



5 Owner blames ex-partner of Kuwait food poisoning



6 UK foreign secretary Boris Johnson resigns in protest



24 'State of war' is over Ethiopia, Eritrea say

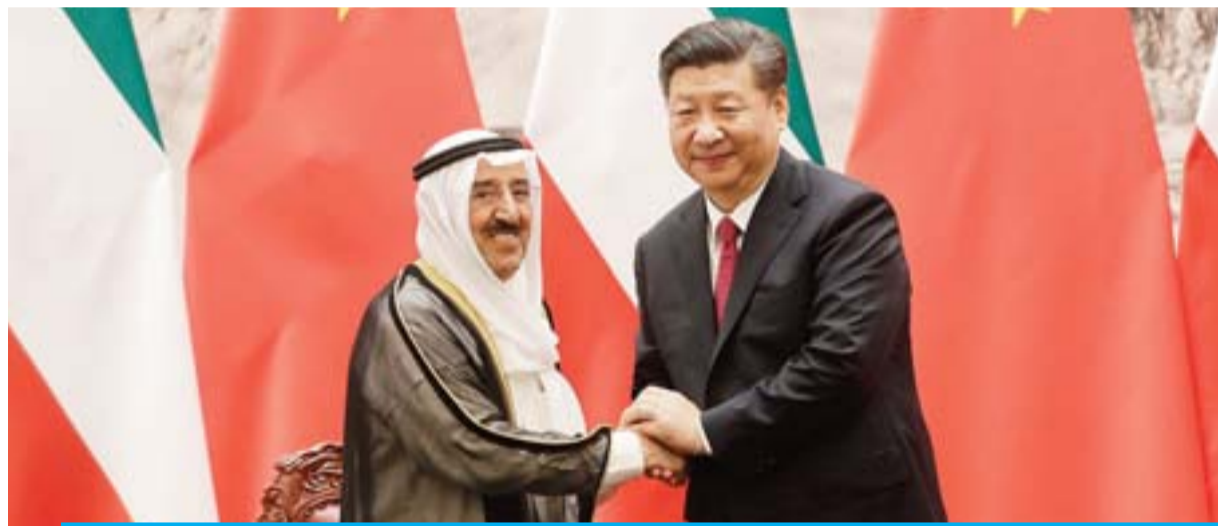


28 France eye WCup final but Belgium have Henry factor



Kuwait-China joint statement reveals 'strategic partnership'

Amir, Xi Jinping discuss regional, international issues



BEIJING: Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (left) shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping after witnessing a signing ceremony at the Great Hall of the People yesterday. — AFP (See Page 3)

BEIJING: In the midst of his official three-day state visit to Beijing, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held extensive talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, focusing on bilateral ties. The Kuwaiti and Chinese leaders have spoken highly of the tremendous progress in relations between the Gulf state and the world's most populous nation - seeing eye to eye on a myriad of significant issues including current world events.

Since diplomatic relations began in earnest a little under half a century ago, Kuwait and Beijing started to develop camaraderie that still stands to this very day, with their respective economies being the ultimate beneficiaries. Citing a mutual desire to take ties to new levels, His Highness the Kuwaiti Amir and the Chinese president have pinpointed a number of fields that they have agreed to cooperate on, chiefly, the need to establish a platform for dialogue as a constant form of engagement.

Meanwhile, Beijing has thrown its weight behind His Highness's efforts to quell a Gulf dispute, in addi-

tion to other humanitarian initiatives Kuwait has been known to pursue, by virtue of the "Humanitarian Leader" moniker the UN has bestowed upon His Highness the Amir. The two countries have also emphasized their commitment to one another's sovereignty through a non-interventionist and non-meddling policy, with Kuwait seeing the self-ruled island of Taiwan as a breakaway province to be reunited with mainland China.

The two leaders pointed out that peace and stability in their countries is partially contingent upon a free and open Indo-Pacific, as well as ensuring peaceful resolutions to conflicts in the region. Kuwait also said that it is a proponent of the Chinese government's "Belt and Road Initiative", in addition to other similar development strategies that allow Beijing to reach out to the rest of the world.

They agreed that energy production and investment are crucial aspects of scientific development, in addition to being two concrete concepts that can help

Continued on Page 24

Erdogan sworn in with new powers

ANKARA: Tayyip Erdogan was sworn in again as Turkey's president yesterday, assuming sweeping powers he won in a referendum last year and sealed in a hard-fought re-election victory two weeks ago. Erdogan, who has dominated Turkish politics for 15 years, says the powerful new executive presidency is vital to drive economic growth, ensure security after a failed 2016 military coup and safeguard the country from conflict in Syria and Iraq.

"As president, I swear upon my honor and integrity, before the great Turkish nation and history, to work with all my power to protect and exalt the glory and honor of the Republic

of Turkey," Erdogan told parliament as he took the oath of office. The introduction of the new presidential system marks the biggest overhaul of governance since the Turkish republic was established on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire nearly a century ago.

The post of prime minister has been scrapped and the president will now be able to select his own cabinet, regulate ministries and remove civil servants, all without parliamentary approval. Erdogan's supporters see the changes as a just reward for a leader who has put Islamic values at the core of public life, championed the pious working classes and overseen years of strong economic growth. Opponents say the move marks a lurch to authoritarianism, accusing Erdogan of eroding the secular institutions set up by modern Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and driving it further from Western values of democracy and free speech.

Erdogan is expected to name a streamlined cabinet of 16 ministers yesterday evening after a ceremony at the presidential palace for more than 7,000 guests, including Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, Russia's Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. No major Western leader was included on a list of 50 presidents, prime ministers and other high-ranking guests published by state news agency Anadolu.

Investors were waiting to see whether cabinet appointees would include individuals seen as market-friendly, and particularly whether Mehmet Simsek, currently deputy prime minister, would continue to oversee the economy. "For the cabinet appointments in the past several years, the most important issue has been the presence of the current deputy prime minister, Mehmet Simsek," said

Continued on Page 24



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with his wife Emine Erdogan wave as he arrives at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) to take oath of office yesterday in Ankara. — AFP

Saudi Arabia bid to protect its pre-Islamic heritage sites

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is preserving pre-Islamic heritage sites, like a date palm oasis from the Stone Age, in a break with the austere strain of Sunni Islam that has dominated the country for decades, as the reclusive kingdom tries to open up. Wahhabism, the ultra-conservative branch of Islam that emerged in Saudi Arabia some 250 years ago, regards the vener-

ation of objects, especially those predating the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) life in the 7th century, as tantamount to idolatry, and has advocated their neglect or outright destruction.

But under reforms pushed by Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, who has vowed to promote a more moderate form of Islam and loosened strict social rules like a ban on women driving, the kingdom has allocated \$1 billion to preserve its heritage. Many of the cultural areas date back thousands of years and the attention given to them could risk a possible backlash from religious fundamentalists.

"National heritage wasn't an easy trip, to get people to reflect and go back, especially the antiquities. All the discussions that were about antiquity-this is not Islamic, this is Islamic-this is - I think behind us now," said Prince Sultan Bin Salman, head of the Saudi Commission for

Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH). The 62-year-old royal, a son of the king and an older half-brother of the Crown Prince, told Reuters in a recent interview about ongoing cooperation with senior Muslim scholars including bimonthly discussions with the Grand Mufti, the kingdom's top religious figure, about the latest "discoveries".

Those include Al-Ahsa, one of the world's largest natural agricultural oases, which became the country's fifth UNESCO World Heritage site last month. In addition to fresh and hot-water springs and vast tracks of date palms, the 10,000 hectare region holds archaeological sites dating to the Neolithic period. Another UNESCO site, Madain Saleh, is a 2,000-year-old city carved into the rocks of the northern desert by the Nabateans, the

Continued on Page 24



MUSCAT: Photo shows a view of Oman's ancient city of Qalhat that dates back to pre-Islamic times. UNESCO has added Saudi Arabia's Al Ahsa Oasis and Oman's ancient city of Qalhat to its World Heritage List. — AFP

Groups call for urgent law on public amnesty

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MPs, groups and activists yesterday called for moves and actions to contain the consequences of a stunning ruling by Kuwait's top court in which it jailed two serving lawmakers, six ex-MPs and eight activists after convicting them in the highly publicized storming the Assembly case. Postings on social media said that as many as 16 opposition and pro-opposition lawmakers have decided to resign from the National Assembly in protest over the rulings - many have described as harsh.

But MP Abdullah Al-Roumi, one of those said to have resigned, immediately denied the reports. Parliamentary

sources also ruled out the possibility of a collective resignation since MPs have not met. MP Mohammad Al-Mutair, who was acquitted along with 16 other activists and former MPs, yesterday called on lawmakers for a meeting on Thursday to study their course of action after the ruling.

Sources said that the meeting is expected to discuss the issue of resignations or calling for an extraordinary meeting for the National Assembly, currently in summer recess, to discuss issuing a law for public amnesty to pardon all activists sentenced to jail or found guilty but the court did not punish them. Most of those who received jail terms are outside the country, especially MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabai and Jamaan Al-Harbash and former MPs Mussallam Al-Barrak and Faisal Al-Muslem and others.

Opposition leader and former three-time Assembly speaker Ahmad Al-Saadoun said it was high time for the National Assembly to issue legislation

Continued on Page 24

Turkey train disaster kills twenty-four

ISTANBUL: Twenty-four people were killed and hundreds injured when a train packed with weekend passengers derailed in northwest Turkey due to ground erosion after heavy rains, officials said yesterday. The train, which was carrying 362 passengers, was travelling from the Edirne region on the Greek and Bulgarian borders to Istanbul's Halkali station on Sunday when six carriages derailed in the Tekirdag region. Deputy Prime Minister Recep Akdag said 24 people died, in a sharp rise from the previous toll of 10.

The state-run Anadolu news agency quoted Akdag as saying search operations through the derailed train carriages had been completed yesterday morning. Health Minister Ahmet Demircan said 318 people required treatment after the accident with 124 still hospitalized. Regional prosecutors have opened an investigation, with the two train drivers and three other railway workers sum-



TEKIRDAG: A helicopter flies over the site where a train derailed at Corlu district in Tekirdag, northwest Turkey yesterday. — AFP

moned to give statements, Anadolu said. The transport ministry said that the train had derailed as recent heavy downpours caused the ground beneath the track to erode away.

Transport Minister Ahmet Arslan said that the latest checks on the rails had been made

in April, Anadolu reported. Turkish media, including the Hurriyet newspaper, published pictures showing the erosion had been so bad that part of the track had been in the air with no ground left to support it.

Continued on Page 24

Local

Amir condemns deadly criminal attack on Saudi check point

Amir sends condolences to Japan's Emperor, Tunisian, Turkish Presidents

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah strongly condemned a criminal attack that triggered an exchange of fire with terrorists at a check point, killing a Saudi security personnel and an expatriate in the Saudi city of Qassim on Sunday.

His Highness the Amir condemned the attack in a cable to Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and affirmed Kuwait's backing to all measures by Riyadh to restore the Kingdom's security. His Highness the Amir expressed condolences for the martyrdom of the Saudi serviceman and the expatriate.

His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable to King Salman, expressing sincere condolences for the death of the serviceman and the expatriate. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent a similar cable. Also, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem cabled Chairman of the Saudi Shura (consultative) Council Sheikh Dr Abdullah Al-Sheikh, expressing deep and sincere solace on martyrdom of the security man.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi.

In the cable, His Highness the Amir expressed deepest condolences on the deaths among the national guard as a result of the terror attack in Jenduba border province. Furthermore, His Highness asked Almighty Allah to bestow mercy upon those who have been killed and provide speedy recovery to those wounded. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister also sent similar cables, while Ghanem sent a cable to his Tunisian counterpart Mohammad Al-Nasser.



Crown Prince meets security chief

Japan's floods

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Japanese Emperor Akihito and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the victims of mudslides and floods caused by torrential rain in western Japan. His Highness the Amir prayed Almighty Allah would have mercy on the souls of the victims. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables, while Speaker Ghanem sent a cable of condolences to the Speaker of Japan's House of Representatives Tadamori Oshima.

Separately, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the victims of a train derailment incident.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chief of National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah. — KUNA

His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow blessing upon the deceased, and hoped the injured recover rapidly. His Highness the Crown Prince sent a cable of condolences to President Erdogan on the victims of the train accident. His Highness the Prime

Minister sent a similar cable. In other news, His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Sief Palace Chief of National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Tanzania, Kuwait to sign KD 5.4 million loan agreement

DODOMA: Foreign Minister of Tanzania Augustine Mahiga will visit Kuwait soon to sign a loan agreement worth KD 5.4 million (around \$18 million), for an irrigation project in Mkuranga district. Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) will offer the loan to Tanzania.

In a statement to yesterday during a diplomatic function, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Tanzania Jassem Al-Najem said that Minister Mahiga addressed the projects implemented by the embassy in the humanitarian field, commending Kuwait's for its numerous contributions. He referred to a disability program funded by the Kuwaiti government late last year that greatly achieved success in focusing on needs of this group in communities in both Tanzanian mainland and islands of Zanzibar.

During the state budget presentation in the parliament last month, Minister Mahiga discussed the projects by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) in Tanzania, which amounted to about \$65 million in 2017. — KUNA



DODOMA: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Tanzania Jassem Al-Najem (left) presents a gift to Foreign Minister of Tanzania Augustine Mahiga during a diplomatic function in Dodoma, Tanzania. — KUNA

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Cabinet discusses outcomes of Amir's China visit

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti cabinet discussed during its weekly meeting yesterday the outcome of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's state visit to China and his meetings in Beijing.

The cabinet, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, said that His Highness the Amir's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping would further cement relations and cooperation between the two countries in different spheres, Deputy Premier and Interior Minister, Acting Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah said in a statement. Kuwait and China signed earlier yesterday cooperation agreements in different domains like defense industries, telecommunications, oil, investment and e-commerce.

Meanwhile, the cabinet approved an international agreement on combating illegal trade in tobacco, the final documents of the international radio communication conference, cooperation agreement on national guards training with Turkey, cooperation agreement between custom departments in Kuwait and the US, a multi-party accord on tax and profits' transference treaties, as well as joining the tax authorities union in Islamic countries.

The cabinet also approved drafts agreements on culture and art with Britain, Turkmenistan and Vietnam. It also approved establishment of cooperation committees with Turkmenistan and Comoros, marine transport and ports agreement with Egypt,



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

tourism agreement with Egypt, and electricity accord with Bahrain. The government, on the other hand, congratulated the US on the 242nd Independence Day, and wished the American people further development and prosperity.

The cabinet meanwhile condemned deadly attacks in Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Tunisia, extending condolences for families of the victims and wishing speedy recovery for the wounded. The cabinet condemned an attack on a check point in Saudi city of Qassim that killed a security man and a civilian. The cabinet, according to an official statement, expressed full support to all measures taken by the Saudi government to restore security and stability of the Kingdom.

The government also condemned the terrorist attack on the Somali Interior Ministry building in Mogadishu that killed and wounded many people. It denounced a terrorist assault on Tunisian forces in Jandouba province that killed at least eight personnel. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry held a reception yesterday to welcome its new undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham, which was attended by top ministry officials, led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Local

Kuwait, China ink several agreements, MoUs to boost ties in various fields

Amir, Chinese President chair official talks in Beijing



BEIJING: His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend a ceremony that featured signing several agreements between the two countries yesterday.



His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping lead their respective countries' official delegations during official talks between Kuwait and China. —Amiri Diwan, KUNA and AFP photos

BEIJING: Kuwait and China yesterday signed several agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) aimed at boosting ties. During a ceremony held at the Great Hall of People in Beijing in the presence of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping, Kuwait - represented by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah - and China - represented by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi - signed a cooperation mechanism between the governments of the two states.

A cooperation protocol to boost defensive industry cooperation was signed by Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and executive at the Chinese State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense Zhang Youxia. A bilateral cooperation agreement was signed between Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State of Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh as well as Vice Chairman of the Chinese National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) Zhang Yong. A MoU on e-commerce cooperation was signed between Kuwaiti Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan and Chinese International Trade Representative and Deputy Minister of Commerce Fu Ziyang.

A MoU to encourage investment was signed by Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Mishal Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) Jiang Zengwei. A cooperation agreement was signed between Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation (Sinosure). KPC's CEO Nizar Al-Adsani and Sinosure's Wang Yi inked the deal.

A memo on developing smart applications for Kuwait's Al-Harir City (Silk City) and Boubyan Islands projects was signed between Chairman of the Board and CEO of Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CIT-RA) Salem Al-Othainah and Chairman of Huawei Technology Liang Hua.

Smart cities

The agreement signed with Huawei Company aims to implement the smart cities strategy in the country, Othaina said, noting that the memorandum was divided into four sections connected with the development of

intelligent infrastructure networks, security, virtual systems and the digital transformation of various industries and central managements in Kuwait.

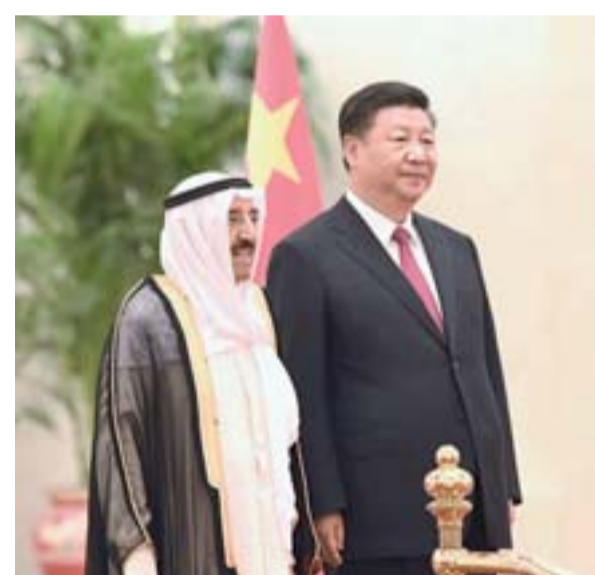
He also explained that the memorandum had touched on the implementation of smart cities in Kuwait, including the Silk (Al-Harir) City and Kuwaiti islands development projects. He added that both sides discussed the Mubarak seaport, proposed to be built in Boubyan Island northeast of Kuwait, as an initial starting point for smart cities projects, noting that the MoU will include a joint strategy in this regard. The MoU also aimed to exchange expertise, technological innovation, general design and consultancy to transform Mubarak seaport project into an intelligent facility. The cost of this consultation and design will be on Huawei Company, Othaina said.

Meanwhile, the MoU signed on e-commerce aims to boost cooperation in facilitating trade between the two countries and achieve sustainable development in the field, Roudhan said. The three-year deal also focuses on boosting electronic trade in the fields of joint studies, sharing experience in making policies, creating dialogue between private and public sectors and organizing joint training courses. Moreover, it will provide opportunities to develop small and medium-sized enterprises in different fields including tourism and leisure, which will create more job opportunities.

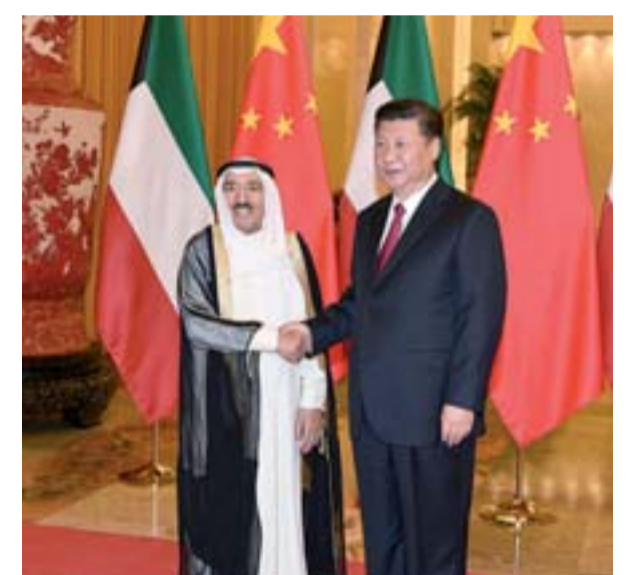
Official reception

The reception ceremony for the official state visit of His Highness the Amir and his accompanying delegation to China was held earlier yesterday at Great Hall of the People in Beijing with the presence of President Xi and senior officials. After the ceremony, His Highness the Amir and President Xi presided over the official talks between Kuwait and China. The discussions focused on the historic bilateral ties in addition to ways and means to develop the partnership on all possible domains, especially within economy. The talks, highlighted by a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, also touched on coordinating efforts within the regional and international spheres, as well as issues of common interest. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir extended an official invitation to President Xi to visit the country.

President Xi later held a dinner banquet at the Great Hall of People in Beijing in honor of His Highness the Amir and his accompanying delegation. His Highness the Amir's accompanying delegation includes Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-



His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend the official reception ceremony.



Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomes His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

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 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.

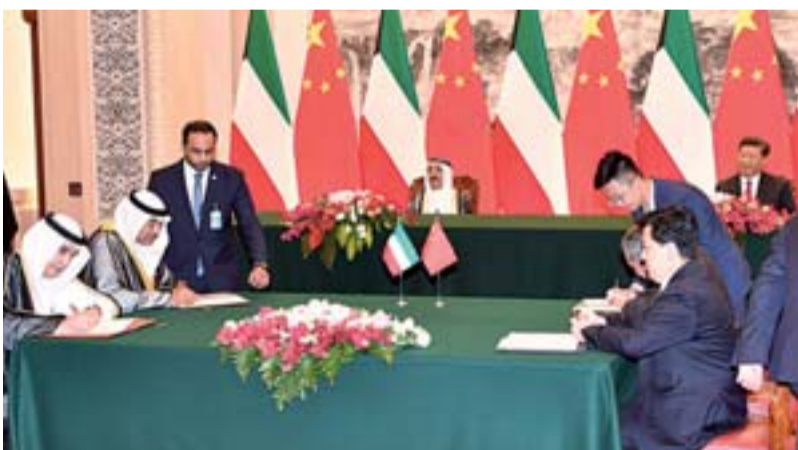
The delegation also gathered the Chairman and CEO of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority, Eng. Salem Al-Othaina, Director General of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development's (KFAED) Abdulwahab Al-Bader, Head of Media and Cultural Affairs at Amiri Diwan Yousef Hamad Al-Roumi, Head of Political and Economic Affairs at Amiri Diwan Sheikh Fawaz Al-Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah, Director General of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr Meshal Jaber

Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chief Executive Officer of the apparatus for developing the Silk City (in Al-Sabbah) and Boubyan Island, Faisal Al-Medlej and top officials at Amiri Diwan, Foreign Ministry and oil Ministry.

Strategic value

Minister Hajraf described the Amir's official state visit to China as being of extreme strategic value, saying that the event would hopefully further bolster relations between the two sides. The official rounds of talks had touched on various political and economic issues, said Hajraf who indicated that the Kuwaiti side informed their Chinese counterparts of their plans for the development of Al-Harir city and a number of Kuwaiti Islands.

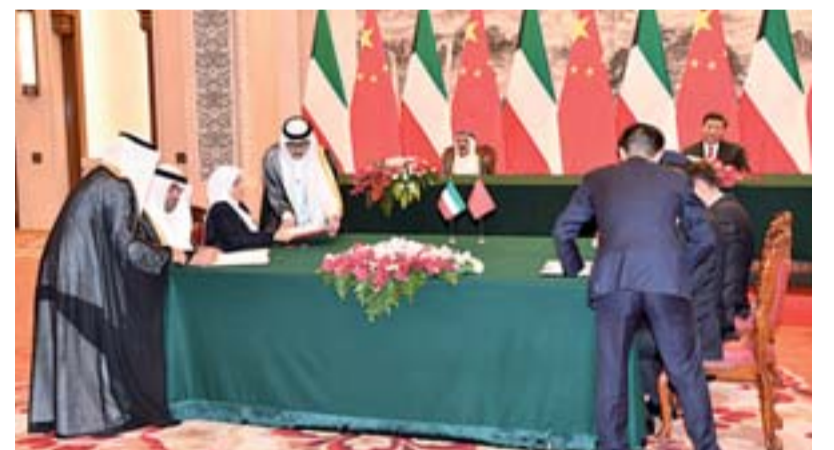
China is welcomed to invest in Kuwait, affirmed Hajraf, adding that his country was keen on exploring business opportunities offered by China. The two sides have succeeded in inking seven agreements and memorandum of understandings that will contribute to the development of relations on various domains, said the Kuwaiti minister, indicating that "the Chinese side have showcased great interest integrated economic cooperation with Kuwait." —KUNA



His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping look on as officials sign cooperation agreements between the two countries.



Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi pose for the cameras after signing a cooperation mechanism between the governments of the two states.



Kuwaiti and Chinese officials sign cooperation agreements between the two countries.



Children welcome His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



Members of His Highness the Amir's accompanying delegation are seen during the official reception ceremony.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Al-Jahra Gate, one of five main gates of Kuwait's Wall, located on the edge of Jahra Road in Kuwait City. Kuwait's 3rd wall was built in 1920 to fend off attacks on Kuwait City. Its five gates were kept as memorials upon the wall's demolition in 1957. In addition to Jahra, the gates include Dasman, Al-Shaab, Al-Shamia, and Al-Maqsab. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

Alghanim Industries supports low-income women entrepreneurs

In collaboration with 33 Boutique; a Ministry of Social Affairs initiative

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region, announced its ongoing support for low-income women entrepreneurs through its sponsorship of 33 Boutique, an 'Own Effort' project in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the Kuwait Awqaf Public Foundation.

Boutique 33 provides comprehensive support for low-income women entrepreneurs, including monetary and moral support in addition to providing them with all the necessary skillsets to prepare them for launching their business and reaching financial independence. Joining the incubator is exclusive to women between the ages of 20 and 50, who are already registered to receive monetary aid from the Ministry of Awqaf. Boutique 33 also holds exhibitions and pop-up markets for a rotating number of 33 businesses throughout the year.

Commenting on this initiative, Director of Corporate Communications at Alghanim

Industries Abdullateef Al-Sharikh noted: "At Alghanim Industries, we are always excited and eager to expand long-standing partnerships with local and regional entities, to support aspiring entrepreneurs. The spirit of this initiative shares some of our fundamental values and focus areas, such as supporting entrepreneurs and empowering women. We wish all the participants in this business incubator continued success and prosperity."

Meanwhile, the founder of 'Own Effort' project Dalal Subayil presented Alghanim Industries with a plaque of appreciation for the generous contribution to the project, underscoring the great example for corporate social responsibility set by the company. "We appreciate the generous support of Alghanim Industries, and the opportunity to work with such a reputable organization of this size to support the participants of our program. This isn't new to an organization of such a long track of activities that support entrepreneurs

and propel them to reach their highest potential. We have received a large number of applicants that exceeded our expectations," she noted.

Throughout its contribution with Alghanim Industries, the incubator was able to successfully hold a pop-up market in the Avenues Mall during the holy month of Ramadan. During this 11-day event, business owners were able to interact with a large segment of audiences and customers, which is one of the main goals of the project.

Alghanim Industries works extensively throughout the year with a number of regional and local reputable entities, such as the UNCHR, the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, AMIDEAST, and Injaz Kuwait. Throughout its contribution and collaboration with these entities, Alghanim Industries reiterates the deep-rooted value of giving back to the community, which is engrained within its Kuwaiti identity.



KUWAIT: 'Own Effort' team poses with Abdullateef Al-Sharikh and Hadeer Shelash from Alghanim Industries.

EQUATE decreases greenhouse gases by over 1 percent

KUWAIT: Continuing its role as a global petrochemical enterprise committed to sustainability, the EQUATE Group issued its 2015-2016 sustainability report that details its combined performance after acquiring MEGlobal in 2015.

As the fifth account of its type issued since 2012, the EQUATE Group's Sustainability Report 2015-2016 was developed according to the guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to cover the Group's locations in Kuwait, UAE, Canada and the USA. In addition, it details EQUATE's Sustainability Strategy 2025.

EQUATE's President and CEO Dr Ramesh Ramachandran, said: "The Group seeks to create sustainable development through the triple bottom line of economy, society and the environment in all our locations. Sustainability is a core strategic objective that we want to achieve with our stakeholders. It is applicable to every aspect of our enterprise, and is not an expression that we use lightly".

"Having launched our Sustainability Strategy 2025 during 2016, we renewed our focus and plan to enhance the

impact of our activities throughout the world. The strategy consists of 16 initiatives identified under three core themes - Build, Innovate and Impact. These are elements that we aspire to achieve in all parts of our business," added Dr Ramachandran.

Covering a number of sustainability topics, major highlights from the report include:

- Total amount of community investments reached \$2.8 million in 2015 and 2016.
- An increase in the economic value retained from zero to \$37.5 million during 2015 to 2016.
- An increase of over 119 percent in the direct economic value generated from \$1.619 million to \$3.557 million throughout 2015 to 2016.
- A decrease of over 58,000 tons of direct greenhouse gas emissions representing a 1.14 percent reduction between 2015 and 2016.
- An achieved goal of zero regulatory fines.
- EQUATE's sustainability roadmap until 2025 and overall realized progress.
- Alignment with the UN Sustainable Goals (SDGs) and the Kuwait National development plan 2035.



Dr Ramesh Ramachandran

KAMCO hosts Generation 8 of Proteges

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment firm with one of the largest AUMs in the region, hosted the Generation 8 Proteges, as part of the Kuwait Projects Company's (KIPCO) strategic partnership with the youth mentorship program, at the American University of Kuwait's (AUK) auditorium. The workshop, titled 'KAMCO Day', is part of KAMCO's ongoing corporate social responsibility initiatives, in collaboration with KIPCO

Group companies, that focus on educating and empowering the youth to become tomorrow's leaders.

The workshop kicked off with an opening speech delivered by Chief Business Development Officer of KAMCO, Faisal Hasan, who gave a brief introduction about KAMCO's operations, products and services. Hasan's speech was followed by a Q&A session allowing the Generation 8 candidates to get a better understanding about the investment firm and the investment sector. The next segment of the workshop was led by Proteges Director and Mentor, Shamlan Al-Bahar, who assisted the candidates in a key brainstorming session to develop an idea and strategize for their upcoming project.

Hasan said, "KAMCO is a proud and ongoing supporter of the Proteges mentorship program, a program that challenges and drives the youth

towards discovering their true potential while developing key skills that will benefit their future careers. It has been a privilege for KAMCO to witness the previous generations go through the different stages of this one of a kind program in Kuwait, and now we get to witness the 8th generation."

He also said, "It is crucial for organizations to implement and monitor their social responsibilities, regardless of what sector they operate in, to contribute towards achieving a more sustainable economy. KAMCO's annual CSR agenda focuses primarily on issues related to health, education and the environment. These initiatives, carried out by the Proteges mentorship program, fall in line with our corporate social responsibility and personal goals to enhance and promote education while driving the youth to expand their reach and impact in our society."



KUWAIT: Faisal Hasan poses with Generation 8 candidates.

Local

Legalese

Intellectual property rights for writers



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

As a lawyer, legal columnist and bookstore owner, I have always had a passion for the power of words as a means to transforming knowledge, wisdom or even creativity through writing. Today's article is dedicated to all the aspiring writers and creative content creators (your local blogger).

Copyrighting your work

Question: As a writer, I want to copyright my work. Where do I go, and what information should I know?

Attorney Fajer: Copyrighting in the State of Kuwait is done at the Public Library, which is located on the Arabian Gulf Road. Copyrighting is done very quickly, and is done internationally for writers for a minimal fee. The copyright is valid for 50 years usually, and the author has the following rights:

1. To have their name or an anonymous name as a writer.
2. The author has the right to ban any changes or edits to their work, or to order the court to do so.
3. To have all mentions of their work cited to the author.
4. To ban any amendments or rewrites of their works.

What can you copyright?

Question: I am a creative person working on a wide range of artists' pieces, and I would like to know what can I or can't I copyright?

Attorney Fajer: Yes you can copyright your writings, in fact as a general rule, you can copyright any written works such as books, editorial pieces such as poems, songs, and lectures, also theatrical works and podcasts, any art, photography, maps, illustrations, computer programs i.e. coding, translations and research. You cannot copy general ideas, official documents or daily news and events.

For questions or queries, please email us at info@ftl-legal.com.

Salmonella, other bacteria found in Hawally restaurant food samples

Owner blames ex-partner of poisoning food 'as revenge'

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Test results on samples taken from a Hawally restaurant where nearly 300 customers were recently hospitalized with food poisoning came positive for contamination with salmonella and other types of bacteria, said sources familiar with the results. The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) had received samples of the food served by the popular falafel joint, and tests revealed traces of salmonella and other bacteria which makes the food completely inedible, the sources noted.

Other sources said meanwhile that the owner, who is currently detained with his staff members pending investigations, accused his former partner, a Syrian man, of conspiring with one of the restaurant's staff members, and had him contaminate the falafel, which resulted in poisoning a large number of customers. The sources added that the former partner would be summoned for interrogation as well.

On a related concern, PAFN urged Kuwait Municipality to hand over authority of the main food lab to it, said the capital food and nutrition department's manager Abdul Rahman Al-Fares. He noted that food inspectors are incapable of detecting food contamination by virtual inspection, adding that samples have to be collected and examined in labs, which would enable routine inspection rounds to examine food and prevent any further poisoning cases.

Govt debt

The government paid off KD 650 million as part of its KD 6.97 billion general debt, as per the end of March 2018, said informed sources, noting that the debts were in the form of bonds due for local banks. The sources explained that KD 200m were paid in April, KD 150m in May, KD 200m in June and KD 100m on July 4. Following the payments, the state's general debt drops by 9 percent, the sources explained, adding that further KD 550 million of the debt would be due by the end of the year. Furthermore, financial sources stressed that the debt is primarily paid from the state's general reserve, which have been decreasing gradually after the government failed to convince the parliament to pass a law allowing it obtain new loans.

Staff promotion

The chairman of the Public Anticorruption Authority denied that the board of trustees issued any decisions to ban authority employees from being promoted to directors, Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Dr Fahad Al-Afasi said. He added that the board of trustees set both general and special conditions for some vacant positions in the authority's organizational structure.

On a different concern, Afasi said that the total cost of preparing the authority's current headquarters reaches KD 6.342,000, adding that once the authority moves to its new building, the finance ministry would offer the current building for privatization.

Summer break

Various secondary stage school administrations officially

concluded their school year yesterday and started a summer vacation that runs through September 2, 2018. This year's 52-day summer break for high school staff is considered the least compared to other educational stages. In this regard, education ministry sources said that secondary stage schools had exerted relentless efforts this year, adding that the summer vacation offers an opportunity to reconsider the success of primary stage pupils and help prepare them for further stages, with hopes of eventually helping limit complaints made about the outcomes of the educational process.

Free gas production

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) CEO Jamal Jaafar stressed that free gas production would reach 500 million cubic feet per day by the end of this fiscal year, while light crude oil's daily production would reach 200,000 barrels.

Jaafar added that KOC's strategic goal is to increase gas production's capacity to one billion cubic feet a day, and light crude oil to 275,000 barrels a day by 2022-2023. He also stressed that KOC is keen on developing its free gas and light oil production's capabilities, which are the base of its strategy for 2040. Further, Jaafar said that discovering free gas and light crude oil came within KOC's constant work to find alternatives to the use of crude oil and its derivatives in generating electricity. He added that KOC always works on turning strategic goals into well-studied working plans.

Construction material

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry decided to citizens subsidized construction material to citizens for only once in their lifetimes, even if a citizen obtains more than one construction loan. In this regard, informed sources said that unless a citizen had received full subsidies when applying to build his first house, the concerned committee agreed that he would have the right to complete his share by a maximum of KD 30,000. "70 percent of the subsidies paid by the government in general goes to subsidized food stuff goods, while the balance goes to subsidized construction material paid to citizens who receive housing loans," explained the sources, noting that the parliament had rejected a proposal to increase housing loans to KD 100,000.

Passports centers

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah stressed that he had instructed his new undersecretary to open by next week six new centers to deliver new Kuwaiti passports, in addition to the six that already exist. The old centers would be allocated to submit applications, while the new ones would be used to deliver the passports, he added. Speaking during a reception that the Ministry of Interior (MOI) held yesterday to welcome its new undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Nahham, Jarrah said that the new centers would enhance the delivery of new passports. Further, Jarrah announced that new assistant undersecretaries, directors and assistant directors would be appointed in various MOI sectors within a month.

Motorist killed, two injured in 6th Ring Road crash

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A motorist was killed and two others were hospitalized with head injuries following an accident reported on Sixth Ring Road yesterday. Paramedics, firefighters and police rushed to the scene immediately after the accident was reported, and discovered that one driver had succumbed to his injuries. His body was left for forensics' personnel, while the other two persons involved in the accidents were rushed to the nearest medical facility. An investigation was opened to determine the cause of the accident.

Man found dead in Jahra stable

A Kuwaiti man was found dead in a Jahra stable. Police and paramedics rushed to the scene in response to an emergency call in which a man reported that he found his friend motionless inside a rented stable. The man was pronounced dead on the scene, and investigations are underway to determine whether foul play is involved or not.

Drunks arrested

Six teenagers were arrested while being under the influence of alcohol, and they were sent to the juveniles' prosecution for further action. A vehicle carrying four boys and two girls was pulled over at a street in Ahmadi for reckless driving, and police arrested them after discovering they were intoxicated. Meanwhile, 24 persons were arrested during campaigns in Ahmadi governorate.

Thefts

An Egyptian woman accused her friend of stealing her gold bracelet while they were visiting a mutual friend in Fintas. Investigations are underway. Separately, Ahmadi detectives are looking for an Egyptian man who posed as real-estate broker, and made a deal with a citizen to manage his buildings. The suspects disappeared after collecting rents from tenants in the buildings that the citizen owns.

Smuggling foiled

Nuwaiseeb customs officers caught a man who had a pistol and ammunition. Officers became suspicious when they noticed that the man was nervous, so he was searched and the pistol was found. He was taken to the proper authorities for further action.

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Delhi's top court upholds death sentences over 2012 gang-rape

Page 9

Page 9

Landslide warnings as Japan digs through rain devastation



LONDON: Britain's new Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Brexit Minister) Dominic Raab leaves 10 Downing Street in central London yesterday following his appointment. — AFP

May-day: Foreign, Brexit ministers quit

Davis and his deputy dramatically quit overnight

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May's government imploded yesterday as Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson followed Brexit minister David Davis in resigning over her master-plan for Britain's future outside the EU. Davis and his deputy dramatically quit overnight over May's plan to retain strong economic ties with the European Union even after Britain leaves in March next year.

Brexit cheerleader Johnson then delivered a stunning second blow when he also marched out, triggering speculation that May could face an imminent leadership contest. May's Brexit plan-agreed by the cabinet on Friday in the hope of unblocking negotiations with Brussels due to resume on Monday-has now cost her two of her top four ministers, throwing her administration and authority into turmoil. "This afternoon, the prime minister accepted the resignation of Boris Johnson as foreign secretary," her Downing Street office said in a three-sentence statement. "His replacement will be announced shortly. The prime minister thanks Boris for his work." Johnson criticized the Brexit blueprint in private but has so far refrained from public comment.

Downing Street swiftly appointed eurosceptic housing minister Dominic Raab to Davis's job, and said May was looking forward to working with him to deliver Britain's departure from the EU in March. The resignation of Davis,

with a stinging warning that Britain was "giving too much away too easily" in Brexit talks, was a blow to May just days after she declared a truce among her warring ministers.

All eyes are now on the next move by Brexit hardliners in her centre-right Conservative Party. But the appointment of Raab, a leading Brexit supporter, suggests Tory Brexiteers are divided. Davis himself said it would be "wrong" if his departure led to a full-fledged rebellion, insisting that "of course" May would survive.

May will address parliament later to explain her proposal for Britain to adopt EU rules on goods after Brexit, and is also expected to speak to Conservative MPs. The plan was agreed by cabinet ministers during marathon talks on Friday, where even those wanting a clean break from the EU fell into line. The deal meant that for the first time since the vote for Brexit in June 2016, Britain has a detailed proposal to take to Brussels, and still hopes to agree a deal by October.

May's spokesman told reporters: "There was an agree-

ment reached on Friday and we look forward to taking that agreement forward in negotiations." He added: "We believe it will deliver a positive Brexit, that's what we're focused on." European Commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas said the change of ministers was not a problem and that the EU was ready to negotiate "24/7". The EU "will continue to negotiate in goodwill, bona fide, with Prime Minister May and the UK negotiators in order to reach a deal", he said. May spoke to Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker, EU president Donald Tusk and the leaders of Ireland, Sweden and Malta over the weekend to discuss her plans, and is meeting Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz in London later Monday.

'Reluctant conscript'

In his resignation letter to May late Sunday, Davis warned that on Brexit, "the general direction of policy will leave us in at best a weak negotiating position, and possibly an inescapable one". Her plan would "make the supposed

control by parliament illusory rather than real", and proposals for a "common rulebook" on goods "hands control of large swathes of our economy to the EU".

Davis said his job required "an enthusiastic believer in your approach, and not merely a reluctant conscript". Speaking to BBC radio on Monday, he said he hoped Britain would "resist very strongly any attempt to get any further concessions". May replied in a letter rejecting "your characterization of the policy we agreed", which she said would see powers currently held by the EU returned to Britain.

Davis was appointed after the referendum to head up the newly created Department for Exiting the EU and became the public face of Brexit, leading the British delegation in talks with Brussels. His role had been increasingly overshadowed in recent months as May and her aides took a bigger role, and had reportedly threatened to quit several times as they moved towards closer ties with the EU post-Brexit.

Brexit hardliners have welcomed Davis's move, with Conservative MP Peter Bone saying: "The PM's proposals for a Brexit in name only are not acceptable." The main opposition Labour Party said the government was in "absolute chaos". "It is now clearer than ever that Theresa May does not have the authority to negotiate for Britain or deliver a Brexit deal that protects jobs and the economy," spokesman Keir Starmer said. — AFP



Eyes now on the next move by hardliners

Turkey-funded mosque stirs unease in Cyprus

NICOSIA: In the flat sunbaked fields north of the Cypriot capital Nicosia, a huge Turkey-funded mosque opening this week has caused a stir in the largely secular Muslim society. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is to attend the opening ceremony, expected to take place on Tuesday, of the 3,000-capacity house of worship, with its four minarets and built in classic Ottoman style.

While many have welcomed it, the mosque has fuelled concern among some Turkish Cypriots that Ankara is increasing its dominance over the north of the divided island. "This mosque symbolizes the Islamist mentality, the Sunni Islam mentality and also an imperialist mentality," Sener Elcil, head of the Turkish Cypriot Teachers Union, told AFP at his Nicosia office. "The Turkish Cypriot community is secular. We are not a fundamentalist Islamist community."

Elcil and many other leftist Turkish Cypriots strongly oppose Ankara's dealings in northern Cyprus, which broke away after Turkey invaded the island in 1974 following a Greek Cypriot coup seeking union with Greece. Turkey is the only country to recognize the unilaterally declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, whose administration it bankrolls and where it has some 35,000 soldiers stationed. "Erdogan's policy is to transform the Turkish Cypriot identi-

ty," said Izzet Izcan, a former member of parliament and founder of the socialist United Cyprus Party who has urged members of the government to boycott the opening ceremony. "Our identity is based on Cyprus. We have a lot of common identity with Greek Cypriots, and Armenians and Maronites, all of which have a presence on the island," said Izcan. "What Erdogan is trying to do is to annex the north, to build another identity... They are trying to make us good Muslims for their way of life, and pure Turks as they wish to see us."

'Ottoman ancestors'

Elcil and Izcan are at the forefront of calls against Ankara's strengthening pull on Turkish Cypriot life. "We all know (the goal) behind this is to assimilate and to integrate the north part of Cyprus to Turkey," Izcan said. In a rare protest in Nicosia on Friday, members of Elcil's teachers union demonstrated against the mosque under the slogan "put schools and hospitals first".

"What our country needs is science, education and health, (but) priority is being given to investments in religion," demonstrators said in a statement. The Hala Sultan mosque is the centerpiece of a string of Turkish-funded projects in the same area on the capital's outskirts, including an Islamic high school, several universities and housing projects for students, many of them from Turkey.

Outside the towering new structure with its four 60-meter minarets, local resident Ayhan Ankurt was ecstatic. The 61-year-old spent months collecting signatures from other residents in the area in favour of building the mosque. "Every day I've prayed for this mosque," he said. "With the help of this mosque

we have found our identities... and our connection with our Ottoman ancestors." Hala Sultan is a sized-down copy of the Selimiye mosque in Edirne, Turkey, built during the Ottoman empire reputedly with tax revenues collected in Cyprus. It is also not to be confused with the Hala Sultan Tekke shrine on the Greek Cypriot side of the island, a pilgrimage destination revered by Muslims as the burial site of a companion of the Prophet Mohammed.

'Not an innocent thing'

"These kinds of buildings, they really add something to the community," said Mustafa Tumer, a 51-year-old marketing professor at the Social Sciences University next to the mosque. A few kilometers (miles) away in the winding streets of Nicosia's Old Town, 75-year-old shopkeeper Zihni Kalmaz was unimpressed.

"Those minarets! They're huge! And why so many? If I want to pray I can pray on my own or in my shop, but God is here," he said, pointing to his chest. "If you want to build a mosque, you also have to repair your schools. The school is more important for me. We want to send our kids to good schools." Elcil of the teachers union said it cost more than \$30 million to build the superstructure, which dwarfs the island's other generally squat, two-storey mosques. Official figures on its cost were unavailable.

"They could build a huge hospital for less... They could build more than 20 schools, which we need," he said. "Instead, they want to build a mosque... on every street in northern Cyprus," he said. "This is the policy of Erdogan. To occupy the northern part (of the island). It's not an innocent thing to build a mosque in Cyprus." — AFP

Bahrain's top Shiite cleric leaves to UK for treatment

DUBAI: Bahrain's top Shiite cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim left Manama for treatment in London yesterday after his health deteriorated, his aides said. The ayatollah, in his late 70s, was stripped of his Bahraini nationality in 2016 on charges of "serving foreign interests". He flew out of the country at 10:30 AM (0730 GMT) using a temporary passport-valid for one year-issued on the orders of Bahrain's king, the aides said.

While the family has not made public the details of his condition, rights groups say the cleric has high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease. Bahrain's foreign minister tweeted Friday that the country's monarch had ordered the "facilitation of travel" for Qassim to seek treatment abroad. The cleric's health has for months been a point of contention between authorities and his family, who had refused offers to transfer him to hospital over fears he could be detained and deported.

He did however undergo surgery in December before returning to de facto house arrest, activists said. In January, a Bahraini court upheld the decision to revoke his nationality. The Gulf nation's king has offered to cover the cost of "any treatment required", Bahrain's foreign minister said Friday. Those close to Qassim, who has played a leading role

in protests against Bahrain's Sunni monarchy, said the issue of payment had not yet been decided, and it was up to the sheikh to accept or reject the king's offer.

The monarch's olive branch to the influential cleric came less than three weeks after a Bahraini court made a rare acquittal of another Shiite opposition figure, Sheikh Ali Salman, head of Bahrain's largest- and now banned- Shiite opposition group Al-Wefaq was found not guilty on charges of spying for regional rival Qatar.

Located between regional arch-rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia, Sunni-ruled Bahrain is home to a Shiite majority that has long complained of political marginalization. Security forces crushed demonstrations demanding a constitutional monarchy and an elected prime minister in 2011. The country has been rocked by unrest ever since.

Manama has long accused Tehran of backing the protests and seeking to overthrow the government. Tehran denies any involvement. Authorities have jailed dozens of high-profile activists, disbanded both religious and secular opposition groups and stripped hundreds of people of their citizenship. The strategic Gulf kingdom is a key regional ally of the United States and serves as home for its Fifth Fleet. — AFP

International

Syrian rebels say army besieging their enclave in the southern city of Deraa

Syrian army, allies step up pressure on rebels

AMMAN: The Syrian army and allied troops yesterday laid siege to the rebel-held enclave in Deraa and were poised to gain complete control of the city where the uprising against President Bashar Assad's rule first erupted, rebels said. With its advance on rebel-held parts of Deraa city, the government appeared to be piling military pressure on the insurgents even after they agreed to surrender terms last week, in a major victory for Assad.

The army was also consolidating its grip over the border area with Jordan to the east of Deraa city yesterday. Free Syrian Army rebels (FSA), once backed by the West and Jordan, have mostly handed over the area along with their heavy arms to the government after the surrender deal clinched last Friday. Backed by Russian air power, the Syrian army and its militias won a strategic victory in a 20-day offensive after they captured Nassib crossing, a vital trade route that insurgents held for three years.

Abu Shaima, a spokesman for the opposition in Deraa, said several thousand people were now encircled after the army pushed into a base west of the city without a fight. "The army and its militias have besieged Deraa completely," he told Reuters. State media said the army was spreading along the border areas with Jordan and tightening the noose on what they term as "terrorists" but made no mention of the siege of Deraa. The return of Deraa to Assad's complete control would deal a big psychological blow to the opposition since the city came to epitomise the early peaceful protests against authoritarian rule in 2011 that spread across Syria. The protests were violently crushed and paved the way for the bloody civil war.

Surrender deal

The surrender deal reached on Friday between Russian officers and rebel representatives covers Deraa city along with other towns in the southern province, which borders Jordan. Before the deal, many towns and villages in

Deraa province had been forced to agree to return to state control after a major Russian aerial bombing campaign on urban centres that led to the largest displacement of civilians in the more than seven year-long conflict.

The territorial sweep into Deraa province will allow the army for the first time to take over FSA frontlines with Islamic State militants, who occupy the Yarmouk Valley pocket south-west of Deraa along both the Israeli and Jordanian borders, opposition sources said.

“Militias have besieged Deraa completely”

"The Russian military police and the army entered Tafas town and secured a corridor through opposition territory to a frontline with Daesh," a regional intelligence officer said, using the Arab acronym for Islamic State. As part of the

surrender deal, opposition fighters not ready to make peace with the army must first be allowed to evacuate to opposition-held areas in northern Syria before the handover of weapons and the return of state sovereignty.

"There are fighters who want to go to (opposition-held) Idlib but this was rejected after we were besieged," said Abu Shaima, referring to a meeting on Sunday in which he said a go-between with the Syrian army had flatly rejected their demands to leave. The rebels say the deal also does not allow the army to move into their bastions and allows for setting up local forces from ex-rebels under the oversight of Russian military police.

"There is a lot of fear about the unknown fate that awaits us and we do not trust the Russians or regime," Shaima said, adding that remaining rebels in Deraa city were still holding their positions on its frontlines. Another opposition negotiator said a further round of talks with Russian officers was planned yesterday over the fate of Deraa and security arrangements once it returns to state rule. "We will work with the Russians on setting up a local force from the inhabitants that will prevent the entry of the army to Deraa with Russian guarantees," Abu Jihad, a negotiator said. — Reuters



Syrian government soldiers ride in an infantry-fighting vehicle in the town of Saïda in the west of Deraa province on July 7, 2018. — AFP

EU head in Libya urges for trafficker 'blacklist'

TRIPOLI: European Parliament chief Antonio Tajani in Libya yesterday called for a "blacklist" of people smugglers to be set up to help stem the flow of migrants from Africa to Europe. The European Union is grappling with the issue of migration from Africa and the Middle East and hammered out a controversial plan last week to curb the number of arrivals. People traffickers in North Africa have taken advantage of chaos in Libya since the 2011 ouster of Moamer Khadafi to send people on the perilous voyage northwards across the Mediterranean Sea.

"We have to establish a blacklist of the major traffickers...

so that police and law enforcement in Africa and in Europe can work together on a common objective," Tajani said after meeting the head of Libya's internationally backed government in Tripoli. "If we do not manage to destroy these criminal organizations, it will be very difficult to fight against illegal immigration."

Italy and Greece have until now recorded the biggest numbers of migrants crossing the Mediterranean to reach the European Union. But with the route through Libya shutting down as the Libyan coast guard increases patrols, people smugglers are setting their sights westward to routes from Morocco to Spain. Libya is split between rival factions, with the UN-backed Government of National Accord under Fayeze Al-Sarraj in Tripoli opposed by strongman Khalifa Haftar in the east of the country. A deal between Libya's vying leaders was brokered in May by France to hold elections this year, but skepticism remains that the vote will go ahead. — AFP

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International

British police rushing to solve Novichok nerve agent death

'Present a danger not just for the British but for all Europeans'

SALISBURY: British police rushed to solve a murder mystery yesterday after a woman died following exposure to the nerve agent Novichok, four months after the same toxin nearly killed a former Russian spy in an attack that Britain blamed on Moscow. Prime Minister Theresa May said she was "appalled and shocked" by the death of Dawn Sturgess, a 44-year-old mother of three who had been living in a homeless hostel in Salisbury in southwest England.

Sturgess and Charlie Rowley, 45, fell ill last weekend in the town of Amesbury, near Salisbury, the city where former double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia were attacked with Novichok in March. They have since recovered. The British government has called a meeting of its COBRA emergency committee for 1:00pm (1200 GMT). The Kremlin said it would be "absurd" to suggest Russia was involved in the death of Sturgess.

"We don't know that Russia has been mentioned or associated with this," President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "We consider that in any case it would be quite absurd." Russia is "deeply concerned by the continuing appearance of these poisonous substances on British territory," which "present a danger not just for the British but for all Europeans," Peskov added. Britain and its allies accused Russia of trying to kill the Skripals, prompting angry denials and sparking an international diplomatic crisis.

Police said they could not yet say whether the nerve agent in the Amesbury case was linked to the Salisbury attack-but it was their main line of inquiry. The head of Britain's counter-terror police also said he could not rule out further contaminations. "I simply cannot offer any guaran-

tees," said Assistant Commissioner Neil Basu, who is leading the investigation.

He said people in Salisbury should not pick up strange items such as needles, syringes or unusual containers. Whilst 21 other people have come forward with health concerns, they have been screened and "all been given the all-clear", he said. Police and public health officials insist the risk to the wider public remains low.

Police said that given the deadly dose, the British couple were believed to have become exposed to Novichok by handling a "contaminated item", with speculation that it could have been the container used to administer the nerve agent to the Skripals. Christine Blanshard, medical director at Salisbury District Hospital, where Sturgess and Rowley were being treated and where the Skripals were hospitalised, told The Daily Telegraph newspaper that staff had "worked tirelessly to save Dawn". "This latest, horrendous turn of events has only served to strengthen the resolve of our investigation team as we work to identify those responsible for this outrageous, reckless and barbaric act," said Basu. He said Rowley remained critically ill in hospital.

"Absurd" to suggest Russia was involved

'Praying for Charlie'

Residents of the homeless hostel in Salisbury where Sturgess lived, which was evacuated after the couple fell ill, expressed their devastation at the news of her death. "It could easily have happened to anyone, to me or my partner," 27-year-old Ben Jordan told AFP. "We are really, really sad. I am praying for Charlie." Around 100 counter-terrorism officers are helping in the investigation, which police said Friday could take "weeks and months".

So far, there is no evidence that the couple visited any of



SALISBURY: In this file photo taken on July 04, 2018 a general view shows the main entrance to Salisbury District Hospital. —AFP

the sites involved in the Skripal case. "Detectives will continue with their painstaking and meticulous work to gather all the available evidence so that we can understand how two citizens came to be exposed with such a deadly substance that tragically cost Dawn her life," Basu said. Sturgess collapsed on the morning of June 30 and was taken to hospital. That afternoon, Rowley fell ill at the same address in Amesbury and was also hospitalized.

On Wednesday, the government's Defense Science and Technology Laboratory at Porton Down confirmed their exposure to Novichok. Police said Sunday they were not yet able to say whether the nerve agent was from the same batch that the Skripals were exposed to. The Skripals have been released from hospital but the investigation into the attack on them continues. No arrests have been made. —AFP

At least 14 dead after raid by Nicaragua pro-govt forces

MANAGUA: A raid by pro-government forces Sunday left at least 14 people dead in Nicaragua, where hundreds have been killed since unrest broke out in April, a rights group said. Protesters in the Central American country, who are demanding the resignation of President Daniel Ortega, had barricaded roads in the areas of Diriamba and Jinotepe, 20 kilometers from the opposition bastion of Masaya.

According to videos filmed by residents and posted on social media, heavily armed groups of men in black-hooded civilian clothes were seen on Sunday in the region. Demolishing the opposition barricades, they entered the municipalities alongside police, who also surrounded the area. Mechanical equipment dismantled the barricades, opening up access to over 350 cargo trucks stranded on the highway in Jinotepe for over a month.

"This has been a horror. We have a minimum of 14 dead, but it could be more. That includes at least one anti-riot officer, one paramilitary member and two police officers," Vilma Nunez, president of the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH), told AFP. "This looked like an occupation army. They wiped out all the barricades. There are more dead whose identities we have not been able to confirm. There are a lot of arrests and injuries. A disaster," she added. —AFP

Reuters reporters to face Myanmar trial

YANGON: Two Reuters reporters accused of breaking Myanmar's draconian secrecy law during their reporting of the Rohingya crisis must face trial, a judge ruled yesterday, on a charge that carries up to 14 years in jail. Myanmar nationals Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, were both "charged under the state secrets act", Judge Ye Lwin told the court, setting a first court date for July 16.

The pair have been held in custody for nearly seven months for pre-trial hearings. They were arrested in December and accused of possession of leaked sensitive material linked to security operations in crisis-hit Rakhine state. Reuters says the pair are innocent and were simply doing their job by reporting on a massacre of Rohingya Muslims and has urged the judge to dismiss the case. But Judge Ye Lwin decided the prosecution had shown enough proof that they men were "collecting evidence" from state officials to proceed the case to trial.

The legal action against them has been lambasted by rights groups and foreign observers as an assault on media freedom and an effort to stifle reporting on the Rohingya crisis. During pre-trial hearings the prosecution argued the reporters tried to access "secret papers" and therefore deserved punishment under the British colonial-era secrecy law. The reporters say they were entrapped by police-a version of events seemingly backed up in court by a whistle-blowing cop who testified that officers were ordered to set up the reporters.—AFP

Spain PM meets Catalan prez to defuse tensions

MADRID: Spain's new leader Pedro Sanchez met with separatist Catalan president Quim Torra for the first time yesterday, aiming to kickstart dialogue after the region's failed attempt at secession sparked a political crisis. The first meeting between a Spanish prime minister and a Catalan regional leader in more than two years started in Madrid around 0930 GMT with a handshake.

Torra, who has said he wants another independence referendum, earlier said his aim was to "find out the Socialists' view on the right of self-determination for Catalans". However Sanchez, who has been in power for a month, has urged Catalan separatist leaders to "turn the page". Several government figures have rebuffed the idea of another referendum, with Deputy Prime Minister Carmen Calvo telling the Spanish newspaper El Mundo on Sunday that the country's constitution does not allow for a territory to become independent.

"And no Spanish constitutional government will consider it," Calvo said. But a senior Catalan government official told AFP that they would bring the fractious issue up in Madrid. "Our proposal to resolve this is a referendum on self-determination. If they have a better idea, they can explain that to

us," the official said. Before the meeting, Torra tweeted that he was going "to explain to Pedro Sanchez the very serious situation that the Spanish state has created in Catalonia". "And with the willingness to listen to the solution he proposes," he added.

'Federal model?'

Sanchez overthrew his conservative predecessor Mariano Rajoy in a key parliamentary vote last month that he won with the help of Catalan separatists. In a bid to ease tensions ahead of the talks, at the start of this month six of the nine Catalan leaders being held near Madrid were transferred to Catalonia.

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, they face up to 25 years in jail.

Catalonia's separatist government pushed ahead with an independence referendum on October 1 despite it having been ruled unconstitutional by the court and Spain's central government. The referendum was followed by a unilateral declaration on independence on October 27. At the time, separatist authorities said 92 percent of the 2.2 million Catalans who cast their ballot — 43 percent of eligible voters—opted for independence.

The conservative Spanish government in power at the time, headed by Mariano Rajoy, responded by sacking the Catalan government, suspending its parliament and

Ukraine wins US assurances ahead of Trump-Putin summit

KIEV: Ukraine has secured US assurances that President Donald Trump will not betray its interests when he holds his first bilateral summit meeting with Russian leader Vladimir Putin in Helsinki on July 16. But Trump is known for his spontaneous and sometimes erratic style of doing diplomacy, and Kiev fears that behind closed doors he may prove susceptible to Putin's efforts to win US acceptance of Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

Trump and Putin will discuss a range of issues including arms control, Syria and US economic sanctions against Moscow at their summit, which could potentially prove a game-changer for Ukraine. "We received clear assurances from the American side that Ukrainian interests will be confirmed and protected (at the summit)," said a Ukrainian diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

"It is important for us that no nasty surprise happens behind our backs, and we received assurances (from the US side) that this will not happen." Kiev has counted on US diplomatic and financial support in its standoff with Moscow since the annexation

of Crimea and the outbreak of Russian-backed separatist fighting in eastern Ukraine that has killed more than 10,000 people despite a notional ceasefire.

Kiev and Washington accuse Russia of sending troops and arms to Ukraine's eastern Donbass region, which Moscow denies. Ukraine hopes Trump will push Putin to scale back Moscow's support for the separatists in eastern Ukraine and to soften his position regarding the deployment of a peacekeeping mission to that region.

Support

Some comments Trump made on the presidential election campaign trail in 2016 made Ukrainians nervous about a Trump presidency, but such worries have proved premature. Kiev has continued to enjoy strong bilateral support from the United States, and sanctions imposed against Russia after the Crimea annexation have been strengthened, not, as some feared, lifted.

In Kurt Volker, Washington appointed a hawkish special envoy to the Ukraine conflict after Trump's election victory, and went as far as providing military aid to Ukraine, a step Trump's predecessor Barack Obama had shied away from taking. Also, any concession Trump might want to make to Putin would likely meet resistance in the US Congress. But Trump's unpredictability and capacity to cause ructions among Washington's allies will give Ukraine pause for thought.

Asked in June if the United States would recognize Crimea as part of Russia,



MADRID: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez (R) meets with Catalan regional president Quim Torra (L) at the Moncloa Palace. —AFP

imposing direct rule over the wealthy north-eastern region. Madrid ended direct rule over Catalonia last month after Torra's administration was sworn in. Catalan lawmaker Meritxell Batet, who was recently appointed as Spain's minister for public administration, said the ruling Socialists wanted to amend the constitution to move toward a "federal model".

However with only 84 deputies in the 350-member house, the Socialists have little room for maneuver. Amending Spain's constitution requires a two-thirds majority of the Congress of Deputies. Sanchez "will not launch anything that is too complicated for such a minority party", said Fernando

Vallespin, a political science professor at the Autonomous University of Madrid.

No majority

"There's no majority in Spain for an amendment of the constitution. The right can block it." Vallespin said the only possible positive outcome would be if both sides accept to try and reach a compromise that grants Catalonia a special status within Spain with more power over taxation and other matters. "Sanchez will push for Catalonia to start abiding by the law again and function as a region within the constitution and Torra will say that's not his intention," Vallespin predicted. —AFP



BRUSSELS: Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko (C-R) and his delegation attend a EU-Ukraine summit with European Union Council president Donald Tusk (C-L) and European commission president Jean-Claude Juncker (4th L) to discuss trade, economic reforms, and relations with Russia. —AFP

Trump said: "We're going to have to see." A White House spokesman later stressed Washington would not recognize the Crimea annexation. Anton Gerashchenko, a prominent Ukrainian lawmaker, said any decision by Trump to support Putin's interests in Ukraine would "extremely negatively affect all US positions in the world because America was believed only when they defended their allies with their own strength".

"Ukraine, one way or another, is an ally of the United States," he told the television

channel 112. "President Obama did not protect us, he let Putin freely capture Crimea and did not support us to the proper extent." Trump's meeting with Putin will take place after a potentially fractious NATO summit in Brussels this week, where the president is likely to press Washington's allies to spend more on defense. German lawmakers and security experts fret that Trump could take decisions with Putin at their meeting without consulting his NATO allies. Ukraine is not a NATO member. —Reuters

International

Delhi's top court upholds death sentences over 2012 gang-rape

Crime that sparked national protests and soul-searching

NEW DELHI: India's top court yesterday upheld death sentences for three men convicted over the notorious 2012 gang-rape and murder of a woman that sparked national protests and soul-searching. Jyoti Singh, a physiotherapy student, was raped and left for dead by a gang of five men and a teenager on a bus in the Indian capital New Delhi in December 2012.

The 23-year-old woman, on course to be the first professional in the family, was coming home from the cinema with a male friend. The six-strong gang beat the man unconscious before raping and torturing Singh with an iron bar as the private bus drove loops through the Indian capital. She was dumped on the streets after 45 minutes with horrific internal injuries, and died 13 days later in a Singapore hospital.

The brutality of the attack, and her determination to survive long enough to identify her attackers to police, triggered angry demonstrations by tens of thousands of people in Delhi and nationwide. The case also put the treatment of women in the world's largest democracy in the global spotlight and led to heavier sentences for sex crimes. Four of the men were convicted in September 2013 for murder, gang-rape, theft, conspiracy and "unnatural acts" after a seven-month trial in a fast-track court.

All four maintain their innocence. Only three of them were involved in the appeal rejected on Monday by the Supreme Court. A fifth man, the suspected ringleader, was found dead in jail in a suspected suicide, while a 17-year-old was sentenced to three years in a detention centre and has since been released. The victim's parents on Monday welcomed the ruling, with her mother Asha Singh saying it was "very happy news". "It's a great message for the entire society. This verdict is meant for soci-

ety, women and all of us," father Badrinath Singh told reporters.

But the defendants' lawyer said he would file a curative petition, the last legal challenge. If that fails they could seek a pardon from the president. "Justice should be for everyone. Injustice has been meted out to them. The court has taken a decision against these kids (convicts) under political and media pressure," AP Singh told reporters.

40,000 rapes

Following the 2012 case and subsequent protests, some of which were violent, there were demands to overhaul the laws on sexual assaults. A panel entrusted with reviewing legislation rejected public appeals for the death penalty for rape but boosted the jail terms to 20 years. But the government then buckled under public pressure and approved capital punishment for repeat offenders.

There were some 40,000 rapes reported in India in 2016, according to the most recent official figures available. But activists say this is just the tip of the iceberg as many victims are afraid to report the crimes due to threats by perpetrators or the social stigma attached to sexual assaults. In recent months a string of sex attacks, mostly of children, have caused further outrage and protests.

Death row

This included the attack on an eight-year-old girl from a Muslim nomadic community in January. The girl from the northern Jammu region died after being kidnapped, drugged and gang raped by several men for days at a Hindu temple. This led to the introduction of the death sentence for raping girls younger than 12.

More than 1,300 people have been sentenced to



NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court building is pictured in New Delhi. —AFP

death in the past decade, and India ranks 10th globally in the number of sentences handed down. India rejected a 2007 UN sponsored moratorium plea on executions amid an ongoing debate on capital punishment.

More than 370 convicts were on death row as on December 2017, the last official count, down from 399 the previous year. But many were spared the noose by higher courts on appeals, including 35

who were acquitted outright. Out of the 371 death row convicts in 2017, 43 were awarded the ultimate punishment for crimes involving fatal sexual assaults. But India carries out very few hangings. Just four convicts have been executed in the last 25 years, including Dhananjay Chatterjee in 2004 for the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl. The three other hangings—in 2010, 2011 and 2015 — were for terrorism. —AFP

Pakistan's transgenders launch election fight

ISLAMABAD: "Give me a chance," Nadeem Kashish pleads with voters in Islamabad. Her struggle is not for power—she knows her campaign is futile—but for acceptance, as transgenders make historic bids in the upcoming Pakistan election. "I am contesting for the first time and your vote will give me my identity," Kashish tells residents as she goes from door to door in a low-income neighbourhood near the Sufi shrine of Bari Imam, in the north of the capital.

Kashish, slender and clad in yellow plaid, is contesting in a district that pits her against incumbent prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and opposition leader Imran Khan. She is armed with small black and white leaflets displaying her picture and mobile phone number which she hands out enthusiastically to everyone she meets: shopkeepers, motorcyclists, pedestrians. Two sentences printed on it amount to her manifesto: "Preserve water for the next generation" and "I need your support".

But the vote on July 25 is not about winning or losing for Pakistan's transgenders, she says. "We have been given support and space by the government (to contest the elections) and we will use this opportunity with full force." Transgenders—also known in Pakistan as "khwajasiras", an umbrella term denoting a third sex that includes transsexuals, transvestites and eunuchs—have long fought for their rights in the patriarchal, deeply conservative Islamic country.

Many modern-day transgender people in Pakistan claim to be cultural heirs of the eunuchs who thrived at the courts of the Mughal emperors that ruled the Indian subcontinent for two centuries, until the British arrived in the 19th century and banned them. In 2009, Pakistan became one of the first countries in the world to legally recognize a third sex, allowing transgenders to obtain identity cards, and several have run in elections in the past.

Japan digs through rain devastation

KUMANO: Desperate relatives braced for bad news yesterday as rescuers dug through landslides in the wake of severe floods that have killed more than 100 people and left swathes of central and western Japan under water. With the toll mounting, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe cancelled a four-country foreign trip, the government's top spokesman said.

As the floods receded, emergency workers reached previously cut-off places where authorities fear they could find more bodies in the wreckage of homes devastated by rivers of mud and debris. "I have asked my family to prepare for the worst," said Kosuke Kiyohara, 38, as he waited for word of his sister and her two young sons. "I can't reach her phone," he told AFP, sitting across from a house that had been ripped apart and tossed on its side by a huge landslide.

Rescue workers said it was still possi-

ble that survivors could be found, but acknowledged the odds were getting longer. "It has been three days... It's possible that survivors will be found, but as the days pass the likelihood becomes slimmer," a soldier at the scene said. At the end of last week rivers engorged by more than a meter of rain burst their banks, engulfing entire villages and forcing people on to rooftops to await evacuation by helicopter. Hillsides gave way under the weight of water, with deadly landslides crushing wooden houses and erasing roads. The government said at least 103 people had been killed, and with many people still missing, the tally was expected to rise further.

Search for survivors

Government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said 73,000 police, firemen and troops were taking part in the rescue effort, with 700 helicopters deployed to help. In Kumano, soldiers and other emergency workers were using diggers to clear crushed cars and mangled homes and chainsaws to cut up tree trunks. But



HIROSHIMA: This photo shows a damaged house in a flood hit area in Kumano, Hiroshima prefecture. —AFP

they were moving carefully, looking as they went for survivors, or the remains of those killed in the disaster.

In one part of Kumano, the nose of a white car was just visible underneath the top floor of a home that had been torn

from the rest of the building and swept down a hillside. Water was still flowing from the surrounding hillsides around the feet of shellshocked residents, some of whom wept as they saw their damaged district. —AFP

North Korea talks sidelining human rights: UN reporter

SEOUL: The North Korean talks process with the US and the South is sidelining the human rights of Pyongyang's oppressed citizens, the UN's top official on the issue said yesterday. In a whirlwind of diplomacy, the leader of the isolated, nuclear-armed North Kim Jong Un held an unprecedented summit with US President Donald Trump in Singapore last month, after two earlier meetings with the South's Moon Jae-in.

It was a marked contrast to the mutual threats and mounting fears of last year, instead raising hopes of reaching a deal over North Korea's arsenal, which include nuclear bombs and missiles capable of reaching the US mainland. But Pyongyang remains accused by many—including the UN—of a litany of rights abuses against its population.

Neither the joint statement issued by Trump and Kim in Singapore, nor the earlier Panmunjom Declaration signed by Kim and Moon, mentioned the issue of human rights. "It seems that those who are negotiating are losing sight of this important thing, which is would this process benefit at the end the people living in North Korea," said Tomas Ojea Quintana, the United Nations' Special Reporter on human rights in the North.

Instead Washington and Seoul were prioritizing their own concerns, he said. "In principle the interests that the president of the United States has shown is that they want to denuclearize North Korea so their territory is not in danger, and that of course is something that has to do with their own interests," Ojea Quintana told AFP in Seoul. —AFP

Duterte could extend rule under draft constitution

MANILA: The draft of a new Philippine constitution submitted to President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday would grant him new powers and a chance to extend his stay in office by up to eight years. Under the current law Duterte will have to step down in 2022, when his six-year term is up. But the proposed shift to a federal system laid out in the draft would allow him to run for two additional terms of four years each.

"The adoption of a new constitution... effectively results in a fresh start for all," said a statement from the committee that crafted the draft on the president's orders. The draft constitution has several obstacles to clear before it can become law, including a congressional debate and a public referendum. The latest polls—surveying around 1,200 people—show only 37 per cent of Filipinos back changing the constitution while 29 per cent are against it.

According to the draft the country would be divided under a federal system into 18 regions which would have a greater degree of control over their own affairs. Duterte says the reforms would shift power away from Manila elites and help seal long-stymied peace agreements with insurgent groups fighting for greater regional autonomy. —AFP

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Ethiopia and Eritrea: Decades of dispute over a border

Ethiopia and Eritrea have been bitter enemies for decades, fighting a frontier war in 1998-2000 that cost nearly 80,000 lives, but a breakthrough was signaled Sunday when they agreed to reopen embassies and borders. Here is an overview of their troubled relationship.

Eritrea breaks away

In 1962 Ethiopia's last emperor, Haile Selassie, proclaims the annexation of Eritrea, abolishing its autonomous status and effectively making it a province. Eritrea launches a war for independence that lasts nearly 30 years. In 1991 Eritrean rebels, who help overthrow the military-Marxist Ethiopian regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, seize the Eritrean capital Asmara. They install a government, gaining de facto independence. Eritrea gains full independence in May 1993, a secession blessed by Addis Ababa. However the 1,000-kilometre border between the neighbors is not properly defined.

War breaks out

In May 1998 skirmishes erupt after Eritrean forces enter the area around Badme, claiming the town under borders drawn during Italian colonial rule. Fighting spreads and in June the warring sides carry out air strikes. The ensuing conflict is marked by trench warfare and large-scale pitched battles, alternating with long periods of calm. Attempts at mediation fail. Fighting flares anew in May 2000. A fierce bombardment of Eritrea turns the conflict in favor of Ethiopia, while indirect negotiations resume in Algiers.

Peace deal reached

In June 2000 they reach an initial peace accord brokered by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It allows for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force in a border buffer zone and calls for the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from areas inside Eritrea. An official peace pact signed in December 2000 establishes a Boundary Commission, which sits at the International Court of Arbitration in The Hague, to officially demarcate the disputed frontier. Its ruling is to be "final and binding".

Border ruling rejected

In April 2002 the commission attributes to Eritrea chunks of land along the border, including the contested town of Badme. Ethiopia rejects the ruling as "illegal, unjust and irresponsible" and requests an "interpretation, correction and consultation". The commission refuses. Ethiopian forces continue to occupy the town. The standoff delays the physical demarcation of the border in terms of the commission's ruling. Tensions rise between the two sides with gunfire, landmines and troop movements near the border.

Stalemate

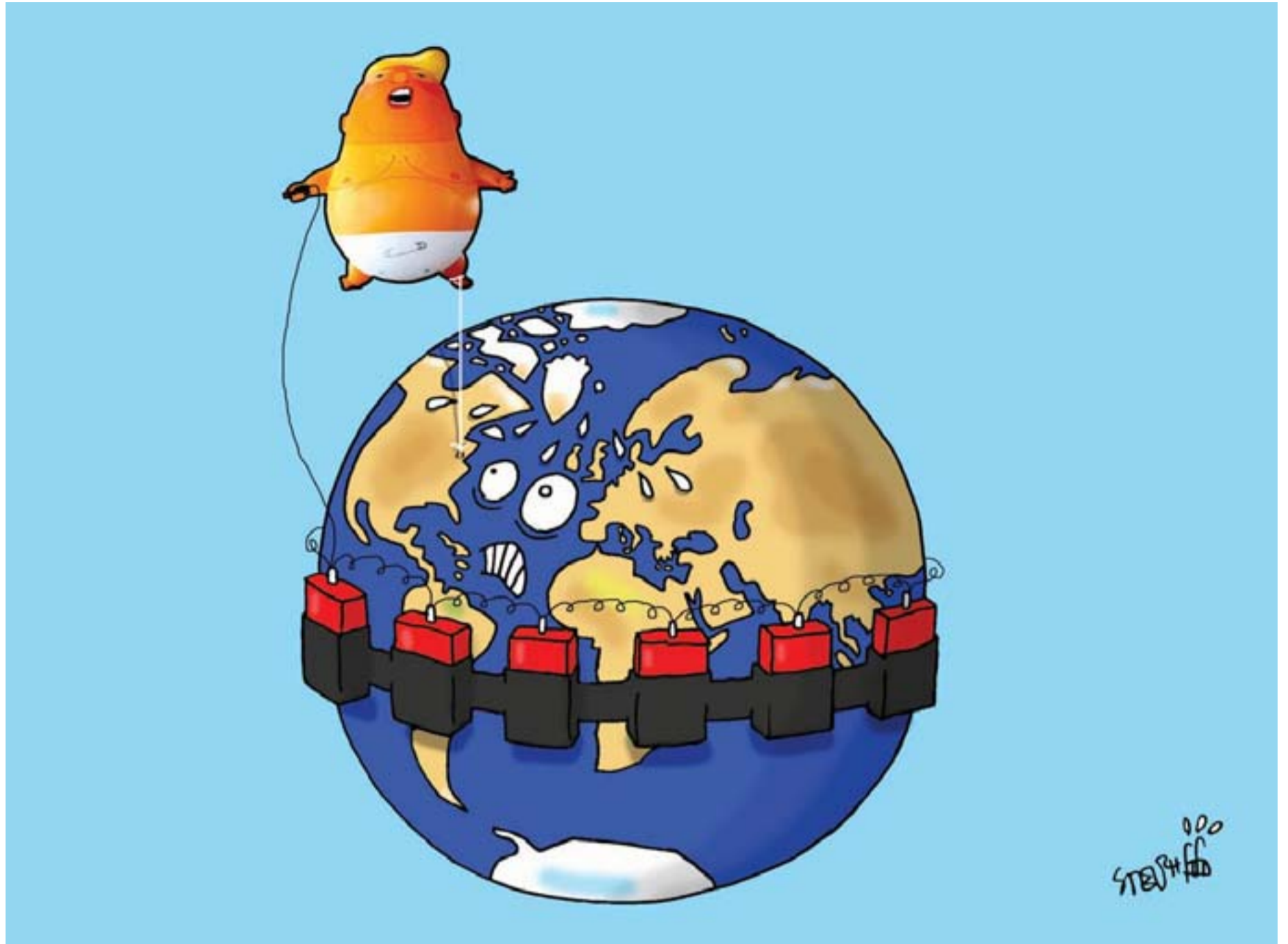
In May 2006, amid fears of a new all-out war, talks are held in London on resuming the demarcation of the border but fail, the neighbors accusing each other of holding to inflexible positions. In June Ethiopia claims to have killed more than 110 rebels allegedly sent by Eritrea to destabilize the country, a claim denied by Eritrea. Meanwhile fears arise that the feuding neighbors may be using Somalia as a proxy battleground. As the dispute drags on, border regions experience regular attacks and incidents.

Concession, breakthrough

In June 2018 Ethiopia's new prime minister, Abiy Ahmed, announces his country will abide by the 2002 ruling requiring it to cede territory, including Badme, and withdraw its forces. Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki responds positively and sends a delegation to Addis Ababa to plan for future action. Talks are announced between the rival leaders and Abiy arrives in Asmara on July 8 for the meeting, cheering crowds lining the streets to welcome him. At dinner afterwards Abiy announces that the two countries will reopen embassies and borders between them, a major step in normalising ties. — AFP



Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed walks to make his speech during the inauguration ceremony of Djibouti. — AFP



Erdogan: Turkey's combative 'chief' with eye on history

After 15 years in office that have transformed his country, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan takes up a new mandate with expanded powers, aiming to establish himself alongside founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as the leading figure of modern Turkish history. Erdogan, 64, has in his political career overcome a stint in prison, mass protests and even a bloody coup attempt to emerge as Turkey's uncontested leader, first as premier and then as president from 2014. He has freed up constraints on religion in the officially secular but overwhelmingly Muslim state, overseen a vast program of infrastructure building he calls his "crazy projects" and implemented a more assertive foreign policy.

Supporters say Erdogan gives a voice to Turkey's conservative Muslim majority, has brought new levels of economic prosperity and commands respect on the international stage. But detractors accuse Erdogan of leading Turkey down a dangerous path to authoritarianism reminiscent of the Ottoman Sultans, pursuing an imperial foreign policy and reckless handling of the economy. In any case, Erdogan is here to stay, being sworn in Monday for a second presidential term under a new system that gives him enhanced powers and could see him stay in office to 2028.

'The heavyweight campaigner'

If there was a global contest for winning elections, Erdogan would see himself as the undisputed and undefeated heavyweight champion of the world. In the one-and-a-half decades since his ruling party came to power, Erdogan has taken part in 14 elections—six legislative polls, three referenda, three local elections and two presidential votes—and won them all. Known to his inner circle as "beyefendi" (sir) and admirers as "reis" (the chief), Erdogan prides himself on being able to woo doubters with his indefatigable campaigning. His only setback—so far—came in June 2015 elections when the AKP won the most votes but lost its overall majority for the first time.

But Erdogan swatted away the prospect of a coalition, saying such governments belonged to the days of "old Turkey". He called new elections in November 2015 where the party's majority was restored. Erdogan pressed on with an April 2017 referendum on a new constitution that abolishes the office of prime minister and that critics said resembled an autocracy, but eked out a relatively narrow win. He won 52.6 percent of the vote in the presidential elections last month, higher even than his result from the 2014 polls.

From Kasimpasa to presidency
Born in the working-class Istanbul

harbour district of Kasimpasa but brought up near the Black Sea, Erdogan gained prominence in the nascent Islamist political movements that were challenging secular domination, becoming a popular mayor of Istanbul in 1994. His term was cut short when he was convicted and then jailed for four months for inciting religious hatred when he recited an Islamist poem. But this only magnified his profile.

Founding the AKP after the previous Islamist party led by his mentor Necmettin Erbakan was banned, Erdogan spearheaded its 2002 landslide election victory and became premier less than six months later. Erdogan's signature early achievements included a series of reforms that gladdened the EU, including abolishing the death penalty and beginning a peace process with Kurdish militants.

Mass protests in summer 2013 over plans to turn an Istanbul park into a shopping mall marked the start of a more divisive era as Erdogan came out fighting, dismissing the protesters as "hooligans". Tensions further increased later that year when a corruption scandal broke implicating Erdogan's inner circle. The allegations enthralled his opponents but his supporters rubbish the claims. The accession process to join the EU ground to a halt—with Erdogan complaining

Ankara was being "kept waiting at the door"—and in 2015 the peace process for the Kurdish-majority southeast collapsed.

Close family

In its early days the AKP, lacking allies and experience, forged an alliance with Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen, who moved to permanent exile in the US in 1999 yet built huge influence in Turkish society. Gulen's former allies blamed him for masterminding the July 15, 2016 coup bid by a renegade army faction, charges he denies. The president, on holiday in the Aegean, appeared on the FaceTime app on live TV to urge supporters out onto the streets, before returning in triumph to Istanbul and describing the events as a "gift from God".

The coup bid marked a watershed moment in Erdogan's rule with some 77,000 arrested in the unprecedented purge that followed, further increasing tensions with the West. And his increasingly pugnacious style has alienated some former allies such as predecessor Abdullah Gul, a co-founder of the AKP. Family is key for Erdogan and one of his closest confidants is his energy minister and son-in-law Berat Albayrak, the husband of his eldest daughter Esra. His younger daughter Sumeyye plays a key role in a women's organization but, in contrast, his two sons are less prominent. — AFP

What do we know about gang-rape that rocked India?

India's Supreme Court yesterday upheld death sentences for three men over the infamous gang-rape and murder of a woman in New Delhi in 2012 that sparked national protests and led to tough new penalties for sexual violence. The horrific violence meted out to 23-year-old Jyoti Singh on a bus in India's capital sparked angry protests and shone unprecedented attention on the scourge of sexual crimes against women in the country. The case spurred a major overhaul of laws governing such crimes, faster prosecutions in courts and harsher punishments for perpetrators. Here are five questions and answers about the watershed case.

Who was the victim?

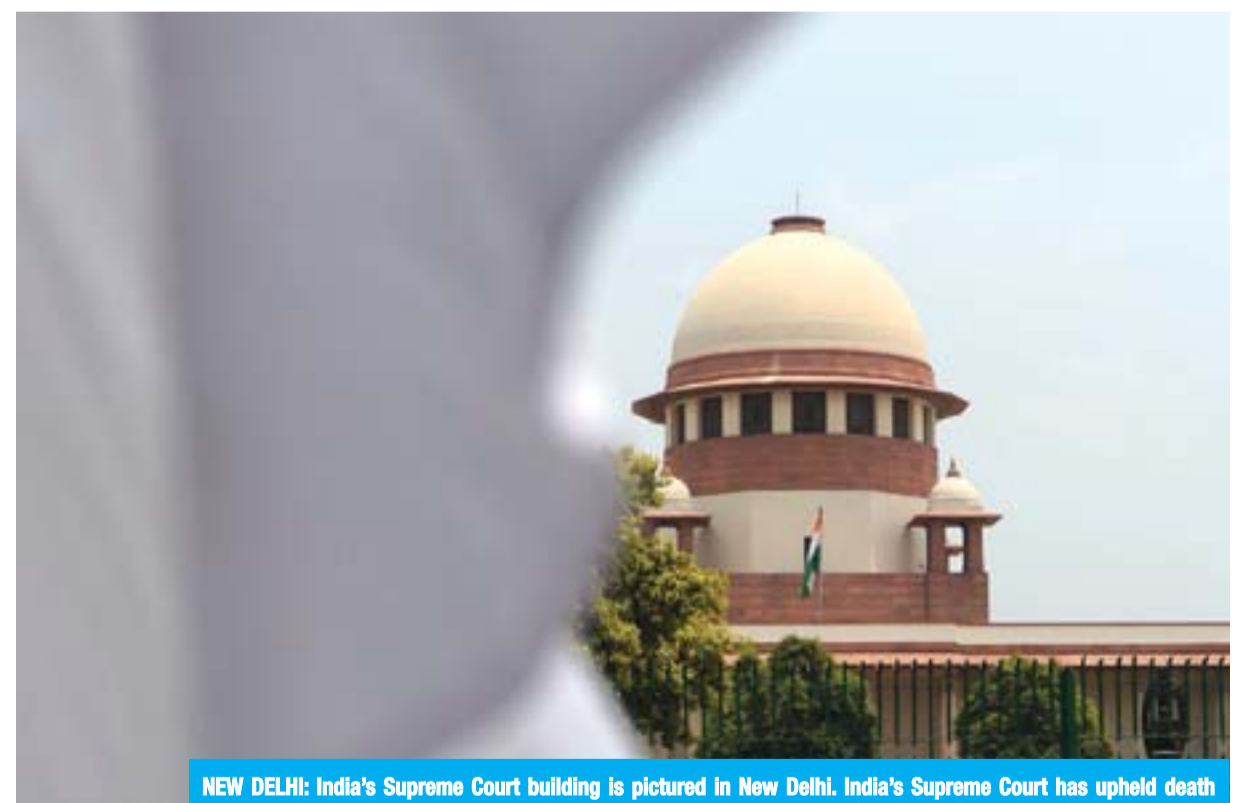
Singh's father moved the family from their small farming village in rural Uttar Pradesh state to the bustling capital in search of work. It was hoped Singh would become the first professional in the family, and all energies were channeled into her studies at a private physiotherapy college. Her father earned just \$200 per month as an airport baggage handler but sold ancestral land to help pay for his daughter's tuition. To supplement her family's meagre income, Singh worked nights at an outsourcing firm and gave private lessons to school children.

December 16, 2012

Singh was returning from the cinema after watching 'Life of Pi' with a male friend when they were offered a ride in a private bus. Six men, including a juvenile, beat Singh's friend unconscious before raping and torturing her with an iron bar as the bus drove loops through the city. Singh was dumped on the streets 45 minutes later with horrific internal injuries, and died 13 days later in a Singapore hospital.

Why is this case extraordinary?

The savagery of the attack proved a tipping point in a city where an average of six women are raped every day. Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Delhi demanding swifter justice for victims and tougher laws to



NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court building is pictured in New Delhi. India's Supreme Court has upheld death sentences handed down to three men over the gang-rape and murder of a woman in New Delhi in 2012, saying there were no grounds for a review. — AFP

punish perpetrators. It also led to much soul-searching about the treatment of women in India, which suffers from extremely high levels of sexual assault and where discrimination against women and girls is rife. As Singh struggled to survive long enough to help police identify her attackers, she became a symbol of India's long-overdue campaign to end sexual violence against women.

What happened to attackers?

The accused were low-paid migrants to New Delhi, among them a bus cleaner, a gym assistant, a fruit seller and a school dropout. Four were convicted in September 2013 for murder, gang-rape, theft, conspiracy and "unnatural acts" after a seven-month trial in a fast-track court. A fifth man, the suspected ringleader, was found dead in jail in a suspected suicide, while the 17-year-old was sen-

tenced to three years in a detention centre and has since been released. Sentencing the four in 2013, Judge Yogesh Khanna said the case fell into the "rarest of rare category" which justifies capital punishment in India. Just three were involved in the appeal rejected yesterday.

What changes came of it?

In the aftermath of the crime, a panel headed by a former chief justice was tasked with reviewing India's laws on sexual violence. The panel recommended a minimum sentence of 20 years for gang-rape, with the possibility of life imprisonment. It also called for tougher punishments for a range of sexual crimes common across India, including voyeurism, stalking and acid attacks. The government responded by introducing tougher punishments for rapists, including the death penalty for repeat offenders. — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2018

12 OPEC agrees to boost output to resupply tight markets

13 Boubyan Bank posts net profits of KD 25.7 million in H1 2018

14 Turkish Airlines signs global agreement with Amex GBT



NBK reports net profits of KD 185.9m for 1H

Al-Sayer: NBK on track to record another year of record profits

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) reported net profits of KD 185.9 million (\$613.8 million) for the period of 1H 2018 compared with KD 164.7 million (\$543.9 million) in 1H 2017, growing 12.9 percent year-on-year.

NBK's 2Q 2018 net profits reached KD 92.3 million (\$304.7 million), compared to KD 79.3 million (\$262.0 million) for the same period in 2017 recording an increase of 16.3 percent YoY.

Total assets as of end of June 2018 reached KD 26.9 billion (\$89.0 billion) up 5.7 percent compared to end of June 2017, while total shareholders' equity increased by 4.1 percent to KD 3.0 billion (\$9.9 billion). Customer loans and advances reached KD 15.2 billion (\$50.3 billion) as of end of June 2018, up 6.3 percent from last year's levels. Customer deposits grew by 7.8 percent year-on-year to reach KD 14.6 billion (\$48.3 billion) as of end of June 2018.

Asset quality remained strong with NPL/Gross Loans ratio at 1.40 percent as of end of June 2018, and NPL coverage ratio at 254 percent. The Group maintained best in class capitalization ratios. As of end-June 2018, NBK's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) reached 17.2 percent, comfortably exceeding regulatory requirements.

Nasser Al-Sayer, NBK Group Chairman said "Building on last year's strong profitability trends, NBK is on track to recording another year of record profits as demonstrated in 1H 2018 results. We continued to deliver on our conservative diversification strategy, while maintain growing at a steady pace in spite of critical challenges in the regions we operate in." "The Group's net operating income grew by 10.9 percent year-on-year to KD 442.2 million

(\$1,460.3 million), driven by robust lending volumes, improving margins in addition to strong fee business" Al-Sayer highlighted.

Al-Sayer also added that "the domestic operating environment continues to drive our positive outlook growth. We continue to witness capital spending plans in place; that was evident in the recent budget where capital spending is on an upward trend."

"Kuwait is our home market and the most important for us. We continue to see a great opportunity in Kuwait on the back of our view of the private sector playing a major role in infrastructure project execution and financing," Al-Sayer highlighted. "NBK continues to be at the forefront of this segment and the largest beneficiary given the size of the Banks' balance sheet, market, dominance, capabilities and expertise. Isam Al-Sager, NBK's Group Chief Executive Officer said: "The Group has been delivering strong performance quarter after quarter and we continue to see similar trends in 1H 2018 and beyond. Our profits are always driven by core banking activities and growing volumes across most segments supporting our aspiration to diversify assets and income stream by business activity and geography. Given the Bank's adequate capitalization, stable funding and ample liquidity conditions; NBK continues to benefit from emerging opportunities locally and regionally."

Islamic banking

"Islamic banking remains a key element in the Group's growth and diversification strategy. Our subsidiary, Boubyan Bank, is delivering extraordinary performance



Nasser Musaed Al-Sayer Isam Al-Sager

and growing its contribution to the Group. Boubyan Bank positions NBK Group in a very favorable position, being the only Kuwaiti bank with access to both markets, conventional and Islamic."

"The geographic exposure helped NBK bring its diversification strategy into practice as we drive a meaningful contribution from our operations outside Kuwait. Profits from international operations reached 28.2 percent of the Group's total profits in 1H 2018. This confirm the Bank's key competitive advantage relative to peers."

"Our key growth markets regionally are the GCC along with Egypt; and we continue to identify organic growth opportunities in international markets. In 2H 2018, we plan to expand our branch network in Saudi Arabia to three branches from one branch currently, in addition to inaugurating our wealth management services in the Kingdom

through a Saudi CMA licensed entity." Through constant innovation, NBK secures its future, and ensures both the acquisition and retention of customers. NBK has recently been investing in platforms to support transfer initiatives. During the second quarter, the Bank introduced SWIFT GPI service after passing the rigorous testing phase of SWIFT. Moreover, NBK will be the first bank in Kuwait to offer instant cross-border payments latest technology in partnership with Ripple Labs. The RippleNet solution will offer NBK customers a fast, safe and convenient cross border payments option while ensuring all regulatory and compliance requirements are met.

Ratings, awards

NBK continues to enjoy collectively one of the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and its disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. NBK was also named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for twelve consecutive times and was awarded as the Best Bank in Kuwait in 2017 by the Banker, Euromoney and Global Finance.

NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including New York, Europe, Singapore and China; in addition to its presence in MENA.

185.9

Million KD Net Profit for the 1st Half, 2018 Compared to 1st Half, 2017



Moody's Aa3 FitchRatings AA- Standard & Poor's A+



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Business

Boubyan Bank posts net profits of KD 25.7 million in H1 2018

Bank's successful strategy, strength of HR dept pay off

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank has reported net profits of KD 25.7 million for the first half of 2018, a growth rate of 18 percent compared with the comparative period last year, with an earnings per share of 9.72 fils compared to 8.09 fils for the comparative period of 2017.

Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed, the Bank's Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, commented on such positive results by stating: "Boubyan's journey of success which started 9 years ago continues to achieve positive results by acquiring market shares in various segments, both in retail or corporate services".

"This reflects the level of trust in the bank by various stakeholders whether shareholders or clients and this positively influences the growth of all the financial indicators of the bank," he added.

Positive growth

Al-Majed stated that all of the Bank's main performance indicators witnessed a remarkable growth during the first half of the year where the total assets increased to KD 4.2 billion at a growth rate of 12 percent while the operating income increased to reach KD 71 million at a growth rate of 18 percent in addition to the increase in customers' deposits by 12 percent, amounting to KD 3.5 billion. He further added that the total equity of the bank increased to KD 378 million compared with KD 352 million last year and that there was a notable increase in the financing portfolio to KD 3.1 billion with a growth rate of 13 percent in addition to the continuous growth of the bank's customers' base.

Al-Majed stated as well that the market share, in financing, increased to approximately 8.3 percent with an increase in the market share of the retail finance to approximately 11 percent. Besides this, the bank recorded a remarkable growth in the corporate credit portfolio at 11 percent compared to last year. This was achieved by building relationship with a number of companies known for their financial position and creditworthiness while continuing to maintain the highest standards of credit quality, monitoring and diversifying risks.

Customer Service

On the other hand, Al-Majed stressed that the bank would continue opening new branches after reaching 42 branches, and he stated: "In line with our domestic geographic expansion to be closer to our clients, we are continuing our investment in e-services and e-banking products which placed us ahead of other local banks. We are doing that in order to cater for the various needs of our clients."

He went on to add: "Boubyan will continue providing the highest levels of service to its client emanating from its slogan "Towards Perfection" which has been reflected in all the services and products of the bank, aiming to make the life of our customers easier and to make all the aspects of their daily life more convenient."

In this context, Al-Majed stressed that Boubyan Bank continued being at the top of the pyramid for customer service in Kuwait, supported by receiving two awards from Service Hero - the international consumer-driven customer satisfaction index, namely, the First Place Award in Customer Service as a Country Winner atop all economic sectors in Kuwait, for the third time, in addition to being named the 2017 Best Islamic Bank in Customer Service for the eighth year in a row since 2010.

Al-Majed added: "The confidence of our customers was well-placed, and this was fruitful as it resulted in these two special awards in Kuwait". He further stressed that the bank would continue at that remarkable level of customer service.

CSR and HR

Al-Majed stated that the first half of this year marked a



Adel Abdul Wahab Al-Majed



number of activities and events organized by the bank as a part of its corporate social responsibility to support the youth as well as many other segments of the society, while highlighting that the past Holy Month of Ramadan witnessed a number of outstanding activities and events held by Boubyan Bank.

"Boubyan Bank gives a special attention to its human resources as a part of the bank's approach being a developed and modern bank keeping up with interna-

tional and regional changes through its young management, and the Consumer Banking Group, which comprises mostly of youths, testifies to this. The bank is known for placing the youth in leading roles, and this has further helped Boubyan Bank earn the award for the "Replacement and Nationalization of Manpower in Kuwait". The award is given on an annual basis by the Council for the Ministers of Labor for the best GCC institution," Al-Majed concluded.

Aramco more resilient to oil slump than listed rivals

LONDON: Saudi Aramco is more resilient to oil price slumps than its biggest listed rivals, its 2016 accounts indicate, giving a rare insight into the state energy giant's finances ahead of a proposed flotation. The full-year accounts, not publicly available but seen by Reuters, show Aramco's net income fell by about 21 percent to \$13.3 billion in 2016 - when oil prices collapsed to a 12-year low of \$27.10 a barrel due to a global glut of crude.

By comparison, the net income of Exxon Mobil Corp, the world's largest listed oil company, dropped 51 percent in 2016, while the earnings attributable to shareholders of Royal Dutch Shell, the No.2 listed oil firm, fell 37 percent, excluding items.

Saudi Aramco said in response to a request for comment: "Saudi Aramco does not comment on speculation regarding its financial performance and fiscal regime."

Industry experts say Aramco's ability to better weather price shocks is down to low production costs, the fact its major operations are concentrated in just one country and because it has fewer employees than its biggest rivals even though it is the world's largest oil producer.

Analysts estimates the Saudi giant's pro-

duction costs at below \$1 per barrel compared to \$10 per barrel in places like Russia and as much as \$20-30 per barrel in locations like the North Sea.

The accounts show 67,718 people worked for Aramco in 2016. That compares with 71,100 at Exxon and 89,000 at Shell. Aramco produces around 10 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil compared with Exxon's and Shell's oil equivalent of 4 million bpd and 3.7 million bpd respectively.

In April, Bloomberg reported Aramco had net income of \$33.8 billion in the first six months of 2017, up from \$7.2 billion in the first half of 2016, as oil prices spiked and as the Saudi government changed the tax rate.

Full-year results for 2016 and 2015 have never been disclosed before. Aramco's earnings and other key information about the company, which pumps about 10 percent of the world's oil, have been a closely guarded secret for decades. The accounts provide a window into its finances ahead of the proposed stock market listing, should it go ahead.

Even though Aramco may be bigger and more resilient than its peers, analysts have repeatedly expressed doubt that it can achieve Riyadh's \$2 trillion valuation, if and when it decides to list its stock. Its nearest rival Exxon is worth \$350 billion.

A listing of up to 5 percent of Aramco has been the centerpiece of a government plan to diversify the kingdom's economy. But some sources close to the process say the plans for a domestic and international listing may never happen. "Domestic is more likely, but the whole thing is uncertain," said a source familiar with Aramco's IPO plans.

Saudi Arabia's energy minister, Khalid Al-Falih, said on June 21 it would be "nice" to see Aramco floated in 2019, adding the timing was not critical to the government.

\$13 billion net income

The documents seen by Reuters show that Aramco made more money than any other oil company in 2016. Its net income of \$13.3 billion in 2016 outstripped Exxon's \$7.8 billion, while Shell reported 2016 earnings attributable to shareholders - the equivalent metric - of \$3.5 billion. BP, dealing with the financial aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, reported a loss of \$999 million in 2016, better than a \$5.162 billion loss in 2015.

Based on cash flow from operations, another important metric for investors, Aramco did well too. The company's net cash from operating activities rose about 21 percent to \$29 billion in 2016, the accounts show. The highest figure among the listed competitors was reported by Exxon, whose cash flow from operations was \$22.1 billion, down 27 percent from 2015. Shell's cash flow from operations fell 31 percent and BP's declined 44 percent.

Aramco realised an average price of \$40.68 on its crude oil exports in 2016, down from \$49.46 in 2015, the accounts showed. Revenue was \$135 billion, down from \$146 billion in 2015.

The 2016 Aramco accounts reviewed by Reuters were prepared according to IFRS standards, and according to the 85 percent tax rate that applied at the time. The Saudi government cut the tax rate to 50 percent from 2017, making the firm more attractive to potential investors. — Reuters

UK business welcomes May's Brexit plan

LONDON: British business welcomed a UK plan to keep strong European Union economic ties post Brexit, even though Prime Minister Theresa May was already counting the political cost. May faced a crisis in her cabinet yesterday after Brexit minister David Davis and two of his deputies resigned over the plan drawn up ahead of the weekend.

British business, whose leaders have persistently called for a clear plan on Brexit, came together yesterday to back May's proposals. "It is welcome that the cabinet set out an agreed position for the UK's future relationship with the European Union," said Catherine McGuinness, head of policy at the City of London Corporation, a local government authority for the capital's financial district.

However in a note of caution she said "a deal that excludes services... could have a negative impact on the UK's financial sector". Despite a divided cabinet, May on Friday won overall support at her country retreat for a new "free trade area" where Britain would accept EU rules for goods. Speaking yesterday to

the BBC, the head of Britain's main business lobby group the CBI, called the resignation of Davis "a blow" to the plan. But at the same time, Carolyn Fairbairn said the government was moving "in the right direction". She added: "There will be a time when the benefits of free trade deals internationally could outweigh European trade, but it's not yet."

"Our argument is unless and until you have an alternative way of reaching frictionless trade, a customs union is the right answer so we think broadly this is going in the right direction." And in a statement on Davis' replacement, eurosceptic junior minister for housing Dominic Raab, Fairbairn said: "There's a tough job ahead and business is ready and willing to support him and his team... deliver a good Brexit at such a critical time for the country."

May's proposals are for "a common rule book for industrial goods and agricultural products". They additionally call for "a new business-friendly customs model", which would maintain high standards but allow Britain "to strike new trade deals around the world" once it has left the European Union in March next year. The government believes that plan would allow Britain to maintain frictionless trade with the EU in goods, avoid customs checks on the sensitive Irish border, and end both free movement of people and jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice in Britain. — AFP

Kuwait Times

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Business

Turkish Airlines signs significant global agreement with Amex GBT

Deal to boost cooperation on a global level



KUWAIT: Turkish Airlines signed a significant deal with American Express Global Business Travel (Amex GBT), one of the world's leading agencies for corporate travel. With this agreement, signed by Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee, M Ilker Ayçi, and Amex GBT's Board Chairman, Greg O'Hara, Turkish Airlines expands its existing collaboration with AMEX to a global partnership, which was on regional scale between 2014-2017 and including just Europe, North America and Asia / Pacific regions. The global carrier who has added the "South America" region to the new joint service area with

Amex GBT, will also become one of the airlines supported by Amex GBT at the top level, within the scope of this expanded agreement.

It is aimed to determine a common strategy on a global level and to increase the cooperation between the managements of both parts at all levels along with this expanded partnership. Another goal at this point is to increase the cooperation in product development and sales for "Marine & Offshore", "Travel and Lifestyle Services" (TLS), and "Meeting & Events" segments. Promotion of Turkish Airlines' brand awareness and perception within Amex

GBT organization, as well as top level participation in all global events organized by Amex GBT, increasing the visibility of Turkish Airlines in Amex GBT's communication channels, acquiring new corporate customers through the joint data analysis studies, and also the promotion of sales activities are all the other subjects to be improved within this new business partnership. Commenting on the agreement M Ilker Ayçi, Turkish Airlines Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee said: "As Turkish Airlines, we are very pleased to enter such an important business partnership with Amex GBT. With this new agreement, which

was existed on a regional scale and now expanded to global, we aim to increase our market share also in the corporate travel segment and to be the most preferred airline for all business travellers worldwide."

Amex GBT, considered as one of the largest global agencies in the sector, has more than 100 years of experience in corporate travel. The global agency, which aims to make the business travels much easier, productive and less stressful, both in terms of suppliers and travelers, serves in nearly 140 countries around the world, with 12,000 employees, to 8,000 customers.



Sterling gains as investors bet on softer Brexit despite Davis exit

LONDON: Sterling rallied yesterday as traders bet the resignation of British Brexit minister David Davis would not endanger the prime minister and instead focused on the government's newly-announced plan that markets believe makes a "soft Brexit" more likely.

In a blow to Prime Minister Theresa May, Davis resigned overnight because he was not willing to be "a reluctant conscript" to her hard-won Brexit agreement with the cabinet.

Under the plan, Britain and the European Union would keep close trade ties but Davis believed this would hand too much power to the European Union in the exit talks.

Davis, however, said yesterday that he would not encourage a challenge to May's leadership, fuelling sterling's rally as investors speculated that the exit from the cabinet of a chief opponent to a softer Brexit would make it easier for her to negotiate with Brussels. The British currency gained as much as half a percent to \$1.3363, its strongest best level since June 14, with most of the rise following Davis's comments that played down the risk to May posed by his departure.

Sterling strengthened 0.3 percent against the euro to 88.17 pence per euro before easing back. "She's survived resignations before; she can survive again," said Nomura strategist Jordan Rochester, adding that the major risk for the pound would be if the Conservative prime minister's leadership looked untenable.

The Davis resignation has underlined May's limited ability to impose cabinet disci-

pline around a softer Brexit strategy. However, analysts said May's success in getting broad agreement for her plan for life after the EU was more important.

UBS Global Wealth Management's chief economist Paul Donovan said the market reaction was "almost as if investors do not know who Davis is".

Under the agreement announced by May on Friday, Britain will retain a close trading relationship with the EU, making the sort of arrangement business leaders have called for in recent weeks more likely. "It's a softer Brexit and it's a plan. A plan is better than no plan. The market is extrapolating that the EU will get more concessions out of the UK", bringing the two sides towards something like a customs union as favored by markets, Nomura's Rochester said. May announced Davis's replacement as Brexit campaigner Dominic Raab.

BoE boost

Broad-based dollar weakness also supported the pound's bounce, while data this week could raise expectations of a Bank of England interest rate rise in August if they suggest growing economic momentum in the second quarter. "News that Brexit minister David Davis has resigned looks welcome news to those looking for a soft Brexit. The question will be what further backlash (leadership attack) May now faces from the right wing of the (Conservative) party," said ING analysts in a note.

They predicted that sterling could hit \$1.3450 if the EU signals its openness to Britain's Brexit proposal and if the BoE sticks to a slightly hawkish script. Markets are now pricing in a 68 percent chance of a rate rise in August. Sterling has climbed 2.3 percent since hitting a 7-1/2 month low in late June, boosted by improving economic sentiment and signs that May had faced down the hard Brexiters in her cabinet. — Reuters

Alkhaja stated, "We are very pleased to celebrate the completion of El Mercado Village. These villas, built to the highest-standards, are some of the most premium properties available on the market today. As our first new homeowner has already moved in, I would like to highlight that these homes are available for immediate occupancy. The mixed-use development, anchored by the adjacent El Mercado Mall, is quickly transforming into a vibrant community and an ideal place to call home."

Alkhaja is a seasoned leader with a long career in investments. He served for 19 years in the Investment Directorate of the Kingdom of Bahrain's Ministry of Finance, before joining the Pension Fund Commission of Bahrain as Director of Investment and Executive Director of the SIO Asset Management Company. In 2013, he became the Managing Director of AMAK Property & Development, a family firm. He served on the Board of Directors of Seef Properties, Batelco Group, and Bahrain Tourism Co. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of Reef Real Estate Finance Co, Gulf Educational Projects, and on the Board of Trustees of Applied Science University. Alkhaja holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from North Texas State University. First Bahrain Real Estate Development Company is an innovative regional real estate developer established in Kuwait in October 2004.

Dedicated to achieving sustainable returns through collaborative relationships, First Bahrain creates enduring value for all stakeholders with a demand-driven investment approach. Operating out of Bahrain and Kuwait, First Bahrain is strategically positioned to execute projects across the GCC, in accordance with the principles of sharia.



Waleed Ahmed Alkhaja

First Bahrain appoints Waleed Alkhaja as Acting CEO

MANAMA: The Board of Directors of First Bahrain Real Estate Development Company has announced the appointment of their current Chairman Waleed Ahmed Alkhaja as Acting CEO. He will assume responsibilities from the 12th of July, succeeding Amin Al Arrayed who recently was appointed to serve as the CEO for Edamah, the real estate arm of Mumtalakat Holding Company (Mumtalakat), the sovereign wealth fund of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

With the selection of Alkhaja as the interim CEO, the Board desired to send a message of stability and confidence to the market. Alkhaja has served as Chairman of First Bahrain since May 2014. Under his wise leadership, the Company has doubled the value of its income generating assets and quadrupled its net rental income, as it developed a series of new projects in Janabiya and Seef, actively converting raw lands into income generating investments. The Company has clear plans for expansion as it begins work on the first phase of a retail project in Seef and looks closely at opportunistic acquisitions.

The announcement of this leadership transition was made on the side lines of celebration in honor of the successful completion of the second and final phase of its mixed-use development in Janabiya. Commenting on this announcement,

Unlimited roaming internet with Ooredoo Passport

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait launched a revamped roaming package - Ooredoo Passport Unlimited that can be used in over 60 countries including Russia, the host country of the 2018 World Cup.



The roaming package is available for both pre-paid and post-paid customers, at the same price and benefits.

The Ooredoo Passport Unlimited package gives customers exclusive unlimited roaming internet for KD 12 per week to keep up with the customers'

mode of usage for mobile internet, as it is the main tool for sharing videos, pictures and audio clips with loved ones on various social media channels such as Instagram and Snapchat.

Commenting on the launch of the revamped service, Ooredoo Kuwait issued a statement saying that the service is aimed to enrich the experience of the telecom service provider's customers and meet their expectations, taking in mind the lifestyle of the company's global-oriented customer base. The packages also reiterate Ooredoo's commitment to helping customers enjoy the internet, especially since mobile internet is an essential part of everyday use to many customers. Ooredoo noted that the new my Ooredoo passport service can be conveniently activated and auto-renewed through the company's My Ooredoo smartphone app.

Ooredoo's operations in Kuwait date back to December 1999 when it launched wireless services as the second operator. The company today provides mobile, broadband internet and corporate managed services tailored to the needs of customers and businesses. Ooredoo Kuwait - which is an enlisted company in the Kuwait Stock Exchange Market - operates a number of telecom service



providers in the region, such as Ooredoo Algeria, Ooredoo Tunisia, Ooredoo Maldives, and Wataniya Palestine. Ooredoo Kuwait is a member of the international Ooredoo Group based in Doha, Qatar.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, the second largest in terms of assets, announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Abdullah Hasan Abdullah Alsabti
2. Sundus Mahmoud Yaseen Alshatti
3. Gurvinder Singh Amrik Sahni
4. Sameerah Khudhair Habar Alshammari
5. Makeyah Sulaiman Mandani Khawajah

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Shares in China's Xiaomi dip on Hong Kong debut

HONG KONG: Chinese smartphone giant Xiaomi fell on its Hong Kong stock debut yesterday, following a long-awaited initial public offering overshadowed by China-US trade tensions and falling global markets. Even before public trading started confidence was low, with investors selling at a discount on the unofficial "grey market" last week, Bloomberg News reported.

And yesterday it ended down 1.18 percent at HK\$16.80, though that was much better than in mid-morning trade, when it was briefly down almost six percent. Despite being one of the most anticipated Chinese technology IPOs this year, Xiaomi saw a disappointing valuation of US\$54 billion, well below its ambitious \$100 billion target.

Founded in 2010 by entrepreneur Lei Jun, Xiaomi has grown from a start-up in Zhongguancun-China's "Silicon Valley"-to



Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

become the world's fourth-biggest smartphone vendor at the end of last year, according to International Data Corp. Lei has described Xiaomi as a "new species" of company with what he describes as a "triathlon" business model combining hardware, internet and e-commerce services. Its products range from smart home gadgets like air purifiers to non-tech items such as pillows and ballpoint pens.

A delay in Xiaomi's plan to launch new so-called Chinese Depository Receipts (CDRs) in Shanghai as well as doubts about the sustainability of its business model were also among reasons for the lower valuation, analysts said. Chinese authorities devised the CDR program, under which homegrown companies listed abroad can simultaneously list at home, after watching technology heavyweights Alibaba and Baidu launch on Wall Street.

The plan aims to help development of China's still relatively immature and volatile share markets and allow domestic investors to invest in the country's big tech champions. Beijing-based Xiaomi is the first firm in Hong Kong to trade with a controversial dual-class structure since listing rules were

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

overhauled to allow weighted voting rights for different sets of shareholders.

Analysts say Hong Kong's technology listings have struggled in recent months, deflating investor interest, while escalating trade tensions have made it a bad time to launch an IPO.

"Nothing can help because the sentiment is no good at the moment... Most of the IPOs listed this year were not that profitable," said Dickie Wong of Kingston Securities, adding he does not see any "upsides" until the CDR listing, which would boost interest. But Mo Jia of Canalis said the IPO was a "must-go for them even though the current situation is not positive", as Xiaomi would need the cash for an ongoing global expansion as it looks to broaden its scope outside the saturated Chinese smartphone market.

And Jackson Wong, at Huarong International Securities, warned there could be repercussions for Hong Kong's IPO outlook, saying a tepid start for Xiaomi would suggest a weak appetite for new listings in the city. "That would definitely make (other firms looking to list) look for other markets such as New York," he added. — AFP

Health & Science

Eco-warriors battle glyphosate in Argentina's countryside

Glyphosate causes increase in cancer, birth defects

DIQUE CHICO: "They can't spray!" screamed Sofia Gatica, waving her arms before police led her away from the soybean field, handcuffed for having illegally entered private property. Gatica had been protesting against the use of an herbicide in the field in the village of Dique Chico, in Argentina's Cordoba province. It's a place where local residents clash regularly with farmers over the spraying of glyphosate on genetically modified crops.

Glyphosate is an herbicide developed by the controversial agrochemical company Monsanto which ceased to exist last month after it was bought by Bayer—that has been described by the World Health Organization as "probably carcinogenic." These genetically modified plantations first appeared in Argentina at the end of the 1990s in place of livestock. At the end of June, 18 million hectares had been planted, producing 35.8 million metric tons and making Argentina the third biggest such producer in the world behind the United States and Brazil.

But millions of liters of glyphosate are poured onto those plantations. Pressured by local residents, and without specific legislation, village mayors have delivered their own regulations to control the spraying, as much to limit their scope as to control the amount of toxins in herbicides. But those regulations have been appealed by farmers, occasionally successfully, thus fueling

the conflict. "On the one hand there are constitutional rights, like the right to engage in legal industry, which is what the agricultural producer usually argues. But on the other side, there are other rights: to live in a healthy environment, the right to good health and life," said environmental attorney Dario Avila. "In terms of pesticides in Argentina, there are no national laws that apply

“
The right to good health and life
”

to the whole country. These rules are reserved for the provincial governments."

My children die

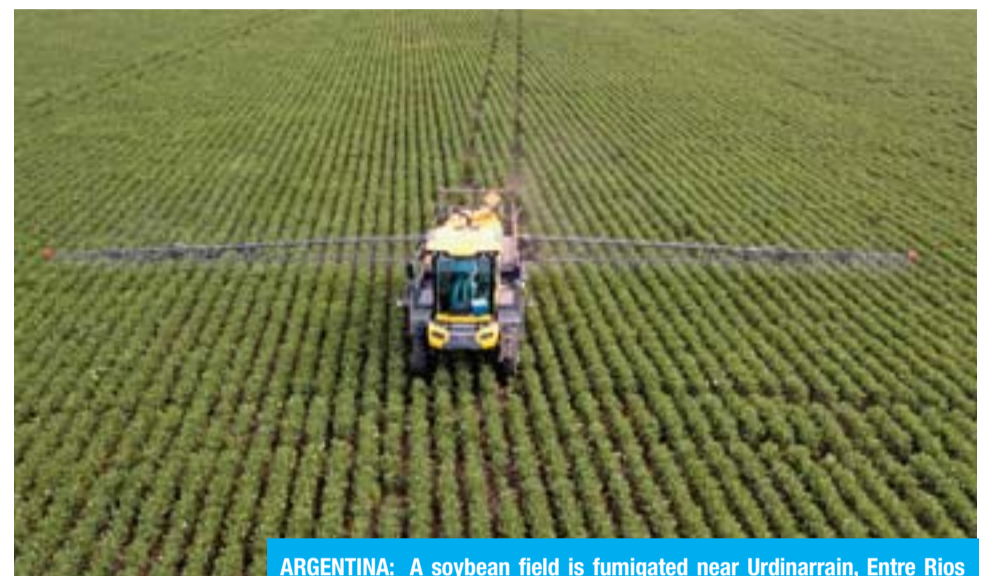
As for Gatica, she bears a heavy cross. "I entered a property to stop the spraying which enters homes without permission," she said. "They (pesticides) can enter our homes without permission and we have to ask their permission not to kill us." Their spray comes into my house,

into my garden, dries up my garden, contaminates it and my children die," added Gatica, who lives in the neighboring village of Anisacate and several years ago suffered the death of a three-month old baby, born with a congenital disorder.

According to neonatologist Medardo Avila, from the Doctors of Fumigated Villages Network, since the use of glyphosate in Argentina began there has been an increase in cancer and birth defects amongst rural populations. "What we doctors are seeing is that people are becoming sick in a different way," he said. "They're mostly dying of cancer now, since the use of spraying and the mass use of pesticides. Clearly, rural populations in Argentina have a cancer rate three times higher than those in the cities," stated Avila, adding that for every 100 births in the countryside six babies have defects compared to two percent in other areas.

Eco-terrorists

However, the farmers are fighting back and Alejandro Dalmasso, who produces soybeans in Dique Chico, brands the health activists as criminals. "We're adhering to the right agricultural practices. We fulfill whatever standards there are," he said. "These groups are all over Argentina, they feed off causing damage to this country. We call them eco-terrorists." There's no serious scientific evidence to support their claims. That product was developed to be used



ARGENTINA: A soybean field is fumigated near Urdinarrain, Entre Rios province, Argentina. —AFP

in agriculture, there's no other use."

But for Fabian Tomasi, a 53-year-old suffering from severe toxic polyneuropathy (a disease affecting the nervous system) who used to work in the supply of herbicides for fumigation planes, the outlook is bleak. He's suffering from

loss of muscle mass and joint pain making it difficult to move and believes that glyphosate is "tremendously deceptive, a trap set by powerful people." "There will be no-one left," he said. "All the land that we have won't be enough to bury so many dead." — AFP

China's chickens lay a billion eggs a day

HANDAN, China: Behind a row of sealed red incubator doors in a new facility in northern China, about 400,000 chicks are hatched every day, part of the rapidly modernizing supply chain in China's \$37 billion egg industry, the world's biggest. As China overhauls production of everything from pork to milk and vegetables, farmers raising hens for eggs are also shifting from backyards to factory farms, where modern standardized processes are expected to raise quality and safety.

That's an important step in a country where melamine-tainted eggs and eggs with high antibiotic residues have featured in a series of food safety scandals in recent years. It is also spurring demand for higher priced branded eggs over those sold loose in fresh produce markets. "These days if you're a small farmer, your eggs won't get into the supermarkets," said Yuan Song, analyst with China-America Commodity Data Analytics. Tough new regulations on treating manure and reducing the environmental impact from farms have also pushed many small farmers out. Most egg producers now have between 20,000 and 50,000 hens, said Yuan, a significant change even from two years ago. The remainder with less than 10,000 birds are likely to be shut down soon as local governments favor larger producers that can be more easily scrutinized.

High-tech hatchery

Those rapid changes are driving investments like the 150 million yuan hatchery in Handan, about 400km southwest of Beijing. The highly automated plant, owned by a joint venture between China's Huayu Agricultural Science and Technology Co Ltd and EW Group's genetics business Hy-Line International, is the world's biggest hatchery of layer chicks, or birds raised to produce eggs rather than meat.

By producing 200,000 females a day, or around 60 million layers a year (one day a week is for cleaning), it can meet demand from larger farms who want to buy day-old-chicks in one batch, said Jonathan Cade, president of Hy-Line International, based in West Des Moines, Iowa. "That's the best way to start off with good biosecurity," he said.

When the birds on one farm are the same age, they are less likely to spread disease. Imported, latest-generation equipment helps speed up the throughput of the hatchery. An automatic grading machine, which can handle 60,000 eggs an hour, sorts eggs into two acceptable sizes before they enter incubators - uniform eggs produce similar sized chicks that will have the same feeding ability. Once hatched, female chicks go to automated beak-clipping machines that process around 3,500 an hour. Only 20 staff will be needed in the new plant, compared with around 100 in Huayu's older hatchery, said Huayu chairman Wang Lianzeng.

Fierce competition, disease

Efficiency is important in an industry which is not expected to see much volume growth. The Chinese already eat more eggs per capita than almost everyone else, about 280 a year or almost one billion a day across the country, so consumption is unlikely to rise much. Breeders like Huayu are trying to grow by taking market share from others. In addition to the new Handan hatchery, it is building another in Chongqing, which will bring annual production to 180 million chicks.

Layer inventory last year was around 1.2 billion, according to the China Animal Agriculture Association. Huayu is also looking into breeding layers and building hatcheries in South-East Asia and Africa, said Wang, the chairman. Key to industrial scale facilities will be managing the risks of disease. Prices and demand for eggs and poultry plunged last year, after hundreds of people died from contracting bird flu, even though the disease left flocks largely unscathed.

Although that has created new opportunities for large players to expand after others were forced to exit, the impact of a disease outbreak on intensive operations is significantly higher. Huayu itself has recently suffered from outbreaks, with high rates of poultry disease Mycoplasma synoviae (MS) in China's breeding flocks last year, said Wang.

The disease can reduce egg production in layers. Wang said biosecurity is the major advantage in the new hatchery, which uses advanced ventilation and environmental controls to keep new chicks healthy. "When you enter the hatchery you wouldn't know you're in a hatchery," he said, referring to the small typical in older facilities. Disinfection is used at every step along the chain and workers follow strict procedures on hygiene, he added. — Reuters

'Round Up' pesticide cancer link on trial

SAN FRANCISCO: During more than a century of business, US agrochemical colossus Monsanto has been vilified for products critics say harm people and the environment. In the first trial of its kind, a Californian dying of cancer is suing Monsanto, claiming its popular herbicide Roundup caused his disease—a case that could have sweeping ramifications. A jury yesterday was scheduled to begin hearing pitches from opposing sides, with witnesses to follow.

The stakes are high for Monsanto, which could face massive losses should a jury order it to pay out damages over the product, whose main ingredient is glyphosate, a substance some say is dangerously carcinogenic. Dwayne Johnson, a 46-year-old father of two, says he is sick because of contact with Roundup, which he used for two years from 2012 as a groundskeeper for the Benicia school district near San Francisco, his lawyer Timothy Litzberg said.

"A major part of that job was spraying Roundup or Ranger Pro (a similar Monsanto product)... He sprayed it 20 to 40 times per year, sometimes hundreds of gallons at a time on the school properties," Litzberg said. In 2014, Johnson was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer that affects white blood cells. No longer able to work two years later, he filed suit against Monsanto, accusing the company of hiding the dangers of its product.

Agent Orange

Monsanto, a company that is more than a century old, was recently acquired by Germany-based Bayer for more than \$62 billion. Founded in 1901 in St. Louis, Missouri, Monsanto made the artificial sweetener saccharin. The company began produc-



CALIFORNIA: In this file photo bottles of Monsanto's Roundup are seen for sale at a retail store in Glendale, California. — AFP

ing agrochemicals in the 1940s and now employs 20,000 people around the world and generates \$15 billion in annual revenue. Monsanto was one of the companies which produced a defoliant dubbed "Agent Orange," which has been linked to cancer and other diseases, for use by US forces in Vietnam but denies responsibility for how the military used it.

The company also made insecticide DDT. Monsanto's flagship herbicide Roundup was launched in 1976. The company soon thereafter began genetically modifying plants, making some resistant to Roundup. The pesticide has been accused of damaging the environment, contributing to the disappearance of bees and being an endocrine disruptor. The Roundup trial in San Francisco, which will directly address whether product has caused cancer, is the first of its kind.

Scientific controversy

The International Agency for Research on Cancer, a World Health Organization body, has classified glyphosate, which is widely used around the world, as "probably carcinogenic." The European food safety and chemicals agencies have so far not followed suit. A US Department of Health study has suggested its toxicity is limited. Monsanto has always denied any link between disease and

glyphosate, a substance classified as carcinogenic in the state of California.

"More than 800 scientific studies, the US EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), the National Institutes of Health and regulators around the world have concluded that glyphosate is safe for use and does not cause cancer," the group said in a statement. "We have empathy for anyone suffering from cancer but the scientific evidence clearly shows that glyphosate was not the cause. We look forward to presenting this evidence to the court."

Johnson has not yet set the damages he intends to seek from Monsanto, also known for its genetically modified seeds that have sparked intense controversy elsewhere. "The only thing, as civil attorneys, that we can do is to take money from Monsanto and give it to Mr. Johnson," said Litzberg. Californian law allows for an expedited procedure when a party is facing imminent death and Johnson's is the first targeting Roundup to use that law and reach trial. "Monsanto has purposefully deceived the public about the safety of its flagship herbicide Roundup for decades," said Linda Wells, Midwest organizing director for Pesticide Action Network North America. "If Johnson is successful at trial, it will be a huge shakeup for the entire pesticide industry." — AFP

First quolls born in Australian wild in half a century

SYDNEY: The first eastern quolls in 50 years have been born in the wild on the Australian mainland, with the rice grain-sized pups offering hope to a species of marsupial devastated by foxes. Eastern quolls—a furry carnivore that grows to about the size of a domestic cat—disappeared from the mainland in the 1960s but clung on in the island state of Tasmania. Twenty of them were returned to their native environment in the Booderee National Park, south of Sydney, in March to see if they could survive and thrive.

It is the first time in Australia that a carnivore extinct on the mainland has been re-introduced to the wild and followed a 15-year project to bring feral predators in the area under control. Booderee National Park Natural Resource Manager Nick Dexter said yesterday babies had been confirmed in three of the females' pouches. "There remains challenges ahead to establish a sustainable population, but to have 30 percent of the female quolls produce pouch young from this pilot project is a move in the right direction," he said.

Quoll babies stay sheltered in the pouch for around three months while they gain weight and grow fur. "We've been tracking every animal in this project with a GPS collar, and unlike other translocation projects we've been able to quick-



CRADLE MOUNTAIN, Australia: This handout photo shows juvenile eastern quolls at the Devils at Cradle conservation facility in Cradle Mountain, Tasmania. — AFP

ly discover and manage threats," Dexter added. Eastern quolls, which primarily eat insects, were present on the mainland for thousands of years. But large numbers were killed in the early 1900s by a mysterious epidemic, and their population was then devastated as foxes spread across south-eastern Australia.

They were last regularly seen on the mainland in the 1960s in the Sydney region. Australian National University researcher Natasha Robinson said the new colony had demonstrated several vital points needed for a successful long-term future. "We've proven the quolls can find food, shelter and breed. We've also shown a capacity to make changes to improve the quolls survival rate," she said. — AFP

Reindeer herders tangle with new industries in Arctic

FINNMARK PLATEAU, NORWAY: When he's not out on the Arctic tundra with his 2,000 reindeer, his dog and Whitney Houston blasting through his headphones, Nils Mathis Sara is often busy explaining to people how a planned copper mine threatens his livelihood. Along with other Sami herders and fishermen, the 60-year-old is in a standoff with the mine owners, Norwegian officials and many townspeople that is, after six years, coming to a head.

It is a litmus test for the Arctic, where climate change and technology are enabling mineral and energy extraction, shipping and tourism while threatening traditional ways of life and creating tensions among its four million inhabitants. "This mine is completely nuts," said Sara, preparing to move his herd from winter pastures on Norway's windswept Finnmark plateau three days north to the grass-rich pastures on the coast, where females calve and there are fewer mosquitoes. "We would be losing summer pastures for our reindeer again."

Herders around the Arctic - in other Nordic nations, Russia, Canada and Alaska - echoed his concerns in interviews, citing threats from climate change, mining, oil spills and poaching as well as thoughtless behaviour from townspeople and tourists. Global majors, including Eni, Equinor, Gazprom, Glencore, Lukoil and Rio Tinto, are all grappling with how to square their prospecting plans with the interests of people whose views count more than in the past. Anders Oskal, Executive Director of the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry, said the copper mine was in



FINNMARK PLATEAU: Nils Mathis Sara drives his ATV as he follows a herd of reindeer on the Finnmark Plateau. — Reuters

the spotlight. "Big industry is sitting on the fence and seeing how it plays out," he said.

Legal action?

Local officials gave the green light for the privately-owned Nussir copper project back in 2012 on the grounds it would bring in much-needed jobs and funds. It has been stuck ever since. Indigenous Sami herders and fishermen say the plan to dump the mine's tailings in the fjord, while less damaging than piling them on land, would destroy spawning grounds for cod and the mine would damage summer pasture grounds and frighten the reindeer. "I don't get it," Tommy Pettersen, a 47-year-old Sami fisherman, said on board his boat, which gives him a potentially

lucrative but unpredictable income. "We are a maritime nation. We have relied on the ocean to live off and we want to dump this stuff in the fjord?" He had just caught king crabs worth 16,000 Norwegian crowns. Last year he earned 1.6 million crowns for four weeks' work—about half from cod and the rest from crabs, a Pacific species brought to the Barents Sea in the Stalin era.

Sara's income is steadier. He gets up to 130 Norwegian crowns a kilo for his meat, 300 crowns for each skin and 140 crowns a kilo for the antlers, which he sells to China as aphrodisiac. Nussir has won the necessary permits, says the area contains 72 million tons of copper—Norway's largest reserve—and plans more than 1 billion crowns in investment. — Reuters

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What's On

ASSE changes name to American Society of Safety Professionals



American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Kuwait Chapter is a premier voluntary, non-profit making Health, Safety and Environmental organization, which strives to provide professional guidance, training, consultancy and resources to the industrial and social sectors in the region. American Society of Safety Engineers members globally showed a great vision in taking the historic step to approve the name change from June 1, 2018 as American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP).

ASSP Kuwait Chapter chairman Fadhel Al Ali expressed that the new name would eliminate confusion about who can join the organization and more inclusive, which will help more members to join the society. ASSP Kuwait Chapter conducted Annual General Body Meeting for the year 2017-18 on 25th June 2018 at KOC's Executive Tent, Ahmadi Township. More than 150 members of the Chapter attended the meeting.

Fadel Al Ali Chairman of the ASSP Kuwait Chapter in his opening speech extolled the activities performed by the office bearers of 2017-18 under the leadership of the President Muhammad Alamgir and wished successful year for the next team for new term. Alamgir, President ASSP KC, in his presidential address highlighted the achievement by the chapter to conduct two major events HSSE Professional Development Conference and GCC HSE Excellence award in one-year term.

He mentioned that all the chapter programs were focused towards chapter objectives like professional development of the members, chapter growth and protecting people, property and environment in the region. He stated that chapter was able to implement all its planned activities successfully only with the unconditional voluntary support of the ASSP Executive committee members.

He conveyed his appreciation to the chapter Elected members, Executive Committee, Advisory Committee, Advisory Board, Chairman, sponsors, ASSP US president, Global region Vice President and the chapter members for the efforts, support and encouragement for all the activities during the year. Alamgir also conveyed gratitude to CEO's and HSE Leaders of various state owned and private sector organizations and Governmental agencies of the State of Kuwait. He declared that the chapter year 2017-18 will be remembered and as one of the successful year in the chapter history.

Sunil N Sadanandan, Chapter Secretary, appreciated the efforts of the Committees. He stated that during this chapter term many new initiatives were taken and gave the brief summary of the activities conducted during the year in brief by highlighting the major activities, achievements and awards received during the term. The Chief Guest for the program Fares Al-Mansori, Team



Leader (QHSE) of Kuwait Oil Company applauded the Kuwait Chapter activities and assured KOC's support towards the chapter activities. Jahid Thakor, Chapter Treasurer presented the financial report for the chapter with the revenue and expenditure for the year 2017-18. A technical presentation on "Waste Management" presented on the occasion of World Environment Day by Eng.

Fatima Owayed who is working as Senior Environmental Engineer for Health & Environment team in Kuwait Oil Company. As a token of gratitude for the efforts during the year, the chapter Chairman Fadhel Al-Ali presented the elected core committee members, committee heads, subcommittee members and Advisory Committee members with mementos and letter of appreciation.

In addition the Executive committee also recognized the members who have completed 15 years and 10 years membership with ASSE Kuwait logo lapel pins for their continuous support to the chapter. Aamir Rasheed, Elected President of ASSP Kuwait Chapter for the year 2018-19 introduced the elected members for the new term 2018-19, along with the nominated head of committees and Advisory Committee Members. In the closing ceremony, Aamir Rasheed thanked all the members for their participation and wished the new team a successful year ahead.



Canada expands its biometrics program

In 2018, Canada will expand its biometrics program to all foreign nationals applying for a visitor visa, study or work permit (excluding US nationals), and to all those applying for permanent residence.

Accurately establishing identity is an important part of immigration decisions and helps keep Canadians safe. For more than 20 years, biometrics (fingerprints and a photograph) have played a role in supporting immigration screening and decision-making in Canada.

On July 31, 2018, nationals from countries in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, including Qatar and other GCC States will be required to provide biometrics if they are applying for a visitor visa, a work or study permit, a temporary resident permit, or permanent residence. Expanding biometrics will strengthen Canada's immigration programs through effective screening (biometric collection, verification, and information-sharing with partner countries). It will also enable Canada to facilitate application processing and travel - while maintaining public confidence in our immigration system.

The expansion of Canada's biometrics program, which includes the implementation of new requirements for immigration applicants, an expanded biometrics collection service network and automated fingerprint verification at ports of entry, will be rolled out over 2 years (2018-2019).

KAICO launches Eicher on-site mobile service

Kuwait Automotive Imports Company, KAICO, the exclusive dealer of Eicher trucks has announced the launch of Eicher mobile service as part of their ongoing commitment towards client

and their peace of mind. The launch of this service is to get close to clients as part of the company spirit and to provide an on-site service no matter the location.

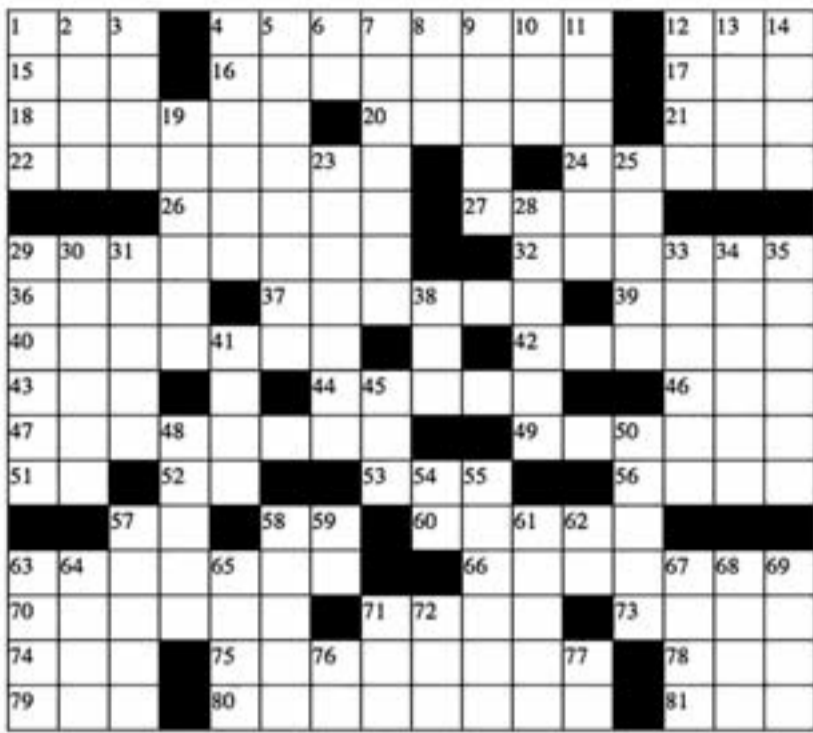
Eicher mobile workshop is aimed to helping

you save valuable time and money especially if you are located far from our service workshops. On top of this special service, clients now can enjoy a 20 percent discount on genuine parts when booking a service. The convenience saves you precious time so you can focus on growing your business. KAICO adds: "Our trusted professionals are regularly trained to provide quality service quickly and efficiently. This helps to improve up-time, and save on repair maintenance work in the long run."



Stars

CROSSWORD 1955



ACROSS

- (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir known for his beauty and skill with bow and skis.
- Human external genital organs collectively especially of a female.
- A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
- Being one more than sixty.
- Generalized edema with accumulation of serum in subcutaneous connective tissue.
- Something that remunerates.
- A bodily organ that is essential for life.
- A long pointed rod used as a weapon.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Pertaining to filberts or hazelnuts.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- A drug (trade names Calan and Isoptin) used as an oral or parenteral calcium blocker in cases of hypertension or congestive heart failure or angina or migraine.
- German bacteriologist who isolated the anthrax bacillus and the tubercle bacillus and the cholera bacillus (1843-1910).
- Uncertain of all claims to knowledge.
- Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.
- Speaking a Slavic language.
- A member of the people inhabiting an area of northern Mongolia and eastern Siberia.
- (Greek mythology) Daughter of Zeus and Demeter.
- Sweetened beverage of lime juice and water.
- A soft suede leather formerly from the sheep of the chamois antelope but now from sheepskin.
- A lyric poem with complex stanza forms.
- A ballroom dance of Latin-American origin.
- Having undesirable or negative qualities.
- Having a list of ancestors as proof of being a purebred animal.
- A state in the western United States.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- Feline mammal usually having thick soft fur and being unable to roar.
- (informal) Being satisfactory or in satisfactory condition.
- Having a specified size.
- Be earlier in time.
- The process of becoming softened and saturated as a consequence of being immersed in water (or other liquid).
- A city in central Tanzania.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- The compass point midway between south and southeast.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- The corporate executive responsible for the operations of the firm.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- Freetail bats.
- Imperial dynasty that ruled China (most of the time) from 206 BC to 221 and expanded its boundaries and developed its bureaucracy.

DOWN

- Type genus of the family Ulvaceae.
- Being four more than sixty.
- Having relatively few calories.
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of wisdom and useful arts and prudent warfare.
- Without salt or seasoning.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- The choicest or most essential or most vital part of some idea or experience.
- A period of time spent sleeping.
- (slang) Merchandise that is shoddy or inferior.
- Fiddler crabs.
- A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
- Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- The eighth month of the civil year.
- A small recess opening off a larger room.
- Lack of sophistication or worldliness.
- A case or sheath especially a pollen sac or moss capsule.
- Reverent petition to a deity.
- Aircraft supported only by the dynamic action of air against its surfaces.
- Given or having a specified name.
- An alloy of copper and zinc (and sometimes arsenic) used to imitate gold in cheap jewelry and for gilding.
- A large fleet.
- An internationally recognized distress signal via radiotelephone (from the French 'm'aider').
- (prefix) Reverse of or absence of.
- Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
- A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
- Small tropical American tree bearing edible plumlike fruit.
- Unaged colorless liquor originating in Russia.
- A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
- The first month of the civil year.
- Used by northerners of Confederate soldiers.
- (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
- A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
- One of the distinct individuals forming a colonial animal such as a bryozoan or hydrozoan.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- Danish philologist whose work on Old Norse pioneered in the field of comparative linguistics (1787-1832).
- At a previous time.
- (of persons) Highest in rank or authority or office.
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
- Very dark black.
- A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
- An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You seem to have a major focus on health and wellness at this time. A sense of what is right and what you view as wrong seems to drive you to make your decisions more carefully. You may be focused on your future and this finds you focused on your well-being and the well-being of those around you. You have a desire to care for those around you and realize you also long to surround yourself with others that will care for you in return. Today finds you able to convey your feeling to others and they will have great understanding of your focus and your needs. You may experience this as a very peaceful day as you are surrounded with love.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Not only are you intelligent but a quick thinker. You have the ability to make things happen. You know what will work and who is best for the job. You may find yourself seeking new financial ventures. Working deals and making deals work may bring great financial reward your way. You see opportunity and seize it. Anything to make a dollar. Your horizons are broad and options limitless and you know just what to do to make the deals profitable. This may be a new venture for you or something you have done in the past but seems to be a new focus and will bring you much success. Taurus. You seem to be paying strong attention to detail and find yourself rejecting any ideas and plans that you do not absolutely feel are the right things to do.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

It seems as if what you have been keeping secret and private may be revealed in a most disturbing way today. When you feel exposed at this level you could be at your most vulnerable. This will most likely be a very emotional time for you and you will have no choice to face the music. The best answer for this situation is a major change. You may find yourself faced with a situation that you are unable to fix. The best thing to do is hold your head high and move on. Gemini. This is not a good time to make any decisions concerning your living situation. Sit tight and let the air clear.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today you may find everything just falls into place for you. This a great day to get those unfinished projects completed. You seem to crave change. You are led to do the right thing. What you feel in your heart to be right is the only way to go for you today. Anything that doesn't seem on the up and up will give you a very uneasy feeling and this is the day to just let your conscience be your guide. You are very detail oriented and today you will find much satisfaction with the projects you are able to complete. A great day and a wonderful time is to be spent with those near and dear to you today. Cancer. Much love!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You are extremely focused on doing the right thing. You only see black and white at this time. There is no room for grey areas. If you have the least bit of doubt about a situation you have to follow your heart to avoid overwhelming guilt. You seem to be extremely focused on detail today. Eating right, working out, and physical activity seem to be a major focus for you now. Mentally and physically your well-being will all play a part in your success. Others may see you as distant today as you seem to be all about you! Don't let the pressure of trying to fit in and please others entice you to make decisions you are not comfortable with.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You seem to be paying major attention to detail today. Your focus is strong, and you seem to only be able to do things your way. You have no tolerance for other's ideas nor their opinions. You may be faced with some very personal issues and find others close to you not to be as understanding and supportive as you need them to be. You may have to fight this battle on your own. The issues you face today will have to be worked through, so you can move on and get yourself back on the right track. This is a time that being on the go and keeping busy is what makes you feel the best.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may find this a great time to reflect and gain understanding of your own situation. How did you get to this point in your life you know that everything happens for a reason and you have learned to have a positive outlook on adversity. You have learned lessons from obstacles that have been placed in your path in the past. This a great time for you to gain a sense of understanding for those around you. A deeper connection is possible for your relationships. This is a good time for you to spend with a loved one. Pisces, you may have found yourself at peace today. Libra. You may find that you are very in touch with your spiritual side. This will help you make deep connections with those that see things the same way.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be feeling a strong desire for change, a need for something new and different. It may be time to throw out the old and start fresh. Let your creative side be your guide. Step above and beyond the boundaries you have allowed yourself to become so comfortable with and let your hair down. You may find those close to you are drawn to the new and different version of you and find great ease when communicating with them. This could be a great time to study and take some time to broaden your intellectual horizons. Reach out to a love one whether by a phone call or possibly a letter. You may find they are very open to what you have to say and old barriers between you have since dissolved.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Scatter brain is the word of the day. You may not be able to keep your mind on work or any other task you have facing you. This is not a great time for you to make decisions. You may find that you are extremely sensitive to the feelings of others now. You have a million things going through your mind at once. You may be unable to focus on work or any task that is put before you. You may find yourself bonding with someone younger. They may find you as someone they look up to and this may be the beginning of a long-term relationship and they may look to you as a mentor for years to come.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your conscience seems to be in total control of your actions today. If anything strikes you as being the least bit shady you will have no part of it. You seem to be paying close attention to detail and have begun to find great satisfaction with doing what is right and refusing to cut any corners to accomplish completing all projects set before you. Today finds you placing much value on your material possessions and items you would like to acquire. You may find a quick trip to the mall would satisfy the desire you have to surround yourself with some of the finer things in life. You have worked hard and feel as if you deserve a reward and deserve to splurge a bit and do something for yourself.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a time there is no room for any grey area in your world. You see things in black and white only. It is either right or wrong and any action you may choose to take that is questionable will leave you with a feeling of overwhelming guilt. You have always been admired for your honesty and being the person that tends to always do the right thing. You are very detailed oriented and very health conscious at this time. You may find yourself resisting that chocolate you are craving because you know the guilt isn't worth the pleasure. You are on the right track, Aquarius, and will soon see great results from the choices you make.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Today finds you at your mental best. You seem to be paying close attention to detail and are extremely disciplined. Things you may have viewed as problems in the past present clear solutions today. You feel a need to be respected and are not only working to organize your surroundings, but you are able to organize the people around you. You're extremely ambitious and devoted to your job today. This is a great day for working with others and you may be called upon to lead the team. You may have to work to fund balance between your home and work life as you try hard to keep everyone around you happy. Pisces. This is an easy task for you as you are as devoted to your family as you are to your job.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Spring

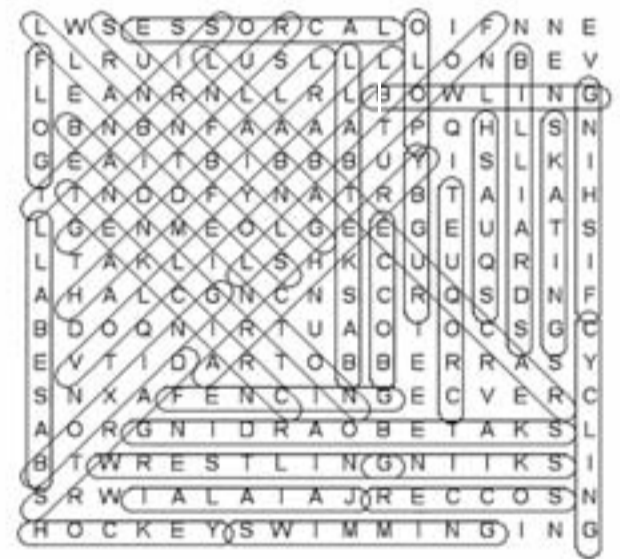
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a message about Spring.



- | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------------|
| ALLERGIES | FROGS | RAIN |
| APRIL | GOLF | RENEWAL |
| BASEBALL | GRASS | ROBINS |
| BEEES | GREEN | SEASON |
| CROCUSES | GROWTH | SNOWMELT |
| CYCLAMENS | IRISES | SOFTBALL |
| DAFFODILS | LILIES | SPRING BREAK |
| DANDELIONS | MARCH | SPRING CLEANING |
| EASTER | MAY | TULIPS |
| EQUINOX | NEW LEAVES | WARMER |
| FLOWERS | PLANTING | WET |

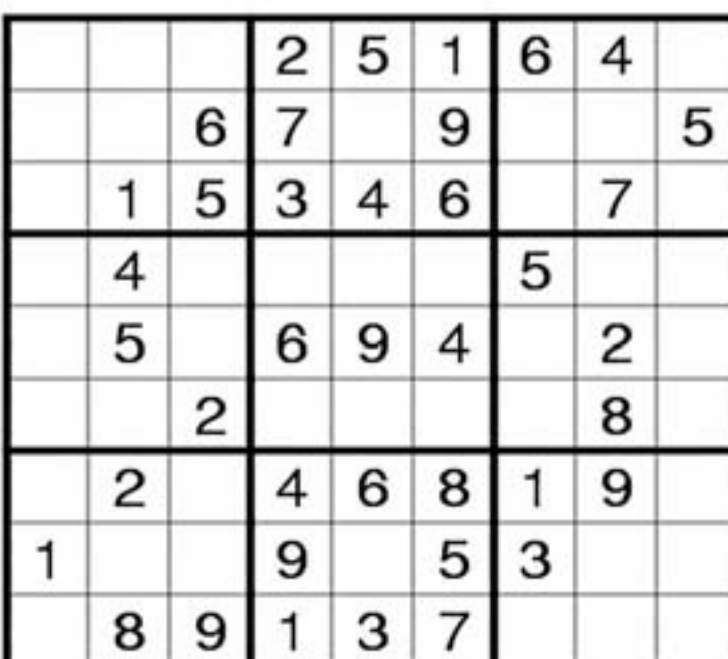
Yesterday's Solution

Sports

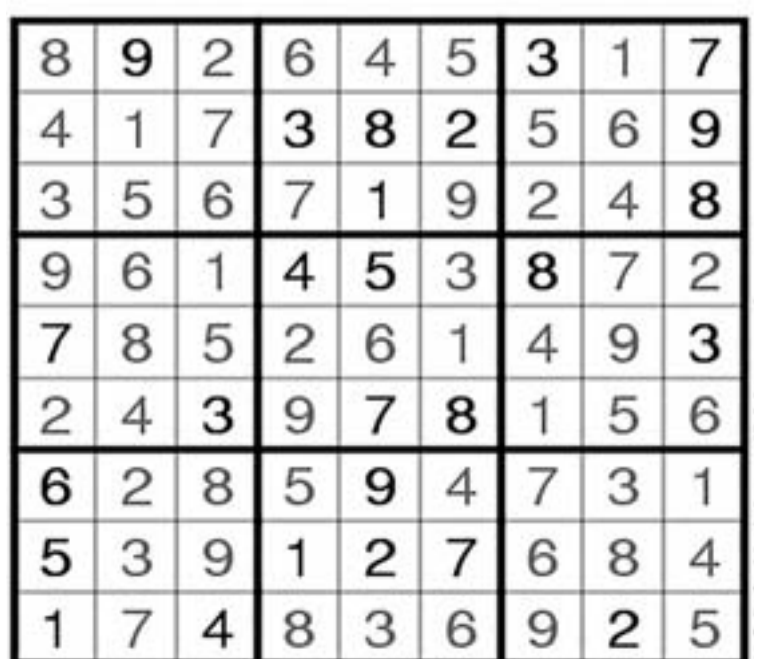


The hidden sentence is: WINNERS NEVER QUIT AND QUITTERS NEVER WIN

Daily SuDoku

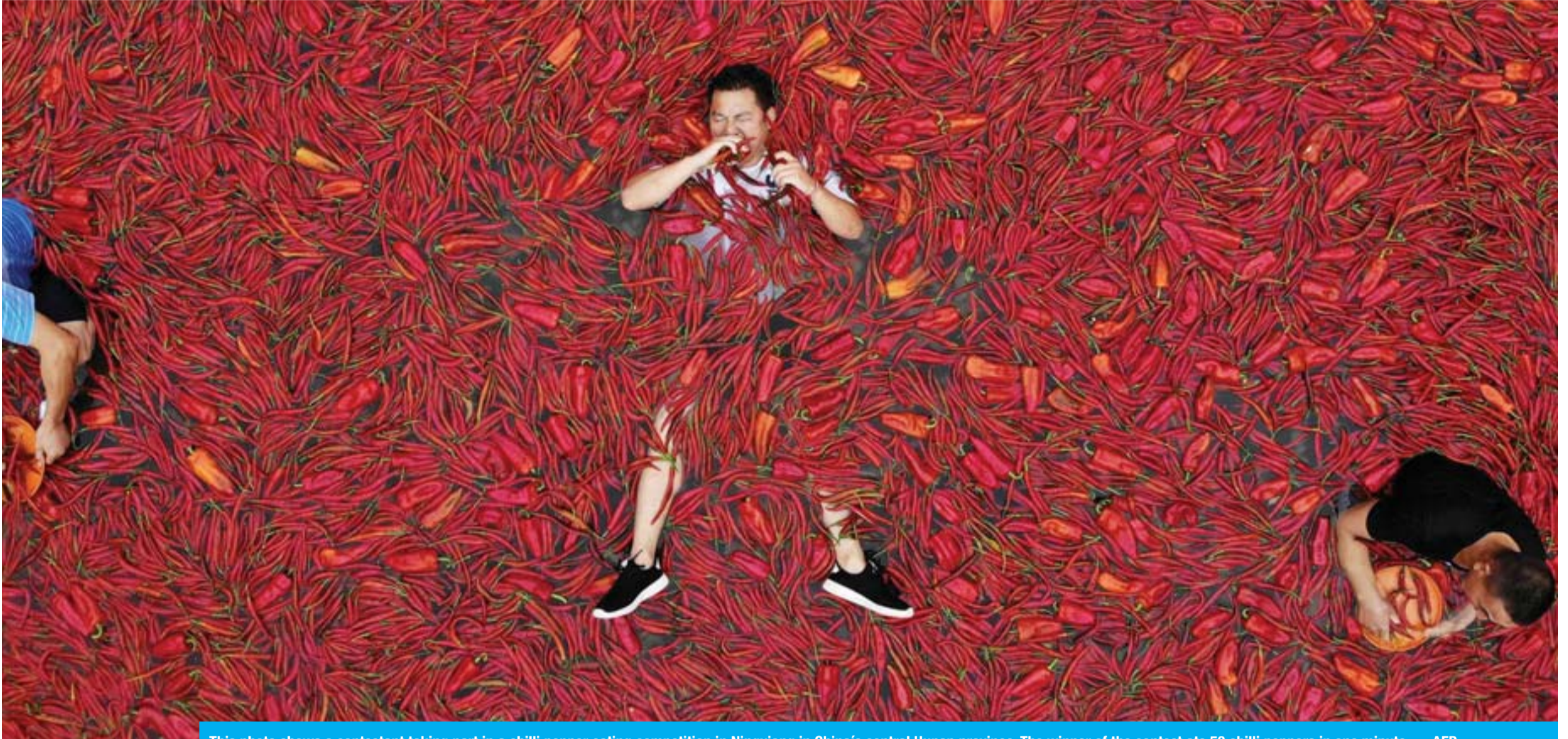


Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JULY 10, 2018



This photo shows a contestant taking part in a chilli pepper eating competition in Ningxiang in China's central Hunan province. The winner of the contest ate 50 chilli peppers in one minute. — AFP



View of the Cerro Azul, in the Serrania La Lindosa.



Detail of cave art at the Cerro Azul, in Serrania La Lindosa .



Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos shows the document through which the Chiribiquete National Park -named UNESCO's World Heritage site on the eve- is expanded by 1.5 million hectares.



Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos stares at cave art before announcing the expansion by 1.5 million hectares of the Chiribiquete National Park -named UNESCO's World Heritage site.

COLOMBIAN PEACE ALLOWS CULTURAL JEWELS TO RE-EMERGE

Deep inside the lush green and humid Amazonia jungle, a sinewing path stops abruptly in front of a giant rock face decorated with ancient paintings of anacondas, jaguars and tortoises. For millennia, indigenous Colombians have been illustrating their mythology in rock art, but these national treasures laid hidden-and preserved-during decades of war between government forces and Marxist rebels.

In the heart of the Guaviare jungle, a strategic area that armed groups continue to fight over, lies a UNESCO World Heritage site national park in which the Serrania de Chiribiquete table top mountains stand tall like giant drums. The rock frescoes adorning their sides occupy an invaluable place in the understanding of Amazonian settlement. "It was very difficult to work in the Guaviare because it was the epicenter... of the war these last 50 years," Ernesto Montenegro, general manager at Colombia's Anthropology and History Institute (ICANH), told AFP.

"Although there were exploration missions at the start of the 20th century they stopped because of the (precarious) situation." Since the 2016 peace accord that ended the war with FARC guerrillas, adventurers have ventured forth once again to try to decipher the secrets of the ritual drawings, some of which date back at least 12,000 years.

Sacred spirits

The area is sacred to the indigenous people of the jungle and not everyone has the right to even approach the rock art. "Only wise men are worthy of entering sacred sites, in which spirits dwell. The common mortals should not even allow their thoughts to wander in," said Andres Lopez, a historian at the institute, as he traipsed through mud to a rock painting spanning 30 meters (100 feet) in height and 100 meters in length. That site lies an hour by jeep away from the village of Raudal in the Guaviare department, an area known for coca plantations and cocaine production that once marked the front line between government soldiers and FARC rebels.

An hour by boat down the Guaviare river, where military vessels mounted with machine guns still patrol, a hamlet on stilts, surrounded by right-wing paramilitaries until 2000, remains the stronghold of the First Front-former FARC dissidents who refuse to disarm. Montenegro says that doesn't stop archeologists returning to Guaviare, insisting they are "benefiting from the peace process" that ended the decades-long guerrilla war. The remaining dissidents, when they come across explorers, impose territorial limits-but seem unopposed to the study of cultural relics that remain little-known in the country.

'A lot to discover'

This area was declared a "protected archeological site" by the culture ministry at the end of May, in a move initiated by the ICANH, which also organized the first international mission to the site, alongside the French Institute for Andean Studies (IFEA). "We hope to be able... to explain all this. There's still a lot to discover," said IFEA anthropologist Celine Valadeau. There are other unknown sites, for which "there is photographic evidence... but it hasn't been possible to find them because back then there wasn't any GPS" and the existing maps are imprecise, she says while displaying pictures of dancers, hunters and even amorous relations.



Mystery surrounds the paintings. Even carbon dating cannot shed light on when the drawings, created with a mineral mixture rich in manganese that turns orange once oxidized, were created due to vegetable components. The only indications come from the ashes of fires burned by the artists in front of the rock faces. Crucially, though, this area was declared a World Heritage Site at the start of this month-the ninth such listing in Colombia. Spanning an area of 2.7 million hectares (6.7 million acres), Chiribiquete is Colombia's largest natural park and the UNESCO listing was vital to protect the area from oil and mineral prospectors. It is the home to some 70,000 pictograms but just as importantly to the Chiribiquete emerald hummingbird, seen as the only endemic species in the Colombian Amazon, and the jaguar, the big cat only found in the Americas that is threatened by the loss of its habitat due to deforestation. — AFP

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos speaks during a press conference to announce the expansion by 1.5 million hectares of the Chiribiquete National Park -named UNESCO's World Heritage site on the eve- at the Cerro Azul in the Serrania La Lindosa, department of Guaviare, Colombia. — AFP photos

Bieber engaged to Baldwin

Pop singer Justin Bieber became engaged to model Hailey Baldwin over the weekend, according to US media reports on Sunday. The couple dated in 2016 but had broken up. Last month, they appeared together publicly, leading to speculation from fans that they had rekindled their romance, CNN reported. The pair got engaged on Saturday during a trip to the Bahamas, E! News said. Agents for Bieber, 24,

and Baldwin, 21, did not immediately respond to requests for comments. Bieber's parents put up social media posts that helped spark speculation about the pair.

A tweet posted by Baldwin's father, actor Stephen Baldwin, also seemed to allude to the engagement, saying: "Always pray 4 Gods will !! He is moving in the hearts of JB&HB," according to CNN. The post is no longer on Baldwin's Twitter account. The

romantic status of the Canadian-born pop singer, one of the world's biggest-selling musical acts, is of acute interest to his fans. Bieber dated singer and actress Selena Gomez off and on for years. — Reuters





China chilli fest gets off to scorching start

An annual chilli pepper festival kicked off yesterday in central China's spice-loving Hunan province with a chilli-eating contest in which the winner set a blistering pace by downing a gut-busting 50 peppers in just over a minute. Local boy Tang Shuaihui took home a 3-gramme 24-karat gold coin for winning the competition, which is put on by a local theme park in the county of Ningxiang and is now in its second year. With doctors on hand just in case, ten contestants each held plates heaped with 50 Tabasco chilli peppers, racing to be the first to finish off the red-hot fruits.

Tang cleared his plate in just 68 seconds in a contest held in nearly sweltering temperatures and as competitors sat in a shallow pool filled with water and three tons of floating chillies. "He finished them at an amazing speed, barely after the emcee had finished speaking," said Sun Mingyong, an employee at the theme park, called the Tanhe Ancient City. The Tabasco pepper has a rank of 30,000-50,000 on the Scoville Heat Scale that measures the piquancy of chillies, which puts it somewhere between a jalapeno and a habanero.

The peppers bobbing in the pool, however, were of a far weaker variety, partly to avoid irritating the contestants' skin. Smiling contestants wearing shorts and T-shirts—some armed with small bottles of water—waded into a vast pool of bright red peppers before attempting to clear their plates of chillies. One man floated on his back in the pool of chillies, chomping happily on the fiery fruits. Hunan cuisine is marked by its spicy peppers and richly coloured dishes and is considered among China's eight great food traditions along with Sichuan, Cantonese and other cuisines. The festival lasts until the end of August, with a fresh chilli-eating contest held daily. — AFP

This photo shows contestants taking part in a chilli pepper eating competition in Ningxiang in China's central Hunan province.



This photo shows contestants taking part in a chilli pepper eating competition in Ningxiang in China's central Hunan province. — AFP photos



A contestant taking part in a chilli pepper-eating competition.



A contestant taking part in a chilli pepper-eating competition.

Raising the standard: Women outdo men at India's official flag maker



An employee of Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangh stitching together an Indian national flag.

When top Indian officials salute the national flag anywhere in the world, women in a village at the other end of the country from New Delhi swell with pride. This is because Tulasigeri is home to India's only official flag-making company—and because the local men have proved themselves not up to the job. "The men were not as patient as the women and got the measurements wrong," groans Annapurna Koti, a supervisor at the Karnataka Cotton Village Enterprise (KKGSS).

"They had to unstitch the cloth and re-do the time consuming process," she told AFP. "They left after the fourth day and never returned." Around 400 people work for the state-owned company in the southern state of Karnataka, 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) from the capital, most of them women. The production takes place at two sites: in Tulasigeri where the raw products are processed and in Bengeri around two hours away where the finished products are made.

The female employees perform all the intricate parts of the process such as spinning the cotton and weaving the thread into cloth on foot-powered looms. Last year, they produced around 60,000 Indian tricolours of saffron, white and green against a blue wheel. Their flags hang at all official events and government buildings, at Indian embassies across the world, as well as at schools, village halls and on official cars. The guidelines in the national flag code of India and from the Bureau of Indian Standards are strict, covering everything from the exact shades to the stitching size.



In this photo Nirmala S Ilkal (left) hangs the screen printed central strip of the Indian national flag at the Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangh production line at the Indian National Flag Production Centre in Bengeri in the southern state of Karnataka. — AFP photos

"The piece is rejected if there is even the slightest error," Nirmala S Ilkal, who has worked in the printing department for 15 years, told AFP. Most workers, especially the women—who also manage their households—have rarely travelled outside their local districts. But Koti, the supervisor, says that knowing that their handiwork

goes far and wide goes some way to compensating for this. "We can't go outside to different places but the flags we make go all over the world and I feel proud to see everyone saluting them," she said. — AFP

Nirmala S Ilkal (left) prepares to screen print the central strip of the Indian national flag.



Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangh ironing an Indian national flag.



An employee of Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangh checking Indian national flags.



This photo shows an employee of Khadi Gramodyog Samyukta Sangh weaving cotton yarn to be later used to make the Indian national flag.

Lifestyle | Music & Movies



'Melodies of Istanbul' orchestra perform during a rehearsal ahead of the 46th edition of Istanbul Music Festival at the Grand Bazaar, exceptionally open on a Sunday, during an interview with AFP in Istanbul.



"Melodies of Istanbul" orchestra perform during a rehearsal ahead of the 46th edition of Istanbul Music Festival. — AFP photos



Turkish traditional musician and conductor Hakan Gungor performs during a rehearsal ahead of the 46th edition of Istanbul Music Festival at the Grand Bazaar.

Festival takes music deep into Istanbul's centuries-old heritage



Kudsi Erguner, a celebrated Turkish traditional musician of ney poses for a picture during a rehearsal ahead of the 46th edition of Istanbul Music Festival.

It's an early summer evening at Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, the maze-like warren of alleyways crammed with shops that has been the city's trading hub for over half a millennium. But this time, there are no traders' voices beckoning to travellers to come and haggle over the price of a carpet. Nor is the air filled with the pungent whiff of oriental spices being offered to passers-by. As the evening light streams through the upper arch windows, it is music that resonates through the bazaar; oriental wind instruments like the Turkish ney and Armenian duduk, the lute-like oud and the Balkan accordion.

For the first time in its history as an epicenter of trade and commerce in Istanbul, the bazaar is being used for a concert in the prestigious annual summer Istanbul Music Festival run by the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (IKSV) — the city's premier musical event since its creation in 1973.

'Grand' acoustics

It's a constant source of frustration to music lovers in Istanbul that the Turkish megapolis lacks a world-class, purpose-built music venue, especially for classical and traditional music. But the festival uses the city's multicultural and multi-confessional heritage to make up for what it lacks in modern infrastructure, staging concerts in churches, synagogues, historic universities and now the Grand Bazaar. "It is a very intelligent way to use this kind of historical space for concerts and bring in people for reasons other than their original function," said Kudsi Erguner, a celebrated Turkish traditional musician and one of the great living exponents of the ney.

"Usually, people come here to buy things," he added, before dazzling the audience with his command of the long, flute-like instrument. Despite the venue not being built for the purpose, he praised the acoustics of the Grand Bazaar, known in Turkish as the Kapalicarsi, meaning Covered Market. "The space is curved, there is a nice resonance and a very nice differentiation of sound," he added.

'Connections with identity'

The Istanbul Music Festival, which focuses on classical music but includes high quality traditional music and jazz, has taken concerts to venues like the Neve Shalom Synagogue, the St Anthony Roman Catholic Church and even the platform of Sirkeci Train Station, the legendary terminus of the Orient Express. The use of the venues, and the music played inside them, is a celebration of multicultural heritage in a city where the presence of Jews, Armenians and Greeks, as well as other minorities alongside the majority Muslim population, is a key part of its urban identity. Their populations were greatly diminished by 20th century tragedies such as the deportations and massacres of Armenians under the Ottoman Empire from 1915 seen by Armenians, but not Turkey, as a genocide and the mob rioting directed at the Greek minority in 1955.

Today, these buildings are a symbol of the proud presence that Turkey's minorities maintain in the former Constantinople, once the capital of the Roman, Byzantine and then Ottoman empires. "Istanbul has been the capital city of three empires and home to three major religions. They all left their landmarks in the city," director of the Istanbul Music Festival and deputy director general of IKSV, Yesim Gurer Oymak, told AFP. "A festival should also underline the historical heritage of the city where it takes place and make connections with its cultural identity," she added.

'Tolerance and harmony'

This year saw a concert held for the first time in the Neve Shalom Synagogue, a key place of worship for Istanbul's Jewish community, which was hit twice by deadly attacks—first in a 1986 gun attack and then a 2003 bombing blamed on Islamist militants. Istanbul may not have an ultra-modern concert hall like Paris or Hamburg but some of the finest acoustics in the city are to be found in historic buildings which also double as concert venues. Possibly the finest venue for an orchestra in the city is the Hagia Eirene a former Byzantine church, now a museum-



Ferran Savall plays guitar during a rehearsal ahead of the 46th edition of Istanbul Music Festival at the Grand Bazaar.

Ferran Savall plays guitar during a rehearsal ahead of the 46th edition of Istanbul Music Festival at the Grand Bazaar.

that dates back to the 6th century and where audiences can enjoy classical music with pin sharp acoustics marred only by the occasional swooping pigeon.

At the concert inside the Grand Bazaar, its historic walls echoed with a celebration of Istanbul's cultural heritage, bringing together songs of Armenian, Ladino, Jewish as well as Turkish origin, led by traditional musician Hakan Gungor. "This is the first time we perform a concert in the Grand Bazaar. It is a very important place with very authentic shops and our music is also very authentic," said Cag Ercag, one of Turkey's top classical cellists. Oymak said there were still locations in Istanbul where she dreamt of holding concerts, in particular a concert of "tolerance and harmony" at the historic Sultanahmet Square—which is flanked by the Hagia Sophia and Blue Mosque—fusing elements of Western and Eastern music. — AFP

Beyonce leads S Africa anti-poverty festival for Mandela

Beyonce and Jay-Z will lead an A-list lineup to mark 100 years since Nelson Mandela's birth in a Johannesburg festival by the Global Citizen movement to eradicate poverty. The December 2 event, which will be internationally broadcast, will celebrate the late anti-apartheid icon and draw a number of leaders in an attempt to throw a spotlight on fledgling efforts to eradicate the world's worst poverty, Global Citizen announced yesterday.

Beyonce and her husband Jay-Z will headline the music at the FNB Stadium alongside several other stars: Coldplay frontman Chris Martin, English singer-songwriter Ed Sheeran, Pearl Jam singer Eddie Vedder, hit pop producer Pharrell Williams and R&B chart-topper Usher. The festival will also feature some of the continent's most popular musicians including South African hip-hop producer Cassper Nyovest and Nigerian artists Wizkid, D'banj and Femi Kuti, who is the son of Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti.

Global Citizen said it hoped that the run-up to the festival would raise commitments of \$1 billion to help the world's poorest, with half of the amount aimed at women and girls. Global Citizen has held festivals since 2012 in New York's Central Park on the sidelines of the annual UN General Assembly to rally support, especially among young people, in the fight against poverty. The group



In this file photo Beyonce (left) and Jay-Z perform during a Get Out the Vote (GOTV) performance in support of Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton at the Wolstein Center in Cleveland, Ohio. — AFP

has since branched out overseas with seminars and music in India, Germany and elsewhere.

Hugh Evans, the founder and CEO of the movement, said he expected the Johannesburg festival to be the biggest Global Citizen festival ever in terms of reach, symbolism and lineup. "On every way that we measure outcomes—the number of citizens engaged, the number of policy outcomes that are achieved, the number of lives that are affected as a result of those policy outcomes—we believe it has the potential to be the most significant campaign we've ever been part of," Evans told AFP. Unlike traditional benefit concerts, Global Citizen distributes tickets for free to supporters who pledge to take actions such as writing their governments to support international development assistance.

For the Johannesburg edition, Global Citizen will also hand out tickets to people who are taking direct

action for good including community health workers who conduct HIV tests or who instruct mothers on child nutrition as well as teachers and South Africans who recycle plastics.

Mandela as inspiration

Evans said that Mandela offered a model for the Global Citizen movement through his magnanimous efforts at racial reconciliation and democracy as well as through his focus on tackling poverty and global health. Beyonce previously performed in South Africa in 2003 at a concert hosted by Mandela to raise awareness on HIV and AIDS. Two years later Mandela delivered a landmark speech in London's Trafalgar Square urging concerted efforts to "make poverty history." But Evans said that the world was falling behind on the UN Sustainable Development Goals which include ending hunger and ensuring educational opportunities to all children, regardless of gender, by 2030.

While Britain, Germany and Nordic countries are meeting the UN-backed goal of devoting 0.7 percent of gross domestic product to international aid, other major countries are lagging behind.

In the United States, President Donald Trump has called for slashing foreign assistance by one-third, although Congress has largely resisted his "America First" push on aid. "The truth is the world is not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals unless there is greater political will," Evans said. Global Citizen said that South African President Cyril Ramaphosa as well as the leaders of Norway and Ghana plan to attend the December 2 festival in honor of Mandela, who was born on July 18, 1918. — AFP

Mick Jagger quips about Polish courts overhaul at Warsaw concert

The Rolling Stones' Mick Jagger took a swipe at the Polish government's shake-up of the judiciary during a concert in Warsaw, adding his voice to a chorus of critics who say the changes harm democracy. The new laws force all judges aged 65 or over - including the head of Poland's Supreme Court, Malgorzata Gersdorf - to retire. They are part of a wide-ranging overhaul that the ruling conservative Law and Justice party (PiS) says is needed to rid Poland of its lingering communist legacy. "I am too old to be a judge," Jagger, 74, said in Polish on Sunday to the audience gathered at Warsaw's national soccer stadium. "But I am young enough to sing."

The European Union, human rights groups, international bodies and Polish opposition parties have all criticized the changes, saying they undermine the independence of the courts and boost the influence of politicians. Poland overthrew communism in 1989, breaking away from the Soviet system imposed after World War Two, before the Berlin Wall fell several months later. —Reuters



Mick Jagger

Lifestyle | Features



File photo provided by Sherwin-Williams shows a room with the Sherwin-Williams color Rare Gray SW 6199 on the wall.



File photo provided by Sherwin-Williams shows a room with the Sherwin-Williams color Functional Gray SW 7024 on the wall.



File photo provided by Sherwin-Williams shows a room with the Sherwin-Williams color March Wind SW 7668 on the wall. — AP photos

Gray: A 'sneaky color' is red-hot for painting interiors

When it comes to painting rooms, gray is red-hot. Benjamin Moore carries over 150 shades of gray, and Sherwin-Williams says that of their top 50 colors for interiors, 30 are grays. "The trend toward gray started in Scandinavia, became big in the US around six years ago, and is still on the rise," says Sue Wadden, director of color marketing at Sherwin-Williams. Andrea Magno of Benjamin Moore says, "Gray is not going anywhere, and is still growing in popularity. It updates things instantly, and it's evolving over time. And we're seeing more gray cabinetry and more trim in gray now."

Just 15 years ago, she says, "if you told someone you were going to paint your room gray, they would groan and say, 'How depressing.' Before about 2010, it was all about warm Tuscan colors. Since then, it's really about cool modern grays, and not just for paint colors. Stone, marble, tile and wood have also gone a lot cooler." But picking the correct shade of gray can be tricky. "It's crucial to pay attention to the undertones, and also how the light reacts to it," Magno says. "Gray is a very sneaky color."

Purple undertones

Grays have undertones of blue, purple or green, and you'll want to make sure the undertones are compatible with surrounding tile, furnishings and fabrics, designers

say. For a real "smack-in-the-middle gray," Wadden suggests her company's Repose Gray. "For walls surrounding pink tile in a bathroom, I'd go with Repose Gray, which goes great with pink and creates a neutral background," she says. Amazing Gray has a greener undertone, while Passive is cooler with more blue. "We typically try to steer clients away from purple undertones. Usually, we stick to true warm and true cools, and the middle ground, often referred to as French grays. They are pretty true grays," says Cate Dunning, who, with Lathem Gordon, runs the Atlanta-based GordonDunning Interior Design.

In addition to undertones, there's a big difference between cool and warm grays, with the former better suited to modern interiors and the latter often better for traditional homes with warmer-colored furnishings, according to Dunning. Too cool of a gray in extreme sunlight, like that in Florida, can sometimes look chalky, Wadden warns. "My best advice is to select your three favorite grays, paint a poster board with each one, and look at them in your home over a weekend, tallying up which one you like best at various times of the day and night. If you plunge in before doing that, you may regret it," says Dunning. "You might love a picture you saw in a magazine, but it's important to remember that the very same shade of gray might look entirely different in your own home," says Gordon.

Gray trim

While undertones are hard to spot in a paint chip, they become more obvious on a larger surface like a poster board placed prominently in the room you are planning to paint, Magno adds. Some of Benjamin Moore's more popular grays are Gray Owl, Balboa Mist, Coventry Gray, Stonington Gray, Revere Pewter and Thunder, she says. Revere Pewter has a gray cast "but it's warm and very livable," she says. "For cabinetry, it's Kendall Charcoal." What about trims? Although grays are generally used with lighter grays, whites and off-whites, the latest trend is toward trim in the same or even a darker shade of gray. "We are loving doing everything in one shade of gray," says Gordon. "It looks great, especially paired with light linen drapery with a little sheen to it. We are also seeing more interest in silvery grays." Laurie Pressman, vice president of the Pantone Color Institute, also sees gray with gray trim as a trend. "White still feels safer to some people, but it's easy to overlook how harsh white can feel. Give gray a chance," she says. "And if you're nervous starting out, I'd recommend going with a shade with blue undertones." — AP



File photo provided by Sherwin-Williams shows a room with the Benjamin Moore color Kendall Charcoal HC-166 on the wall.



Photo provided by Abbe Fenimore shows the delicate leaves and flowers of potted flowering plants which creates a perfect balance with the architectural molding and a dramatic black front door.



Photo provided by Abbe Fenimore shows how sofa pillows, as seen in this outdoor seating area designed by Texas-based interior designer Abbe Fenimore, bring a touch of indoor comfort to a deck or patio.

\$1.1m awarded to preserve African-American historic sites

Grants totaling \$1.1 million will help support important African-American heritage sites including the homes of jazz musician John Coltrane and playwright August Wilson, a Virginia location central to the slave trade and civil rights locations in Birmingham, a preservation group announced Friday. The money from the African-American Cultural Heritage Action Fund is part of an effort by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to preserve and promote African-American historic places.

Brent Leggs, who directs the fund, says African-American historic places have traditionally been undervalued and underfunded. "Through the action fund we have the opportunity to raise the visibility and the full contributions of African-Americans to our nation. We have the opportunity to highlight stories and places of activism achievement and community, to rewrite history and tell a new story about a black America," he said. He says the group and outside advisers narrowed down the 830 applicants from 42 states to 16 awardees. The grants are given in four categories: capacity building; project planning; capital; and programming and interpretation.

The trust plans to raise a total of \$25 million over five years to preserve and highlight African-American historical contributions. The recipients constitute a range of sites and needs across America. Some like Shockoe Bottom in Richmond, Virginia, are connected with the slave trade while others, like the John and Alice Coltrane Home, in Huntington, New York, are connected with African-American artistic contributions.

Historic Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, is part of a consortium of civil rights sites in the city that received a grant. Martha Bouyer of Bethel Baptist says the church, home to famous civil rights activist pastor Fred Shuttlesworth, will use the money for a historic structures report - a detailed accounting of the building which can guide future preservation efforts. "I've been trying for years to get this done," Bouyer said of the grant. Paul A. Ellis Jr is executive director of the August Wilson House in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which pays homage to the African-American playwright who wrote

such works as "Fences." Ellis, who's also Wilson's nephew, said the organization will match the \$50,000 grant from the trust and use it to create a series of interpretive exhibits and interactive techniques that "tell the story of August Wilson and the community that served as the inspiration for his plays."

"That's why it means so much to get this grant, to keep moving forward with this project," he said. "We're here in August Wilson's hometown and we want the world to know his story." Leggs said the fund was created in "the aftermath of Charlottesville last summer where heritage, culture and public spaces collided" as a way to "tell the whole history of our nation and to foster understanding, healing and reconciliation."



This file photo taken Oct 31, 2013 shows a person walking past the Freedom House Museum in Alexandria, Va.

In Charlottesville, Virginia, last year, a "Unite the Right" rally drew hundreds of white nationalists to the college town, where officials planned to remove a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee. After vicious brawling broke out between white nationalists and counter-demonstrators, a driver ran his car into a crowd of counter-demonstrators, killing one and injuring many. He currently faces federal hate crime charges. — AP

Front porches and entries that say 'welcome'

Interior designer Joan Craig sees many clients who give the decorating of their living room or kitchen a lot of thought. Yet while "people have become much more attuned to developing personality inside a house," she says, "the outside becomes something that often can be much more generic." And even if you give your backyard patio or deck some decorating attention, the front entrance often remains an afterthought. "The front of your home is the first thing your guests will see," says Edyta Czajkowska, founder of the Chicago-based design firm Edyta & Co., "so creating a beautifully crafted, welcoming atmosphere is important." In this season of outdoor entertaining, we've asked Craig, Czajkowska and Dallas-based interior designer Abbe Fenimore for advice on creating the most welcoming front entry areas.

Step back

It's hard to assess your front-door area when standing right in front of it. A home's entrance area begins where the visitor can first see it, says Craig, so stand at the road and consider your home from that distance. That may inspire you to embrace larger, more dramatic items. "Pump up the scale of lanterns on either side of the door," Craig says, or go for dramatic containers for planting. Or stay with simple planters, but put dramatic plants in them: "Even if you have a small container," Craig says, "it can have an incredible climbing rose coming out of it." She also suggests Boston ivy or climbing ivy.

Czajkowska recommends hydrangeas, which bloom for months and add color and texture to the front of a house. Climbing roses also add drama and romance, she says, "and if your entry allows for it, adding a spot where they can climb and envelope your entry can add major impact."



Photo provided by Abbe Fenimore shows a bold blue colored door set against crisp white which creates a cheerful atmosphere in this front entry area designed by Abbe Fenimore, founder of Studio Ten 25 in Dallas, Texas.

Consider the style of your home and the vibe of your neighborhood, says Fenimore. One client of hers, an artist, added artificial flamingos to the lawn around her front door. It wouldn't work in every neighborhood, Fenimore says, but at this house the effect was "jazzy and classy in a fun way, without being too kitschy."

Include seating

Even a small front porch may have room for a little bench, and these designers say it's worth adding seating. Tiny as your space may be, Craig says, "think of it as an outdoor room." Fenimore likes porch swings, which don't have to take up much space and are welcoming. A simple canvas seat cushion matched with indoor/outdoor pillows can create a perfect space for reading or having coffee in the morning, she says. Outdoor seating offers not just a spot to relax, Czajkowska says, but can double as a place to rest your bag while searching for keys. It may even be worth investing in an expanded porch area to make space for seating, Fenimore says. She remodeled her own front porch to create a sitting area.

Be bold with color

A beautiful, bright color can make an otherwise simple front door area look special. When you pass homes with brightly colored front doors, "you drive by and think, 'Oh my gosh, that's really pretty,'" Fenimore says, and it "gives you the warm fuzzies." Dark front doors painted black or charcoal have also become popular and work well on some houses. "Personally, I don't care for dark-colored doors unless it speaks to the rest of your home's architecture and design aesthetic," says Czajkowska. "However, I do think your door should be impactful, whether that means painting it a bold color or letting the beautiful craftsmanship and hardware shine."

Accessories

"Beautifully crafted house numbers," says Czajkowska, "add a ton of character, while highlighting and playing off of the other architectural details on your home." Ditto for outdoor lighting: "Selecting good outdoor lighting can make or break the ambiance of your home," she says. "Gas lanterns add an instant charm and set a cozy vibe, but if you don't want to go with gas, make sure to choose warm lighting that creates a soft glow." Craig and Fenimore agree: Sweating the details can pay off handsomely. "Whether you have a little space or a lot," Fenimore says, "be creative with even the smallest things." — AP



This Nov 11, 2004 file photo, the Mountain View Officers' Club, built in 1942, is shown, at Ft Huachuca, Ariz. — AP photos



This Dec 24, 1933 file photo shows the restored historic Dillaway-Thomas house, a military headquarters during the Siege of Boston and where George Washington held conferences with his office.

Classifieds

Tuesday, July 10, 2018

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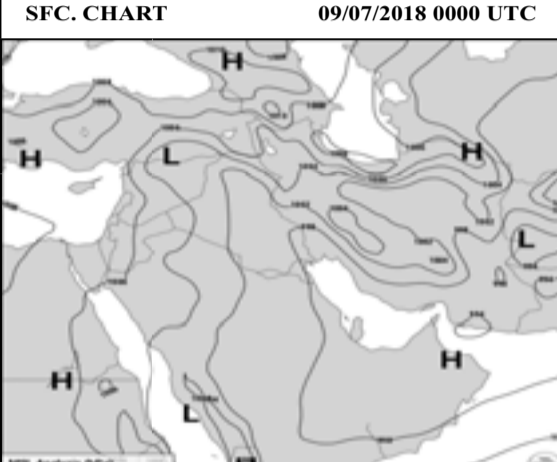
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 60 km/h causing rising dust.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Dust will subside gradually with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h.

WEATHER WATCH			Fresh wind + dust	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 09/07/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	48 °C	35 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	35 °C		
ABDALY	49 °C	32 °C		
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C		
JAHRA	50 °C	36 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	47 °C	33 °C		
SALMIYAH	44 °C	34 °C		
AHMADI	41 °C	36 °C		
NUWAISIB	46 °C	34 °C		
WAFRA	48 °C	35 °C		
SALMY	47 °C	32 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	07/10	Very hot and raising dust	49 °C	36 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	07/11	Very hot	48 °C	37 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Thursday	07/12	Very hot and raising dust over open areas	50 °C	37 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Friday	07/13	Very hot and raising dust	49 °C	36 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:22
Sunrise	04:56
Zuhr	11:53
Asr	15:27
Sunset	18:51
Isha	20:22

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	49 °C
MIN. Temp.	34 °C
MAX. RH	34 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	N 50 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Required Full staff

needed for burger restaurant including chefs, waiters, busboys, drivers and assistant chef with transferable visas.

For inquiries call: 55640060

Required Asian bikers

needed to deliver a burger restaurant orders.

Transferable visas conditioned.

For inquiries call: 55640060

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American Airlines	22087425
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Jazeera Airways	177
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	a22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
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 block 1 street 127 house 12 - corner
 2 floor and quarter - new house
 Foreign Family

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Pushpa Narayan Kambali, Passport No: L5936300, Civil ID No: 264123001432, has changed my name to Ayesha Mohammad Kamil. (C 5407)

Donor Required

Kidney donor required in Kuwait.
 Blood type **A+**

For inquiries call: **97141333**

I, Gadi Karimulla s/o. Gadi Gafoor Basha, holder of Indian Passport No. K8035636, Civil ID No. 280051008394, has changed my name to Shaik Karimulla, father Shaik Gaffar Basha, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5408) 9-7-2018

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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 10/7/2018				Departure Flights on Tuesday 10/7/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	MSC	412	Asyut	13:30
WAN	886	Sarajevo	00:20	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	JZR	124	Bahrain	14:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	JZR	562	Sohag	14:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:25	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:20
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	FEG	342	Sohag	14:50
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	234	Riyadh	15:00
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	SWA	501	Jeddah	15:45
WAN	416D	Beirut	02:40	AXB	396	Kozhikode	15:55
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	KKK	1269	Addis Ababa	16:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	16:00
JZR	553D	Alexandria	02:50	KLM	446	Amsterdam	16:05
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	UAE	854	Dubai	16:10
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	THY	769	Istanbul	16:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	WAN	311	Asyut	16:15
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	JZR	142	Doha	16:20
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	JZR	530	Asyut	16:20
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	16:45
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	MSR	607	Alexandria	16:50
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	16:55
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	QTR	1087	Cairo	17:00
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	MSR	613	Cairo	17:15
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	PGT	861	Istanbul	17:30
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	JZR	540	Cairo	17:35
KAC	152	Istanbul	04:20	LMU	5511	Doha	17:35
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	JAI	571	Mumbai	17:40
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	QTR	1077	Doha	17:45
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	303	Mumbai	18:10
THY	1414	TZY	05:05	THY	1465	Istanbul	18:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	FDB	070	Dubai	18:25
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	177	Cairo	18:30
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:20	THY	771	Istanbul	18:30
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	1542	Cairo	19:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	GFA	212	Bahrain	19:05
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	RJA	643	Amman	19:05
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	JZR	164	Dubai	19:10
BAW	157	London	06:10	WAN	133	Doha	19:10
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	KAC	167	Paris	19:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	RBG	550	Alexandria	19:25
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	KAC	413	Bangkok	19:30
THY	6376	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	171	Frankfurt	19:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	KAC	501	Beirut	19:35
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	JZR	238	Amman	19:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	JZR	778	Jeddah	19:40
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	07:05	BAW	156	London	19:40
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	KAC	165	Rome	19:50
JZR	529	Asyut	07:30	KAC	177	Vienna	20:00
KAC	122	AGP	07:35	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	20:05
WAN	342	Sohag	07:35	FDB	054	Dubai	20:05
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	KAC	613	Bahrain	20:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	117	New York	20:15
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	20:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	671	Dubai	20:25
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	ABY	126	Sharjah	20:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	561	Amman	20:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC	741	Dammam	20:45
IRA	675	Lar	09:40	JZR	534	Cairo	21:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	856	Dubai	21:15
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	JZR	482	Istanbul	21:15
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	21:15
WAN	312	Asyut	10:05	KAC	101	Istanbul	21:30
SAW7	03	Damascus	10:30	KAC	515	Tehran	21:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	541	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	531	Asyut	10:40	KAC	617	Doha	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	WAN	873	Istanbul	22:05
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	22:05
SAW	701	Dammam	11:00	QTR	1071	Doha	22:05
JZR	541	Cairo	11:05	FDB	056	Dubai	22:10
WAN	134	Doha	11:10	IRA	674	Lar	22:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	SYR	342	Damascus	22:25
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	SVA	513	Riyadh	22:30
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	SAW	704	Dammam	22:35
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	GFA	214	Bahrain	22:50
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	MEA	405	Beirut	23:00
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	VIZ	101	Baghdad	23:10
KAC	239	Dammam	13:00	SAW	702	Damascus	23:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	JZR	776	Jeddah	23:30
JZR	1543	Cairo	13:05	QTR	1075	Doha	23:35
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	JZR	176	Dubai	23:40



MULTAN: Shroud-wearing activists of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party - some with mock nooses around their necks, shout slogans as they take part in a protest after a sentencing decision against former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Pakistan's former PM was sentenced in absentia to 10 years in prison by a corruption court in Islamabad, dealing a serious blow to his party's troubled campaign ahead of July 25 elections. — AFP

'State of war' over, Ethiopia, Eritrea declare

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia and Eritrea declared their "state of war" over yesterday and agreed to open embassies, develop ports and resume flights, concrete signs of a stunning rapprochement that has swept away two decades of hostility in a matter of weeks. The announcement promised to end of one of Africa's most intractable military stand-offs, a conflict that has destabilized the region and seen both governments funnel large parts of their budgets into security and soldiers.

"The people of our region are joined in common purpose," Ethiopia's new prime minister Abiy Ahmed said, according to a tweet from his chief of staff, after signing a pact on resuming ties with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki. Abiy flew to neighboring Eritrea a day earlier and embraced Isaias on the airport runway. Thousands of Eritreans came onto the streets to cheer them and the two men danced side by side to traditional music from both countries at a dinner that evening. Abiy came to office in April and announced reforms that have turned politics on its head in his nation of 100 million.

With the 41-year-old former intelligence officer at the helm, the ruling coalition has ended a state of emergency, released political prisoners and announced plans to partially open up the economy to foreign investors. In his boldest move, Abiy offered last month to make peace with Eritrea, 20 years after the neighbors started a border war that killed an estimated 80,000 people. Full-blown fighting ended in 2000, but their troops have

faced off across their disputed frontier ever since. Abiy also said he would honor all the terms of a peace deal, suggesting he might be ready to settle the border row, particularly over the contested border town of Badme.

Both sides tweeted summaries of the agreement signed yesterday and repeated the reference to honoring the boundary decision. (1) State of war has come to an end; (2) The 2 nations will forge close political, economic, social, cultural & security cooperation; (3) Trade, economic & diplomatic ties will resume; (4) The boundary decision will be implemented; (5) Both nations will work on regional peace," read the Ethiopian version. The "State of war that existed between the two countries has come to an end," Eritrea's information minister, Yemane Gebremeskel, wrote on Twitter.

He said the deal included a commitment to open embassies in Addis Ababa and Asmara and a plan to resume flights between the two capitals. He published a photo of both men sitting at a table with their flags behind them. Ethiopia's state broadcaster said the two men had "agreed to participate in the development of ports" - potentially a huge economic boost for both countries, particularly landlocked Ethiopia which has one of Africa's fastest growing economies. The deal would also include a resumption of phone connections, Ethiopia's foreign ministry said. Ethiopia's dollar-denominated bonds rose to their highest in 10-weeks yesterday.

The shake-up by Abiy, a polyglot former soldier from the Oromo ethnic group, Ethiopia's largest, has won plaudits from Asmara to Washington and drawn comparisons to the 1980s 'perestroika' reforms of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. However, it has also attracted opposition from hardliners in the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the ethnic Tigrayan party that has dominated the ruling EPRDF coalition - and by association the country and economy - for nearly three decades. — Reuters

8 rescued from Thai cave, but 5 remain trapped

MAE SAI: Elite divers hauled four more young footballers out of a flooded Thai cave yesterday, authorities said, bringing to eight the number saved in a stunning rescue mission but still leaving five others trapped. "Hooyah," the Thai Navy SEALs, who have played a crucial role in the against-the-odds operation, said in a Facebook post as they announced that a total of eight members of the "Wild Boars" football team had been rescued on Sunday and yesterday.

Thais have been fixated on the crisis, hoping desperately for the safe return of the 12 boys and their 25-year-old football coach, after they ventured into the Tham Luang cave complex after practice and became trapped by rising waters more than a fortnight ago. The extraction of the four yesterday followed a similar pattern to the previous day, with the youngsters emerging in quick succession just before nightfall after navigating a treacherous escape route of more than four kilometers.

The saga has dominated global headlines, with the team spending nine days unaccounted for inside the cave, before British divers found the emaciated and disheveled group huddling on a muddy bank above the flooding. Authorities then struggled to determine the best way to save the "Wild Boars", with the group stuck on a shelf above the floodwaters in pitch darkness. Among the ideas were drilling an escape route through the mountain, or leaving them for months until the monsoon season ended and the flooding subsided. But with oxygen levels inside dropping to dangerous

levels and the prospect of heavy rains flooding the area completely, authorities decided they had to move quickly, and take the group out through the water-filled tunnels. Dozens of foreign divers and other experts from around the world were brought in to help the rescue effort, working alongside Thai Navy SEALs.

Rescue operations chief Narongsak Osottanakorn described Sunday's initial rescue bid as "D-Day" when it was launched, and there were fears that any one of many potential pitfalls could prove deadly. Among these were that none of the boys had scuba diving experience, and that they could easily panic while swimming underwater in darkness. The death of a former Thai Navy SEAL diver who ran out of oxygen in the cave on Friday underscored the danger of the journey even for professionals.

But after the first four emerged late on Sunday afternoon, hopes began to rise of a fairytale ending to the ordeal. Narongsak on Sunday described their journey out, escorted by elite divers, as "smooth". Crucially, round-the-clock pumping to ease some of the flooding had paid off. "The water level is still at a satisfactory level and we have enough teams to complete the mission," Narongsak said yesterday.

But although the eight were rescued, there were concerns they may have contracted an illness while in the cave. Narongsak said after the first four boys were rescued that they would be quarantined "for a while because we are concerned about infections". And rain could still re-emerge as a threat for the remaining five, particularly if there are complications that could delay the extraction further. Weather forecasters warned heavy rain could hit the area through the week. Authorities have repeatedly said the rain could re-flood crucial parts of the cave complex that have been drained and make the escape route much harder or even impossible to navigate. — AFP

Turkey train disaster kills...

Continued from Page 1

Television pictures showed several train carriages sprawled on their sides, and shocked injured passengers being taken away on stretchers as rescue workers picked through the wreckage. The train derailed outside the village of Sarilar in the Corlu district of Tekirdag.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed his condolences over those who lost their lives in the accident that he said has "deeply upset the whole nation". The accident, one of Turkey's worst train disasters of recent years, threatens to cast a shadow over a lavish ceremony scheduled in Ankara later to mark the inauguration of Erdogan for a new presidential mandate and the transition to a new system of government.

Erdogan said all state institutions were "using every

means available to help", vowing that there would be a comprehensive investigation into the "tragic accident", the presidency said. Turkey's audiovisual authority RTUK later said the government had issued a temporary ban on broadcasting images from the scene. This was lifted yesterday morning. Turkish authorities under Erdogan have over the last years sought to modernize Turkey's once ramshackle rail network, building several high speed inter-city lines.

Turkish passengers have in general preferred taking planes or buses for inter-city travel, but this has been changing with the new high-speed lines. The train involved in the accident appeared to be one of the slower passenger trains travelling on a single track line. Turkey's rail network has been hit by several fatal accidents in recent years. In January 2008, nine people were killed when a train derailed in the Kutahya region south of Istanbul due to faulty tracks. And in Turkey's worst recent rail disaster, 41 people were killed and 80 injured in July 2004 when a high-speed train derailed in the northwestern province of Sakarya. — AFP

stand at 4.61 against the dollar at 1350 GMT.

Erdogan has described high interest rates as "the mother and father of all evil", and said in May he would expect to wield greater economic control after the election. "We will take our country much further by solving structural problems of our economy," he said on Saturday, referring to high interest rates, inflation and the current account deficit. Inflation surged last month above 15 percent, its highest level in more than a decade, despite interest rate hikes of 500 basis points by the central bank since April. — Reuters

active participation in Beijing's "International Import Expo," with both nations agreeing that cooperation in the financial sector is key to boosting bilateral trade and investment. The two nations also agreed to work closely together in fields running the gamut from culture and education to healthcare and tourism, in addition to the fight against terror, hinting that a plan to introduce visa free travel between Kuwait and Beijing could be in the works. Other plans include establishing a free trade zone between China and the Gulf Arab states, which serves the best interests of both regions, as the two countries appreciated one another's contributions towards keeping peace and security in the region intact. — KUNA

Kuwait-China joint statement reveals...

Continued from Page 1

get development projects in Kuwait off the ground, namely its "Silk City" urban enterprise. They revealed that a joint economic and trade committee has been set up with the purpose of easing bilateral trade and investment, which will prove instrumental in improving economic ties.

With that in mind, China has commended Kuwait's

Groups call for urgent law on...

Continued from Page 1

for general amnesty to pardon the opposition activists. Opposition MP Abdulwahab Al-Babtain said on Twitter that the issue of storming the Assembly has not ended, adding that "it has not started even". He stressed on the need to issue new legislation for general amnesty and said the membership of the two convicted MPs should not be revoked. He called for popular support to achieve those goals.

Babtain said that a series of meetings will be held in the next few days and urged all to live up to their responsibility because the situation is bad when the honest people are sent to jail while the corrupt remain free. The liberal Kuwait Democratic Forum called for issuing a general amnesty law and to open a new page

in the Kuwaiti political life. Former opposition MP Obaid Al-Wasmi said he believes that the new sentences are specifically targeting former MPs Barrak and Muslim, and advised them not to return to the country now.

Head of the anti-corruption society Meshaal Al-Suwait called on those who were sentenced to jail to meet with HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and said he believes he will pardon them. Suwait however warned the opposition figures from the danger of "setting up an opposition abroad" calling the step totally unwise. The Popular Action Movement said in a statement that the majority of the Kuwaiti people was shocked at the rulings that sent honest people who fought against corruption to jail while corrupt elements remain free enjoying strength.

It said its legal office will study the court ruling thoroughly and take the necessary decisions outlining its options. The Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) also called for pardoning those convicted in the case. In the meantime, pro-government MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli said he was very pleased, like many Kuwaitis, at the rulings which sent opposition figures to jail.

Saudi Arabia bid to protect...

Continued from Page 1

pre-Islamic Arab civilization that also built Petra in neighboring Jordan.

It is now the centre of a multi-billion dollar tourism project the authorities are developing with French support. "I believe you cannot understand Islam as a great religion if you are dismissing completely what happened before Islam," Prince Sultan said. "That's why we focused on hundreds of pre-Islamic sites, pre-history because this is a story that cannot be understood without being looked at in its own holistic and complete sense." He said up to 150 important sites had been intentionally destroyed or lost to urban development before the government adopted its new policy of protecting pre-Islamic monuments. SCTH is dispersing soft loans to municipalities to develop heritage locations and preparing another 10 sites for UNESCO recognition.

Saudi Arabia hopes reviving such sites will bolster national identity while attracting tourists - local and

foreign - as part of a bid to diversify the economy of the world's top oil exporter away from crude. Reforms aim to lift total tourism spending to \$46.6 billion in 2020 from \$27.9 billion in 2015. Saudi Arabia is home to more than 10 million foreign workers and family members, and grants more than 6 million special visas a year for foreigners to attend the annual Hajj and other Muslim pilgrimages. But it does not offer regular tourist visas.

Plans to admit tourists have been discussed for years but have not come to fruition due to sluggish bureaucracy and concern over conservative sentiment. Prince Sultan said last year he hoped the kingdom would start issuing visas in 2018, but told Reuters that they still need approval from "the higher authorities in government", without elaborating or setting a new timeframe.

Asked if the kingdom would relax social restrictions to allow tourists to drink alcohol and wear bikinis, Prince Sultan said: "Ninety-nine percent of the things you say today are allowed in Islam and can be managed as we speak, but there are some things that will not be accepted in Saudi Arabia. "The Islamic world is all looking at Makkah every day, five times a day, but also thinking about Saudi Arabia," said Prince Sultan. "Some people would accept things in their own countries but would not accept it happening in Saudi Arabia." — Reuters

Sports

Former Barca coach Enrique tasked with reviving Spain

Enrique's appointment as coach for the next two years

MADRID: Former Barcelona coach Luis Enrique was appointed Spain's new coach yesterday after previous incumbent Julen Lopetegui was sacked on the eve of the World Cup in what turned out to be a disappointing campaign. "Luis Enrique's appointment as coach for the next two years was approved unanimously," Luis Rubiales, president of the Spanish football federation, told reporters. The 48-year-old faces a similar challenge to the one that he had when he took over at Barcelona in 2014.

A team with a history of success, a talented squad and a distinctive style of playing, had just failed to win a trophy for the first time in six years. With Spain, Enrique must revive a side that won three consecutive major tournaments between 2008 and 2012 but are deflated after three failures, the latest their World Cup loss to hosts Russia-ranked 70th in the world-on penalties in the last 16.

Before that, Spain were humiliated at the hands of the Netherlands in 2014 and beaten by Italy at Euro 2016 — their winning streak but a distant memory. Enrique will be taking over from Lopetegui, who was fired by Rubiales when the coach announced he had signed to take over at Real Madrid.

Spain's then sporting director Fernando Hierro stepped in hastily to replace him and led the team to the last 16, before stepping down after the tournament. Changing the coach two days before Spain's opening game probably did not benefit the side's chances.

With Hierro in place, there were positive signs against Portugal, when Cristiano Ronaldo's free-kick overshadowed an assured Spain performance in a thrilling 3-3 draw. But defensive errors and tactical rigidity soon came to the fore as poor displays followed against Iran, Morocco and Russia. Enrique will also be taking over a team shorn of captain

Andres Iniesta, who has retired from international football.

RESTORING CONFIDENCE

The new manager faces the same two-pronged brief that Lopetegui was tasked with two years ago: to restore confidence and get fresh blood from the younger generation. Of the starting XI against Russia, only Marco Asensio will be under 30 when the next World Cup comes around. Gerard Pique, Sergio Ramos, David Silva, Diego Costa and Sergio Busquets will all be 33 or older. The survivors from the triple triumph of Euro 2008, the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2012 will either be gone or nearing retirement, which paves the way for an evolution of personnel and maybe style.

Enrique played for both the warring powers of Spanish club football. A bustling forward or midfielder, he made 157 appearances for Real Madrid over five seasons scoring 15 goals and then played 207 games, scoring 73 times, for Barcelona over eight seasons. He also made 62 appearances for Spain between 1991 and 2002, scoring 12 goals.

After retiring in 2004, Enrique was groomed as a coach by Barcelona and led the club's B team to promotion to the Spanish second division and then took them to a third-place finish. His first head coaching job was at Roma in 2011 but after a mediocre season he returned to Spain and led Celta Vigo to ninth, an improvement of eight places, and masterminded a 2-0 home victory over Real Madrid that ensured Atletico Madrid won the title. That summer he joined Barcelona for a glorious three-year reign. His first season started shakily while he searched for a settled lineup but ended in a treble of La Liga, Copa del Rey and the Champions League, beating Juventus in the final. Barcelona then won the World Club Cup and at the end of the 2015-16 season added another Spanish double.—AFP



BARCELONA: In this file photo taken on May 21, 2017 Barcelona's coach Luis Enrique holds a ball during the Spanish league football match FC Barcelona vs SD Eibar at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on May 21, 2017. The Spanish Football Federation named yesterday former Barcelona coach Luis Enrique as Spain's new coach. — AFP

Modi lauds Indian gymnast for first gold in world event

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the tributes yesterday for woman gymnast Dipa Karmakar who bagged India's first ever gold medal in a global gymnastic event in Turkey. Karmakar, who participated in her first international competition since narrowly missing an Olympic medal in 2016, won the women's vault at the FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup in Mersin on Sunday. The 24-year-old had recov-

ered from a career-threatening knee injury suffered last year as her average score of 14.150 edged out Indonesia's Rifda Irfanaluthfi (13.400).

"More than the gold, what was important for me was to perform at the optimum level. I am happy I could do that considering the fact at the beginning of the year, I was hobbling back to fitness," Karmakar was quoted as saying by the Hindustan Times newspaper.

"Getting back into top gear makes me believe that my knee has healed completely and I should now be able to go all out at the Asian Games," she added. The Asian Games take place in Indonesia from August 18 to September 2. Modi took to Twitter to congratulate the Indian athlete who missed the Commonwealth Games in Australia this year due to her injury. "India is proud of @DipaKarmakar!... This win is a prime example of her tenacity and never-say-die attitude," said Modi.

Sports minister Rajyavardhan Rathore, an Indian

politician and a former professional shooter who won silver in the 2004 Olympics, also praised the champion gymnast. "#DipaKarmakar is the stuff champions are made of! After battling an injury for the past 2 yrs, she makes a heroic comeback by clinching her first in the Gymnastics World Challenge Cup in Turkey! Many Congratulations to her for making proud!" Rathore wrote on Twitter.

Karmakar though is still some distance away from the dangerous "Prodnova Vault" that got her bronze in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland. Named after Russian gymnast Yelena Prodnova, the "Vault of Death" as it is nicknamed was first introduced in 1999, but is so dangerous some want it banned.

It involves a handspring double-front somersault, and has one of the highest degrees of difficulty rating a seven, but only a handful of gymnasts have attempted it in competition. —AFP

Wilshere feels 'special bond' with new club West Ham

LONDON: England midfielder Jack Wilshere said it felt "special" to be joining West Ham on a free transfer yesterday as it is the club he and his family supported. The 26-year-old-whose lack of form towards the end of the season with Arsenal led to his being omitted from the World Cup squad—signed a three year contract with the Hammers.

Wilshere—scorer of 14 goals in his 197 appearances for the Gunners and who won two FA Cup winners medals in 2014 and 2015 — said it was well known the strong emotional ties he had with West Ham.

"It feels good, it feels special," said Wilshere on the West Ham website. "Many people know that I've had a special bond with this club growing up. People will have seen the picture of me in a West Ham shirt and I've got good memories of my childhood supporting West Ham, watching them at Upton Park."

"It feels good and of course my family and a few of my friends are West Ham fans so everyone's buzzing." Wilshere—whose contract ran out at the end of June — decided to look for a new club when new Gunners manager Unai Emery told him he would not be a first choice next season.

Emery's predecessor Arsene Wenger had recommended that the club offer Wilshere a new contract after a series of impressive performances last season. Wilshere's career has been hobbled by injuries and he was willing to take a pay cut to stay at a club he had been with for 17 years but Wenger's departure left his fate in Emery's hands.

Wilshere—who won the last of his 34 England caps in the humiliating Euro 2016 2-1 defeat to Iceland—said he did not have to think twice when he learned of West Ham's interest in securing his services adding that he is a great admirer of manager Manuel Pellegrini.

"I think it was a number of things," he said. "The manager being one and the way he wants to play and where he sees me playing." Mario Husillos, director of football at West Ham, said he and Pellegrini had made Wilshere's signing a priority once they knew he would be available.

"Manuel and I identified him as a target as soon as we joined the club and we are delighted to have succeeded in securing Jack's signature above a number of other teams. "On the biggest stage, he has shown that he has game-changing abilities, as well as having the creativity and intelligence to make a real difference to our squad."—AFP

Pivac to coach Wales after Gatland era

LONDON: Wayne Pivac will coach Wales when fellow New Zealander Warren Gatland's 12 year reign comes to an end following the 2019 Rugby World Cup, the Wales Rugby Union announced yesterday. Pivac's successful tenure at Welsh region Scarlets—last season he guided them to their first European Cup semi-final in a decade—had placed him as favourite to fill the vacancy.

Pivac, who also coached Scarlets to a thumping victory over Irish powerhouses Munster to land the 2017 Celtic League title, saw off two fellow New Zealanders—two-time Super Rugby winning coach Dave Rennie, who is presently in charge of Glasgow Warriors, and Scott Robinson. "The current Scarlets boss will take over from Warren Gatland, who is scheduled to step down after the 2019 Rugby World Cup when he will have served more than 12 years at the helm," read the WRU statement posted on their website.

Martyn Phillips, chief executive of the WRU, said that there should be no complaints after a rigorous selection process which took two years to complete. "We have secured the best man for the job and we have done so rigorously and decisively to the collective benefit of all involved in Welsh rugby," said Phillips.

"Both Wayne and Warren and their coaching teams, our international players, supporters and everyone at the Scarlets now have clarity and there is no underestimating the positive benefit to be gained from having the time to plan properly for the future.—AFP



Kuwait jet ski team with Kuwait's Ambassador in Brussels Jasem Al Budaiwi and other Kuwaiti diplomats.

Kuwaiti team wins 4 medals at Belgium's European Jet Ski championships

BRUSSELS: The Kuwaiti national Jet Ski team won one gold, two silver and one bronze medal at the Euro Jet-tribe Jetski Championship held in Belgium from July 4-8. Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium, the EU, NATO and Luxembourg, Jasem Al-Budaiwi, yesterday welcomed the team to the Kuwait embassy and congratulated them on their win. He noted that the Kuwaiti team had an outstanding performance at the championship that was organized by the Belgian Jet Ski Federation near the town of Froidchapelle in southwestern Belgium.

"The embassy welcomed this team in line with its

efforts to provide all sorts of services and facilities to various Kuwaiti delegations that visit Belgium, political, economic cultural, sports. We are here to help them to ease their stay here," Al-Budaiwi told KUNA.

"We are keen on promoting Kuwait's relations with Belgium in different fields. Sports is a sector where cultures and the youth can meet and exchange views and ideas in a very civilized and peaceful manner," he said.

On his part, Jet skier and team member Abdurrahman Al-Umar said that he won a gold medal in the pro-am runabout limited class.

"It was really a tough competition. It is the first time that I participated in this class. I am really happy that I won," he said. On his part, teammate Salem Al-Mutawa said that he won the silver medal in the pro-am limited category and a bronze medal in pro-am stock category. Mohammad Ibrahim Burabia won the silver medal in the pro-GB category, which he said, "is the biggest and hardest category in the championships."

A number of 31 countries from around the world, including some Gulf countries, with 299 racers took part in the event. — KUNA

Sports

Diamondbacks lose 16-inning marathon to San Diego Padres

New York Mets lose 25 of their last 33 games

PHOENIX: Wil Myers, who tied a Padres record with three homers Saturday night, homered off Arizona catcher Jeff Mathis with two outs in the top of the 16th inning Sunday to give San Diego a 4-3 win over the Diamondbacks at Phoenix. Mathis, who caught the first 15 innings, was called upon to pitch after the Diamondbacks ran out of pitchers. Mathis was Arizona's 10th pitcher, a parade that started with Zack Greinke. The Diamondbacks used all seven members of their bullpen plus their Friday starter, Zack Godley, who pitched the 15th. Mathis retired the first two hitters he faced in the 16th before Myers drove a full-count fastball into the seats in right-center. Brad Hand (2-4), the ninth pitcher deployed by the Padres, got the win to give San Diego a split of the four-game series. Hand pitched the final two innings, stranding the tying run at third in the 16th.

RAYS 9, METS 0

Nathan Eovaldi carried a perfect game into the seventh inning and combined with Andrew Kittredge on a two-hit shutout as Tampa Bay won at New York. The Rays won the final two games of the three-game series and have won 11 of their last 15. The Mets have lost 25 of their last 33 games and haven't won a series since May 18-20, a span of 14 series. Brandon Nimmo laced a clean single over second base on an 0-1 count to open the seventh inning and end the perfect-game bid. Eovaldi (3-3) was pulled after the seventh. He gave up one hit and no walks while striking out nine.

RANGERS 3, TIGERS 0

Jurickson Profar smacked a first-inning homer, and four pitchers combined on a shutout as Texas salvaged a split of a four-game series at Detroit. Rangers designated hitter Shin-Soo Choo extended his on-base streak to 47 games with a ninth-inning infield single. He broke Julio Franco's 1993 club record with the hit. Texas starter Austin Bibens-Dirckx (2-2) lasted 5 1/3 innings and limited Detroit to three singles and a walk while striking out five. Reliever Jose Leclerc also recorded five strikeouts in 1 2/3 innings. Jake Diekmann tossed one inning, and Keone Kela notched his 22nd save by getting the last three outs.

RED SOX 7, ROYALS 4

Rick Porcello struck out nine over seven innings of three-run ball. Xander Bogaerts, Mitch Moreland and Eduardo Nunez each had two RBIs, and Boston capped a three-game sweep at Kansas City. Steve Pearce added an RBI for the Red Sox, who have won six consecutive games. Porcello (11-3) allowed nine hits and walked one. Jorge Bonifacio had two RBIs, and Adalberto Mondesi and Whit Merrifield (5-for-5) each drove in another for Kansas City, which matched its longest losing streak this year at nine games. It's the third time the Royals have lost nine in a row this season.

YANKEES 2, BLUE JAYS 1 (10 INNINGS)

Brett Gardner hit the go-ahead RBI single in the top of the 10th inning as New York won at Toronto in the rubber

match of a three-game series. Toronto's Tyler Clippard (4-3) hit Greg Bird with a pitch to open the 10th. Tyler Wade ran for Bird and was sacrificed to second by Austin Romine. Gardner singled left to score Wade. Chad Green (5-1) earned the win, and David Robertson picked up his second save. Kendrys Morales hit a solo homer for the Blue Jays. It was the 200th of his career, making him the fifth Cuban-born player ever to reach that plateau.

ANGELS 4, DODGERS 3

Shohei Ohtani's pinch-hit home run leading off the seventh inning snapped a tie and lifted the Los Angeles Angels to a win over the Los Angeles Dodgers in Anaheim, Calif. The Angels won the series, taking two of three. The two teams will square off again at Dodger Stadium next weekend. Angels starter Andrew Heaney (5-6) threw seven innings of three-run ball. He struck out 10, matching a season high. Hansel Robles pitched a scoreless eighth, and Justin Anderson tossed a scoreless ninth for his fourth save.

A'S 6, INDIANS 0

Stephen Piscotty and Jed Lowrie hit home runs for the second consecutive game, and Brett Anderson came off the disabled list to go five-plus scoreless innings as Oakland earned a victory at Cleveland. The A's won for the 10th time in their past 12 games and took a series against the Indians for the second consecutive week. The A's won two of three games at Oakland last weekend before doing it again in Cleveland by winning Saturday and Sunday. Anderson (1-2) gave up just three hits with three strikeouts and a pair of walks. Oakland's bullpen allowed just two hits over the final four innings as the A's recorded their sixth shutout of the season.

ASTROS 2, WHITE SOX 1

Jose Altuve slugged a home run, Marwin Gonzalez delivered a perfect squeeze bunt, and host Houston completed a sweep of its season series with Chicago. The Astros moved to a season-high 30 games over .500 by mustering just enough offense against Lucas Giolito, who gave up two runs in a season-high 7 1/3 innings. Dallas Keuchel (6-8) worked seven innings, allowing one run on six hits. Hector Rondon tossed a perfect ninth for his seventh save.

BREWERS 10, BRAVES 3

Jesus Aguilar hit two home runs, and Hernan Perez capped a five-run inning with a three-run homer to lift host Milwaukee past Atlanta. In the decisive third-inning rally, the Brewers got an RBI single from Christian Yelich and a sacrifice fly from Travis Shaw before Perez blasted his sixth homer to center field. Aguilar went deep in the seventh inning, and Eric Thames and Aguilar homered in the eighth. Milwaukee's Junior Guerra (6-5) allowed only one run in six innings and won his third consecutive start.

CUBS 6, REDS 5 (10 INNINGS)

David Bote drew the game-winning walk with one out



PHOENIX: Carlos Asuaje #20 of the San Diego Padres attempts to turn a double play as Paul Goldschmidt #44 of the Arizona Diamondbacks slides into second base during the fifth inning at Chase Field on Sunday in Phoenix, Arizona. —AFP

in the bottom of the 10th inning to lift Chicago past visiting Cincinnati. The Cubs won for the eighth time in nine games despite not getting a hit in the 10th. Reds first baseman Joey Votto committed a crucial error in the inning. Cincinnati's Adam Duvall prompted extra innings when he hit a game-tying homer off Brandon Morrow in the ninth. Morrow blew his second save chance of the year and allowed his second homer in the past two seasons.

PIRATES 4, PHILLIES 1

Nick Kingham pitched six strong innings and drove in two runs as Pittsburgh broke a five-game losing streak with a win over visiting Philadelphia. Starling Marte had two hits, and Josh Harrison and Josh Bell each drove in a run for the Pirates. Nick Williams hit a solo homer for Philadelphia, which had won six straight. Kingham (3-4), making his eighth big league start, gave up Williams' homer for his only run allowed. That was among four hits he gave up while striking out five and walking one. He had been 0-4 in five starts since winning his first two.

MARLINS 10, NATIONALS 2

J.T. Realmuto went 5-for-6 with three RBIs as Miami

rolled to a win at Washington, avoiding a four-game weekend sweep. All five of Realmuto's hits were singles. In fact, the first 20 of Miami's 22 hits were singles, as the team did not get an extra-base hit until the ninth. Martin Prado helped by going 4-for-6 with one RBI as six Marlins posted at least two hits. Miami finished 8-for-20 with runners in scoring position and still stranded 17.

TWINS 10, ORIOLES 1

Brian Dozier homered, doubled and drove in three runs, and Mitch Garver and Eduardo Escobar each hit two-run home runs as Minnesota completed its first four-game home sweep of Baltimore. Dozier, Robbie Grossman and Max Kepler each had two hits for Minnesota, which broke the game open with an eight-run sixth inning that featured a double and a home run by Dozier. Jake Odorizzi (4-6) picked up his first victory since a 7-1 win at St. Louis on May 8 by pitching six shutout innings. Chris Davis hit his ninth home run of the season, and Manny Machado and Jonathan Schoop each had two hits for the Orioles, who lost their sixth straight game and fell for the 13th time in 14 games. — Reuters

Hamilton limited the damage, but Ferrari are the real winners

SILVERSTONE: Lewis Hamilton's superb fight back from last to second in Sunday's British Grand Prix cannot mask the fact that Ferrari landed a telling blow on Mercedes and their Formula One champion.

This was a race that, on paper, had Hamilton's name written all over it and should have sent the Briton back to the top of the standings. Instead, the Mercedes driver slipped eight points behind Sebastian Vettel, with the real possibility that his German rival will be leading into the August break, with all the bragging rights that entails.

Second place, after a first lap collision and spin, was great damage limitation and a fine drive by Hamilton. But Mercedes have been letting too many bankable points slip through their fingers.

The fact that Hamilton is only eight points adrift after 10 races is remarkable considering that Mercedes have only won three times so far in 2018. Races have been lost through mechanical misfortune, strategy blunders, racing incidents or the simple fact that rivals have come up with a better car for a particular circuit.

Mercedes have won every championship since the start of the V6 turbo hybrid era in 2014, but their grip has been prised open this season. After 10 races in 2017, Mercedes had won six. In 2016, 2015 and 2014 the tallies were respectively nine, eight and nine wins at the same stage.

No wonder, then, that Vettel was so elated on Sunday afternoon at a circuit that had seen Hamilton win for the previous four years and Mercedes for the last five. The German is picking up crucial points, like a winning electoral candidate collects votes in marginal seats or states, in places that would previously have been considered solidly Mercedes.

"Qui a casa loro (here in their home)," he exclaimed over the radio after the chequered flag as Ferrari hailed their 'lion'. "We are leaving with the British flag to hang in Maranello," he added. Vettel also triumphed in Canada, a race Hamilton had won for the previous three years and six times in total, while Mercedes' hopes of a fifth successive Austrian Grand Prix win ended with mechanical failures to both cars. Sunday's victory was Vettel's fourth of the campaign, one more than Hamilton, and another in Germany next week would equal in half a season what Ferrari managed in all of 2017 — which was already the team's best since 2010. — Reuters

Introducing the new AC Milan 2018/19 home kit

PUMA football brings you the new AC MILAN 2018/19 Home kit. The first PUMA kit for AC MILAN plays to the Club's long history and tradition.

The unmistakable red and black stripes that represent the fire in the hearts of the team and the fear they instill in their opposition are retained in a clean and classic execution.

A vintage inspired button-up collar, as seen on the club's kits from the early part of the 20th Century adds to this classic and clean feel, whilst the legendary 'Diavolo Rossonero' (The Red & Black Devil) appears on the back of the neck, a nod to the famous quote by club founder Herbert Kilpin: "We're going to be a team of devils. We'll be red like the flames that will animate our souls and black like the fear our opponents will feel" To accompany the home kit, PUMA Football created a social campaign under the title 'A NEW MILAN'. It is inspired by the youthful exuberance and creativeness of the city, and the passion of the fans that is reflected in a new era of youth and energy within the

Skiing a model for equity, says top earner Shiffrin

LOS ANGELES: The world's best overall women's ski racer Mikaela Shiffrin, who for the second successive year was the highest paid athlete in the sport, said Alpine skiing can serve as a model for equal pay.

The 23-year-old American, who again earned more than the men's top athlete Austria's Marcel Hirscher, said she is proud to be part of a sport that recognizes the achievements of women as equal to those of men. "Gender equality and equal pay in the workplace are hot topics right now and ski racing is one of the most equal professions out there," Shiffrin, who took home 702,774 Swiss francs (USD \$710,734) in prize money, told Reuters on Sunday.

"To have the opportunity as a girl in ski racing to win as much or more prize money as her male counterparts is a testament to the sport. "Of course it's a really cool thing for me but it's also goes to show how far female ski racing has come that people want to watch it and find it exciting."

Shiffrin's gold medal in giant slalom and silver in



Club, fuelling a burning desire to succeed.

To view the AC Milan home kit launch film: https://youtu.be/m-Z_YnB2vMO

AC Milan are part of an impressive roster of PUMA Football clubs including Borussia Dortmund, Arsenal FC, Olympique de Marseille, CD Guadalajara, Borussia Monchengladbach, and National teams such as Italy, Switzerland, Uruguay, Senegal and Serbia. PUMA's football portfolio also includes some of the world's

best players, such as Romelu Lukaku, Antoine Griezmann, Olivier Giroud, Sergio Aguero, Marco Reus, Julian Weigl, Adam Lallana, Cesc Fabregas, Mario Balotelli, Hector Bellerin, Petr Cech, Gianluigi Buffon, Nacho Monreal, Allan Saint-Maximin and Marco Arnautovic.

The AC Milan home kit is now available at Orient Sports, Soccer Scene at Avenue Mall, Lilly whites, The Boot Room and on NAMSHI.

combined at the Pyeongchang Games have earned her two ESPY nominations - for Best Female Athlete and Best US Female Olympian - and she was pleased those performances can help keep her sport in the public eye. "Ski racing doesn't receive a ton of attention outside of the Olympic cycle in the US so to be able to keep that ball rolling through the ESPYs is super cool," she said of the awards, which are voted for by fans ahead of a July 18 ceremony in Los Angeles.

"It's good for me and my brand and that's all great but to be honest, it's cooler because it means people are watching the sport and I get to share my passion with more people. "So let's give it a little more time in the spotlight."

Shiffrin was quick to praise compatriot Lindsey Vonn as a trailblazer in the sport who paved the way for Shiffrin's success. With 82 World Cup victories, the 33-year-old Vonn could surpass Ingemar Stenmark's record of 86 World Cup victories this season, a feat once thought unimaginable.

"Lindsey put ski racing on the map in the US," said Shiffrin, whose 43 World Cup wins already has her halfway to the record she may one day hold. "Definitely she's the biggest name in the sport and because she came before me and had success, it's given me an opportunity to make ski racing a career."

"I like to think that I'm carrying the torch in some sense." Taking the mantle from Vonn, who has said she will retire before the next Winter Olympics in Beijing,



Mikaela Shiffrin

could be seen as a lot of pressure for Shiffrin but she said it's an opportunity she cherishes. "There's some little girl out there who wants to be a ski racer and might have a shot to be really, really good and they are only going to have that possibility because Lindsey and I came before them and there's a torch to carry," she said. — Reuters

Sports



Croatian midfield threat poses dilemma for manager Southgate

Southgate's system is built to probe for weaknesses

REPINO: Manager Gareth Southgate has largely stuck to his guns in terms of England's tactical approach at this tournament but the challenge of a World Cup semi-final against Croatia in Moscow tomorrow poses him a tricky dilemma. Croatia have arguably the strongest central midfield pairing of the tournament in Barcelona's Ivan Rakitic and Real Madrid playmaker Luka Modric, while England have been playing with just one orthodox central defensive midfielder, Jordan Henderson.

Southgate's system is built to probe for weaknesses via a trio of attacking players operating behind and around striker Harry Kane, with all three expected to contribute to the defensive work when the team does not have possession. That means Jesse Lingard, Dele Alli and Raheem Sterling - none of whom are noted for the defensive side of their game - must put in the hard graft of closing down space and harrying their opponents.

So far it has worked pretty well. Taking on both massive responsibility and a huge workload, Henderson has been excellent and the attacking trio have helped him enough to ensure he has not been swamped. But with Rakitic and Modric operating centrally and Andrej Kramaric inclined to drop off behind lone striker Mario Mandzukic, the danger of Croatia dominating the central areas is a very real one for England.

The obvious option for Southgate would be to strengthen that area by bringing in Eric Dier to help Henderson and shore up the middle of the park. That would mean sacrificing one of the attacking midfield trio, however, which risks upsetting the balance of the formation and reducing England's effectiveness with the ball.

The impression so far is that Southgate trusts his system and his players, and does not want to let the opposition dictate his approach. But after two knockout games in

which they were favourites against Colombia and Sweden, England now face a high-quality, highly tactical opponent and Southgate must decide if his trusted formation is really suited for such a task.

Another matter of concern for England will be the wide areas, where Kieran Trippier has been outstanding in his attacking wing back role on the right and Ashley Young has done an effective job on the left.

Croatia have attacking quality out wide in Ivan Perisic on the left and Ante Rebic on the opposite flank, both of whom will give England's full backs plenty of defensive work to do. Both Perisic and Rebic can cut inside to support Mandzukic from inside left and inside right roles, meaning even more strain on Henderson if he is left unaccompanied. If Southgate were to bring in Dier, it will be a very difficult decision to decide which of his attacking trio he should sacrifice. Jesse Lingard has been excellent and is surely a certain starter, leaving the issue as a straight choice between Dele Alli, who scored in the 2-0 win over Sweden but is carrying a knock and was otherwise quiet, and Raheem Sterling.

Sterling caused Sweden plenty of problems, stretching them with his movement on Saturday, but missed a glorious chance and the fact he has not scored for England since October 2015 is a major concern for the most advanced of the trio. Southgate is loyal to his players and would be reluctant to leave out the Manchester City forward. Nor will he be keen to disrupt a formation which has carried his team to the last four.

But Croatia are, unlike Colombia and Sweden, a team that can dominate possession for long stretches as they seek to exploit defensive gaps. Plenty then for both Southgate and his opposite number Zlatko Dalic to ponder ahead of their meeting in Moscow. — Reuters



MOSCOW: Croatia's team players take part in a training session of Croatia's national football team at the Luzhniki training field, in Moscow, yesterday ahead of their Russia 2018 semi-final football match against England. — AFP

'Winners' Fellaini, Chadli keep African interest alive

MOSCOW: The World Cup semi-finals may be an all-European affair but Belgium's unlikely heroes Marouane Fellaini and Nacer Chadli have ensured that at least one part of North Africa has retained a strong interest in the tournament.

The midfield duo, who both have dual Moroccan-Belgian nationality, kept Belgium alive with their goals off the bench in the extraordinary round of 16 comeback against Japan and were handed starts in the 2-1 win over Brazil. In the Kazan quarter-final, Fellaini rewarded coach Roberto Martinez with 90 minutes of hassling, harrying and sometimes hacking that played havoc with the flow of Brazil's vaunted midfield.

Born in Etterbeek to Moroccan parents, Fellaini is an established member of Belgium's "golden generation" despite criticism of his performances at Manchester United. While his call-up to the World Cup squad was to be expected, Chadli would have been a shock inclusion in the squad even if he had not missed most of the season for West Bromwich Albion because of injury.

The versatile 28-year-old, who played a friendly for Morocco in 2010 before committing to Belgium, ran himself into the ground at left wing back against Brazil before making way for the better-known Thomas Vermaelen seven minutes from time.

That Belgium held off a late Brazilian charge to set up tomorrow's last four meeting with France in St Petersburg was another vindication of Martinez's faith in the duo. "We are extremely proud of Nacer and Marouane," the Spaniard said before the Kazan Arena clash. "Their performances have been incredible. Not just on the football level, where they've been very inter-



MOSCOW: (L to R) Belgium's forward Michy Batshuayi, Belgium's midfielder Marouane Fellaini, Belgium's forward Eden Hazard and Belgium's midfielder Thorgan Hazard joke during a training session at the Guchkovo Stadium in Dedovsk, outside Moscow, yesterday, on the eve of their Russia 2018 World Cup semi-final football match against France. — AFP

esting technically and tactically. "They are two players who are winners, they are fighters, they are survivors. I think for me they are an example for any young player who wants to play the game. And any young player who wants to face adversity in life."

Fellaini and Chadli are not the only players in the squad with African heritage, of course, with Romelu Lukaku, Vincent Kompany, Dedyryck Boyata and Michy

Batshuayi all having at least one Congolese parent, while Mousa Dembele's father is from Mali.

Adnan Januzaj, meanwhile, is the son of Kosovar-Albanian migrants and Axel Witsel's father has roots in the French Caribbean island of Martinique. "We are very, very proud of the diversity we have in the squad," Martinez added. "I feel that's probably the biggest strength that we have as a football team." — Reuters

Froome faces public 'trial' on Tour third stage

CHOLET: The roadside spectators who booed Chris Froome at the Tour de France presentation and those who cheered at the stage 1 finish line when he fell will have the perfect opportunity to target the champion yesterday's team time-trial.

A leaked dope test signalling too much salbutamol last September-but which anti-doping authorities WADA dismissed-has made Froome a target as he and Team Sky in their white team shirts progress along the 21-day course. Froome's charm offensive to win the backing of the French public with an explanatory editorial in the daily Le Monde newspaper has had some effect but yesterday it will be put to its severest test to date. The eight Sky riders will race the 35.5 kilometres (22 miles) of yesterday's team time-trial alone, as each group embarks at two minute intervals. Over the first two stages Froome and Sky have passed largely under the radar, hidden by the blur of a speeding

peloton, whizzing past fans at over 40km an hour.

Other than a couple of fans holding up signs such as "Froome go home" on Saturday and Sunday, the festive Atlantic coast jaunt went well for Froome until 6km from home when he was forced off the road, escaping unhurt but losing around a minute to some key rivals.

But there was some ugly cheering at the Fontenay finish line where a giant screen was broadcasting the images live. Sky are among a clutch of favourites to win Monday's stage, where they will hit around 50km/h over the slightly rolling course but will be easily identified.

A broadly smiling champion seemed pained on hearing of the incident and preferred to talk about the race itself on Sunday. "The people have been great so far," Froome said at the start line. "This isn't the first time I've been a minute down or had to dig in, it's just racing, that's what we're here for," he said at the starting line. Froome's loyal lieutenant, tough Welsh all-rounder Geraint Thomas, brushed off the issue of the cheering at his captain's tumble. "Chris is okay, he was relieved not to be hurt," he said when asked if Froome was affected by the fans' reaction.

Team boss Dave Brailsford was also avoiding thinking about fans and looking to the race. "There is no doubt about it, there will be time gained and lost tomorrow," he said. "This is one stage where you have to push to the limit more than ever, but if you misgauge your effort you pay for it massively. "You have to focus, we are aiming at get-

ting perfect execution," he said. "The worrying comes afterwards," he added.

Another team highly fancied yesterday is the powerful BMC, whose leader, like Froome and Mitchelton Scott's Adam Yates, trails yellow jersey Peter Sagan by 1min 09sec due to the mayhem at Saturday's finish. Mitchelton Scott also have healthy dose of good strong rollers while Spanish outfit Movistar are expected to hold their own. But the Belgian side Quick Step could stun them all and reclaim the yellow jersey for Fernando Gaviria, winner of Saturday's opener. The Colombian is second overall to Sagan who brushed off his chances.

"We'll try our best for the team, it'll be hard but you never know in cycling," said the yellow jersey wearer on his chances of holding on to it. — AFP

WORLD CUP 2018

Today's Matches (All local timings)

France		21:00		Belgium
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After Russia's glorious World Cup run, fans ask: 'Where was Putin?'

MOSCOW: As Russia's World Cup dream ended with defeat to Croatia, some soccer fans noted the absence from the stadium of President Vladimir Putin, who attended only one match in Russia's best World Cup run since the Soviet collapse in 1991.

Putin was at Russia's opening game against Saudi Arabia but skipped the following four - despite the national side, the tournament's lowest-ranking, defying expectations and reaching the quarter-finals.

"Where has the president got to?" asked Nezygar, a popular news channel on messaging service Telegram. "Tell Putin our guys would have won if he'd come to the game!" fan Pavel Gondarev wrote on social media to Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who attended the shootout defeat.

Online news site Znak.com wrote that Russians on social media are "tying themselves up in knots trying to guess where Vladimir Putin might have got to".

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Reuters on Monday Putin had only ever been scheduled to attend the opening and closing games of the tournament. He was minimising attendance because matches "happen when he is at the height of his working day".

"He doesn't play soccer himself, but naturally like the overwhelming majority of Russians he is a fan. Of course he isn't obsessive-because he can't permit himself this-but he likes interesting football," Peskov said.

While Putin sat out the Russia-Croatia quarter-final, his Croatian counterpart, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, was in the stadium, wearing the red and white of the Croatian flag. French President Emmanuel Macron will fly in for the semi-final between France and Belgium, which Putin has no plans to attend.

Competing theories in Moscow swirled as to why Putin appeared to have stayed away. Putin, a black belt in judo, is an avid ice hockey fan and The Bell, a Russian media outlet, cited a high-ranking official as saying the reason for Putin's absence was a simple lack of interest in soccer.

One Moscow-based political analyst speculated the real explanation was the wish not to be associated with a Russian defeat, the prospect of which loomed larger as the side faced higher-calibre opponents in the knockout stages.

"Vladimir Putin likes to be associated with victories and triumphs, but doesn't like to be associated with defeats and losses. He's always had this trait and it has grown with time," political analyst Valery Solovayev said. Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev attended Russia's two elimination matches-its win over Spain, which prompted wild partying in the capital, and the quarter-final loss to Croatia.

Peskov said Putin had watched the games remotely. Following the loss, Putin invited the Russian players and coach to discuss the World Cup with him and called them heroes, Peskov said. — Reuters

25 Former Barca coach Enrique tasked with reviving Spain

26 Skiing a model for equity, says top earner Shiffrin

27 'Winners' Fellaini, Chadli keep African interest alive



Federer leaves rival chasing shadows

Nishikori outlasts Gulbis to reach first quarter-final



LONDON: Switzerland's Roger Federer returns to France's Adrian Mannarino in their men's singles fourth round match on the seventh day of the 2018 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon, southwest London, yesterday. —AFP

LONDON: Over the past week none of Roger Federer's opponents needed to play on a court with a retractable roof as Wimbledon has been roasting in 30 degrees Celsius temperatures. What they would probably have preferred is to play on a Centre Court with a retractable grass surface - one that can open up and swallow them whole and spare them from receiving any further punishment from the most elegant executioner in tennis.

Just too bad that option was not available to Adrian Mannarino on Monday as he was tortured and tormented during a jaw-dropping opening set when he won only one point on his own serve.

Mercifully the set flashed by in 16 breathtaking minutes as Federer whizzed into the quarter-finals with a 6-0 7-5 6-4 win. Had the Swiss not squandered four break points in the opening game of the second set, which lasted almost as long as the entire opener, Federer would probably have

not needed an hour and 45 minutes to get back into the locker room.

Did he feel sorry for Mannarino? "Not really. I'm telling myself why didn't I break the first game of the second," a grinning Federer said as he stood three wins away from lifting the men's trophy for a record ninth time. "I was also surprised it was that fast, that first set, especially 16 minutes. That was too fast. Shouldn't really happen but thankfully they do for me. I probably won't have another 6-0 set this week, so I'll enjoy this one."

Perhaps blinded by the male fan who sat in the corner decked in gold lame to resemble the pineapple-topped Challenge Cup, the 36-year-old Swiss luffed his lines despite being 0-40 up on Mannarino's serve in that first game of the second.

That reprieve, followed by further break point let-offs in the Frenchman's next two service games, allowed

Mannarino to make more of a match of it. The first set horror-show and an apparent groin injury did not stop the world number 26 from becoming the first man to earn break points against Federer at the All England Club this year.

Converting any of them, however, was mission impossible as Federer saved all four to take his streak of winning successive service games at Wimbledon to 81, dating back to last year's semi-finals. Federer has also won 32 consecutive sets at the grasscourt major, dating back to his semi-final defeat in 2016.

Even the top seed was surprised at how easily everything appears to be falling into place as he chases a 21st Grand Slam title. "After all these years, it is surprising to be the No. 1 seed, in the top two rankings at 36. I didn't think that was ever going to happen, to be honest," Federer said after setting up a last eight meeting with another

Frenchman, Gael Monfils, or South African eighth seed Kevin Anderson.

Meanwhile, Kei Nishikori overcame elbow trouble in the opening set to win a marathon match 4-6 7-6(5) 7-6(10) 6-1 against a limping Ernests Gulbis and reach his first Wimbledon quarter-final at the tenth attempt yesterday.

Latvian qualifier Gulbis, a former world number 10 also looking for his first quarter-final at Wimbledon, gave as good as he got in a ding-dong battle over three sets before hurting his knee in the third-set tiebreak.

Japanese former world number four Nishikori, seeded 24th, was troubled by his right elbow during the first set which he lost after being broken in the fifth game. Gulbis, who won the ace count 18-7, beat Nishikori with a chip at the net to give himself two set points and took it on the first.—Reuters

France eye WCup final but Belgium have Henry factor

SAINT PETERSBURG: World Cup favourites France are targeting the final in Russia two decades after their 1998 triumph with one of their greatest players, Thierry Henry, plotting their downfall from the dugout of opponents Belgium.

The European neighbours meet in today's first semi-final in Saint Petersburg for the right to play England or Croatia in Sunday's showpiece in Moscow. Former Arsenal and Barcelona forward Henry, who was part of the squad that won the World Cup on home soil 20 years ago, is now alongside Belgium coach Roberto Martinez and eyeing the chinks in France's armour.

"It will be bizarre to have him up against us," said France striker Olivier Giroud. "He is a living legend of French football. He has given so much to the France team and we have got a lot of respect for what he has done. But we're not thinking about it too much, we're going to be focused on the pitch and our game."

A slick Belgium side boasting the talents of Kevin De Bruyne, Eden Hazard and Romelu Lukaku are the only team to have won all their matches in Russia and are the top scorers, with 14 goals. Confidence is sky-high after they ousted Neymar's Brazil in the quarter-finals but they will come up against formidable opponents in France as they try to reach a first ever World Cup final.

Didier Deschamps' side, with Antoine Griezmann and Kylian Mbappe up front, struggled for goals in their group matches but have now hit their stride, dominating Uruguay after beating Argentina. France will start the semi-final in Saint Petersburg as favourites, with an impressive mix of youth and experience allied to tournament nous after they reached the Euro 2016 final.

With Hugo Lloris impressing in goal and a solid midfield of Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante, the one potential weakness for France could

be their inexperienced defence. Belgium's Thomas Meunier will miss the game after picking up a second yellow card but France will be buoyed by the return of defensive midfielder Blaise Matuidi, after sitting out a suspension of his own.

For the fifth time in World Cup history, the semi-finals will be an all-European affair. On each of those occasions the tournament has been hosted in Europe. In the other last-four clash on Wednesday, England take on Croatia in Moscow.

England boss Gareth Southgate has told his players they can be bigger heroes even than the generation of 1966, which featured Bobby Moore and Bobby Charlton. "I've met quite a few of those players and we know exactly how they're held and perhaps, in the modern era, that would be even crazier," Southgate told British newspapers.

"(With) social media and everything else, the global thing is so much bigger." England is gripped by World Cup fever. Nearly 20 million viewers tuned in for the win over Sweden and social media is awash with videos of excited fans watching on big screens in bars and parks, fanatically celebrating every England goal.—AFP



SAINT PETERSBURG: France's forward Antoine Griezmann (R) controls the ball next to France's forward Thomas Lemar (L) during a training session of France's national football team at the Saint Petersburg Stadium, in Saint Petersburg, yesterday, on the eve of their Russia 2018 World Cup semi-final football match against Belgium.— AFP