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Kuwait security situation stable, northern borders under control

Two killed in southern Iraq • Protests held at Safwan border • KAC halts flights to Najaf

KUWAIT: Chief of the General Staff of Kuwait's Army Lt-Gen Mohammad Al-Khudher meets troops stationed at the northern borders yesterday.

AL-QURNAH, Iraq: Protesters demonstrate yesterday in front of oilfields some 100 km north of Basra. — AFP

KUWAIT/BASRA: Kuwait's overall security situation is stable, under control, and unaffected by the ongoing protests in southern Iraq, the Kuwaiti army announced yesterday. The incidents that are currently taking place near Kuwait's northern borders with Iraq are interior affairs of a neighboring country, the army said in a press statement. The recent actions carried out by the Kuwaiti army in cooperation with security bodies in the country are merely precautionary measures, added the statement.

The Chief of the General Staff of Kuwait's Army Lt-Gen Mohammad Al-Khudher, accompanied by a number of military and security leaders in the country, inspected the northern area to check on the Kuwaiti forces and the precautionary procedures, it noted. Yesterday, tens of protesters demonstrated at the Safwan border crossing with Kuwait as well as at the entrance to the Majnoon oilfield, one of the largest in the country which lies 40 km north of Basra, local security sources said.

The Kuwaiti foreign ministry also said the situation on the northern borders of Kuwait is totally under control with no incident occurring because of the protests in Iraq. Kuwait is closely following the situation and developments in Iraq, said a foreign ministry source in a statement, adding that Kuwaitis were confident that their

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Fingerprints of 2 million expats in MoI database

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's criminal evidence department announced it has uploaded the digital fingerprints of around two million expatriates older than 18 into its systems in a bid to have a full database of fingerprints of all expats in the country, including those yet to enter Kuwait. Informed sources said building such a database of all expats in the country, including those in prison, is part of the ministry's projects designed to update its database and stay abreast with security-related scientific and technological advances.

"The digital fingerprints will help identify expats wanted in Kuwait, those banned from travelling and those banned from entering Kuwait," the sources explained, noting that the new system will also prevent deported expats from returning to Kuwait with new passports as well as help investigators identify criminals.

The sources noted that the process has helped identify people who obtained residency visas without being fingerprinted after the liberation of Kuwait, identify deportees applying to renew their residency visas - and thus their applications were rejected, in addition to identifying expats who turned 18 and whose fingerprints had been found at some crime scenes, and thus they were arrested.

Pak mourns bombing that killed 128

MASTUNG, Pakistan: Pakistan was in shock yesterday after a suicide blast killed 128 people, shaking confidence in security just as the dramatic arrest of ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif ratcheted political tensions higher ahead of nationwide polls. Sharif's highly-anticipated return from London and subsequent arrest for corruption was overshadowed as the carnage in Mastung, in the southwestern province of Balochistan, unfolded late Friday. Newspapers branded the blast - one of the deadliest in Pakistan's history - a "massacre", as analysts and media called on the military to, in the words of the daily Dawn, "do the job they are meant to do - ie preventing attacks".

One week ago, Sharif was sentenced in absentia to 10 years in prison on corruption charges. He was transferred to the garrison city of Rawalpindi, adjacent to Islamabad, after landing in Lahore Friday. Media reports said he was being held in a prison there. Sharif has claimed he is the victim of a military conspiracy, and there are widespread allegations from the media, politicians and analysts that the powerful security establishment is meddling in the polls. Mobile signals were blocked and police deployed in the eastern city of Lahore where Sharif's supporters had gathered as he landed.

Soon after, the scale of the destruction in Mastung - hundreds of kilometres to the southwest, where an Islamic State suicide bomber had detonated at a crowded political rally - began to emerge.

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ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani civil society activist holds a placard yesterday as she protests against the suicide blast during an election rally. — AFP

Belgium secure third place finish

SAINT PETERSBURG: Belgium's team pose with their medals after winning their 2018 World Cup playoff for third place against England at the Saint Petersburg Stadium yesterday. — AFP (See Page 28)

Eritrea president hails unity with Ethiopia on visit

ADDIS ABABA: Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki pledged to resolve his country's dispute with Ethiopia yesterday in a historic visit to Addis Ababa aimed at cementing peace less than a week after the nations declared an end to two decades of conflict. Isaias arrived in the Ethiopian capital just five days after Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed visited Eritrea as part of a dizzying peace process aimed at ending years of violence and animosity between the neighbors who were once part of the same nation.

Abiy and Isaias shared laughs and hugs at an official lunch yesterday as the Ethiopian leader said his counterpart was "beloved, respected and missed by the Ethiopian people". "We are no longer people of two countries. We are one," Isaias told political and cultural figures gathered in a palace built during Ethiopia's imperial days. "We'll go forward together." Isaias started his three-day visit at Addis Ababa's airport, where he and Abiy strode down a red carpet as a brass band played and traditional dancers cheered.

The leaders then drove into the city on a road lined with thousands of people dressed in white shawls and waving palm fronds as Ethiopian and Eritrean flags flew side-by-side from lampposts. There were also banners and pictures of the two leaders who on Monday signed a declaration declaring an official end to the war. "Welcome home President Isaias!!" Abiy's chief of staff Fitsum Arega wrote on Twitter as the Eritrean leader arrived.

Later in the day, the two leaders flew to the southern city of Hawassa where Isaias toured an industrial park that's key to Ethiopia's economy. Eritrea was once part of Ethiopia and comprised its entire coastline on the Red Sea until it voted for independence in 1993 after decades of bloody conflict.

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ADDIS ABABA: Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki (right) is received by Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed as he arrives at Bole International Airport yesterday. — AFP

Speaker Ghanem returns from Lebanon after Arab Economic Forum participation

President Aoun lauds Kuwaiti leadership's sincere support towards Lebanon

KUWAIT/BEIRUT: Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem returned to Kuwait from Lebanon yesterday after he attended the 26th Arab Economic Forum. On the sidelines of his participation, Speaker Ghanem had met with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, designated Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri, and other top Lebanese officials.

President Aoun lauded Friday His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's sincere support and stance towards his brethren in Lebanon. In a statement by the Presidential office during his meeting with Ghanem, President Aoun affirmed the strong Kuwaiti stance on issues pertaining to Lebanon's security and welfare as well as issues connected with the Arab region.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah dealt with various dilemmas plaguing the region in a wise and thoughtful manner, said President Aoun, who commended the Kuwaiti role in defusing the Lebanese civil war, which swept the country in the past. On the strong Kuwaiti-Lebanese relations, the President said that it was a natural reflection of both countries' desires to boost ties further. In regards to the verbal message conveyed by Speaker Ghanem from His Highness the Amir, President Aoun thanked His Highness Sheikh Sabah for his brotherly gesture and sincere wishes for Lebanon and its people.

He asked Speaker Ghanem to convey a similar message to His Highness the Amir and the people of Kuwait, wishing them further progress and welfare. According to the presidential office, President Aoun had reviewed with Speaker Ghanem the Lebanese government's plans to develop the country economically. President Aoun also touched on the issue of Syrian refugees, affirming that the world most bring on a peaceful solution to the crisis.

After meeting with President Aoun, Speaker Ghanem said that the leaderships of Kuwait and Lebanon were seeking to further bolster relations on all possible fields.

> **No travel ban to Lebanon**

Speaking to the press at Baabda Palace, Ghanem said that His Highness the Amir's message to President Aoun reflected the Kuwaiti leadership's keenness on supporting and assisting Lebanon 'through thick and thin.' He commended the Lebanese honorable stance during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and subsequent liberation in 1991.

In regards to agreements signed during President Aoun's visit to Kuwait recently, Speaker Ghanem said that "all the agreements between Kuwait and Lebanon where either already unanimously approved by the National Assembly or in the process of being accepted."

No travel ban

Answering a question regarding a travel ban on Kuwait citizens to Lebanon, Ghanem said that there was no such policy being implemented, noting that as of now, there were around 14 flights between the two countries on a daily basis. Ghanem also answered a question regarding President Aoun's invitation to His Highness the Amir to visit Lebanon, affirming that it would occur when the date and time were suitable.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's ambassador to Lebanon Abdelaal Al-Qenaei praised Kuwait's parliamentary diplomacy, led by Speaker Ghanem. The Ambassador added that the participation of Kuwait's National Assembly speaker at the Arab Economic Forum upon an invitation from Lebanon's Prime Minister-designate Saad Al-Hariri was an opportunity to exchange views on the economic aspects of Kuwait and Lebanon. Qenaei noted that Ghanem had conveyed Kuwait's views on various economic and political issues, praising his active parliamentary diplomacy to convey Kuwait's view to the Arab and the world.

Parliamentary ties

Speaker Ghanem also held talks during the visit with Speaker of the Parliament of Lebanon Nabih Berri, after which he praised his country's 'distinctive' parliamentary relationship with Lebanon. During talks, the Kuwaiti side benefited significantly from Berri's long parliamentary experience and reiterated its 'special' ties with the Parliament of Lebanon, he said. The two sides also discussed bilateral coordination regarding their membership at the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in addition to the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union's emergency session on the Palestinian cause, slated for July 21 in Cairo, he added.

BEIRUT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Lebanese President Michel Aoun. — KUNA

The Kuwaiti top lawmaker also lauded the harmony existing between the two countries on all levels, including leaderships, parliaments, and governments, adding his meeting with Berri has embodied that harmony.

"We wish Lebanon all the best and perpetual peace and stability," Ghanem said, hoping for a swift formation of the government in the country. He also reiterated confidence in the wisdom of the Lebanese leadership, wishing the Kuwaiti-Lebanese parliamentary coordination with other Arab parliaments contributes in achieving the desired positive outcomes. Furthermore, Al-Ghanem thanked Lebanon for its good generosity and well reception of the Kuwaiti delegation, pointing out the close and brotherly ties the two countries and people share mutually. Before leaving Beirut, Head of the Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party Walid Jumblatt held a dinner banquet Friday night in honor of Speaker Ghanem and his accompanying delegation. A number of Lebanese officials attended the banquet. — KUNA

Zain awards annual caricature competition winners

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, awarded the winners of the first three places of the 'Ramadan Caricature' competition. Zain sponsored the competition, organized by the Kuwait Caricature Society, for the second consecutive year during the holy month of Ramadan.

Zain's sponsorship of this competition for the second year running came in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the support of artistic initiatives, through which the company encourages efforts that contribute to offering the opportunity for talented people to unleash their creativity in the various forms of art, including caricature.

The competition witnessed positive participation from caricature artists in Kuwait, featuring 53 submissions that centered around the traditions of the Holy Month of Ramadan. Zain awarded the winners of the first three places; Meshal Al-Shimmiri, Zainab Dashti, and Hawrah Ali Yateem.

Zain believes in contributing to the development of the communities in which it operates, and considers it a very important part of its overall success. The company considers art as a core element of the community's development process, and it will continue to support initiatives and programs that cater to the further progress of art.

Zain's sponsorship of this competition for the second consecutive year springs from the company's core belief that social responsibility is a significant corporate element. The company believes that supporting initiatives such as this one provides talented people with the opportunity to help them highlight and develop their skills.

KUWAIT: Zain officials with the winners.

Burgan Bank joins forces with Ahmadi Music Group

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, one of the leading financial institutions contributing to the societal progress, continues to promote one of Kuwait's most prestigious music and arts organizations, Ahmadi Music Group. As a devoted supporter of social and cultural advancement in Kuwait, Burgan Bank continues as lead sponsor of the popular long-standing music group for the fourth consecutive year.

Ahmadi Music Group's many performances are considered one of the fastest growing and highly regarded artistic and musical experiences in Kuwait. Performing with the highest musical standards, the Ahmadi Music Group, operational locally and internationally for more than 65 years, conducts concerts and performances on globally famed platforms. Making its mark locally, the Group has contributed to the artistic and cultural life of Kuwait through its performances both choral works and fully-staged opera. It is worth noting since the start of 2017, Burgan Bank supported the creation of a youth orchestra and sponsored the first ever classical music performance by Ahmadi Music Group at Jaber Al Ahmed Cultural Center which brought together young local and international musicians for two complete symphonies by Beethoven and Faure, establishing a momentous occasion in Kuwait and bringing out the best of what classical music has to offer.

Loulwa Al-Ayoubi

Loulwa Abdulla Al-Ayoubi, Acting Group Head of Investor and Corporate Communications, Burgan Bank said: "We are firm believers in art and culture as powerful means to improve community experiences, enrich lives and create an overall positive impact in society. Music brings people together, promoting diversity and inclusion. By supporting world-class artists, we are also encouraging Kuwait's youth to embrace art and develop artistic talent, enabling their empowerment and the elevation of Kuwait's artistic standing abroad."

Richard Bushman, Director of Ahmadi Music Group said: "We would like to thank Burgan Bank for its unwavering support over the years. Kuwait has a thriving and creative pool of promising young talents that we are eagerly tapping into. With the bank's contribution, we are able to continue exploring and nurturing new talent and elevate our artistic offering".

Burgan Bank's support of this initiative falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives.

Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.

ABK kicks off internship program

KUWAIT: In its efforts to provide youth with real work experience, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently launched its summer internship program with Lothan Youth Achievement Centre (LOYAC) and Manpower and Government restructuring Program (MGRP). ABK's partnership with LOYAC and MGRP further solidifies its commitment towards investing significant time to the professional development of Kuwaiti Youth.

ABK's Summer Student Development Program will be spread across five weeks and will give the students a platform to participate in real-life challenges in the competitive field of banking, and gain an in-depth understanding of the current market expectations in terms of technical proficiencies and soft skills. ABK prides itself in being an ardent supporter of education and youth, and the Summer Student Development Program is one of numerous opportunities the bank avails to youth with the objective of encouraging them to consider a career in the banking industry.

Field trip for NBK trainees to Air Ambulance Center

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) concluded the first session of its Summer Internship Program 2018, a two weeks courses custom-made for high school and college students. The session has ended by a visit to Air Ambulance Center where the students had the chance to tour the center and get to know more about the air ambulance functions and responsibilities. The students had the chance to see also the helicopter used in rescue operations and were closely introduced to the daily work of the center from the minute the patient contacts the dispatch center.

The Summer Internship Program is made up of four sessions, five-hours daily over two weeks each. The program features a mixture of theoretical and practical training dedicated to provide the interns with valuable knowledge on a variety of subjects such as: teamwork, creative thinking, the means of self-expression and modern banking, in addition to helping them having a greater exposure to daily banking work procedures.

This annual program demonstrates NBK's long-standing social involvement as well as its national commitment towards providing young generations with the appropriate opportunities to experience how the actual professional banking issues and transactions are handled and processed.

The second session will start on the 15th of July, while the third and the fourth sessions will take place on 29th of July and 12th of August respectively. It has been 17 years since the establishment of this program. NBK views the Summer Internship Program as an extension to its educative initiatives and as part of its corporate social responsibility.

Former speaker, MPs call for amnesty for jailed lawmakers

Officials discuss unified lease contract

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti political blocs are currently preoccupied with coming up with legal and political ways out of the recent ruling by the court of cassation against lawmakers and activists who had stormed the parliament seven years ago. According to the court's ruling on July 8, 2018, 13 of the defendants, including MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Jamaan Al-Harbash, six former MPs including Musallam Al-Barrak and five activists, were sentenced to 42 months in prison. Former speaker of the house Ahmad Al-Saadoun was the first to call for activating article 75 of the constitution concerning a general amnesty.

Saadoun referred the matter to MP Mohammed Al-Mutair, who was acquitted in the same case, and who held a meeting on Thursday with seven other MPs and several activists. During the meeting, they issued a special statement that recommends referring to the 'political leadership' (HH the Amir) to resolve the problem. Riyadh Al-Adasani, one of the MPs attending the meeting, said 24 lawmakers had so far singed a plea requesting a general amnesty as stipulated in article 75 of the constitution, adding that the cases of storming the parliament and the millions in bank deposits were closely related, as the latter was the motive for the former. "The deposits case was shelved due to legal loopholes, but this does not mean acquitting the accused," he underlined. MP Adel Al-Damkhi echoed Adasani, noting that those who stood up were iconic reformists who were now paying the price.

Meanwhile, constitutional expert Mohammed Al-Feyali said the court of cassation's ruling was a criminal penalty that entails cancelling MPs' memberships. He remarked that the seats would not be declared vacant before announcing the cancellation. "Passing a sentence or imprisonment does not mean that the seat is vacant - this has to be decided by the parliament," he explained. Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem has stressed that no urgent sessions would be held during the parliamentary recess and that the first session of the third term will be held in October.

Unified contract

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry's (MoCI) lease department manager Mariam Al-Bahrani met Kuwait Real Estate Brokers Union's board of directors and discussed various topics, including the unified lease contract that is awaiting Minister Roudhan's approval, linking e-contracts made at real estate brokers' offices with relevant bodies, updating brokers' information and issuing special IDs for them. Head of the real estate brokers union Emad Haidar said that the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) is currently working on linking sale and purchase contracts made at any real estate brokerage offices with relevant authorities at MoCI, justice ministry, PACI, Kuwait Municipality and Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD). Commenting on the unified lease contract form, Haidar said the final form is currently awaiting the minister's approval before printing it and officially distributing it to various offices before the end of the year.

Sabah Al-Ahmad City

Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Services Jenan Boshehri said the project of building an industrial area in Sabah Al-Ahmad City will be allocated to a number of crafts workshops, light industries and warehouses. The minister added that the project's feasibility studies had been completed pending offering it to investors. She added that the 1.23 million-square-meter project will be offered for investment according to the public-private-partnership (PPP) system.

local spotlight

The situation in Iraq

By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

It is a difficult time for Iraq, which is still recovering from crises and problems since 2003, after the fall of the regime of former president Saddam Hussein. During the following years, Iraq witnessed some internal protests, but last week the protests expanded in the province of Basra in southern Iraq to include the provinces of Najaf, Karbala and Babel. The protesters are demanding job opportunities and improvement in living conditions.

The demonstrations swept the streets of the province of Basra, which contains the largest oilfields and ports exporting Iraqi oil. The situation worsened after the death of a demonstrator last Sunday, who was protesting against unemployment and deterioration of the situation in the communal sector.

Iraq since 2003 has succeeded in avoiding a civil conflict for the simple reason that all the Iraqi powers, despite differing agendas and objectives, reject the idea of dividing Iraq and believe in unity. Also, there are many other reasons, including intelligence by these political parties that a civil war could make the situation worse and no one can win it. Another reason that contributed to the agreement of most parties on Iraqi unity is the external threat of ISIS and the war against terror.

I think all these reasons prevented a civil war in Iraq despite the conflicts and militias. Let's remember that Iraq was affected by the war against terror and suffered damage to its infrastructure. But Iraq is a rich county and the second largest oil producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) after Saudi Arabia, with a production capacity of 4.8 million barrels per day. The protesters in Basra prevented access to the port of Umm Qasr, while others stormed Najaf airport. The city is a religious center. Fights later resumed after the withdrawal of demonstrators from the airport.

Dr Saadi Al-Ibrahim is an Iraqi writer who had published a long report in 2016 in the newspaper Al-Quds Al-Arabi entitled "Will Iraq remain unified until 2020?". The report analyzes the future of Iraq under unstable conditions. The report is long and one of the most prominent observations is of regional conditions, in which he says no one wants to divide Iraq, and the role of the international community towards Iraq since 2003.

I think we should not be surprised that there is a difference of views on the situation in Iraq and its future between powerful forces or demands to improve the situation. The problem here is that political instability is a negative indicator and has important implications on the security and social levels.

The most important question remains: Will the fate of the current Basra protests be like the fate of its predecessors? No one wants that, and it depends on how the Iraqi government deals with the situation in general. I believe that in the Gulf region, we need a strong and stable Iraq because it is a very close neighbor.

But when your neighbor's house burns, you have to be careful not to be exposed to the fire or the sparks coming from that direction in the event of instability. Kuwait's interior ministry has raised the alert level on the northern border due to events in southern Iraq. This is a normal procedure and required until the situation calms down. Preserving our internal security is essential.

Union demands fish market's relocation

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fishermen Union issued a statement concerning its repeated demand to move the imported fish auction from the main fish market in Sharq, reminding that since the market was moved from Mubarakiya to Sharq, intolerable odors had been spreading inside and outside the fish market. The union added that some influential people had been using their powers to slander the union and make groundless accusations that it has been absent as a guide for all fishermen. The statement stressed that the union will continue contacting various government and relevant bodies to move the imported fish market to Rai, where an entire market has been built, and leave Sharq market for local fish only, especially since the transfer from Mubarakiya was supposed to be for only two months but extended to a year.

KUWAIT: People buy fish at the fish market in Sharq during a daily auction. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Shuwaikh blaze under control

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Firefighters battled a blaze that erupted in car repair workshops in Industrial Shuwaikh Area on Friday, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said. Firefighters from five stations rushed to the scene immediately after the control room received a call about the fire, it said. The fire erupted in five workshops with a total area of 3,000 square meters, it said, but no injuries were reported. An investigation was launched to know cause of the fire.

Separately, the prevention sector of KFSD carried out inspections in Hawally on the instructions of Deputy Director General Maj Gen Khalid Fahd to check buildings in violation of safety laws and issued several citations.

Man drowns

A man drowned while swimming near Blajat beach. Salmiya sea fire station men responded to a call reporting that a swimmer went missing, and divers found the victim's body following extensive search. The body was taken by the forensics department.

Smuggling foiled

Nuwaiseeb land border outlet customs officers caught a traveler with hashish joints after they searched him. The joints were hidden in a pack of cigarettes. He said they were for his personal use. The suspect was handed to concerned authorities.

Physical assault

A citizen who returned from a trip abroad went to the travel agency where he had made reservations to blame the Jordanian agent for reserving seats apart from each other for his family. The agent said seat assignment is the responsibility of the airline, but the citizen became angry and started beating the agent, who called police, and the citizen was arrested.

Freak accident

An eight-year-old Egyptian girl lost her life after she was stuck between the elevator cabin and the wall in an Abu Halifa building. Firemen, paramedics and police responded to a call and removed the girl in critical condition, but she died on the way to hospital. A malfunction caused the tragedy.

Drunk driving

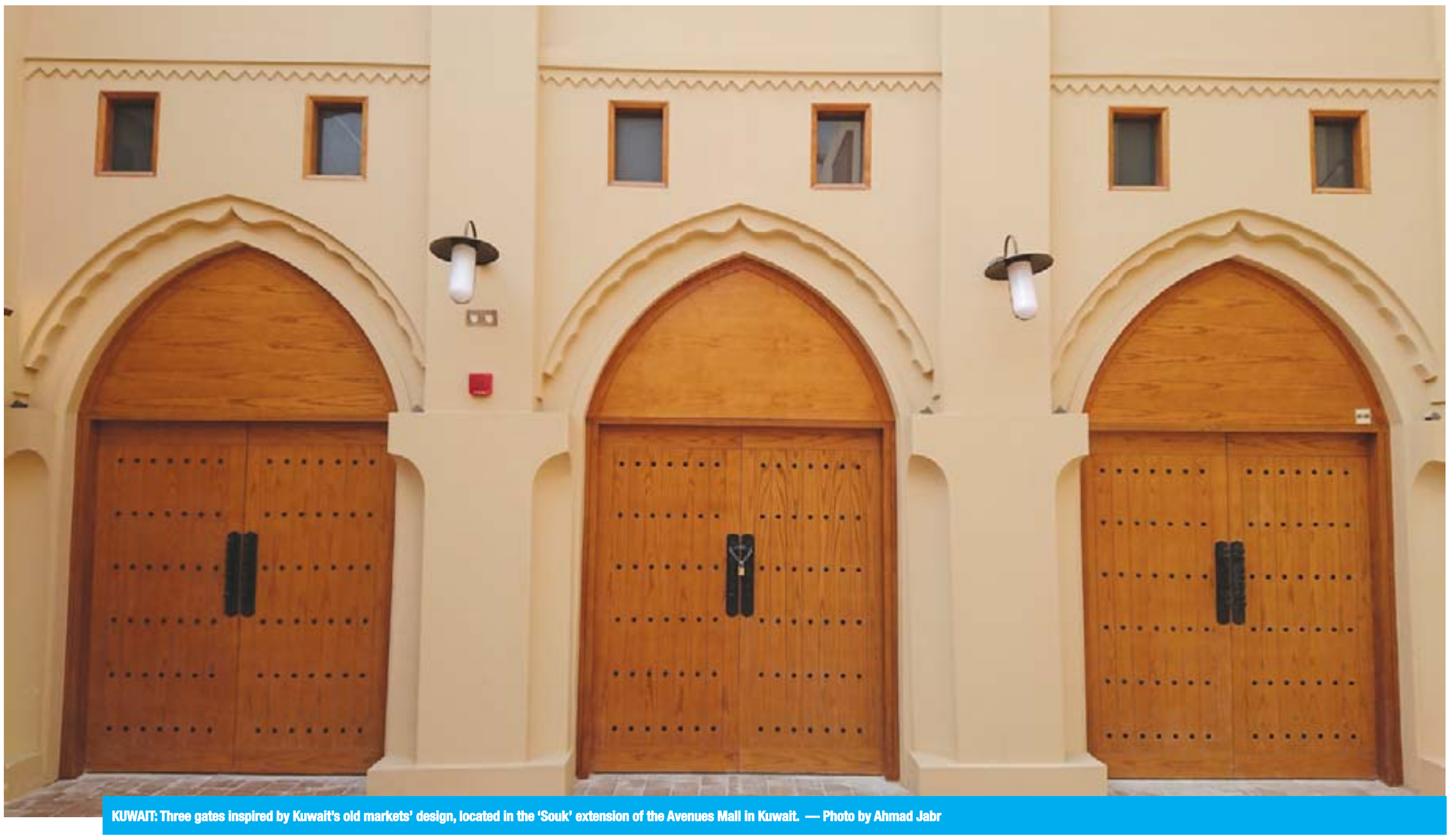
Police patrols spotted a car driven erratically in Hawally and pulled it over. Policemen asked the driver, a woman, to lower the volume of the stereo, but she did not pay attention to the officer and verbally insulted him. Police found she was drunk, so she was arrested and will face legal action.

Parents questioned over children social media misuse

KUWAIT: The public prosecution asked the juvenile police to question children who use social media applications the wrong way and hold their families responsible for allowing them to use those apps. The new instructions come in line with the rules issued by the Supreme National Childhood Committee of the Health Ministry applicable to children 13 years old and younger, Al-Jarida reported.

The prosecution said parents must be held responsible for allowing photography of their children from the above mentioned group on social media for commercial purposes, or to speak about their personal life or for fame, or those who expose their children to torture scenes and verbal or physical harm, in addition to those who are not sending their children to school. It asked juvenile police to summon violating parents and get undertakings from them not to allow their children to see such scenes and take them to court if the offense is repeated.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Three gates inspired by Kuwait's old markets' design, located in the 'Souk' extension of the Avenues Mall in Kuwait. — Photo by Ahmad Jabr

KFH honors voluntary team who executed + 90 initiatives in 29 days

Our message copes with social values, enhances sustainable development goals: Nahedh

KUWAIT: Mazin Al-Nahedh, Dr Sayed Al-Tabtaba'e and executive management with KFH Voluntary team.

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has organized an honoring ceremony for its voluntary team. The team has succeeded in executing more than 90 voluntary, educational and awareness assignments in 29 days as part of the program 'Be Part of the Good Deeds Month 4'. This honoring ceremony comes to incarnate the most beautiful pictures of enhancement and communication between operational management and employees and to be the motive for further giving and dedication.

The honoring ceremony was held at the 4 Seasons Hotel in presence of KFH GCEO Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh and Head of Group Sharia Board Dr Sayed Mohammed Al-Sayed Abdul-Razzak Al-Tabtaba'e in addition to other high rank officials at the bank.

KFH GCEO Mazin Al-Nahedh praised the performance and efforts of KFH Voluntary Team during various social activities, events and initiatives organized during the holy month of Ramadan as part of its program "Be Part of the Good Deeds Month 4" which has achieved major success, admiration and encouragement from the public, thus reiterating KFH commitment and dedication to social responsibility and enhancement of voluntary work concepts in accordance with social values and sustainable development goals.

Dr Tabtaba'e praised the efforts of the voluntary team and reiterated the significance of voluntary work in achieving benefit for both individuals and society. He indicated that KFH is a highly reputable Islamic financial institution not only as a school of business but also as a school of moral conduct.

He conveyed his thanks and appreciation to executive management for their support to these initiatives, thus highlighting the necessity to spread these kind of activities at the group level to participate in social growth and spread voluntary work culture on a higher scale. KFH voluntary team has succeeded in executing more than 90 initiatives within 29 days as part of the program "Be Part of the Good Deeds Month 4", the matter which has contributed to the enhancement of volunteering spirit for youth and deepened and strengthened the concept of giving among society members.

KFH school of business, moral conduct

KFH voluntary team was active daily in more than 5 locations to perform various initiatives including the distribution of 27 thousand meals to fasting people, providing service to visitors of the grand mosque during the last 10 days of Ramadan, distribution of girgian, visiting hospitals and caring homes in addition to many other initiatives which have met wide acceptance and admiration at the society level.

KFH ensures to perform its social responsibility in the best possible manner thus aiming to cover all society tiers through its work plans and programs which include several aspects e.g. educational, health, awareness, environment and special needs in addition to youth and sports, to achieve a sustainable and comprehensive development.

Mazin Al-Nahedh speaking.

Dr Sayed Al-Tabtaba'e speaking.

A general view of the audience.

Jarallah lauds talks with US Treasury officials as 'successful'

Kuwaiti Deputy FM stresses historic relations with France

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy and other officials cut the cake during the French Embassy's ceremony to mark France's National Day.

French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy delivers a speech.

—Photos by Joseph Shagra

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said on Thursday recent talks held in Kuwait with US Undersecretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Sigal Mandelker were 'successful and positive'. Speaking to reporters after attending a ceremony that the French embassy held Thursday night to mark France's National Day, Jarallah said the US side had voiced much understanding of all measures taken by the State of Kuwait to fight terrorism and stop its finance sources. He added that coordination and contacts with the US in this regard were "continuing at a high level."

Meanwhile, Jarallah said that the recent state visit by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China was "totally successful and a quantum leap in bilateral relations". "The talks held by His Highness the Amir and the Chinese president were so candid and constructive that economic, trade, oil, technological and communication aspects, as well as regional issues, were involved," Jarallah said to reporters. The State of Kuwait counts on China on a number of issues and challenges, primarily security and terrorism that poses a threat to the entire world, he added.

Historic relations

Jarallah underlined the distinguished historic relations between Kuwait and France, saying Kuwait looks forward to closer cooperation. The State of Kuwait appreciates the French positions towards regional issues, Jarallah said, adding that both countries share the same views on several international issues.

He hoped that bilateral relations would further develop and growth, noting that the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs and French authorities co-organize exhibitions and festivals pertinent to the history and culture of the State of Kuwait with a view to promoting this relationship.

French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy meanwhile underlined the significance of the 'firm' relations between France and Kuwait, hoping that more business opportunities would be provided to French companies in Kuwait. But, she regretted that Kuwaiti students in France make up only one percent of the number of foreigners studying in her country. —KUNA

French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy is seen with guests at the event.

French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy welcomes Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah.

French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy welcomes guests to the ceremony.

French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy welcomes Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Senegalese Ambassador to Kuwait Abdou Lahad Mbacke.

EU to open delegation in Kuwait

BRUSSELS: The European Union (EU) will open its delegation (embassy) in Kuwait by the end of this year, Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced Friday after a meeting with EU High Representative Federica Mogherini.

"We thank our friends in the European Union for opening a mission in Kuwait which will contribute to strengthening the relations between Kuwait and the EU in all fields," he said after the meeting. "It was a fruitful meeting and Inshallah we will celebrate together the opening of the EU mission by the end of this year," he said.

Sheikh Sabah Khaled said Kuwait supports the EU's quests to find solutions to the problems in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, the Middle East Peace Process, Libya, and terrorism. Kuwait also supports all of the EU's humanitarian efforts, he noted. The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister said that the 2016 cooperation agreement between the two sides is boosting cooperation in the fields of energy, investment and development.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed ways of enhancing cooperation in all domains on the regional and international fronts. Mogherini praised the distinguished efforts exerted by the State of Kuwait towards such issues, expressing hope for more coordination and cooperation between the two sides. The meeting was attended by Ambassador Saleh Salem Al-Lughani, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Jassem Al-Budaiwi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Belgium and Head of its missions to the EU and NATO in addition to senior officials from the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs. —KUNA

BRUSSELS: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini. —KUNA

Kuwait to boost cooperation with Italy's northern provinces

ROME: The Consul General of the State of Kuwait in Milan and Northern Italy Abdulnaser Bokhador met on Thursday with President of Lombardy Attilio Fontana and discussed bilateral cooperation and means to enhance economic and cultural ties with northern Italy.

Fontana announced the organization of a round-table meeting between Kuwaiti Consulate-General in Milan and Lombardy's governors and officials in order to offer mutual investment, commercial and industrial opportunities, and tackle means of cooperation and coordination on that matter, regarding that Lombardy is the most important and vital region in Italy and Europe in tight economic ties with Kuwait.

Kuwaiti Consulate-General added in a press release that Bokhador met yesterday the newly-appointed President of Lombardy to congratulate him over winning the elections, and to boost cooperation between both sides to better serve mutual interests of both nations. They discussed means of boosting cooperation between Kuwait and northern provinces of Italy, chiefly Lombardy, especially in the economic, commercial, and cultural domains, it added. —KUNA

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Trump, London mayor renews war of words

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When fake news sparks violence: India grapples with online rumors

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KARBI ANGLONG, India: Photo shows villagers near the site of the lynching of two men in Panjuri Kachari village, in Karbi Anglong district some 180km from Guwahati, the capital city of India's northeastern state of Assam. — AFP

Death by 'fake news', social media

Social media-fuelled lynchings shock India

PANJURI KACHARI: The smartphone footage shows the two blood-soaked men pleading for their lives. Moments later they were dead, two more victims of lynchings sparked by rumors spread on Facebook and WhatsApp in India. The two men were young and well-educated. Gregarious, dreadlocked musician Nilotpal Das, 29, and his businessman friend Abhijeet Nath, 30, were both from Guwahati, capital of the northeastern state of Assam.

On the fateful day last month when they were beaten to death by a crazed village mob wielding bamboo sticks, machetes, and rocks, the friends were driving back from a day in the country, near a popular waterfall. "He liked to listen to the sounds of nature to find inspiration for his music," his grieving father Gopal Chandra Das, 68, told AFP at their home, the television table in the living room now a shrine to his son. Viral rumors about kidnappers, spread through Facebook and WhatsApp, have led to the lynching deaths of some 20 people in the last two months in India, according to a tally from local media reports.

Indian authorities have scrambled to respond but awareness campaigns, public alerts and internet blackouts have had limited success in deterring the spread of misinformation. Instead, officials blamed WhatsApp for the "irresponsible and explosive messages" being shared by its 200 million Indian users-the company's largest market. WhatsApp said it was "horrified" by the violence and promised action. The social media giant took out full-page advertisements in Indian newspapers offering "easy tips" to sort fact from fiction on its platform. "Together we can fight false information", the slick adverts declared.

Child kidnappers

On their June 8 excursion, the two men were unaware that "fake news" on child traffickers had been spreading on social media in the area. In the isolated, impoverished district of Karbi Anglong, Facebook and WhatsApp have become the new word of mouth, and messages on the platforms-however outlandish-are often taken as gospel.

Late in the day, the two men were sitting by a stream when a villager confronted them, causing an altercation. The young men left in their car in a hurry, but their antagonist warned the next village they were coming. "He made a phone call. He said that child kidnappers were on the way, that they needed to be stopped," said Gulshan Daolagupu, deputy division chief of Karbi Anglong. The mob surrounded the car on the country road. Convinced they had caught the child kidnappers, they launched a savage attack, posting videos of the killings online. The images shocked India.

An enquiry is under way to establish whether the suspect who instigated the attack, a 35-year-old taxi driver, genuinely believed he had caught the purported child kidnappers or whether he had ulterior motives. Some 50 people have been detained over the attack. "Had social media not been there, had this been 2014 — Facebook was not there, smartphones were not cheap-this would not have happened," said G.V. Siva Prasad, superintendent of police in Karbi Anglong district. "The speed at which it goes, nobody can address it, it is almost the speed of light." One month after the incident, the village of Panjuri Kachari is almost deserted. Only a few women, children and elderly people remain. The men are behind bars or on the run.

'It could have been me'

Lynchings based on misjudgment or malicious information are not a new phenomenon in India. But the spread of smartphones and internet access in the country's poorest and most isolated areas has exacerbated the problem. Close to half a billion Indians are online, most accessing the internet via their smartphones. India was the fastest growing market for smartphones in 2017. Internet penetration in rural areas, though low at 20 percent, is growing. The tumbling cost of handsets-many priced at well below $100 — coupled with cheap data plans is attracting many first-time users to the internet.

For researcher Abdul Kalam Azad, the lynchings in Panjuri Kachari must be seen in the particular context of Assam state, which is a patchwork of ethnic tribes and has been routinely hit by intercommunal strife. "Assam has been experiencing violence for a long time. In this situation of conflict, fake news become more dangerous, more violent and that's evident now," he said. The killing of Nilotpal Das and Abhijeet Nath has resonated broadly among urban, well-educated Indians and played on perceptions that rural districts are backward-looking and lawless. "Everyone could feel: 'it could have been my son, it could have been me,'" said Ittisha Sarah, 25, a friend of the victims. "That feeling is impacting people a lot. That it could have been anyone, so innocent, in that barbaric incident." — AFP

Syria raises flag in Daraa, but tough battles ahead

BEIRUT: The rapid fall of Daraa city, the cradle of Syria's uprising, is an important victory for President Bashar al-Assad's regime, but the country's devastating war is far from over, analysts say. Russian-backed government forces raised the flag in Daraa city on Thursday, but the regime still has two regions outside its control-and influential neighbors-to contend with.

To the west, it will have to retake the Quneitra province bordering the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, before moving on to a major battle in the north near the border with Turkey. "Bashar Al-Assad sent a signal with the fall of Daraa city that nowhere in Syria that has risen up against him will remain outside his reach," said Nick Heras, an analyst at the Center for a New American Strategy.

It was in poverty-stricken Daraa that anti-Assad protests erupted in 2011, sparking an uprising that spiraled into a complex civil war. Seven years into the conflict, Assad's forces have sealed a deal for a handover of the city and are determined to retake the whole of the wider province of the same name on the border with Jordan. More than 80 percent of Daraa province has returned to regime control, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor says, but rebels are resisting in its western countryside.

DARAA: A man rides a scooter in front of the Syrian national flag, raised in a street in Daraa-Al-Balad, an opposition-held part of the southern Syrian city of Daraa. — AFP

"All of these images from Daraa of Assad's flag flying are meant to hasten the process of negotiating deals" for these rebel holdouts, Heras said. It is also intended to help the Assad regime retake the whole of southwest Syria, including Quneitra. "The hope in Damascus is that the fall of Daraa will move the Israelis to a deal now to let Assad reconsolidate his rule in southwest Syria," he said. But, says Sam Heller of the International Crisis Group think-tank, Quneitra will "represent a special military and political challenge". The ICG said in a recent report that Israel had supported fighters in southern Syria since 2013 or 2014, apparently to "secure a buffer zone on its border". This week, Israel said it had carried out missile strikes on Syrian military posts in Quneitra, after intercepting what it said was an unarmed drone that had strayed into its territory.

Syria geographer Fabrice Balanche said Damascus securing Quneitra and the adjacent demilitarized zone would be "difficult because a deal is needed with the Israelis". "They are scared that the Syrian army will enter and then never leave," he said, adding the missiles strikes overnight to Thursday were likely a "warning". Israel is particularly worried about the presence of Iranians next door in Syria, where they have been backing Assad's regime. In recent months, a series of strikes in Syria that have killed Iranians have been attributed to Israel. — AFP

China floods wreak havoc

SHANGHAI: Heavy rain and thunderstorms are wreaking havoc across China, with floods along major rivers destroying bridges, blocking roads and railways and forcing thousands of residents to evacuate, state media reported yesterday. State television said 241 rivers in 24 provinces had flooded in the last few days, causing direct economic losses of 25.9 billion yuan ($3.87 billion). Weather authorities are forecasting more downpours throughout the country today, with floods and landslides expected in the southwestern province of Sichuan.

Heavy rain and flooding hits much of China this time every year, often with hundreds killed, but the number of casualties this year has been relatively low, at least in the early summer, with one province reporting 15 dead and another three. The National Meteorological Center said rainfall could exceed 80 mm per hour in some regions. It also warned of floods in the northeast and called on authorities to halt outdoor activities and watch out for collapsing structures. The flood-prone Yangtze river, which runs from Yunnan in the southwest to Jiangsu and Shanghai on the east coast, has seen a massive increase in water volumes, causing flooding in many of its tributaries and bringing water volumes in the giant Three Gorges reservoir close to record levels.

State news agency Xinhua reported on Friday that more than 10 highways in Sichuan province were inaccessible as a result of flooding, and a bridge across Sichuan's Min river, a Yangtze tributary, had collapsed. Floods in the province had caused damage to the tune of about 2.4 billion yuan by Thursday, according to the Ministry of Emergency Management, which had sent emergency relief teams to Sichuan and neighboring Gansu province.

The nearby city of Chongqing had evacuated more than 80,000 residents by Friday, Xinhua reported. Heavy rain has also caused the Yellow River, which runs through northern China, to burst its banks, blocking a section of a railway line in the northwest province of Shaanxi. Gansu, also in the northwest, reported 15 people killed, four missing and more than 1 million affected by a week of heavy rain and flash floods, the official China News Service said yesterday. The normally arid region of Inner Mongolia, which had suffered weeks of drought, also issued a flood warning on Friday. — Reuters

Cave rescue highlights plight of Thailand's stateless people

Thousands of stateless people live trapped between countries

MAE SAI: On the Thai side of the mountainous border with Myanmar, where 12 boys and their football coach were rescued from a flooded cave last week, thousands of stateless people live trapped between countries with no access to some basic rights. All of the boys and their 25-year-old coach, who make up the 'Wild Boars' soccer team, will be discharged from hospital next week following a three-day rescue that evoked international relief and joy. Although the Wild Boars are now viewed in this Southeast Asian country as national treasures, four of them are technically stateless. At least two of the boys, however, are already in the advance stages of obtaining citizenship.

"I feel very good that the Wild Boars cave story has put a spotlight on this issue," Tuanjai Deetes, Commissioner of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand said. "We must put more emphasis on this domestically as well as internationally. There are still many stateless people." According to official statistics, 486,440 people are registered with the Thai government as stateless, of whom 146,269 are - like three of the Wild Boars - under 18 years old. There are several groups whose people have over generations moved around the region, across open borders in remote hills between southern China, Myanmar and Laos, and into northern Thailand's ethnic patchwork of communities.

The blurry-border province of Chiang Rai, at the northern tip of Thailand, has long been an entry point for illegal migrants, people smuggling and drug trafficking from the 'Golden Triangle' area that straddles Thailand, Myanmar and Laos. But it is the better economic conditions in wealthier Thailand that have most attracted families from the other side of the border. Once in Thailand, they are eligible for basic education and healthcare but face travel restrictions, have no access to financial services, and cannot get married or buy property.

"Whilst some progress has been made, stateless people in Thailand continue to face challenges accessing some of their basic rights," said Hannah Macdonald with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). "Examples include restrictions on their freedom of movement, healthcare, access to financial services, being able to get married, and to own property or land." Somsak Kanakham, chief of the district office in Mae Sai, the area within which the boys were trapped in the cave, said his office was ultimately just following Thai law. "I understand why on human rights grounds we all want to resolve this issue," he said. "But it's a matter which concerns national security."

486,440 registered with government as stateless

'Major challenge'

The number of people in limbo is understated by the official data because many have not yet registered as stateless. In the Mae Sai district alone, there are more than 27,000 pending cases of stateless people who have applied for Thai citizenship. "The last time the government surveyed this village was in 2011. Now there are more than 210 new people," Tuanjai told Reuters in the village of Prachao Tum Jai, 8 km from the cave, where around 400 people of the "Dara-ang" hill tribe live.

Most of the villagers, who make a living by growing pineapples and rice, do not have Thai citizenship, and over 200 are not even registered as stateless, Tuanjai said. "The major challenge is the migration pattern. There is a lot of movement, and a lack of information about the registration process." Stateless people who can prove they have lived in Thailand for at least 10 years can apply for citizenship, which then takes around six months to process, said Vitat Techabun, director-general of Thailand's Department of Children and Youth.

CHIANG RAI, Thailand: This combo of video grabs shows rescued 'Wild Boars' football team members recovering at the hospital in Chiang Rai province. — AFP

But Tuanjai says "exploitation by officials" who demand bribes to facilitate citizenship applications has sometimes stood in the way of this process. Mae Sai district chief Somsak Kanakham said his office has partnered with civil society groups on the issue to ensure more transparency and combat corruption. The Wild Boars' coach, 25-year-old Ekkapol Chantawong, is a member of the Tai Lue minority, one of several groups in the region. He hopes to become a Thai citizen, a friend and relative told Reuters last Thursday. Tarn Aree, 35, another stateless Tai Lue who lives in the town of Chiang Rai, and her son are struggling to obtain citizenship. Despite her son's age, 11, he has the same technical status as a "migrant worker", meaning he is officially living in Thailand, the country of his birth, temporarily. "Many of us have been applying for citizenship for years but we haven't got it," said Tarn as she queued with friends for free bags of rice at a fair hosted by a Buddhist temple. "We can't technically buy land so we need to use other people with Thai citizenship to buy land for us," she said. "I just want my son to truly own our home". — Reuters

Death toll rises as Nicaraguan violence rages

MANAGUA: Nicaraguan forces on Friday attacked a university in the capital Managua and a neighborhood in opposition bastion Masaya, killing two in the latest violence to convulse the Central American country hit by months of unrest. Political tensions have soared since protests against a now-aborted pension reform began on April 18 and mushroomed into general opposition to President Daniel Ortega and his government. Friday's attacks came as Ortega called for peace during a day of strikes, the second in three months of anti-government protests that have left over 270 dead.

Two people were killed when government forces opened fire on the combative neighborhood of Monimbo, south Masaya, as Ortega and his supporters began a procession from the capital to the opposition stronghold, 30 kilometers south. One was a policeman, a local rights group representative told AFP. The march was to celebrate the June 1979 "retreat" that saw thousands of guerrillas withdraw from Managua to Masaya to regroup, before securing victory on July 19 when president Anastasio Somoza fled the country. On Friday, protesters erected barricades and vowed to prevent the former leftist guerrilla's procession from passing through. It was delayed and limited to a driven caravan.

But where Ortega was once hunkered down with allies in Masaya fighting against a dictatorship, the 72-year-old head of state now is now the one hated in the rebel heartland. In Masaya, Ortega accused the opposition of acting "with venom and hate," and appealed for a return to "the road of peace." Elsewhere at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, where students have been holed up since protests began, a medic reported several injuries after pro-government forces opened fire. "They all came with firearms, they came to kill," one young person told reporters from a church near the university.

Second strike

Meanwhile, banks, markets, gas stations, schools and shops kept their doors locked among deserted streets as Nicaragua's opposition staged a 24-hour general strike on Friday, a day after five people were killed in violence surrounding anti-government protests. Opposition supporters claimed the strike was 90 percent respected across the country while official media announced business as usual in several trade zones. In cities such as Leon and Granada, only state-owned Petronic gas stations remained open.

Mercado Oriental, one of the biggest trade centers in the capital Managua with 20,000 businesses, was almost entirely shuttered. "I'm working out of necessity but the strike is a weapon to put pressure on the government because there is no end in sight to this situation," Adolfo Diaz, a 67-year-old shoe shiner, told AFP while sitting alone in a hall at the Huembes market in the east of Managua, normally a bustling hub of some 4,500 businesses. The strike, called by the opposition Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy grouping, came after four police officers and a protester died on Thursday as clashes erupted between opposition activists and government forces and their paramilitary allies in the southeast town of Morrito.

'Terrorist' arrested

On Friday, police arrested opposition leader Medardo Mairena, accusing him of being a "terrorist" and having "organized" and "ordered" the "attack" against the murdered police and protester. The opposition Civic Alliance denounced Mairena's detention as an "act of intimidation." The opposition is demanding either early elections or the resignation of Ortega and his wife Vice President Rosario Murillo, accusing both of corruption, despotism and nepotism. But while the will was there to support the strike, not everyone has the means to do so. "If I don't work, I don't eat. It's not a question of not supporting the strike but one of supporting our families. We need this to end so we can work," said 56-year-old cobbler Nestor Larios. — AFP

Hospital overflows after Pakistan blast

QUETTA: Survivors of a suicide blast which killed 128 people as it ripped through a crowded Pakistani rally described scenes of panic and horror yesterday, as hospitals struggled to cope with scores of wounded. The attack in Mastung in southwestern Balochistan province on Friday, claimed by the Islamic State group, was one of the deadliest in Pakistan's history. More than 150 people were wounded when the suicide bomber detonated just as a local politician, Siraj Raisani, was standing to make a speech in a tent packed closely with supporters. He was among the dead.

"As he stood up, there was a huge bang," said student Rustam Raisani, who was part of the security arrangements and was standing on the stage behind the politician. "I could not see anything. There was only dust and the smell of blood and burnt human flesh. I could hear voices screaming. "I tried to get up and I saw people who were trying to run towards the gate. They were trampling on dead bodies... Everybody was screaming."Raisani was speaking to AFP from the Civil Hospital in Quetta, where many of the survivors were taken.

The hospital was overflowing yesterday, with so many people crammed into corridors and relatives of victims sleeping on floors and in corners that it was difficult to walk through the building. Witnesses and emergency workers have described seeing the injured piled into rickshaws in a desperate attempt to get them to hospital from the town, which has no electricity and little in the way of medical services. In the ringing moments after the blast, survivors began to rush towards the exit, said witness Ghulam Hussain, who also spoke to AFP from his hospital bed where he was being treated for head injuries.

They were stepping on those on the floor, he saw. "It was a sort of stampede... I started to pull some of the people and scream for help." Luckily, he said, others from the crowd realized what he was doing and began to help him pull the wounded out of the rush. The blast, the deadliest in a series of attacks that have killed 154 people in Pakistan in the past week, has dented optimism after the militancy-wracked country has seen dramatic improvements in security in recent years.

'Bad dream'

Analysts have predicted more violence ahead of an already-tense July 25 election, which pits the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his brother Shahbaz against cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Smaller parties such as Raisani's local Baloch outfit are also contesting polls across the country, with activists calling on the military to provide greater security at campaign events. "(Raisani) had just begun when something hit me," Mansoor Ahmed, a 34-year-old activist with Raisani's party who also survived the blast, told AFP from his hospital bed.

"I could hear very faint sounds of people screaming, and (there was) blood and human flesh. It was like a bad dream." Another man had fallen on him when the bomb went off, he said. "When I pushed (him away)... a fountain of blood spurted out of my stomach." After that, he says, he could not remember much. The doctors have told him that ball bearings, which were packed into the explosives, had torn into his stomach. Ahmed said he did not know if the dozen or so friends that he attended the rally with had lived. "The doctors said I will survive," he said. "But I am not sure. Do you think I will survive?" — AFP

GAZA: Photo shows a smoke plume rising - following an Israeli air strike in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah, near the border with Egypt. — AFP

Israeli air strikes hit Gaza after bloody border protests

GAZA: Israel's military renewed air strikes targeting Hamas in the Gaza Strip yesterday afternoon, following border clashes in which two Palestinians including a teenager were killed and hundreds injured. The army said it was "currently striking terror targets in the Gaza Strip", without giving further details, following an assault on the territory earlier in the day. According to Palestinian security sources and witnesses, fighter jets struck Hamas targets without causing any injuries. The Israeli bombardment came as rockets and mortars were lobbed into southern Israel from the blockaded Palestinian enclave.

Sirens warning Israeli residents to take shelter rang out in all areas bordering Gaza, the army wrote on Twitter. The escalation followed further protests on the Gaza border on Friday, in which two Palestinians were killed and more than 220 injured according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run Strip. A 15-year-old Palestinian was shot dead during the demonstrations and a 20-year-old died yesterday of gunshot wounds sustained during the protest, the health ministry said. The Israeli military said one of its soldiers was injured by a grenade.

Israel hits Gaza tunnels

Early yesterday the Israeli military said it conducted strikes against Hamas "in response to the terror acts instigated during the violent riots that took place along the security fence" on Friday. It also cited "continuous arson attacks damaging Israeli territory on a daily basis with the launching of arson balloons from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory". In the morning raids Israeli fighter jets struck two "Hamas terror tunnels", one in southern Gaza and another in the north, as well as other infrastructure across the coastal territory. It said targets included "complexes used to prepare arson terror attacks and a Hamas terror training facility".

During the morning strikes, militants in Gaza fired a total of 31 mortar rounds at Israel, the military said, adding that six were intercepted by its Iron Dome air defense system. Israeli media reports said no one was injured in those attacks. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said the group was responsible for the mortar fire on Israel and that they were carried out "in response to the Israeli air strikes". "The protection and the defense of our people is a national duty and a strategic choice," Barhoum said.

Grenades and flaming tyres

Palestinians in Gaza have for months been demonstrating against Israel's decade-long blockade of the territory and in support of their right to return to lands they fled or were driven from during the war surrounding the creation of Israel in 1948. Since the protests and clashes broke out along the border on March 30, at least 141 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire. The majority were involved in protests and clashes but others were seeking to breach or damage the border fence.

No Israelis have been killed. Israel's army said grenades, Molotov cocktails, flaming tyres and stones have been hurled in the direction of its soldiers. Israel says its use of live fire is necessary to defend its borders and stop infiltrations. It accuses Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas of seeking to use the protests as cover for attacks against Israel. Hamas has run Gaza since seizing it from the Palestinian Authority amid deadly clashes in 2007. Since then, Israel has maintained a crippling blockade on Gaza which it argues is necessary to isolate Hamas. Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since 2008. — AFP

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Fake news - media industry hits back, stepping up fact-checking

News media on the offensive to shore up credibility

WASHINGTON: The viral spread of hoaxes and misinformation ahead of the US election and Brexit referendum two years ago was a wake-up call for many established news media, who have gone on the offensive to shore up their credibility and help filter out fake news. Major media organizations, often in partnership with big technology and social media firms, have stepped up fact-checking and other steps to support fact-based journalism. But these efforts have been complicated by unrelenting attacks on the media by US President Donald Trump and others who tend to label any unfavorable coverage "fake news."

The 'gatekeeper' role

Fake news is as old as journalism itself, and reputable media organizations have often played a role of "gatekeeper" to reliable information. This role has been fundamentally challenged in the fast-moving internet age when rumors and false information can become viral, sometimes with tragic results. In one chilling example in India, a WhatsApp rumor warning that 300 people had descended on Gujarat looking to abduct and sell children has triggered deadly mob attacks. Social media "has made things much worse," because it "offers an easy route for non-journalists to bypass journalism's gatekeepers, so that anyone can 'publish' anything, however biased, inaccurate or fabricated," says John Huxford, an Illinois State University journalism professor.

"Journalism's role as the 'gatekeeper' of what is and isn't news has always been controversial, of course. But we're now seeing just how bad things can get when that function breaks down." Internet firms, after initial reluctance to define themselves as "media," have stepped up efforts to identify false news and to "curate" stories from "trusted" news sources. "Technology companies including Apple, Google, Snapchat, Twitter, and, above all, Facebook have taken on most of the functions of news organizations, becoming key players in the news ecosystem, whether they wanted that role or not," said a March 2018 report by Columbia University's Tow Center for Digital Journalism.

Fake news spreads faster

Numerous studies have shown that fake news-often more sensational than genuine information-spreads faster online because of how social media has prioritized "virality." "False political news traveled deeper and more broadly, reached more people, and was more viral than any other category of false information," said a report this year from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The MIT researchers examined 126,000 rumors spread by three million people, and found that false news reached more people than the truth.

> **Social media 'made things much worse'**

"Analysis found that it took the truth approximately six times as long as falsehood to reach 1,500 people," the researchers said. Oxford Internet Institute scholars came to a similar conclusion, pointing out that on many online platforms, news is "prioritized by complex algorithms that have been coded to sort, filter, and deliver content in a manner that is designed to maximize users' engagement," according to a study. "The speed and scale at which content 'goes viral' grows exponentially, regardless of whether or not the information it contains is true," wrote Oxford researchers Samantha Bradshaw and Philip Howard.

Huxford said many internet users are not adept at telling fake news from the real thing, making the role of major news organizations critical. "This is why Trump falsely labeling the mainstream media as 'fake news' is so toxic," he said. "It means that, at a time when there is a lot of fabrication and falsehoods swirling through the system, the credibility of the most reliable sources of news is being undermined." There have been some hopeful signs for news media, such as increased digital subscriptions for the New York Times and Washington Post. But many legacy organizations such as local newspapers are struggling with a shift to digital platforms.

Journalists may face new dangers in the current environment, in some cases subject to attacks by political leaders even when trying to debunk false information. In Brazil, the fact-checking organizations Lupa and Aos Fatos, which have partnered with Facebook to curb fake news, have faced threats and harassment, with some groups accusing them of ideological bias. —AFP

NEW DELHI: This photo illustration shows an Indian newspaper vendor reading a newspaper with a full back page advertisement from WhatsApp intended to counter fake information, in New Delhi. —AFP

Media curbs in DR Congo raise fears ahead of election

KINSHASA: The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is clamping down on online media in a declared campaign against fake news, hate speech and cybercrime, a move that has stoked alarm as crucial elections loom. Watchdogs say the crackdown breaches media freedom and stifles political debate, adding to volatility in what is already a powder-keg country. On June 14, the ministry of communications issued a decree giving online media outlets a month to comply with new regulations, or else face potential fines and prison sentences.

"The law is intended to protect the public," Communications Minister Lambert Mende said in an interview with AFP. "It's not just fake news-there's also incitement to violence, hate-speech, and in our country, we know where that can lead." The rules include registering with the authorities, complying with a 1996 law on freedom of the press and having ads approved by relevant authorities. The punishments are the same as those detailed in the 1996 law, which include a fine and a 15-day prison term that can be longer if the crime warrants a higher sentence.

Watchdogs for media freedom and human rights say they are worried. "If the decree is applied in its current form, it will muzzle online media and restrain freedom of expression," said Tshivis Tshivuadi, head of an advocacy group called Journalists in Danger. "There are real concerns that these new requirements will soon be used as an excuse to crack down on Congo's vibrant online media outlets," said Ida Sawyer of Human Rights Watch. Amnesty International warned about text prohibiting "any illustration, story, information or insertion infringing the right to the image and the right to privacy"-a provision that, it said, has been used in the past to censor political criticism. —AFP

Activists debunk war-torn Syria's fake news

BEIRUT: Old images, fiction films and even video games have all been used to spread fake news stories in war-torn Syria-creating all the more work for a media collective debunking them. Protests broke out against Syria's regime in 2011 and then spun into violent conflict. All along, there has been a continuous stream of fabricated "news", helped by the rapid-fire reach of social media. To bring clarity and truth to an increasingly complex war, 32-year-old activist and journalist Ahmad Primo founded Verify-sy, an electronic platform that monitors and fact-checks stories about the conflict.

"As reporters, journalists, and activists, we've got a responsibility," Primo tells AFP. "What's happening today will be written down as history, and we don't want it to be fake history." Years ago, Primo took part in protests in the northern city of Aleppo and worked at a website that published news about the popular movement. After being arrested three times by government forces, he moved to rebel-held territory in northern Syria before eventually leaving for Turkey. "I was arrested for publishing the truth about what's happening (in regime territory), and when I moved to opposition areas, I noticed they tamper with the truth, too," says Primo. —AFP

Fake news: Algorithms in the dock

PARIS: At the heart of the spread of fake news are the algorithms used by search engines, websites and social media which are often accused of pushing false or manipulated information regardless of the consequences.

What are algorithms?

They are the invisible but essential computer programs and formulas that increasingly run modern life, designed to repeatedly solve recurrent problems or to make decisions on their own. Their ability to filter and seek out links in gigantic databases means it would be impossible to run global markets without them, but they can also be refined down to produce personalized quotes on everything from mortgages to plane tickets. They also run our Google searches, our Facebook newsfeed, recommend articles or videos to us and sometimes censor questionable content because it may contain violence, pornography or racist language. Other algorithms charged with the most complex and sensitive tasks can be opaque "black boxes" which develop their own artificial intelligence based on our data.

A skewed view of the world?

"Algorithms can help us find our way through the huge amount of information on the internet," said Margrethe Vestager, the European commissioner for competition. "But the problem is that we only see what these algorithms-and the companies that use them-choose to show us," she added.In organizing your online content, algorithms also tend to create "filter bubbles", insulating us from opposing points of view.

During the US presidential election in 2016, Facebook was accused of helping Donald Trump by allowing often false information about his rival Hillary Clinton to circulate online, closing people into a news bubble. Algorithms also tend to make extreme opinions "and fringe views more visible than ever", according to Berlin-based Lorena Jaume-Palasi, founder of the Algorithm Watch group. However, their effects can be difficult to measure, she warned, saying that algorithms alone are not to blame for the rise in nationalism in Europe.

Spreading fake news?

Social media algorithms tend to push the most viewed content without checking if it is true or not, which is why they magnify the impact of fake news. On YouTube in particular, conspiracy theory videos get a great deal more traffic than accurate and properly sourced ones, said Guillaume Chaslot, one of the Google-owned platform's former engineers. These videos, which may claim that the moon landings or climate change are lies, get far more views and comments, keeping users on the platform longer and undermining credible, traditional media, Chaslot insisted.

More ethical algorithms?

Some observers believe that algorithms could be programmed "to serve human freedom", with many non-governmental groups demanding far more transparency. "Coca-Cola doesn't reveal its formula but its products are tested for their effect on our health," Jaume-Palasi argued, insisting on the need for clear regulation. The French privacy protection body, the CNIL, last year recommended state oversight of algorithms and that there should be a real push to educate people "so they understand the cogs of the (information technology) machine". New European data protection rules also allow people to contest the decision of an algorithm and "demand a human intervention" in case of conflict.

Some internet giants have themselves begun to act to some degree: Facebook has started an effort to automatically label suspicious posts, while YouTube is reinforcing its "human controls" on videos aimed at children. However, former Silicon Valley insiders who make up the Center for Humane Technology, which was set up to combat tech's excesses, have warned that "we can't expect attention-extraction companies like YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, or Twitter to change, because it's against their business model." —AFP

CALIFORNIA: Twitter logo is seen on a sign at the company's headquarters in San Francisco, California. Twitter shares tumbled on concerns the social media's efforts to crack down on fake accounts would affect its user base, and potentially its finances. —AFP

When fake news sparks violence

NEW DELHI: India has been shaken by a spate of mob killings sparked by a hoax about child kidnappers spread on WhatsApp. In just two months, 20 people have been murdered in such attacks. Officials and social media platforms have so far been powerless to stop the violence. But who is to blame? And why is a rumor turning people to violence?

A rumor is born

An online hoax emerged more than a year ago in eastern India claiming strangers were sedating and abducting children. Six men falsely accused of snatching kids off the streets were killed by mobs in Jharkhand state, police said. In February this year, the rumors resurfaced nearly a thousand miles away in western India. By May, it had reached the country's southern states, often accompanied by a grainy video purporting to show men on motorbikes stealing kids.

This falsehood spread like wildfire via WhatsApp, which boasts 200 million users in India who send a billion messages a day. Later, a grisly video claiming to show Indian children killed by organ-harvesting gangs went viral. The macabre images were Syrian infants killed in a gas attack five years ago. Translated into regional languages, the rumor triggered violence across India, particularly in rural areas where distrust of outsiders is entrenched and digital literacy is poor. By early July, at least twenty people had been killed in the previous two months. Among the victims were homeless people, two picnic goers and an elderly woman handing out chocolates to children.

Police powerless

India's police rounded up suspects and formed patrols, driving village to village to quash the rumors. In some areas, travelling musicians sung about the scourge of fake news. Authorities in some states shut down internet access in a desperate bid to stop the hoax from spreading. But the awareness campaigns had limited effect. In one instance, an official "rumor buster" was himself beaten to death. Anger turned to WhatsApp, blamed by authorities for spreading "irresponsible and explosive messages".

Seeking penance

WhatsApp said it was "horrified" by the violence and assured Indian authorities it was taking action. The Facebook-owned company said it was working with Indian researchers to better understand the problem and had introduced changes which it said would reduce the spread of such messages. But some pointed out that WhatsApp as a medium was not to blame, and urged the authorities to tackle the violence.

Mob rule

India is no stranger to mob violence, with well-documented cases of crowds turning on victims for every manner of transgression, real or imagined. In recent years, for example, there has been a sharp escalation in "cow vigilantism"-Hindu extremists murdering Muslims and thrashing low-caste Dalits accused of killing cows or eating beef. Many of the victims in other vigilante killings, such as those over child kidnapping rumors, are targeted because they are outsiders.

Facts vs Fiction

India is fertile ground for fake news to take hold and spread. It has a billion-plus mobile phone users-more than any other country on earth-and close to half a billion people with internet access, most via their smartphones. Cheap handsets and data plans are bringing more Indians online but many are first-time internet users unskilled in discerning fact from fiction. Indian police say there is no substance to the child kidnapping rumors, but the viral videos may not appear outlandish to some. More than 120,000 children were abducted or went missing in 2016, according to the most recent Indian government figures. There is no data available on the number of children who were found. —AFP

GUWAHATI: Photo shows Gopal Chandra Das, father of lynching victim Nilotpal Das, with a picture of his son at his residence in Guwahati, the capital city of India's northeastern state of Assam. —AFP

Trump renews war of words with London's Muslim mayor

US president links immigration to deadly wave of knife crime

LONDON: A baby-shaped blimp meets a thin-skinned president: cue the renewal of a war of words between Donald Trump and London's first Muslim mayor, encompassing terrorism, crime and good manners. Mayor Sadiq Khan has "done a very bad job on terrorism", Trump declared, linking immigration to a deadly wave of knife crime in London, as he began a contentious four-day trip to Britain this week.

"You have a mayor who has done a terrible job in London," he said in an interview with Friday's edition of The Sun newspaper. It was the latest potshot in a feud that began when Khan, the son of a bus driver who emigrated from Pakistan in the 1960s, criticized Trump's travel ban on people from certain Muslim countries. Khan responded Friday by saying terrorism was a global problem which also affected other European cities. "What is interesting is Trump is not criticizing mayors of those cities, but he is criticizing me," he told BBC radio. Trump's comments blaming immigration for crime in England were "preposterous", he said. The president ridiculed Khan in June last year following the latest in a spate of terror attacks in London.

Distorting a message from Khan, telling Londoners there was "no reason to be alarmed" by an increased police presence, Trump tweeted: "At least 7 dead and 48 wounded in terror attack and Mayor of London says there is 'no reason to be alarmed!'" At the time, Khan criticized Trump as "ill-informed" and on Friday, lauded the "special relationship" between Britain and the United States. Asked if the new row could jeopardize that bond, he said: "It takes two to tango, and I'm not tweeting President Trump or saying beastly things about him."

Pigs and babies

Khan added: "I think our prime minister (Theresa May) should have the confidence to speak to the US president on equal terms and it's for President Trump to say what he wants about me; I'm not going to rise to President Trump's views." Khan is a member of the opposition Labour party. His predecessor as London mayor was the Conservative Boris Johnson, who resigned this week as foreign secretary in protest at May's blueprint for Brexit.

> "You have a mayor who has done a terrible job"

In his Sun interview, Trump accused May of violating British voters' wishes with the plan and, for good measure, praised Johnson as an alternative prime minister. If Johnson and Trump are kindred spirits politically, Khan this week authorized a plan by protestors to float a six-metre (19-foot) inflatable of a distinctly orange nappy-clad baby bearing Trump's face above London's Parliament Square on Friday.

Trump's attack on May's Brexit plan drew scorn from across the political divide as being ill-mannered during a high-profile visit. But the president told The Sun that Khan himself had "not been hospitable to a government that is very important". "Now he might not like the current president, but I represent the United States," he said, insisting that "millions" of Britons supported his hard line on immigration. The London mayor has powers over policing and transport in the capital of eight million people, but does not control immigration policy, which is set nationally by the Home Office.

Khan's authorization for the "angry baby" stunt has infuriated Trump supporters in Britain such as Brexit champion Nigel Farage, who called it an "insult". Conservative MP Michael Fabricant was accused of Islamophobia after tweeting a cartoon showing the Muslim mayor's head on an inflatable balloon, engaged in a sex act with a pig. Fabricant later deleted the tweet and apologised. But the war of words escalated as Labour lawmaker David Lammy said Trump's real problem with Khan was not about policy but the mayor's faith. "He hates that London chose a Muslim mayor. The President is racist. He does not deserve to meet our Queen today #StopTrump," he tweeted. —AFP

LONDON: This combination of files pictures shows Mayor of London Sadiq Khan (left) and US President Donald Trump. US President Donald Trump criticized London Mayor Sadiq Khan over recent terror attacks and knife crime in an interview published in the Sun on July 13, 2018. —AFP

Bad blood over golf course stalks Trump's Scotland trip

EDINBURGH: Discord over a golf course dating back over a decade means there is little love lost between Donald Trump and the pro-independence government in Scotland, where he will be teeing off over the weekend during his visit to Britain. Trump, whose mother was from Scotland, is expected to stay at his luxury golf resort at Turnberry. Most of the controversy has centered on his other course, known as Trump International Golf Links. In the run-up to his first visit as US president, Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has been celebrating the construction of a wind farm that the billionaire tycoon tried to stop because it spoiled the view from his resort. "A famous golf course owner from America who, I think, has now turned his hand to politics, decided to take the Scottish government to court to try to block these wind turbines," the Scottish National Party (SNP) leader said as the first turbine was switched on last week. "The Scottish government beat that American golf course owner in court... and these amazing wind turbines generated their first electricity," she said. Sturgeon has refused to meet Trump on his visit but has resisted pressure from some Scottish lawmakers to deny him landing rights at Glasgow's Prestwick Airport. He will be greeted by Scottish Secretary David Mundell, from the British Government, when he arrives north of the border on Friday.

Fierce opposition

For someone who claims extraordinary negotiation skills, Trump's forays into Scottish tourism and politics over the years have had mixed results. He bought 1,400 acres of land near Aberdeen in 2006 and promised to build "the world's best golf course". The proposal was welcomed by former first minister Jack McConnell-who named Trump a "Global Scot" business ambassador in 2006 shortly before his Labor Party lost power to the SNP. But local councilors rejected the plan amid fierce opposition from conservationists and neighboring residents.

The SNP government overturned the councilors' decision shortly after golf-loving nationalist Alex Salmond took control, kicking off a short and tempestuous bromance with Trump who called Salmond "an amazing man". However, the relationship cooled when Trump's promise to create 6,000 jobs and invest £1 billion failed to materialize, and Trump began interfering with the SNP's flagship plan to make Scotland a renewable energy powerhouse. The Trump Organization has spent around £100 million on the course, known as Trump International Golf Links, and employed around 650 temporary and permanent staff-but the company insists the resort remains a work in progress.

'I am the evidence'

Three years later Trump visited the Scottish Parliament to complain about plans to build 11 "ugly" offshore wind turbines near his newly minted Aberdeenshire resort, insisting the development would do "terrible damage" to Scottish tourism. Trump declared "I am the evidence" when Scottish lawmakers asked him to back up his assertion that the wind farm would "destroy the financial wellbeing of Scotland". Six years on, overseas visitors to Scotland have increased by nearly a quarter and renewable energy now powers over two-thirds of Scottish homes and rising.

Trump threatened to pull all of his investment in Scotland if the wind farm went ahead-but bought another golf course instead. With dramatic timing, Trump came to Scotland to open his second golf resort at Turnberry on June 24, 2016 - the day after Britain voted to leave the European Union. Protests are expected across Scotland over the weekend, including at his golf courses as well as at Glasgow's George Square and in the capital, Edinburgh. Demonstrators rallied for Trump's arrival in Britain Thursday, massing at several sites he visited, ahead of a mass protest expected to draw thousands on Friday. —AFP

EDINBURGH: Protesters carry placards as they take part in the Scotland United Against Trump demonstration through the streets of Edinburgh, Scotland yesterday, on the third day of US President Donald Trump's four-day UK visit. —AFP

Explosive thrown at house of Sinn Fein leader

BELFAST: An explosive device was thrown at the home Gerry Adams in Belfast overnight, the former Sinn Fein leader said yesterday, saying the attack may have been carried out by Irish nationalist militants opposed to Northern Ireland's peace deal. A second device was thrown at the home of the party's former Northern Ireland Chairman Bobby Storey, he said.

Adams told journalists that no one was hurt in either attack, but that two of his grandchildren had been in his driveway 10 minutes before and could have been killed. A police spokesman said remnants of "large industrial, firework-type devices capable of causing serious damage or injury" were found at both locations after the attacks, which he said took place late on Friday. The Belfast attacks came after days of street violence in Northern Ireland's second city Londonderry, which police blamed on militant Irish nationalists opposed to a 1998 peace deal that Adams helped to broker.

Asked if dissident Irish nationalists were responsible for the attack on his home, Adams said that "there may be a connection with what is happening in Derry", referring to Londonderry. Adams later said he was willing to meet with dissident nationalists and pro-British groups involved in violence in east Belfast in a bid to end recent street violence. Northern Ireland's peace deal largely ended three decades of violence between Irish nationalists who wanted the region to join the Republic of Ireland and pro-British unionists who wanted it to remain British. More than 3,000 died in the violence. Several groups of dissident Irish nationalists remain active and carry out occasional attacks, but their capacity is tiny compared with the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which decommissioned its weapons after the 1998 deal. Many of the dissidents consider Adams and his Sinn Fein party - the former political wing of the IRA - as having betrayed the Irish nationalist cause by signing a peace agreement with the British government. Political leaders in Northern Ireland have warned that Britain's decision to leave the European Union and the possibility of infrastructure on the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish republic for the first time since 1998 could help dissident groups to recruit new members. —Reuters

Trump meeting Queen rankles with many Britons

LONDON: Queen Elizabeth II welcomed US President Donald Trump for tea at Windsor Castle on Friday-a meeting which many Britons find the toughest part of his already contentious trip to swallow. Trump walked ahead of the 92-year-old while inspecting troops and did not bow when he met her-a couple of minor protocol breaches-but the meeting went smoothly. Trump was gracious about the British sovereign in a newspaper interview out Friday in which he attacked Prime Minister Theresa May's strategy on Brexit.

However, his previous comments about the royals have been less tactful, including boasting he would have slept with Diana, princess of Wales "without even hesitation", and saying "who wouldn't" photograph the Duchess of Cambridge topless. Some 1.86 million people signed a petition at the June 2017 general election, wanting to prevent Trump from making a state visit "because it would cause embarrassment to Her Majesty the Queen". His four-day trip to Britain is not a state visit-with the formal trappings of a carriage procession and certain banquets-but it bears many of the hallmarks, including time with the head of state.

A YouGov poll of 1,648 British adults conducted on Monday and Tuesday found that half thought Trump's working visit to Britain should go ahead, with just over a third thinking it should be cancelled. However, the meeting with Queen Elizabeth on his first visit to Britain as US president still seems to rankle. Just one in three (35 percent) thought the monarch should meet Trump, as opposed to half (49 percent) who thought she should not.

'Great and beautiful grace'

Trump was treated with a guard of honor when he arrived at Windsor Castle, west of London. The Coldstream Guards gave a royal salute and played the US national anthem. The two heads of state inspected the guard before watching them march past, in the castle's quadrangle. The Trumps then went for tea with Queen Elizabeth. "For so many years she has represented her country, she has really never made a mistake. You don't see, like, anything embarrassing. She is just an incredible woman," Trump told The Sun newspaper. "My wife is a tremendous fan of hers. She has got a great and beautiful grace about her."

His previous comments about members of the royal family have not been so generous. Buckingham Palace said no other royals will be meeting him at Windsor. Trump has previously spoken about Prince William's wife Kate and his late mother Diana. William, second in line to the throne, is the monarch's grandson. In a 1997 interview, just weeks after Diana's death, US radio host Howard Stern asked Trump if he "could have nailed her". Trump replied: "I think I could have." In 2000, Stern asked Trump if he would have slept with Diana. The tycoon replied: "Without even hesitation. "She was crazy, but these are minor details."

WINDSOR: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II escorts US President Donald Trump into Windsor Castle in Windsor, west of London on the second day of Trump's UK visit. —AFP

'Only herself to blame'

In 2012, after Kate was photographed sunbathing topless in France, Trump weighed in on Twitter. "Who wouldn't take Kate's picture and make lots of money if she does the nude sunbathing thing. Come on Kate!" he wrote. "Kate Middleton is great-but she shouldn't be sunbathing in the nude-only herself to blame." Trump will not be meeting Queen Elizabeth's eldest son and William's father Prince Charles, the heir to the throne. A January 2017 report in The Sunday Times newspaper said Trump and Charles would not meet during his visit to Britain due to their strongly divergent views on climate change. Prince Charles is a keen environmentalist. A source close to Trump was quoted as saying: "He won't put up with being lectured by anyone, even a member of the royal family. Frankly, they should think twice about putting him and Prince Charles in the same room." —AFP

France marks Bastille Day with military parade

PARIS: Fighter jets streaked over Paris yesterday as part of a massive military parade in a "demonstration of controlled force" on France's national day, due to be followed by a street party if "Les Bleus" win the World Cup. Thousands of people, many of them tourists, thronged the Champs Elysees avenue to watch the march past involving 4,290 soldiers, 220 vehicles, 250 horses, 64 jets and 30 helicopters.

Many of them waved little tricolor flags distributed by the French army. President Emmanuel Macron flagged off the two-hour spectacle and was joined by two guests of honor: Singapore Prime Minister Hsien Loong and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono. The theme of this year's Bastille Day was "fraternity in arms" and featured Spanish gendarmes, Belgian armored vehicles and an Airbus A400M military transport plane from the German defense fleet.

"We have come here because we heard it's the best military parade in the world," gushed a 40-year-old Vietnamese man who gave his name as Koi. Japanese honeymooners Yoshi and Mika said they had come to witness an important French cultural event and also to see Japanese soldiers marching down the Champs Elysees. There were two minor glitches: one of the planes in the flypast supposed to be leaving the blue, white and red colors of the national flag in their trail spread a line of red instead of blue and two motorbike-riding gendarmes fell off after a minor collision. —AFP

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Washington Watch

Thank You, Ireland

By Dr James J Zogby

On Wednesday morning, I watched an amazing debate unfolding in the Irish Seanad (Senate), as members spoke for and against a bill to prohibit the importation of Israeli goods produced in settlements in occupied Palestinian lands. The legislation in question is the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territory) Bill 2018, which would "make it an offense for a person to import or sell goods or services originating in occupied territory or to extract resources from an occupied territory".

The bill had been introduced by independent Senator Frances Black and a group of co-sponsors earlier in the year. At the request of the Irish government, the sponsors agreed to delay the debate and vote until this month. The delay proved fortuitous in that it allowed supporters to mobilize broad public support for the effort.

In the months leading up to the Senate debate, Black led a delegation to the Occupied Palestinian lands. On her return she crisscrossed the country holding town hall meetings in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. The bill's supporters also hosted Palestinian farmers from the West Bank who related to Irish audiences the horrors of the occupation.

Several town and county councils passed resolutions in support of the boycott initiative. As Irish public support grew, the main opposition party, Fianna Fail, joined Sinn Fein, the Social Democrats, and the Green Party as endorsers of the bill. By the time the legislation came to the floor, its passage was assured. The vote was 25 in favor, with 20 opposed.

As delighted as I was with the outcome, it was the debate, itself, that was so impressive. It was, in a word, lopsided. Not a single voice was raised in support of Israel's policies vis a vis the Palestinians. Even those who voted against the bill denounced Israeli settlements, the US' unilateral move to open an embassy in Jerusalem, and more than one member compared the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories to South Africa's notorious "Apartheid regime."

Despite the government's opposition, they could only muster half-hearted arguments of concern and caution. Even the leading opponent, Foreign Minister Simon Covney acknowledged that he could "emotionally connect" with the bill and recognized the "deep injustice" endured by the Palestinians. He, and others from his party, made clear that their government's policy recognized that settlements were illegal and that Palestinians had rights that were denied to them by the occupation and the expansion of settlements. Their concerns were with Ireland taking a step ahead of the European Union and the possible repercussions that might follow.

Illegal

Senator Black's response was both forceful and eloquent. Speaking of the impact of settlements on Palestinian life and lamenting the hollow condemnation of Israeli practices by the EU, she said:

"Though these settlements are repeatedly condemned as illegal by the European Union, the United Nations, and the Irish government, they continue to extract valuable natural resources and agricultural produce. These goods are exported and sold on shelves around the world, including in Ireland...There is a clear hypocrisy here - how can we condemn the settlements as 'unambiguously illegal', as theft of land and resources, but happily buy the proceeds of this crime.

"I saw the impact of settlement expansion when I visited the West Bank this year: the restrictions on movement, the shrinking space for housing and health care, the lack of electricity. I witnessed the crushing indignity of a Palestinian community cut off from their water supply so that it could be diverted to an Israeli chicken farm. That commercial settlement, built on stolen land beyond internationally recognized borders, is a war crime. Is the moral response to condemn this illegality, but then ask 'how much for the eggs?' Ultimately, trade in settlement goods sustains injustice. We can criticize all we want, but years of empty rhetoric simply have not worked. As long as we buy their produce and they stay profitable, nothing will change."

Black and her colleagues also rebutted the charge that they were calling for a boycott of Israel, making it clear that their bill targeted only settlement goods. And in response to the charge that the legislation would put Ireland at odds with the EU, the Irish Senators presented expert legal opinion to the contrary. They also reminded the government that when similar arguments were made cautioning against banning products from South Africa, "Ireland demonstrated leadership" and the rest of Europe eventually followed.

The debate was remarkable and the final vote was historic. At the same time, the reactions from Israel and its supporters were predictable and hysterical. True to form, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is currently rushing through the Knesset a bill that would formally legislate Jewish-only communities, played the victim hypocritical condemning the Irish legislation as "violating free trade and justice."

Israel's foreign Minister, Avigdor Lieberman said he would not speak to Ireland's Ambassador saying, "we will not engage with Israel's oppressors. Israel should close immediately its embassy in Dublin." And some American supporters warned that the Irish effort would run afoul of proposed US legislation that calls on the US to boycott any businesses that support boycotts of Israeli settlement products.

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

Trump portrayal of NATO carries risks

Donald Trump's portrayal of NATO as an alliance in crisis has raised concern that the US president's nagging criticism might erode US public support and risk America's commitment to collective defense, diplomats said. Allies emerged confused and shaken from a two-day NATO summit in which Trump harangued them over perceived under-spending on defence, accused Germany of being a prisoner to Russian energy and prompted an emergency meeting of leaders trying to contain the fallout from the unexpected tirade at one session.

NATO diplomats complained that the drama around Trump's forthright comments had overshadowed big decisions that the allies took in areas from defense spending to new weapons and strategies to address Russia's efforts to destabilize the West through cyber and covert attacks. "There was a gap between the Trumpian-generated idea that there is some kind of crisis and the reality that this was one of the most substantial summits for years," one senior NATO diplomatic source told Reuters.

Having questioned the value of NATO in tweets throughout the summit, Trump later told reporters that the 29-member military alliance "was not doing what they were supposed to be doing" until he came to Brussels and that he was "extremely unhappy" until his intervention. Then he claimed "total credit" for increases in defense spending, although they were in fact agreed in 2014, and warned that "NATO is helping Europe more than it is helping us," in language that did not make a public case for unity.

However, the summit also agreed on a new training mission for Iraq, an invitation for Balkan state Macedonia to join NATO and more funding for troops in Afghanistan. While Trump did let the 79-point summit declaration go through, his assertion that "I've taken over a lot of bad hands and I am fixing them," at the end of the summit left the impression there were serious problems at NATO, diplomats said. NATO may now need its friends in the US Congress and in the Republican and Democratic parties to speak out more to prevent permanent damage to alliance's image in the United States, they said.

The US Senate overwhelmingly approved a motion in support of NATO on the eve of this week's summit, and former US Secretary of State John Kerry called for more. "Enough," the Democrat said of Trump's style at the summit. "This isn't good for the United States and there are people across the aisle - as the Senate vote yesterday clearly showed - who know it and need to say it," Kerry said on Twitter.

Perception, reality

The summit decisions, agreed by all 29 allied governments, won hardly any sustained public attention and the underlying unity was undercut by Trump's claims he had won new pledges in defense spending, forcing the French and Italian leaders into denials that dominated post-summit news conferences. He reiterated that claim in Britain on Friday. "The concern is that this is not just noise to disregard, because perception is reality and this president may be with us for another six years," the senior source said.

NATO, founded in 1949 to contain a military threat from the Soviet Union, relies on the United States' military superiority to face down a host of threats on Europe's borders, including a resurgent, nuclear-armed Russia and militant attacks. A commitment to defend each other is the bedrock of the alliance and any suggestion that the United States would not come to Europe's aid because, as Trump has suggested, they owe "massive" sums, could be a blow to its deterrence.

"President Trump has not taken damaging actions against NATO, but his words are damaging," said Adam Thomson, a former British ambassador to NATO and now director of the European Leadership Network think-tank in London. Having lambasted NATO for failing to reach a target of 2 percent of national income on defense, Trump told fellow leaders in Brussels he would prefer a goal of 4 percent, similar to US levels, and then claimed victory for forcing countries to move. He also said he expected an easier meeting with Russian President Vladimir tomorrrow in Helsinki in remarks that contrast with the West's accusations that Moscow is seeking to undermine European democracies.

Stuck between EU and US: UK's Brexit dilemma

US President Donald Trump's unique brand of disruptive diplomacy appears to have shattered the UK government's claim that Britain can have it all when it comes to trade once it exits the European Union. Prime Minister Theresa May probably expected a more helpful stance as she welcomed Trump to Britain this week, given that the populist leader has been outspoken in his support for Brexit. Instead, Trump scorched her policy towards the EU divorce in an interview with The Sun newspaper that shocked Britain's political establishment.

May had ignored his own advice on how best to confront Brussels, he said, while praising her departed foreign secretary. The colorful Boris Johnson quit rather than take part in turning Britain into a "colony", after May's blueprint for Brexit was signed off by her cabinet. Johnson, one of the most prominent Brexit campaigners ahead of Britain's June 2016 referendum, had said the country could "have our cake and eat it" by retaining close ties to the EU while also forging ahead with new trade deals with the rest of the world, including the United States.

May's blueprint, fleshed out in a government white paper this week, argued that it was possible through a deal with the EU that would preclude the return of a hard border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK. Trump, however, torpedoed such thinking in his interview. He said May's plans to bind Britain's economy closely to its European partners after Brexit would "probably kill" its hopes of a US trade deal.

Hyperbole

Both leaders tried to brush aside Trump's incendiary language at a news conference Friday, insisting they were determined to pursue a post-Brexit pact. May stressed London could stay on friendly trade terms with both Brussels and Washington. "It's not either or," she said at the press conference. The allure of a free-trade agreement (FTA) with Washington has propped up much rhetoric by Brexiteers, and kept May determined to go ahead with Trump's visit despite opposition from thousands of protestors who denounced the trip.

That was why the government's white paper was "veiled by strategic ambiguity on trade in goods", said Hosuk Lee-Makiyama, director of the European Centre for International Political Economy in Brussels. "The problem is that FTAs don't actually go that far," he added. "There is a great misconception in the Brexit debate about what an FTA can do. Many arguments are hyperbole or even outright false."

The pound slid 0.6 percent against the dollar on Trump's interview as the rhetoric of Brexit freedom ran into the reality of Britain's economic relationships. "The UK can't afford to alienate either the US or the EU, its two largest foreign trade partners, and will not be able to choose an 'either-or' solution," commented Fiona Cincotta, senior market analyst at City Index in London. But even if Britain can extricate itself from the dense web of regulations and tariffs resulting from its decades of EU membership, a US-UK trade deal would be easier said than done.

Trump has begun a trade war already with the EU, China and others. There is nothing to suggest the hard-nosed dealmaker would go easier on Britain, and he may press hard for lower tariffs and easier access for US industry to Europe's second-biggest economy. Chlorinated US chicken has already become totemic of future rows as campaigners line up against the prospect of Britain relaxing its food-safety standards under any US deal. Defenders of Britain's cherished National Health Service have mobilized against what they see as a US plot to dismantle the NHS by opening it up to competition from US healthcare providers, and to allow higher prices for US drugs.

Backlash

Free-trade deals that threaten to undermine institutions like the NHS have drawn mass protests elsewhere. A long-negotiated EU-Canada trade pact is staring at political defeat in Europe. A separate US-EU agreement is on ice. So May faces an unpalatable choice. The United States may be Britain's single biggest national trading partner, but the EU as a whole is far bigger. "At first glance, Trump's disruptive approach may make some sense from a narrow 'America first' perspective. In any bilateral negotiation with any other country in the world, the US would be the stronger party," Berenberg Economics said in a report. — Reuters

Indictment puts pressure on Trump at Putin summit

If US President Donald Trump was inclined to be tentative when raising election meddling with Russian President Vladimir Putin tomorrow, the indictment of 12 Russian intelligence officers with hacking in 2016 has made that approach a much harder sell. A federal grand jury on Friday alleged that officers of Russia's military intelligence agency, the GRU, secretly monitored computers and stole data from the campaign of Trump's former rival, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

The charges put an even greater spotlight on Trump's treatment of Putin, who has denied making efforts to intervene in the US election that Trump, a Republican, unexpectedly won. Trump has called the investigation into whether his campaign colluded with Moscow a "witch hunt" and has shown an eagerness to get along with his Russian counterpart, repeatedly referring to the former KGB leader's denials of such behavior.

"Trump has maybe a little less room to maneuver if he wants to downplay the issue or pretend that it's not real," said Jeffrey Mankoff, a Russia expert at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. Trump has said he plans to raise the issue. When asked at a news conference in Britain on Friday whether he would tell Putin to stay out of US elections, Trump said "yes". But the president indicated he did not expect much progress on the issue. "I will absolutely bring that up," Trump told reporters. "I don't think you'll have any 'Gee, I did it. I did it. You got me.'"

Critics said they were skeptical Trump would press the issue at all, despite the indictments. "Even with today's news, we can expect Trump to raise Putin's attack on our democracy in a passing, perfunctory way before again taking - or at least claiming to take - Putin's denials at face value," said Ned Price, a former national security council spokesman for President Barack Obama.

Democratic lawmakers urged Trump to cancel the get-together with Putin. The president is spending the weekend at his golf property in Scotland before leaving on Sunday for Helsinki, where the meeting is scheduled to take place. The White House said the release of the charges would not affect the summit. "The announcement has no impact on Monday's meeting," said Garrett Marquis, a spokesman for the White House National Security Council.

But the meeting, and the extent of Trump's emphasis on election meddling, could highlight a divide between him and his own advisers, not to mention other Republicans, about the seriousness of Russia's activities. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and national security adviser John Bolton, at least prior to joining the White House, have both been more critical of Moscow than the president they serve.

And the administration's broader policy toward Russia is harsher than the rhetoric employed by Trump, who recently suggested that Moscow be readmitted to what is now the Group of Seven, since Russia was kicked out of the bloc of industrialized countries for annexing Crimea from Ukraine. "The administration has a pretty good policy towards Russia, just the president doesn't agree with it," said Michael McFaul, a former US ambassador to Russia under Obama. "I can't remember a foreign policy debate that had this kind of disconnect between the president and literally every other person in his administration." — Reuters

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Business

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FARNBOUROUGH: This file photo shows a model of the Virgin Galactic, the world's first commercial spaceline, displayed at the Farnborough International Airshow in Hampshire, southern England. — AFP

Boeing, Airbus to vie for superiority in the skies

Global plane makers flying into Farnborough

FARNBOROUGH: Top global plane makers land at the Farnborough airshow in England next week, hoping to pick up speed on demand for passenger jets while charting a path through Brexit and trade war turbulence. This year's sector showpiece event, opening tomorrow, will be buzzing on the back of rapid changes in the industry, as US titan Boeing and European arch rival Airbus vie for superiority in the skies.

Chicago-headquartered Boeing could signal plans for its new midsize airplane (NMA), but reports suggest this could be derailed by the festering global trade war spearheaded by US President Donald Trump.

Boeing recently took control of the commercial business of Brazil's Embraer, while Toulouse-based Airbus bought a majority stake in Canadian peer Bombardier's C Series airliner program.

The pair will continue their head-to-head dogfight at the biennial Farnborough event locked in a battle for lucrative multi-billion-dollar jet orders. Farnborough, southwest of London, is one of the world's largest civilian and defense airshows, along with Paris and Dubai. Visitors from almost 100 countries will flock to the event, which features air displays by civil and defense jets.

London to NY in an hour?

"It's our biggest international show ever," said Gareth Rogers, chief executive of Farnborough International, adding that Chinese participation alone was up 70 percent from 2016. "Everybody is coming to the show," he added, noting that industry leaders, politicians and government officials would also be attending. One key talking point will be the NMA single-aisle commercial jets for long-haul journeys, a sweet spot for plane makers.

Rising demand for various types of passenger planes from emerging economies and the soaring success of no-frills airlines will raise the market's need over the next two decades, Airbus has forecast. The plane maker expects almost 37,400 new aircraft, worth $5.8 trillion, will be required to meet global demand over the next 20 years. That was hiked from its 2017 forecast of 35,000 new jets.

Aviation show to open under Brexit cloud

Airbus has however experienced delivery problems with its new fuel-efficient A320neo jets, and has also faced challenges with the A380 superjumbo-the world's largest civilian airliner-and its over-budget military transporter A400M. Boeing, fresh from striking a deal with Embraer, will issue its global demand outlook on Tuesday. This year's airshow has been billed by organizers as "the return of supersonic", with several companies seeking to flesh out their tentative plans for the first supersonic passenger aircraft since Concorde took its final flight in 2003. US company Boom Supersonic will make its debut presence at Farnborough and hopes to make its new-generation jets in the mid-2020s or later, with the aim of slashing journey times in half. Boeing could meanwhile reveal more details for its "hypersonic" jet concept that could be capable of reaching Mach 5 speed or higher, potentially flying between New York and London in one hour.

In shadow of Brexit

Farnborough is taking place in the shadow of Britain's stalled negotiations to exit the European Union.

Organisers warn that aircraft could stop flying if British Prime Minister Theresa May fails to clinch an adequate Brexit deal with Brussels.

Britain remains on course to leave the European Union on March 29 next year. "Our worst case scenario is genuinely-and it is not alarmist or scare mongering-that aircraft will not fly," said Farnborough International chairman Paul Everitt, who is also head of aerospace, defense and space trade body ADS.

"Aircraft will not fly because on... March 30, I am sitting at an airport anywhere in the world, and they have got a piece of paper saying that this is not a certified European product. This bit comes from the UK. And this bit isn't certified. So the plane does not fly." He added that EU's European Aviation Safety Agency and Britain's Civil Aviation Authority regulators needed to meet and address the matter. Airbus, which employs some 15,000 people in Britain, has warned it would reconsider investments if Britain crashed out with no deal. — AFP

US sanctions seen barring IT platform of insurer Lloyd's for Iran trade

LONDON: New US sanctions are likely to prevent the use of a Lloyd's of London IT platform for any Iran insurance, adding to difficulties for European insurers providing cover for the country. European insurers, reinsurers, brokers and shipping firms have been winding down Iranian business as the United States reimposes sanctions on insurance and reinsurance from Nov. 4 after withdrawing from a nuclear deal with Iran in May. Lloyd's of London and other European insurers provided marine, energy and trade credit cover for Iran after the United States lifted secondary sanctions in January 2016 following a nuclear deal between world powers and Iran reached in 2015. The European Union also lifted sanctions in January 2016.

Lifting secondary sanctions meant European firms could trade with Iran without being penalized by the United States. It also allowed foreign subsidiaries of US firms to trade with Iran.

Lloyd's Chairman Bruce Carnegie-Brown told Reuters the re-imposition of sanctions meant insurers "probably" would not be able to process Iran-related business through the Lloyd's platform, partly owned since last year by US firm DXC.

"You can do it through Lloyd's through other settlement mechanisms outside DXC, it's just more complicated and more expensive to do it that way," he said.

"There is a bit of an evaluation going on about what business opportunities there are, in any event." A Lloyd's spokeswoman said it had advised insurance syndicates "to consider obtaining legal advice before engaging in Iran-related activities, to assess and mitigate their sanctions risk".

DXC provides data processing and other back office services to Lloyd's and other London insurers through two firms, XIS and XCS, that are jointly owned by DXC's British subsidiary Xchanging, Lloyd's and the International Underwriters' Association.

The US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) last month revoked licenses which had allowed foreign subsidiaries of US firms to trade with Iran. "DXC, Xchanging, and our JV (joint venture) partners are evaluating the impact ... on the continued ability of XIS and XCS to process Iran-related premiums and claims, and the timing of processing changes required during the wind-down period," DXC said in an e-mailed statement.

It said a "wind-down" license issued by OFAC at the end of June gave firms until November to phase out their Iran-related activities. "XIS and XCS will issue guidance to the market in the near future," DXC said. Lloyd's insurers and brokers with Iran business included Chaucer, Ed Broking, RFIB and UIB, sources told Reuters. Chaucer, Ed Broking and RFIB declined to comment. UIB did not respond to a request for comment.

Trade disruption

Iran's economy, heavily reliant on its oil industry that Washington wants to shut down with sanctions, needs marine insurance to ensure the smooth flow of maritime trade for both its exports and imports.

Efforts to upgrade Iran's creaking oil infrastructure also require insurance, alongside investment capital. Tehran had faced logistical difficulties until Western sanctions were lifted after the 2015 nuclear deal. Responding to the US decision to withdraw from the nuclear pact, Germany insurer Allianz said in May it planned to wind down its "minimal" amounts of Iran business and French reinsurer Scor said on Friday it would not write new Iran business or renew business.

Other European insurers and reinsurers with Iran business include France's AXA, Germany's Munich Re, Swiss Re and European subsidiaries of US firms Gallagher and PartnerRe, according to sources and company filings. AXA said it had insured shipping and shipments for Iran by non-Iranian parties following the 2015 nuclear deal, but has suspended taking new contracts for such marine insurance.

When asked by Reuters, Swiss Re, Gallagher and PartnerRe said they were assessing the sanctions situation. Munich Re declined to comment. Renewed sanctions on Iranian port operators could also make it "practically impossible for vessels to call at and use Iranian ports", said Andrew Bardot, executive officer of the International Group of P&I Clubs. — Reuters

EU takes anti-Trump trade show to China and Japan

BRUSSELS: The European Union's top officials will meet the leaders of China and Japan next week to boost ties in the face of fears that US President Donald Trump will spark an all-out global trade war. The trip by EU Council President Donald Tusk and Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker includes the signing of a free trade deal with Japan, which was moved from Brussels last week because Japanese premier Shinzo Abe was dealing with deadly floods at home.

Their Asian tour comes as the EU-which, with 28 countries and 500 million people is the world's biggest single market-tries to forge alliances in the face of the protectionism of Trump's "America First" administration. European Commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas said the "landmark" Japan deal was "the biggest ever negotiated by the European Union".

"This agreement will create an open trade zone covering nearly a third of the world's GDP," Schinas added. In China tomorrow, the two leaders will meet with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang to discuss their shared tensions with Washington, having both recently announced new tariffs on US goods in retaliation for measures imposed by Trump.

They are expected to reaffirm their support for the rules-based international order, including the World Trade Organization, which faces unprecedented criticism from Trump's administration. The leaders will also discuss climate change-another area on which the EU is in disagreement with Trump after he pulled out of the Paris climate deal-and nuclear issues in North Korea and Iran, Schinas said.

'Signal to the world'

But the EU and China will have to smooth over existing differences over Beijing's own restrictive market practices including the "dumping" of cheap Chinese imports, especially steel.

Some of those concerns are shared by Washington. The EU recently pushed through measures targeting China that were intended to offset the consequences of granting China so-called market economy status at the WTO, which will make it more difficult to prove and punish illegal trade practices by Beijing. In Tokyo, talks will also focus on presenting a united front against the United States over its tariffs, with the Japanese government having slammed them as "extremely deplorable".

The EU-Japan deal was hailed recently as a "strong signal to the world" against US protectionism by EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom, who is travelling with Juncker and Tusk to Asia. Abe was originally due to come to Brussels to sign the deal last week, but he called off the trip after flooding and landslides in Japan that killed more than 200 people. — AFP

Fuel price riots in Haiti lay bare budget woes

Govt may have to look for alternative means to raise $300m

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Setting a budget is not the easiest exercise for wealthy countries in the best of circumstances. In impoverished Haiti, where proposed fuel price increases sparked deadly looting and arson attacks, it's nearly impossible.

The decision to scrap the price hikes amid the weekend spasm of violence means the government will have to find another way to come up with the $300 million the move would have generated.

It's not an insignificant amount-the total is more than 11 percent of the 2018-2019 budget presented to parliament in June for debate.

Now, the government of President Jovenel Moise has to get creative in a bid to appease all sides-consumers demanding his resignation, politicians with varying interests and the International Monetary Fund, It won't be easy.

The streets of the capital Port-au-Prince were strewn with barricades over the weekend, bringing activity in the chaotic city to a halt. Dozens of shops were looted and burned and cars were set ablaze. At least four people were killed. For motorcycle taxi driver Luckner Michel, the proposed price hikes — 38 percent for gasoline, 47 percent for diesel and 51 percent for kerosene-are simply unworkable.

"Gasoline was already too expensive, and life here is generally too expensive-they are simply trying to kill us," Michel said. "Even if I could pay that much, I would have to hike my fares, and people don't have the means to pay more. So I would be out of business."

Guichard Dore, an aide to Moise, insists "new priorities" for the budget will be set after the fuel price riots. "We have realized that there were not enough resources to address social problems," Dore said. "For years, social financing of the economy has not been assured."

'Revised strategy'

Haiti is desperately poor: around 60 percent of its people live on less than two dollars a day, and they are extremely sensitive to even minor increases in prices of just about anything. In February, Haiti signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, the Washington-based global crisis lender, in which the country committed to carrying out economic and structural reforms to promote growth.

One of those conditions was to eliminate petroleum product subsidies, prompting the doomed price hike proposal. The accord also called on the government to keep inflation under 10 percent. Since 2015, inflation has been running at between 13 and 14 percent annually. And the budget blueprint submitted to the legislature in late June still foresaw a rate of 13.6 percent.

IMF wants gradual approach to end subsidies

On Thursday, the IMF suggested "a more gradual approach" to ending fuel subsidies, paired with "compensatory and mitigating measures to protect the most vulnerable people." "We will continue to support Haiti... as they develop a revised reform strategy," IMF spokesman Gerry Rice said, noting that ending subsidies would free up funds for other programs like education.

How to build a budget

Crafting that revised strategy-and divvying up Haiti's meager budget resources-will be a delicate task. Each year, parliament-which can defy the government-carves out a big slice for itself, at the expense of other institutions. As it stands, the current budget proposal allots $100 million to the two chambers of the legislature-compared to $32.8 million for the judicial branch.

And in a country where more than half of the population is under age 20, the ministry of youth affairs, sports and civic action has to get by on just $16 million.

PORT-AU-PRINCE: In this file photo, Haitian people wait to purchase fuel at a gas station in the commune of Petion Ville in the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince, one of the few gas stations open during the strike to protest the hike in fuel prices. — AFP

The relatively large amount of money going to parliament angers everyday Haitians because lawmakers also receive a variety of subsidies over the course of the year and do not have to report how those funds are spent. More than 200 years after gaining independence from France, Haiti is still ranked by the World Bank as having one of earth's most unjust societies.

Over the weekend, that inequality was cited furiously by protesters demanding the resignation of Moise, who they accused of caring only about those who are well off.

"We are suffering through sheer misery here. We cannot withstand a hit" like the fuel price hikes, said Claudy Altidor, who lives in the Port-au-Prince suburb of Petionville, where many businesses were destroyed in the looting. "People work and work, and in one day, they lose everything. That makes a lot more people poor." — AFP

US lifts ban on suppliers selling to China's ZTE

NEW YORK: The US Department of Commerce on Friday lifted a ban on US companies selling goods to ZTE Corp, allowing China's second-largest telecommunications equipment maker to resume business.

The Commerce Department removed the ban shortly after ZTE deposited $400 million in a US bank escrow account as part of a settlement reached last month. The settlement also included a $1 billion penalty that ZTE paid to the US Treasury in June.

"The department will remain vigilant as we closely monitor ZTE's actions to ensure compliance with all US laws and regulations," Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a statement that described the terms of the deal as the strictest ever imposed in such a case. The terms will allow the department to protect US national security, Ross said. The administration has clashed with lawmakers from its own party over issues related to China, and this was no different. On Friday, Senator Marco Rubio, a Republican, criticized the lifting of the ban.

"ZTE should be put out of business. There is no 'deal' with a state-directed company that the Chinese government and Communist Party uses to spy and steal from us where Americans come out winning," Rubio said in a statement. A photograph circulating among employees around midnight showed ZTE's new chief executive and 10 other managers each giving a thumbs-up to the news, which was flashed on a screen at the company, according to a person familiar with the matter.

The reprieve follows threats by the Trump administration this week to impose 10 percent tariffs on $200 billion of Chinese goods in a trade war.

ZTE did not respond to requests for comment. ZTE, which relies on US components for its smart phones and networking gear, ceased major operations after the ban was ordered in April.

US President Donald Trump tweeted in May that he closed down ZTE and let it reopen, although no agreement had been reached. White House trade adviser Peter Navarro said last month Trump agreed to lift the ban as a goodwill gesture to Chinese President Xi Jinping. — Reuters

In this file photo, the ZTE logo on an office building in Shanghai. Shares in Chinese telecoms equipment maker ZTE surged more than 20 percent in Hong Kong yesterday after the company moved a step closer to having a painful US purchase ban lifted. — AFP

Some US industries could thrive amid trade tensions

NEW YORK: Though the escalating tensions between the United States and several of its trading partners could hurt companies across a broad range of sectors, several industries are poised to withstand them or even thrive, according to US financial services firm Cowen and Company on Friday.

China's recent revisions to tariffs have a clear benefit to luxury retailers, Cowen analysts said in a report. While the country raised import duties on several categories of US goods, it lowered tariffs on apparel, cosmetics, household goods and jewelry. The lower tariffs on jewelry could especially benefit Tiffany & Co, as 16 percent of its sales come from China, Cowen said. Other industries, including banks, restaurants and discount retailers, face relatively minimal impact from the burgeoning trade war and could even benefit under certain conditions, Cowen said.

Banks do not rely directly upon imports and exports, so the biggest risk for the group would be an overall economic slowdown if the trade war were prolonged. In that case, regional and community banks in areas especially hit by tariffs, such as the rural US Midwest, would have the most exposure to risk from an economic slowdown. Conversely, if the White House's stance on trade resulted in fewer tariffs on US goods and stronger intellectual property protections for US companies in China, it could boost the US economy and thereby brighten banks' outlooks.

Restaurants are insulated from tariffs because they source most of their food from within the United States. As with banks, the biggest tariff-related risk for the industry is a general economic slowdown. Ongoing trade disputes have pushed down grain prices, which could lead to increased protein production and ultimately lower prices for poultry and cattle. As a result, quick-service restaurants may cut prices, especially if tariffs begin to hit customers' wallets. That scenario would benefit large chains such as McDonald's Corp and Taco Bell, owned by Yum Brands Inc, but not regional chains such as Sonic Corp or Jack in the Box Inc, Cowen analysts said.

Discount and off-price retailers are also well-positioned as trade tensions ratchet up. Walmart Inc and Costco Wholesale Corp derive more than half of their sales from groceries, which shields them from tariff pressures, Cowen said. Both chains would benefit from shoppers seeking lower prices in the event of an economic downturn. That same scenario would help off-price discretionary retailers such as TJX Companies Inc , Ross Stores Inc and Burlington Stores Inc, according to Cowen. — Reuters

S Korea to raise minimum wage by 11%; group rejects decision

SEOUL: South Korea yesterday decided to raise the minimum wage by 10.9 percent to 8,350 won ($7.40) an hour next year but a small-business group said it would refuse to implement the reform as its members were already grappling with a slowing economy.

South Korea's labor-friendly President Moon Jae-in has pledged to raise the minimum wage by 55 percent to 10,000 won per hour by 2020 as part of efforts to boost consumption and growth.

After a 19-hour-long meeting ending yesterday, the Minimum Wage Commission agreed on the wage increase, which was smaller than this year's 16.4 percent rise, amid worries about weak job growth.

South Korea added a monthly average of 142,000 jobs between January and June this year, the slowest growth seen since the 2008-09 global financial crisis, according to Statistics Korea.

A lobby group representing small business owners called the wage increase a "unilateral decision" and said it would impose a "moratorium" on its implementation.

"We can't accept the decision by the Minimum Wage Commission," the Korea Federation of Micro Enterprise said in a statement. "Small-business owners are at crossroads where they cannot help but choose either business shutdowns or staff cuts," the association said, adding that they were facing a "miserable reality."

It said its members would discuss the possibility of more action. "We may not be able to satisfy both companies and workers, but after a heated debate, we proposed levels that can contribute to improving the income of low-wage workers and alleviate an income cap, without hampering the economy and employment," Ryu Jang-soo, chairman of the commission, said in a statement.

He also said the commission would submit to the government proposals to support small merchants facing difficulties. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development said in a report in May that raising the minimum wage "could also slow employment growth and weaken Korea's competitiveness if not accompanied by productivity gain". Moon, who was elected last year, had made job creation a priority. — Reuters

SEOUL: Korean Air and Asiana Airlines employees protest outside the presidential Blue House in Seoul yesterday. — AFP

Fitch downgrades Turkish debt rating to 'BB,' outlook negative

WASHINGTON: The ratings agency Fitch on Friday downgraded Turkish sovereign debt a notch to 'BB' with a negative outlook, citing inflation and widening current account deficit.

The decision followed S&P's move in May to cut the country debt ratings, likewise amid concerns about Ankara's worsening finances and weakening currency.

Recent actions by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that could weaken central bank independence meant stewardship of the economy could suffer, Fitch said in a statement.

"In Fitch's opinion, economic policy credibility has deteriorated in recent months and initial policy actions following elections in June have heightened uncertainty," Fitch said in a statement.

"This environment will make it hard to engineer a soft landing for the economy."

Fitch said trouble was on the horizon for Turkey's economy. Annual inflation hit a 15-year high last month of 15.4 percent, driven by the falling lira, which has lost 27 percent so far this year.

While the central bank has raised interest rates by five percentage points since April, Fitch forecasts inflation will be double that of other countries in the 'BB' category. The current account deficit is expected to widen to 6.1 percent of GDP this year, but should decline to 4.1 percent next year by the weakening lira, lower oil prices and a growing tourism sector.

And with foreign investment at a low ebb, the government will have to resort to borrowing to finance the budget deficit, which is expected to drive net external debt to 35 percent of GDP by year end.

"Turkey's large gross external financing requirement leaves it vulnerable to shocks," the agency said, estimating external borrowing needs at $299 billion for 2018. Meanwhile, the central bank's credibility was "damaged" after Erdogan suggested his government could take a greater role in setting monetary policy.

"Subsequent amendments to the central bank's articles of association appear to strengthen the president's influence, notably over key appointments," Fitch said. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.395594	0.409494
Czech Korune	0.005683	0.014983
Danish Krone	0.043484	0.048484
Euro	0. 348122	0.361822
Georgian Lari	0.139562	0.139662
Hungarian 0.001144	0.001334	
Norwegian Krone	0.033382	0.038582
Romanian Leu	0.065001	0.081851
Russian ruble	0.004889	0.004889
Slovakia	0.009060	0.019060
Swedish Krona	0.030198	0.035198
Swiss Franc	0.297153	0.308153
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.217775	0.229775
New Zealand Dollar	0.199787	0.209287
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.225655	0.234655
US Dollars	0.299450	0.304750
US Dollars Mint	0.299950	0.304750
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003125	0.003926
Chinese Yuan	0.044007	0.047507
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036927	0.039677
Indian Rupee	0.003890	0.004662
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002618	0.002798
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.071524	0.077524
Nepalese Rupee	0.002624	0.002964
Pakistan Rupee	0.001864	0.002634
Philippine Peso	0.005501	0.005801
Singapore Dollar	0.217488	0.227488
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001610	0.002190
Taiwan	0.010416	0.010595
Thai Baht	0.008814	0.009364
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.789964	0.806464
Egyptian Pound	0.014332	0.020060
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000197	0.000257
Jordanian Dinar	0.423836	0.432836
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020565	0.044565
Omani Riyal	0.782123	0.787803
Qatar Riyal	0.079088	0.084028
Saudi Riyal	0.079880	0.081180
Syrian Pound	0.001287	0.001507
Tunisian Dinar	0.111034	0.119034
Turkish Lira	0.057130	0.067430
UAE Dirhams	0.081220	0.082920
Yemeni Riyal	0.000987	0.001067

US banks see mixed profits, little trade war hit so far

JP Morgan sees unpredictable outcomes from trade frictions

NEW YORK: Clients of giant US banks are increasingly nervous about growing trade tensions, but are not yet significantly curtailing business activity due to the uncertainty, banks said Friday after reporting mixed earnings. JPMorgan Chase chief executive Jamie Dimon cautioned that "There are unpredictable outcomes when you start skirmishes like this with multiple countries." "It's a worry," he told reporters in a conference call, but "I don't know if I'd use the word 'major' yet."

Citigroup chief financial officer John Gerspach agreed with his counterparts that the concerns are not yet driving business decisions. "When you get into this kind of rhetoric, it does impact sentiment," he said. "It's going to slow down decision making in some cases, but that hasn't translated yet into anything we've seen." The comments came as the two major US banks reported earnings that easily topped analyst expectations, in contrast to slumping Wells Fargo which badly underperformed forecasts.

The banks are among the first major companies to report results in what is expected to be a strong second-quarter earnings season thanks to US tax cuts and a humming American economy. However, a series of trade battles launched by US President Donald Trump against key trading partners, including China and the European Union, have clouded the overall business outlook. Another worry particular to bank stocks is whether the benefits from higher Federal Reserve interest rates are ebbing. Higher interest rates boost bank profits by allowing them to charge more for loans. However, as rates continue to rise, banks also must pay more to depositors. A note from S&P Global credit analyst Brendan Browne this week warned that the gains for banks from higher interest rates "are likely to diminish, because we expect deposit rates to rise more materially over the next year."

Banks will need to sweeten the incentives for depositors to compete with improved rates for certificates of deposit and money market mutual funds, Browne said in an interview.

JPMorgan, the biggest US bank by assets, reported an 18.3 percent surge in net income compared to the year-ago period to $8.3 billion. Revenues came in at $28.4 billion, up 6.5 percent. Highlights included increases in net interest income following two Fed rate hikes this year, and a rise in overall loans compared with the year-ago period, a sign of strengthening economic conditions.

More regional trade?

Citigroup profits jumped 16 percent in the second quarter to $4.5 billion due to overall loan growth and lower tax payments. Both main divisions, global consumer banking and institutional client services, had higher profits.

Revenues came in at $18.5 billion, up two percent. Gerspach said Citigroup has seen an uptick in activity within Asia that could pick up further if the US-China clash worsens. "If it does emerge that there is some slowdown in trade between China and the US, what we are seeing is that there is growth in trade flows elsewhere in the world," he said. "In particular, we're seeing a lot of growth in trade flows just in the Asia corridor."

Citigroup has hired additional staff for China desks in India and South Korea, Gerspach said. The big laggard was Wells Fargo, which still has not completely found its footing following a fake accounts scandal that surfaced in 2016, prompting numerous fines, government probes and lawsuits. Net income fell 11.4 percent to $5.2 billion, and there was a drop in overall deposits and loans.

On the positive side, the company notched an increase in net interest income, indicating it also benefited from higher interest rates. Wells Fargo has replaced key executives, revamped some pay incentive policies to improve governance, and spent on marketing to emphasize these improvements. "During the second quarter we continued to transform Wells Fargo into a better, stronger company for our customers, team members, communities and shareholders," said Wells Fargo chief executive Tim Sloan. Shares of JPMorgan finished down 0.5 percent, while Citigroup dropped 2.2 percent and Wells Fargo 1.2 percent. — AFP

TIPTON, IA: Corn and soybeans grow on a farm near Tipton, Iowa. Farmers in Iowa and the rest of the country, who are already faced with decade-low profits, are bracing for the impact a trade war with China may have on their bottom line going forward. — AFP

Warba Bank announces 5 winners of 'Al-Sunbula' draw

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, Kuwait's best investment bank and corporate consultancy firm, organized in presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and employees of the Bank, the 24th weekly draw for Al-Sunbula Account.

The lucky 5 winners who received KD 1,000 each are: Saud Abdullah Saud Al-Mutairi, Helail Sanat Helail Al-Harbi, Mohammad Arbeed Jluwi Al-Arbeed, Ali Ahmad Ali Abu Dames and Meshal Ebdah Hazzaa Al-Mutairi.

Al-Sunbula Account is the perfect choice for all those who wish to save money and achieve steady incomes while simultaneously have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year.

Due to the high traffic towards this account, for its offerings of unparalleled opportunities, Warba Bank has worked on enhancing the Al-Sunbula account to grant customers more benefits. Such enhancements include increasing the number of winners and the frequency of the draws. Now, on every Thursday the bank draws 5 weekly winners of KD 1,000 each.

In addition, the bank continues its monthly draws held on the first Thursday of every month, with cash prizes of KD 30,000 divided amongst 4 winners: two winners of KD 10,000 each, and two winners of KD 5,000.

The new development of Al-Sunbula account raised the total number of winners to 24, and the total amount of prizes to KD 50K instead of KD 30K.

As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against every KD 10. It is noteworthy, that Warba Bank has recently launched the Al-Sunbula Fixed Deposit, which provides depositors with high returns reaching up to 3 percent, as well as monthly profit opportunities in Al-Sunbula Account draws.

Furthermore, Warba Bank has launched its latest Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request opening the Sunbula account in an easy electronic manner through the Bank's website without having to visit any of the Bank's branches, by following five simple steps that might take up to five minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, and the bank will receive, process and pass the new application for approval through the new and unique automated system used to implement this service.

The staff will then contact the client to determine the appropriate time to visit in order to obtain the required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

US Fed sees tax cuts boosting spending, offsetting oil rise

WASHINGTON: The US tax cuts will boost business and consumer spending this year, offsetting the hit to individual wallets from rising fuel prices, the Federal Reserve said Friday. The increase in oil prices also should attract more investment to the sector, which will boost growth, according to the Fed. In its semi-annual report to Congress, the Fed was upbeat about the US economy and saw few concerns about inflation but noted the risk to the global economy from "an intensification of trade tensions." US central bankers have for months flagged the rising concerns among businesses nationwide over the aggressive trade policies pursued by President Donald Trump. They have cautioned that such policies could pose a risk to US growth.

Less of a drag

Despite the rapid increase in oil prices over the past year, the Fed said the impact on economic growth was less than it once was. "Although higher oil prices are likely to restrain household consumption in the United States, much of the negative effect on GDP from lower consumer spending is likely to be offset by increased production and investment in the growing US oil sector," the report said.

"Consequently, higher oil prices now imply much less of a net overall drag on the economy than they did in the past." And the tax cuts have boosted disposable income and "should lead to increased private consumption and investment," which will support growth. US GDP slowed in the first three months of the year but is expected to have expanded by as much as four percent in the second quarter. Fed Chair Jay Powell is set to testify before Congress on Tuesday and Wednesday to answer questions about the state of the economy and how the central bank views the path of interest rates. — AFP

This file photo shows a view of the US Federal Reserve in Washington, DC. — AFP

S&P 500 at 5-month high, but banks weigh after results

NEW YORK: US stocks rose slightly on Friday, putting the S&P 500 at its highest closing level in more than five months, as gains in industrials and other areas offset a drop in financials after results from three of the big banks mostly disappointed.

The industrial sector gained 0.6 percent, with Boeing Co, Caterpillar Inc and 3M Co all rose in the absence of any trade rhetoric overnight. Investors were optimistic ahead of what is expected to be a strong second-quarter US earnings season, although reports on Friday from three of the biggest Wall Street banks failed to enthuse. "In spite of the disappointment from the financials, which have been and continue to be a laggard ... there's still relative strength," said Michael James, managing director of equity trading at Wedbush Securities in Los Angeles. Earnings "expectations are certainly elevated from where they were a month ago, but if companies do deliver in general, the market as a whole will continue to move higher," he said. Citigroup Inc slid 2.2 percent, the most among financials, after its revenue fell short of estimates due to lower debt underwriting. Wells Fargo & Co dipped 1.2 percent after its profit fell more than expected as lending slowed and costs rose. JPMorgan Chase & Co shares were down 0.5 percent although the bank's profit beat estimates. The financial index fell 0.5 percent. — Reuters

Ooredoo continues sponsorship of Proteges Youth Development program

8th generation of students sponsored on third year

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Ooredoo is continuing its sponsorship of The Proteges youth development program for the third consecutive year by sponsoring the 8th generation of students.

The program focuses on developing and training a cohort of 30 students between the ages of 16 to 20.

Ooredoo Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Al-Ayoub told Kuwait Times that Ooredoo is keen to deliver good values to society through ideas and projects that are represented by the students. "We are happy to have been part of the graduation of a number of ambitious young people through our participation in this program and witnessed that they are ready to embark on their own individual journey with confidence."

He added that Ooredoo launched a 24-hour challenge. "We started the 24 challenge. The challenge is about gathering the students to develop their ideas to submit them to the committee to decide who will win. Through the challenge, the students are required to deliver creative ideas to improve Ooredoo's applications. We will see what will they present to us and we will see if the idea is applicable." Ayoub noted that later when the students will go on a trip, Ooredoo Kuwait will provide SIM cards with roaming services to help them connect with their families and friends during the trip.

Yarub Bourahmah, director, producer and media consultant, said: "I'm the mentor and one of the founders of the Proteges program. Today we are holding the 24 challenge to develop the students, where they were divided into five groups. They stayed at Ooredoo's headquarters for 24 hours to think creatively about the ideas they will suggest."

Tariq Al-Bedah

Yarub Bourahmah

KUWAIT: Mijbil Al-Ayoub addresses the students. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

Bourahmah added that this year's program is scheduled to include a visit to Swansea in the United Kingdom for 14 days. To further support the students, the trip will include several workshops, lectures and visits by people who work in different fields such as history, business, art and many more to give them the skills they need. "We already held workshops about hidden media messages and critical thinking last week and over the past weeks, we have been providing skills to help students improve their skills in developing plans for proposals," he said.

Tariq Al-Bedah, graduate of the 5th generation of the Proteges, said that he went through a lot of processes to become a mentor assistant. "My main goal is to assist mentors in the program, and connect with the students on the emotional level where I let them know that I will be there for them to help. They feel more comfortable to communicate with someone of the same age to help them in what they need," he said. "I also assist in logistics - whenever there is an event, we make sure that everything is running smoothly. I pass on my experience to students, where it is good to know that someone with them has passed the same challenge and realize that it will help candidates to connect and develop and give them an amazing experience for later," Bedah added.

Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons launches the biggest campaign on ACDelco batteries

KUWAIT: Yusuf Ahmad Alghanim & Sons announced its biggest offer on ACDelco batteries which includes thousands of gifts. With every purchase, customers will get a scratch and win coupon entitling them to win an IPhone X, Galaxy S9, Lenovo tab 4, Wansa TVs, X-cite vouchers, and many other rewarding prizes only from ACDelco Alghanim and till end of October 2018, keeping in mind that everyone is a winner!.

Customers today can purchase the best battery In the Middle East, from any of Yusuf Ahmad Alghanim Spare parts retail outlets in Shuwaikh, Canada Dry Street, Sharq and Fahaheel, in addition to Bumper to Bumper outlets and more than 500 stores and puncture shops to cover most of the areas in Kuwait. Also, it's worth mentioning that customers can easily identify ACDelco Alghanim batteries from the yellow sticker that is placed at the battery box in all participating shops.

Constantly striving to deliver the best-in-class car care, ACDelco Alghanim's highly trained professional staff relies on premium ACDelco batteries, to ensure that the quality of the work is never compromised. Power your journey today with ACDelco Alghanim batteries, designed, tested, and manufactured for your specific vehicle

When reliable starting power is a priority, ACDelco Batteries are the answer. Whether the application is automotive, industrial, marine or recreational, ACDelco has a battery to meet virtually any need. Field-proven and backed with outstanding limited warranty coverage; ACDelco Batteries set the standard for performance.

Bayan weekly market report

Boursa Kuwait equities rally on renewed buying interest

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the green zone. The Premier Market Index closed at 5,344.48 points, up by 3.17 percent, the Main Market Index increased by 1.15 percent after closing at 4,975.74 points, and the All-Share Index closed at 5,213.42 points up by 2.47 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover increased by 37.58 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching around KD 35.83 million, whereas trading volume average was about 191.06 million shares, recording an increase of 66.15 percent.

Boursa Kuwait was able to hold in the green zone for the third consecutive week, and its three indices were able to record noticeable improvement in the performance during the last week, however at a slower pace than the previous week, compensating most of its losses recorded since the beginning of the market development, whereas it ended last week's trading with a grouped gain supported by the heavy purchasing activity witnessed by the banks and operational stocks during most of the daily session, in addition to the movement witnessed by some government and local portfolios, and the relative movement on some small-cap and low priced and promising stocks, amid a general state of optimism that over controlled the traders after some banks' disclosures of its fiscal results for the first half of the current year which came beyond expectations, and the relative increase in the oil prices, in addition to the increase in the cash liquidity levels and the trading activity which reached high levels that never reached since the market segmentation, as the trading value recorded in one session of the last week an increase of 49.57 percent reaching around KD 49.08 million, and the traded stocks volume recorded in the same session a growth of 35.02 percent reaching 262,795,672 stock.

Also, the positive performance of the Boursa Kuwait continued during the last week, however it contained correction movements and profit collection operations during some sessions, in light of a general state of optimism among traders amid a watch state for the listed companies results for the first half of the current year, renewing hope in the Banks sector, especially after the growth announced by some banks during the last week, with expectations that the other listed banks will disclose similar results.

Moreover, Boursa Kuwait recorded weekly gains of around KD 700 million, as its market capitalization reached by the end of last week about KD 28.70 billion, up by 2.50 percent of its previous week level that was around KD 28 billion. The Boursa market cap gains since the beginning of market segmentation reached approximately KD 842.5 million, up by 3.02 percent. (Note: The market cap of the listed companies in the market is calculated based on the weighted average number of outstanding shares as per the latest available official financial statements).

Furthermore, the leading and operational stocks continued to over control the trading activity in the market during the last week, especially the Banks' stocks which acquired most of the traded cash liquidity during the last week, whereas the Banks sector trading value reached about KD 110.7 million, or 61 percent of the total market liquidity during the week which was around KD 179.14 million.

Moreover, last week witnessed trading over 149 stock out of 174 listed stock in the Market, where prices of 98 stock increased against prices of 38 stock decreased, and prices of 38 stock remained at no change.

Sectors' Indices

Ten of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone, and two recorded declines. Last week's highest gainer was the Banks sector, achieving 3.70 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,084.82 points. The Real Estate sector came in the second place, as its index closed at 995.69 points recording 2.65 percent increase. The Basic Materials sector came in third as its index achieved 2.38 percent growth, ending the week at 1,097.43 points.

On the other hand, the Health Care sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 0.51 percent to end the week's activity at 993.40 points, The Consumer Goods sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 0.43 percent, closing at 924.69 points.

Sectors' Activity

The Banks sector dominated a total trade volume of around 297.80 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 31.17 percent of the total market trading volume. The Financial Services sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 26.31 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 251.38 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 110.70 million or 61.80 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 19.96 million representing 11.14 percent of the total market trading value.

—Prepared by the Studies & Research Department

KIB celebrates successful closing of $250m syndicated Murabaha

KUWAIT: KIB held an exclusive ceremony to mark the occasion of the Bank's successful closing of a $250 million 3-year syndicated Murabaha financing facility. This landmark financing was concluded with a consortium of international and local banks viz; Standard Chartered Bank, First Abu Dhabi Bank, National Bank of Kuwait, Kuwait Finance House and Boubyan Bank.

Held at the Sheraton Hotel in Kuwait City, the event was an opportunity to express KIB's appreciation to the banks and the law firms who contributed in achieveing this remarkable feat. The event was attended by KIB's top management led by Mohamed Said El Saka, Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Acting Chief Executive Officer.

On this occasion, El Saka, said: "The competitive terms of this financing is a clear indication of the high confidence, strong reputation and ratings that KIB enjoys in the banking industry across the region. The success of this innovative syndication which was significantly oversubscribed is a definite endorsement of KIB's strong track record, financial position and growth prospects." He also added: "This new facility will help KIB continue pursuing its strategic objectives to strengthen and confirm the Bank's position as a leading Islamic bank in Kuwait. We thank all the banks who participated in the deal along with other advisors for their support and look forward to further strengthening our relationship in the future."

CBK wins excellence award from Mastercard

KUWAIT: The leading e-payment company; Mastercard recently awarded the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) an excellence trophy in appreciation of its outstanding performance in terms of marketing Mastercard World cards in Kuwait in 2017.

In this regard, a delegation from Mastercard visited CBK headquarters where they were received by CBK's retail banking devising general manager, Hameed Ibrahim Salman, the head of CBK's marketing and administrative data systems section, Rami Al-Meqdad and the Cards Center manager, Abdul Aziz Malak.

Speaking on the occasion, Salman stressed that the awarding proves the success of CBK's strategies on promoting and marketing its cards and banking services. He added that CBK and British Airways cards come in three types; Mastercard World, Mastercard Platinum and pre-paid Mastercard.

CBK receives winners of 'Your Trip Your Way' campaign

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently received the winners of the first draw in the 'Your Trip Your Way' campaign. The winners were received by CBK's cards center manager, Abdul Aziz Malak who congratulated the winners and presented their travel vouchers and cash.

Notably, the campaign includes all CBK credit, debit and prepaid cardholders. Every KD 10 spent to settle purchases inside Kuwait using credit cards, gives customers one chance to enter the monthly and the final draws. Every KD 10 spent to settle purchases outside Kuwait using debit, prepaid or credit cards, gives customers three chances to enter the monthly and the final draws.

Brazil is taking the fight to fake news in the classroom

'The aim is to teach students to identify fake news'

SAO PAULO: Brazil has taken a stand against the explosion of "fake news" stories swamping the internet by making media analysis studies compulsory for schoolchildren. Around the world, debates proliferate about the problem of unfettered information flooding social media, uploaded by people with no consideration for journalist ethics, impartiality or even the truth. Of particular concern is the effect such misinformation can have on those most impressionable.

"The aim is to teach students to identify fake news, and now it's part of the national curriculum because the country has decided it's necessary," said Leandro Beguoci, editorial director at Brazilian education specialists Nova Escola. "The proliferation of social media networks have created an urgent situation in this respect," Beguoci said.

Media analysis studies became compulsory in December 2017, but have been offered alongside traditional subjects like mathematics and history for years in some Brazilian schools. Kayo Rodrigues, 14, said the Brazilian press is not perfect, but plays a vital role in combating fake news "because not everyone has the internet or the tools to check facts." She enrolled in the "Young Press" program launched six years ago in the Casa Blanca public school in Sao Paulo. At Casa Blanca, teachers Lucilene Varandas and Hildenor Gomes do Santos ensure their students, aged eight to 14, know not to take everything they watch or read at face value.

'Think about clicks'

"When I receive a piece of information, I look for it on the internet and ask myself if it's true," said Helena Vital, 11, whose parents are teachers. She said the program has taught her to view the media from a different perspective. "Now I know that things aren't so bad, the whole country isn't going to collapse," added Vital, who said that consuming news without questioning it "leaves people sad" and that "there are many negative things that aren't true."

The children do not have the tools to systematically check everything, but "they look at the articles, who wrote them, who could be interested in them and where they're published, which are all ways of questioning the information," said Varandas, who is looking to create partnerships with fact-checking agencies to expand the children's education.

The measures seem to be working despite the children's young age. "All it takes is one click to share false news; this project teaches me to think about my clicks," said Rodrigues, daughter of a shopkeeper and a manicurist. The students enrolled in "Young Press" have also been analyzing local media stories about the project, and even found inaccuracies.

AFP was told its own coverage would be equally scrutinized. With a population of almost 208 million people, Brazil has a massive social media presence: 120 million WhatsApp users, more than 100 million people on Facebook and another 50 million signed up to Instagram. "In the past, kids were taught by their parents, but now that happens through a variety of means, something which alters the role of the school," said Beguoci, a trained journalist. "What's so interesting in Brazil is that media and technological literacy are considered as important as classical literacy."

'Digital age natives'

Beguoci denies that information analysis is an additional burden on the education system, saying it rather offers "a context that can improve education."

"We're talking about things that are part of the student's world," he said. For Veronica Martins Cannata, who coordinates technology and communication studies at the private Dante Alighieri school, children have their own responsibility when it comes to fake news.

"Technology has facilitated communication, but the time has come to question its content," she said. "As natives of the digital age, children and teenagers must take the responsibility to analyze that content before reproducing it." Dante Alighieri has been analyzing media content for 11 years and has also brought the fight against fake news into the classroom.

Children are born "with ingenuity," but at school they acquire "a critical eye and no longer consume information in the same way," said Martins Cannata. Such media analysis studies will not necessarily create a new generation of wannabe reporters, though. Vital, for one, is suspicious about the press that "is sometimes flawed in its credibility." Asked if she would like to one day become a journalist, Vital said: "I prefer swimming!" — AFP

SAU PAULO: Students of Unified Educational Centers (CEU) attend a lesson on 'Fake News: access, security and veracity of information'. — AFP

Half of Americans trying to lose weight: Study

WASHINGTON: Half of the adults in the United States are trying to lose weight, according to a study published Thursday, with more women than men seeking to shed a few pounds. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, conducted from 2013 through 2016, found that 49.1 percent of Americans aged 20 and older had tried to lose weight in the last 12 months.

A higher percentage of women — 56 percent-had tried to lose weight than men — 42 percent. Nearly six out of 10 women between the age of 40 and 59 years old said they had tried to lose weight. Nearly 40 percent of the US population was considered obese in 2015-2016, a figure which rises to 70 percent if it includes those considered overweight. The survey found that it was not only people who were overweight who were looking to lose pounds. One-fourth of those surveyed who were of normal weight or even underweight had sought to slim down. The study found that the most common methods of losing weight were exercising and eating less food. — AFP

First space tourist flights could come in 2019

WASHINGTON: The two companies leading the pack in the pursuit of space tourism say they are just months away from their first out-of-this-world passenger flights-though neither has set a firm date. Virgin Galactic, founded by British billionaire Richard Branson, and Blue Origin, by Amazon creator Jeff Bezos, are racing to be the first to finish their tests-with both companies using radically different technology.

Moments of weightlessness

Neither Virgin nor Blue Origin's passengers will find themselves orbiting the Earth: instead, their weightless experience will last just minutes. It's an offering far different from the first space tourists, who paid tens of millions of dollars to travel to the International Space Station (ISS) in the 2000s.

Having paid for a much cheaper ticket-costing $250,000 with Virgin, as yet unknown with Blue Origin-the new round of space tourists will be propelled dozens of miles into the atmosphere, before coming back down to Earth. By comparison, the ISS is in orbit 250 miles (400 kilometers) from our planet. The goal is to approach or pass through the imaginary line marking where space begins-either the Karman line, at 100 kilometers or 62 miles, or the 50-mile boundary recognized by the US Air Force. At this altitude, the sky looks dark and the curvature of the earth can be seen clearly.

Virgin Galactic

With Virgin Galactic, six passengers and two pilots are boarded onto SpaceShipTwo VSS Unity, which resembles a private jet. The VSS Unity will be attached to a carrier spacecraft-the WhiteKnightTwo-from which it will then detach at around 49,000 feet (15,000 meters.) Once released, the spaceship will fire up its rocket, and head for the sky.

Then, the passengers will float in zero-gravity for several minutes, before coming back to Earth. The descent is slowed down by a "feathering" system that sees the spacecraft's tail pivot, as if arching, before returning to normal and gliding to land at Virgin's "spaceport" in the New Mexico desert. In total, the mission lasts between 90 minutes and two hours. During a May 29 test in California's Mojave desert, the spaceship reached an altitude of 21 miles, heading for space. In October 2014, the Virgin spaceship broke down in flight due to a piloting error, killing one of two pilots on board. The tests later resumed with a new craft. The company has now also reached a deal to open a second "spaceport" at Italy's Tarente-Grottaglie airport, in the south of the country. Branson in May told BBC Radio 4 that he hoped to himself be one of the first passengers in the next 12 months. About 650 people make up the rest of the waiting list, Virgin told AFP.

Blue Origin

Blue Origin, meanwhile, has developed a system closer to the traditional rocket: the New Shepard. On this journey, six passengers take their place in a "capsule" fixed to the top of a 60-foot-long rocket. After launching, it detaches and continues its trajectory several miles toward the sky. During an April 29 test, the capsule made it 66 miles.

After a few minutes of weightlessness, during which passengers can take in the view through large windows, the capsule gradually falls back to earth with three large parachutes and retro-rockets used to slow the spacecraft. From take-off to landing, the flight took 10 minutes during the latest test. Until now, tests have only been carried out using dummies at Blue Origin's West Texas site.

But one of its directors, Rob Meyerson, said in June the first human tests would come "soon." Meanwhile, another company official, Yu Matsutomi, said during a conference Wednesday that the first tests with passengers would take place "at the end of this year," according to Space News.

What's next?

SpaceX and Boeing are developing their own capsules to transport NASA astronauts, most likely in 2020, after delays-a significant investment that the companies will likely make up for by offering private passenger flights.

"If you're looking to go to space, you'll have quadruple the menu of options that you ever had before," Phil Larson, assistant dean at the University of Colorado, Boulder's College of Engineering and Applied Science, told AFP. Longer term, the Russian firm that manufactures Soyuz rockets is studying the possibility of taking tourists back to the ISS. And a US start-up called Orion Span announced earlier this year it hopes to place a luxury space hotel into orbit within a few years-but the project is still in its early stages. — AFP

This December 3, 2016 handout photograph obtained courtesy of Virgin Galactic shows the Virgin Spaceship (VSS) Unity as it touches down after flying freely for the first time after being released from Virgin Mothership Eve (VMS Eve) in the Mojave Desert, California. — AFP

Online battles for the truth

PARIS: False information is saturating political debate worldwide and undermining an already weak level of trust in the media and institutions, spreading further than ever on powerful social networks. US President Donald Trump has popularized the term "fake news", using it mainly as an accusation leveled at the media, and it is increasingly used by politicians from Spain to China, Myanmar or Russia. "Fake news" has been generalized to mean anything from a mistake to a parody or a deliberate misinterpretation of facts. At the same time, the proliferation of false online information is increasingly visible in attempts to manipulate elections, notoriously surrounding Trump's 2016 victory.

Misinformation

Nearly two years after Trump's shock win, debate is still raging on the impact of "fake news" on the presidential campaign. The build-up saw numerous examples of hoaxes and false news stories-one about Hillary Clinton's alleged links to a child sex ring, another about the Pope purportedly endorsing Trump-which were shared massively and some believe could have swung votes to tip Trump to victory.

Misinformation had "a significant impact" on voting decisions, according to Ohio State University researchers, who questioned voters about whether they believed certain false stories. The researchers said it was impossible to prove that false information had changed the course of the election but noted it would have required a change in just 0.6 percent of voters, or 77,744 people, in three key states, to alter the electoral college outcome.

Since the election, Trump has denounced as "fake news" any information that displeases him while his aides have offered a mixture of truth and distortions, sometimes described as "alternative facts." This has hurt the credibility of the US news media and led some to describe the current period as a "post-truth era"-an age without a shared reality. "The truth is no longer seen as important," said John Huxford of Illinois State University, whose research focuses on false information, adding that "lies and fabrication even seem to bolster one's reputation and political prowess among their core supporters."

Eroding trust

In 2018, the average level of trust in the news, across 37 countries, remained relatively stable at 44 percent, according to a poll by YouGov for the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. But Reuters Institute research associate Nic Newman warned in text accompanying the report: "Our data show that consumer trust in news remains worryingly low in most countries, often linked to high levels of media polarisation, and the perception of undue political influence."

This is exacerbated by the spread of false information by authority figures. In some countries this can go far. For example in Ukraine, where authorities staged the death of Russian journalist Arkady Babchenko at the end of May. Kiev said the move was justified to foil a real plot to assassinate Babchenko. The staging, broadcast in good faith by media worldwide, "is a godsend for paranoid people and conspiracy theorists. At a time when confidence in news is so low, a state playing with the truth in this way makes things even more complicated," said Christophe Deloire, secretary general of journalism watchdog Reporters Without Borders.

Social networks in crisis

Many see Facebook as being the main vehicle for spreading false information in recent years. The Cambridge Analytica public relations disaster, in which Facebook admitted that up to 87 million users may have had their data hijacked by the British consultancy firm, came on top of widespread criticism of the social network's propensity to spread and accentuate large amounts of completely false information.

In the US, many Facebook accounts and private pages that were managed by the Internet Research Agency, a Russia-based "troll farm", were targeted by Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Trump's campaign links with Russia. Facebook acknowledged on July 3 that it was facing multiple inquiries from US and British regulators about the Cambridge Analytica user data scandal, after its boss Mark Zuckerberg was grilled by the European Parliament and the US Congress earlier this year.

Under growing pressure, the US giant in 2018 stepped up efforts to communicate and improve technology for tackling false information. A third-party fact-checking programme, started in December 2016, now has more than 25 partners in 14 countries including Argentina, the US, the Philippines and Indonesia. It aims to "identify potentially false stories" circulating on Facebook and send them to fact-checkers to review. If an article is rated as false, it appears lower in the platform's News Feed and reduces "future views by over 80 percent on average".

One country where Facebook has invested in the battle against false information is Brazil, where there was a giant truckers' strike last May. "While the strike was ongoing, a lot of audio was recorded with a lot of false information saying, for example, that in Rio it was impossible to find meat," Cristina Tardaguila, founder of the Brazilian Agencia Lupa fact-checking organisation. "There was audio recorded by people supposedly connected to the organisation of the strike, but they were not."

As in a growing number of countries, most of the messages during the strike were not spread on Facebook, but on WhatsApp, a messaging service with more than one billion global users, owned by Facebook. The rise in the use of messaging apps for news was noted in the YouGov report, which said that WhatsApp was now used for news by around half of the sample of online users in Malaysia and Brazil and by around a third in Spain and Turkey. "WhatsApp will be the platform of the fakes during the election," Tardaguila said, referring to Brazil's presidential polls in October. — AFP

Virtual whale ride helps ease fear of heights: Study

PARIS: People who had lived with a fear of heights for decades became less afraid after virtual reality (VR) therapy that saw them riding a flying whale, researchers said recently. A specialized team that included psychologists and IT experts put confirmed acrophobes through their paces in a series of life-like VR simulations, after which all reported "a reduction in fear", they announced.

VR-based treatments, the team concluded, "have the potential to greatly increase treatment provision for mental health disorders." With a virtual "coach" to guide people through treatment, the new method could offer a low-cost way of providing care to people who cannot afford or access a face-to-face therapist. The VR coach uses the recorded voice of an actor. Fear of heights, the most common phobia, affects one in five people at some point of their lives, according to researchers who published their findings in The Lancet Psychiatry medical journal. Most never receive treatment.

For the latest study, the team recruited 100 volunteers. Half were given VR treatment and the other half not, to allow for comparison. This was the first VR phobia treatment not to require the presence of a real-life therapist, said the team. "We designed the treatment to be as imaginative, entertaining and easy to navigate as possible," explained study leader Daniel Freeman of the University of Oxford's psychiatry department.

Wearing goggles and tactile gloves while standing safely on firm ground, patients moved around a 3-D world centered in the massive atrium of a computerized, ten-storey office building. The pre-recorded, 30-minute program sessions ran automatically, with the virtual coach explaining what the participants must do. Tasks included having to cross a rickety bridge, rescue a cat from a tree, perform tasks near the edge of a balcony, and ride a flying whale. The outcome after several sessions exceeded the researchers' expectations. In self-reported feedback, "over three-quarters of the participants receiving the VR treatments showed at least a halving of their fear of heights," said Freeman. — AFP

Canada rebuffs tobacco firm in big damages suit

OTTAWA: US cigarette maker Philip Morris suffered a setback Friday in a long-running suit when Canada's Supreme Court denied it access to personal data on people suffering from tobacco-related diseases. Since 2001, British Columbia province has been fighting a legal battle against 14 tobacco companies-including Rothmans, RJ Reynolds and Philip Morris-seeking reimbursement for the costs of providing health care for people suffering from such illnesses. The provincial appeals court had upheld a lower-court decision siding with Philip Morris's argument that access to the personal data of affected patients was critical to the company's ability to defend itself. Philip Morris sought access to databases regarding patients in British Columbia from 1991 to 2011, including on their medical costs and prescription drug use, the Supreme Court said in a judgment seen by AFP.

The nine high-court justices voted unanimously to overturn the judgments of the two lower courts. Justice Russell Brown, writing for the court, said the case had not reached the point where production of the documents was necessary. Philip Morris's expressions of concern about "trial fairness," Brown added, "are premature." The ruling will have an impact far beyond British Columbia, because other Canadian provinces have filed identical lawsuits against the tobacco companies. Together, the provincial governments are seeking Can$120 billion ($91 billion) from cigarette makers, according to Canadian media reports. Rob Cunningham, a lawyer with the Canadian Cancer Society, welcomed Friday's ruling as an important step in keeping the legal process moving. "The objective of the tobacco industry is to delay the start of this trial," he said. "They don't want to have to pay tens of billions of dollars in damages." — AFP

CLINIC PAGE

Kuwait Times
248 33 199

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

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- Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
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- Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

@Malhajry
Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

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

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:
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- Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- Referee reviewer of International journal of Dermatology.

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Head of Cardiology departmenta
at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
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- Laparoscopic mini bypass
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Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:
- American Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of American College of Surgery
- Canadian Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- American Board of Colo – Rectal Surgery
- American Board of Surgical Critical Care

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

مستشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555
daralshifa
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

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

Academic Certificates – Training
- Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- (IFSO) member .
- Faculty member of (BEST).
- Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

Scope of clinical Practice.
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- Gallbladder stones surgeries.
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- G.I. surgeries.
- Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- Anal surgeries.

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

LOYAC launches KON Social Entrepreneurship Program

For the third consecutive year and in collaboration with Babson College-Boston, USA, LOYAC launched its 'KON' program for social entrepreneurship, sponsored by NBK, Zain Telecom, Agility and its subsidiary United Projects for Aviation Services Company (UPAC).

Eman Al-Omar, KON's program leader, stated that the six-week program targets young adults between the ages of 12 through 16, it encourages the participants to transform their ideas into action, aiming to develop responsible business solutions to our community's most pressing challenges. The KON program is an intensive curriculum where the trainees will receive a certificate accredited by Babson College.

Al-Omar added that the students experience three phases during the program, thinking, planning and doing. The experiential learning journey the students undertake throughout the six weeks, encourages them to learn "21st century skillsets" that include creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration. The students also learn technical skills, i.e. how to write up a successful business plan, and how to pitch their business ideas to investors.

By the end of the program, students will be able to present their business ideas before a jury panel, in addition to a professor from Babson College.

This plan will reflect everything they've worked on throughout the program, and they will be judged based on their innovative solutions to the community's current challenges. LOYAC is a non-profit organization working towards the overall development of the youth. They design and develop many programs to facilitate the professional development and personal growth of the youth, ages 6 to 30.

URC hosts the Proteges Workshop

United Real Estate Company KSCP (URC), one of the Middle East and North Africa's leading real estate developers, hosted a learning workshop with Generation 8 of The Proteges in Hessah Al Mubarak District and Marina World, and attended by URC's key senior representatives from both the Sales and Marketing Department and the Property Management as well. The learning workshop included two case studies discussed by URC to Generation 8 of The Proteges, in order for them to create and propose alternative solutions through a presentation performed before a panel represented by URC's key senior management.

In partnership with Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - KIPCO, The Proteges program leading supporters; URC continues reflecting its social responsibility and commitments in harnessing national initiatives of empowering the youth with future leadership and survival skills through real life developing and training programs, to confidently meet their unexpected challenges during their upcoming life journey. The learning workshop also aimed at raising Generation 8 of The Proteges awareness of URC's valued local properties and its clear business vision of real estate development in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Ahmad H Kasem
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Hamad AlMulaifi
Director of Sales and Marketing

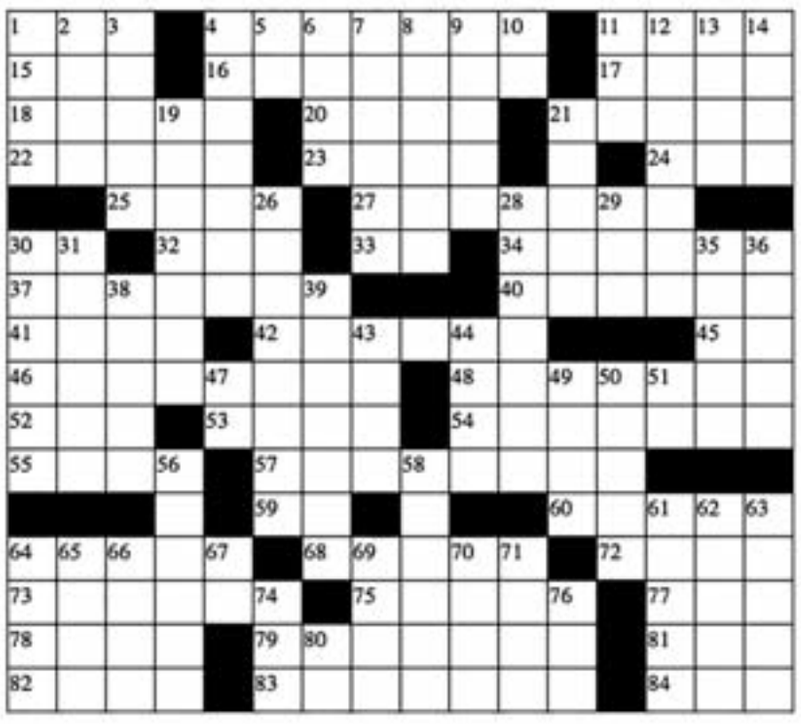
"We are delighted to be among the leading supporters of The Proteges programs and activities. We are always keen in investing in our younger generation by actively engaging them in our existing developments in Kuwait's real estate industry. By instigating their critical thinking, we heavily encourage the youth to create and innovate in order to stimulate their confidence and enable them as future leaders capable of facing life with all its unforeseen challenges." said Ahmad H Kasem, Acting Chief Executive Officer at United Real Estate Co.

Hamad S AlMulaifi, Director of Sales and Marketing at URC, said: "We are pleased to partake in such a youth driven group, Generation 8 of The Proteges, by engaging them into URC's most prestigious real estate development in Kuwait that is, Hessah Al Mubarak District. Our learning workshop was an opportunity to expose them entrepreneurially, as sales and marketing leaders by addressing our project developments with all its challenging issues in order to levitate their problem solving skills and preparing them as tomorrow's industry leaders." The United Real Estate Company KSCP expresses its sincere appreciation to all those valued members who contributed towards the workshop success.

French School of Kuwait achieves outstanding results

The French School of Kuwait announced that it had achieved 100% success in the French Baccalaureate well known for its demand on the academic performance. 95% of candidates received an honorable mention or very honorable. More than that most of our students could enter the most prestigious universities and schools around the world, in France of course, but even in other countries for studies followed through, French, English or Arabic languages.

CROSSWORD 1959



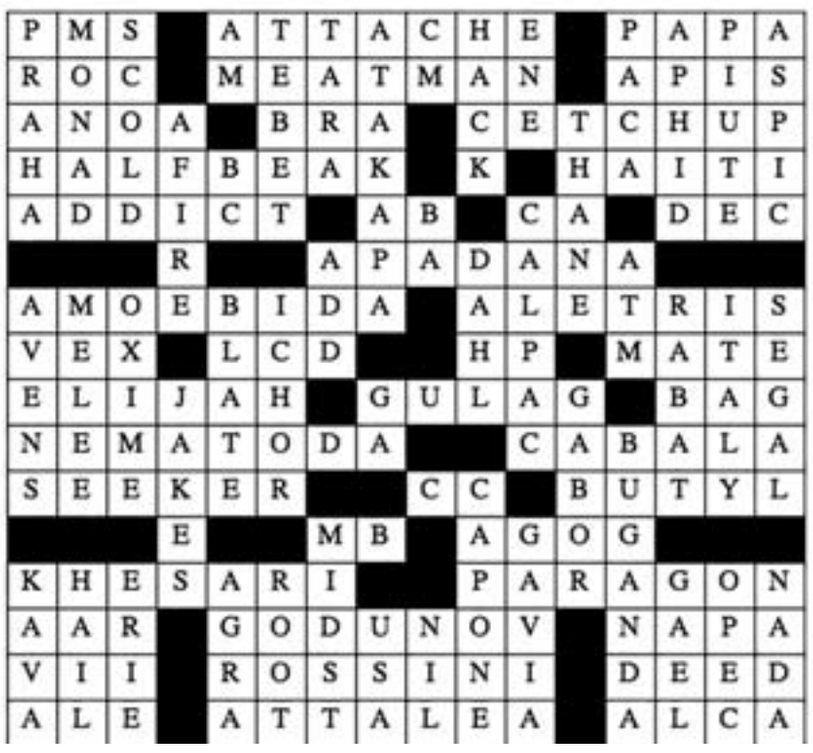
ACROSS

1. Informal terms for a mother.
4. A town in western Kentucky on the Ohio River.
11. A rare chronic progressive encephalitis caused by the measles virus and occurring primarily in children and young adults.
15. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
16. A hard nonresilient rubber formed by vulcanizing natural rubber.
17. Marked by the reception of pay.
18. Measuring instrument in which the echo of a pulse of microwave radiation is used to detect and locate distant objects.
20. A course of conduct.
22. A support that consists of a horizontal surface for holding objects.
23. A city in northern India.
24. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
25. A fit of shivering.
27. (Greek mythology) One of the three Gorgons.
30. Informal terms for a mother.
32. Any of various systems of units for measuring electricity and magnetism.
33. An honorary degree in science.
34. A city of southeastern Mexico.
37. A large mass of ice floating at sea.
40. Aircraft supported only by the dynamic action of air against its surfaces.
41. A person with unusual powers of foresight.
42. A name for the Old Testament God as transliterated from the Hebrew YHVH.
45. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
46. The act of sitting or standing astride.
48. The quality of being slow to understand.
52. Being one more than two.
53. The face of a timepiece.
54. Conceived of or imagined or hoped for.
55. The universal time coordinated time on board the spacecraft.
57. A literary language of Chinese Turkestan (named for one of the sons of Genghis Khan).
59. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
60. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
64. A unit of current equal to 10 amperes.
68. The event of dying or departure from life.
72. A branch of the Tai languages.
73. A kind of sedan chair used in India.
75. A negatively charged atom.
77. A master's degree in business.
78. Little known Kamarupan languages.
79. Genus of North American spring wildflowers.
81. Tag the base runner to get him out.
82. Type genus of the Ranidae.
83. Occurring every day of the week except Sunday (and sometimes Saturday).
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. The 4th planet from the sun.
2. Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.
3. (Greek mythology) A princess of Colchis who aided Jason in taking the Golden Fleece from her father.
4. A toiletry that emits and diffuses a fragrant odor.
5. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
6. Amino acid that is formed in the liver and converted into dopamine in the brain.
7. Not subjected to an aging process.
8. Of or relating to plants of the genus Citrus.
9. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
10. A very light colorless element that is one of the six inert gasses.
11. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
12. A person who lacks good judgment.
13. Type genus of the Pipidae.
14. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
19. The mathematics of generalized arithmetical operations.
21. A village of huts for native Africans in southern Africa.
26. (Greek mythology) The wife of Orpheus.
28. A custard-like food made from curdled milk.
29. Being one more than sixty.
31. Relating to or containing acetic acid.
35. (`cease' is a noun only in the phrase `without cease') End v 1.
36. An honorary arts degree.
38. Suggestive of the supernatural.
39. (Arthurian legend) The most virtuous knight of the Round Table.
43. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
44. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
47. A doctor's degree in religion.
49. An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
50. Sole genus of the family Naiadaceae.
51. The square of a body of any size of type.
56. An analgesic for mild pain.
58. A city of northern Poland near the mouth of the Vistula River on a gulf of the Baltic Sea.
61. A genus of Lamnidae.
62. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
63. Jordan's port.
65. A small cake leavened with yeast.
66. A primeval personification of air and breath.
67. An informal term for a father.
69. Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
70. Bound or secured closely.
71. Any plant of the genus Hoya having fleshy leaves and usually nectariferous flowers.
74. The compass point that is one point west of due north.
76. A negative.
80. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are hungry for knowledge. You may find yourself eager to take in all life has to offer and teach you. This is a great time of clarity and understanding for you. Your social life may begin to take a turn towards the dramatic. An interesting and more appealing side of someone close to you may be revealed. You have a great desire to strengthen relationships that are closest to you and may have someone near who you are drawn to and is especially appealing to you at this time. Aries, now is a great time to keep the company of those nearest and dearest to you rather than spending time alone. Surround yourself with love and support.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are a practical person with an abundance of common sense. You are able to use both of these qualities as assets to make your way to the top in the career world. You may be feeling a need to change your focus and tighten your circle a bit. You feel as if you need to spend more of your time and attention on you and yours. At this point you may have accomplished your goal in the workplace but feel you need to continue to work on your goal at home. This will be a balancing act to continue to make sure you thrive in every area of your life. Your communication skills are at all time high and you have the ability to interact with ease to all who surround you, Taurus. Today is a day full you may find yourself full of energy and ready to take on the world.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today may find you a bit zoned out. You may not be quite yourself. Your thoughts are scrambled, and you just can't think very clear. This is not a great day to make big decisions or purchases. Today would be best spent curled up with a good book or sitting back and listening to your favorite music. Today may find you stressed to your limits and beyond so leave all the big decisions for when your mind is clear, and you are rested. This may be your bodies way of telling you it is time to take a break. This is also a great time to perhaps spend some time with your siblings or neighbors. This will satisfy a longing to be close with those special to you.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may find that you are able to have a very deep conversation with someone close to you today. Mentally, you are sharp and at your best. Understanding of an issue you have been experiencing. You are surrounded by love and support today as you have shown much in the past to those close to you. You may find yourself being the recipient of many compliments today because of who you are and what you have done for others. You are very pleased with your living situation now and find yourself in a very loving mood. Your desire is to help others and let them know just how special they are.

Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your communication skills are at all time high and you have the ability to interact with ease to all who surround you, Leo. Today is a day full you may find yourself full of energy and ready to take on the world. You may find yourself in a dreamy mood with a desire to let reality escape you. You don't often have this feeling, and this is a great time to just roll with it. You may find a movie, a road trip, or something as simple as lighting the candles and soaking in the tub, may bring you a needed rest. Not only are you able to appreciate the beauty in everything in everyone around you, others are showering you with appreciation and praise.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A strong desire to get out and about seems to come over you today. Choose your company wisely as this will help avoid conflict. You have a strong desire for romance and long to spend time with a special someone. Your day may be best spent with a love one. Perhaps a stroll in the park or a nice dinner out with someone very special to you is just what you need. You may feel as if you are not being noticed in the workplace or you have simply been passed over by an opportunity. Don't let frustration block your progress or discourage you in anyway. You work hard and this will soon be noticed and appreciated.

Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are really feeling a need to be needed. You desire to be the shoulder that is leaned on a listening ear to those in need. You may find others are drawn to your compassion and eagerness to assist them with their problems. Not only are you a wonderful friend to those close to you, but strangers are drawn to you also. You always make time to listen and help whenever possible. This is very rewarding for you as it fulfills this need to be needed desire you seem to be feeling. You may find yourself being looked to for advice and being admired for your ability to make decisions.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may feel a desire to surround yourself with loved ones family and friends. This is a time in your life where your home life and family mean everything to you. You have a strong desire or a need to be needed. You long to you develop a strong foundation within your family can withstand the test of time. You love your life in your only desire is to make sure everyone in it is happy. You are overflowing with kindness and more to shower you love ones with love and affection. You may find that are not as focused on your career and things are not going is well in the workplace as you have concentrated on your energy and effort on your family. You will soon find a way to balance all aspects of your life.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a great time to step into the spotlight. Any situation that puts you in limelight or gives you the opportunity to work with others and take the lead is where you need to be. You have a knack for knowing what others want and how to give them just what they are looking for. You may find that your popularity has increased and that others are drawn to you. This may be a great time to look into any real estate ventures you have been involved with. You may find an opportunity to be the middle man on a deal and make a great commission on a deal.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Today may find you very creative or even poetic. You may find new ways to express your feelings to others through these outlets. You may find you are in a dreamy mood and almost feel as if you are on the outside looking in at your own life. This is a great time of reflection for you and a great time for you to analyze exactly how you feel about who and where you are in your life currently. Your mind is clear, and you may find the lines of communication are opened between you and a love one. This is a very nice time in your life. It may seem if answers come easy and you are able to put plans in motion to turn all of your dreams into reality. Capricorn, it may take looking at life from a different perspective to really help you get ahead in this world.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Sensitive problems are no obstacle for you today. You may actually find pleasure in conquering some of your demons today. You are able to work through some problems that have been bothering you for a very long time. Today finds you ready and eager to make some long past due changes in your life. You know your faults and you know what you need to do to make things better and get on the right track. Today's motto is, today is the first day of the rest of your life. Make it a good one and set your standards high. There is no stopping you once you have your mind made up.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Today may find you feeling as you encounter a road block at every turn. Perhaps, today is not the day for big decisions. You may find yourself a bit frustrated and preferring a bit of isolation. You are simply not in the mood for people. You may feel as if you are not able to get your point across to anyone and may feel greatly misunderstood. You could find yourself at odds with those close to you and should remember to try and remain calm as conflict and confrontation seem to be seeking your company today. Today would be a great day for reorganizing and spending some time reflecting on your past to get yourself back where you want to be, Pisces. This too shall pass.

Wordsearch Puzzle

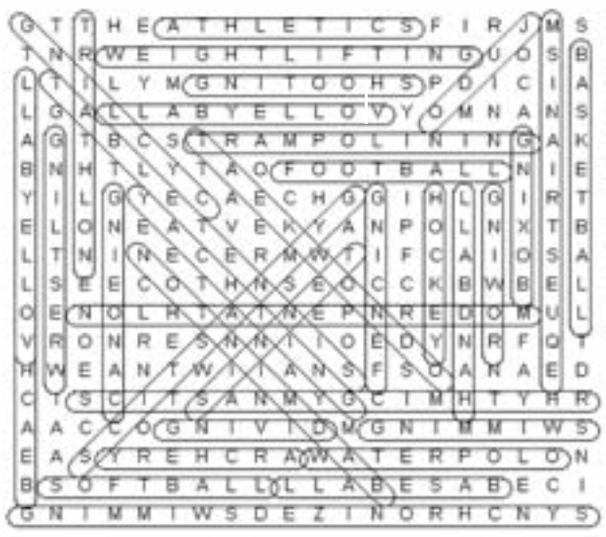
Surgery

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

ANESTHESIA, APPENDIX, BIOPSY, BLOOD, BONE SAW, BRAIN, CALIPER, CANNULA, CATHETER, CLAMPS, COLON, DILATORS, DISTRACTORS, DRILL, ENDOSCOPE, FORCEPS, GRASPERS, HEART, HEMOSTAT, HOOK, INCISION, INJECTION, IRRIGATION, KIDNEY, LANCET, LIVER, LUNGS, MALLET, NEEDLE, OCCLUDERS, PROBE, RETRACTORS, RIBS, RULER, SCALPEL, SCISSORS, SKIN, SPECULA, SPLEEN, SPLINT, SPONGE, STAPLER, SUCTION, SURGEON, SUTURE, SYRINGE, TISSUE, TRACHEOTOME, TRANSPLANT, TREPHINE, TROCAR, TWEEZERS

Friday's Solution

Summer Olympics



ARCHERY, ATHLETICS, BADMINTON, BASEBALL, BASKETBALL, BEACH VOLLEYBALL, BOXING, CANOEING, CYCLING, DIVING, EQUESTRIANISM, FENCING, FOOTBALL, GYMNASTICS, HANDBALL, HOCKEY, JUDO, MODERN PENTATHLON, RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS, ROWING, SHOOTING, SOFTBALL, SWIMMING, SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING, TABLE TENNIS, TAEKWONDO, TENNIS, TRAMPOLINING, TRIATHLON, VOLLEYBALL, WATER POLO, WEIGHTLIFTING, WRESTLING, YACHTING

The hidden sentence is:
THE FIRST OLYMPIC GYMNAST TO ACHIEVE A PERFECT SCORE OF TEN WAS NADIA COMANECI

Daily SuDoku

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Friday's Solution

7	2	8	4	3	1	9	6	5
3	4	9	6	2	5	1	8	7
6	1	5	8	7	9	3	4	2
1	3	2	9	4	6	7	5	8
9	5	7	1	8	2	4	3	6
8	6	4	7	5	3	2	9	1
4	7	6	3	1	8	5	2	9
5	8	3	2	9	7	6	1	4
2	9	1	5	6	4	8	7	3

Kuwait Times
Established 1961

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JULY 15, 2018

A baby hippo born on May 28 swims alongside its mother Gina at the Guadalajara Zoo, in Guadalajara, Mexico. — AFP

Banksy's lesser-known works on show in London

A gallery assistant poses with 'Media' 2006 artwork by Banksy at Lazinc Gallery in London. —AFP photos

A gallery assistant poses with 'Turf War' 2003 artwork by Banksy at Lazinc Gallery in London.

A gallery assistant poses with 'Girl with Balloon' 2006 artwork by Banksy at Lazinc Gallery in London.

Street artist Banksy is known around the world for his simple graffiti stencils, often with a sharp political point, but a new London exhibition is an opportunity to discover his wider talents. The mysterious British artist from Bristol, southwest England, made his name with clandestine street murals but has also produced a treasure trove of other kinds of images as the value of his work soared. "You've got quite a few different styles here, you've got everything from the stencils to the paintings to the crude oils," said Steve Lazarides, co-founder of the Lazinc gallery where the show opens on Thursday.

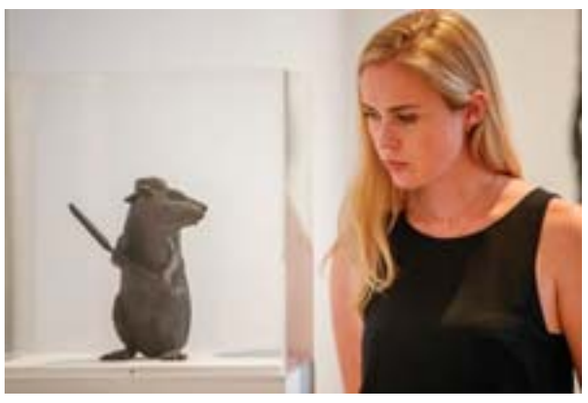
It includes classics such as "Girl with Balloon", a black and white image of a little girl letting go of a red heart-shaped balloon, and "Flower Thrower", depicting a masked protester ready to throw a bunch of posies. But there are also lesser known works such as the oil painting "Sunflowers from Petrol Station" depicting Van Gogh's Sunflowers withered in a vase. None of the framed pictures in "Banksy, Greatest Hits: 2002-2008" were made on the street-all were made to be sold and are on loan from private collectors. The show examines a prolific period when Banksy organized some of his most significant shows such as Crude Oil, Barely Legal, and Turf War.

More and more political

Lazarides met Banksy, whose identity remains a mystery, in 1997 when he said he noticed his "visceral energy", and became first his photographer and then his gallerist. "At this time he was free, he didn't have the kind of expectations he has now. He was just painting for fun," he recalled in an interview with AFP. Over the years, the value of Banksy's art exploded and he began producing paintings and limited edition prints, which allowed him "to do more and more elaborate street operations". In 2008, a collaboration with Damien Hirst, "Keep It Spotless", was sold at auction at Sotheby's in New York $1.8 million (1.5 million euros).

Pointing to an oil painting parodying Monet's water lilies, 2005's "Show Me the Monet", Lazarides remarked: "That painting would have been £15,000 pounds when we sold it. "The client now wants to sell it for [almost] £5 million." The artworks can be bought by visitors to the gallery, but Lazarides warns that there is very little under £500,000. He believes Banksy has become one of the most popular contemporary artists because "he doesn't make people feel scared".

"He popularized art among the general public and suddenly it was OK to say that you like art and you didn't need an art history degree to understand it," he said. He said Banksy had become "more and more political" over the years, for example in recent works in Paris where he took aim at the French government's hard line on migrants. His anonymity has given him something of a mythical status, which Lazarides feeds, saying: "It could be a team, it could be twins, a woman, who knows?" — AFP



A gallery assistant poses with 'Bronze Rat' 2006 artwork by Banksy at Lazinc Gallery in London.

A gallery assistant poses with 'Flower Thrower' 2006 artwork by Banksy at Lazinc Gallery in London.

Iggy Pop's screen shows

Iggy Pop wants to perform "behind a screen" with Underworld. The 'Lust for Life' singer has teamed up with the 'Born Slippy' hitmakers for four-track EP 'Teatime Dub Encounters' and though he'd like to sing the songs live one day, he's "tired" of people looking at him. He said: "Some time, some day, I would like to sit in the dark behind a screen and do the live vocals while they play. I would love to do that. "But I'm just tired. I'm tired of people looking at me all the time. What I enjoy most in my life are my secret hours. "So probably if I ever did this live with these guys, it'll be when they're somewhere where they've got room for an extra hand for bridge or whatever and I can go behind. "Maybe I could have one guy, like, with a cell phone in my face and nobody could see me." Underworld - comprising Karl Hyde and Rick Smith - don't mind having no set plans to perform with Iggy because they think the unpredictability brings a special "magic" to their shows. Karl told Q magazine: "The magic comes back into you. "We're supposed to be making magic, we're supposed to be surprising people. "Very often it's about taking away the surprise, it's about broadcasting upfront, 'What's it going to be about?' 'Tell me, how is it going to be great?' 'What are you going to do in your show?' "Look, just turn up and I promise you we'll deliver a surprise."

All Saints hated looks obsession

All Saints were treated like "objects" during the height of their success. The 'Pure Shores' hitmakers - sisters Natalie and Nicole Appleton, Melanie Blatt and Shaznay Lewis - found it frustrating that so much attention was paid to their appearance when they were so focused on their music. Shaznay said: "Looking beautiful was the last thing on my mind. We were a band, we sang, we wrote our own music. "In my head, that was the drive. "And then you realize that's not the main thing people were interested in. "We learned very quickly that we were objects." And the group also recalled how they were asked to dance topless behind a screen on 'Top Of the Pops' and are proud they were able to stand up for themselves. Shaznay told Grazia magazine: "We were lucky in that we were strong, forceful women. "Saying no caused a bit of a stink but we were never scared, which is probably what a lot of people found back in the day." The group split in 2001 and reunited two years ago, and even now the quartet feel "pressure" to look good. Mel admitted: "I feel way more under pressure today. "A lot of the interviews we've done since we've come back have been about how we feel about our bodies, what we do to keep fit, whether we train. "We never got asked that back in the day. This is a new thing. "Our culture is obsessed with it, with social media, filters, all that thing. I get involved and I hate myself for it. "I'm an intelligent, strong woman. Why do I care?"

Mandy Moore back in the studio

Mandy Moore is back in the studio for the first time in nearly 10 years. The 'This Is Us' star has given fans a snippet of some upcoming music as she admitted she "missed" working on her tracks. She wrote on Instagram: "Getting back to it. It's time. I miss it. I'm not scared anymore. No more excuses. No more allowing someone's else insecurities to dictate my relationship to music and singing. Boom. Also- this is just a little demo of something @themikeviola and I worked on yesterday... but still, it's a start! (sic)" Mandy previously revealed how being a singer has "led her" to where she is now. She said: "It's all led me to where I am now. I'm happy to acknowledge [the past], but also stay focused on the present. I think it's cool to have different chapters of your life and career and for there to be a portion of an audience out there that just knows me from ['This Is Us']. I'm totally fine with it because there's plenty of stuff in the past I'd like to forget. "I've gone through my share of career lulls and rejections and disappointment. I sort of feel like my life has hit on so many different notes that that collective experience [is something I can] bring to the table with a role like this and sprinkle a little bit of that into this woman."

KREPT AND KONAN RECORD WITH SLAVES

Krept & Konan have teamed up with Slaves on a new track. The 'Wrongs' duo have collaborated with the punk rockers on 'Told You/The Hunter' as part of Hennessy's Masters of Potential project and recorded the track live to vinyl at London's famous Abbey Road studios. Krept & Konan were particularly excited to work with Slaves and their "new punk sound". Casyo 'Krept' Johnson said: "We knew about Slaves and their new punk sound and got excited at what we could do together. "It was us who wanted to work with Slaves - they share the same label as us - Blending sounds appeals to us because you create something that is brand new." And Karl 'Konan' Wilson added: "We've probably crossed paths at festivals but we've never had the opportunity to actually get in the studio and get things going like right now, it's sick!" The studio session was so successful, both bands are hoping they'll get the chance to perform the track for their fans in the coming months. Konan said: "We are performing at a few of the same festivals this summer, so yeah it would be could if we could perform this to a crowd." Slaves' Laurie Vincent - who is joined in the band by Isaac Holman - said: "This mash-up was made for a live performance so yeah definitely if we could make that happen that would be great." Masters of Potential sees Hennessy work with a panel of well-respected music industry heads - author and music aficionado Hattie Collins, Island Records' President of Urban Division Alex Boateng and Abbey Road Studios' Lead Mastering Engineer Christian Wright - to create a platform for blending together unexpected artists from different genres and backgrounds, creating unique live-to-vinyl recordings at Abbey Road Studios. To follow Masters of Potential, view the live to vinyl recording of the track and behind-the-scenes content go to @HennessyUK Instagram Channel, where the full track will be hosted on IGTV.

Louisa Johnson departs Syco Music

Louisa Johnson has parted ways with Syco Music. The 'Tears' hitmaker - who won 'The X Factor' in 2015 - has announced that there was a "mutual decision" for her to move away from the record label as she promised there was more music ahead for her. She said: "I've been working super hard and I just wanted to let you all know that Syco Music and I have decided not to work together moving forward. It was genuinely a mutual decision and there are no hard feelings. Big thank you to Syco for everything they've done for me, I've had an actual blast! It's been so much fun and I'll always be grateful to Simon [Cowell] and the team for all their support. I'm excited to be releasing a single with @ministryofsound next month which is still part of the Sony family. You're gonna love this one guys." Meanwhile, Louisa previously revealed she feels "in control" of her music now she's now found her niche. She said: "I'm just trying to be a bit careful about what I do. I've just grown up a lot, and I think I wanted it so badly and I rushed too much. And now I've just found this nice position that I'm in and I'm just kind of being myself a little bit more, and taking it easy. I feel so in control, it's amazing. I just kind of realized I was a bit down, and a bit lost and I just thought, 'Do you know what? I'm not really that happy in myself. It just clicked one day, and I was like I'm going to change everything - I want to be my own person. It was a weird feeling, but now I'm so happy."

Enjoy a marvelous MARVEL movie marathon only on OSN this July

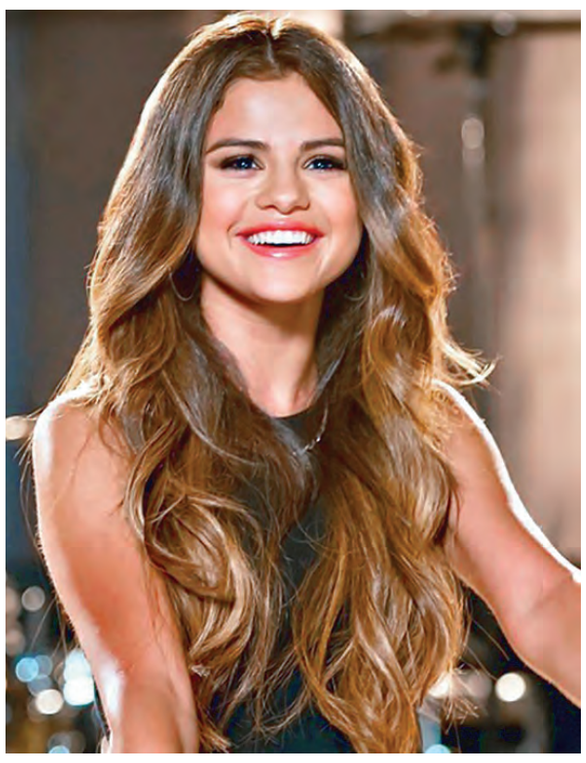
Something seriously marvelous is about to happen at OSN, the region's leading entertainment network. Something related to some of the biggest super heroes in the Marvel universe such as Thor, Iron Man, Captain America and The Hulk. As a special treat for Marvel fans, we've used our intergalactic influence to ensure these super heroes and their buddies appear in one place - our new and exclusive, dedicated Marvel pop-up channel - OSN Pop Up HD Marvel. Our first ever Marvel pop-up channel in October last year was such a huge hit we had to do it again, but this time we've added series to the mix!

So, get ready for the very best in Marvel family entertainment (with English and Arabic subtitles available) to explode onto screens from Friday 13 July to Saturday 28 July with no less than: Thor, Thor: Ragnarok, Guardians of the Galaxy, Guardians of the Galaxy Vol ll, Iron Man 1-3, Doctor Strange, The Avengers, Captain America: The First Avenger, Marvel's Inhumans S1 and Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D S5.

What's more, dedicated binge-watchers can also revel in Marvel's movie magic wherever and whenever they like with OSN on Demand, and on any device with OSN Play. We promise the entertainment won't stop once OSN Pop Up HD Marvel ends as we're going to be putting on more exclusive pop-up channels featuring the characters and stories people love throughout the rest of 2018!

NANCY SINATRA, FIRST WIFE OF STAR FRANK SINATRA DIES AT 101

Nancy Sinatra, the first wife of the late, legendary singer and actor Frank Sinatra, died Friday at the age of 101, her daughter, also named Nancy Sinatra, said in an internet tweet. "My mother passed away peacefully tonight at the age of 101," the younger Nancy Sinatra, 78, wrote on her official Twitter page. "She was a blessing and the light of my life. God speed, Momma. Thank you for everything." The elder Nancy Sinatra was married for 12 years to one of the most famous stars of the 20th Century, who starred such blockbuster movies, as "From Here to Eternity," and "Guys and Dolls", and is known for his signature jazz song, "New York, New York." The couple, both New Jersey natives, had three children, and divorced in 1951, after her husband had a string of extramarital affairs which were made public in Hollywood gossip columns, The New York Times reported. He married actress and Hollywood bombshell, Ava Gardner, just 10 days after his divorce from Nancy Sinatra. But the pair remained close until Frank Sinatra's death in 1998 at the age of 82, after a heart attack, the newspaper reported. The late Nancy Sinatra never remarried and lived a quiet life in Beverly Hills, California and focused on charity work, the newspaper reported. A spokesperson for the family could not be reached early Saturday, and no other details about her death were available.



Woman charged in LA with hacking email of pop star Gomez

A 21-year-old woman who prosecutors say hacked into the email accounts of pop star and actress Selena Gomez and posted photos she found there online has been charged with identity theft and fraud, Los Angeles prosecutors said on Friday. Susan Atrach is accused of accessing Gomez' accounts several times from June 2015 to February 2016 and obtaining images and other media stored there, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office said in a written statement. Atrach then allegedly shared the material she took from the 25-year-old singer with others and posted them online, prosecutors say. A spokesman for the office declined to provide further details of the case. It was not immediately clear whether Atrach, of Ridgefield Park, New Jersey, was in custody on Friday afternoon or if she had retained a criminal defense attorney. The charges include five counts of identity theft, five counts of accessing computer data to commit fraud or illegally obtain money, property or data and one count of accessing computer data without permission. Atrach, who was scheduled to be arraigned in Los Angeles Superior Court on Aug 27, faces a maximum sentence of nine years in state prison if convicted at trial. Prosecutors have asked that she be held on $250,000 bail. Representatives for Gomez could not immediately be reached for comment on the case. The pop star, of Grand Prairie, Texas, first rose to fame starring as Alex Russo on the teen comedy Wizards of Waverly Place, which aired on the Disney Channel from 2007 to 2012. She has since gained fame as a solo artist, landing six top 10 singles in the Billboard charts, and appeared in feature films. Gomez has also been celebrated as the "queen of Instagram" with more than 138 million followers on the social media site as of Friday.

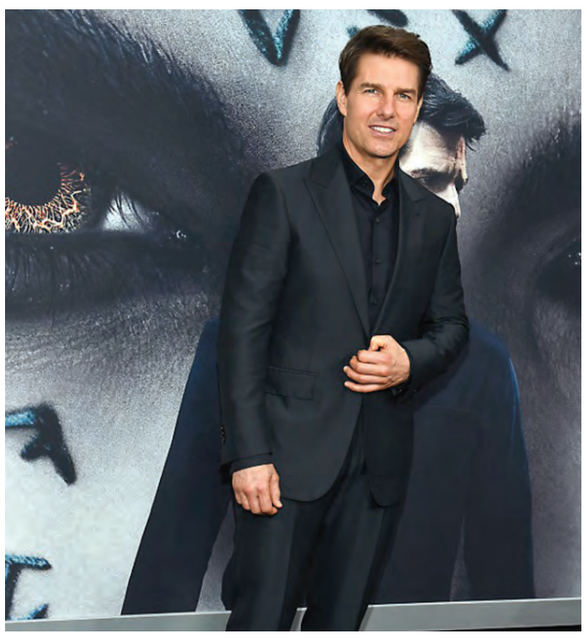
Johansson quits transgender role after LGBT backlash

Scarlett Johansson on Friday pulled out of a movie in which she was cast to play a transgender character following a backlash from some members of the LGBT community who believed the part should have gone to a transgender actor. Johansson, one of Hollywood's biggest stars, had agreed to take a role in "Rub & Tug" as Dante "Tex" Gill, a real-life American crime kingpin who used his massage parlor as a front for prostitution in the 1970s and 1980s. Gill was born a woman but identified as a man. It was the second time Johansson, an American of European descent, found herself in the middle of a casting controversy after appearing in 2017's "Ghost in the Shell" in a role originally conceived as a Japanese character. Johansson, 33, said she had decided to withdraw from "Rub & Tug" for ethical reasons. "Our cultural understanding of transgender people continues to advance, and I've learned a lot from the community since making my first statement about my casting and realize it was insensitive," the actress said in a statement to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender magazine "Out." "I understand why many feel he (Gill) should be portrayed by a transgender person, and I am thankful that this casting debate, albeit controversial, has sparked a larger conversation about diversity and representation in film," she added. On social media, newspaper editorials and videos, the transgender community had slammed her casting as highlighting the limited opportunities given to transgender actors. In recent years, straight actor Eddie Redmayne played a transgender woman in "The Danish Girl," Jared Leto won an Oscar for playing a trans woman in "Dallas Buyers Club," and Jeffrey Tambor has won awards for playing a father who transitions to a man in the television series "Transparent." According to LGBTQ advocacy group GLAAD, none of the 109 movies released by Hollywood's seven biggest studios in 2017 included a transgender character. GLAAD welcomed Johansson's decision saying on Twitter that "her announcement, together with the transgender voices who spoke out about this film, are game changers for the future of transgender images in Hollywood." Filming has yet to begin on "Rub & Tug" and no replacement for Johansson was immediately announced.

Kylie Minogue

My new band is so sexy

Kylie Minogue says her new band is very "sexy" because she now has three male guitarists on stage with her. The 50-year-old singer released her 14th studio album 'Golden' in April and it has a strong country vibe with her recording many of the songs in Nashville, Tennessee. To recreate the sound on stage for her 'Golden Tour', which kicks off in September, Kylie has had to add more guitars to her group and she loves the hot new dynamic between her and her male bandmates. Speaking to Magic Radio, she said: "I love doing choreography and all of that but the band vibes are strong at the moment. It's the first time I've had three guitarists, because of the country influence we needed an extra one. Oh my god, it's so sexy just having these three guys." The 'Dancing' hitmaker says the energy on stage between her and the band is like organized chaos, but it's working in rehearsals. She explained: "You know ... I sometimes think, we're just a bunch of people making noise. Someone's hitting, someone's plucking or strumming or singing or whatever. You just happen to do something that all works together and it sounds great. You can't help but get off on that energy." Kylie - who returned to the studio to record the album following her split from fiancÈ Joshua Sasse in February 2017 - has been thrilled by how well her latest LP has been received and she has been "really moved by people's reactions" to the personal lyrics. She added: "It does feel different too, to other albums. I mean, success is success, that's great. But it's people's response to the lyrics and the songs and they're aware that this has come from a much more personal place for me. So I've just been really, really moved by people's reactions."



Cruise: Mission: Impossible - Fallout is for the fans

Tom Cruise says 'Mission: Impossible - Fallout' is a "love letter" to the fans. The 55-year-old actor - who plays Ethan Hunt in the 'Mission: Impossible' franchise has revealed the most recent installment of the spy film was made for the movie's supporters. He said: "We truly hope you know this is our love letter to you." Meanwhile, Tom recently admitted that he went back to work on 'Mission: Impossible - Fallout' with a broken ankle. The Hollywood actor - who was left seriously injured on the set of the action sequel whilst performing a jump between two high-rise buildings in London which resulted in him snapping his ankle - said: "Their concern was would I be running within that six months, or ever ... but I had great rehab and was back sprinting in about 11 weeks. It was still broken, but I was able to get all the rest of the scenes done ... I say [to myself], 'Get your ass out and don't break your ankle again you idiot, keep running! Get on there; we've got a movie to release!'" Tom even learned how to fly a helicopter for the new film, but he insists his preparation was second-to-none. He added: "I do think that [I could lose my life], yes. But I train really hard so that won't happen. But I make movies for audiences, and I learnt how to fly a helicopter for the movie, I train for about a year and a half beforehand. But I've been doing stuff like this since I was a little kid, climbing tall trees and breaking bones!"

Cavill's fun Superman role

Henry Cavill isn't worried about missing out on movie roles because he plays Superman. The 35-year-old actor has portrayed the superhero a number of times and although it means he can't squeeze in other parts, he doesn't mind "paying that price" because it's so "fun" to play Clark Kent. He said: "I don't mind paying that price. I think it's fun. And if there are times when it's not fun, then I need to correct my thinking. Because it will be my fault that I'm not having fun." And Henry thinks playing Superman has made him a better person in general. He added: "He bleeds goodness, so to be representing that person is a wonderful standard to hold yourself to. To be honest, it's done nothing but help me up my game and hopefully be a better human being just by trying to be more like him." Whilst most celebrities prefer not to read what people say about them online, Henry goes looking for it. He told The Times magazine: "It's an insight. Obviously there are a lot of people who just like to spit venom, but you have no idea what's going on in their life. They might be going through something horrendous and so I don't hold it against them. I just look at it from a performer's point of view. Let's say 75 per cent of people say my performance was great, then I'll think, OK, cool, I'm on the right track. Yeah, I could probably finesse some things, and while I'm not saying you should take everything into account, it definitely gives you something to think about that you might not have considered. It's just another insight. Depending on which message board you're on, obviously."

Foster looking forward to future roles

Jodie Foster is "super-excited" about making movies in her 70s. The 55-year-old actress-and-director has just made her first film in five years, 'Hotel Artemis', but isn't too worried about the fact she's currently got nothing else in the pipeline as she thinks the more interesting roles are some way down the line. She said: "I like to wait. And you know, I'm super-excited to be acting in my 60s and 70s. I think the roles will be so much more interesting!" And the 'Money Monster' filmmaker admitted she turned to directing in recent years because she was at a difficult age for acting. She told The Guardian newspaper: "Being in your 50s is a transitional period for actors - you're not old enough to play the old characters and not young enough to play the young ones, so I felt like, OK, this is my time to direct. "It's just what happens - it's normal. There are just not that many roles for this age. But I anticipated it and I feel like I made hay in my younger years and I can express myself by directing. But once in a while something original comes along that isn't just another franchise." Jodie thinks she could have made more movies but is proud she'd been "discerning" and only worked when projects interested her. She said: "I was never interested in a career for a career's sake. I just wanted to tell the stories I find interesting and I wasn't very good playing the girlfriend, so, nope, I never did that. I just worked when I found something that moved me. "It's true, I probably worked less than others, but I'd rather be more discerning. The industry has changed a lot recently, with the end of the studio system, the rise of superheroes and streaming. But the only thing I trust is the quality of stories, and I decided I would focus on that. "Some of my movies haven't worked, but at least I held to the same principle. That's why I'm not the richest actor, or the most successful. But I think I've had the longest career."

Microgreens of Basil are pictured.

Wasabi microgreens under artificial light are pictured.

Shoots for the stars: Briton grows microgreens for top French chefs

Borage flowers are pictured.

French chef Dorian Van Bronkhorst (left) of the "L'Atelier Yssoirien" restaurant, poses with British microgreens grower Chris Kilner, in Issoire. — AFP photos

Microgreens of Mustard 'Golden Frills' (right), 'Red Luce' (up) and 'Agastache Purpurea' (left) are pictured under artificial light.

Fuchsia-coloured lights glow over a miniature garden where tiny plants pack a wealth of flavor and nutrients headed for the tables of Michelin-starred French chefs. British producer Chris Kilner nurtures his "microgreens" on a farm in Saint-Jean-en-Val, a village only a couple of hours from France's gastronomic capital Lyon. "Our clients determine what we grow," says the soft-spoken Kilner, 47. "They're very demanding." Unlike sprouts that are grown in water and eaten whole, Kilner's come up in soil and are snipped just at the right time for maximum impact on the palate.

They don't hang around for long. Some are only a week old when they are harvested, and none grow for more than two months. Kilner plucks a tiny leaf to check on progress, like a vintner fussing over ripening grapes. "Everyone knows what rocket tastes like, but around day 11 its taste is suddenly more precise," Kilner says as he bites into the heart-shaped, lilliputian green. "You recognize it clearly when you taste it. It's perfect, with no bitterness." The practiced chef can conjure licorice from agastache microgreens; shiso is redolent of anise or cumin, depending on the variety; the big blue star-shaped flowers of the borage plant give off the fresh, crunchy quality of the cucumber.

Microgreens, the young seedlings of edible vegetables and herbs, can exude the most startling flavors-mustard, wasabi, pepper, citrus, capers and even oysters-and in such high concentrations that they substitute easily for their counterparts on the spice or condiment rack. One thing is certain: the microgreen is not for decoration. "It's an ingredient unto itself; you can't do without it," said Dorian Van Bronkhorst, head chef at the Michelin-starred Atelier Yssoirien restaurant in the town of Issoire, in the Auvergne region near Kilner's farm. "It's a flavor enhancer that adds finesse and color, as well as acidity or sweetness."

The self-taught entrepreneur is a former robotics engineer who helped develop the humanoid robots Nao and Pepper for Aldebaran Robotics. Once they went into mass production, Kilner was ready leave the high-tech world to spend more time with his wife Virginie Vial, a 46-year-old development economist, at the family farmhouse. It was in 2016 that Kilner went microgreen, partly inspired by his wife's fondness for growing her own soybean sprouts and others.

> "IT'S AN INGREDIENT UNTO ITSELF; YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT IT"

Kilner's company Radix-from the Latin for "roots"-supplies Van Bronkhorst and dozens of other chefs in the region, including many boasting Michelin stars, with a turnover of around 50,000 euros ($58,000) last year. With such tiny crops-around 50 microgreen varieties sprout under special lamps or in miniature greenhouses-Kilner operates in a space of some 500 square meters (5,000 square feet). But thanks to growing demand-"most big chefs use microgreens," he says Kilner may move to a bigger space in the autumn.

'I'm not a magician'

The key to his success? The only inputs are water and a keen attention to detail. "I'm not a magician," Kilner says. "You have to keep tasting all the time, and it's your taste buds that guide you." Before Kilner set up shop here, French chefs have relied on the Dutch company Koppert Cress, which has enjoyed a near-monopoly in France. The difference with Kilner is that he delivers his microgreens in the soil they sprouted in. "You're sure of getting the product in season, ultra-fresh, and you cut it only as you are putting it on the plate," said Cyrille Zen, who runs the Michelin-starred La Bergerie de Sarpoil in Saint-Jean-en-Val.

While chefs began coveting microgreens about a decade ago, they are also prized for their nutritional value. According to a study published in 2012 by the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, microgreens contain four to 40 times the vitamins and antioxidants of their mature counterparts. — AFP

Flowers of Wasabi are pictured.

British microgreens grower Chris Kilner, works in his vegetable farm.

British microgreens grower Chris Kilner, sprays plants in the greenhouse in his vegetable farm.

British microgreens grower Chris Kilner, poses in his vegetable farm in Saint-Jean-en-Val.

British microgreens grower Chris Kilner, poses in his greenhouse under artificial light, in his vegetable farm in Saint-Jean-en-Val.

British microgreens grower Chris Kilner, works in his vegetable farm.

Classifieds

Sunday, July 15, 2018

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot and with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 35 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	48 °C	34 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	34 °C
ABDALY	49 °C	29 °C
BUBYAN	** °C	** °C
JAHRA	49 °C	33 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	45 °C	29 °C
SALMIYAH	44 °C	33 °C
AHMADI	46 °C	33 °C
NUWAISIB	48 °C	31 °C
WAFRA	48 °C	28 °C
SALMY	45 °C	29 °C

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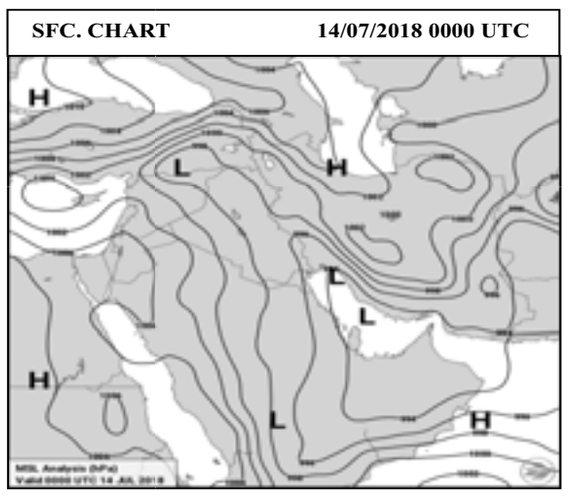

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures MAX.	Temperatures MIN.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
Sunday	07/15	Very hot and some scattered clouds will appear	47 °C	33 °C	VRB-NE	06 - 26 km/h
Monday	07/16	Very hot and some high clouds will appear	48 °C	35 °C	NE-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Tuesday	07/17	Very hot with a chance for rising dust	48 °C	35 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	07/18	Very hot	47 °C	34 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:24
Sunrise	04:58
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:28
Sunset	18:50
Isha	20:20

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	49 °C
MIN. Temp.	36 °C
MAX. RH	19 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	N 57 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

NOTICE
June 5, 2018

Mr. Abeezar Hakimuddin Berawala, son of Mr. Hakimuddin Ali Husain Berawala, resident of A 64, Paradise CHS- Beach Queen No. 1, 358, Azad Road, Koliwada, Juhu, Mumbai 400049 and Ms. Rashida, daughter of Mr. Kutbuddin Seth, resident of VPO, Sagwara, Najampura, TEH Sagwara, Dungarpur, Rajasthan, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (attachecons@indembkwt.org, welfaresection@indembkwt.org) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(Sanjeev Saklani)
Attache (Consular) and
Marriage Officer.
Embassy of India, Kuwait.

Ph.00965- 22550171 - 00965-22533125
Fax: 00965 - 22573910
Email: attachecons@indembkwt.org
welfaresection@indembkwt.org

NOTICE
July 12, 2018

Mr. Girish Vishwanatha Reddy son of Mr. Vishwanatha Reddy Ramalinga, resident of D.No. 6. Ground floor, 5th main Krishna Layout, D C Halli, Bangalore, Pin: 560076, Karnataka, India and Ms. Angelpricilla Gunaseelan daughter of Mr. Gunaseelan Viswasam, resident of No. 178, Govindappa Lane, Kodihalli Hal, 2nd stage, 10th cross, Bangalore -560008, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (attachecons@indembkwt.org, welfaresection@indembkwt.org) I letters I telephonic calls (00965- 22550171, 00965- 22533125).

(Sanjeev-Saklani)
Attache (Consular) and
Marriage Officer.
Embassy of India, Kuwait.

Ph.00965- 22550171 - 00965-22533125
Fax: 00965 - 22573910
Email: attachecons@indembkwt.org
welfaresection@indembkwt.org

WE ARE HIRING

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LOCATION: Kuwait

PURPOSE STATEMENT:
To execute the company's operational plan within their assigned territories to deliver trade marketing, distribution, and brand objectives within trade channels and key accounts through application of the company's best practices (field position).

Knowledge, Skills & Experience
- English & Arabic speaking Graduates (a must).
- Preferably but not a must: 1-2 years' in sales/trade marketing.
- Good interpersonal skills
- Good communicator both verbally and written
- Well organised with good time management skills
- Ability to work unsupervised
- Transferable art. 18 residency
- Valid drivers licence

Benefits
- Assigned company car
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- Career Development opportunities

Please share your CV to:
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EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL
HOTLINE 128

Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 15/7/2018

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50
KAC	102	London	00:50
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15
AEE	956	ATH	02:25
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40
WAN	416D	Beirut	02:40
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40
WAN	714	AGP	02:45
KAC	418	Manila	03:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05
RJA	648	Amman	03:05
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00
JZR	551	Alexandria	04:05
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30
JZR	1541	Cairo	04:35
THY	1414	TZX	05:05
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:20
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30
QTR	8511	Doha	05:30
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55
BAW	157	London	06:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00
JZR	143	Doha	07:00
MSR	2616	Sohag	07:05
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
WAN	312	Asyut	09:50
WAN	342	Sohag	09:55
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30
SAW	703	Damascus	10:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00
WAN	134	Doha	11:10
JZR	903	Baku	11:10
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
JZR	239	Amman	13:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10
JZR	531	Asyut	13:10
RJA	644	Amman	13:20
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30
KAC	792	Madinah	13:40
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45
FEG	341	Sohag	13:50
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	13:55
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
KAC	618	Doha	14:10
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15
JZR	125	Bahrain	14:15
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KAC	364	Colombo	14:20
KAC	516	Tehran	14:20
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
KAC	304	Mumbai	15:05
KNE	529	Jeddah	15:10
OMA	645	Muscat	15:20
KAC	562	Amman	15:20
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
KAC	502	Beirut	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
KAC	154	Istanbul	15:45
SYR	341	Damascus	15:55
SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
KAC	118	New York	16:20
FDB	051	Dubai	16:20
FEG	241	Alexandria	16:45
NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50
KAC	542	Cairo	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	145	Doha	17:35
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
JZR	177	Dubai	17:40
WAN	976	Baku	17:40
QTR	1080	Doha	18:10
JZR	483	Istanbul	18:20
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
RJA	640	Amman	19:00
WAN	874	Istanbul	19:00
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
KAC	156	Istanbul	19:25
JAI	216	Delhi	19:35
KAC	776	Riyadh	19:35
RBG	555	Alexandria	19:40
KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	178	Vienna	19:55
KAC	104	London	20:00
DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:05
OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
KAC	620	Doha	20:15
KAC	166	Rome	20:25
QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
KAC	172	Frankfurt	20:45
JZR	803	Tbilisi	20:45
JZR	553	Alexandria	20:50
WAN	866	TZX	20:50
UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:15
THY	764	Istanbul	21:30
KAC	676	Dubai	21:35
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	564	Amman	21:50
QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
KAC	786	Jeddah	22:15
AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
WAN	136	Doha	22:25
WAN	118	Bahrain	22:40
JZR	185	Dubai	22:50
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
MSR	2614	Cairo	23:30
FDB	071	Dubai	23:35
PIA	205	Lahore	23:40
JZR	241	Amman	23:40

Departure Flights on Sunday 15/7/2018

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	988	Chennai	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
MSC	502	Alexandria	00:15
KAC	417	Manila	00:25
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
MSR	2615	Sohag	00:30
MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
KAC	677	Dubai	01:30
THY	773	Istanbul	01:45
KAC	363	Colombo	01:50
DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
JZR	502	Luxor	01:55
PGT	859	Istanbul	02:15
THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
AEE	957	ATH	03:15
JZR	142	Doha	03:20
UAE	854	ubai	03:30
WAN	311	Asyut	03:30
THY	769	Istanbul	3:35
WAN	341	Sohag	03:40
OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
QT	1087	Doha	04:15
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25
LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
JAI	571	Mumbai	05:00
QTR	1077	Doha	05:15
JZR	902	Baku	05:30
KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35
KAC	103	London	05:45
FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
JZR	786	Riyadh	06:05
THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
JZR	530	Asyut	06:45
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	153	Istanbul	07:00
RJA	649	Amman	07:00
QTR	8512	Doha	07:00
JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
WAN	133	Doha	07:25
RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30
KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50
KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
JZR	238	Amman	08:00
JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00
MSR	2617	AGP	08:10
BAW	156	London	08:20
KAC	165	Rome	08:25
KAC	177	Vienna	08:30
FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00
KAC	791	Madinah	09:00
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05
KAC	117	New York	09:05
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
KAC	561	Amman	09:40
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
KAC	773	Riyadh	09:45
KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
JZR	534	Cairo	09:45
UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55
KAC	101	London	10:00
KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
IRC	529	Ahwaz	10:00
KAC	617	Doha	10:10
WAN	873	Istanbul	10:15
KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25
QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
WAN	873	Istanbul	10:50
SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
IAW	158	Najaf	11:00
JZR	124	Bahrain	11:20
SAW	704	Damascus	11:30
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
WAN	965	Tbilisi	12:15
JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
JZR	144	Doha	13:55
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05
AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
RJA	645	Amman	14:15
WAN	865	TZX	14:30
JZR	802	Tbilisi	14:50
FEG	442	Asyut	14:50
IAW	158A	Al Najaf	14:55
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
KAC	563	Amman	16:10
KAC	619	Doha	16:15
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
SYR	342	Damascus	16:55
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
SAW	710	Latakia	17:00
KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
FEG	242	Alexandria	17:45
NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	240	Amman	18:30
JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
JZR	650	Lahore	18:35
WAN	135	Doha	18:40
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
RJA	641	Amman	20:00
ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
JAI	215	Delhi	20:35
DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
JZR	1540	Cairo	22:10
KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
THY	1403	AYT	22:25
UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
KAC	783	Jeddah	22:50
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15
QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40

This handout photo made available by the marine conservation organization Sea Shepherd on Friday shows what they report to be a blue whale awaiting slaughter at the Hvalur hf whaling station in Hvalfjordur in Iceland on July 7, 2018. — AFP

WHO recognizes 'compulsive sexual behavior' as mental disorder

GENEVA: The World Health Organization has recognized "compulsive sexual behavior" as a mental disorder, but said yesterday it remained unclear if it was an addiction on a par with gambling or drug abuse. The contentious term "sex addiction" has been around for decades but experts disagree over whether the condition exists. In the latest update of its catalogue of diseases and injuries around the world, the WHO takes a step towards legitimizing the concept, by acknowledging "compulsive sexual behavior disorder", or CSBD, as a mental illness.

But the UN health body stops short of lumping the condition together with addictive behaviors like substance abuse or gambling, insisting more research is needed before describing the disorder as an addiction. "Conservatively speaking, we don't feel that the evidence is there yet... that the process is equivalent to the process with alcohol or heroin," WHO expert Geoffrey Reed told AFP yesterday.

In the update of its International Classification of Diseases (ICD), published last month, WHO said CSBD was "characterized by persistent failure to control intense, repetitive sexual impulses or urges... that cause marked distress or impairment". But it said the scientific debate was still ongoing as to "whether or not the compulsive sexual behavior disorder constitutes the manifestation of a behavioral addiction".

Reed said it was important that the ICD register, which is widely used as a benchmark for diagnosis and health insurers, includes a concise definition of compulsive sexual behavior disorder to ensure those affected can get help. "There is a population of people who feel out of control with regards to their own sexual behavior and who suffer because of that," he said pointing out that their sexual behavior sometimes had "very severe consequences". "This is a genuine clinical population of people who have a legitimate health condition and who can be provided services in a legitimate way," he said.

It remains unclear how many people suffer from the disorder, but Reed said the ICD listing would likely prompt more research into the condition and its prevalence, as well as into determining the most effective treatments. "Maybe eventually we will say, yeah, it is an addiction, but that is just not where we are at this point," Reed said. But even without the addiction label, he said he believed the new categorization would be "reassuring", since it lets people know they have "a genuine condition" and can seek treatment.

Claims of "sex addiction" have increasingly been in the headlines in step with the #MeToo movement, which has seen people around the world coming forward with allegations sexual mistreatment. The uprising has led to the downfall of powerful men across industries, including disgraced Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein, who has reportedly spent months in treatment for sex addiction. Reed said he did not believe there was reason to worry that the new CSBD listing could be used by people like Weinstein to excuse alleged criminal behaviors. "It doesn't excuse sexual abuse or raping someone ... any more than being an alcoholic excuses you from driving a car when you are drunk. You have still made a decision to act," he said.

While it did not recognize sex addiction in the first update of its ICD catalogue since the 1990s, WHO did for the first time recognize video gaming as an addiction, listing it alongside addictions to gambling and drugs like cocaine. The document, which member states will be asked to approve during the World Health Assembly in Geneva next May, will take effect from Jan 1, 2022 if it is adopted. — AFP

Outrage as Iceland fishermen kill rare whale

REYKJAVIK: Is it a blue whale or not? The slaughter in Iceland of what is claimed was a member of the endangered species has triggered outrage and left experts puzzled about its true identity. "There has not been a blue whale harpooned by anyone for the last 50 years until this one," Sea Shepherd, an international non-profit marine conservation movement, said in a statement on Wednesday. The group, which published photos of the mammal being butchered for export at an Icelandic whaling station on the night of July 7, said the fishermen "posed for photos next to and even on top of the whale in a sign they knew very well this was a rare blue whale".

But Icelandic experts are not completely certain whether it is indeed the world's largest leviathan, which the International Whaling Commission has been protecting since 1966. They're also not sure if it could be the endangered fin whale, the second largest animal on the planet, which can only be legally hunted in Iceland despite an international moratorium on whaling. Kristjan Loftsson, CEO of Hvalur hf, the whaling station which slaughtered the animal, said they did so believing it was a fin whale. Most of the fin whales killed are exported as meat to Japan. "We see blue whales all the time and identify them by their blowholes...but we leave them alone," he told AFP.

For Gisli Vikingsson, a scientist at the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute in Reyjkavik, the butchered whale's characteristics are similar to both the blue and fin whale. "There is a large dorsal side with a small dorsal fin like a fin whale...this explains perhaps why it was hunted as such," he told AFP, adding its "size and markings on the side are like those of a blue whale." He added the whale could even be a hybrid species resulting from cross-breeding between the fin and blue whale, which is a rare phenomenon.

Since 1987, five such animals have been observed in Icelandic waters and they are known to be infertile. All killed whales in Iceland undergo DNA tests after the hunting season and the results are released during the fall. However, due to the controversy surrounding this particular case, a test will be done earlier than planned and the results are expected at the end of July. But Sea Shepherd said the fishing crew which butchered the animal mixed its parts with previously caught fin whales, making "it difficult or impossible to locate during potential inspections by the authorities".

"This shows how inaccurate and imperfect this hunting is and there is no need to continue it," Sigursteinn Masson, Iceland representative for the International Fund for Animal Welfare, told AFP. Should the killed whale be confirmed as a hybrid, then things could become even more complicated as there are no laws to protect them. "Hybrids are much more rarer than the blue whales," Masson said. — AFP

Kuwait security situation stable...

Continued from Page 1

brethren in Iraq would find a way to resolve their issues and bring stability back to their country.

The Kuwaiti embassy in Baghdad confirmed the safety of Kuwaiti nationals in Iraqi cities, calling for avoiding gathering places and roads. "At a time when we confirm the safety of all Kuwaiti citizens visiting Iraq, we are calling for avoiding gathering places and roads," Ambassador Salem Al-Zamanan told KUNA. He called for coordinating with the embassy in Baghdad in case of traveling to Kuwait by calling round the clock on 07802604123, 078300004444 and 0783111112222.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Airways announced halting its flights to Najaf until further notice due to the current security conditions in the city. In a statement released yesterday, Kuwait Airways said that it will either divert existing bookings for Najaf to other aviation companies or return the airfare back to clients without fees. Iraqi authorities halted flights from Al-Najaf International Airport yesterday as demonstrators protesting against a lack of services in the country broke into the airport.

Two more demonstrators were killed in southern Iraq, officials said, as protests against unemployment spread yesterday from the port city of Basra to other parts of the country including Baghdad. The deaths overnight in Maysan province on the border with Iran brought to three the number of demonstrators killed since the protests erupted Sunday in neighboring Basra. A spokesman for the Maysan health authorities, Ahmad Al-Kanani, said the pair died from gunshot wounds in the provincial capital Amarah. It was not clear who killed them but Kanani said there had been "indiscriminate gunfire" in the city.

Dozens more have been wounded in the past week, including security forces, according to medical sources. The unrest comes as Iraq struggles to rebuild after a devastating three-year war against Islamic State group militants, and with the country in political limbo following May elections. The demonstrations over unemployment, the rising cost of living and a lack of basic services escalated after a protester was killed by security forces on Sunday in Basra. Demonstrators set tyres ablaze to block roads and tried to storm government installations.

On Friday, Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi flew to Basra from Brussels, where he had attended a NATO summit, to try to restore calm. But even as he met the governor of the oil-rich province and energy chiefs, protesters took to the streets of Basra city as well as other parts of the province and the unrest spread further afield. Overnight in Maysan, several protests were held outside the headquarters of various political parties - including Abadi's Dawa Party - and some were set on fire, Iraqi media reported. A small protest also took place after midnight in the northern Baghdad district of Al-Shula amid a heavy deployment of security forces, a security source told AFP.

The source said a few protesters were still out on the streets of Al-Shula yesterday morning, adding that the demonstration was peaceful. Unidentified calls were also posted on social media for massive demonstrations to take place yesterday in Baghdad. Some urged demonstrators to head for the fortified Green Zone, an area out of bounds for most Iraqis where the country's key institutions and embassies, including the US and British missions, are located.

Yesterday, dozens of protesters rallied in different parts of Basra, including at the West Qurna and Majnoon oil fields west of the city, an AFP correspondent said. Protesters were gathered at Basra's Umm Qasr port and outside the governor's office in the center of the city. A group of demonstrators also staged a brief protest at the Safwan border crossing with neighboring Kuwait.

On Friday, hundreds of people holding Iraqi flags gathered outside the governor's office in Basra while protests also took place in the provinces of Dhi Qar and Najaf. Shiite clerics, including Moqtada Sadr whose populist coalition triumphed in May elections, have backed the protesters but urged them to refrain from violence. Sadr has sought to form a broad coalition with rivals including Abadi, but the process has been complicated by the supreme court ordering manual recounts in areas where the election was disputed.

After visiting Basra, the prime minister chaired a security cabinet in Baghdad, his office said in a statement accusing "infiltrators" of feeding on "peaceful protests to attack public and private property". "Our forces will take all the necessary measures to counter those people," the statement said. Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, had expressed solidarity with protesters, saying they faced an "extreme lack of public services" such as electricity in the suffocating summer heat. Sistani, who has millions of followers, rarely intervenes in politics, but has wide sway over public opinion. Officially, 10.8 percent of Iraqis are jobless, while youth unemployment is twice as high in a country where 60 percent of the population are aged under 24. — Agencies

Eritrea president hails unity with...

Continued from Page 1

The move left Ethiopia landlocked, and the deterioration of relations after the outbreak of the war in 1998 forced Addis Ababa to channel its foreign trade through Djibouti. The two countries showed little sign of rapprochement since the signing of the Algiers peace agreement in 2000 after a conflict which left 80,000 people dead before settling into a bitter cold war.

Analysts say the surprisingly rapid burying of the hatchet was possible only because of Abiy's ascension to the post of prime minister in April. As part of a whirlwind set of reforms, Abiy announced last month that Ethiopia would abide by a 2002 UN-backed ruling and hand back disputed border territory to Eritrea, including the flashpoint town of Badme. However Ethiopia has not announced the pullout of troops from the area. Abiy then paid a historic visit to Eritrea, where the two leaders announced the re-establishment of diplomatic and trade ties that could mean big benefits for both nations, and the wider Horn of Africa region, plagued by conflict and poverty.

The emotional reunion between the two countries has allowed residents to speak to each other by telephone for the first time in two decades as communication lines were re-opened. Direct flights are due to start next week. "Can one find appropriate words to describe the intensity of popular emotions that has gripped both countries; the depth and significance of the promising changes underway in the region!" Eritrean Information Minister Yemane Gebremeskel said on Twitter after Isaias arrived. Ethiopia's state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting Corporate said Isaias would also re-open the Eritrean embassy during his three-day stay. A state dinner in his honor will be held today.

Eritrea and Ethiopia are both among Africa's poorest nations. However, Ethiopia has seen double-digit growth in recent years and is seeking wider options for importing goods and exporting from its nascent manufacturing industry by eyeing ports in Somalia and Eritrea. Meanwhile Eritrea, one of the world's most isolated nations, has pursued policies that have hamstrung the economy by scaring off investors, including an indefinite military conscription program the UN has likened to slavery. — AFP

Pak mourns bombing that...

Continued from Page 1

"It has never been more true that Pakistan's security establishment needs to focus on security, not politics," tweeted analyst Mosharraf Zaidi as mourners gathered to bury their dead in Mastung yesterday. More funerals were planned for the afternoon.

Hospitals in the area have been placed under "emergency" management after being overwhelmed in the hours after the attack, with around 150 also wounded in the blast - many still in critical condition. "I could hear voices screaming. I tried to get up and I saw people trying to run towards the gate. They were trampling over dead bodies," survivor Rustam Raisani told AFP from his hospital bed. "We have imposed emergency (management) in the hospitals and cancelled the vacations of the doctors and paramedics," Balochistan home minister Agha Umar Bungalzai told AFP.

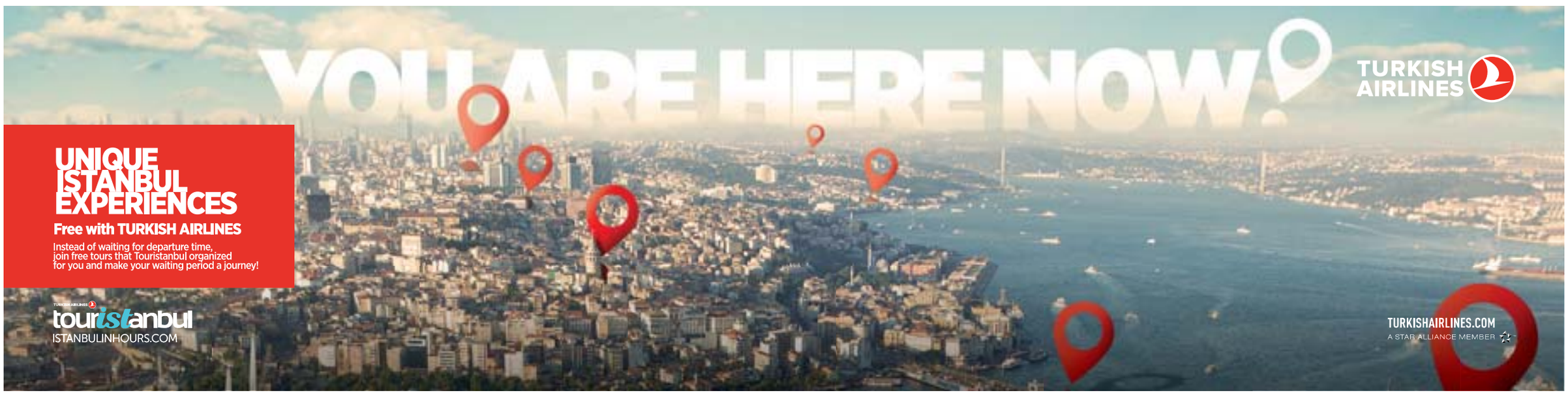
The provincial home secretary Haider Shako added that extra security forces had been deployed in "sensitive areas" and warned politicians to remain "vigilant". A caretaker government has been installed ahead of the July 25 election, and prime minister Nasirul Mulk declared today would be a day of mourning. The attack was by far the deadliest of a series of blasts at various campaign events this week that have killed at least 154 people, including two local politicians, and underscored ongoing security challenges following years of optimism over improvements.

Security analyst Rahimullah Yusufzai termed the blasts a "wave of terror" that indicated coordination between militant groups, and noted that security forces could not protect every single campaign event. But "they have been sidetracked," he added of the military, and "criticized for taking sides and focusing on politics". He predicted the bloodshed would continue "until the election and even after".

Violence has dropped significantly since the country's deadliest-ever militant attack, an assault on a school in the northwestern city of Peshawar in 2014 that left more than 150 people dead, mostly children. The military intensified operations against militants in the tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan in the wake of that attack, and security has improved dramatically.

But analysts have long warned that Pakistan is not getting to the root causes of extremism, and that militants retain the ability to carry out spectacular attacks like the blast in Mastung. "It has proved that the work that was required was not done," the head of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, said in televised comments yesterday. He warned that unless terrorism is wiped out "these incidents will continue to happen".

Lahore resident Shahzad Anwar told AFP yesterday that such an attack was the result of the "failure of security institutions". "It's wrong. It should not happen. The security institutions should work on this," he said. Sharif's return is set to increase political tensions as his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz seeks to fend off a challenge from the party of cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan at the polls. Sharif has been banned from holding political office, but analysts have said his return is aimed at reinvigorating support for his party, now led by younger brother Shahbaz, which is limping towards the vote after a lacklustre campaign. The military has already warned of a security threat in the run-up to the vote, and said it will deploy more than 370,000 soldiers on polling day. —AFP



Reputations burnished, others buffeted at 'best World Cup ever'

This is progress, this is better than the past: Infantino

MOSCOW: A stage for new beginnings, a cementer of fortunes, a last resting place for life-long dreams, the 2018 soccer World Cup was so much more than a month-long festival of goals and glory. "The best World Cup ever," was FIFA President Gianni Infantino's verdict, and there was much evidence to support his view.

Host Russia used the extravaganza to detoxify its global brand and enhance its reputation by breaking down a number of negative stereotypes, and showcasing itself as a nation that can host huge events and welcome tens of thousands of global visitors.

The Russian team, too, came out of the tournament having passed with flying colours. Ranked a lowly 70th in the world at the start and on the back of a nine-month winless run, there were real fears the team could fail to win a match. The Russians need not have worried as Stanislav Cherchesov's men hammered Saudi Arabia 5-0, finished second in their group, beat mighty Spain in a penalty shootout in the last 16, before finally falling to Croatia in the same fashion in the quarters.

Croatia went on to reach their first World Cup final, where they will play France today, in a remarkable achievement for a nation of some four million people. The Croatians bettered their previous best of a semi-final spot in 1998 — their first World Cup as an independent nation — with a thrilling extra-time victory over England.

Gareth Southgate's young English side had been seeking to reach the final for the first time since their victory in 1966, but the Croatians were too tough, coming back from an early English goal to prevail. They had come from behind in all three knockout games, showing admirable spirit and remarkable fitness.

Regardless of what happens in the remaining two matches, the reputations of both Croatia and England were greatly enhanced by their runs in the tournament. By no means were all reputations burnished in Russia, however, as some of the biggest names in sport flopped on the biggest stage. Champions Germany suffered their earliest World Cup exit in 80 years when they finished bottom of Group F following defeats by Mexico and South Korea, triggering an inquisition back home. Argentina and Lionel Messi needed a last-gasp goal to scramble through their group, despite a 3-0 loss to Croatia and a 1-1 draw with Iceland, before being beaten by France in the last 16.

Messi was largely invisible throughout. Not so their other talisman, Diego Maradona, whose matchday antics were captured on television. The low point being when the once-great soccer star gave an obscene middle-finger gesture with both hands to fans of Nigeria after a late group-stage winner for Argentina.

"From the hands of God, to the fingers of shame", read one headline in Latin America. The stock of Neymar also took a hit when the Brazilian striker-the world's most expensive footballer-left the tournament after Brazil's quarter-final loss to Belgium with the sound of laughter ringing in his ears.

Even though he undoubtedly came in for some tough tackles, his over-the-top histrionics and gravity-defying spins and rolls along the ground left pundits and commentators half-amused and half-outraged and launched many social media memes. On the whole, though, it has been a clean tournament, with some superb refereeing. Up to and including the semis there had been only four red cards - the lowest since 1978.

The dreaded spectre of VAR proved to be an overblown fear, and instead of breaking up the rhythm of the game, it eliminated most cheating, helped referees act on things they had missed and provided elevated levels of drama. "This is progress, this is better than the past," Infantino said. "VAR is not changing football, it is cleaning football, making it more honest and transparent and helping referees to make the right decisions." Honesty and transparency haven't exactly been the buzzwords around football in recent years, so if Infantino has that right, the reputation of the sport itself might be the biggest beneficiary of Russia 2018. — Reuters

MOSCOW: File photo shows Croatia fans cheer before the Russia 2018 World Cup semi-final football match between Croatia and England at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow on July 11, 2018. —AFP

Can Croatian mental fortitude defy physiology in final?

By Ricardo Guerra

KUWAIT: When France plays Croatia in the World Cup final today, they will have a significant but often overlooked advantage. Croatia will go into the match against France with 24 hours less time to rest due to the fact that they played their semifinal game one day after the French faced Belgium. The calendar of the World Cup competition gives a major advantage to one of the semifinalists. An extra 24 hours of rest becomes even more of a factor when you have only three or four days between matches.

The lost day of rest isn't Croatia's only disadvantage: The Croatian players, led by Zlatko Dalic, are also coming into the final having recently played an exhausting semifinal match against England. In that semifinal, they played two halves of extra time. And in the previous game, the Croatians played a fatiguing match in the quarterfinals against the Russians. In that game, extra time was followed by the emotional burden of penalty kicks.

It should be noted that the Russian squad in this tournament has been in possession of astounding levels of fitness. Hence, the Croatians had to pull everything from deep inside the gas tank. As a result, several Croatian players seemed physically battered after the hard-fought duel.

Making the disparity worse still is the fact that in all their matches, the French have not played a single bout of extra time. Consequently, they have been able to conserve energy and move into the final game with considerable capital. It will clearly be a huge challenge for Croatia to recover in time to play with the energy and vitality necessary to win. They will definitely need the encouragement of the thousands of Croatian fans who have inundated Moscow. France's physiological edge may also confer a psychological advantage in that match. In the backs of their minds, the Croatians will know that they may be entering the game with less fuel in the tank, and having those thoughts won't help, especially in a game of this magnitude-one that surely will be the most important in these players' lives.

But we must note that there is a trait of the utmost importance in sports that is often overlooked. Will, or the psychological fortitude of any given team or player, is one of the most difficult and least quantifiable elements in sports. Football experts, pundits and statisticians often consider several elements related to the game, such as individual talent, technique, fitness and tactical prowess, but many observers let will slip by unnoticed, perhaps because this attribute is usually observed only in times of tribulation, defeat or extreme adversity-that is, when a team is losing. Yet the Croatians showed plenty of blood, sweat and tears when they faced England. Their mental fortitude was apparent even with a fresher England that had not played an extra set of overtime in their previous match. The main question we have to ask is how they were able to show so much grit against England. In answering that question, we have to go back to history.

It may be worthwhile to note the traumatic recent history of the Croatian people: Their unity may have been forged from the bloody conflict that followed the collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Some players in the squad directly faced the brunt of that trauma. Undoubtedly, events such as these can galvanize a group of united men to accomplish extraordinary feats.

If in the final, the Croatian team is able to once again muster this psychological strength to offset the dramatic physiological disadvantage that they face, it would be simply mind boggling. They have already defied the odds against England. The island should have had a physical advantage, since they had not played overtime just before that encounter.

But the odds against France are of a significantly higher magnitude. It would take a gargantuan effort by the Croatians to win the final. France is significantly better than England in all aspects of match play. They are more organized tactically, and in all positions, their players' individual skills exceed those of their English counterparts. Furthermore, they will benefit from the physiological advantage we discussed-an extra day of rest and being spared any extra-time play.

It is evident that both teams have made use of many schemes and of even more complex strategies to shorten their recovery time. However, the success of these strategies depends on how organized, committed and persistent the staff of a team is in mobilizing them.

In fact, even if the Croatians use all these strategies, we still cannot be sure they will have adequate time to fully recover, especially given the toll taken by all the other tough matches they have played throughout the tournament. The trauma to physiological systems and subsystems may be too overwhelming for them to come through again.

If Croatia wins, it would defy well-established notions within the field of exercise physiology. Moreover, there is no precedent, at least in World Cup competition, of a team reaching the finals and winning after playing three bouts of overtime in their previous matches. But then again, its one game, and we cannot be sure that the French will show up in full force for the encounter. Let's not forget that they flopped in the final of the Euro against Portugal. And strange things happen in the game of football. Sometimes unknown forces affect the game, and randomness is all around us. Black swan events do happen; Croatia may yet have us all running off to read Nassim Nicholas Taleb. Last but not least, an emotionally resilient mind can accomplish great feats. If the beast mode within the Croatian spirit is let loose once again, France had better watch out.

Goals, Neymar and Kalinic: Best and worst of WCup

MOSCOW: Following is a factbox on the best goals, most memorable moments and biggest disappointments of the 2018 World Cup:

No room for Lionel Messi in this list, but Cristiano. Ronaldo bags a spot with some individual brilliance that will live long in the memory. Having led Spain twice, but trailing 3-2 in the dying minutes of their opening group game, Portugal won a free kick from 25 yards out.

Cometh the hour, cometh the man ... Ronaldo hitched his shorts up to Y-front proportions and nailed it, smashing and curling the effort past David De Gea to complete his hat-trick.

Perhaps predictably, the world's most expensive footballer, Neymar, would be expected to claim one of the more memorable moments of this World Cup. Maybe not like this, though. While the Brazilian did come in for some tough tackling during the tournament, his over-the-top histrionics, swan-like dives, howls, and gravity-defying spins and rolls along the ground left pundits and commentators chuckling, and launched a thousand social media memes.

There was an element of farce to South Korean Son Heung-min's goal against champions Germany, but the sheer weight of its impact ensures his strike wins a place in this list. The Germans had not been eliminated in the opening round for 80 years, but in the dying seconds of a dramatic night in Kazan, that is precisely what happened.

Germany had pushed everybody, including goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, forward in search of an equaliser allowing Son to sprint onto a long clearance and roll the ball into an empty German net, consigning them to bottom spot in their group.

Adding to the piquancy of the moment, the South Koreans celebrated crazily, in the mistaken belief their victory would see them reach the last 16, when in fact Sweden and Mexico advanced from that group.

Everybody knew that England could not win penalty shootouts at World Cups - they had last lost all three previous World Cup deciders (1990, 1998 and 2006) not to mention losing three out of four in European Championships.

So when Colombia equalised in injury time, and the sides were still dead-locked after extra-time, the smart money was on the South Americans to reach the quarter-finals. It had looked like 'same ole, same ole' when Jordan Henderson's spot kick was saved by David Ospina, but Mateus Uribe hit the bar and Jordan Pickford saved from Carlos Bacca, leaving Eric Dier to squeeze the decisive penalty home and send England through.—Reuters

Organisers say World Cup has transformed perception of Russia

MOSCOW: Russia's World Cup organisers said yesterday that the tournament had so far been a success and would help to improve the country's image abroad. With the third-place game and the final remaining, Alexei Sorokin, CEO of the local organising committee, said the country had welcomed more than one million foreign guests during the tournament and that its 12 World Cup stadiums had had a 98-percent occupancy rate. The month-long tournament, which ends with the final between France and Croatia on Sunday at Moscow's Luzhniki stadium, has so far been without major security incidents. Pre-event fears of racism and hooligan violence have not materialised.

"It changed the perception of Russia abroad," Sorokin told a news conference. "It showed who we are. We showed ourselves as an open, hospitable, welcoming nation." Sorokin said that the fan zones set up in the 11 host cities, including Moscow, St Petersburg and Sochi, had been visited by more than seven million people during the tournament so far.

Although fans from European countries were outnumbered by their Latin American counterparts, Sorokin said Europe's interest in the World Cup picked up as the tournament went on. "We can only think and speculate why there was not a huge number, why didn't European nations come in huge numbers to support their teams," Sorokin said. "But the truth of the matter is that on the way they really got a taste of the World Cup." Citing an increase in fan ID requests by English fans as the tournament went on, with England reaching the third-place playoff, Sorokin said prejudices about Russia had been broken during the World Cup.

"You see that we did our best to welcome any fans from any country, from any corner of the world," he said. Russia's success on the pitch made the World Cup especially appealing for the host country. Russia qualified automatically for the finals as hosts and entered the tournament as the lowest-ranked team.

But wins against Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the group stage allowed Russia to reach the World Cup knockout stage for the first time in post-Soviet history. Russia went on to eliminate Spain in the round of 16 before losing to finalists Croatia on penalty kicks in the quarter-finals.

"It changed not only the perception of Russia abroad, it changed us," Sorokin said. "We now believe that we can. We can play football well, we can organise events of global importance well." — Reuters

Justin Smoak homers twice as Blue Jays crush Red Sox

Bieber hold Yankees to four runs on five hits

BOSTON: Justin Smoak hit two home runs and had four RBIs as the visiting Toronto Blue Jays emphatically ended the Boston Red Sox's major-league-leading 10-game winning streak with a 13-7 victory Friday night at Fenway Park. Smoak (3-for-5) tied teammate Yangervis Solarte for the team lead in home runs with 16. Kevin Pillar (4-for-5) also drove in four runs and Dwight Smith Jr. had a two-run blast and three RBIs for Toronto, which had lost four of five. Mookie Betts (3-for-4) hit two triples and had two RBIs for Boston. The Red Sox lost for the first time since dropping the rubber match of an important three-game series against the rival Yankees in New York, 11-1, on July 1. Red Sox starter Rick Porcello (11-4) surrendered a season-high eight runs over two-plus innings. He allowed seven hits and walked four batters while striking out two, suffering his first loss in six starts since June 10.

INDIANS 6, YANKEES 5

Rookie Shane Bieber pitched into the eighth inning as host Cleveland held off New York. Bieber (5-1) held the Yankees to four runs (three earned) on five hits. Three of the runs were in the fifth after the Indians built a 4-0 lead. Cleveland closer Cody Allen opened the ninth by allowing Giancarlo Stanton's 23rd homer and a single to Greg Bird. After rookie Miguel Andujar hit into a double play, Allen walked Neil Walker but retired pinch hitter Didi Gregorius and notched his 19th save in 20 chances.

PIRATES 7, BREWERS 3

Gregory Polanco homered and rookie Nick Kingham struck out nine as Pittsburgh topped visiting Milwaukee. Josh Bell had four hits and two RBIs, and Colin Moran had three hits and an RBI for Pittsburgh, which has won three in a row and five of six. Brewers reliever Brandon Woodruff, recalled earlier in the day, allowed one hit in three scoreless innings and hit his first career homer. Travis Shaw also homered for Milwaukee, which has lost three straight and five of seven.

RANGERS 5, ORIOLES 4

Ryan Rua hit a tiebreaking pinch-hit three-run homer in the top of the seventh inning, leading Texas to victory at Baltimore. The game was tied at 1 when Robinson Chirinos got a one-out single off Baltimore starter Alex Cobb (2-12). Tanner Scott came on and walked Joey Gallo. Rua then came on to bat for Carlos Tocci and homered to left on a 1-0 pitch, a three-run shot that gave Texas a 4-1 lead. Nomar Mazara added an RBI double three batters later that made it 5-1.

PHILLIES 2, MARLINS 0

Jake Arrieta pitched seven scoreless innings to lead Philadelphia past host Miami. Relievers Victor Arano and Pat Neshek (first save of the season) each pitched a scoreless inning to complete the shutout. Arrieta allowed just three hits and three walks, striking out three. He was supported by an RBI double from Aaron Altherr, who also started a run-saving play in the sixth inning. Maikel Franco added a solo homer in the ninth.

METS 4, NATIONALS 2

Noah Syndergaard wriggled in and out of trouble over five innings and earned the win in his first start in seven weeks, helping his cause with an RBI single in the second inning of New York's victory over visiting Washington. With the win in the second game of the four-game series, the Mets improved to 11-27 since June 1. The Nationals have lost 12 of 18. Syndergaard (5-1), who was sidelined with a strained ligament in his right index finger suffered in his previous start May 25, allowed one run on seven hits and two walks while striking out three. Seth Lugo tossed two scoreless innings before Robert Gsellman allowed one run over two innings to earn his fourth save.

DIAMONDBACKS 2, BRAVES 1

Shortstop Nick Ahmed had two hits, including the go-ahead single in the seventh inning, as Arizona won at Atlanta. Ahmed drove home Daniel Descalso, who had drawn a one-out walk from Atlanta's Sam Freeman (2-5) and advanced to second on Dan Winkler's wild pitch. Arizona starter Zack Godley (11-6) allowed one run in six innings. Yoshihisa Hirano, Archie Bradley and Brad Boxberger each pitched one scoreless inning to complete the game. Boxberger struck out the side in the ninth and earned his 23rd save.

ASTROS 3, TIGERS 0

Alex Bregman set a career high for homers and Dallas Keuchel posted his third scoreless start on the season as host Houston beat Detroit. Bregman clubbed a two-run blast off Tigers right-hander Mike Fiers (6-6) in the first inning, driving in George Springer and setting a new single-season mark with his 20th home run. He has recorded half of his season total since June 20, batting .344 with 22 RBIs during that 22-game stretch. Keuchel (7-8) continued his stellar pitching of late, allowing six hits and one walk over six scoreless innings. He recorded four strikeouts, including two in succession to close the third inning after surrendering consecutive hits to lead off that frame.

WHITE SOX 9, ROYALS 3

James Shields pitched 6 2/3 effective innings, and Chicago held off a late rally to defeat visiting Kansas City. Jose Abreu, Leury Garcia and Omar Narvaez hit home runs for the White Sox, who won consecutive games for the first time since taking three in a row from June 24-27. The Royals lost for the 12th time in their past 13 games and dropped to 5-30 since June 3. Shields (4-10) allowed four runs (two earned) on five hits. He walked two and struck out seven. Joakim Soria struck out two of the three batters he faced in the ninth for his 14th save of the season.

TWINS 11, RAYS 8

Joe Mauer homered and drove in four runs and Jake Cave had three hits, including a double and triple, and had two RBIs and two runs scored to lead Minnesota over visiting Tampa Bay. Robbie Grossman also had three hits, and Mauer, Eddie Rosario and Jorge Polanco each had two as Minnesota, which finished with 15 hits, won for the eighth time in nine games. Trevor Hildenberger (2-2), who struck out all three batters he faced in the seventh inning, was awarded the victory. Jake Odorizzi, traded to the Twins on Feb. 17 after pitching in 127 games over five seasons for Tampa Bay, struggled in his first start against his old team, allowing six runs (five earned) on eight hits and a walk in just 4 1/3 innings.

REDS 9, CARDINALS 1

Matt Harvey allowed only one run in five innings, and Dilson Herrera and Scooter Gennett hit home runs as visiting Cincinnati continued its torrid play with a rout at St. Louis. Harvey (5-5) allowed just four hits, struck out five and walked two while winning for the fourth time in his past five starts. Carlos Martinez (6-5), who had won his past three starts, pitched five innings and allowed three runs and six hits. He struck out four, walked two and hit a batter. — Reuters

BOSTON: Sam Travis #59 of the Boston Red Sox slides safely past the tag of Russell Martin #55 of the Toronto Blue Jays in the second inning of a game at Fenway Park on Friday in Boston, Massachusetts. —AFP

Sri Lanka beat S Africa by 278 runs in 1st Test

SRI LANKA: South Africa collapsed dramatically against Sri lanka's spin to crash to 73 all out in the first Test in Galle yesterday, their lowest total since readmission to international cricket.

The dismal performance came a day after they were bowled out for just 126, which had been their previous lowest Test innings in Sri Lanka.

Offspinner Dilruwan Perera took six for 32, and veteran left-arm spinner Rangana Herath claimed three for 32, as the pair bowled in an unbroken partnership for 28 overs, after Sri Lanka set South Africa a target of 352 for victory.

Herath moved to ninth on the all-time wicket tally, with 423 career dismissals to his name, while Perera's five-wicket haul was the sixth of his career.

South Africa's match aggregate of 199 was 20 runs fewer than Sri Lanka opener Dimuth Karunaratne's individual score across both innings.

Only three of the visitors made it into double figures, and the highest partnership yielded just 22, as batsmen repeatedly fell in their attempts to take on the Sri Lanka spinners.

South Africa's top scorer was Vernon Philander, who made 22 not out, with opener Aiden Markram batting out the most deliveries, facing 46 balls for his 19. Perera made the first breakthrough in the third over after lunch, having opener Dean Elgar stumped, after the batsman ran down the pitch and failed to connect with a turning delivery.

Hashim Amla was caught at leg slip for a duck in Perera's next over, and Temba Bavuma was caught for two by the same fielder shortly after, reducing South Africa to 24 for 3. The wickets continued to tumble as Herath began to strike as well, with the next three batsmen out for 11 runs in the space of four overs.

It was not until left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj joined Philander at the crease with the score on 36 for 6 that South Africa began to show any resistance, and even that partnership was snuffed out in 22 balls.

Left-arm wristspinner Lakshan Sandakan was required only to take the final wicket of the innings, while paceman and stand-in captain Suranga Lakmal did not bowl himself in this innings at all.

South Africa had begun the day 272 runs in arrears, but had bowled with discipline to remove the last six Sri Lanka wickets for 79 runs.

Kagiso Rabada had struck twice in an over in the first hour of the day, before spinners Maharaj, Tabraiz Shamsi, and Dale Steyn took one wicket apiece to finish the innings off.

Sri Lanka's second innings 190 was built on 35 from Angelo Mathews, and a stroke-filled 33 off 46 balls from Lakmal, who came in at No. 9. South Africa were always going to struggle with a target of 352, but the rate at which they lost their wickets will be cause for serious concern ahead of the second Test in Colombo. —AFP

Root century sets up England's series-levelling win over India

LONDON: Joe Root's composed hundred laid the platform for England's 86-run win over India in the second one-day international at Lord's yesterday. Victory saw 2019 World Cup hosts England, first in the ODI rankings to India's second, level the three-match series at 1-1 ahead of Tuesday's finale at Headingley-Root's Yorkshire home ground.

Test skipper Root's 113, allied to fifties from white-ball captain Eoin Morgan and David Willey, guided England to 322 for seven. This was significantly more than their 268 all out during an eight-wicket loss in Thursday's series-opener at Trent Bridge and meant even India's powerful batting line-up faced a degree of scoreboard pressure.

England's pacemen then followed up by reducing India to 60 for three before they were all out for 236, with fast bowler Liam Plunkett taking four for 46.

Rohit Sharma, fresh from back-to-back hundreds, including a superb 137 not out on Thursday, and Shikhar Dhawan shared a brisk first-wicket stand of 49. But England were gifted a breakthrough when Sharma (15) was bowled by fast bowler Mark Wood after an ugly slog across the line.

Dhawan made a rapid 36, including six fours, before carving a wide ball from left-arm quick Willey to Ben Stokes at backward point. KL Rahul then fell for a duck when he was brilliantly caught by wicket-keeper Jos Buttler, who dived low to his left to hold an inside edge off Plunkett. But while India captain Virat Kohli, one of the world's leading batsmen, and Suresh Raina were at the crease, the tourists' hopes were intact. India needed at least one of the duo, however, to make a really big score but instead they both fell in the 40s.

Kohli's patient 45, featuring just two fours, ended when he played across the line to a Moeen Ali off-break that kept low and was plumb lbw. With the run-rate climbing, leg-spinner Adil Rashid, who took an impressive two for 38 in 10 overs, bowled Raina for 46 with a ball that spun past the left-hander's intended sweep.

And when Buttler, diving well down the legside, caught the big-hitting Hardik Pandya (21) off Plunkett, India were deep in trouble at 191 for six with 11 overs left. With India's situation increasingly desperate, MS Dhoni (37) holed out off Plunkett before Yuzvendra Chahal was out off the last ball of India's 50 overs. England fans among a packed crowd at a sunny Lord's might have feared the worst when India left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who finished with stunning figures of six for 25 at Trent Bridge, again took early wickets. As he had done in Nottingham, Kuldeep struck with the second ball of his first over but this time his final figures were a more modest three for 68 after again removing openers Jonny Bairstow (38) and Jason Roy (40).—AFP

LONDON: England's Jason Roy bats during the second One Day International (ODI) cricket match between England and India, at Lord's Cricket Ground in London yesterday. — AFP

Crusaders cruise into play-offs, Rebels hopes on hold

SYDNEY: Defending champions Canterbury Crusaders eased into the Super Rugby play-offs with a 54-17 thrashing of the Auckland Blues yesterday, while the Melbourne Rebels hopes of qualifying hung in the balance. The Rebels went down to the Otago Highlanders 43-37 in Dunedin after leaking 19 points late in the game which left their fate in the hands of the Coastal Sharks and Jaguares who clash later in the weekend in the final match of the regular season.

Australian conference champions NSW Waratahs were upset 40-31 by the ACT Brumbies in Sydney a week out from the finals. The Crusaders already had the top spot sewn up and were able to score points when it mattered against a poorly-performed Blues side.

But despite the eight-tries-to-three hiding, Crusaders captain Sam Whitelock was not totally happy. "Definitely that middle part. We'll have a good review," he said referring to the Blues' two second half tries. "We gave away a lot of penalties, we didn't learn from our mistakes and if you give any side a number of opportunities they're going to score."

Tries to Jack Goodhue, George Bridge and Seta Tamanivalu saw the Crusaders lead 19-5 at the break with the Blues sole points coming from a Melani Nanai try. Bridge was to score two more tries in the second half to go equal top of the try scoring list with 14 for the season.

Although the Blues had parity with possession they lacked the Crusaders ability to recycle quick ball which nullified their attempts to build momentum until midway through the second spell when they bounced back with two tries.

One was a penalty try from a rare dominant scrum, and Nanai followed with his second to close the gap to 26-17. That was enough for the Crusaders to put the foot down again which saw Bridge score twice more with a try each to Whitelock and Bryn Hall.

The Rebels, looking to secure a play-off berth for the first time since they joined the competition in 2011 were the dominant force in their clash with the Highlanders until the final 17 minutes.

They had built a 34-22 lead, masterminded by fly-half Reece Hodge who finished with a match haul 29 points from three tries, four conversions and two penalties. The Highlanders were already assured of a quarter-final berth before kick off, rested most of their All Blacks including Ben and Aaron Smith. But when staring defeat in the face, the makeshift Highlanders scored three tries in 12 minutes to confirm their sixth place on the table and the Rebels had a question mark over their future. Hodge said the Rebels only had themselves to blame if they do miss the play-offs. "We were up by 13 or 14 points at one stage and we can't afford to slip against a team like the Highlanders. Hopefully we get another chance next week. If not that's the way it goes."

Less than a year after the Rebels' Super Rugby future was in doubt, during tense negotiations to trim the number of Australian sides in the competition, they have bounced back to win seven matches so far this year compared to one in 2017.

The Waratahs needed only a win to finish in second spot, guaranteeing the right to host two consecutive finals, but they fizzled against the Brumbies. Three Brumbies tries in the first 20 minutes blew the game open, in one of the ACT's best outings of the season and the momentum the Waratahs had built in recent weeks was sapped out of them along the way. — AFP

SNIPPETS

Croatia fans hope to settle old score at WCup final with France

'They owe us and they will pay us back'

MOSCOW: Croatian soccer fans streaming into Moscow for today's World Cup final between Croatia and France are hoping their team can settle an old score with the French dating back to the 1998 tournament.

That year, Croatia's World Cup dreams were cut short as France clawed back from a goal down in the semi-final to beat Croatia 2-1, going on to win the tournament. "They owe us and they will pay us back," said Drazen Karakasic, a 47-year-old banker from Zagreb, who was wearing his team's jersey in Moscow.

A day ahead of the final, Croatians in red-and-white chequered hats waved national flags and chanted on a pedestrian street that has become popular with football fans in Moscow. "They are fighting all the time," Croatian fan Nikola Kresic said of his country's soccer team.

"Maybe we don't have the best team but they've got the biggest heart for sure." The success of Croatia, a country of 4.2 million, has come as a surprise even to some Croatians who have been scrambling to secure tickets for the final and flights to Russia. It has been a reunion of sorts for Croatians living in Moscow.

For Nicolas Grbac, who has not lived in his native Croatia since he left as a child in 1989 ahead of the violent break-up of Yugoslavia, the influx of fans from his homeland has made him feel at home.

"It's really great for me because of all the people from my country, even from my hometown," said Grbac, who works on the street most popular with fans. "It's a big football party." There were fewer French fans visible in central Moscow yesterday, though those present included dedicated supporters such as Akim Snouci from Paris who has been in Russia since the beginning of the tournament.

MOSCOW: Croatia's midfielder Luka Modric (L) and Croatia's defender Dejan Lovren attend a training session at the Luzhniki training field in Moscow yesterday on the eve of the Russia 2018 World Cup final football match between France and Croatia. — AFP

"I don't think it will be a huge win (for France)," he said. "There are no small teams. I'll be pleased if we win 1-0." Snouci said he had one regret: his presence at the World Cup final in Moscow today means that he will not make it to the wild street celebrations that will erupt in Paris if France win. "I won't be at the gathering on the Champs-Elysees," he said. "You can't cut yourself in half." — Reuters

Sarri appointed Chelsea's manager

LONDON: Maurizio Sarri has succeeded Antonio Conte as Chelsea manager on a three-year deal, the club announced yesterday. The 59-year-old former Napoli head coach becomes Roman Abramovich's ninth full-time manager in his 15 years as owner less than 24 hours after Conte parted company with the club he led to a league and FA Cup title.

Chelsea director Marina Granovskaia said: "We are delighted to welcome Maurizio and are looking forward to him bringing his football philosophy to Chelsea." Sarri, a chain-smoking former banker, said he would be starting his new job "and meeting the players" on Monday ahead of Chelsea' pre-season Australia tour.

"I hope we can provide some entertaining football for our fans, and that we will be competing for trophies at the end of the season, which is what this club deserves," he said. Winning trophies didn't save Conte being shown the Stamford Bridge exit door as he was dismissed after guiding Chelsea to the FA Cup in May. His days were numbered after he fell out with the board and senior players. Chelsea believe they have got in Sarri an astute tactician who produces sides playing exciting football with his three years at Napoli harvesting two second-placed finishes in Serie A.

"Maurizio's Napoli side played some of the most exciting football in Europe, impressing with their attacking approach and dynamism, and his coaching methods significantly improved the players at his disposal," noted Granovskaia.

"He has plenty of experience in Serie A and the Champions League and we know he is relishing the chance to work in the Premier League." She added: "He has plenty of experience in Serie A and the Champions League and we know he is relishing the chance to work in the Premier League."

Chelsea finally put an end to Conte's two year reign on Friday. The former Italy national coach returned to take training this week but the writing was on the wall and the drawn out process was reportedly due to how much compensation the club should pay Napoli for Sarri. Conte began his tenure with a bang, lifting the Premier League title in his first season, but an FA Cup win wasn't enough to save him even though he has the best win percentage 65.1% of any of Chelsea's managers in the Premier League era. —AFP

Maurizio Sarri

World Cup — road to the final

MOSCOW: France play Croatia in the World Cup final at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium today. Here is each team's path to the showpiece match.

FRANCE

Group stage

France had a helping hand from the video assistant referee (VAR) in their World Cup opener and a dash of good fortune when Paul Pogba's effort deflected off Australia's Aziz Behich and into the net to seal a 2-1 win. A low-key 1-0 victory against Peru put them in a prime position to qualify and a 0-0 draw against Denmark ensured they topped their group.

Last 16

A 4-3 win against Lionel Messi's Argentina was one of the standout matches of the tournament. Goals from Angel Di Maria and Gabriel Mercado cancelled out an early Antoine Griezmann penalty before Benjamin Pavard struck a wonderful equaliser and teenager Kylian Mbappe scored twice. A late Sergio Aguero goal was not enough to save Argentina.

Quarter-final

France had far too much quality for a Uruguay side missing in-form forward Edinson Cavani, winning 2-0. Defender Raphael Varane headed France ahead towards the end of the first half and Griezmann scored thanks to a terrible error by goalkeeper Fernando Muslera.

Semi-final

France knew they had a tough job on their hands to contain a Belgium side boasting Eden Hazard, Kevin De Bruyne and Romelu Lukaku but for the second consecutive match they kept a clean sheet. Samuel Umtiti scored the winner in the second half from Griezmann's corner to take the team through to their third World Cup final as 1-0 winners.

CROATIA

Group stage

Croatia were one of only three teams in Russia to win all three of their group matches, beating Nigeria 2-0 in their opener and Iceland 2-1 in their final game. But their standout performance came in their second match, when they swept aside two-time winners Argentina 3-0 to make a huge statement of intent.

Last 16

Goalkeeper Danijel Subasic was the hero, saving three penalties in the shootout as Croatia squeezed past Denmark. Earlier, they had conceded a goal in the opening minute but hit back quickly to equalise through Mario Mandzukic. Luka Modric missed a penalty shortly before the end of extra-time but Croatia survived.

Quarter-final

Croatia looked like they would have too much quality for a solid but limited Russia side but were again taken to extra-time and penalties. Goals from Andrej Kramaric and Domagoj Vida cancelled out a Denis Cheryshev opener but Croatia watched in agony as Mario Fernandes snatched a late equaliser. Ivan Rakitic struck the decisive penalty to send his side through to the semi-finals.

Semi-final

Croatia were again forced to dig deep against England. Zlatko Dalic's side looked in deep trouble after conceding a early goal in Moscow but regrouped to equalise midway through the second half. Despite dominating the second period they were unable to force a winner until deep into extra-time, when Mandzukic struck to break English hearts and win the match 2-1. — AFP

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Kerber stuns Serena in Wimbledon final

Weary Nadal bows out of Wimbledon with pride

LONDON: Germany's Angelique Kerber (L) holds the winner's trophy, the Venus Rosewater Dish, after her women's singles final victory over US player Serena Williams on the twelfth day of the 2018 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon, southwest London, yesterday. Kerber won the match 6-3, 6-3.—AFP

LONDON: Angelique Kerber became the first German woman to win Wimbledon for 22 years as the 11th seed shattered Serena Williams' bid for Grand Slam history with a shock 6-3, 6-3 victory in yesterday's final.

Kerber avenged her defeat against Williams in the 2016 Wimbledon title match, overwhelming the seven-time champion with a stunning 65-minute upset on Centre Court. "I knew I had to play my best tennis against a champion like Serena," Kerber said.

"It was my second chance to play in the final. I think I'm the next one after Steffi who won. That's amazing." Williams had hoped to equal Margaret Court's record of 24 Grand Slam singles titles by winning her first major prize since becoming a mother in September.

The 36-year-old, who last won a Grand Slam at the 2017 Australian Open, went into the final as the title favourite, even though she was playing only the fourth tournament of her post-pregnancy comeback.

But instead world number 10 Kerber sprang a huge surprise, making her Germany's first female champion at the All England Club since Steffi Graf in 1996. "It's obviously disappointing but I am just getting started," said an emotional Williams after losing in the Wimbledon final for the first time since 2008. "For all you mums out there I was playing for you. I really tried." Graf helped Kerber get her game on track earlier in the her career, so it was an especially sweet moment for the 30-year-old to follow in her footsteps at Wimbledon.

Kerber had endured a significant slump last year after winning her previous major titles at the Australian and US Opens in 2016. But, back to her best on the grass at Wimbledon, she needed only 11 winners and one ace to deny an oddly nervous Serena, who contributed to her own downfall with a whopping 24 unforced errors, compared to only five from Kerber.

In the first Wimbledon final for 41 years to feature two women 30 or older, Serena was cheered on by her friend the Duchess of Sussex, golf legend Tiger Woods and Formula One ace Lewis Hamilton. Left needing several life-saving operations to deal with the threat of blood clots after Olympia's birth, Williams was unable to walk for six weeks and even now is still haunted by harrowing flashbacks to that period.

Winning Wimbledon with Olympia at the tournament with her was supposed to be the crowning glory of her return to the top. But, foreshadowing the pain to come, Serena's 30th Grand Slam final got off to a rocky start as she dropped her serve with four unforced errors in the opening game.

Play had started two hours late due to the conclusion of Novak Djokovic's win over Rafael Nadal in the men's semi-finals, and it was Serena who looked more affected by the delay She briefly hit back, breaking to love in the fourth game, but then produced another error-strewn effort, including two double faults, to gift a 4-3 lead to Kerber.

Although Williams was on a 20-match winning run at Wimbledon and had lost only one set en route to the final, she was completely out of sorts, spraying wild groundstrokes wide time and again.

On break point, the left-hander landed the knockout blow with a fierce forehand winner down the line that left Williams grasping in vain to reach it.

When Williams made another mistake to lose the next game, she gestured to her coaching team with a look of depair. Her agony only increased with a woeful volley that flew long to put Kerber within two points of the title. Moments later, Serena's misery was complete as a tame return left Kerber wiping away tears of joy.

Earlier, Rafael Nadal said he was proud and had nothing to reproach himself for after losing a top-quality Wimbledon semi-final to great rival Novak Djokovic yesterday. The two-day, five-hour-15-minute match of breathtaking shotplay and tiny margins between two giants of modern tennis ended 6-4 3-6 7-6(9) 3-6 10-8 in Djokovic's favour.

"Nothing to complain. I think I played a great match. I have not much more inside me. I give it my best," the 32-year-old Spanish world number one said. "I think I did a great work. Is difficult to come back after injuries for a long time and have these kind of results, so I am proud of myself." Nadal, who won the French Open for the 11th time last month, spent much of 2016 out of action with a wrist injury. He has won the Wimbledon title twice but last reached the final in 2011 and has since struggled at the All England Club with a series of losses to lower-ranked players. It was his 52nd match against Djokovic, 31, a rivalry dating back to 2006. Serb Djokovic leads the head-to-head 27-25. "I can say he deserve (the win), because he deserve it. In my opinion, he deserve it. I deserve it, too. Both of us deserve it," Nadal said wearily.

"As I say the other day against Del Potro, anyone could win. Today I say the same. The other day was for me, today was for him. That's it." Argentine Juan Martin del Potro stretched Nadal to five sets in the quarter-finals. "These kind of matches between probably two great players, playing so well both of us, anything could happen. That's it. Today was for him. Well done," Nadal said.

"Played great. Semi-finals, after a while without being there. Winning some great matches, especially in that quarter-finals against Del Potro. Today was another great match." Nadal said he regretted losing an opportunity to win another major title. "But that's it. Nothing else. I go for holidays proud of the things that I'm doing." —Agencies

Hazard and Belgium too good for England in WCup play-off

SAINT PETERSBURG: Belgium achieved their best World Cup finish as goals from Thomas Meunier and Eden Hazard secured a 2-0 victory over England in yesterday's third-place playoff in Saint Petersburg.

Meunier, who missed the semi-final loss to France due to suspension, scored after just four minutes before Hazard grabbed a late second as Belgium eclipsed the side that came fourth at the 1986 edition.

Belgium have now defeated England twice in a fortnight, having waited 82 years to beat them before winning 1-0 in their group stage encounter. Gareth Southgate's men were forced to settle for England's joint best performance at a World Cup abroad, matching that of the 1990 generation. He made five changes to the team beaten 2-1 by Croatia in the last four, as England fielded their youngest World Cup line-up in history-with an average age of 25 years and 174 days. Phil Jones, Danny Rose, Eric Dier, Fabian Delph and Ruben Loftus-Cheek all came into the side, while Belgium boss Roberto Martinez recalled Meunier and handed a start to Youri Tielemans.

Paris Saint-Germain defender Meunier made a quick impression by firing Belgium in front following an attack started by Romelu Lukaku. The Manchester United forward released Nacer Chadli down the right into space behind the England defence, and his cross was turned home by Meunier who stepped in front of a static Rose. Jordan Pickford readjusted his body superbly to deny Kevin De Bruyne a second time, the Everton goalkeeper clawing away the ball after a sizeable deflection off Kieran Trippier. Eden Hazard sought to exploit the spaces at every opportunity, the Belgium captain linked up intelligently with Tielemans on the edge of the area but was blocked off as he tried to pull the trigger.

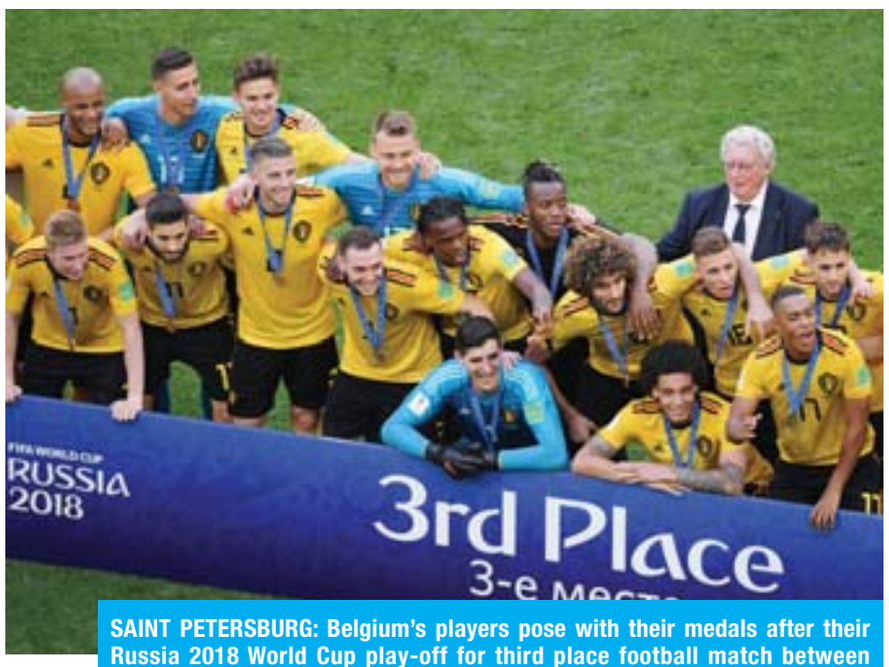
England slowly worked their way into the contest as Loftus-Cheek headed straight at Thibaut Courtois on 15 minutes. Harry Kane blew a terrific chance to add to his six goals in Russia, the favourite for the Golden Boot scuffing harmlessly wide after an inviting lay-off from Raheem Sterling. Toby Alderweireld, one of six Tottenham players on the pitch, then hooked just over after a mishit Tielemans shot dropped to the Belgium defender at a corner.

Belgium lost Chadli to a hamstring injury before half-time, while Southgate introduced Marcus Rashford and Jesse Lingard at the break for Sterling and Rose.

Their pace and directness gave England renewed vigour, with Lingard volleying across goal just out of the reach of a lunging Kane. They received a let-off when Lukaku failed to control a defence-splitting pass from De Bruyne, allowing Pickford to charge off his line to smother.

And it looked as though Dier was going to draw England level when he lifted the ball over Courtois, only for Alderweireld to race back to clear off the line.

With England pushing forward, Meunier nearly produced one of the goals of the tournament, his crisp volley from a Dries Mertens cross drawing an excellent one-handed stop from Pickford.—AFP



SAINT PETERSBURG: Belgium's players pose with their medals after their Russia 2018 World Cup play-off for third place football match between Belgium and England at the Saint Petersburg Stadium in Saint Petersburg Yesterday.— AFP