' prize, Ahmed Hermaines Al-Enezi to hand him over the Range Rover vehicle he won.

Al-Enezi was received by CBK's branches department manager, Hanadi Ahmed Al-Mislem who explained that all Kuwaiti clients who transfer their salaries to CBK during the campaign lasting until December 31, 2018 would be eligible to win instant KD 150 prizes, up to KD 10000 scratch & win coupons or getting loans up to KD 10,000 without interest.



US job growth points to solid economy

WASHINGTON: The US economy created more jobs than expected in June, but steady wage gains pointed to moderate inflation pressures that should keep the Federal Reserve on a path of gradual interest rate increases this year.

Nonfarm payrolls rose by 213,000 jobs last month as manufacturers stepped up hiring, the Labor Department said on Friday. The economy added 37,000 more jobs in April and May than previously reported. It needs to create about 120,000 jobs per month to keep up with growth in the working-age population. — Reuters

CBK appointment

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced the appointment of Tameem Khalid Al-Meaan as its general manager at the Compliance and Corporate Governance Dept.

Meaan has over 8 years experience in compliance and corporate governance in banking regulations as he had worked at the Central Bank and several other local and foreign conventional and Islamic banks.



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Business

The new Mercedes-Benz G-Class arrives in style to the Middle East

The most anticipated launch of the year



KUWAIT: The arrival of the new Mercedes-Benz G-Class was celebrated at Al-Serkal Avenue in Dubai this week. The event introduced to the world the legendary flagship model - taking a leap into a new era in terms of technology while staying true to its unrivaled legacy.

Having undergone its greatest change in history, the new G-Class maintains its iconic design and remains a benchmark for originality, ruggedness and luxury - with regards to comfort and safety. Beneath its classic rugged exterior lies the latest cutting-edge technology, giving its drivers a much better performance than ever before.

The new model presents itself in top form - whether on or off the road and whatever the operating conditions, the off-road vehicle impresses with its performance, advanced assistance systems, outstanding handling and safety.

At the same time, the new suspension, the DYNAMIC SELECT driving modes including the "Desert" driving mode designed specifically for the G 500 in the Middle East, the "G-Mode" - an intelligent off-road control system - and the three 100 percent differential locks enhance not only ride comfort but also agility - on any surface.

Commenting on the launch, Lennart Mueller-Teut, Head of Marketing and Communications, Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East, said: "The Middle East has eagerly awaited the launch of the latest G-Class. Being one of the first markets around the world to welcome this model, we believe our customers will be immensely satisfied with its new developments, especially innovations made specifically for the region - alongside its unparalleled performance, comfort and world-class safety systems. The G-Class remains an icon, only better and stronger - but at the same time stayed true to itself and kept its character".

Reinterpreted for today

The luxury off-road vehicle from Mercedes-Benz has long been considered a design icon. In as much as the new G-Class is 53 mm longer and 121 mm wider than the previous model, its external appearance has not changed significantly since 1979. It follows the philosophy of Sensual Purity and at the same time remains true to the character of the original. Iconic elements continue to serve very specific purposes, now as then, and to give the G-Class its unique appearance. All these are still found in the new model: the

distinctive door handle and the characteristic closing sound, the robust exterior protective strip, the exposed spare wheel on the rear door and the prominent indicator lights. Extraordinary features like these in concert with the off-roader's angular lines define its special look - giving it an even greater presence, on the road as well as in terrain. More than ever, the new G-Class appears to be cast from a single piece. All surfaces have a tauter design and have more tension, while the surface quality has been taken to an even higher level. This results in narrower, more precise gaps and more harmonious transitions. In addition, the wheel arches and bumpers form a more integral part of the body and thus look less like add-on features.

Interior: Authentic icon

While the exterior maintains the iconic classic look, the interior of the G-Class has undergone a fundamental modern redesign. With its off-road character and top-class luxury appointments, the model has always combined two extremes into a harmonious symbiosis. Unmistakable at first glance and from the first touch, only high-quality materials are used. Every detail is finished by hand with the utmost care.

Getting in the G-Class reveals that numerous design features from the exterior have been transposed into the interior: the shape of the round headlamps, for instance, which is reflected in the side air vents and the design of the iconic indicators, found again in the shape of the loudspeakers. Hallmarks of the model include the grab handle in front of the front passenger and the chrome-highlighted switches for the three differential locks; both have been meticulously optimized and retained as characteristic features. The very clearly arranged and completely redesigned instrument panel features timeless tube-look analogue round dials as standard - with two 12.3-inch displays blend visually into a Widescreen Cockpit beneath a shared glass cover. In other words, fans of classic round instruments will certainly not be disap-

pointed in the new G-Class. Drivers can choose between three different styles for the displays - "Classic", "Sport" and "Progressive" - and also select relevant information and views according to their individual needs.

Off-road: the legend surpasses itself

The primary goal of development was to redefine the quality of the handling both on and off the road. This goal has been achieved: The new G-Class performs even better off-road, while on the road it is significantly more agile, dynamic and comfortable than its predecessor - thanks to its standard ladder-type frame, the three 100-percent differential locks and LOW RANGE off-road gear reduction.

The new suspension emerged from the collaboration between Mercedes-Benz GmbH and Mercedes-AMG GmbH. The result is an independent suspension with double-wishbone front axle in combination with a rigid rear axle. The new front axle is designed in such a robust way that the off-road performance and off-road capabilities of its predecessor are maintained and partly even surpassed.

The icon has reinvented itself

On-road: agile, comfortable, superior

The specification for the G-Class not only included solidness and superiority in terrain, but also greater driving dynamics and comfort on paved roads. Thanks to the new front axle design, the on-road performance has therefore been enhanced at the same time. On the road, the "G" is as agile as it is comfortable and provides the driver with a better steering feel.

Using a digital prototype, the developers simulated the service life of individual components and closed systems to find out in which places it would be possible to make use of lighter raw materials.

The diet worked, as the G-Class has shed around 170 kg. The recipe for success: a new mix of materials comprising strong, high-strength, ultra-high-strength steels and aluminium, as well as improved production processes at the

Magna Steyr plant in Austria. The rigid body shell is now made of a variety of steel grades, while the wings, bonnet and doors are made of aluminium. However, less mass in no way translates into less stability - on the contrary, it was possible to increase the torsional rigidity of the frame, body shell and body mounts by around 55 percent, from 6,537 to 10,162 Nm/deg.

New automatic transmission on board

For the transfer of power, the 9G TRONIC automatic transmission with torque converter was specifically adapted to meet the needs of the off-road icon. The developers have managed to reduce the shift and response times of the 9-speed transmission by means of a dedicated software application. The wide transmission ratio not only makes driving quieter and more comfortable especially at low engine speeds, it simultaneously also contributes to reducing fuel consumption.

The powerful Mercedes-AMG G 63

The new Mercedes-AMG G 63 underpins its unique position among performance off-road vehicles with the powerful drive system, the newly developed AMG RIDE CONTROL suspension, the AMG-specific transmission modes and new interior with optimal widescreen cockpit.

The AMG 4.0-litre V8 biturbo engine now also replaces the previous 5.5-litre V8 biturbo engine in the G 63. It generates 430 kW (585 hp) in this model and delivers a maximum torque of 850 Nm. This is available across a wide rev range between 2,500 and 3,500 rpm, providing a sense of effortless superiority. It involves a sprint from zero to 100 km/h in 4.5 seconds.

The eight-cylinder delivers its power with muscular torque in all engine speed ranges, combined with maximum efficiency for low fuel consumption and emission figures. Unmistakable design features give the new AMG G 63 its unique appearance: the boxy silhouette, the proud bonnet, external door hinges, round headlamps, mounted direction indicators, robust door handles, muscular protective strips with inserts in high-gloss black with a silver AMG emblem, the exposed spare wheel on the rear door with a stainless-steel cover and three-dimensional Mercedes star.

26 new winners in Al-Hassad Islamic account

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 4th of July 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Tariq A Rahman Al-Shirawi.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Faisal Zaid Al Zaid, Ahmed Abbas Abdulla, Sabah Mohammad Al-Nejadah, Ali Naghi Anbaz, Salma Ali Al Naji, Awadh Said Awadh, Khudhair Ahmad Al-Qadhi, Majed Habes Al-Mutairi, Seham Mohammad Al-Azmi, Naser Abdulaziz Al-Zaid, Linda Khaled Al-Dairi, Anita Bukhary Amjad, Ibrahim Abdulaziz Ibrahim, Mona



Abdulrazaq Yousef, Jacintha Linette Dsouza, Abd Alrasoul Ali Bader Khan, Ammar Abu Hejlal Mustafa, George Malek Azzam, Hasan Salah Al Sadeq, Abdulaziz S Al-Nafisi, Salma Amir Hasan, Ebtisam Mahdi Al-Sammak, Ali Adel Jaffar, Abdulmahdi Hussain Fathalla and Fatema Jaafar Mohamed. Al Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions.

Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year." Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.

KFH announces winners of debit card cross border campaign

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced the winners of its debit card cross border campaign in partnership with Visa "Once in a life Time Travel Experience in a Private Jet to London". The campaign confers splendid benefits on customers as part of the bank's efforts to continually offer customers a wide spectrum of rewards and sought-after benefits that meet their aspirations, while emphasizing the pioneering position of the bank as a world leading Islamic financial institution.

The campaign awarded 6 winners and their companions a unique 6 days trip to London in a private jet, in addition to accommodation in a 5-star hotel premium suite, luxury car with chauffeur service and KD 2000 cash credit for enjoying a unique shopping experience. The winners used KFH Visa debit card abroad for a minimum of KD 100 in a month for purchases & cash withdrawals. Customers were eligible to earn chances to enter a monthly draw to win, for every KD 1 spent internationally gives customers 3 chances to enter the 3 monthly draws. The winners are: Jamal Alhebaida, Amina Alebraheem, Fajer Alobaidan, Abdulwahhab Alhawly, Khaled Alkhaleedi and Abdulaziz Almutairi.

KFH will continue the collaboration especially after our campaigns generate a highly positive resonance in the market and among



The winners heading towards London

customers. He pointed out that KFH has recently launched Visa Signature credit card with enhanced benefits to customers as part of its efforts to continually expand its products and services to meet the modern lifestyle needs of its customers.

The "KFH" Visa Signature credit card offers customers a unique experience for enjoying a world of exclusive privileges, luxury and convenience that are carefully selected and tailored to suit their lifestyle.

"KFH" Visa Signature credit cardholders are eligible to get up to 6 percent cashback on their monthly spends. Furthermore, the card offers comprehensive multi-trip travel insurance for customers and their family when

they travel outside Kuwait with travel insurance coverage of up to \$500,000. With KFH Visa Signature credit cardholders will also get special offers at over 900 of the world's most prestigious hotels with the Visa Luxury Hotel Collection.

KFH also launched Card Summer Campaign titled "Your KFH card, the key to your house in Turkey". When using any of "KFH" Visa cards (Debit, Credit or Prepaid) to pay for domestic or international purchases, 3 customers will win a house of their choice in Turkey with furniture and home appliances. In addition, fly business class to Turkey with a companion and stay in a 5 star hotel for 5 nights.

Warba Bank announces 9 winners of Al-Sunbula draw

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, Kuwait's best investment bank and corporate consultancy firm held its monthly and weekly Sunbula Account draw in the presence of officials from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The bank proudly announced the lucky 4 monthly winners for the month of July. The two winners of the KD 5,000 were Tahani Mohammad Naeem Hammad Shukri and

Saud Abdulaziz Hasan Baqer, while the two winners of the KD 10,000 were Dhari Mohammad Oqlah Al-Altali and Faten Baheej Al-Asalkhadi.

The bank also held the weekly Sunbula Draw, to reveal the following 5 lucky winners of KD 1000 each: Yaseen Khaled Yaseen M Al-Yaseen, Meshari Abdulhadi Mohammad Al-Shammari, Sulaiman Fahid Mubarak Al-Shamri, Abdulwahab B S A Al-Rifai and Saad Fahad Thuwaini Al-Thuwaini.

Al-Sunbula Account is the perfect choice for all those who wish to save money and achieve steady incomes while simultaneously have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. Due to the high traffic towards this account, for its offerings of unparalleled opportunities, Warba Bank has worked on enhancing the Al-Sunbula account to grant customers more benefits.

Such enhancements include increasing the number of winners and the frequency of the draws. Now, on every Thursday the bank draws 5 weekly winners of KD 1,000 each. In addition, the bank continues its monthly draws held on the first Thursday of every month, with cash prizes of KD 30,000 divided amongst 4 winners: two winners of KD 10,000 each, and two winners of KD 5,000.

The new development of Al-Sunbula account raised the total number of winners to 24, and the total amount of prizes to KD 50K instead of KD 30K. As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against every KD 10. It is noteworthy, that Warba Bank has recently launched the Al-Sunbula Fixed Deposit, which provides depositors with high returns reaching up to 3 percent, as well as monthly profit opportunities in Al-Sunbula Account draws.

Furthermore, Warba Bank has launched its latest Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request opening the Sunbula account in an easy electronic manner through the Bank's website without having to visit any of the Bank's branches, by following 5 simple steps that might take up to 5 minutes.

New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, and the bank will receive, process and pass the new application for approval through the new and unique automated system used to implement this service. The staff will then contact the client to determine the appropriate time to visit in order to obtain the required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.



Technology

Infiniti unveils the all-new QX50 in the Middle East

World-first technologies, stand-out design and unrivalled interior



DUBAI: The all-new INFINITI QX50 premium SUV made its first Middle East appearance in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, last night at an exclusive event hosted at the Dubai Design District.

The much-anticipated model features a range of unique elements including world-first technologies, stand-out design and unrivalled interior. The all-new QX50 pairs INFINITI's signature 'Powerful Elegance' design philosophy with the company's innovative VC-Turbo engine, the world's first production-ready vari-

able compression ratio engine.

Markus Leithe, Managing Director Middle East at INFINITI Motor Company said: "The Middle East is a key focus region for INFINITI globally and the all-new QX50 is one of the most important vehicles we've unveiled here in the past year.

"Our discerning customers in this region will appreciate the unique and attractive features of this car, including its striking design, dynamic versatility and advanced technology. The all-new QX50 boasts advanced safety features and is the



first vehicle in the world to be powered by an engine that can vary compression ratio on the fly, thanks to our groundbreaking VC-Turbo engine. We very much look forward to seeing this car on the region's roads from September."

INFINITI's all-new four-cylinder 2.0-liter VC-Turbo (Variable Compression Turbo) gasoline engine is the world's first production-ready variable compression ratio engine, and is one of the most advanced internal combustion engines ever created. The VC-Turbo changes its compression ratio seamlessly with an advanced



multi-link system, continuously raising or lowering the pistons' reach to transform compression ratio - offering the power of a sprinter and the efficiency of a marathon runner, the best of both worlds. The all-new QX50 will be available at INFINITI showrooms in the Middle East from September 2018. Prices start at \$44,400 excluding VAT.

INFINITI Motor Company Ltd. is headquartered in Hong Kong with representations in 50 markets around the world. The INFINITI brand was launched in 1989. Its range of premium auto-

mobiles is currently built in manufacturing facilities in Japan, the United States, United Kingdom and China. INFINITI design studios are located in Atsugi-Shi near Yokohama, London, San Diego and Beijing.

INFINITI is in the middle of a major product offensive. The brand has been widely acclaimed for its daring design and innovative driver-assistance technologies. From the 2016 season, INFINITI is a technical partner of the Renault Sport Formula One team, contributing its expertise in hybrid performance.

Bitcoin exchange brings on technology chief

SAN FRANCISCO: A bitcoin exchange headed by Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss announced Friday it hired a former New York Stock Exchange executive to head its technology team as it seeks to bring cryptocurrency to a wider market. Robert Cornish, former chief information officer at NYSE, will begin his job as chief technology officer at New York-based Gemini later this month. Cornish will join the exchange founded by the twins who made a fortune in cryptocurrency after settling a claim they came up the idea for Facebook.

"Rob is a tremendous addition to our team," Gemini chief executive and co-founder Tyler Winklevoss said in a release. Winklevoss and his brother, Cameron, earlier this year pitched a plan to create a body to police the wild digital money mar-

ket. Bitcoin is independent of governments and banks and uses blockchain technology, where encrypted digital coins are created by supercomputers.

The virtual currency is not regulated by any central bank but is instead overseen by a community of users who try to guard against counterfeiting.

Virtual currency exchanges have seen tremendous volatility, and have sparked concerns they can be used to launder money for criminal networks. The Winklevoss twins are part of the story of Facebook's controversial genesis story. In 2008, a \$65 million settlement was reached with three Harvard classmates—the Winklevoss twins and Divya Narendra—over their charges that Mark Zuckerberg had stolen the idea for Facebook from them. — AFP

US hits Chinese firm Sinovel with \$1.5m fine for stealing technology

WASHINGTON: A US court on Friday imposed the maximum fine of \$1.5 million of Chinese firm Sinovel for stealing trade secrets from an American company producing wind turbines, the Justice Department said. The decision comes on the day Washington

unleashed 25 percent import tariffs on \$34 billion in Chinese products to punish the country for what President Donald Trump has said is the rampant theft of American technology.

After being charged in 2013, Sinovel was convicted in January by a US court of stealing the trade secrets of AMSC, a US-based company formerly known as American Superconductor, which lost \$550 million and 700 jobs—more than half its global workforce—as a result, the Justice Department said in a statement.

The two companies this week reached a settlement and Sinovel has one year to pay \$25 million to AMSC, after paying \$32.5 million this week. The Chinese firm also will repay \$850,000 to other victims. "Rather than pay AMSC for more than \$800 million in products

and services it had agreed to purchase, Sinovel instead hatched a scheme to brazenly steal AMSC's proprietary wind turbine technology, causing the loss of almost 700 jobs and more than \$1 billion in shareholder equity at AMSC," acting Assistant Attorney General John Cronan said in statement. "As demonstrated by this prosecution, intellectual property theft poses a serious threat to American companies." Sinovel used the stolen technology, including software, to regulate the flow of power from turbines to electrical grids, to produce its own wind turbines and retrofit existing turbines, prosecutors said.

The company also hired away an AMSC engineer to help steal source code for the key software in 2011, the statement said. — AFP

Six-year boom pushes New York to mull Uber regulation

NEW YORK: Should Uber be forced to pay drivers better? After years of untamed growth, app-based for-hire services have brought New York's iconic yellow cabs to their knees and the city is mulling regulatory action. It's a rare New Yorker whose smart phone is not hooked up to market leader Uber or several of its biggest competitors—Lyft, Juno and Via. The city of 8.5 million is the biggest app-ride market in the United States.

The nightmare of getting behind the wheel in traffic-clogged streets, the astronomical cost of parking and poor public transport in outlying neighborhoods has seen demand for these services skyrocket since they were first introduced to America's most populous city in 2012.

Today around 80,000 drivers work for at least one of the big four app-based companies, compared to 13,500 yellow cab drivers in New York, according to a new study commissioned by the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC).

If New Yorkers for years ignored criticisms that met the arrival of Uber in London and Paris, and then today they are more aware. For all the US financial capital's embodiment of unfettered wealth creation, it is also more heavily regulated than many US cities. In 2017, a report by expert Bruce Schaller highlighted worsening congestion, the deteriorating efficiency of public transport and pollution concerns in a city that wants to spearhead efforts to counter climate change. Since December, six yellow cab drivers have committed suicide in deaths interpreted as acts of desperation in the face of plummeting income.

'Everybody in trouble'

"Everybody now is in trouble. Not only me and the yellow cab drivers, also Uber," sighs Malik Awan, 60, a driver originally from Pakistan

MTN Uganda says security personnel raided its data center

KAMPALA: MTN Uganda, a unit of the South African telecoms firm, said government security personnel had raided its data center and disconnected four of its servers.

The firm said in a July 3 letter to the state-run telecommunications regulator that it had "reported to police a case of illegal intrusion into the data center and the disconnection of the four information servers." The regulator



who switched from yellow cabs to Uber, only to switch back again.

"It's the same piece of bread. But before it was hundreds of people eating from it. Now it is 10,000 people eating the same piece."

The TLC, the agency responsible for regulating taxis, commissioned two economists to carry out the latest study in a bid to underscore the chaos and push city authorities into taking action. Increased competition from the app-dispatch companies has slashed the value of "medallions"—the New York yellow cab taxi licenses. In 2014, they sold for more than \$1 million. Today they are valued at less than \$200,000. Unlike drivers in smaller towns, most in New York work full time and not just to make extra money at the end of the month, according to the TLC study. Often immigrants without higher education, they get into heavy debt to buy their vehicle license and have little other means of generating income. Around 85 percent earn substantially less than the equivalent of a \$15-an-hour minimum wage, according to the TLC-commissioned study. After more than 30 years on the job, Awan says his monthly income has fallen from \$8,000 — based on 10-12 hour shifts seven days a week—to \$6,500.

Uber dismisses 'flaws'

Hence, calls to regulate the market have multiplied. A May editorial in The New York Times called on Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio and

elected officials to make the transportation system fairer to paid drivers, responsive to the needs of commuters and more environmentally sustainable. The Democrat city council is now mulling various options, such as a cap on driver numbers, raising taxes on journeys or imposing a minimum income for drivers. The TLC-commissioned study recommends a guaranteed income of \$17.22 an hour for drivers — \$15 plus a supplement to mitigate against rest time—and claimed it can be implemented without over-penalizing Uber and its competitors. The salary hike could be off-set by limiting the number of drivers, reducing the percentage they take off each ride and by making customers wait about 15 seconds longer to reduce the number of passenger-less cars.

But Uber is not impressed. A company spokesman dismissed "assumptions" in the report as "over-simplified to the point of (being) flawed," arguing that the proposals would hurt riders "through substantially increased prices."

But the Independent Drivers Guild, a union set up in New York in 2016, said it was "optimistic" that the city will act based on this report.

"The hope is that it would trigger a raise for workers across the country," says Jim Conigliaro, guild president. The TLC calls its own report "an excellent foundation for public policy" and says it is "happy" to work with the city council "on legislation that helps increase driver pay." The city is expected to decide on the proposals at the end of the summer. — AFP



BEIJING: In this file photo ZTE logo is seen on a building in Beijing. The US has temporarily allowed Chinese telecoms company ZTE to resume some activities while it works to meet conditions set by Washington in a politically charged settlement reached in June. — AFP

Departing ZTE executive describes 'deep humiliation' in farewell letter

HONG KONG: A departing senior executive at China's ZTE Corp, which is fighting a crippling US supplier ban, said in a letter to staff on Friday that his departure amid a Sino-US trade war was "deeply humiliating".

Zhang Zhenhui was one of scores of executives at China's No.2 telecommunications equipment maker ordered to leave as part of a \$1.4 billion settlement deal ZTE made with the United States in June in order to end a seven-year supplier ban.

ZTE, which relies on US suppliers for core components, had to cease major operations in April after the US government imposed the ban, saying the firm broke an agreement to discipline executives who conspired to evade US sanctions on Iran and North Korea.

As part of the settlement, ZTE agreed to pay a \$1 billion fine, put \$400 million in escrow, and hire a US-appointed compliance monitor. It also agreed to replace its board, remove all members of its leadership at or above senior vice-president level along with any executives associated with the wrongdoing, within 30 days. Zhang, who was one of five

executive vice presidents at ZTE and in charge of sales and marketing, issued a farewell letter to staff on Friday, employees said.

In the letter, which was circulated online on Saturday, Zhang recounted his 18 years at ZTE and said he had no responsibility in ZTE's compliance violations.

"In the environment of a Sino-US trade war, in the 'white terror' of a technology war, all executive presidents including me have signed termination contracts to formally leave the company yesterday," Zhang said.

A spokeswoman for ZTE declined to comment. Reuters could not immediately contact Zhang. ZTE was found guilty in 2016 of having sold products with US technology to restricted countries including Iran, violating US export rules. It managed to avoid a 7-year supplier ban after reaching a settlement agreement with the United States in March 2017 that included a \$1.2 billion fine. The United States reinstated the ban this April after it said ZTE had failed to punish the executives involved as agreed.

Despite a provision in the settlement agreed last month that allowed the United States to exempt certain executives, all members of ZTE's former board and former senior management team have left the company. Company insiders told Reuters nearly two dozen senior executives left ZTE on Friday.

Some employees and analysts have expressed doubt over whether a new board and management team could settle in quickly enough to lead the company out of the woods even after the ban is lifted. — Reuters

CLINIC PAGE



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What's On

KIPCO renews partnership agreement with INJAZ-Kuwait

Kuwait Projects Company - has renewed its partnership agreement with INJAZ-Kuwait - an NGO that aims to drive community service through professional volunteering engagement with youth. As per the agreement, 1000 students will be trained by KIPCO Group volunteers over the course of two academic years. Volunteers from across the KIPCO Group will be taking time out of their work schedules to deliver INJAZ programs to middle school, high school and university students in the areas of work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy. The programs will commence with the start of the academic year in September 2018, and continue through to June 2020.

Executive Officer of INJAZ-Kuwait said: "We are proud to work closely with KIPCO, a treasured supporter of INJAZ's mission. KIPCO Group's backing has helped us empower the youth of Kuwait and has been a testament to the power of partnerships."

The number of volunteers who represented KIPCO in the various activities we have conducted, and the time and effort they have put in to mentor students, reaffirms INJAZ's stance in investing in Kuwait's future by educating youth and raising awareness about the importance of building an entrepreneurial culture."

Ms Eman Al Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Communications Director said: "We are delighted to renew our partnership with

INJAZ-Kuwait for another two academic years. Our previous collaboration has allowed our volunteers the opportunity to work directly with students, and give them insight on their future career options. We look forward to further enhance the volunteering culture within our Group companies, as our professionals share their knowledge and expertise with younger people in our community."

KIPCO first partnered with INJAZ-Kuwait in June 2016, to train 1000 students over the course of two academic years. More than 30 volunteers were recruited from KIPCO, Burgan Bank, Gulf Insurance Group, OSN, United Real Estate, Qurain Petrochemical Industries and KAMCO Investment Company for this initiative.



INJAZ-Kuwait CEO Laila Hilal Al Mutairi, left, poses for a picture with KIPCO Group Communications Director Ms Eman Al Awadhi.



LuLu Financial Group inaugurates third branch

LuLu-Phils International Exchange, Inc. a part of the LuLu Financial Group, on Monday commenced operation of its fourth branch in the Philippines and third 24-hr outlet offering forex services at Arrival Area of Clark International Airport. The branch was inaugurated by Alexander Cauquiran, Clark International Airport Corp. President and Chief Executive in the presence of Surendran Amittathody, Vice President - Asia Pacific Region, Lulu International Exchange and Sunil Kumar, GM, LuLu-Phils International

Exchange, Inc., dignitaries and other senior management.

Speaking on the opening of the outlet, Adeb Ahmed, President and Chairman of the board of LuLu-Phils International Exchange said, "This is a great milestone for us as this is our third 24-hour branch. We are doubly excited as this is our second airport branch here in the Philippines. Our priority is to deliver the best service and quality to our valued customers by making accessibility to financial solutions more convenient and closer to them."

LuLu-Phils International Exchange, Inc. headquartered in Manila, Philippines began its commercial operations in May 2014. The exchange house currently has four branches in the Philippines including at Clark International Airport, Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Robinsons Place Mall in Las Pinas City and Ermita in Manila.

NBK offers Al Shabab customers up to 50% discount on Talabat

Continuously serving the youth with personalized banking solutions that meet their lifestyle, National Bank of Kuwait announced up to 50 percent discount on Talabat orders to Al Shabab customers. "We always reward our Al Shabab customers with unique and innovative solutions," said Bedoor Al Adsani, Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "We focus on providing them with products, special offers and rewards tailored to their needs and lifestyle. We want them to practice an easy, convenient and safe banking experience."



Bedoor Al Adsani

To avail from this discount, Al Shabab customers need to complete their payments on Talabat by using their NBK Al Shabab Visa Prepaid Card, noting that the maximum discount is KD 5.

Al Adsani, concluded: "Customers are invited to follow our social media platforms to stay up-to-date about any new offer. And we promise to continuously provide them with new and exciting offers". Al Shabab Visa prepaid card provides exciting and important features that allow customers to transfer money from the prepaid card to their account. Customers can also now withdraw cash from Al Shabab Visa prepaid card without paying a fee using any NBK ATM.

Al Shabab Account benefits include easy and convenient banking transactions, direct contact with customer care staff through online live video chat, Whatsapp service and the 24 hours, seven days a week call center.

Also, Customers can utilize a newly



launched service, 'Quick Pay' on the NBK Mobile Banking app to receive funds in just a few clicks. Al Shabab customers also enjoy many great offers and benefits including 50% exclusive discount on weekend movie tickets at Cinescape. Students who want to transfer their allowance to NBK and set up an Al Shabab Account can visit NBK.com or one of NBK's local branches.



Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait: The summer 2018 dream wedding destination

Symphony Style Hotel Kuwait, the jewel of Kuwait City, appreciates the importance of ensuring everything is perfect for that all-important wedding day. With summer wedding season in full swing, the hotel caters to the needs of all brides and guarantees impeccable celebrations this season. Offering two distinctive venues that match the desire for large or more intimate celebrations, the hotel is your destination of choice to enjoy a marvelous summer wedding packages available this summer. The customizable events complex, located on the second floor of the hotel, has infinite scope of possibility.

Opening out onto Symphony Style's unique pool terrace, the venue is home to the 662 sqm iconic Ebreez ballroom and dedicated reception area and is the epicenter of wedding celebrations in Kuwait. With the capacity to host 650 people for a reception, Ebreez ballroom truly is a wedding venue of unmatched quality and ambiance. The highly-skilled wedding planning team is on hand to take care of every need for that special occasion. Providing warm and special touches and an elegant flair, the team can accommodate and deliver the finest details of any grand wedding plan, from tables and chairs, to tableware and decor, creating that fairytale setting for bride and groom and their guests.

Dramatic chandeliers, seductive wall lighting and the latest audio-visual equipment add to Ebreez's rich ambiance, resulting in an alluring venue for a special, large wedding. For those looking for a more intimate occasion, Symphony Style Hotel's Breesim ballroom offers the same quality in



a more private, yet equally captivating setting. The charming colors of Breesim provide an enlivening venue and can be cus-



tomized to suit the dreams of the bride. With capacity to host 150 people, booking a wedding in Breesim, allows the bride to share her special day with closest family and friends over a rich buffet dinner featuring an array of international cuisine.



NBK celebrates Cancer Survivors Day at children's hospital

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) celebrated Cancer Survivors Day at its Children's Hospital. This initiative is a part of a program designed for engaging patients and runs monthly. The program for the month of June included fun events with the patients including arts and crafts activities and creating a personal photo frame using different colors and designs.

The fun events come as part of a program designed for engaging children and runs all year round. Children and the Hospital team took part in the different events and fun workshops. "NBK recognizes the heroes who fought and survived cancer. We saluted them for their will and strength. They are our flame for hope. Sharing fighters experience inspires patients and helps them tolerate, accept and undergo their treatment", said Manal

Al Mattar, NBK Public relations Assistant General Manager.

Al Mattar added, "Children, nurses and doctors also took part in part in creating the different fun workshops in a sign that shows solidarity and family spirit as main values of the Hospital and its vision". In the arts and crafts initiative, the girls designed their bracelets using beads and the boys played with the play Doh. Additional framing design took place to make the children frame their happy memory, we arranged a photo session for the children, then they created and designed their own a photo frame." NBK also organized story telling sessions and movie nights for children at NBK's Children's Hospital as part of a fun-activity program that was launched to support children while they get their treatment and extends all the year round.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1953

15x14 crossword grid with numbers 1-80 indicating starting positions.

ACROSS

- 1. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
4. Relating to or included in the zodiac.
12. Being one hundred more than two hundred.

- 15. Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
16. A tangible symbol signifying approval or distinction.
17. Canadian hockey player (born 1948).
18. An archaic name for Easter or Passover.
20. A person who gives private instruction (as in singing or acting).
21. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
22. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
23. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
24. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
29. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
30. Not straight.
32. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
33. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
37. A republic in the Asian subcontinent in southern Asia.
38. A metric unit of length equal to one thousandth of a meter.
40. A photograph taken at close range.
42. In such a manner as could not be otherwise.
43. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
44. New World flycatchers.
45. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
47. A public promotion of some product or service.
48. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
49. Having an illustrious reputation.
54. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
55. (music) The speed at which a composition is to be played.
58. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
62. The capacitance of a capacitor that has an equal and opposite charge of 1 coulomb on each plate and a voltage difference of 1 volt between the plates.
64. A Dravidian language spoken in southern India.
66. Goddess of fortune.
70. State in eastern India on the Bay of Bengal.
73. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
74. Remove with or as if with a ladle.
75. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
77. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.

- 78. Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing.
79. A bee that is a member of the genus Andrena.
80. The basic unit of money in Albania.

DOWN

- 1. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
2. (informal) Exceptionally good.
3. The compass point that is one point south of due east.
4. Outstanding United States athlete (1914-1956).
5. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
6. The district occupied entirely by the city of Washington.
7. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
8. Scale-like structure between the base of the wing and the halter of a two-winged fly.
9. Clouding of the natural lens of the eye.
10. In an adorable manner.
11. (Irish) The sea personified.
12. A South American shrub whose leaves are chewed by natives of the Andes.
13. Baby bed with high sides.
14. A steep rugged rock or cliff.
25. (law) A comprehensive term for any proceeding in a court of law whereby an individual seeks a legal remedy.
26. Characterized by intense emotion.
27. An associate degree in nursing.
28. (computer science) A standardized language for the descriptive markup of documents.
31. Physical discomfort (as mild sickness or depression).
34. Any tree of the genus Genipa bearing yellow flowers and edible fruit with a thick rind.
35. Someone who moves forward suddenly (as in fencing).
36. Large family of bark-boring or wood-boring short-beaked beetles.
39. English economist noted for his studies of international trade and finance (born in 1907).
41. Chocolate cookie with white cream filling.
46. A metric unit of length equal to one hundredth of a meter.
50. A republic in southeastern Europe on the southern part of the Balkan peninsula.
51. An inactive volcano in Sicily.
52. East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the Orient.
53. A large number or amount.
56. 300 to 3000 kilohertz.
57. A large and stately mansion.
59. Expressive of contempt.
60. The beginning or early stages.
61. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
63. Jordan's port.
65. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
67. Precipitation of ice pellets when there are strong rising air currents.
68. Produced by a manufacturing process.
69. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
71. Not divisible by two.
72. Term of address for a man.
76. Half the width of an em.

Friday's Solution

Solved crossword puzzle grid with letters filled in.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This may be a great time to spend your time with friends and especially some of the younger crowd you like to spend time with. This should make for a great time and you may really enjoy yourself today. This should be an extremely peaceful day for you. You may find this a day that a little retail therapy may be in order. A great day to unwind and relax at home with your favorite tunes playing. All in all, this will be a day you enjoy and find very satisfying and relaxing. Aries. Enjoy what this day brings.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You seem to place an importance on material things today. You are dedicated and devoted to your career and rarely take time to do things for you. A shopping trip may be in order. A time to spoil yourself a bit may be just what you need. You may find yourself connecting with someone older than you today. This connection may be effortless, and you may find things with you two just seem to flow. This may be a new friend that seems as if you have known them for years that becomes a permanent part of your life. Enjoy your day and do not let anything stand in your way. You may find that you are selected to take on a special project in the workplace today.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are feeling much peace and stability in your life now. This is satisfying a deep yearning you have had for years. Music seems to be your personal escape. Turn on the tunes and sit back and relax. This is a great time to do some soul searching. Your mood may lead you into a deep conversation and connection with a love one on an intimate level. Gemini, you can expect to be the recipient of many compliments today as others are drawn to how at peace you are. You may find yourself being able to assist those around you as you have great insight into the needs of others.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may experience some very personal issues today and feel as though you are unable to totally put your heart into things. This may have you feeling a bit down as you do some soul searching and try to work through your issues. You may find as no one truly understands what you are going through and may feel a bit isolated from friends and family. You feel as if you are at odds with those around you. This is a good time to keep to yourself and let these issues work themselves out. Be sure and let your loved ones and peers know your issues are personal and have nothing to do with them. This could prevent confrontation and being misunderstood. Cancer. You may find that in your workplace you are selected to lead a project or offered a new position today. Good luck!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your marriage or partnership or lack thereof, seem to be a major focus for you. You feel the need to be needed and need to be loved. You want someone by your side and someone to share your life with. You crave a beautiful relationship and the word soulmate takes on great meaning for you. You desire someone you can share your deepest thoughts and dreams with and someone to always be there to love and support you. You find all these feelings beautiful and desire this type of harmony in your life. Leo. Love is what seems to make your world go around at this time. Surround yourself with as much as possible.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You seem to find great comfort in music today. Whether you play an instrument or just spend some time listening to your favorite tunes, this will bring a sense of peace over you and you may find yourself more productive because of it. You have a deep desire to acquire material possessions. A shopping trip may be in order to scratch this itch. Put off any decisions about your career for a later date. Your focus is lacking in this area and this is not a great time for you to make major decisions. You may find yourself in a more private mood and could greatly benefit from some time spent at home alone.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your mood is peaceful, and all is stable in your world. More than usual you seem to be drawn to my music. This may involve a concert or just some time relaxing with your favorite tunes playing, but this will bring some peace into your life. Today finds you more materialistic than usual. A shopping trip or some online shopping may fill a void for you. You want to reward yourself for all your hard work and treat yourself a bit. You are extremely understanding to those around you and are the friend others long to have. You find yourself surrounded by those who admire and appreciate you always being there for them.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find one that music plays a special role in your life today. Whether listening to old tunes or playing your favorite instrument, this will bring a bit of peace into your world. You may find the desire to surround yourself with new possessions. It seems all that glitters catches your eye today and you are drawn right in. Today finds you more materialistic than usual and you feel as if you would like to reward yourself for all your hard work. You have needs and wants it seems acquiring these new items satisfies those desires.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may be sought after as the perfect person for a particular job. There could be some competition in the workplace, but you may ignore the competition in order to remain focused in your present activities. Good focused job-related thoughts and ideas are available for your expression. You successfully communicate with superiors. All of your hard work is finally paying off and you are being noticed, appreciated, and rewarded for all you do. You know what needs to be done and are also able to choose the correct people for each job. Your superiors are truly recognizing you are a natural born leader and made for management.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Exchanging ideas and working together with friends and family towards a common goal is where your focus is. You are hungry for knowledge and seem to want to gain it in every area you can. Curiosity takes hold and you find yourself researching every topic that comes up. This is a time where you may find yourself feeling a bit more materialistic than usual and feeling a need to acquire new things. A feeling of peace seems to come over you today. You may find yourself especially enjoying some time just listening to music and relaxing this evening. All is well in your home life and you will find that your time today was very productive.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Emotionally you may find yourself truly at peace today. A feeling of stability and comfort comes over you in every aspect in your life. This is emotionally satisfying as these are feelings you have been craving for a very long time. You may be in the mood to reward yourself for all of the hard work you have been doing. A shopping trip may just be the ticket for you today. Tonight, is a wonderful time to sit back with some music playing in the background and enjoy this feeling. You have put in many long hours and hard days to accomplish this level of stability and peace.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

As someone new comes into your life you are faced with an opportunity to put your best foot forward and make a great first impression. This is something very important to you. You are beginning to enter a stage that appearance and style play a huge role in who you are and how you feel about yourself. You become intrigued by the arts and romance becomes something you are drawn to. You become more charming and refined than you have been in the past. Now is a great time to make the date, apply for the new job or make presence known in areas you have been standing on the sidelines. Pisces, this is your time to shine.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Spiders 2

Find and circle all of the spider species that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

Word search grid containing hidden spider species names.

- ANT MIMIC, ARROWHEAD, BANDED GARDEN, BIRD DROPPING, BOLAS, BOLD JUMPER, BROWN RECLUSE, BROWN WIDOW, BUTTON, CELLAR, ENAMEL, FILMY DOME, FLOWER, GHOST, GIANT HOUSE, GOLDENROD CRAB, GRAY CROSS, GREEN LYNX, HAMMOCK, HERCULES BABOON, HOBO, JEWEL, JOHNSON JUMPER, JUMPING, LADYBIRD MIMIC, NURSERY WEB, ORBWEAVER, PARSON, PIRATE, REDBACK, RUNNING, SOWBUG KILLER, SPITTING, STEALTHY GROUND, STRIPED LYNX, TENT WEB, TURRET, TWIG, WESTERN LYNX, WHIP, WOODLOUSE, ZEBRA.

Spiders 1

Word search grid containing hidden spider species names.

- ABDOMEN, BLACK WIDOW, BOOK LUNGS, BRAZILIAN WANDERING, CAMEL, CARDINAL, CHELICERAE, CLAWS, EIGHT LEGS, ESOPHAGUS, EXOSKELETON, EYES, FANGS, FISHING, FUNNEL WEB, GIANT HUNTSMAN, GOLDEN HUNTSMAN, GRASS, HEAD, HEART, INTESTINE, LICHEN, MIRROR, MOUSE, OGRE FACED, ORCHARD, PEACOCK, PEDIPALPS, PELICAN, VENOM, REDBACK, RED WIDOW, SETAE, SILK GLAND, SILKHENGE, SPINNERETS, TARANTULA, TEXAS RECLUSE, THORAX, TRAPDOOR, VIOLIN, WATER, WEBS, YELLOW GARDEN, YELLOW SAC.

THE GOLIATH BIRDEATER TARANTULA IS THE LARGEST SPIDER IN THE WORLD BY WEIGHT

Daily SuDoku

9x9 Daily Sudoku puzzle grid.

Friday's Solution

Solved 9x9 Daily Sudoku puzzle grid.

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JULY 8, 2018



A model presents a creation by Jean-Paul Gaultier during the 2018-2019 Fall/Winter Haute Couture collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP

SWEDISH INTELLECTUALS FORM NEW LITERATURE PRIZE IN NOBEL PROTEST

What do you do when this year's Nobel Literature Prize, the world's most prestigious accolade of its kind, is postponed because of a sexual assault scandal? You create your own award. More than 100 Swedish intellectuals have joined forces to form a new prize-giving body in protest after the Swedish Academy, which selects Nobel laureates, was plunged into crisis over its long-standing ties to a man accused of assaulting several women.

"You create your own award"

The alternative honor serves to denounce "bias, arrogance and sexism", according to its founders The New Academy, whose members include authors, artists and journalists. It is meant to "remind people that literature and culture at large should promote democracy, transparency, empathy and respect, without privilege", the 107 intellectuals wrote in a joint statement.

As the #MeToo movement has made waves globally, the Swedish Academy descended into turmoil in November when local media published the testimonies of 18 women claiming to have been raped, sexually assaulted or harassed by an influential French cultural figure who has long been connected to the institution. The revelations led the Academy to announce in May there will be no Nobel Literature Prize this year, as disagreements on how to deal with the scandal sowed deep discord among its 18 members and prompted six to quit—including the first

woman permanent secretary Sara Danius.

But for some the lack of a Nobel literature award for the first time in almost 70 years was unacceptable. "Sweden is one of the world's most democratic, transparent and gender-equal countries... it needs a great literary prize," Swedish columnist and one of the founders of the new prize, Alexandra Pascalidou, said.

Open and inclusive

The Swedish Academy's members used to be appointed for life before its patron, Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf, was forced to change the statutes, making it possible for members to resign and be replaced. Resigning member Kjell Espmark told the Dagens Nyheter newspaper that the institution had "given way to nepotism, attempts to cover up serious violations, stale macho values and arrogant bullying".

Seen as the bearer of high culture, the Swedish Academy, founded in 1786, is traditionally known for its integrity and discretion, with meetings and decisions on prizes kept secret. But the New Academy plans to make its prize-awarding process transparent. "We want to create something which is open and inclusive and which allows people to contribute," said Pascalidou.

The new literature award—which carries a prize of one million kronor raised from crowd-funding and donations—will be handed out at a December 10 ceremony, the same day as the Nobel banquet. Librarians across Sweden have been asked to nominate up to two authors, with a deadline set for July 8. Authors with the most nominations will then receive votes online from the public in Sweden and abroad.

Based on the nominations and the vote results, a jury including publishers, literature professors, culture journalists and critics will

shortlist four authors—two men and two women—and make the final choice. The winner, who may come from anywhere in the world and must have published at least one literary work in the last 10 years, will be announced on October 14, in the same month as the Nobel Literature Prize would have been announced.



Anders Olsson, the acting permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy.

Skepticism, warnings

But some observers are skeptical about whether the New Academy can compare with the Nobel Literature Prize's history of recognizing distinguished authors including Ernest Hemingway, Albert Camus, Boris Pasternak, Alice Munro and Doris Lessing, among others. For Asa Linderborg, chief culture editor at daily paper Aftonbladet, it's "deeply provocative" of the New Academy to use literature to promote moral values and even "the most disturbing ideas" can become high-quality literature.

"Art should be free. You cannot label it based on righteousness or evil. The New Academy is after total purity... total goodness," Linderborg said. She warned that allowing the public, who may not have a profound understanding of languages and books from different parts of the world, to vote for an author risks turning the prize in favor of "predictable and Western-translated" literature. Meanwhile others are indifferent to the initiative. "They're free to do as they wish," Swedish Academy member Per Wastberg said. The new literature prize is the latest award to be dubbed an alternative to the Nobel, joining the Swedish Right Livelihood Award honoring those who work to improve the planet, and Finland's Millennium Technology Prize.—AFP



In this file photo, a woman opens the door of the Alfred Nobel Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, that is located in the building where will be announced the winner of the 2017 Nobel Prize in Literature. — AFP photos

Let the Games begin: Netflix releases first Indian series

Netflix's first original Indian series premieres on Friday as the US streaming giant battles with Amazon Prime for a slice of the country's fast growing on-demand video market. "Sacred Games", an adaptation of Vikram Chandra's 2006 novel of the same name, stars Bollywood stalwarts Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Saif Ali Khan and Radhika Apte. Analysts say the gritty underworld thriller sets a new benchmark for Indian-produced internet shows as providers seek to capitalize on the country's burgeoning number of smartphone users.

"Sacred Games" is probably the most high-profile content that has been made. Others have not been on the same scale," Girish Menon, who tracks media and entertainment for KPMG, told AFP. Revenues from India's entertainment streaming industry are expected to be \$823 million by 2022, up from \$297 million in 2017, according to a PricewaterhouseCoopers report released this month. Netflix, which is blocked in China, is investing millions in the world's second-most populous country to attract young consumers with access to cheap mobile data and an appetite for something different.

"India is seeing the biggest and fastest investment in content for any country we have launched in," said Erik Barmack, vice-president of international originals at Netflix. "Sacred Games" is also a punt that high-quality Indian content will prove popular overseas and forms part of Netflix's worldwide drive to produce programs in many different languages, including Spanish and German. The eight-

part series—filmed mainly in Hindi—centers on the attempts of police officer Sartaj Singh, played by Khan, to capture mafia boss Ganesh Gaitonde (Siddiqui).

Lust Stories

"Sacred Games" is the first release of eight Indian series that Netflix has commissioned. Last week the company announced it would adapt Salman Rushdie's multiple-award winning novel "Midnight's Children". "Selection Day", based on Aravind Adiga's novel about cricket and corruption, is also in the works. "Sacred Games" follows Hindi-language movie "Love per Square Foot" and "Lust Stories", a collection of four short films, which both came out on Netflix this year.

Amazon has also released a host of original Indian content, including crime drama "Breathe" and several successful stand-up comedy shows. Experts say producing high-quality programs in Hindi and regional Indian languages is essential if Netflix and Amazon are to make up ground on market leader Hotstar. "One needs to have local content. It's a given," Frank D'Souza, a media and entertainment analyst with PwC in Mumbai, told AFP.

Hotstar dominates India's streaming landscape owing to its huge catalogue of entertainment and movie channels owned by Star India, many of which are free to view. It also streams live cricket and English Premier League football. A yearly subscription for all content costs 999 rupees (\$14.55), the same as an Amazon Prime membership.—AFP



This photo shows Indian commuters walking below a poster of 'Sacred Games,' the upcoming Indian series on Netflix, in Mumbai. — AFP

Lifestyle | Feature



Pictures show the newly-refurbished Lutetia hotel in Paris. — AFP photos

Paris' Lutetia hotel reopens after luxury makeover

The Lutetia hotel in Paris, favored by the likes of Picasso and Hemingway, reopens this week after four years of costly renovations that it hopes will win it the "palace" label reserved for the most opulent of French lodgings. Steeped in history, from its occupation by Nazi intelligence agents to its years as a hangout for celebrity intellectuals in the 1950s, the Lutetia hasn't changed much on the outside at least. The new-look hotel in the chic Saint-Germain-des-Pres neighborhood has retained its imposing art deco facade, lined with elegant wrought iron balconies overhung with carved stone grapevines.

said. The first guests are due to walk through its corridors-lined with dark eucalyptus wood-from Thursday.

There is a softly lit 17-metre swimming pool, while the rooms feature discreet art-deco chandeliers and a lot of white marble: the baths were carved out of a 1.9 ton block. While the brasserie will not reopen until autumn, guests can sip a cocktail in the Josephine bar, whose frescos, previously forgotten under layers of wallpaper and paint, have been restored after 17,000 hours of painstaking work.

Former refugee camp

Opened in 1910, the Lutetia owes its existence to its neighbor Bon Marche, one of the first department stores in the world. Marguerite Boucaut, its owner, had the hotel built to provide accommodation for her wealthy customers travelling up to Paris from the provinces for shopping trips. Situated in the centre of the Left Bank, the heart of the French intellectual scene, it quickly became a hub of philosophical and artistic debate.

During the Nazi occupation of Paris, the hotel was requisitioned by German forces and used to host and entertain troops. Upon the liberation, wartime leader General Charles de Gaulle—who himself had honeymooned at the Lutetia—ordered the hotel to take in thousands of refugees. Post-war it swiftly regained its reputation as a place to see and be seen, with artists like Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse haunting its hallways. James Joyce famously wrote part of "Ulysses" there—with the help of editing suggestions from Ernest Hemingway—and the dancer Josephine Baker was also a regular.

Currently a four-star hotel, the Lutetia has applied for a fifth—the next step before getting the "palace" label, which is currently held by 10 top Parisian hotels including the Bristol and Peninsula. The Lutetia "offers something different, it wouldn't do any harm to the other palaces because its clientele is different," said Christian Mantei, head of national tourism development agency Atout France. Cousty said the Lutetia attracted hardly any of the ultra-rich "Middle Eastern and Russian customers who prefer to stay in the 'Golden Triangle', an area near the Champs-Elysees boulevard on the other side of the river.



While still out of reach for all but the wealthiest, he said the Lutetia was aiming for "more accessible" pricing than those rivals on the Right Bank, "with an average price of 800 euros". Bought in 2010 by Israeli group Alrov, the Lutetia is seeking to double its turnover—which stood at 30 million euros before the renovation works—within three or four years of reopening. At least the timing is good: after two years during which Paris was scarred by terror attacks, tourists returned to the French capital in record numbers in 2017, with 33.8 million hotel rooms booked.—AFP



Director General of the newly-refurbished Lutetia Hotel Jean-Luc Cousty poses in the gallery of the hotel.

But the 200-million-euro makeover has allowed the hotel to spruce up its original frescos and stucco work, decking out the 184 rooms and suites in understated luxury. Hotel manager Jean-Luc Cousty said the goal was to "create a contemporary hotel by enhancing everything that was historic". "The Lutetia has not lost its soul, and one of the big triumphs of architect Jean-Michel Wilmolte is that natural light has been brought in throughout," he



Lifestyle | Features



Visitors tour the Fun House exhibit a freestanding structure designed by Snarkitecture that recalls and re-imagines the idea of a traditional home, at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. — AFP photos

A whimsical white house exhibit beckons imagination in Washington

A massive interactive installation that opened this week fills the US National Building Museum's cavernous Great Hall with an all-white house, pool and pavilion designed by New York-based design firm Snarkitecture. The idiosyncratic group—which sees itself as creating neither art nor architecture, but rather something in between—invites Washingtonians to immerse themselves in a tactile show that captivates with a sprinkling of whimsy.

"We are looking to make architecture accessible and engaging. Part of doing that is to integrate this concept of play," said Alex Mustonen, who co-founded Snarkitecture with Daniel Arsham. Ben Porto joined the pair in 2014. "We like people to experience architecture and environments in ways that children might experience them," he said. "Ideally to let your guard down to approach something in a new way."

Visitors enter the free-standing structure filled with interactive pieces through what looks like a primitive cavern entrance, created by hammering and chiseling away at a solid piece of EPS (expanded polystyrene) architectural foam. A carved out skylight appears after clambering through one of the openings, the tightly packed foam beads crunching beneath your feet. Forced perspective—an optical illusion that makes objects appear a different size than they actually are—gives an impression of depth in "Playhouse" (2017), scaled for adults in front and growing increasingly smaller for children.

In the larger house, wall shelves emerge from excavated forms, a tilted white oak chair becomes usable thanks to a tapered black marble stone and a cabinet that looks cracked open at the center is completely functional. "People could take home that the most normal and simple things can be looked at in different ways. This is a sign of (creative) freedom and freedom is the seed of the future," said Milan-based curator Maria Cristina Didero.

Tabula rasa

Working mostly in monochrome tones is "like a tabula rasa where you are open to everything," said Didero. The main structure looks like a typical American house, complete with white picket fence—except this one was built with EPS foam. The precisely milled siding, gutters and roof eventually dissolve in an irregular pattern—as though chopped off by some large, hungry animal—to reveal the frame and rafters beneath. It's a "balance between precision and looseness," Mustonen explained.

One of the highlights of "Fun House"—the fifth in the museum's annual Summer Block Party installations that runs through September 3 — is a kidney-shaped pool. After dipping in some 175,000 translucent balls, visitors can lounge on beach chairs under parasols, white astro turf mimicking sand all around. It's a new take on Snarkitecture's uber-popular 2015 installation at the museum, "The Beach." While "Fun House" is sure to be an Instagram hit, Mustonen encouraged people to also



lift their eyes from their tiny screens to "appreciate the moment and have a more physical, tangible, tactical, memorable experience."—AFP



TBWARRAAD lands Gold Lion at Cannes Festival of Creativity

TBWARRAAD delivered one of its best performances in years at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity 2018, leading the MENA awards tally with a total of six Lions among twelve shortlisted entries, for five clients, across eight award categories. The agency landed its first Gold Lion in the Outdoor category for the 'Highway Gallery' campaign for Louvre Abu Dhabi. As the first museum of its kind in the Middle East, Louvre Abu Dhabi gave the world another exciting first: a radio-guided gallery along the Sheikh Zayed Road in Dubai, proving that art can, and should be enjoyed and explored by all.

The second Gold Lion was awarded to the '#SheDrives' campaign for Nissan Saudi Arabia in the PR category. Upon the declaration of Saudi Arabia's historic royal decree, which granted women the right to drive, Nissan aimed to give Saudi women the confidence to exercise their right and encourage men to support their decision. The brand offered a group of young women the chance to get behind the wheel for the first time, with a surprise group of driving instructors: their respective husbands, fathers and brothers, who were their teachers for the day.

TBWARRAAD was also honored with a Silver and a Bronze Lion, both in the Media category for the 'Highway Gallery' campaign for Louvre Abu Dhabi. The campaign additionally earned a Bronze Lion - the only Lion awarded to an agency from the Middle East and North Africa region in the Radio and Audio category. 'Camel Power' for Nissan Middle East landed a Bronze Lion in the Branded Experience and Activation category.

"There's something deeply satisfying about our wins at Cannes. The wins confirm that what we have been doing for the past few years has been right. We have transformed ourselves into an agency of the future whilst simultaneously gathering new business, winning the highest industry accolades, and cultivating a creative culture that's capable of consistently producing exceptional work. It's a huge achievement," said Reda Raad, CEO of TBWARRAAD.

He added, "An achievement that could not have been possible without the bravery and belief of our clients and team, and without the contribution of our partners at OMD, PhD, Google and Facebook. These wins are an affirmation that data-driven creativity works. And that a team that believes passionately in what its doing can achieve almost anything." The Cannes Lions are the most established and coveted awards for the creative and marketing communications industry and winning at the festival is recognised globally as the ultimate achievement in creativity.

Earlier this year, TBWA Worldwide was named Network of the Year at the Dubai Lynx International Festival of Creativity and TBWARRAAD was crowned Agency of the Year, winning an unprecedented eight Grands Prix and a host of other awards. At the MENA Cristal Festival, TBWARRAAD was named Advertising Agency of the Year and won the MENA Grand Cristal for its 'Camel Power' campaign for Nissan Middle East. It also won eight Gold Cristal awards, three Silver Cristal awards and one Bronze Cristal in various categories. Contagious magazine has named it among the top 10 'Bravest and Best Agencies on the Planet'.



MUSE BEHIND DALI'S WORK GETS OWN SHOW IN BARCELONA

Salvador Dali's companion and muse Elena Diakonova, known as Gala, is the star of a new show unveiled Thursday in Barcelona that also portrays her as a key force behind his work. Pepe Serra, director of the National Art Museum of Catalonia where the exhibition opens on Friday, said it highlights that Gala had an important, active role in the surrealist artist's "creative, life-long project."

"Gala Salvador Dali" gathers more than 300 elements from 18 museums and collections like the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris or the Salvador Dali Museum in Florida. It includes Dali's paintings and sketches of Gala, as well as items of their private life like letters, postcards, photos, clothes and personal objects. Born in 1894

into a family of intellectuals from Kazan, Russia, she spent her childhood in Moscow. She settled in Switzerland where she met the French poet Paul Eluard, with whom she moved to Paris and had a daughter.

Gala was the mistress of German painter Max Ernst and the muse of photographers such as Britain's Cecil Beaton. But her life changed when she met Dali in 1929 and moved in with him. The pair later wed and were inseparable until her death in 1982. "Gala has much more of a role in (Dali's) work than what is attributed to her," said Estrella de Diego, curator of the exhibition. "She collaborates, comes up with ideas and thinks like Dali."—AFP



Visitors look at paintings by artist Salvador Dali during the exhibition entitled 'Gala Salvador Dali, a room of its own in Pubol' at National Art Museum of Catalonia in Barcelona. — AFP photos



2018 Durban July horse race



Models present creations by local designers during a fashion show at the 2018 edition of the Durban July horse race in Durban, South Africa. The Durban July race is the biggest horse racing event on the African continent as well as a high social event where South African celebrities dress up and watch the race. The race attracts close to 100,000 spectators. — AFP photos

Emeralds and rubies meet aluminium at Chopard for fashion week

Necklaces dripping with emeralds took centre-stage at Paris Haute Couture Week on Thursday as Chopard and other jewelers joined fashion houses in showing off their most elaborate creations. Switzerland's Chopard mixed gemstones and precious metals with less noble metals such as aluminum that can be dyed and worked into lightweight, ornate structures. "It allows us to produce very creative pieces," said Celine Wackie-Eysten, director of communications at the brand.

Chopard's latest "high jewellery" display - where pieces can fetch more than 1 million euros, though prices are not disclosed - included a necklace in red aluminium adorned with rubies and shaped into pom-poms. Another highlight was a large cameo pendant mounted onto a necklace made out of iridescent heron and pheasant feathers. LVMH's Chaumet and diamond company De Beers, part of Anglo American, were also showcasing their collections.—Reuters



High jewelry from the Red Carpet 2018 Collection are displayed at the luxury jeweler Chopard store in Paris. — Reuters photos



SAMARA: England's goalkeeper Jordan Pickford dives for the ball during the Russia 2018 World Cup quarter-final football match between Sweden and England yesterday. — AFP (See Page 28)

Turkey swears in new parliament



ANKARA: Remziye Torun, a pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) parliamentarian from Diyarbakir, attends the opening session of the new parliament in Ankara yesterday. — AFP

49 killed and 48 missing; record

Continued from Page 1

were in critical condition after being injured in landslides, it added. By yesterday morning, more than 1.6 million people had been ordered to evacuate their homes for fear of flooding and further landslides, with

Sudden shift in Iran; hardliners...

Continued from Page 1

Some 30 percent of all the world's sea-borne oil exports pass through the strait, which runs from the Gulf into the Indian Ocean. Conservative Iranian media outlets have thrown their weight behind Rouhani. "Meeting in the Strait" read a headline in Javan—a daily close to the Revolutionary Guards—along with a picture of the president and General Soleimani shaking hands in front of a map of the Strait of Hormuz.

A photo of Soleimani was splashed across the front page of Sazandegi newspaper with the headline "Unity Sepah-Government" (Sepah is the Farsi acronym for the Revolutionary Guards). Rouhani, who has sought to open up various economic sectors to private enterprise, has repeatedly criticized the Revolutionary Guards for exerting too tight a grip on Iran's economy. Since he

Pope voices concern over...

Continued from Page 1

Christians have been murdered or abducted. Also attending the ecumenical meeting in southern Italy are the patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, the spiri-

3.1 million more advised to leave, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency said.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said about 48,000 police, firefighters and members of Japan's Self-Defense Forces were responding to appeals for help. The weather also hit industry. Some automakers halted production as the rain and flooding disrupted supply chains and risked workers' safety, Kyodo news agency said. Mitsubishi Motors Corp halted operations at one plant because it could not get parts, Kyodo said. Mazda Motor Corp stopped production lines at two plants so employees would not have to travel in hazardous conditions. — Reuters

first took office in 2013, Rouhani has regularly been attacked by ultra-conservatives. He was elected for a second four-year term in May 2017, with the support of reformers. After protests around the New Year in many Iranian cities against economic hardship, they accused Rouhani of abandoning the country's weakest citizens. Some have held up America's withdrawal from the nuclear agreement as proof of the president's naivety in trusting the West.

As Iran's rial plunged in value and protests re-ignited, some legislators called in late June for Rouhani to be impeached. But things changed abruptly after June 27 when he appealed to his opponents for help. Kayhan is another ultra-conservative newspaper now backing the president. "We must put to one side our differences because, at present, the national interest and the survival of the nation are at stake," said an editorial. But Javan signaled the truce may only be temporary. "Resisting the enemy and preserving the nation's independence require us to be together and put our differences to one side until a later date", wrote editor-in-chief Abdollah Ganji. — AFP

tual leader of the eastern orthodox church, and metropolitan Hilarion of the Russian orthodox church which is powerful in Syria. Patriarch Tawadros II is representing Egypt's orthodox Copts alongside six patriarch of eastern Catholic churches. Francis described the Middle East region as "the crossroads of civilizations and the cradle of the great monotheistic religions". "Yet this region ... has been covered by dark clouds of war, violence and destruction, instances of occupation and varieties of fundamentalism, forced migration and neglect. "All this has taken place amid the complicit silence of many." — AFP

ANKARA: Lawmakers yesterday began taking their oaths in Turkey's new parliament, with the ruling party of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan needing to rely on nationalist allies to ensure an overall majority. Legislative polls were held simultaneously on June 24 with presidential polls, where Erdogan won a new mandate to extend his 15 year domination of Turkey under a new system that gives him greater powers.

But Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) was less dominant in the parliamentary elections, winning 295 seats and falling slightly short of an outright majority in the 600 MP chamber. To ensure a majority it will have to rely on its ally, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) which won 49 seats in a far stronger performance than was predicted. Analysts say the MHP could push the AKP into a harder line on Kurdish issues and foreign policy.

Opposition will be led by the secular Republican People's Party (CHP) which won 146 seats in the parliament. The pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), which has been hit by a spate of detentions of its top figures, is the second largest opposition party with 67 seats. The right-wing Iyi (Good) Party of Meral Aksener enters parliament for the first time after it was set up in October last year with 43 seats.

In a speech to the AKP MPs ahead of the session, Erdogan said they had emerged as the largest party but nonetheless had "fallen short of the target" and needed

to "correctly evaluate" the results. The new MPs began the lengthy process of taking their oaths individually in a session chaired by senior Good Party member Durmus Yilmaz as temporary speaker. The process of swearing in each MP is expected to last until late into the night.

The AKP is expected to nominate outgoing Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, whose post is being extinguished under the new system, as permanent speaker but this has yet to be confirmed. The new parliament is set to include some colorful characters as the AKP seeks to bring in figures from outside politics. Former Turkey international footballer Alpay Ozalan, who famously taunted David Beckham in a notorious Euro 2004 qualifier, has been elected for the AKP. Also elected for the AKP is the former world Supersport motorcycle champion Kenan Sofuoglu, who raised eyebrows by showing for the ceremony in a Lamborghini sports car.

A high-profile new MP for the HDP is the investigative journalist Ahmet Sik, who was handed a seven-and-a-half year jail sentence in April along with other staff from the opposition Cumhuriyet daily but is free pending appeal. Erdogan is himself to be sworn in at parliament on Monday, followed by a lavish ceremony at his palace marking the transition to the new presidential system. He said 22 presidents and 17 premiers of foreign states were expected to attend. — AFP

African meals and football...

Continued from Page 1

He has a strict policy of not discussing individual prisoners and declined to answer questions relating directly to Bamba. However, during a rare visit inside the unit, which still houses the likes of Ivorian expresident Laurent Gbagbo and his right-hand man Charles Ble Goude, journalists gained a glimpse of life behind bars.

For the ICC's remaining six detainees like African rebel warlords Bosco Ntaganda and Dominic Ongwen, the day starts at 7:00 am when cells are unlocked. Cells are basic at 15-square meters: a single bed, open toilet, basin, a chair and a few cupboards make up the bulk of the furniture. Possessions include a razor, shaving cream, toothpaste, a toothbrush and a towel. But there is a television inside, and a desk for a computer although there is no internet access.

Inmates are responsible for keeping their cells and communal areas clean. When not getting ready for a court appearance, the men can roam the wing, meet in its two communal areas or pump iron in its well-equipped gym. Looking around it quickly becomes clear that cooking is a favourite past-time. "Some are unbelievable bakers. Some days you cannot believe the smells that come from this area," Craig says. But diplomatically, he did not want to say who was the best chef.

Inmates can also spend scheduled time outside in a fenced-off courtyard with an ageing, but functional tennis court, or play football in an adjacent gymnasium. "Often the ICC's detainees play against their counterparts of the now defunct ICTY (the Yugoslav war crimes court)," says Craig. But overcrowding is not a problem. Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic died in the centre while on trial in 2006. And the ICTY's numbers have been whittled down to two: wartime for-

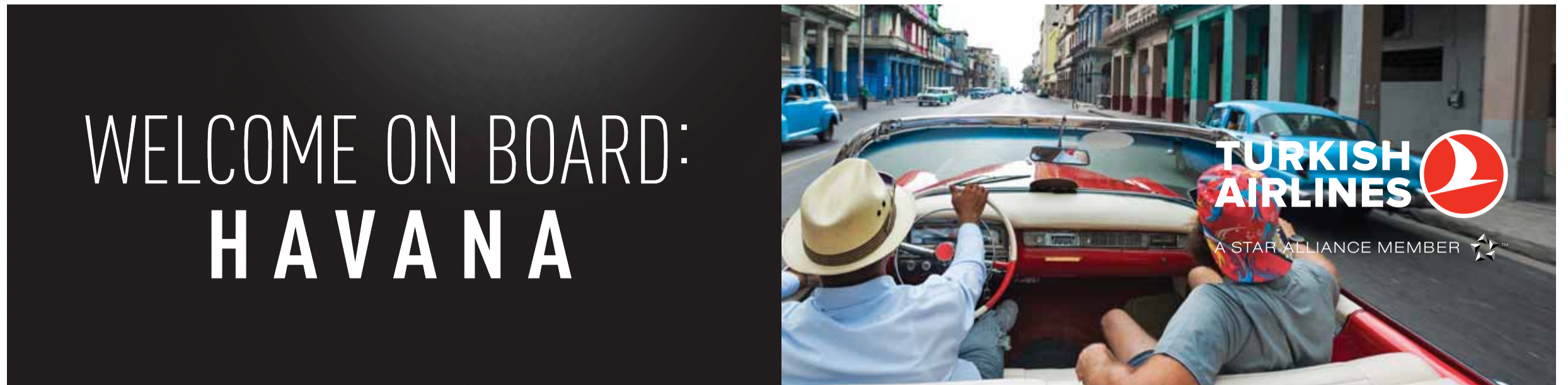
mer Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, so teams are often filled out by the 29-strong contingent of correctional officers. The matches are the only time the detainees of the two courts meet, as they are otherwise kept on separate locked floors.

Inside two communal areas are a table-tennis table and table football set, an aquarium with a handful of goldfish, chess and other board games. Although there are no restrictions on visits, the ICC's Trust Fund for Victims help with one to two visits a year if the detainee has no money, says Craig. Inmates get 200 free minutes every month to phone loved ones and friends at home, using a list of 25 strictly vetted telephone numbers. All phone calls are recorded. The unit also has "private rooms" for conjugal visits between spouses, usually lasting a few hours.

It's clear that food plays an important part in the daily lives of the international detainees. In a kitchen area, a larder stands packed with supplies—much attesting to the African origins of most men on trial. A cooking roster is pasted on a nearby fridge door. "The detainees sometimes share their meals with warders. Chicken, garlic and peanut dishes are a favorite," says Craig. But as he himself has to remain impartial as the head of the ICC prison, he does not share meals. Numerous tins of tomato-and-onion sauce, dried maize, cassava and packets of rice compete for space on the shelves of a kitchen that looks out onto the surrounding Dutch part of the prison.

Achingly close beyond, lie the wild and wind-swept sand dunes of Scheveningen. In another courtyard outside, close to the tennis court, lies a vegetable garden where the prisoners tend their crops of abundant sunflowers, coriander and spinach. Twice a day the inmates are locked in their cells when warders eat their lunch and supper at the prison's canteen. After supper, the detainees often settle in front of the television. "Watching the World Cup football is currently very popular," says Craig, but now all the African teams have been eliminated, it's not clear who they support. At 8:30 pm cell doors are locked again, with lights out shortly afterwards. — AFP

Sports



South Americans make early exit after top players fail to fire

Top players either failed to excel or suffered injuries at key moments

MOSCOW: South America will be absent from the World Cup semi-finals for the fifth time in the tournament's history after the continent's top players either failed to excel or suffered injuries at key moments during the tournament in Russia.

Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Peru all contributed to making the 2018 World Cup one of the most dramatic in history and there was rarely a dull moment when they and their thousands of colourful, vociferous fans were around.

Four out of five of them got through the group stage—a better percentage than Europe where 10 out of 14 teams progressed—and at one point, they rolled off seven wins in a row. But it all ended in tears as Argentina and Colombia went out in the round of 16, the latter on penalties, while Uruguay and Brazil both lost their quarter-finals on Friday, to France and Belgium respectively.

France proved to be the bogey team for South America as they eliminated Peru in the group stage, Argentina and then Uruguay to remain unbeaten at the World Cup against teams from the continent in 40 years. In several cases, a few centimetres could have produced a very difficult outcome such as when Thiago Silva hit the post early on against Belgium and when Mateus Uribe struck the underside of the bar with Colombia's fourth penalty in the shootout against England.

And if any one of Peru's numerous shots against Denmark had found the target, they could have made the knockout round and then found themselves in the easier half of the draw. But if there was a recurring theme, it was that there was an over-dependence on big name players who either failed to make the difference or suffered injury at key moments.

The most obvious was Argentina's Lionel Messi. The 31-year-old, who seems destined never to win the tournament, often looked detached from what was going on around him and did not seem to enjoy his fourth World Cup. He was burdened by the responsibility of carrying the team and not helped by Argentina's shambolic defence which leaked nine goals in four games.

But, while Messi was disappointing, Neymar was infuriating. Brazil's top player should have come out of the tournament as the victim of FIFA's permissiveness towards tactical fouling, as he was tripped and pushed by rivals.

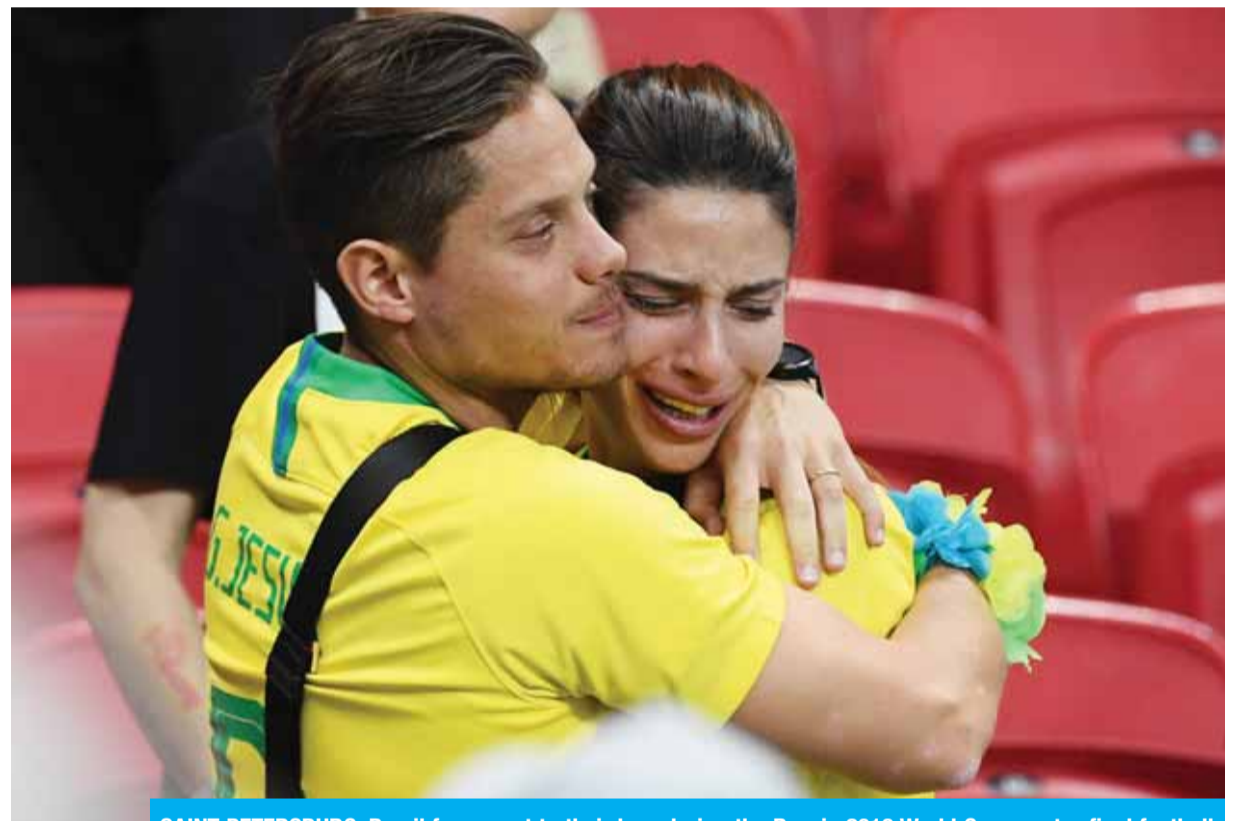
But his constant complaining, his theatrical tumbles and repeated attempts to win penalties earned widespread reprobation. He wasted scoring chances by taking a tumble instead and there were moments when his histrionics distracted the team from the task at hand.

Colombia playmaker James Rodriguez was troubled by a nagging calf muscle injury and missed out on the second round match against England, although Jose Pekerman's surprisingly negative tactics in that match were as much to blame for their defeat.

Uruguay, a country of 3.3 million people, performed heroically to reach the quarter-finals where they sorely missed the injured Edinson Cavani, who had scored two magnificent goals in the previous round against Portugal.

Without Cavani, his striking partner Luis Suarez was strangely subdued and Uruguay were simply beaten by a better team. "We won our first four games but that means nothing now," said coach Oscar Tabarez, who has been in charge since 2006.

"We tried to do the right things in this World Cup but today, our rivals overcame us. We have to recognise that and congratulate them." — Reuters



SAINT PETERSBURG: Brazil fans react to their loss during the Russia 2018 World Cup quarter-final football match between Brazil and Belgium at the Kazan Arena in Kazan on Friday. — AFP

Hazard not Neymar takes over as tournament's star

ST PETERSBURG: When Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo were sent packing from the World Cup a week ago, the stage was set for Brazil's Neymar to take over the role of the tournament's true star. But it is now Belgium's Eden Hazard who is making the strongest bid for that crown.

On Friday night in Kazan, Neymar too saw his World Cup end prematurely, as a Brazil team packed with talent but over-reliant on the forward's inconsistent individual contribution, were beaten 2-1 by a brilliant Belgium team, inspired by the gifted Hazard.

The semi-final clash against France will give a chance for the 19-year-old Frenchman Kylian Mbappe to make his claim to be the tournament's most exciting talent and the final itself could throw

up another contender but at this stage it is Hazard who is setting the standard.

Face to face with Neymar on Friday, the difference between their contributions was strikingly evident. Many will blame Brazil's exit on the way in which their attacks were constantly funnelled towards Neymar in the hope that he would deliver the world-class individual skill he has shown he is capable of but which he rarely delivered in Russia.

With all the talent and Brazilian coach Tite's disposal, the vortex of Neymar ended up weakening their collective effort, whereas Hazard had the exact opposite effect on Belgium. The Chelsea winger showcased his individual skill numerous times against Brazil, especially with a mesmerising dribble from wide in the second half, and the statistics showed that all 10 of his dribbles in the game ended with his team still in possession.

But his contribution went well beyond the eye-catching moments of skill. Hazard dictated the tempo of the game, pressing the accelerator for counter-attacks that ripped open Brazil's defence but also, especially in the second half, slowing down play and maintaining possession.

That aspect of game management, of understanding the right moment to burst



KAZAN: Belgium's forward Eden Hazard (L) vies for the ball with Brazil's defender Marcelo during the Russia 2018 World Cup quarter-final football match between Brazil and Belgium. — AFP

forward and equally the opportune time to calm things down, is what makes Hazard more than just a tricky winger or support striker.

And he is part of an attacking unit that the French will be very wary of on Tuesday night in St Petersburg. The highlight moment of the win was Kevin De Bruyne's superb strike for Belgium's second, after a glorious run from midfield and killer pass from Romelu Lukaku.

The goal showed that while Belgium hugely benefit from Hazard they are far from dependent on him. Indeed, Roberto

Martinez's side have had nine different goalscorers, excluding own goals, in this tournament. Only Italy in 2006 and France in 1982 with 10 each have ever had more in a single tournament.

Hazard's ability has never been in question but there were some, heading into this tournament, who wondered if he had the mental fortitude to deliver on the biggest stage. He was disappointing at the last World Cup in Brazil and two years ago at the European Championship he drifted out of the game during his team's quarter-final loss to Wales.—Reuters

In a far corner of Mozambique, a World Cup under the stars

ALUA: In front of a large screen in a dusty field in remote northern Mozambique, a crowd is gripped by the second World Cup quarter-final, desperately willing Brazil to victory. The project to show live football for free in the remotest parts of Mozambique is a novel attempt to provide a rare night of entertainment and also spread public health awareness.

On Friday, the first quarter-final between France and Uruguay began in harsh daylight, rendering the canvas screen unwatchable. Local barefooted players instead kicked around a ball made of plastic bags as other villagers listened to the commentary on large speakers until sun sank below the horizon.

Children in scruffy school uniforms followed the game eagerly, still carrying their notebooks and pens in hand. The village of Alua has no mains power and only a few wealthier individuals have televisions powered by generators, and they charge other residents to watch. "We usually have to pay," Leonardo Joao Batista, sitting a few rows from the front, told AFP. It is often too expensive for Batista, a farmer and father of seven children. "Today you do not have to know people to get in," he said. Many locals, including Batista, had little idea who was playing in the quarter-finals or that the tournament is being held in Russia. But the crowd soon developed a fierce loyalty to France in the first quarter-final, as several of the team's players have African heritage. They transferred their loyalty to Brazil in the second match.

"Brazil speaks Portuguese like us," explained Erasmus Anadani, 15. After France won the first game, the audience erupted into wild cheers whenever Brazilian star Neymar appeared on screen. Portugal, Mozambique's former colonial ruler, was eliminated in the Round of 16, and many fans pinned all their hopes on Brazil.

Earlier, the large screen was erected on rough ground and held firm with guy-ropes while organisers crisscrossed Alua village with a megaphone to announce that the broadcast was about to begin.

Between the two games, songs, dances and short plays spread messages on how to detect early warning signs of cancer and when to seek treatment—though medical facilities are basic and very scarce. One mother, Lourdes Darin, promised to go to the health centre urgently to learn how to examine breasts and detect any problems. "Football is a way to reach a lot of people, so we combine sport and health education," said Bastos Azarias, of the Mozambican Ministry of Health, a project partner.—AFP

Lexus claims first place in round three of 2018 AUTOBACS SUPER GT series

TOKYO: Lexus continued its winning streak in the 2018 AUTOBACS SUPER GT series, taking the top position in the third round of the GT300 classat Suzuka Circuit in Japan's Mie Prefecture. The No. 96 Lexus RC F GT3K-tunes, driven by Morio Nitta and Yuichi Nakayama, won the race from pole position.

"I would like to congratulate our team on its outstanding performance and results. This triumph builds on our proven record in motor sports, and the valuable experience gained on the racetrack filters back to our production models, helping us to create amazing experiences for our customers," said Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative of Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation. "We extend our sincere gratitude to our fans for their ongoing support, which remains an unending source of inspiration in our quest to develop fun-to-drive vehicles that ignite the emotions."

From the start of the race, Morio Nitta

and Yuichi Nakayama's pole-sitting Lexus RC F GT3 maintained first position and continued to widen its lead over the pack. By the 10th lap, it had opened up a lead of around five seconds. However, as the race entered its 13th lap, an accident brought out the safety car and the lead soon evaporated.

Teams that had planned an early pit stop began returning to the pit lane one-by-one shortly after the race was restarted. When the No. 96 Lexus RC F GT3 K-tunes made its pit stop on the 25th lap, however, it changed all four tires. This strategy paid off, as although other teams had opened a small lead by deciding not to change their tires, the Lexus RC F GT3 K-tunes was soon closing in fast on fresh tires. By this time, there was an exciting five-car battle for the lead. However, in the chicane on the 36th lap, Nakayama swept past the competition to reclaim first position.

Following this move, a fierce battle for second place ensued among the teams



that had foregone a tire change, with many rapid variations in the order during the final stages of the race. In the end, the No. 96 Lexus RC F GT3 K-tunes proved unstoppable, pulling away to take the chequered flag with a 15.885-second margin. This win brought Morio Nitta

back into a tie with another driver from a competitor for the most career wins in GT300 and took the Nitta-Nakayama pair up to fourth place in the overall standings. Nitta also recorded the fastest lap of the race, at 1 minute and 59.252 seconds.

Sports

Taiwan's Hsieh stuns Halep at Wimbledon, Nadal keeps top spot

Pliskova, the only women's top 10 seed to reach fourth round

LONDON: World number one and French Open champion Simona Halep was knocked out of Wimbledon yesterday, losing to Taiwan's Hsieh Su-Wei 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 in the third round as the All England Club seeds' carnage claimed another victim. Defeat for Halep means that Karolina Pliskova, at number seven, is the only women's top 10 seed to reach the fourth round. It also further boosted Serena Williams's chances of becoming an eight-time Wimbledon champion.

Hsieh, the world number 48, battled back from 2-5 down in the final set and saved a match point when the Romanian served for the match at 5-3 in the decider.

It will be Hsieh's first appearance in the last 16 of a Slam where she will face Dominika Cibulkova of Slovakia for a place in the quarter-finals.

"It's my first win against a world number one," said 26-year-old Hsieh. "It's amazing. I was 2-5 down in the final set but the crowd pushed me to fight."

Two-time champion Rafael Nadal reached the last 16 for the eighth time and made sure of keeping the world number one ranking. The second seed comfortably defeated Australian teenager Alex De Minaur 6-1, 6-2, 6-4. Nadal, the 11-time French Open champion and bidding for an 18th career major, will face either Italy's Fabio Fognini or Jiri Vesely of the Czech Republic for a place in the quarter-finals.

"It was a positive match against a player with a lot of energy," said Nadal, the 2008 and 2010 champion. "I am just happy to be in the fourth round again."

Nadal, with Spain out of the World Cup, was heading to watch England play Sweden. He had obviously captured the national mood. "I'll go and watch some foot-

ball-England, it's coming home or not?" he said in reference to a football song which is currently being sung, hummed and whistled on almost every street and in every pub. Juan Martin del Potro made the last 16 for the first time in five years when the Argentine fifth seed defeated France's Benoit Paire 6-4, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. Later Saturday, three-time champion Novak Djokovic plays his first match this year on Centre Court against Britain's Kyle Edmund. Djokovic, the champion in 2011, 2014 and 2015, faces the home country's last remaining singles player looking to snatch another landmark. Victory would see him reach the last 16 of a major for the 44th time to take him second on the all-time list. German fourth seed Alexander Zverev, who almost quit his second round match through illness, faces Latvian qualifier Ernests Gulbis.

Gulbis, now ranked at 138, reached the Roland Garros semi-finals in 2014 famously demolishing Roger Federer on the way. Explosive Nick Kyrgios, fresh from a social media row with former women's champion Marion Bartoli after she accused him of squandering his talents, plays Japan's Kei Nishikori. Kyrgios, the Australian 15th seed, is bidding to reach the fourth round for the fourth time. Nishikori, seeded 24, bids to make the last 16 for a third time and record his 350th career win. Other early winners on Saturday included Belgium's Alison Van Uytvanck who followed her upset of defending champion Garbine Muguruza by beating Anett Kontaveit, the 28th seeded Estonian, 6-2, 6-3.

Van Uytvanck will meet fellow last-16 debutant Russian 14th seed Daria Kasatkina, who defeated Ashleigh Barty of Australia 7-5, 6-3. — AFP



LONDON: Romania's Simona Halep returns to Taiwan's Hsieh Su-Wei in their women's singles third round match on the sixth day of the 2018 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon, southwest London, yesterday. — AFP

Sale strikes out 12 as Red Sox beat Royals 10-5

KANSAS: Mookie Betts clubbed his 100th career home run, Chris Sale struck out 12 over six innings of one-run ball in his 100th win and the Boston Red Sox routed the host Kansas City Royals 10-5 on Friday night. Betts' solo blast to lead off the game was his 22nd of the season and his 16th career leadoff blast, extending his own franchise record. He joined Ted Williams, Jim Rice and Tony Conigliaro as the only players to hit 100 homers with the Red Sox before the age of 26. Sale (9-4) allowed five hits and walked one while lowering his season ERA to 2.36. J.D. Martinez added a two-run shot for his major-league-leading 27th homer, and Xander Bogaerts also hit a two-run homer for Boston. Mike Moustakas hit a two-run homer for the Royals, who suffered their seventh loss in a row.

BLUE JAYS 6, YANKEES 2

Justin Smoak hit a three-run home run to cap a five-run second inning as Toronto beat visiting New York. Yangervis Solarte had three hits and a walk for the Blue Jays, and Smoak had two hits and a walk in the opener of a three-game series. Yankees starter Sonny Gray (5-7) allowed five runs, six hits and two walks in two innings, his shortest outing of the season. He also had two wild pitches, a hit batter and four strikeouts.

ANGELS 3, DODGERS 2

Down to their last out, the host Angels pushed across two runs in the bottom of the ninth off Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen to pull out an improbable win. Shohei Ohtani worked a full-count walk and broke for second on Jansen's first pitch to David Fletcher. Dodgers catcher Yasmani Grandal double-clutched, then threw the ball into center field for an error, Ohtani going to third. Fletcher lined a single to left field to score Ohtani and tie the game at 2-2. Ian Kinsler followed with a blooper to shallow right field, where Yasiel Puig bobbled the ball. Fletcher raced around third but initially was held by third base coach Dino Ebel. Puig's throw, however, bounced past Grandal, allowing Fletcher to score the winning run.

ASTROS 11, WHITE SOX 4

Lance McCullers Jr. recorded a career-high 12 strikeouts and Houston extended its winning streak to four games with a rout of visiting Chicago. McCullers (10-3) posted his fourth consecutive winning decision by dominating the White Sox throughout, save for a sudden spurt of vulnerability in the sixth inning. He gave up three hits and did not issue a walk over seven innings, picking up 16 swings and misses on his 58 curveballs. The White Sox did not record their first hit until there was one out in the sixth. Center fielder Adam Engel reached on an opposite-field single to right, preceding singles from Yoan Moncada and Yolmer Sanchez, the latter of which plated Engel and cut the Houston lead to 3-1 at the time.

INDIANS 10, ATHLETICS 4

Jose Ramirez and Edwin Encarnacion each drove in three runs and Carlos Carrasco struck out seven over 5 1/3 innings as Cleveland defeated visiting Oakland. The Indians won their eighth consecutive home game and have now won seven of their last eight games at Progressive Field against the A's. Oakland's Dustin Fowler led off the game with a home run, his sixth, and Matt Olson added a home run to lead off the second inning, his 19th, but the A's squandered their early 2-0 lead. The A's lost for just the second time in their last 10 games.

NATIONALS 3, MARLINS 2

Mark Reynolds hit a pinch-hit, walk-off solo homer in the bottom of the ninth inning to give Washington a win over visiting Miami. Reynolds led off the ninth, batting for winning pitcher Sean Doolittle (3-2), and worked the count to 3-1 against Kyle Barraclough (0-3). Then, Reynolds crushed a pitch to left-center that gave the Nationals the victory. Both starters got no-decisions but did plenty of work. For the Nationals, Gio Gonzalez allowed two runs in five innings but needed to throw 114 pitches. Miami's Dan Straily threw 111 pitches in six innings as he gave up two runs.

PHILLIES 17, PIRATES 5

Odubel Herrera and Andrew Knapp each homered, and visiting Philadelphia hammered Pittsburgh in a 4-hour, 30-minute affair that tied the National League record for longest nine-inning game. It was also the longest nine-inning game in the history of each franchise. Herrera had four RBIs, Knapp and Carlos



KANSAS CITY: Mookie Betts #50 of the Boston Red Sox hits a home run in the first inning against the Kansas City Royals at Kauffman Stadium on Friday in Kansas City. — AFP

Santana added three each and Scott Kingery had four of the Phillies' 18 hits. The Pirates have lost four straight-by a combined score of 48-13 — and five of their last six.

BREWERS 5, BRAVES 4

Milwaukee got home runs from Tyler Saladino and Jesus Aguilar in a five-run third inning and hung on to beat visiting Atlanta to extend its winning streak to five games. Saladino hit a two-run homer, his fourth, and Aguilar delivered a three-run shot, his 20th, in the rally against Atlanta starter Mike Foltynewicz (6-5). Corey Knebel worked a scoreless ninth inning and earned his 11th save. He allowed a one-out hit to Dansby Swanson, but the shortstop was thrown out by Manny Pina while trying to steal second. — Reuters

Stokes return gives England selection conundrum

CARDIFF: England one-day captain Eoin Morgan has refused to guarantee that Ben Stokes will jump straight into the side for today's T20 series decider against India in Bristol. All-rounder Stokes missed the recent one-day series against Australia with a hamstring injury and has sat out the first two 20 over games against India. Stokes rejoins the squad in Cardiff on Saturday after coming through an innings of 90 in 68 balls playing for Durham on Thursday. Alex Hales recently said he thought his place was vulnerable when Stokes came back but he gave the selectors food for thought with his match-winning innings of 58 not out at Sophia Gardens which levelled the series up. England insist Stokes has no injury worries and is fit for selection leaving Hales or Jake Ball, who made his international T20 debut in Friday's last over five wicket win facing exclusion.

"He comes into the squad for the next game and he is a fantastic player and it will be a difficult decision to make," Morgan told reporters after the Cardiff win.

"We have made calls like this in the past and we will make the call for the benefit of the team and put out our strongest XI. "Alex always makes it difficult particularly in T20 cricket. He has played a lot of T20 for us and he is a very experienced campaigner. An innings like that gives him a pretty strong case for the next game. "He really did play brilliantly. He has played a lot international T20 cricket and he has played a lot around the world. It was a mature innings. "But we played better than we did at Old Trafford and the plans we had we committed to more. There was a lot more clarity in the shots that we played." Hales struggled in the first T20 match in Manchester when England were beaten by eight wickets and young left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav took five wickets for 24 runs to set up an Indian victory.

But Hales and England's other batsmen had been working on the bowling machine nicknamed Merlyn which they use to mimic bowlers' actions and it paid off with Hales and the rest neutering Yadav who went

Hamilton on pole for home British GP

SILVERSTONE: An emotional Lewis Hamilton put Mercedes on pole position for his home British Grand Prix yesterday after giving his all to stay ahead of Ferrari's Formula One championship leader Sebastian Vettel in a knife-edge qualifying.

The difference between the four times world champions came down to just 0.044 seconds at the end, with Vettel 0.057 faster after their first flying laps around a sizzling Silverstone circuit. Hamilton, who will be chasing his fifth successive home win today to retake the lead from his German rival, was shaking as he parked up, leapt out and punched the air. His lap of one minute 25.892 seconds was a track record.

"I gave it everything I could, but it

was so close with these Ferraris," he said, addressing the crowd with their Hamilton banners and flags. "I was just praying I could do it for you guys. "For me it feels like one of the best laps that I have been able to produce," the 33-year-old told reporters later. "It felt like the most pressurised lap I have ever had.

"I was shaking through the emotion and the adrenalin rush which was way above the limit of what I had experienced before," he added. "It's my 76th but it's so special." Vettel, had suffered a cricked neck in final practice that left him unsure whether he would be able to take part in the session, said he had lost pace on the straight but was happy with his afternoon. Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen will line up third with Hamilton's Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas completing the second row of the grid. Hamilton, a point behind fellow-four times champion Vettel after nine races, has now had six poles at Silverstone and yesterday was his fourth in a row at the circuit he has come to dominate since his debut in 2007. —Reuters

Froome crashes as Gaviria wins first stage of Tour de France

FONTENAY-LE-COMTE: Chris Froome's bid for a record-equalling fifth Tour de France title got off to a shaky start yesterday after a dramatic crash left him around 50 seconds down on rivals, Fernando Gaviria claiming the yellow jersey after a bunch sprint rounded off the first stage. With just 6km to the finish, Froome went flying over a barrier and landed on a grassy verge, emerging seemingly unharmed as the peloton sped off to a frenetic sprint where Quick Step's Gaviria edged Peter Sagan and Marcel Kittel. Froome, fellow Briton Adam Yates, Colombian Nairo Quintana and Australian Richie Porte, all pre-Tour favourites, all lost valuable seconds having been caught in a series of falls and flat tyres over the final 10km of the 201km first stage.

Former Sky man Mikel Landa, 2014 champion Vincenzo Nibali and 2017 Giro champion Tom Dumoulin conversely, all finished in the main bunch having gained an unexpected early



FONTENAY-LE-COMTE: Colombia's Fernando Gaviria celebrates on the podium after winning the first stage of the 105th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Noirmoutier-en-l'île and Fontenay-le-Comte, western France, yesterday. — AFP

advantage over their key rivals that blows the Tour wide open.

Gaviria was left thrilled after his impressive stage win on his very first Tour de France, after outlasting world champion Sagan in a long struggle down an 800m home straight with Kittel, who won four stages on the 2017 Tour, leaving his bid too late and coming third. "I just said to myself 'go' and had the legs luckily," Gaviria said. "What an amazing day, nobody is

happier than me. "The team did amazing. Tomorrow I'll be in yellow and try and keep it as long as possible." The Colombian added: "I don't know about keeping the yellow jersey because of the mountains, but I plan to fight for the green jersey (sprint points) all the way to Paris." Former green jersey winner Thor Hushovd, here working for Norwegian television, told AFP that Kittel and Dylan Groenewegen were the key sprinters to watch out for this year. —AFP



SNIPPETS



Belgium's 'golden generation' finally make their mark at WCup

I have been unfairly criticised a lot this year: Courtois

SAINT PETERSBURG: Long touted as World Cup contenders thanks to an abundance of talent, Belgium claimed their biggest scalp ever in beating five-time winners Brazil to reach just their second semi-final.

A 'golden generation' featuring Thibaut Courtois, Kevin De Bruyne, Eden Hazard and Romelu Lukaku exited tamer to Argentina four years ago and blew a huge chance at Euro 2016 when on the kind side of the draw. Now in their prime, this group of players is unlikely to get a better opportunity to win a major international tournament than over the course of the next week, with France to come in the last four on Tuesday. Here, AFP Sports looks at Belgium's rich resources in every area of the field.

COURTOIS STANDS TALL

The giant Chelsea stopper needed every inch of his 6 feet 6 inch (1.99 metre) frame to prevent Neymar hauling Brazil into extra-time with a stunning stoppage time save on Friday. "I know Neymar likes to curl it that way. I was ready and made a good save," said Courtois.

"I have been unfairly criticised a lot this year. Today I proved again who I am and why I am here." Widely regarded as one of the world's best goalkeepers, Courtois has won two Premier League titles with Chelsea and La Liga while on loan at Atletico Madrid, but his nine-save display against Brazil was one of his best yet on the big international stage.

LAST CHANCE FOR AGEING DEFENCE

Trailblazers for a wave of Belgian talent to make their way to the Premier League, Vincent Kompany and Thomas Vermaelen have battled back from years of injury problems just to make the squad at the age of 32. Before Toby Alderweireld's own injury problems this season, he and Tottenham teammate Jan Vertonghen had



KAZAN: Belgium's goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois stops a shot on goal during the Russia 2018 World Cup quarter-final football match between Brazil and Belgium at the Kazan Arena in Kazan on Friday. — AFP

been hailed as the Premier League's best defensive partnership.

However, Vertonghen, 31, and Alderweireld, 29, also do not have time on their side. The pace of Kylian Mbappe could cause problems in Saint Petersburg on Tuesday, but Belgium will not be short of experience at the back.

MIDFIELD MAESTROS

Coach Roberto Martinez had been criticised for not finding the right balance to get the best out of De Bruyne early in the tournament, but the Spaniard's bold tactical plan worked to perfection against Brazil. Marouane Fellaini took De Bruyne's place in a deep-lying midfield role to free up Manchester City's player of the year to play much further forward and to devastating effect as he blasted home Belgium's second of the night and his first of the tournament.

Captain Eden Hazard has been consistently brilliant, scoring twice against Tunisia in the group stage, and providing the teasing cross from which

Fellaini equalised in a thrilling comeback from 2-0 down to beat Japan 3-2 in the last 16.

As Belgium tired against waves of Brazilian attacks in the second half, Hazard carried his side up the field, winning free-kicks and relieving the pressure—a sign of his and this side's growing maturity.

LUKAKU MORE THAN A GOALSCORER

Still in the race for the Golden Boot behind Harry Kane, with Belgium now guaranteed two more matches, Romelu Lukaku has shown another side to his game so far in the knockout phase after scoring four times in the group stages. His superb run off the ball and dummy in the final seconds against Japan cleared the space for Thomas Meunier to tee up Nacer Chadli's winner.

Against Brazil, again it was Lukaku's link-up play that proved decisive as he powered past Fernandinho and Paulinho on a rapid counter-attack before feeding De Bruyne to smash home from the edge of the area. —AFP

Brazil's WCup defeat hits home in Lebanon

BEIRUT: Brazil's surprise defeat in the World Cup has stunned fans in the Lebanese capital Beirut, where football supporters have long put their hopes in the Latin American side. "We are all Brazilian, we all love Brazil to death whatever happens," said Ali, dressed in a skin-tight shirt, after seeing his heroes lose 2-1 to Belgium on Friday and crash out of the tournament in Russia. The 24-year-old watched the match in the Shiite outskirts of Beirut, where Brazilian flags hang from buildings and shop windows are filled with life-size posters of players.

"A supporter who loves his team, it's in victory but also in defeat," said Ali, who works in deliveries for a multinational firm. Millions of Lebanese have emigrated to Brazil since the end of the 19th century—including the family of Brazilian President Michel Temer—ensuring enduring support when it comes to football.

Haydar Baddar, 38, installed a projector on his doorstep, which attracted dozens of fans for the tie with Belgium. Many in the male-majority crowd donned Brazil's yellow jersey for the occasion, while families watched from their balconies as the sound of drums and vuvuzelas filled the narrow street.

"Here in our part of town we see Brazil, the neighbourhoods and the streets of Brazil, and it's like our home," said Baddar, a shop owner with a neatly trimmed black beard. In Beirut's southern neighbourhoods, "children play ball on the street. There's no



BEIRUT: Lebanese fans watch the Russia 2018 World Cup quarter-final football match between Brazil and Belgium in the Earsal district, southern Beirut, on Friday. Despite the defeat, the "Selecao" unleashes the passions, and makes forget the everyday demands. —AFP

football ground—when the evening comes, you see them playing everywhere," he added.

Brazil's defeat by Belgium brings tears to the crowd, met with mocking wails from some women at the end of the street. Baddar opts for firing his pistol into the air. With residents enduring economic woes, inadequate public services and widespread social inequality, football is a welcome distraction from daily hardships.

"We're in a country where the situation is bad. This neighbourhood is very poor," said unemployed

Hussein Mohamed. "Football makes you forget. When you're suffocating, you go to the stadium and you forget," said the 25-year-old, who explained he dropped out of school because of his obsession with football. Mohamed rallied the neighbourhood's youth into hanging Brazilian flags along the multitude of electricity cables that fill the street. The result is an explosion of colour, with the distinctive blue, yellow and green banner eclipsing the drab concrete buildings. "There are more than a thousand... It's Sao Paulo," boasted Mohamed. —AFP

Teary Uruguay exit WCup dreaming of next one

NIZHNY NOVGOROD: Uruguay's never-say-die players fell to the floor in tears after losing their World Cup quarter-final to France, but they depart with heads high after yet again shaking it up among the world's best.

Despite a tiny population of 3.3 million people, Uruguay got out of the group stages in the last three tournaments, reaching the semi-final in 2010 and the last eight this time. In Russia, they won three group games without conceding a goal, before eliminating Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal 2-1 in the last 16. They were well-beaten 2-0 by France on Friday, but will always wonder what might have been if influential striker Edinson Cavani had not been out with injury.

The absence of Cavani, who scored two wonder

goals against Portugal and draws defenders away from strike partner Luis Suarez, distorted Uruguay's game plan and gave France an easy evening except for one superb save by goalkeeper Hugo Lloris.

"I didn't even get a shot in," lamented a frustrated Suarez, who astonishingly did not have a touch in the French box. Yet the team walked off to resounding chants of "Uruguay!" from Russian fans, an ovation from their own supporters, hugs from the French, and inspiring words by their coach.

"We dream on. Things never end. A World Cup comes around every four years," said Oscar Tabarez, noting Uruguay had surpassed great soccer nations like Germany and Argentina in reaching the last eight.

At home, Uruguayans were sad but bursting with pride. "There's nothing to reproach," said former captain Diego Lugano. "Thanks to the players for again being World Cup protagonists and stirring a nation."

There was huge sympathy from Uruguayans towards defender Jose Gimenez, whom cameras caught crying minutes before the end as he realised it was too late to turn the game around. One British pundit called that "embarrassing", but for Uruguayans it was proof of the passion that has seen

them punch above their weight since winning the first World Cup in 1930.

Once the emotions settle, Uruguay have some serious work to groom a new generation, given mainstays like captain Diego Godin and strikers Cavani and Suarez are now all in their early 30s.

Tabarez, in charge for 12 years and known lovingly as 'El Maestro' (The Teacher) at home, said his future was up to local football association bosses - but there has been no sign they want to move him on after such success and stability.

Inevitably, it was French forward Antoine Griezmann—a fan of Uruguay and friend of Godin and Gimenez from Atletico Madrid — who put the nail in the South Americans' coffin. Not only did he supply the cross for France's first goal, but it was his shot that squirmed through goalkeeper Fernando Muslera's hands for the second.

Out of respect, he did not celebrate. "Uruguay are a tough team, who remind me of my club side Atletico ... They are a pleasure to watch," he said. Griezmann has promised to visit Uruguay for the first time in December. Despite putting them out of the World Cup, Uruguayans are sure to give their French amigo a warm welcome. — Reuters

25 South Americans make early exit after top players fail to fire

26 Taiwan's Hsieh stuns Halep at Wimbledon, Nadal keeps top spot

27 Belgium's 'golden generation' finally make their mark at WCup



England reach first semi since 1990

Maguire and Alli headers clinch win over Swedes



SAMARA: England's defender Kieran Trippier (L) vies for the header with Sweden's defender Ludwig Augustinsson during the Russia 2018 World Cup quarter-final football match between Sweden and England at the Samara Arena in Samara yesterday. — AFP

SAMARA: England defied almost three decades of disappointment to move confidently into the World Cup semi-finals for the first time since 1990 as headers from Harry Maguire and Dele Alli downed a dogged but toothless Sweden 2-0 yesterday.

Far more fancied England sides had failed to reach the last four in the past but Gareth Southgate's young squad powered on as they continued to make a mockery of dampened pre-tournament expectations with another impressive display in Russia.

They were set on their way when Maguire rose imperiously to head home from a corner and Alli added the killer blow after the break as England showed they are not entirely dependent on the tournament's leading scorer Harry Kane for goals.

If anything, England's hero on the day was to be found at the other end of the pitch as keeper Jordan Pickford produced three superb saves to shut out the

workmanlike Swedes. "We had to withstand a lot of physical pressure," said England coach Gareth Southgate. "The resilience of the team and togetherness of the team today was crucial. Today our spirit was as good as theirs and our quality a little bit better."

The fans who serenaded their side at the Samara Arena stayed long after fulltime to herald the achievement, knowing that with so many of the favourites having departed, England have arguably their best chance of global glory in more than half a century.

BULLET HEADER

While England's victory was one-sided it was not easy. Sweden had reached the quarter-finals by making life hard for supposedly superior opponents and it was easy to see why after a dour opening when England looked incapable of stringing passes together against their hardworking opponents. It was predictable in

many ways, therefore, that the deadlock was broken from a set piece. England had laboured without reward before Ashley Young lined up a corner on the left and his curled effort was met by Maguire charging forward with conviction and barging Emil Forsberg out of his way to power a header down into the net.

That was England's eighth set-piece goal at this World Cup, but, while they are lethal from dead balls, apart from Kane they are not blessed with too many other sharp shooters. Forward Raheem Sterling has faced some criticism over his struggles to score for England and just before halftime his doubters were handed ammunition when he was twice left alone to bear down on Sweden keeper Robin Olsen.

His blushes were saved by the linesman's flag as he fluffed the first chance, but moments later he ran through again, this time trying to round the keeper, only to be denied once more. England were almost made to

pay straight after the interval and would have been pegged back if Pickford had not produced a top-drawer save to keep out a Berg header.

The importance of the keeper's contribution was swiftly underlined with England doubling their lead in the 59th minute as Jesse Lingard's teasing cross into the box was met by Alli unmarked at the far post to head powerfully past Olsen.

England had not kept a clean sheet in their four previous matches and had Pickford to thank for ensuring they did not concede this time. He saved superbly from Viktor Claesson before tipping a shot from Berg over the bar and that was enough to ensure Swedish hopes of reaching their first semi-final since 1994 were dashed. "I wasn't born the last time England reached a World Cup semi-final," said Pickford. "We have always said we would take one game at a time and we can go on and create our own history." — Reuters

Croatia end Russia's World Cup dream on penalties

SOCHI: Croatia ended Russia's unlikely World Cup dream when they won 4-3 on penalties to eliminate the gallant hosts after a dramatic quarter-final ended 2-2 after extra time yesterday. Ivan Rakitic stroked home the winning penalty to send Croatia into a semi-final against England after a night of unremitting tension in Sochi, ending the remarkable campaign of a team ranked 70th in the world.

Fyodor Smolov saw Russia's first penalty saved by Danijel Subasic and, although Russia goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev saved a Mateo Kovacic kick, the hosts' fate was sealed when Mario Fernandes fired completely wide from their third attempt.

In the previous 120 minutes, Denis Cheryshev rifled Russia in front with a long-range thunderbolt, his fourth goal of the tournament, in the 31st minute before Andrej

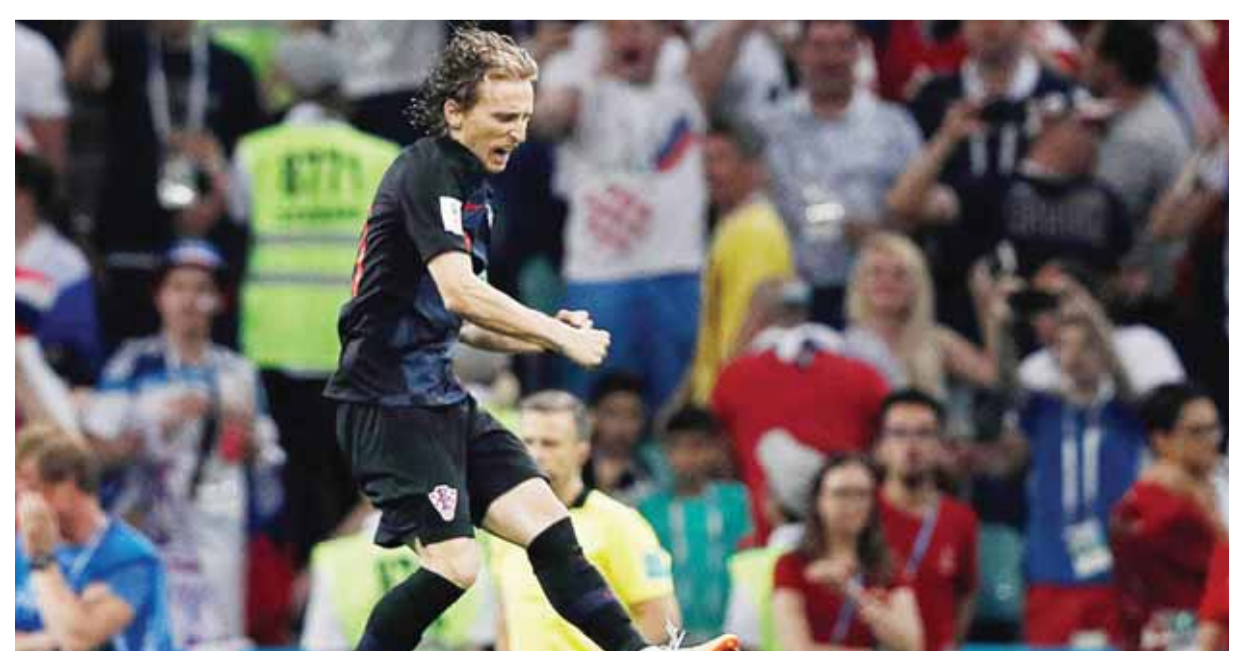
Kramaric headed Croatia level six minutes before half-time. Croatia then went ahead with a soft header in the eleventh minute of extra time but Brazilian-born Fernandes headed the hosts level with five minutes of play remaining to send the game to penalties.

Russia had already surpassed expectations by reaching the last eight, ousting Spain on the way. After a lively opening, the game dropped off, with sessions of head tennis in midfield, but it was Russia's more rustic approach which paid off first as they went ahead out of the blue.

Cheryshev collected the ball near the halfway line, exchanged passes with Artem Dzyuba and curled a 25-metre shot past Subasic. But slack defending allowed Croatia to level eight minutes later. Mario Mandzukic ran unchallenged into the penalty area and chipped a low ball back into the centre where unmarked Kramaric scored with a glancing header.

Croatia were agonisingly close to scoring on the hour when Russia's defence failed to clear the ball and Ivan Perisic's shot hit the inside of the post but rebounded harmlessly across the face of the goal.

Croatia appeared to have the tie in the bag after Vida's extra-time goal until Fernandes rose to head in a free kick and send both teams to their second penalty shootout of the tournament. — Reuters



SOCHI: Croatia's midfielder Luka Modric celebrates scoring his penalty during the Russia 2018 World Cup quarter-final football match between Russia and Croatia at the Fisht Stadium in Sochi yesterday. — AFP