



3 Humanitarian aid by Kuwait alleviates people's suffering



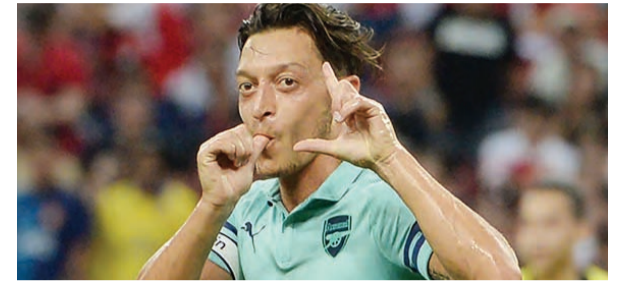
7 Lebanon sinks old tanks to form underwater dive park



24 Egypt seeking 75 death sentences over 2013 sit-in



28 Captain fantastic! Race-row Ozil fires Arsenal to big win over PSG



Capital expenditure, non-oil revenue rise, deficit narrows

Total expenditure down 3.3% • Wages, subsidies account for 73% of all expenditure

KUWAIT: The ministry of finance yesterday announced Kuwait's closing accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018. The state's accounts recorded KD 16.0 billion in revenue, KD 19.2 billion in expenditure, and closed with a fiscal deficit of KD 4.8 billion after accounting the transfer of 10 percent of total revenue to the State's Future Generations Fund (FGF) as mandated by law. Kuwait's fiscal year starts on April 1st and ends on March 31st.

Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf said: "With capital expenditure comprising 16.7 percent of total expenditure and its healthy growth of 22.8 percent from the previous year [actuals], it's clear that the government is delivering on its commitment to growing the national economy, and executing infrastructure projects in line with the Kuwait National Development Plan: Vision 2035 'New Kuwait'.

"The state is currently instituting a structural economic and fiscal reform program, and control of expenditures is a necessary precondition for these reforms to succeed over time. We believe that reform starts with curbing wasteful spending, increasing collection rates of dues to the government's various entities, while maintaining a healthy rate of capital expenditure on infrastructure and minimizing the impact of our fiscal reforms on the Kuwaiti people.

"The government is currently working on bills to improve public finance and budgeting, which will dramatically increase the proficiency of the state's budgeting process as well as a Government Borrowing Act that will provide sufficient liquidity as Kuwait continues on its path of fiscal reform."

Closing Accounts Highlights: Revenue
• Oil revenue: KD 14.3 billion, up 22.2 percent

from last year.
• Non-oil revenue: KD 1.7 billion, up 21.7 percent from last year, reflecting success of fiscal and collection reforms implemented since 2016.
• Total Revenue: KD 16.0 billion up 22.1 percent from last year
• Average Kuwaiti crude selling price for the fiscal year: \$54.15
Closing Accounts Highlights: Expenditure
• Wages and subsidies: KD 14.0 billion, up 8.4 percent from last year due to an increase in subsidy cost as a result of increased oil prices and constituting 73 percent of all expenditure.
• Capital Expenditures: KD 3.2 billion, up 22 percent from last year and constituting 16.7 percent of all expenditure.
• Total Expenditures: KD 19.2 billion, under budget by 3.3 percent and up 8.7 percent from last year's closing accounts.

Closing Accounts Highlights: Fiscal Balance
• The recorded fiscal deficit for the year pre-FGF transfer is KD 3.2 billion. The recorded fiscal deficit post-FGF transfer is KD 4.8 billion, down 18.1 percent from last year. This is the fourth consecutive year where Kuwait records a deficit.
• By law, the state transfers 10 percent of total annual revenue to the Future Generations Fund (also known as Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund) managed by the Kuwait Investment Authority. This year's transfer total was KD 1.6 billion.
• The actual deficit for the year ending on March 31, 2018 will be covered by withdrawals from the General Reserve Fund (GRF, the state's treasury) in the absence of a law governing the issuance of sovereign bonds. The last active debt law expired in Oct 2017. The law is expected to be renewed in the upcoming legislative ses-



Nayef Al-Hajraf

sion. In Kuwait, all laws must pass through its freely-elected parliament.
• By law, the closing accounts do not include revenue from the FGF, which is managed by the Kuwait Investment Authority. All investment revenues from FGF activities are reinvested by the Fund. — Press release

New rules for working women

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The manpower authority issued administrative decision number 552 to organize women's work at night, which limits allowed activities to hotels, pharmacies, medical labs, healthcare providers, law firms, amusement parks, nurseries, disabled care houses, aviation firms, theatres, TV and radio satellite channels and stations, commercial stores at port and airports, the oil sector, petrochemical industries and companies with contracts with government bodies to provide 24/7 services.

The decision also defined the activities in which women will be allowed to work until midnight, except during Ramadan, including banks, restaurants, NGOs, amusement parks, law firms, co-ops, educational facilities, women's salons, travel agencies and shopping malls.

The decision bans women from working in 15 activities including painting, asbestos manufacturing, chlorine and soda manufacturing, asphalt manufacturing, factories and mines, slaughterhouses, pesticide manufacturing and sale, metal fusion and casting, explosives, operating or maintaining machines, battery manufacture or repair, fertilizer manufacture or storage, brick manufacturing, heavy-duty jobs such as construction and firefighting, oil drilling and all jobs involving the use of lead, benzol, arsenic or phosphorus.

In addition to banning men from working in facilities providing special services for women, the decision entitles working women to two hours to breast-feed their babies, provided they file an application to their superiors accompanied with the baby's birth certificate. It also entitles a Muslim working widow to a fully-paid leave of four months and 10 days effective from the date of her husband's death.

Rainstorms kill 49 in northern India; bus crash kills 33

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI: Heavy monsoon rains that sparked floods and caused buildings to collapse have killed at least 49 people in north India's Uttar Pradesh state since Thursday officials said, as the national weather agency issued further storm warnings. Some of the victims died after they were buried by collapsing buildings, while others were drowned, electrocuted or killed in traffic accidents caused by the rain, disaster management officials said.

With scores of houses damaged, authorities in Uttar Pradesh - home to some 220 million people - were on high alert and called for all buildings at risk to be vacated. The torrential rains have also hit New Delhi and the western state of Rajasthan that is popular with tourists, where 11 cm of rain was reported in 24 hours in Bharatpur district Friday. New Delhi's Yamuna river crossed the danger mark of 204 m by one meter yesterday, leading the authorities to issue an alert. The water level in the river is expected to rise further, Delhi government said. Building collapses are common across India, especially during the monsoon season from late June to September. The meteorological office has warned of heavy rainfall across much of northern India for the next five days.

Continued on Page 24



ALLAHABAD: An Indian boatman stands on his boat on the flooded river Ganges yesterday as the water level of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers rise due to heavy rainfall. — AFP

Trump eyeing 'Arab NATO' to confront Iran

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration is quietly pushing ahead with a bid to create a new security and political alliance with six Gulf Arab states, Egypt and Jordan, in part to counter Iran's expansion in the region, according to US and Arab officials. The White House wants to see deeper cooperation between the countries on missile defense, military training, counter-terrorism and other issues such as strengthening regional economic and diplomatic ties, four sources said.

The plan to forge what officials in the White House and Middle East have called an "Arab NATO" of Sunni Muslim allies will likely raise tensions between the United States and Shiite Iran, two countries increasingly at odds since President Donald Trump took office.

The administration's hope is that the effort, tentatively known as the Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA), might be discussed at a summit provisionally scheduled for Washington on Oct 12-13, several sources said. The White House confirmed it was working on the concept of the alliance with "our regional partners now and have been for several months".

Saudi officials raised the idea of a security pact ahead of a Trump visit last year to Saudi Arabia where he announced a massive arms deal, but the alliance proposal did not get off the ground, a US source said. Sources from some of the Arab countries involved also said they were aware of renewed efforts to activate the plan. Officials from other potential participants did not respond to requests for comment. "MESA will serve as a bulwark against Iranian aggression, terrorism, extremism, and will bring stability to the Middle East," a spokesperson for the White House's National Security Council said. The spokesperson declined to confirm that Trump would host a summit on those dates and sources cautioned that it remains uncertain whether the security plan

will be finalized by mid-October.

Similar initiatives by previous US administrations to develop a more formal alliance with Gulf and Arab allies have failed in the past. Washington, Riyadh and Abu Dhabi accuse Iran of destabilizing the region, fomenting unrest in some Arab countries through proxy groups and increasingly threatening Israel. The alliance would put emphasis on Gulf heavyweights Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates working closer together with the Trump administration on confronting Iran.

It is unclear how the alliance could immediately counter Tehran but the Trump administration and its Sunni Muslim allies have joint interests in the conflicts in Yemen and Syria as well as defending Gulf shipping lanes through which much of the world's oil supplies are shipped. A senior Iranian official told Reuters that "under the pretext of securing stability in the Middle East, Americans and their regional allies are fomenting tension in the region." He said the approach would have "no result" beyond "deepening the gaps between Iran, its regional allies and the US-backed Arab countries."

Continued on Page 24

Century's longest blood moon eclipse dazzles skygazers

PARIS: The longest "blood moon" eclipse this century dazzled skygazers across the globe Friday, coinciding with Mars' closest approach in 15 years in a thrilling celestial spectacle. As Earth's constant companion slowly sailed across the skies, crowds gathered around the world to catch a glimpse of the rare phenomenon. Beside Lake Magadi, 100 km southwest of the Kenyan capital Nairobi, young members of the Maasai community watched the eclipse through a high-powered telescope provided by a local couple. "Until today I thought Mars, Jupiter and the other planets were in the imagination of scientists," Purity Sailepo, 16, told AFP. "But now I've seen it I can believe it and I want to be an astronomer to tell other people."

Unlike with a solar eclipse, viewers did not need protective eye gear to observe the rare display. For about half the world, the moon was partly or fully in

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: The "blood moon" is seen during a total lunar eclipse passes through decorative lights late Friday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 2)

Kuwaitis attack Lanka customs officers over dog

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan police Friday arrested a Kuwaiti couple accused of assaults which left five customs officers in hospital after they tried to stop the tourists smuggling a pet dog, officials said. A 32-year-old woman and her 29-year-old male partner turned violent when they were told of quarantine requirements and tried to flee Colombo airport with the animal, police and customs agents said.

"A woman customs guard was badly hurt after she was attacked by the Kuwaiti woman," customs spokesman Vipula Minuvanpitiya told AFP. "Four other customs officers were also injured when they tried to stop the couple attacking people. All five have been hospitalized." Airport police said they had never recorded such a case over a pet dog. Police said the Kuwaiti couple were being held at a police station near the airport and would appear before a magistrate yesterday. Sri Lanka imposes quarantine rules on pets brought into the island country. — AFP

Local

Kuwait laments Syrian children's woes as a 'stigma' to the world

Millions of them know nothing about life but only wars

Amir cables President of Peru on Nat'l Day

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of congratulations to President of the Republic of Peru, Martin Vizcarra on the occasion of the National Day of his country, wishing him everlasting health and wellness, and further progress and prosperity to his country. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem also sent a cable of congratulations to President of the Peruvian congress, Luis Fernando Galarreta Velarde on his country's national day. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait said Friday the sufferings of Syrian children are deemed a stigma to the international community, as millions of them know nothing about life but only wars. Addressing a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on the humanitarian situation in Syria, Kuwait's Permanent representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi said Syrian children are the most vulnerable in this war-torn country so they need to be urgently protected.

"Undoubtedly, Syrian children are paying the highest price as a result of the eight-year war in their country, as they have lost their innocence, dreams and undeniable right to life and dignified living," he said. More than three million Syrian children need humanitarian aid amid killings, detention, abduction, enlistment and torturing, he said, cautioning that nearly two million children have been deprived of education.

The Kuwaiti diplomat cited a recent UN report as showing that 67 schools and 108 medical facilities were targeted in 2017, stressing that schools and hospitals are considered a redline, just as stated by UNSC Resolution 2427. He called on all parties in Syria to comply with this resolution, which frankly condemns attacks on educational and medical facilities.

Al-Otaibi also urged them to reach a ceasefire at an early date and to allow humanitarian access to besieged areas. "As the Syrian crisis has entered its eighth year, Syrian children have been undergoing a humanitarian crisis and very critical economic and social conditions. Thousands of them undergo the gravest violations of all the basic principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law as a result of the continuing circle of violence which has so far claimed the lives of at least 400,000 people, including a large



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi addressing a United Nations Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Syria. — KUNA

number of women and children," he lamented.

He voiced much concern over the recent military escalation in southwest Syria, which led to the displacement of approximately 300,000 people and aggravated humanitarian conditions of innocent civilians. The Kuwaiti permanent representative at the UN noted that the Syrian war, which flared out in 2011, has triggered off the biggest refugee crisis of modern times: five mil-

lion refugees, including two million children, and six million internally displaced persons (IDPs), involving 2.5 million children. However, the Kuwaiti diplomat underlined that the repatriation of children and IDPs should be safe, voluntary and dignified. Finally, Al-Otaibi reiterated Kuwait's support for a military solution to the Syrian crisis, and called for stepping up efforts to save the Syrian people. — KUNA

Risks to Middle East oil and gas shipping routes

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia said it was suspending oil shipments through the Red Sea after Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis attacked two crude tankers, underscoring risks caused by the conflict in the world's top oil exporting region. Iran, in its row with the United States over sanctions, has also threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz, the other major strategic shipping route for oil from the region and the main route for Iranian crude exports. Below are facts about region's shipping routes:

BAB AL-MANDEB

Any move to block the Bab al-Mandeb, the narrow waterway between the coasts of Yemen and Africa at the southern end of the Red Sea, would virtually halt oil shipments through Egypt's Suez Canal or the SUMED crude pipeline that link the Red Sea and Mediterranean. The SUMED pipeline, with capacity for 2.34 million bpd, runs roughly parallel to the Suez Canal and can be used by oil tankers that cannot navigate the canal waterway.

An estimated 4.8 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil and refined petroleum products flowed through the strait in 2016 to Europe, the United States and Asia, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). Reuters data shows Saudi crude exports through Bab al-Mandeb, which is about 18 miles (29 km) wide at its narrowest point between Djibouti's coast and the Yemeni mainland, are estimated to be 500,000-700,000 bpd.

Closing the strait, which has a shipping channel just two miles (3.2 km) wide, would force oil and liquefied

natural gas (LNG) tankers around the southern tip of Africa, extending the distance for a vessel travelling between Saudi Arabia and the United States by 2,700 miles (4,300 km). This would add weeks to the journey time and extra costs, although Saudi Arabia could export its crude along that route on non-Saudi vessels.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ

About 18.5 million bpd of oil or more than 30 percent of seaborne traded crude was transported in 2016 through the Strait of Hormuz, making the waterway at the southern end of the Gulf the most important oil transit channel in the world, according to US EIA figures. The strait, which is about 33 miles (54 km) wide at its narrowest point, separates the Arabian Peninsula from Iran. Most of the crude exported from Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq must slip through a four mile (6.4 km) wide channel between the Omani and Iranian coasts. More than 85 percent of the crude oil that moves through it is sent to Asia, mainly Japan, India, South Korea and China. In addition, LNG tankers from Qatar, the world's biggest LNG exporter, pass through the strait.

The US Fifth Fleet, based in Bahrain and responsible for an area that includes the Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman and parts of the Indian Ocean, has said it would not allow any disruption of traffic through the strait. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have pipelines that can transport their crude without passing through the strait. The UAE can ship crude from its Indian Ocean coastline, while Saudi Arabia's alternative route runs to its Red Sea port of Yanbu.

SAUDI ARABIA

Most oil exports from Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest crude exporter which produces about 10 million bpd, are transported by ship through the Strait of Hormuz. In addition, the East-West Pipeline, known as Petrolina, mainly transports crude from the kingdom's eastern fields to Yanbu, which lies north of Bab Al-



The Vladimr Rusanov, a liquefied natural gas (LNG) tanker ship, is seen following its arrival at the LNG terminal in Nantong city, eastern China's Jiangsu province on July 19, 2018, following its journey from Russia's Arctic Yamal peninsula. — AFP

Mandeb so shipments could avoid that Red Sea shipping chokepoint.

The Petrolina has capacity to transport about 5 million bpd of the kingdom's oil exports that can reach 8 million bpd. Saudi Arabia has a parallel 290,000 bpd Abqaiq-Yanbu natural gas liquids (NGL) pipeline linking gas processing plants in the east with NGL export facilities at Yanbu. It also provides only a partial alternative to Saudi shipments of NGL from the Gulf. State oil giant Saudi Aramco plans to launch its overhauled Muajjiz oil terminal on the Red Sea this year, lifting its total loading and export capacity to as much as 15 million bpd. Located on the Red Sea, Muajjiz had been used as an export terminal for Iraqi crude through the Iraqi Pipeline in Saudi Arabia (IPSA), but it has not carried Iraqi crude since Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990.

OTHER GULF PRODUCERS

Other OPEC members in the region, Iran, the UAE,

Kuwait and Qatar, rely almost entirely on the Strait of Hormuz. A Kuwaiti official said 90 percent of Kuwaiti oil shipments go to Asia and do not pass through Bab Al-Mandeb. The remaining 10 percent of its shipments passing through the Red Sea chokepoint were mostly refined products. The UAE has built a new pipeline, the Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline with a capacity of 1.5 million bpd, to carry the bulk of its production to Fujairah, a bunkering hub and oil terminal on the Indian Ocean, bypassing the Strait of Hormuz. Qatar, a small crude exporter, shipped about 3.7 trillion cubic feet (tcf) per year of LNG through the Strait of Hormuz in 2013, according to BP Statistics.

IRAQ & IRAN

Nearly 80 percent of Iraq's crude is exported through Gulf ports and through the Strait of Hormuz. Most of it heads to Asia. Iran's total reliance on crude exports through the Strait of Hormuz is one of the reasons why it is unlikely to be blocked. — Reuters

Kuwait witnesses century's longest lunar eclipse



KUWAIT: People in Kuwait witnessed the century's longest lunar eclipse on Friday, with the moon looking purple as it is aligned with earth and sun, lasting for 1:43 hours. The eclipse starts with a shade covering the moon which turns to a full eclipse then to partial and then ends. The public and meteorologists were following the eclipse, which happens through three phases: the shade at 8:15 pm, the partial eclipse at 9:24 pm and the full eclipse at 10:29 pm, then ends at 2:29 am. The eclipse occurs because the sun, earth and moon will be aligned, so the shadow of earth will reflect on moon thus restricting sun rays. Upcoming full lunar eclipse would take place on January 21, 2019. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Local

Kuwaiti health delegations depart early August for hajj

The team has its own residence and clinics



KUWAIT: Members of the medical services team for Kuwaiti Hajj pilgrims. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: Moghyer Al-Shammari, the Deputy Director of the medical services team for Kuwaiti Hajj pilgrims.

KUWAIT: Medical services for Kuwaiti Hajj pilgrims are completed and health delegations will head to Saudi Arabia early August to prepare for the grand Islamic ritual, the Ministry of Health announced yesterday. The team has its own residence and clinics and it will leave in two groups on August 5 and 11, said the statement Deputy Director of the medical services Moghyer Al-Shammari will lead the first group

while the second group will be under the supervision of the Director of the medical services Dr Mubarak Al-Ajmi. "All medical and nutrition supplies will be shipped via air in coordination with the Saudi authorities," said Al-Shammari who indicated that there will be four medical clinics serving the needs of Kuwaiti citizens. Al-Shammari asked all travelers to vaccinate 10 days before the Hajj. — KUNA

Kuwait's humanitarian aid: An increasing activity to soothe people's suffering

KUWAIT: In Yemen, head of the relief sector in the Kuwait relief Society Mahmoud Al-Misbah said that the Kuwaiti aid to Yemen falls within the framework of the "Kuwait Besides You" campaign which aims at alleviating the suffering of the Yemeni people in the Socotra island. In Turkey, Al-Najat Charity carried out a training program for those working in the humanitarian field in

Gaziantep city south west of Turkey. In Chad, Kuwait Relief Society, along with the Faculty of Medicine Students at Kuwait University and Al-Najat Charity organized a USD 70,000-humanitarian program. Head of the foreign bureau in the society Mohammad Al-Housli said that a five-day treatment program was launched in the capital with the participation of 15 Kuwait University students. On his part, head of Medicine College Abdullah Jasem told KUNA that the Kuwait University students dedicated a big portion of their time to assist the needy people in Chad, taking into account the noble directives of His Highness the Amir. In Tanzania, Kuwait embassy in Tanzania delivered seven tons of primary food aid for thousands of beneficiaries and those affected by floods in the presence of Minister of Energy and Minerals Angellah Kairuki and Kuwait's ambassador to Tanzania Jasem Al-Najim. — KUNA



Kuwait Relief Society, along with the Faculty of Medicine Students at KU and Al-Najat Charity treatment program in Chad. — KUNA photos



"Kuwait Besides You" campaign in the Socotra island.



Kuwait embassy in Tanzania delivering primary food aid for thousands of beneficiaries.

Children's museum in Ankara contains Kuwait toys of old

ANKARA: The Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Ankara has held a small museum for old children's games which included games which used to be played in Kuwait such as whirlpool, marble and slingshot. The museum has more than 4,000 old toys collected from Turkey and other countries such as Germany, Japan, United Kingdom, Austria, Russia, Greece, Indonesia, India and Saudi Arabia, some dating back to 1980's. Assistant researcher at Ankara Museum Ceren Karadeniz told KUNA that the museum was established by Prof Dr Bekir Onur who's specialized in philosophy and child development in April 1990.

Moreover, he collected many popular old children's games in one place for the audience to see. She added that the aim of the museum is to provide services to children, students, academics and those who are interested in old children's toys, child development. The other aim is to encourage visitors to collect and understand the old games, she added.

Karadeniz pointed out that old children's games also came from visitors' donations because the university does not have the budget to buy such toys. She pointed out that the museum includes games from ancient Turkish companies such as Cevik, Alasya, Neker, Ersan, Julyet Altin, Artin Cakar and Fatos, as well as from Eyup town in Istanbul in the Ottoman Empire from the fourteenth and fifteenth century. German and British companies have also participated in the museum such as Marklin, Lehman and Goppongen, Dobbins, Meccano, Dinky and Lensey. She mentioned that the museum is divided into nine sections: transportation games, IQ games, school tools, entertainment shows, street toys, music, dolls, animals and mini home furniture.



ANKARA: Some old well known children's toys that were once popular in Kuwait. — KUNA photos



ANKARA: Prof Dr Bekir Onur is seen here at the museum.

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sunset over Kuwait City. — KUNA

NBK Summer Internship Program students visit KDD on a field trip



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) concluded the second session of the Summer Internship Program 2018. The session ended by a field trip to Kuwait Danish Dairy Company (KDD). KDD representatives took the students in a tour to introduce them to the various activities as well as an exclusive visit to its factory. The students had the chance to see the different stages of

food production. The aim of this visit is to enrich the students' knowledge. It's worth mentioning that, the Summer Internship Program this year is made up of different sessions, five-hour 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 longstanding 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. It has been seventeen 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.

Interns Gear Up for Burgan Bank's 2018 Summer Internship Program

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, a sought-after career destination, will soon welcome a new group of interns to the annual summer internship program. Targeted to high school students aged 15-19, the program will run for two weeks from 5-16 August and is designed to provide future generations with professional hands-on experience and opportunities to succeed in the banking world.

Organized by Burgan Bank's Learning and Development Department, the extensive program combines both practical and theoretical training and will bring together 20 top students selected among a large pool of applicants. The trainees will gain unique insights into the banking industry and will be exposed to a wide array of topics ranging from leadership skills, teamwork, creative thinking, public speaking and modern banking. Students will be inducted into the basics of banking operations and gain prac-



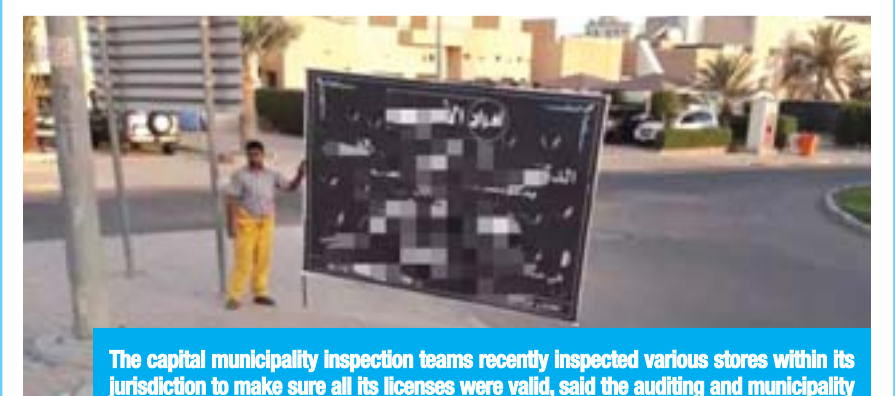
tical experience in customer service at various branches under the supervision of the branch managers and employees.

The summer internship program is an extension to the bank's continuous learning and development efforts that equip future leaders with up-to-date market trends and professional expertise to succeed in a competitive environment. Burgan Bank will continue to develop local talent and foster local

development through various educational initiatives, further reinforcing its role as a contributor to all segments of the Kuwaiti society.

It's worth mentioning that the summer internship program initiated in 2002, has since maintained its pioneering role in fulfilling new generational needs by providing hands-on professional training programs to talented youth and introducing them to the banking realm. The specialized programs aim to bridge the gap between classroom and real world experience as they invest in themselves to match current job market skill requirements. Burgan Bank continues its contributions towards the advancement of all segments of society, especially the young people, confirming its role as a leading institution committed to enhancing the capabilities of youth in the local market.

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.



The capital municipality inspection teams recently inspected various stores within its jurisdiction to make sure all its licenses were valid, said the auditing and municipality services follow up manager Eman Al-Kandary noting that the campaign resulted in filing 31 violations and removing 77 illegal ads.

Local

Egyptian Embassy in Kuwait watching developments in fake degree issue

Jaber Al-Ahmed Causeway project continues

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Egyptian Embassy in Kuwait said that it is closely watching developments in the fake degrees issue and stressed that so far no Egyptian universities are involved in issuing fake bachelor or higher degrees to any Kuwaitis. An official statement issued by the embassy yesterday stressed that Kuwait's cultural office in Cairo constantly contacts the Egyptian ministry of higher education and officials in various Egyptian universities accredited in Kuwait to resolve Kuwait students' problems. "Egyptian authorities are full ready to investigate any forgery cases proven to have been done in Egypt," the embassy emphasized, urging various media to be more accurate in dealing with the case until ongoing investigations are over.

Jaber Al-Ahmed Causeway project

The roads and transport authority announced that the last piece of the concrete structure of Al-Subbiya spur of the Jaber Al-Ahmed Causeway project would

installed today, adding that the 27-km causeway over Kuwait Bay will have a 120-m wide and 23-m high arch pylon that will rise as a landmark in the middle of the vital navigation route.

Mobile car wash services

The Municipality's deputy director for Capital and Mubarak Al-Kabeer affairs Faisal Al-Juma rejected a request by MoCI to add mobile car wash services to its list of licensed activities. In a reply he sent to MoCI Juma justified his decision by the fact that car wash and polishing is already licensed at car wash centers, while the applying companies request licensing these services to be practiced through mobile units at various co-ops, malls, multi-floor parking buildings, public hospitals and the seafront.

KIPIC signs contract

KIPIC signed a \$180 million contract with Canadian engineering contracting company SNC Lavalin to provide administrative support at Al-Zour refinery.

Finalizing post privatization law

Minister of State for Housing and Services Affairs Jenan Boshehri announced finalizing the post-privatization law, adding that the fatwa and legislation department has already approved it. Boshehri added that a bill was prepared to establish Kuwait Post Company as a shareholding company entirely owned by the state to be run commercially.

Kuwait airport Terminal 2 contract

Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Hosam Al-Roumi said the contract of building Kuwait airport's Terminal 2 does not include parking and that special contracts for parking, aviation services, runways and fuel infrastructure will be offered for bidding in two packages separate from the Terminal 2 contract.

Zour Port-Wafra road project

Site manager of the Zour Port-Wafra road project Wael Al-Juma said that 31 percent of the project has been completed and that work is progressing according to



Jaber Al-Ahmed Causeway

schedule. Juma stressed that the project was one of the development projects executed by the roads authority to renovate the current road between Zour port and

Wafra according to modern specifications, adding that the road includes 17 intersections and construction will be done in six phases with a total road length of 130 km.

Kuwaiti Interior Ministry urges vigilance on roads amid dusty weather



KUWAIT: Kuwait's interior ministry has issued severe weather warnings as a massive dust storm continues to sweep over a large swathe of the country, calling on drivers to be extra cautious. In a statement yesterday, the ministry advised motorists to steer clear of piles of sand that have amassed on some roads, saying that emergency help is just a quick phone call away at hotline 112. — KUNA



AC causes massive fire in Jabriya apartment

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firemen put out a fire in a Jabriya flat yesterday. Hawally and Salmiya fire fighting centers responded to the call about a fire in a 3-storey building in Jabriya. They discovered the fire was in an air conditioning unit in the bedroom. The building was evacuated, and no injuries were reported. Another fire broke out in a building under construction in Salwa. Firemen from Bidaa and Mishref Centers put out the flames. No injuries were reported.

False info regarding fire services

Kuwait Fire Services Directorate Public Relations and Information Department disregarded information in local papers and social media about adjusting duty hours in some fire centers that operate on 48 hours duty and 96 hours rest, and turning them in 24 hours on duty and 48 hours rest, and that it will harm firemen through deduction of incentives and allowances is totally incorrect, and that the measure taken does not include any deductions concerning firemen. They said it is only a change of duty system warranted by purely security and technical aspects related to protecting



lives and property, and was taken after studies supported by statistics.

Interior Minister issues ministerial decree

Deputy Premier, Interior Minister Lt General (Rt.) Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah issued a ministerial decree appointing Maj Gen Majed Yousuf Al-Majed Assistant Interior Ministry Undersecretary for Legal Affairs, studies and research in addition to his current post. Elsewhere, Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt



Gen Esam Al-Naham received British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport. Both sides discussed issues of mutual interest.

Zoo timings change

Nuwiseeb, Wafra and Zoor centers have had their duty hours changed because they are no longer considered remote areas. This is because new residential cities were built next to them such as Sabah Al-Ahmad land and sea cities, residential Wafra and Khairan.

local spotlight

Are fish at risk?



By Muna Al-Fuzal

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Fish is a popular food for many people in Kuwait. The fish market is often crowded at all times, so any news about fish creates a stir and becomes a matter of concern. Recently, a woman posted a video of fish bought from the local market, but when she gutted them for cleaning, she found a number of nails had been placed inside them to add weight! The ministry of commerce and industry responded to the video and launched an inspection campaign to make sure all fish are safe. It also arrested the fishmonger and charged him with commercial fraud.

This incident may seem strange, but the reality is that warnings about tampering with fish are not new. For years, there have been calls to seriously consider the status of fish, including the unjustified rise in fish prices in a seafaring country like Kuwait.

The head of the Kuwaiti fishermen's union has expressed on several occasions his concern about the status of Kuwait's fish wealth, especially since it is a very popular food, and the limited fishing area is reflected on the quality and prices of fish in the local market. The official explained some of the reasons for the continued rise in fish prices, including an increase in the population and the high demand by people to buy all types of fish. He urged the government to move towards enhancing food security and protecting local production.

I believe preserving fish wealth is part of the provision and protection of food security. The fishing sector is important and needs guarantees to play its role. I am not an expert, but it is apparent that fish is not cheap, so a number of middle- and limited-income people are reluctant to buy fish. This situation encouraged the fisherman to commit commercial fraud by planting iron nails inside the fish to raise its price. Thanks to this lady for uploading a video of this crime as a warning, otherwise this illegal action wouldn't have been caught or stopped.

I believe the high prices have forced some people to buy imported frozen fish, which is sold in the form of fillets and is very widespread in markets. But the problem of frozen fish is the emergence of scattered reports that it is dangerous or unsafe, so many people hesitate to buy it out of fear, and prefer to buy fresh fish. I think mixing fresh and frozen fish or selling imported fish as local and fresh needs inspection. MoCI needs to keep an eye on all fish that are being offered to the public in all markets. This manipulation in the quality and prices of fish comes at the expense of consumers. I believe in the need of intervention by PAAAFR and the ministry of commerce to control prices for the safety of people and their health.

Pistol wielding man hijacks vehicle in Industrial Jahra

KUWAIT: Taima police were dreadfully surprised by a citizen with his driver claiming that a man with a pistol stopped the driver in Industrial Jahra and removed him from the car before driving away. Detectives showed the victim photographs of the suspect and he identified him. The police also discovered that he is the same suspect who fired at them earlier in the day.

The individual is still being sought after.

House robbers caught

Jahra detectives sent two citizens to the police for prosecution on mugging charges. Detectives had the victims identify the two suspects in a line up. Detectives began work on robbery cases, particularly against Asians and found out the two citizens were behind these crimes. Both confessed to renting cars with unregistered license plates when they committed the crimes. They also confessed that they had spent the stolen money on drugs and liquor.

Car stolen at knife point

Jahra detectives are looking for two persons who stole a car of an expat at knife point. A security

source told Taima police that he was stopped by two men, who asked him to leave the car claiming they were detectives, then one of them placed a knife on his neck while the other drove off in the victim's car. The assailant with the knife later drove off in another vehicle of his own.

Iraqi harasses woman

A female citizen in her 50s complained against an Iraqi expat who attempted to first seduce her with money. After numerous rejections from her side, he then started throwing trash in front of her flat. She later realized that her house was rented by prostitutes before she moved in, and the Iraqi thought she was one of them. A security source said the Iraqi was knocking at her door at late hours of the night and

when he attempted to open the door she screamed prompting him to escape. The Iraqi then started to place money in front of the door, while she kept rejecting him to no avail as he continued to harass her. The woman attempted to inform the building owner but failed. She registered a complaint to the police who also found out the man is already wanted and are working on his arrest.

Asian caught with drugs, liquor

Farwaniya police arrested an Asian with 10 imported liquor bottles on him as well as the drug "Shabu" in the Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh area. The Asian was driving a run-down car late at night so he was stopped and the illicit items were found. He was sent to drugs control general department. — Alrai/Alanbaa



Khan's party begins coalition talks as rivals plan protests

CBS titan Leslie Moonves accused of sexual misconduct



REDDING, California: Burned out properties are seen near the Lake Keswick Estates area during the Carr fire in Redding, California. — AFP

California fire tornado kills 2 firefighters

Thousands flee monster wildfire that destroyed 500 structures

REDDING, California: A fast-growing northern California wildfire killed a second firefighter on Friday after high winds drove it into the city of Redding, prompting mass evacuations, destroying 500 structures and threatening thousands of other dwellings and businesses, officials said. Flames raging in California's scenic Shasta-Trinity area erupted into a firestorm that jumped across the Sacramento River and swept into the western side of Redding, home to about 90,000 people, forcing residents to flee. Firefighters and police "went into life-safety mode," hustling door to door to usher civilians out of harm's way, said Scott McLean, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire). Streets in the Western town were all but deserted, with thick, sickly-brown smoke filling the air, and plumes of smoke rising to the west. Gale-force winds on Thursday night created a fire "tornado" said CalFire Director Ken Pimlott. "This fire was whipped up into a whirlwind of activity, uprooting trees, moving vehicles, moving parts of roadways,"

Pimlott told a news briefing. Such highly erratic, storm-like wildfires have grown commonplace in the state, Pimlott said. "These are extreme conditions, this is how fires are in California," he said. "We need to take heed and evacuate, evacuate, evacuate."

California has had its worst start to the fire season in a decade, with 289,727 acres burned through Friday morning, according to National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) data. Governor Jerry Brown requested emergency federal assistance to prevent an "imminent catastrophe" as Shasta County tried to find supplies and water for 30,000 evacuated residents and care for horses and cattle rescued from ranches and farms. CalFire reported 500 structures destroyed by the blaze.

Curtain of smoke

The fire had scorched 48,300 acres by Friday and was just 3 percent contained as ground crews, helicopters and airplanes battled the flames for a fifth day. High temperatures and low

humidity were expected for the next seven to ten days, said Pimlott. "This fire is a long way from done," he said. The blaze was one of nearly 90 large fires burning nationally, most of them in the West. One of those prompted the closure of much of California's Yosemite National Park.

Wildfires have blackened an estimated 4.15 million acres in the United States this year. That was well above average for the same period over the past 10 years but down from 5.27 million acres in the first seven months of 2017, NIFC reported. The blaze in Redding, about 150 miles north of Sacramento, on Thursday killed a bulldozer operator working with fire teams to clear brush around the fire. A member of the Redding Fire Department was also reported killed on Friday. A Redding hospital said it had treated eight people, including three firefighters.

Thousands of buildings imperiled

Rob Wright, 61, and his wife stayed to fight off flames with a

high-powered water hose. "We were fortunate enough that the wind changed hours ago, and it is pushing the fire back," said Wright on Friday. "We are just waiting it out ... crossing our fingers and hoping for the best." Video and images posted on social media showed flames engulfing structures, as an orange glow lit up the sky. A Red Cross employee told local ABC affiliate KRCR-TV some 500 people took shelter in an evacuation center at Shasta College. Motels were filled to capacity and livestock owners were told to take their animals to the town's rodeo ground. The Carr Fire, the name given to the Redding blaze, was one of three fierce blazes threatening large populated areas.

Cal Fire said the Cranston Fire, about 110 miles east of Los Angeles had blackened 12,300 acres and was 16 percent contained. The Ferguson Fire near Yosemite, which has charred 46,675 acres, was 29 percent contained. A 32-year-old man was charged with setting the Cranston fire, along with eight other blazes, and faces a potential life sentence if convicted of the charges. — Reuters

Three dead in attack on Afghan midwife training centre

KABUL: An hours-long militant attack on a midwife training centre in eastern Afghanistan yesterday killed at least three people and wounded seven, police said, as the latest assault in the country was brought to an end by security forces. Nearly 70 people, including students and teachers, were inside the centre in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, at the time of the attack. Nangarhar police chief Ghulam Sanyee Stanikzai said three people—two guards and a driver—were killed and seven others wounded.

Provincial governor spokesman Attaullah Khogyani put the casualty toll slightly higher at three dead and eight wounded. Afghan officials often give conflicting tolls in the aftermath of an attack. Some of the people inside the centre escaped while others were taken hostage by the gunmen. "They were freed by the police during the operation," Stanikzai said. One attacker was wearing a suicide vest and blew himself up, while the other was killed by security forces, Khogyani said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the latest attack, but most of the recent assaults in the city have been carried out by the Islamic State group, which has a stronghold in Nangarhar.

The Taliban denied involvement in a WhatsApp message sent to reporters. Provincial health department spokesman Inamullah Miakhil said 48 women from remote districts of the province were enrolled in the



JALALABAD: Afghan security forces carry the body of a victim from the site of an attack in Jalalabad. — AFP

two-year midwifery course. The training facility, which is near the centre of Jalalabad in an area where several international organizations and consulates have offices, is funded by the Ministry of Public Health. "We don't know why the midwife centre came under attack," Miakhil said, adding all NGOs and government bodies in Jalalabad were at risk.

A witness in a nearby department said he heard several explosions and then saw three gunmen enter the street where the midwife centre is located. Some of the security forces earlier appeared to dismantle improvised explosive devices apparently planted in the street by the militants, a witness said. Jalalabad has been the scene of several attacks in recent months that have killed dozens, as US and Afghan forces continue offensive operations

against IS and Taliban militants. Government buildings are a common target for insurgents, including hospitals and medical facilities. It is not known why the gunmen targeted the midwife training centre. Midwives have been attacked in the past for providing reproductive health services to women, though such attacks appear to be rare.

Islamist groups—and many ordinary Afghans—also oppose women working outside the home. While thousands of women have been trained as midwives since the 2001 US-led invasion, Afghanistan still has one of the highest maternal and child mortality rates in the world. The last major attack in Jalalabad happened on July 11 when gunmen raided an education department compound in the city, sparking an hours-long battle with security forces. — Agencies

US cardinal steps down amid sex abuse scandal

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis yesterday accepted the resignation of Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, one of the US Catholic Church's most prominent figures who has been at the centre of a widening sexual abuse scandal. McCarrick, 88, the former archbishop of Washington, DC, is the first cardinal in living memory to lose his red hat and title. Other cardinals who have been disciplined in sexual abuse scandals kept their membership in the College of Cardinals and their honorific "your eminence".

The allegations against McCarrick, which first surfaced publicly last month, came with Francis facing an image crisis on a second front, in Chile, where a growing abuse scandal has enveloped the Church in the Latin American country. A Vatican statement said the pope ordered McCarrick's suspension from the exercise of any public ministry. This means he remains a priest but will be allowed to say Mass only in private.

Francis also ordered McCarrick to go into seclusion "for a life of prayer and penance until the accusations made against him are examined in a regular canonical trial". McCarrick's sudden fall from grace stunned the American Church because he was a widely respected leader for decades and a confidant of popes and presidents. Last month, American Church officials said allegations that he sexually abused a 16-year-old boy almost 50 years ago were credible and

substantiated. Since then, another minor has come forward with allegations that McCarrick abused him when he was 11 years old, and several men have come forward to allege that McCarrick forced them to sleep with him at a beach house in New Jersey when they were adult seminarians studying for the priesthood.

McCarrick has said that he had "absolutely no recollection" of the alleged abuse of the teenager 50 years ago but has not commented on the other allegations. The New York Times reported last week that two dioceses in New Jersey, where McCarrick served as bishop before being promoted to Washington in 2000, had reached financial settlements in 2005 and 2007 with men who said they were abused by McCarrick as adults decades ago. Some US Catholics have said the Vatican should send an inspector to the United States to determine who in the US Church hierarchy knew of the alleged incidents and why McCarrick's rise was not impeded.

Last Tuesday, Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston said he was "deeply troubled" by the McCarrick case, saying it and others pointed to "a major gap" in Church policy on sexual conduct and sexual abuse by bishops or other top officials. In 2013, Cardinal Keith O'Brien of Scotland recused himself from participating in the conclave that elected Francis after he was caught up in a sexual abuse scandal involving seminarians. He later renounced rights and privileges of being a cardinal but kept his red hat and title until his death earlier this year. The last person to resign from the College of Cardinals is believed to be French theologian Louis Billot, who left over a disagreement with Pope Pius XI in 1927, according to the US newspaper, National Catholic Reporter. — Reuters

International

Kurds eye decentralized Syria in talks with govt

Rebels bargaining power reduced by loss of territory

QAMISHLI, Syria: A US-backed Kurdish-led alliance said yesterday that it is seeking a roadmap for a decentralized Syria in talks with the government which opened in Damascus this week. The Syrian Democratic Forces alliance, which controls a swathe of the north and northeast, said it had agreed with the government to form joint committees to discuss the major issues after a first round of talks on Thursday and Friday.

The SDF's political arm, the Syrian Democratic Council, said the aim was to "clear the way for a broader and more comprehensive dialogue" and forge a "roadmap leading to a democratic and decentralized Syria". Before civil war erupted in 2011, Syria had a highly centralized form of government which provided no constitutional recognition for the rights of the Kurds and other minorities. But after government forces pulled out of Kurdish-majority areas in 2012, the Kurds seized the opportunity to set up their own administrations and implement longstanding demands such as Kurdish-language education. The SDF formalized the new administrative arrangements in 2016 with

the creation of autonomous cantons in areas under its control that it regards as a model for a federal system nationwide. The Damascus government has opposed the scope of the self-rule sought by the Kurds but late last year Foreign Minister Walid Muallem said a "form of autonomy" was "negotiable". In late May, President Bashar al-Assad said the government was prepared to open talks with the SDF but stressed that it remained ready to use force if necessary to ensure the return of government troops and state institutions to SDF-held areas.

The SDF did not give a date for any new round of talks. Between them, Assad's Russian-backed government and the US-backed SDF control around 90 percent of Syrian territory following major defeats for the rebels as well as the Islamic State group over the past two years. An umbrella group representing most of the rebels has said it wants to hold talks with the government on reform demands of its own. But its bargaining power has been greatly reduced by its loss of territory in recent months. — AFP

“ Roadmap leading to democratic Syria ”



DEIR EZZOR, Syria: Fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces, trained by the US-led coalition, take part in a graduation ceremony in the suburbs of the eastern city of Deir Ezzor. — AFP

Foreign populist parties observe controversial Cambodia poll

PHNOM PENH: A mishmash of populist and far-right party members from Europe and Asia are serving as election observers in Cambodia's controversial vote today while many western governments are keeping their distance after the main opposition was outlawed. With mainly obscure groups on the ballot the ruling Cambodian People's Party is all but assured of victory, extending prime minister Hun Sen's 33 years in power and solidifying the drift towards a virtual one-party state.

Hun Sen backed a crackdown on the his political opponents last year. Authorities charged one of its leaders with treason while the Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of the main opposition party. The US and EU have declined to send assistance or monitors. But officials have drawn on participation from observers with ties to the UK Independence Party, Italy's Fratelli d'Italia, a pro-government party in authoritarian Belarus and India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, among others.

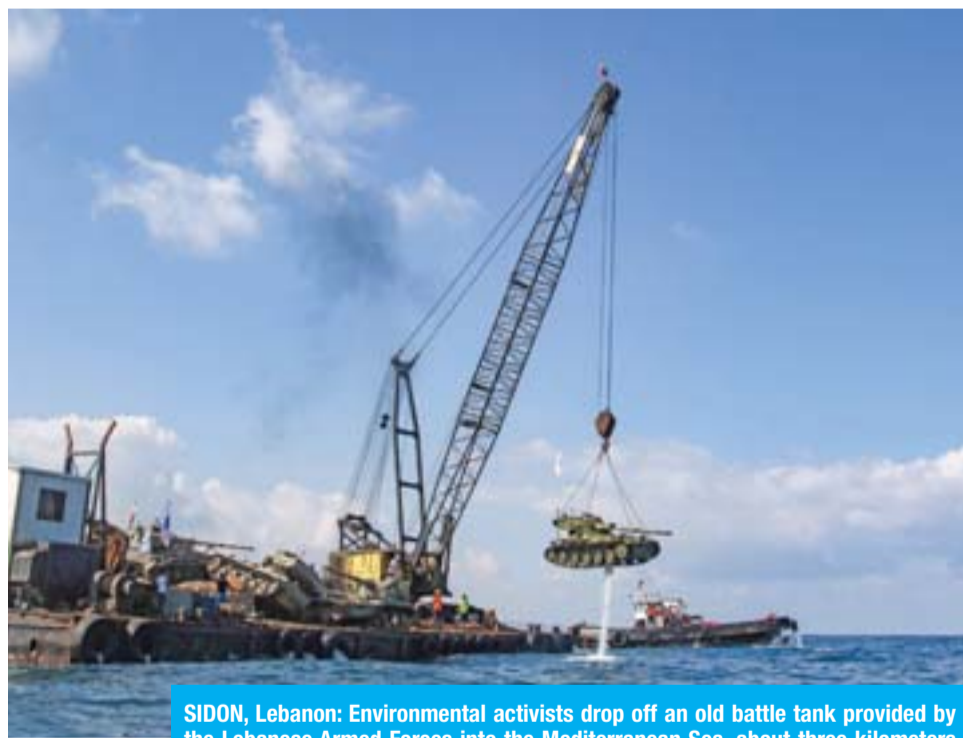
"We're here for the people, to do this for the people," said Richard Wood, who stood for parliament in 2015 for UKIP. He dismissed questions about whether their presence might legitimize a poll tainted by the lack of choice for those who supported the opposition. "It's not my position to say who's who and what's what," he said. "I'm here for one reason only, to make sure that I observe."

The National Election Committee says

there are 538 international observers, adding to tens of thousands of domestic monitors, many with links to the ruling party. A group of 23 election monitoring groups denounced the lack of independent observers in a statement yesterday. They cited the withdrawal of two prominent local organizations and the participation of some foreign observers in other elections that lacked transparency including in Kazakhstan, Zimbabwe, and Venezuela.

Some observers interviewed by AFP painted a positive picture of the political situation in Cambodia, with little mention of the banned opposition. "All we see is people dancing on the streets of Cambodia," said Vijay Jolly, a member of India's ruling BJP, on Friday morning on the last day of campaigning. "I don't think that anyone has to cast aspersions on the decisions of the Cambodian people."

Luca Romagnoli, a member of the populist right-wing Fratelli d'Italia and a former MP in the European Parliament, said he was observing in a "casual" way and not as a representative of his party. "We were in Azerbaijan a few months ago," he said, referring to an observer mission to that country's election in April, which was also criticized as unfair. Opposition leaders from the now-banned Cambodia National Rescue Party have called for a boycott of the Sunday vote but election authorities have said urging others to not show up is tantamount to a crime. — AFP



SIDON, Lebanon: Environmental activists drop off an old battle tank provided by the Lebanese Armed Forces into the Mediterranean Sea, about three kilometers off the coast of the southern Lebanese port city of Sidon. — AFP

Lebanon sinks old tanks to create dive park

SIDON, Lebanon: Lebanese environmentalists yesterday sank 10 old tanks and armored vehicles to the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea in a novel attempt to attract divers and create new habitats for marine life. Three kilometers off the coast of the city of Sidon, a huge crane on the back of a ship maneuvered the military hardware into place over the water before dropping them down to the seabed one after the other.

The initiative to create an "underwater

park" is spearheaded by a local group, Friends of the coast of Sidon, which got the Lebanese army to hand over some of its old vehicles for the project. "This will be a paradise for divers and a place where we can develop underwater life," said NGO representative Kamel Kozbar, who hopes seaweed will soon cover the vehicles. Lebanon boasts some 200 kilometers of Mediterranean coast but beaches have not been spared from a waste and garbage crisis that has plagued Lebanon for years. In Sidon, a mountain of smelly trash has scarred the shoreline, despite the presence of a new waste management facility. In a region fraught with tensions the latest project also has some political undertones. The tanks have been placed with their turrets facing towards Lebanon's southern foe Israel "out of solidarity for the Palestinian people", Kozbar said. — AFP

Iraq sacks five local election officials

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi sacked five local election officials yesterday on charges of corruption during the May 12 parliamentary election, a spokesman

for the Independent High Elections Commission (IHEC) said. The move comes as Iraq conducts a manual recount of the ballots - a move likely to speed up the ratification of the final result and the formation of a new government. Abadi had appointed a special committee to investigate claims of vote-rigging in several regions, and on Saturday he approved its recommendation to dismiss local election chiefs in Kirkuk, Anbar and Salahuddin. Judge Laith Jabr Hamza said in a statement. Those in charge of overseas

Israel to build new settler homes

KOBAR, Palestinian Territories: Israel is to build hundreds of new homes in a settlement in the occupied West Bank where a Palestinian stabbed three Israelis, one fatally, Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Friday. The announcement came as two Palestinians including a child were shot in the head by Israeli soldiers in separate incidents in the southern Gaza Strip, the Hamas-run territory's health ministry said, the latest deaths in the long-running conflict.

"The best answer to terrorism is the expansion of settlements," Lieberman wrote on Twitter, announcing 400 new housing units in the Adam settlement north of Jerusalem a day after the deadly stabbing. Israel rejects the widely held view that settlement expansion is one of the greatest obstacles to peace with the Palestinians, while attacks against Israelis in the West Bank are supported by many Palestinians as pushing back against settlement growth.

The teenage assailant sneaked into Adam Thursday evening by climbing a fence, Israeli media reported. He stabbed three people seemingly at random before being shot dead, the army said, naming the dead Israeli as Yotam Ovadia, 31. Israeli media said he had two young children. The attacker was later identified by official Palestinian media as Mohammed Dar Youssef, 17, from the village of Kobar. The army said Friday it had raided

the village, questioned a number of his family members and suspended their work permits. During the raid Friday morning, clashes broke out between young Palestinians and soldiers firing tear gas. "The rioters hurled large rocks and firebombs and rolled burning tires at (Israeli) troops, who responded with riot dispersal means," an army statement said.

The clashes were over by mid-morning Friday, an AFP photographer said, though the army had established a checkpoint at the edge of the village. Official Palestinian news agency Wafa said three people were arrested. The army added it was "reinforcing the defense" of Adam and other settlements.

US decries barbaric attack

US President Donald Trump's special envoy Jason Greenblatt called on Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas, whose Fatah movement leads the government in the West Bank, to condemn the attack. "Yet another barbaric attack tonight. When will President Abbas and Palestinian leaders condemn the violence?" he wrote on Twitter. There was no response from Abbas' government, which has cut ties with the Trump administration over its stance on Israel.

"Terror must be condemned by all," the United Nations envoy for the Middle East peace process, Nikolay Mladenov, wrote on his Twitter account. "Such horrible acts serve only those who stand in the way of peace." All Israeli settlement construction in the occupied West Bank is considered illegal by the international community. Lone Palestinian attackers have carried out multiple deadly stabbings and car-rammings against Israelis in recent years in the West Bank, Jerusalem and elsewhere.

The West Bank attack came after a period of relative calm. The last such assault in a West Bank settlement was in April, when a Palestinian tried to stab an Israeli with a screwdriver near a petrol station in an industrial area connected to the Maale Adumim settlement east of Jerusalem. In Hamas-ruled Gaza, however, there has been recurrent violence between the Israeli army and Palestinian protesters in which at least 156 Palestinians have been killed in border protests since late March.

Two Gazans shot dead

One of the Palestinians shot dead on Friday was 12-year-old Majde al Satari, hit during border confrontations east of Rafah, the Gaza health ministry reported, correcting a previous statement which gave his age as 14. Earlier the ministry also reported the killing of Ghazi Abu Mustafa, 43, and said he was shot near the frontier fence, east of Khan Yunis.

The Israeli military did not comment directly on the deaths but said about 7,000 Palestinian "rioters" threw rocks and rolled burning tyres at soldiers, and at the fence itself, at several locations along the border. "Troops are responding with riot dispersal means and firing in accordance with the rules of engagement," an English-language statement said, without elaborating.

Hamas pledged revenge after Israeli air and artillery strikes on the coastal enclave killed a number of its members in recent weeks. In a statement late Thursday, it praised the "courageous operation" in the Adam settlement without claiming responsibility for it. "The West Bank is ready and able to avenge the blood of the martyrs." — AFP

Gaza teen dies of wounds from Israeli border fire

GAZA CITY: A Gaza teenager died of his wounds yesterday after being shot by Israeli troops during protests along the border, the health ministry in the Hamas-run Palestinian territory said. A ministry statement identified him as Mohmen al-Hams, 17, and said he was shot in the chest during protests near the southern Gaza town of Rafah on Friday. There has been persistent violence between the Israeli army and Palestinian protesters along the Gaza-Israel border since late March in which at least 157 Palestinians have been killed.

Troops shot dead two Palestinians during Friday's protests. The Gaza health ministry said that one of them was a 12-year-old boy, shot east of Rafah. It also reported the killing of Ghazi Abu Mustafa 43, and said he was shot in head by Israeli soldiers east of the southern city of Khan Yunis. The Israeli military did not comment directly on the deaths but said about 7,000 Palestinian "rioters" threw rocks and rolled burning tires at soldiers, and at the fence itself, at several locations along the border.

"Troops are responding with riot dispersal means and firing in accordance with the rules of engagement," an English-language statement said Friday evening, without elaborating. Hamas has pledged revenge after Israeli air and artillery



GAZA CITY: Relatives of 17-year-old Palestinian Momen al-Hams mourn over his body during his funeral in the Rafah refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP

strikes on the coastal enclave killed a number of its members in recent weeks. Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since 2008.

A week ago a Palestinian gunman shot and killed an Israeli soldier at the border, sparking a fierce wave of Israeli bombing that rattled up fears of a new conflict. A degree of calm was restored until Wednesday when Israel said its

troops came under fire again, with one soldier wounded. It hit back with artillery fire which killed three Palestinians at a Hamas military base, east of Gaza City. In response, the Hamas military wing warned that "the enemy shall pay a high price in blood for the crime which it commits daily against the rights of our people and our fighters". — AFP

Fraud risk looms over Zimbabwe's post-Mugabe election

HARARE: Zimbabwe goes to the polls tomorrow in its first election since authoritarian leader Robert Mugabe was ousted last year, with allegations mounting of voter fraud and predictions of a disputed result. President Emmerson Mnangagwa, Mugabe's former ally in the ruling ZANU-PF party, faces opposition leader Nelson Chamisa of the MDC (Movement for Democratic Change) in a landmark vote for the southern African nation.

The two rivals held large final rallies in Harare yesterday in a last push to attract voters, with both predicting certain victory. Zimbabwe's military generals shocked the world in November when they seized control and ushered Mnangagwa to power, ending Mugabe's 37-year reign in a few short days. Mnangagwa, 75, who promises a fresh start for the country, is the front-runner with the advantage of covert mili-

tary support, a loyal state media and a ruling party that controls government resources.

But Chamisa, 40, who has performed strongly on the campaign trail, hopes to tap into a young population that could vote for change as ZANU-PF has ruled since the country's independence from British colonial rule in 1980. Elections under Mugabe were marred by fraud and violence, and this year's campaign has been dominated by accusations that the vote will be rigged.

The MDC has raised allegations of a flawed electoral roll, ballot paper malpractice, voter intimidation, bias in the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and free food handed out by the ruling party. — AFP

election offices in Turkey and Jordan were also dismissed. "The decision to sack the officials was approved by the prime minister after they committed violations, manipulation and financial corruption," said Judge Laith Jabr.

The announcement comes the day after Iraq's top Shi'ite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani urged for government action to fight corruption amid further protests sweeping the southern provinces - Iraq's Shi'ite heartland - over the lack of proper government services and jobs.

Vote-rigging allegations centered on the city of Kirkuk, although there have been reports of irregularities in multiple provinces. Opposition politicians have claimed that the tabulation system in electronic voting machines that were used for the first time during the election were not secure enough from tampering. In response to the claims, the outgoing parliament in June ordered a nationwide manual recount of the votes. The law also called for IHEC's leadership to be replaced by a panel of judges. — Reuters

International

CBS titan Leslie Moonves accused of sexual misconduct

CBS investigates recently reported alleged misconduct

NEW YORK: A bombshell article published in The New Yorker on Friday accused CBS chairman and chief executive, Leslie Moonves, of sexual misconduct stretching back decades and painted a broader picture of similar behavior within the most watched US television network. The article makes Moonves, a distinguished executive who transformed CBS into a ratings winner, one of the most powerful American men implicated in the #MeToo era that ignited last year after the career implosion of Harvey Weinstein.

CBS announced that it had launched an investigation into the "recently reported" alleged misconduct. Reports about the story sent CBS shares tumbling more than six percent, hours before it was even published. Six women who had professional dealings with Moonves told the magazine that he sexually harassed them between the 1980s and late 2000s. Moonves, 68, joined CBS in 1995 from Warner Bros. Television, where his team developed hit shows such as "Friends" and "ER."

Four described forcible touching or kissing during business meetings, and two said Moonves physically intimidated them or threatened to derail their careers. The New Yorker's Ronan Farrow reported. "I recog-

nize that there were times decades ago when I may have made some women uncomfortable by making advances. Those were mistakes, and I regret them immensely," Moonves said in a statement obtained by AFP. "But I always understood and respected-and abided by the principle-that 'no' means 'no,' and I have never misused my position to harm or hinder anyone's career," he added.

“ I may have made some women uncomfortable ”

Appropriate action

The New Yorker said 30 current or former employees complained that such behavior extended from Moonves to other parts of the corporation, including CBS News and its flagship investigative program "60 Minutes." But his wife, Julie Chen,

whom he married in 2004 and who is the host of "Big Brother" on CBS, said she fully supported her husband. "Leslie is a good man and a loving father, devoted husband and inspiring corporate leader. He has always been a kind, decent and moral human being," she said on Twitter.

Men at CBS News accused of sexual misconduct were promoted, even as the company paid settlements to women with complaints. The New Yorker also reported, suggesting a wider toxic environment at the network. In a statement sent to AFP, CBS suggested the article did not accurately reflect a company that "does its best to treat its tens of thousands of employees with dignity and respect."

The corporation's board of directors had earlier issued a pre-emptive statement, saying that upon conclusion of its investigation, it would "promptly review the findings and take appropriate action." In November, CBS News sacked Charlie Rose, at the time one of the most respected TV journalists in the United States, after eight women told The Washington Post he had made unwanted sexual advances.

Legal battle

Farrow shared a Pulitzer Prize with The



CALIFORNIA: In this file photo Leslie Moonves attends the TWC/NETFLIX Golden Globe after party, in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

New York Times for his reporting on Weinstein, which galvanized the #MeToo movement to quash pervasive sexual harassment in showbiz and other industries. The son of actress Mia Farrow and film director Woody Allen said Friday his latest

article was the product of an eight-month investigation. In May, he uncovered allegations of physical assault that forced New York state prosecutor Eric Schneiderman to resign.

Farrow's latest expose raised speculation that Moonves might also be forced to step aside. Nor was it clear what impact it would have on a legal battle for control of the US television giant-between the Redstone family, which controls CBS, and the board, chaired by Moonves. Shari Redstone is a major shareholder of both CBS and Viacom, and is seeking to merge the two companies. Moonves opposes the deal.

As chairman, Moonves oversees all operations of the company, which include the CBS Television Network, premium cable service Showtime, and the Simon & Schuster publishing company. He has launched primetime CBS hits such as "Everybody Loves Raymond," "Survivor" and "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation." He was promoted to president and CEO of CBS Television in 1998, and became chairman in 2003. A one-time actor, he is father to four children. Chen is his second wife. Last year, CBS was the most watched network in the United States, although it dropped into third place, behind NBC and Fox for adults aged 18-49. — AFP

Greece to start burying wildfire victims, govt faces criticism

ATHENS: Greece will this weekend begin burying the victims of a devastating wildfire near Athens which killed at least 88 people, and has prompted criticism of the government's handling of the disaster. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras on Friday took political responsibility for the tragedy as opposition leaders said the government had failed to adequately safeguard lives.

Today, three members of the same family are due to be laid to rest in the first known funeral since the blaze broke out last Monday in the seaside village of Mati, 30 km east of Athens. "We will say our final goodbye to our much-loved Grigoris, Evita and Andreas ... tragic victims in Mati," the Fytrou family said in a statement published by the Athens news agency, asking media not to attend. The search for the missing continues and many people remain in hospital, while the names of more victims have emerged.

Twin nine-year old girls Sofia and Vasiliki Filippopoulou, whose pictures have featured internationally, were confirmed dead, state broadcaster ERT reported yesterday. DNA tests showed the girls and their grandparents



ATHENS: The wreckage of a burnt car is pictured on the sea side of the village of Mati, near Athens. — AFP

died in the blaze at Mati. Their grandfather's burnt-out car was located outside a plot of land where 26 people died, with some of the victims found embracing each other in death, ERT said. Heavy downpours hit the region on Saturday, prompting fears that the work of rescue crews and efforts by locals to salvage what they can from the fire could be made more difficult.

The government has announced a long list of relief measures and promised to tackle decades-old problems, including haphazard and unlicensed residential building, to minimize the risk of a repeat disaster and to cool public anger. A deputy mayor in Marathon, which administers some of the affected area, yesterday became the first official to resign over the wildfire. — Reuters

Catalan ex-leader vows to press on with independence bid

BRUSSELS: Catalonia's deposed president Carles Puigdemont vowed yesterday to "defend the just cause of the Catalan people" as he returned to Belgium. Four months after he was detained in Germany at Madrid's request, Puigdemont was able to travel to Belgium after a Spanish court dropped a European arrest warrant for him. "This is not the end of my journey. I will travel to the last corner of our continent to defend the just cause of the Catalan people," he said at the offices of Catalonia's delegation in Brussels.

He was joined at the news conference by his designated successor Quim Torra, who still considers him the "legitimate president" of Catalonia. Puigdemont was to travel south of the Belgian capital later Saturday to the town of Waterloo, known for another battle-French emperor Napoleon's defeat by a mix of European forces in 1815 — for a ceremony. The 55-year-old former regional leader intends to set up a "Republican council" at his Waterloo base to continue to fight for Catalan independence, as well as an assembly composed of local officials to work in parallel with the Catalan government.

"My political activity will be based in

Belgium, of course with the aim of pursuing the mandate for the people" for an independent Catalonia. Puigdemont said in Berlin when he announced his return this week. Sacked as Catalan president after a failed secession bid on October 27, Puigdemont and several members of his executive fled to Brussels several days later. He was then arrested in Germany at the end of March on his return from a trip to Finland.

Arrest warrant dropped

Puigdemont was freed on bail and a German court ruled that he could be extradited only on possible corruption charges and not for "rebellion" as sought by Madrid. Following that decision, Spain's Supreme Court judge Pablo Llarena, in charge of the case against separatist leaders, dropped the international arrest warrant. From Belgium, Puigdemont will be able to travel where he likes, except to Spain where he is still wanted for rebellion, which carries up to 25 years in jail, and for misuse of public funds.

In theory, he could remain in self-exile for 20 years, which in Spain's legal system is the time limit after which the rebellion charge would no longer be valid. Although power is now officially in Torra's hands, Puigdemont continues to exert strong influence in the region. "In Brussels, we will continue... to develop activities linked to that which the people of Catalonia approved on October 1," Puigdemont said in Germany, in reference to the referendum banned by Spain's courts and marred by police violence. Five other leading members of the pro-independence movement are in Belgium, Switzerland and Scotland. — AFP

Thousands of Russians protest against pension age hike

MOSCOW: Tens of thousands of Russians took part yesterday in rallies across the country organized by Communists to protest against highly controversial plans to hike the pension age. In Moscow, organizers said up to 100,000 people gathered for a permitted rally against the government-backed reform, which is currently going through parliament. However, reporters put the turnout much lower at around 10,000.

Protests took place in dozens of cities and towns in far eastern Russia, Siberia and western Russia. Around 1,200 people protested in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, TASS state news agency reported, citing city hall. Demonstrators in Moscow chanted "Pension-off Putin!" and carried banners with slogans including "We want to live on our pensions and not die at work." In Russia's second largest city of Saint Petersburg, around 1,000 people took part in a Communist rally, with some waving red flags and holding portraits of Stalin.

The rare show of public opposition to a reform backed by President Vladimir Putin's ruling party has seen 2.9 million sign a protest petition and the often compliant Communist Party vote against it. Putin, who did not mention the issue ahead of his re-election in March and had previously vowed not to raise the pension age, has seen public trust in his presidency fall to 64 percent this month, down from 80 percent in May, according to



MOSCOW: Communist party supporters along with activists of the country's left-wing movements rally against the government's proposed reform hiking the pension age in Moscow. — AFP

VTSIOM state pollster.

"Many believed Putin when he said there would be no pension reform. It turns out that was demagoguery. I'm very disappointed in him," protester Irina Ivanova, 49, told AFP in Saint Petersburg. The draft law calls for the pension age to be gradually raised to 63 for women and 65 for men, up from the current Soviet-era norms of 55 for women and 60 for men.

'How will we live?'

Putin last week said he disliked the idea of raising the pension age but that doing nothing was not an option, insisting "we will have to take some crucial decisions." "Tens of thousands have gathered here to say no to this pension reform," Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov told the Moscow rally. "This is a blow to every citizen in our country." Those who oppose the reform argue that many Russians, particularly men, will not live

to enjoy their pensions.

Currently, Russian men on average die in their early 60s, Zyuganov said, and "they will all get their pension in their coffins". In addition, many Russians say that employers are reluctant to hire older people. "How will we live? I don't know. They don't hire anyone over 50," said 59-year-old Galina Nikiforova in Saint Petersburg. The speaker of the lower house of parliament, representing Putin's United Russia ruling party, said Friday that such protests were pointless.

"You can't resolve these questions at demonstrations," Vyacheslav Volodin told the Communist faction in parliament. Opposition leader Alexei Navalny has called on his supporters to attend an authorized rally against the pension reforms in Moscow on Sunday afternoon, organized by the little-known Libertarian Party. "We all understand perfectly: the only real aim of this 'reform' is to rob the public," he wrote on his blog. —AFP

Ukrainian president slams Russian church

KIEV: Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko yesterday condemned the influential Russian Orthodox Church, which counts millions of believers, as a threat to national security. The influence of the Russian Orthodox Church is a "direct threat to the national security of Ukraine", Poroshenko said during ceremonies marking 1,030 years since conversion to Christianity, adding that "this obliges us to act".

The Orthodox Church in Ukraine is split between the largest branch whose clerics pledge loyalty to the head of the Russian church, Patriarch Kirill, and one that is overseen by Kiev-based Patriarch Filaret. Poroshenko joined a procession of tens of thousands of believers organized by the Kiev church after the Moscow-based church held a similar procession on Friday. "I believe it is absolutely necessary to cut off all the tentacles with which the aggressor country operates inside the body of our state," Poroshenko said of the

Russian church. He complained that it is "separated from the state only on paper" while in reality it "fully and unconditionally supports the Kremlin's revanchist imperial policy." In Moscow on Saturday, President Vladimir Putin headed a procession of worshippers with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, underlining their close relations. Kirill even drew attention to the fact that Putin shares a first name with Prince Vladimir, who brought Christianity to the pagan Slavic state of Kievan Rus in 988.

"I think there is no such thing as a coincidence, especially when we are talking about people whose actions truly change the world," the Patriarch told Putin. He prayed for peace among those fighting in the conflict between Kiev's forces and Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. The conflict has exacerbated tensions between the two churches, with Ukrainian Patriarch Filaret once saying Putin was "possessed by Satan".

The Kiev-based church supported the bloody popular uprising in 2014 that ousted a Kremlin-backed government in Ukraine. Kirill on Friday warned against attempts to drive a wedge between the two churches. "Attempts to artificially tear the Ukrainian Orthodox Church away from the Moscow Patriarchate can lead to a catastrophe," he said. —AFP

International

Khan's party begins coalition talks as rivals plan protests

Parties pledge to boycott joining National Assembly

ISLAMABAD: Imran Khan's party said it has begun talks with independents and small parties to form a coalition government after a resounding triumph in Pakistan's general election, as rival parties planned protests over alleged vote rigging. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) won 116 seats in Wednesday's ballot, short of the 137 needed for a simple majority but a surprisingly strong showing that helped fuel suspicion of rigging.

The latest tally, which was updated yesterday afternoon following long delays, showed the outgoing Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party in distant second place with 64 seats. Khan's party has begun reaching out to potential coalition partners to form a government, according to spokesman Fawad Chaudhry, a task that analysts said should be straightforward. "We have contacted small parties and independent members, they will soon meet party leaders in Islamabad," Chaudhry said late Friday, adding that the process was likely to take about 10 days.

Chaudhry's comments followed an announcement by rival parties vowing to launch a protest

"movement", after foreign observers voiced concerns about the contest. More than a dozen parties calling themselves the All Parties Conference (APC) promised to protest over the results. However the group remained divided with some parties pledging to boycott joining the National Assembly and others calling for a new vote.

The PML-N announced its support for the group but stopped short of saying it would boycott the new parliament. And the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), which was notably absent from the APC, said in a separate announcement that it rejected the results, but vowed to try to convince the other parties to participate in the parliamentary process.

No stamina

Retired general and analyst Talat Masood said the APC may succeed in sparking pockets of unrest but did not see the movement upsetting stability at the national level. "Opposition parties are divided and they are not genuinely in a mood to form any major opposition. I don't think they have this stamina and the support of the people for going for a big movement," said

Masood. The protests announcement late Friday came as the United States, the European Union and other observers aired reservations over widespread claims that the powerful military had tried to fix the playing field in Khan's favor.

Khan's victory represents an end to decades of rotating leadership between the PML-N and the Bhutto dynasty's PPP that was punctuated by periods of military rule.

The vote was meant to be a rare democratic transition in the Muslim country, which has been ruled by the powerful army for roughly half its history. But it was marred by violence and allegations of military interference in the months leading up to the vote, with Khan seen as the beneficiary.

The former cricket star will face myriad challenges, including militant extremism, an economic crisis with speculation that Pakistan will have to seek a bailout from the International Monetary Fund, water shortages and a booming population. He will also have to contend with the same issue as many of his predecessors: how to maintain a balance of power in civil-military relations. — AFP



ISLAMABAD: Newly elected independent candidates Rafaqat Ali Gilani, center, Muhammad Hanif Patafi, left, and Basharat, right, who joined Pakistan's cricket-turned politician and head of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (Movement for Justice) party Imran Khan, talk to the media after a meeting with Khan in Islamabad. — AFP

News in brief

Indian truckers end strike

MUMBAI: Indian truckers have called off their strike after eight days as the government agreed to consider their demands to cut levies on diesel fuel, an official of the protesting group said yesterday. The All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC), an organization of transporters that organized the strike, had demanded a cut in federal and state levies on diesel by bringing the fuel under the scope of the nationwide Goods and Services Tax (GST). India's Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari late on Friday said the government was sympathetic towards truckers' concerns and had formed a committee to look into their demands. — Reuters

Plane crash in Swiss kills four

GENEVA: Four people died when their light aircraft crashed into the summit of a glacier in the Swiss Alps, police said yesterday, in the latest fatal accident to hit the popular tourist region. The plane went down 3,300 meters above sea level at 4:45 pm on Friday in an area known as the Dunand Pass, police in southern Valais canton said in a statement. After receiving an alert, authorities dispatched rescue teams to the summit but found the pilot and three passengers dead at the scene. "The circumstances of the accident have not yet been determined," police added. The victims have not yet been formally identified. — AFP

Mauritius minister resigns

PORT LOUIS: The minister for gender equality in Mauritius has stepped down, the prime minister announced, after an inquiry on the Indian Ocean island linked politicians, police, lawyers and prison guards to drug traffickers. The findings of the commission of inquiry released Friday accused the minister, Roubina Jadoo-Jaunbocus, a lawyer, of meeting jailed drug traffickers who were not her clients. She was also alleged to have been complicit in money laundering and arranging a money transfer to a drug trafficker. With deputy speaker in the national assembly Sanjeev Teeluckdhar also resigning after being implicated in the scandal, the commission called for further in-depth investigations to take place. — AFP

Doctors sacked in Nicaragua for treating wounded protesters

MANAGUA: More than a dozen doctors, nurses and technical staff in a public hospital in Nicaragua have been sacked because they treated wounded anti-government protesters and were seen backing their cause, medical sources said Friday. Those fired "without any legal justification" worked at the Oscar Danilo Rosales Hospital in the northwestern city of Leon, surgery and endoscopy department chief Javier Pastora said. The hospital is run by the health ministry.

The allegation bolstered reports that those perceived to back protest claims calling for the ouster of President Daniel Ortega were being persecuted by his government and sympathizers. Nicaragua has seen more than three months of unrest as those protests were brutally countered by police and armed pro-government paramilitaries. More than 300 people have been killed and thousands have fled to neighboring Costa Rica for safety, according to rights groups. Pastora, who has worked in Nicaragua's public health system for 33 years, said the staff members were fired because they were deemed to support the protesters by treating them. "They said we were people showing solidarity and support for the people's fight," he said. Pastora said at least nine medical specialists were among those fired.

Dismissed in surgery

"I was in surgery when they came from human resources to tell me I could no longer stay because I was fired," said one of the dismissed medics, cancer surgeon Aaron Delgado. A dismissed pediatrician, Edgar Zuniga, called the axings "arbitrary." They were fired "for thinking differently, for saying Nicaragua needs democracy, freedom, that the repression and killings must stop and there has to be dialogue," he said.

The staff and residents in Leon held a protest in front of the hospital demanding the sackings be reversed. Leon used to be a bastion of support for the Sandinista movement Ortega leads, but as the unrest took hold, there too paramilitaries and anti-riot police have stormed the city several times to crush protests. Rights groups say more than 2,000 people have been hurt across the country since the clashes erupted mid-April. — AFP

Polls open in Australia 'Super Saturday' by-elections

SYDNEY: Australia's political leaders made last-gasp bids to sway voters yesterday as polls opened in five by-elections that could see the conservative government boost its wafer-thin parliamentary majority. The seats are being contested following a string of forced resignations in the opposition Labor party after the High Court reaffirmed an obscure provision in the 1901 constitution that bars dual citizenship from elected office.

Picking up just one of them will double Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's parliamentary majority to two. The

outcome is also being seen as a barometer on Turnbull's re-election prospects and whether opposition Labor leader Bill Shorten should potentially be replaced ahead of national polls due by May next year. Half a million people are eligible to vote.

Two of the five seats are considered Labor strongholds while another looks likely to remain with the independent Centre Alliance. The others—Longman in Queensland state and Braddon in Tasmania state—are too close to call, although an opinion poll in Saturday's The Australian newspaper suggested Labor could cling on. Should Turnbull's Liberal coalition win a seat, it would be the first time a government has clinched one from the opposition at a by-election in 98 years.

Turnbull has framed the polls as a referendum on the government's "jobs and growth" agenda while Labor is campaigning on better health funding. "All of our candidates are standing for stronger economic growth, lower taxes,

more jobs, higher wages, guaranteed funding for essential services that comes from a stronger economy," Turnbull said during a final pitch in Braddon. "Labor is a threat to all of that." "We're saying to Australians voting today: don't put your essential services at risk. Don't put your jobs at risk. Don't put stronger economic growth at risk."

While the government continues to trail Labor in opinion polls, the deficit has been narrowing and Shorten's personal popularity has been waning. "I accept that when these campaigns started, Labor was the underdog in both Braddon and Longman. But Labor never gives up," said Shorten, also campaigning in Braddon. "The critical question to ask yourself when you cast your vote in these by-elections, is whether or not you want more of the same? Or do you want to see this government do better? Do you want to see better for our hospitals and schools? Better for our wages? Or do you just want to see more tax cuts for the top end of town?" — AFP

Disaster-hit Japan braces for powerful typhoon

TOKYO: A powerful typhoon hurtled towards Japan yesterday, prompting local authorities to issue early evacuation orders, with western areas recently devastated by floods and landslides in the storm's crosshairs. Typhoon Jongdari, packing winds of up to 180 kilometers an hour, is forecast to make landfall on the country's main island yesterday night or early today, according to Japan's Meteorological Agency.

TV footage showed high waves smashing onto rocks and seawalls on the coastline in Shimoda, southwest of Tokyo, and trees buffeted by strong winds and heavy rain. The storm, currently some 200 kilometers south of Tokyo, is expected to barrel towards the western Chugoku region today, where record rainfall earlier this month unleashed flooding and landslides, killing around 220 people and leaving more than 4,000 survivors still living in temporary shelters. The weather agency warned of heavy rain, landslides, strong winds and high waves, and urged people to consider early evacuation. "We want people especially in the down-pour-hit regions to pay close attention to evacuation advisories," meteorological agency official Minako Sakurai told reporters. The western city of Shobara in Hiroshima prefecture issued an evacuation order to some 36,400 residents as a precautionary measure, officials said.

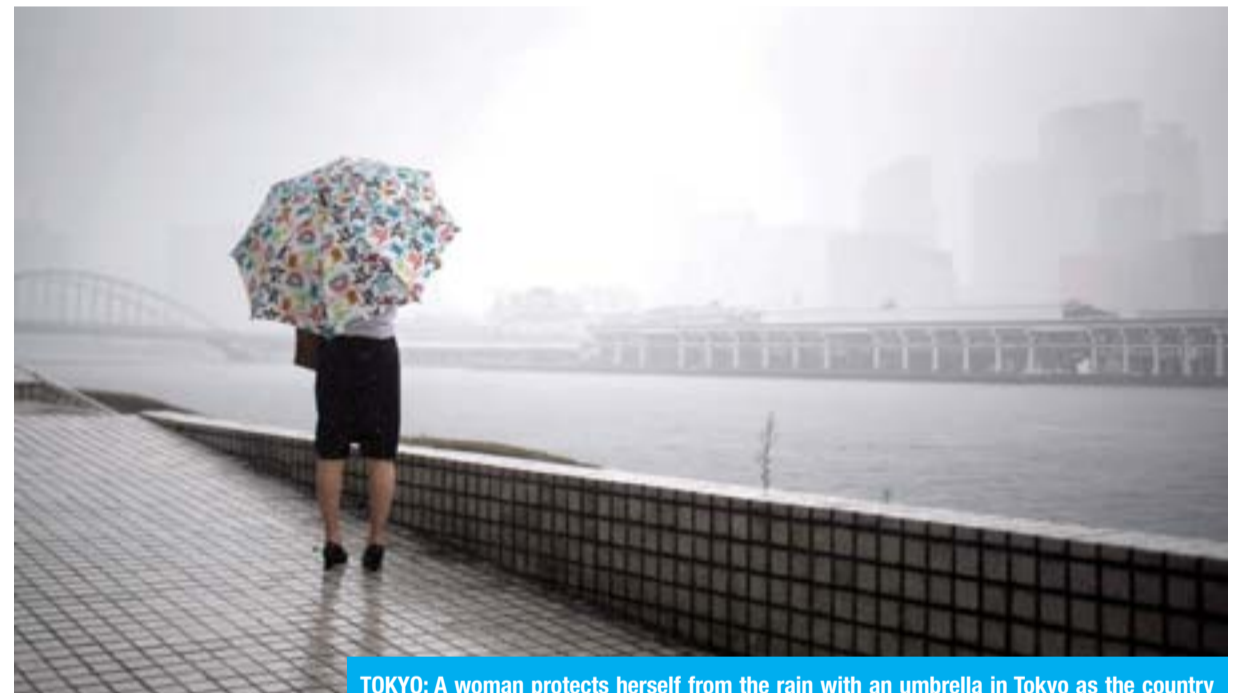
TV footage showed workers and residents hurriedly piling up sand bags to build temporary barriers against potential floods. "Although it has not rained here, we are urging people to evacuate before it gets dark," Masaharu Kataoka, a city official, said. More evacuation orders and advisories were issued in western Japan, including Kure in Hiroshima prefecture, where some 6,380 residents were urged to evacuate, news reports said. In Japan, evacuation orders are not mandatory and people often remain at home, and are

Thick mud hampers Laos dam rescue

ATTAPEU, Laos: Rescuers battled thick mud and flood waters across a swathe of remote southern Laos to find survivors of a dam burst that submerged entire villages, as an official suggested more than 1,100 people may still be unaccounted for. The exact number of dead and missing from Monday's dam collapse remains a mystery because of the complexity of the rescue operation in an inaccessible area and the secretive reflexes of Laos's Communist authorities in the face of an unprecedented crisis.

"The search is very complicated, many areas cannot be accessed by cars or boats. Also we have limited modern equipment to bring to the field," deputy secretary of Attapeu province committee Meenaporn Chaichompo told reporters Friday. She also said hundreds still have not been located, five days after the dam burst. "We can't find 1,126 people," she said, adding that 131 have been confirmed missing by relatives. Initially officials said 27 people were confirmed dead, but Meenaporn reduced that to six, without explanation. The remoteness of the disaster zone and slow trickle of often contradictory information has sparked fears the death toll could rise sharply. A stretch of land dozens of kilometers long and wide was submerged when the Xe-Namnoy dam collapsed after heavy rains.

Slowly retreating floodwaters have cut off access to villages and covered much of the area with thick, sticky mud. "This is one of the worst (disasters) I've ever seen. Especially because we're not a very strong country in terms of rescue operations," a volunteer rescue worker said, requesting anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to media. Days into the treacherous search for survivors, questions are being raised about the quality of the construction of the \$1.2 billion dam, a joint venture between South Korean, Laotian and Thai



TOKYO: A woman protects herself from the rain with an umbrella in Tokyo as the country braces for Typhoon Jongdari. — AFP

later trapped by rapidly rising water or sudden landslides. "It's going to deal a double punch," a resident in Okayama told public broadcaster NHK, referring to the recent killer downpours and the incoming typhoon. "We are seriously worried," he said. More than 410 domestic flights have been cancelled so far because of Typhoon Jongdari, while ferry services connecting Tokyo with nearby islands were also cancelled due to high waves, news reports said.

The flooding in the Chugoku region was Japan's worst weather-related disaster in decades, and many residents of affected areas are still living in shelters or damaged homes. "We are fully ready 24 hours a day to evacuate residents," Tadahiko Mizushima, an official of Okayama prefecture in

Chugoku, said. "We are paying special attention to the areas where restoration of river banks is under way as it would be the first heavy rain since the disaster."

Officials are particularly cautious after the deadly downpours because many people did not heed evacuation orders and became trapped. Some critics said the orders were issued too late. "We are afraid that people may not be able to evacuate due to strong wind or floods blocking evacuation routes," Hiroshima governor Hidehiko Yuzaki told reporters. "I would like people to evacuate in advance so that they can save their lives," Yuzaki said. Japan is now in typhoon season, and is regularly struck by major storm systems during the summer and autumn. — AFP



SANAMXAI, Laos: This picture shows a vehicle left in floodwaters in Sanamxai district, Attapeu province, following a dam collapse that caused flooding. — AFP

firms. Operators said it burst after heavy rains in a country regularly battered by monsoons.

But Laos Minister of Energy and Mines Khanmany Inthirath said poor design contributed to the accident, according to state media. One of the Korean firms involved in the project, SK Engineering & Construction, said it was investigating the cause of the dam break and would donate \$10 million in relief aid. The accident has kicked up criticism of Laos' ambitious dam-building scheme as it bids to become a major power exporter, billing itself

the "battery of Asia" with more than 50 projects set to go online by 2020. Villagers have complained of being displaced, while river waters crucial for fishing and farming have been diverted, destroying livelihoods in one of Asia's poorest countries. The accident has prompted fears over the safety of other dams in the country. "Most of the dams are built by foreign companies and Laos authorities don't have expert knowledge and management to check for weaknesses or problems, that's our worry," villager Si Wonghajak said yesterday. — AFP

Analysis

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Washington Watch

It bears repeating: Foolish wars have consequences

By Dr James J Zogby

Fifteen years ago, we were still in the early stages of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq. "The war that would change everything." Looking at the Middle East today, I feel an overwhelming sadness as I consider the far-reaching and devastating impact that the Iraq war has had on my country and the region and its peoples. Neo-conservatives had been aggressively pushing the Bush Administration to launch a war against Iraq beginning immediately after the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. They argued that America needed to forcefully respond to the attacks in order to demonstrate that we were not to be trifled with. A decisive show of strength, they claimed, was necessary to clearly establish America's hegemony and to forestall any move toward multi-polarity in the post-Cold War era.

It bears repeating that the war was based on lies - and by that I don't mean the lies about Saddam's nuclear program or his connection to the 9/11 terrorists. Rather the more insidious lies were: that the "war would be a 'cake walk'"; that it wouldn't require a significant troop commitment or expenditure of resources; that it would be over quickly; that we would be greeted as liberators; that democracy would take hold in Iraq; and that the entire Middle East would be transformed.

Fifteen years later, only one of these claims turned out to be true: the region would be transformed. But it was not the transformation envisioned by the neo-cons. Again, it bears repeating just how devastating that war has been. The war itself exposed the deep fissures in Iraqi society, while the US occupation's unformed bungling only served to exacerbate these divides. With Iraq's army and ministries dismantled, the country fell into chaos with competing sectarian militias unleashing a civil war. This resulted in the massive displacement of civilians - millions of whom became refugees or internally displaced - and the decimation of vulnerable religious minority communities. All of this occurred on Bush's watch.

An additional tragic consequence of the war was the spread of extremism. Al-Qaeda, far from defeated, metastasized into newer and more deadly forms in Iraq, its immediate neighborhood, and countries beyond. In this weakened and fractured Iraq, Iran found a foothold which it parlayed to its advantage. Today, Iran remains a major player in Iraq and not only there. Another unintended consequence of the war was the unleashing of Iran as a regional power.

Subdued, for a time, by its rival Iraq, Iran now felt empowered to extend itself beyond its borders. Preying on growing anti-American sentiment and sectarian tensions in other countries, "revolutionary Iran" was emboldened to meddle in regional affairs. This gave rise to the Arab Gulf states feeling the need to assert themselves against this growing and destabilizing Iranian threat. The neo-cons' war also emboldened Israel to more aggressively pursue its agenda to subdue the Palestinians and to expand its colonial enterprise.

The US, once seen as the dominant super power that had won the Cold War and built an international coalition to liberate Kuwait, now found itself bogged down in a war it could not win with its military weakened and demoralized by losses. The US also stood discredited in the Arab World as a result of its bloody failure and abhorrent behavior in Iraq and its stubborn refusal to confront its client/ally Israel.

The neo-conservative's blindness to Middle East realities did indeed give birth to a "New Middle East", but it was exactly the opposite of the one they had imagined. As the region descended into multiple new crises - with deadly wars in Syria and Yemen - the impact of the Iraq war became even more pronounced. Iran was a player in each of them. The Gulf states also became involved seeking ways to combat aggressive Iranian advances which challenged and threatened them. Al-Qaeda and its offshoots played a new and deadly role in Iraq and Syria. And new players like Russia and Turkey, each defending what they saw as their interests, also emerged as regional actors.

All the while, the US, weakened diplomatically and still licking its wounds from the war in Iraq, was too war weary and wary of becoming directly involved in new regional crises. Some blame the Obama Administration for passivity. But this fails to recognize the reality that the post-Iraq, the US military cautioned against engagement in conflicts they could neither manage nor see how their entry, without a long-term commitment - in which they loathed to engage - could help bring about a resolution.

In this new chaotic multi-polar world, conflicts spin out of control, becoming more deadly and destabilizing as they grew. The Syrian conflict has taken the lives of a half-million while forcing over five million to become refugees. This has created new pressures in neighboring countries and unleashed an xenophobic tidal wave that is now challenging democracies in Eastern and Central Europe. And the battle in Yemen, which began as an effort to restore the legitimate government that had been overthrown by a rebel faction, has morphed into a draining regional conflict and a humanitarian disaster.

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



Khan's anti-American rhetoric has many wary

Over the years, Pakistan's Imran Khan has been known for his anti-American rhetoric, once even suggesting he might, as prime minister, order the shooting down of US drones targeting Al-Qaeda figures along the Pakistan-Afghan border. Now that Khan is poised to become nuclear-armed Pakistan's leader, Washington will be watching closely for signs of whether he will follow a path of confrontation or continue with the conciliatory tone he struck in his election victory speech.

His attitude towards the United States and President Donald Trump - to whom Khan has often been compared as a populist shaking up the established political order - could determine the future of a crucial but fraught relationship. Officially allies in fighting terrorism, Pakistan and the United States have a complicated relationship, bound by Washington's dependence on Pakistan to supply its troops in Afghanistan but plagued by accusations Islamabad is playing a double game.

Tensions have grown over US complaints that the Afghan Taleban and Haqqani network that target American troops in Afghanistan are allowed to shelter on Pakistani soil. "We want a relationship with America that benefits both the countries, that it is a balanced relationship, and God willing, we will try our best for that balanced relationship," Khan said in his victory speech on Thursday.

However, some experts believe that his years of anti-American rhetoric, which prompted opponents to mock him with the nickname "Taleban Khan", will make improving relations difficult. "Even if (Khan) starts toning down his rhetoric, I don't know if he can send any signals to make Washington hopeful," said Sameer Lalwani, co-director of the South Asia program at the Stimson Center think-tank.

Khan largely unknown in Washington

Khan has been vocally opposed to drone strikes on Pakistani soil and questioned the need for an open-ended US military presence in Afghanistan. In the run-up to the



Pakistan's cricketer-turned politician Imran Khan addresses the nation at his residence in Islamabad a day after general election on July 26, 2018. — AFP

2013 election, Khan said that if he came into power he could shoot down US drones if appealing to the United States and going to the United Nations did not work. "If that does not stop them, then Imran Khan will do what Imran Khan needs to do, I will order the PAF (Pakistan Air Force) to bring down any drone," Khan said at the time.

However, the number of drone strikes in Pakistan has reduced dramatically since peaking in 2010, reducing one potential point of friction. A former senior US official also said much of Khan's anti-American rhetoric was for public consumption. "I think he is certainly capable of being more pragmatic ... He is not averse to US interests and we will have to see how campaigning turns into governing," the official, who has met Khan several times, said. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

Though famous in cricket-playing countries as one of the greats of the game with a playboy reputation in his younger days, Khan remains largely unknown in Washington. An early test could come in September, when

he is expected to attend the UN General Assembly meeting in New York along with US President Donald Trump and other world leaders. In a statement on Friday, the US State Department said it would seek opportunities to work with Pakistan. "As Pakistan's elected leaders form a new government, the United States will look for opportunities to work with them to advance our goals of security, stability, and prosperity in South Asia," the statement said.

Khan is viewed by some as similar to Trump - confident in his own abilities despite having little governing or foreign policy experience. "When two leaders have so much in common, there is a high possibility they either will be good friends or sworn enemies," said Jonah Blank, a former director for South and Southeast Asia at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee now with the RAND Corporation think-tank.

Powerful military

Trump tweeted in January that the United States had "foolishly" given Pakistan more than \$33 billion in aid. Days later, Trump's administration announced the suspension of about \$2 billion in security aid to Islamabad - officially a US ally - over accusations that elements of its military continue to nurture Islamist militants it has viewed as useful proxies in its long rivalry with India. Islamabad denies that it is not doing enough against militants and accuses the United States of disrespecting the hundreds of casualties it has suffered fighting Islamists.

Since then, US officials have said that they have seen positive signs from Pakistan, but that it has to put more pressure on militants, including by arresting, expelling or targeting them. While Khan is more vocally anti-American than his predecessors, he is likely to be reined in by a powerful military that still regards itself as having the final say on Pakistan's foreign policy, officials said. "Ultimately the policy is going to be decided by the security establishment and the security establishment really would like to keep things on a fairly even keel," Blank said. — Reuters

Cuba president changes style, not substance

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel has engaged in a nonstop series of public appearances during his first 100 days in office, stopping everywhere across the island nation in an apparent bid to consolidate his leadership position. But the Castro dynasty is still calling practically all the shots. Upon taking office on April 19, some had hoped he might move quickly to breathe new life into reforms aimed at modernizing one of the world's last Communist-run countries.

But the 58-year-old hand-picked successor of Raul Castro has demonstrated limited room for maneuver in what analysts have called a well-orchestrated and only gradual transition from the octogenarian leaders of Cuba's 1959 revolution. Diaz-Canel has appeared daily in meetings broadcast on state television with authorities and in communities across Cuba, playing basketball with school students, hearing the concerns of patients at hospitals and inspecting factories to see the challenges they face.

His outgoing approach is starkly different from Castro's behind-the-scenes style and many Cubans have said they are reminded of Castro's older brother, Fidel, although the bearded revolutionary was far more charismatic and unrestrained. "Every day he is really getting closer to the people, getting to know their problems first hand," said Lazaro Linares, 45, who struggles to get by on the \$20 per month he earns working for a state administered urban garden in Havana. In terms of substance and problem solving, however, Diaz-Canel has made good so far on the

promise made in his inaugural address to defer to his 87-year-old predecessor on key issues. "Beyond frequent emphasis on the need to combat corruption ... it is hard to identify as yet a policy agenda fully his own," said Michael Bustamante, an assistant professor of Latin American history at Florida International University.

It is Castro, for example, who is spearheading the revamp of Cuba's Soviet-era constitution to overhaul its courts and government, and reflect market reforms opening its economy. Last weekend, when Diaz-Canel announced his new cabinet, he retained two thirds of the ministers who served under Castro, including those in key posts like defense, trade and foreign relations. Earlier this month new regulations defining the scope of the fledgling private sector were released, but the bulk were signed by Castro before he left office.

"More than leading the strategic decisions, Diaz-Canel is acquiring a lot of executive management capability in the day-to-day running of the government," said Arturo Lopez-Levy, a former analyst for the Cuban government who now lectures at the University of Texas. "How long will this situation last? Until Raul Castro and (Jose Ramon) Machado Ventura find it proper," he said, referring to the Communist Party's No. 2, an 87-year-old hardline communist ideologue.

According to some, Diaz-Canel will only have full leeway to implement his own policies when he succeeds Castro in the powerful position as chief of Cuba's Communist Party, which is expected to happen at the party's next congress in 2021. "Diaz-Canel will survive the generation of octogenarians who decided on his promotion and only then will he be able to show his true face, hidden now between compromises, fears and the roadmap dictated by others," Yoani Sanchez, a dissident blogger and director of the online news outlet 14ymedio, told Reuters.



Cuban former president and first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party Raul Castro (right) and Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel attend the celebrations of the Moncada Barracks assault's 65th anniversary in Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 2018. — AFP

'More captive than captain'

While it is still early days, Diaz-Canel has given few hints he might push more aggressively for reforms to address living standards on the island, Cubans' main concern. Cuba's inefficient state-run economy never fully recovered from the collapse of former benefactor the Soviet Union and now faces declining aid from ally Venezuela and lower Cuban exports. Most Cubans complain they cannot live off the average monthly state wage of \$30 despite free social services and some subsidized food and housing.

Castro had initiated reforms to foster the private sector and foreign direct investment while making state-run companies more efficient, but he faced resistance from Communist Party officials and bureaucrats afraid of losing power. Diaz-Canel has tapped new officials to deal with domestic economic issues under his leadership, according to American University professor of government and Cuba expert William LeoGrande. So far, however, he has appeared "more captive than captain,"

said Richard Feinberg, an expert on Cuba at the Brookings Institution.

To date, the one economic topic Diaz-Canel has highlighted is corruption, but for many this is more a symptom than a cause of Cuba's economic problems. Cubans often argue, for example, that low wages force them to steal from their workplace to get by. Diaz-Canel's only big ideological speech to date came at the annual congress of the union of journalists. He has long championed a more critical state media and the cautious roll-out of Internet in one of the world's least connected societies.

But in his speech, he appeared to attack alternative web-based news outlets that have surfaced in recent years, accusing "new revolutionaries" of trying to subvert the revolution. Lopez-Levy said that if Diaz-Canel's speech on the press was anything to go by "we should expect more changes provoked by economic conditions and pressures, not by a progressive ideology or the new president's political support for democratization." — Reuters

Business

SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2018

12 Boursa Kuwait stocks fluctuate amid buy & hold, profit-booking

13 91% of KFH's H1 total profits from core earnings: Nahedh

14 KAMCO issues KD 40m, five-year tenure bond



ABK announces 18% increase in H1 net profit

Net profit reaches KD 19.1 million, operating income KD 83.8 million

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday reported an 18 per cent increase in net profit for the first half ending 30th June, 2018. The upward trend in 2018 continued as ABK's net profit for the period reached KD 19.1 million and operating income was KD 83.8 million, a 11 per cent increase compared to KD 75.5 million for the same period in 2017. Total assets reached KD 4.5 billion, up 4 per cent from 2017, while total shareholders' equity reached KD 569 million, a growth of 2 percent year-on-year. Customer deposits grew by 5 per cent from the corresponding period to reach KD 3.1 billion. Asset quality remained strong with the non-performing loan (NPL) ratio at 1.80 per cent and NPL coverage of 370 per cent. Capital adequacy ratio was robust at 16.30 per cent, well in excess of regulatory requirements and earnings per share was at 12 fils compared to 10 fils in 2017.

Commenting on the results, Talal Mohammed Reza Behbehani, Chairman of ABK said: "The bank has upheld its growth trajectory and maintained its focus on regionally expanding its corporate finance and investment banking operations, which have delivered excellent results this year. We are committed to executing our strategic priorities and are well equipped to deliver sustainable long-term shareholder value."

Michel Accad, Group CEO of ABK said: "Our continued growth is testament to the balanced and healthy lending portfolio at ABK which is supported by state-of-the-art technology across our operations. In the face of fast-growing competition we have a focused on being a customer centric, digitally enabled, and integrated organization. Our digitization efforts are gradually transforming the bank, generating benefits for our clients and ultimately creating long-term share-



Talal Behbehani



Michel Accad

holder value. We are moving forward with our next three year Strategic Plan, which we believe will further enhance our customer's banking experience."

In line with ABK's growth strategy, the

Bank successfully expanded its presence in the UAE with a new branch in the DIFC. The first transaction out of the DIFC branch took place in the first month of operation, when ABK signed a land-

mark agreement with Dubai Aerospace Enterprise (DAE) for syndicated funding worth \$500 million expandable to \$800 million. The four-year revolving loan facility, which has both conventional and Islamic tranches, has been arranged through a syndicated structure with ABK serving as the Coordinating Mandated Lead Arranger together with UAE-based First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) and Noor Bank as Mandated Lead Arranger.

ABK recently launched its new 'Global View' service, the first-of-its-kind in Kuwait. The Global View platform provides ABK customers across UAE, Kuwait and Egypt a simpler and smarter way to view multiple accounts, on digital touch points such as online & mobile banking through a single login.

ABK also continues to be recognized internationally and locally having received a number of awards in the second quarter of 2018.

Trump touts US economic growth as a 'miracle'

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Friday hailed roaring US economic growth as a "miracle," and said the quickest expansion in almost four years was a vindication of his economic agenda.

With the size of the American economy now surpassing \$20 trillion, GDP expanded by 4.1 percent in the April-June quarter, making the United States the fastest-growing of advanced countries, according to a government report. "We're on track to hit the highest annual average growth rate in over 13 years," Trump said in remarks at the White House. "Everywhere we look, we're seeing the effects of the American economic miracle."

The second quarter acceleration came in part after the injection of stimulus and Republican tax cuts.

But economists warned it could be a blip caused by temporary factors, including a one-off bounce produced by Trump's trade confrontation with China.

The robust results put growth in the first half of the year at just over three percent, matching a White House target and faster than the trend in previous years. Trump said the United States was "the economic envy of the world," and "As the trade deals come in one by one, we are going to go a lot higher than these numbers and these are great numbers."

His jubilation did not extend to Wall Street, where stocks closed down markedly as investors feared the economy has peaked and amid disappointing earnings and trade war fears. In the April-June period, consumer spending had its biggest bounce in nearly four years, with Americans buying more cars and spending more liberally on health care, housing, utilities, restaurants and hotels, according to the Commerce Department report.

Purchases of goods jumped 5.9 percent-with the largest contribution coming from booming auto sales-while services rose 3.1 percent. But the report got

another boost from an unusual source: strong exports which leapt 13.3 percent, driven higher by foreign sales of oil and soybeans, which now face stiff Chinese tariffs.

Analysts said that increase was due to stockpiling by Chinese importers before Beijing's retaliatory tariffs on US goods hit in July, which means trade is likely to fall off in the third quarter, dragging down the growth rate.

Accelerating in a trade war?

But Trump nevertheless focused on the sudden drop in the US trade deficit as another triumph for his tough trade policies.

"Perhaps one of the biggest wins in the report, it is indeed a big one, is that the trade deficit, very dear to my heart because we've been ripped off by the world, has dropped by more than \$50 billion," Trump said.

The report showed imports rose only 0.5 percent, the smallest increase in two and a half years.

Also contributing to economic growth, spending by state and local governments rose 1.4 percent. The report fell short of the most bullish forecasts of five percent or higher, with which Trump had teased audiences at events in Iowa and Illinois as recently as Thursday. The White House is counting on faster growth to pay for December's sweeping tax cuts by generating higher revenues. But federal tax receipts are already plummeting, widening the federal budget deficit, just as the costs of borrowing increase due to mounting interest rates.

Ian Shepherdson of Pantheon Macroeconomics said swings in inventories and trade, as well as the fading effects from the income tax cuts could put third-quarter growth at three percent.

"The message, then, is that if you borrow enough money from your grandchildren and throw it at the economy, it will grow faster, for a while," he wrote in a research note. Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton, said the growth rate was likely to meet the White House's three percent target for the year and noted that a sudden drop in business inventories in the second quarter could point to a rebuild in the latter half of 2018. "The question is, how much are firms willing to stock up with the threat of a trade war?" she said in a research note. — AFP



WASHINGTON DC: US President Donald Trump, with Vice President Mike Pence, speaks about the economy on the South Lawn of the White House on Friday, in Washington, DC. — AFP

Business

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

Boursa Kuwait stocks fluctuate amid buy & hold, profit-booking

Speculative deals on small caps hit stocks

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week with mixed performance. The Premier Market Index closed at 5,378.62 points, up by 0.48 percent, the Main Market Index decreased by 0.08 percent after closing at 4,949.13 points, and the All-Share Index closed at 5,226.03 points down by 0.29 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 26.95 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching around KD 21.14 million, whereas trading volume average was about 91.67 million shares, recording a decrease of 27.05 percent.

Boursa Kuwait witnessed during the last week a fluctuated performance included some buy & hold and profit collection operations executed on most of the listed stocks in the Market especially the Premier Market. It also included some speculative operations on small-cap stocks which caused its three indices to close mixed by the end of last week, in light of the decline of the purchasing activity on the Banks and leading stocks, which caused it to lose part of its gains realized in the previous weeks, and lead to weakness in the trading indicators on the weekly level, despite the positive financial results announced by some listed companies for the first half of year 2018 and the disclosures related during the last week on the mergers deal of one local bank with another GCC bank where both are listed in Boursa Kuwait, in addition to the disclosure related to the sale of shares in one listed company in the Industrial Sector of the main market.

On the other hand, Boursa Kuwait is currently witnessing a general state of watch for the listed companies financial results for the first half of year 2018, especially that most of the listed companies did not disclose its results yet. By the end of last week, the number of companies that disclosed its fiscal financial results for the period ended on

30 June 2018 reached 38 company out of 175 listed company in the market, including companies with different year end, realizing net profit of around KD 347.85 million for the second quarter of year 2018, up by 15.22 percent from the same company's results for the same period of year 2017, where it was approximately KD 301.89 million.

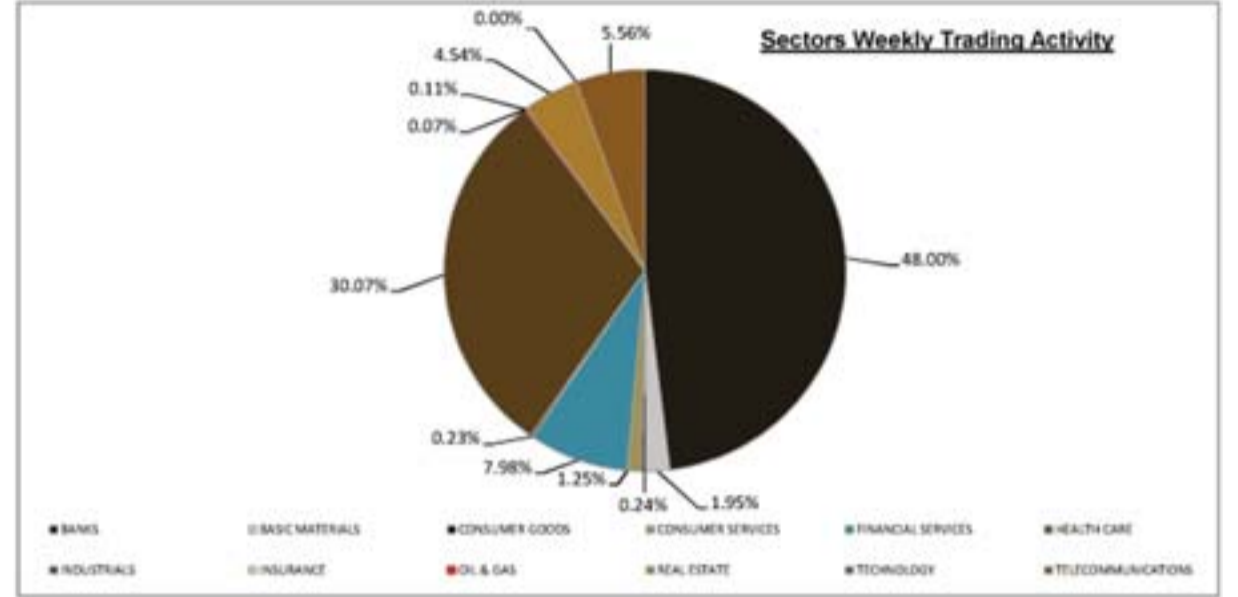
Moreover, Boursa Kuwait recorded weekly gains of around KD 76.23 million, as its market capitalization reached by the end of last week approx. KD 28.79 billion, up by 0.27 percent from its level in a week earlier, where it was about KD 28.71 billion. The market cap gains for the Boursa since the application of the new market segmentation reached around KD 930.11 million, up by 3.34 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 financial statements).

Last week witnessed trading over 156 stock out of 175 listed stock in the Market, where prices of 57 stock increased against prices of 81 stock decreased, and prices of 37 stock remained at no change.

Sectors' Indices

Six of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the red zone, and six recorded increases. Last week's highest loser was the Consumer Goods sector, as its index declined by 4.31 percent to end the week's activity at 896.20 points. The Consumer Services sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 1.28 percent, closing at 1,061.42 points, followed by the Insurance sector, which index declined by 0.62 percent, closing at 947.68 points.

On the other hand, last week's highest gainer was the Technology sector, achieving 6.61 percent growth rate as



its index closed at 938.48 points. The Oil & Gas sector came in the second place, as its index closed at 1,059.77 points recording 1.29 percent increase, followed by Industrial sector, achieving 1.05 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,009.27 points

Sectors' Activity

The Banks sector dominated a total trade volume of around 173.59 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 37.87 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 23.24 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 106.50 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 50.74 million or 48 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Industrial sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 31.78 million representing 30.07 percent of the total market trading value. —Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.

Exxon Mobil shares slump again on dismaying results

NEW YORK: US oil giant Exxon Mobil reported another round of disappointing results on Friday, sending shares sharply lower as it moved to address rising criticism of its communications and operations. The company's share price fell 2.8 percent to \$81.92 following the report, the third quarter in a row that has seen Wall Street punish the company for weak results.

"This quarter was a low point in terms of volumes in the upstream and downstream," senior vice president Neil Chapman said on a conference call. Chapman said some of the decline in oil and natural gas production was due to the sale of low-quality projects and made sense as a strategy to boost profitability.

"There are some plays that are more productive... easier to extract and at lower cost,"

he said. "Volume is not our focus. Value is our focus." Related to this strategy, Exxon Mobil has shifted its emphasis in US shale investment from natural gas to oil because of better returns, he said.

Net income at Exxon Mobil jumped 18 percent in the second quarter to \$4.0 billion compared to the same period a year earlier. That translated into 92 cents a share, well below the \$1.27 expected by analysts. Revenues rose 26.6 to \$73.5 billion, the company announced.

Rival oil giant Chevron reported quarterly profits had more than doubled to \$3.4 billion, while revenues had climbed 22.5 percent to \$42.2 billion. Investors rewarded the company, as Chevron shares climbed 1.6 percent to \$125.97. The results follow jumps in profits

reported Thursday for Royal Dutch Shell and Total and illustrate the bounce from oil prices. US crude futures mostly traded in a range of \$65 to \$75 a barrel during the quarter, up from the \$45 to \$50 range in the year-ago period.

Output and refining drop

But Exxon Mobil reported another significant slide in oil and gas production, which fell seven percent to 3.6 million barrels a day of oil-equivalent. The company said natural gas output was especially weak, diving 10 percent, due in part to downtime in Qatar, Australia and Papua New Guinea, which returned to normal output levels in April after a February earthquake hit production for more than a month. Downtime in refining also affected results, due mostly to an unusually high num-

ber of planned refining outages at various plants and some unplanned maintenance following incidents at facilities in the first quarter, the company said. Chapman said the company was not happy with the downstream results but operations should return to normal in the second half of 2018. "We're all over it in terms of getting to our normal reliability performance," Chapman said.

Transparency drive

Chapman's appearance on Exxon Mobil's conference marked a shift from the oil company's longstanding practice of only staffing the call with the corporate secretary, a low-ranking executive compared with the practice at most large companies.

Chief executive Darren Woods has pledged

more transparency to Wall Street, a point reiterated by Chapman on the call. Exxon Mobil has also taken steps to address longstanding criticism by environmentalists of its policy on climate change, appointing climate scientist Susan Avery to its board of directors.

This year's annual meeting was the first in more than a decade that Exxon Mobil did not face a shareholder vote on climate change on a proposal from critics after the company agreed to publish a report on the effect of climate policies on the company's business. But Andrew Logan, director of oil and gas programs at environmental nonprofit Ceres, said Exxon Mobil had still not allowed the group to meet with Avery and that Exxon Mobil had yet to articulate a viable plan for transitioning its business to one that is more climate-friendly. — AFP

Bayt.com weekly report

Tricks to use when you are stuck in a job interview

One of the most stressful situations we face when it comes to interviews is the fear of being late or being underdressed. However, have you ever felt stuck when facing a tough interview question? This situation is one of the most difficult situations anyone can face. We tend to imagine the interview process in our minds, but we don't plan for the unexpected tough question and subsequent awkward freeze.

Regardless of how prepared you are for the interview, or how long it took you to ace the answers you had in mind, in some cases unprepared and unexpected questions arise during the interview.

Bayt.com career experts have gathered all the tips you'd need to get out of this difficult situation. And the first rule is: breathe. You can do this. We know how stressful this can be, so to ease it for you, continue on reading to know how to handle it professionally.

Before we get started, one thing to be aware of: some questions asked during the interview don't have a right or wrong answer. These questions are meant to test or observe how you process your thoughts and solve problems that arise under pressure. Therefore, you must be true to yourself and the process instead of trying to figure out what the perfect answer is.

1. Take your time

This doesn't mean taking a long pause and letting the 'Uh', 'Um' or anything similar come up. One thing you could say here is 'that's a good question; let me gather my thoughts around it'. It will show the interviewer that you are taking the proper consideration and allow you a minute or two to come up with a good answer.

2. Ask for further clarification

Candidates need to understand that an interview process is not an interrogation; it is rather a two way communication. Asking for clarifications and explanations are perfectly fine if you find yourself unclear on a certain question. Just ask for the details and mention that your intention is to give the best possible answer. Remember, body language is important here too, smile and be sincere.

3. Ask to keep it for later

If you find yourself completely thrown off by a question and totally unable to answer, you can follow the strategy of asking the interviewer to come back to it later and ask you another question meanwhile. Inform them that you prefer to come back to this later on during the interview. This will help you by allowing your thoughts to reorder and you can come up with an answer as you go through other less unexpected questions.

4. Change the topic

To clear things out, do not avoid the question, just redirect the conversation smoothly. For example, if this question reminds you of a situation you had in your previous job or is related to a situation you faced then mention it. Tell the situation and how you handled it to solve the problem or to make a decision. Make sure you do not go too far from the question though and circle back to it if possible.

5. Reduce the tension with some sense of humor

Building a connection with the interviewer is highly important. No one likes sitting in a stiff and tensed place for thirty minutes to an hour or more. If you are having a nice and enjoyable conversation, then most likely the interviewer won't notice that you are stressed or unable to answer a specific question. Throw in some sense of humor and use your personality; however, make sure it is appropriate and professional.

6. Stay focused on your body language

The way you present yourself physically is equally important as your answers and voice tone. Keep eye contact, and stay in a neutral position. Try not to do anything that makes you look defensive such as crossing your arms, or avoiding eye contact. Maintaining a neutral body language sends the interviewer a message that you are intending to answer the question, and that alone can ease the situation.

Keep in mind that preparation and research are the foundation for any successful interview. Also, the best and most experienced individuals are sometimes caught off guard, and that is normal in an interview. Stay positive and give it your best.

Spain dreams big on US gas

MADRID: When the US and EU agreed to boost gas trade to Europe this week, Spain would have been justified in crying victory, having only recently offered its services with its many liquefied natural gas (LNG) ports.

There's a slight problem, though: it may have the capacity to import gas but it's badly connected to the European network of pipelines, an issue on the table at a trilateral meeting between French, Portuguese and Spanish leaders in Lisbon on Friday.

For years, Spain and Portugal have called for an end to their isolation from European networks of electricity and gas distribution. And whereas electricity connections are being built, there is little progress on gas.

Many ports, few pipelines
During a NATO summit at the beginning of July in Brussels, US President Donald Trump criticised EU dependence on Russian gas and asked Europeans to buy US gas instead.

Madrid immediately offered its services. Foreign Minister Josep Borrell revealed this week.

"Us Spaniards are importing more and more American gas, which already represents 25 percent of our supply, and Portugal and Spain have terminals that would allow

us to unload American LNG tankers and transport the gas via pipelines," he told reporters.

As if answering Madrid's offer, Trump, joined by European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker, said Wednesday that the two key economies reached an agreement to boost EU imports of US gas, which is liquefied and transported by tanker before being gasified again.

Spain has six regasification terminals, more than any other European country. But so far there is just one pipeline linking it to France and the rest of Europe. Not enough, says Spain.

"If American gas arrives on the (Iberian) peninsula and can't go any further, we have a problem," said Borrell. As such, Madrid has long been promoting the construction of a second pipeline through the northeastern region of Catalonia.

The project, called Midcat, was broached at a first trilateral summit on energy connections in March 2015 in Madrid.

But Gonzalo Escribano, an energy expert at Spain's Elcano Institute think tank, said Friday's meeting was unlikely to yield any progress.

"We don't know who would pay, and the French are putting the brakes on," he said.

Not viable

Why? A European Commission viability study published in April sheds some light on France's reluctance. It concluded that the Midcat pipeline, which would cost more than 440 million euros (\$510 million), would

not benefit any EU country ... apart from Spain and Portugal.

The main reason is that other countries further north-like France-also have LNG ports, so why pay for another pipeline? The LNG terminal at "Montoir in France is 8,966km (5,570 miles) far from Corpus Christi, in Texas, and Bilbao in Spain is 8,969km far," the report noted.

European gas imports are on the rise as production drops due to "the decline of indigenous supply sources on the continent," including in the United Kingdom and Netherlands, "two key pillars of European supply," said consultants IHS Markit in a May report.

But for now, Europe's "32 regasification terminals have large amounts of spare capacity," they noted.

Thierry Bros, a researcher at the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, estimates current LNG import facilities are only running at about 26 percent of full capacity.

So there is a way to go before LNG terminals further north reach saturation point. That's why the issue is unlikely to be resolved on Friday at a meeting that will focus more on electricity connections. A deal on financing construction of a 370-kilometre long power line linking France to Spain via the Bay of Biscay is to be signed, the European Commission said in a statement Friday.

The commission will finance 30 percent of the project by bringing 578 million euros to the table, an unprecedented amount for an energy project. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL	America	Thai Baht	0.008770	0.009320
British Pound	0.391485	0.405385	0.227361	Arab		
Czech Korune	0.005790	0.015090	0.299250	Bahraini Dinar	0.789541	0.806041
Danish Krone	0.043400	0.048400	0.304550	Egyptian Pound	0.014319	0.020037
Euro	0.346798	0.360498		Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Georgian Lari	0.137568	0.137568	Asia	Iraqi Dinar	0.000197	0.000257
Hungarian	0.001143	0.001333	0.003065	Jordanian Dinar	0.423552	0.432552
Norwegian Krone	0.033073	0.038273	0.043271	Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Romanian Leu	0.064947	0.081797	0.036901	Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Russian ruble	0.004850	0.004850	0.02652	Moroccan Dirhams	0.020543	0.044543
Slovakia	0.009051	0.019051	0.002832	Omani Riyal	0.781604	0.787284
Swedish Krona	0.030416	0.035416	0.00262	Qatar Riyal	0.079033	0.083973
Swiss Franc	0.299091	0.310091	0.071568	Saudi Riyal	0.079807	0.081107
			0.002622	Syrian Pound	0.001286	0.001506
			0.001772	Tunisian Dinar	0.110626	0.118626
			0.005649	Turkish Lira	0.057252	0.067552
			0.217553	UAE Dirhams	0.081165	0.087552
			0.001587	Yemeni Riyal	0.000986	0.001066
			0.001587			
Australasian						
Australian Dollar	0.216869	0.228889				
New Zealand Dollar	0.200256	0.209756				

Business

91% of KFH's H1 total profits from core earnings: Nahedh

Bank focuses on core banking business, growth in high quality assets

KUWAIT: Group Chief Executive Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh said that 91 percent of the total profits of the first half of 2018 came from core earnings compared to 83 percent over the same period last year. This reiterates the success in implementing the bank's strategy of focusing on core banking business and achieving sustainable profitability.

Al-Nahedh's statement was made during TV interviews to comment on the bank's H1 2018 financial results. He added that KFH has reported net profits to shareholders of KD 95.22 million for the first half of 2018, an increase of 16.6 percent over the same period last year.

He attributed the growth in net profits mainly to revenue items from the core banking business. Net financing income for H1 this year reached KD 278 million i.e. a growth of 31.8 percent compared to the same period last year. Total operating income for the first half of this year reached KD 390 million, i.e. an increase by 13.6 percent and net operating income reached KD 236 million, i.e. a growth of 17.7 percent compared to the same period last year. He pointed out that the rise in interest rates on the growth of profit margins has a positive impact on the growth in profits.

Al-Nahedh added that the total provisions for Group reached KD 717.5 million as of end of H1 2018, indicating the non-performing facilities for the Group remained constant at 2.83 percent with a slight deviation from the end of

2017. The total debt coverage is 283 percent and 168 percent for KFH solo and the Group respectively for the first half of 2018.

He explained that maintaining growth is by focusing on core banking business, growth in high quality assets, and optimizing cost in addition to focusing on financing government projects, which contributes to adding value to the national economy. The cost to income ratio decreased to 39.5 percent for the first half of 2018, compared to 41.6 percent for the same period last year, and over 50 percent in 2014.

KFH reports net profits of KD 95.22m for first half



Al-Nahedh said that KFH exited non-core assets of KD 120 million in 2017 and KD 17.2 million in H1 2018. KFH will continue its strategy of exiting non-core assets while focusing on core banking business. KFH targets the divestiture of non-core assets amounting to KD 140-150 million this year. He stressed that the goal of the exit is to preserve the rights of KFH at the appropriate value to the shareholders while improving asset quality.

As for the contribution of KFH subsidiaries in the profits, Al-Nahedh explained that their contribution in the net operating income amounted to about 37 percent. KFH-Turkey's contribution in the net operating income was 31.5 percent.

He added that despite the devaluation of the currency in Turkey, KFH-Turkey enjoys high quality assets and diversification in its financing portfolio. It is achieving excellent

performance and remarkable growth compared to conventional banks or participation banks in Turkey. He noted that KFH-Turkey has 400 branches spread across Turkey.

He indicated KFH succeeded in closing several infrastructure and mega projects credit facilities deals during the first half of 2018. KFH signed a contract of credit facility with Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIC) to participate in financing the company's \$2.3 billion Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import.

KFH was selected to lead the deal of the Islamic banks for their share in the \$500 million. KFH financed different mega projects in Kuwait and the countries where it operates of which inking credit facility agreement of KD 124.6 million for financing terminal II building for Kuwait International Airport, and 200 million euros credit facility for the construction of 'anakkale Bridge in turkey.

In addition, KFH and Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KIPCO), signed a Memorandum of Cooperation 'MOC' stating that KFH offers Sharia-compliant financing solutions for individual purchasers of residential or commercial property in Hessa Al-Mubarak District real estate development project. KFH inked credit facility of KD 120 million with Mena Homes Real estate Company. With regards to growth opportunities, Al-Nahedh said that KFH is currently deliberating with Ahli United Bank - Bahrain (AUB), the possibility of creating one of the largest Islamic banks in the Middle East. He noted the expectation of having positive benefits with this strategic



Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh

move be it at the level of improved profitability or asset quality or at the level of risk diversification and geographical distribution, which would be reflected on KFH and AUB along with their respective shareholders. Also, this would enable the Bank to play an active role in providing advanced Islamic banking services to its customers as well as the ability to provide the proper financing for mega projects both inside and outside Kuwait.

Al-Nahedh added that the study of this strategic option will be implemented in multiple stages. The first stage is the evaluation study by international consultants in this field in order to determine the initial fair trade

price between the shares of AUB and the shares of KFH based on their published financial statements.

The second phase will be the due diligence assessment on the two banks in case they agreed on the initial exchange ratio. The Central Bank of Kuwait, Central Bank of Bahrain and other regulatory authorities will be contacted for the necessary approvals before the due diligence procedures begin. In the event of completing the two phases and the agreement of the two banks on their results, the third and final phase requires preparation of the future business plan for the new banking entity and the executive procedures, whether in Kuwait or in the Kingdom of Bahrain or in any other country. The final approvals will be subject to the approval of the Central Bank of Kuwait and other regulatory authorities as well as the General Assemblies of the two banks.

Dovish ECB underpins eurozone bond markets

LONDON: Borrowing costs in the euro zone's biggest economy, Germany, held below six-week highs on Friday, a day after the European Central Bank's (ECB) president backed market expectations for a rise in interest rates late next year. Most 10-year bond yields in the bloc remained steady as US economic growth data showed the world's biggest economy grew at its fastest pace in nearly four years in the second quarter.

"In fixed income markets, the main question today is whether the 10-year US Treasury yield...will break the 3 percent mark in the wake of the US GDP release," a UniCredit note said.

However, that number stayed just below 3 percent, though it did briefly touch a seven-week high of 2.988 percent. Markets were reluctant to push bond yields too far in any one direction before Monday's Bank of Japan meeting, given recent reports that the central bank is debating moves to scale back its massive monetary stimulus.

For now, however, Thursday's ECB meeting provided some comfort for eurozone bond markets. ECB chief Mario Draghi reaffirmed plans to end the bank's 2.6 trillion euro stimulus program this year and keep rates low "through the summer of 2019".

Asked to unpack this formulation, which has given rise to diverging interpretations, Draghi said market expectations were "very

well aligned" with the central bank's own. Money markets price in a 10-basis-point (bps) rise in the ECB's minus 0.40 percent deposit rate in October 2019, in what would be the first hike since 2011.

"There was a dovish spin relative to what one could have expected, given a recent source-based story that some members of the governing council were not happy with the market pricing on rates," Commerzbank head of rates Christoph Rieger said. Germany's 10-year Bund yield was flat at 0.40 percent, holding below almost six-week highs hit this week at 0.424 percent.

Two-year German bond yields pulled back from six-week highs touched on Thursday at minus 0.60 percent. Elsewhere, Italian shares erased gains and two-year bond yields spiked briefly on Friday with traders citing comments from the founder of Italy's ruling party 5-Star Movement in support of a referendum over Italy's membership of the euro.

Most eurozone bond yields were set to end the week higher for a second week running, with 10-year bond yields in France and Germany up roughly three bps on the week.

That reflects an easing in trade-war fears after talks between the United States and European Union this week and speculation about potential tweaks to BOJ policy.

Japan's 10-year government bond yield slipped off a one-year high on Friday after the BOJ conducted special, unlimited buying for the second time this week. Most market players expect central bankers meeting on Monday to stop short of making immediate policy changes and to say instead that they will study ways to reduce the side-effects of the prolonged easing, such as hits to banks' profits. "The elephant in the room could be the BOJ, which is very hard to assess," Commerzbank's Rieger said. — Reuters

NBK Economic Report

Global markets rebound after turbulent Q1

KUWAIT: World markets rebounded in 2Q18 following a turbulent first quarter that saw the return of volatility, with performance almost flat in the first half of the year. Meanwhile, regional markets continued to outperform, benefitting from firmer oil prices and index reclassifications, with both Kuwait and Saudi now elevated to emerging market status. Currently, diverging global growth and looming trade war concerns have shaken investor confidence, triggering flows to safe havens, with China suffering the most.

International markets

In addition to comments lambasting the strength of the US dollar and the Fed's monetary policy, President Trump's escalating trade rhetoric further dampened international sentiment, with emerging markets bearing the brunt of the impact. Chinese stocks declined markedly (-12 percent YTD) in tandem with a depreciation in the renminbi, followed by a drop in equity markets of close Chinese trading partners. Developed markets, on the other hand, fared slightly better, supported by improving data and a strong earnings season, but sentiment there remains highly sensitive to Mr. Trump's views.

Overall, international markets performed better in 2Q18, as softening growth in some parts of the world implied a more gradual tightening in global financial conditions; driving the MSCI All Country World index up 2 percent q/q and offsetting the previous quar-

ter's decline. US equities led the increase supported by growing strength in the US economy. However, trade sensitive companies, which make up most of the Dow Jones Index, witnessed a relatively muted performance. That index was up a mild 0.7 percent in 2Q18, compared to the S&P 500's 2.9 percent increase.

European markets

In Europe, equity markets were up slightly in 2Q18, as the return of political uncertainty and increasing trade tensions erased most of the gains European equities enjoyed early in the quarter.

Investor sentiment was also weighed down by softer economic data that hinted at another quarter of mild growth. The Euro Stoxx 50 was up 1 percent in 2Q18, but down 3.1 percent in the first half of the year.

Intensifying trade tensions, in addition to a stronger US dollar, prompted vast capital outflows from emerging markets. Investors exited positions in countries with high levels of foreign debt, as well as from those exposed to Trump's trade policies. As such, the MSCI EM index was down 4.2 percent in 2Q18 and 3.9 percent in H1H8.

Recent momentum is being supported by surprising bank earnings that have benefitted from an improving operating environment. Indeed, this has seen most regional bourses increase by 2-6 percent in the first three weeks of 3Q18, with Kuwait leading the way.

As for 2Q18, firmer oil prices, stable currency pegs, and emerging market index reclassifications helped shield regional stocks from the capital outflows affecting other emerging markets. The MSCI GCC index outperformed once again, climbing 4.7 percent to finish H1H8 11.7 percent higher.

The expected inclusion of the Saudi stock exchange in MSCI's emerging market index and the re-weighting of some Qatari stocks

within that same index saw these two markets outperform the rest of the region in 2Q18. Saudi's Tadawul was up 5.6 percent q/q, while QFM increased by 5.2 percent.

In Kuwait, 2Q18 witnessed a major structural overhaul that initially unsettled domestic investor sentiment, with the Bursa All Share index declining 5 percent in the first two months of the quarter. However, growing interest from international investors, boosted by the addition of Kuwait to MSCI's emerging market watchlist and the approach of its official inclusion into FTSE's emerging market index, helped reverse that decline late in the quarter, and continues to do so. In fact, Kuwait outperformed most regional markets in the first three weeks of 3Q18, up 6.4 percent.

FDI inflow

Foreign inflows to the region are expected to increase substantially over the next two years. Saudi will be included in the MSCI EM and FTSE EM indices in 2019 with around a combined \$15 billion in expected passive inflows and possibly \$35 billion in active money.

The expected partial sale of Aramco will also attract overseas investors. Meanwhile, Kuwait is expecting \$0.9 billion in passive flows late this year, and potentially another \$1.5 billion in 2020, not to mention the associated inflows of active money. However, these large inflows may be moderated if the emerging market contagion spills over to the region.

Regional equities are expected to continue their strong performance, supported by a strengthening backdrop in light of easing fiscal consolidation and private sector stimulus programs. However, the increasing likelihood of a full-scale trade war could derail regional and global momentum.

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Business

KAMCO issues KD 40m 5-year bond

Gulf Bank and KAMCO act as joint lead managers and arrangers

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment firm with one of the largest AUMs in the region, issued a KD 40 million, five-year tenure bond, with KAMCO and Gulf Bank as Joint Lead Managers and Arrangers for the debt securities issuance. The transaction was well received by investors, and the success of the placement was witnessed by a strong oversubscription which was covered in a period of 3 days, the shortest subscription period for a KD denominated bond ever. The decision by the Issuer and the Joint Lead Managers to shorten the subscription period to 3 days only was driven by their commitment to enhance the local market standards to be more in line with international best practices where subscription periods can be 24 hours or less.

The bond is comprised of two tranches: Fixed interest bonds with an interest rate of 6.00 percent, paid quarterly in arrears; and Floating interest bonds with an interest rate set at the discount rate declared by the Central Bank of



Khaled Fouad, Chief Investment Officer of KAMCO

Ahmad Khaled Al-Oduwaisan

Kuwait plus 2.75 percent paid quarterly in arrears, capped at 7.00 percent per annum.

KAMCO has recently been assigned an investment grade credit rating of 'BBB' long-term and 'A3' short term by Capital Intelligence Ratings Ltd. ("CI"). These ratings reflect the Firm's solid performance and progressive development strategy while managing an AUM of \$11.2 billion, as of December 31st, 2017.

Khaled Fouad, Chief Investment Officer of KAMCO, said, "I would like to extend my gratitude towards Gulf Bank and KAMCO's Debt Capital Markets team for delivering a deal and making this transaction a resounding success. The strong appetite witnessed during this transaction is a testament to the robustness of KAMCO's prudent investment strategy, strong credit profile, and access to institutional and high net worth clients. Proceeds from the issuance will be used for financing the future activities of the company."

Fouad also said that KAMCO is a key player in the local and regional investment communities with plans to fully utilize its resources, generating the best financial and investment solutions for its clients and stakeholders alike. The firm is proud to once again play a prominent role in strengthening the local and regional capital markets ecosystem to fuel economic growth.

Ahmad Khaled Al-Duwaisan, General Manager of Corporate Banking at Gulf Bank, said, "Gulf Bank is proud to contribute to the issuance of this KD 40 million bond as we focus our commitment towards our corporate clients. We will continue to seek such opportunities to share our expertise and extensive knowledge, and drive local business and economical success."

KAMCO and Gulf Bank expressed their appreciation towards the Capital Markets Authority for their support, commitment and cooperation towards enhancing the financial services industry.

Wall Street Week Ahead

Economy, dollar, trade key to US stocks' global edge

NEW YORK: The ability of the US stock market to keep an edge this year over equities elsewhere in the world hinges on the United States maintaining its economic and earnings growth advantage, the strength of the dollar and how global trade tensions resolve, investors said. Spurred by fiscal policy benefits including a corporate tax cut, the US economy's standout momentum relative to other regions has underpinned Wall Street's advantage this year, investors said. "The outperformance of US stocks reflects not just earnings, but expectations about US economic growth versus other regions," said Kristina Hooper, chief global market strategist at Invesco.

"Conventional investor wisdom is that the U.S. is going to continue to outperform other economies this year and hence investors should move more of their exposure to the U.S.," Hooper said. A clearer read of the US economy comes next week with data such as the government's monthly employment report on Friday and quarterly results from more than 140 S&P 500 companies, including Apple. According to an International Monetary Fund report this month, the United States is projected to post economic growth of 2.9 percent this year, up from 2.3 percent in 2017, while Europe advanced economies, and Japan and China, have slower growth than a year ago. The US economy grew 4.1 percent in the second quarter, data on Friday showed, its fastest pace in nearly four years.

While returns for the US benchmark S&P 500 index trail last year's - they are up 6 percent so far in 2018 against a 10.5 percent gain at a similar point in 2017 - U.S. equities are easily beating indexes covering Europe, Japan and emerging markets after lagging or just keeping pace for all of last year. — Reuters

Dolby and KNCC to bring first Dolby cinemas to Kuwait

SAN FRANCISCO/KUWAIT: Dolby Laboratories, Inc (NYSE: DLB) and the Kuwait National Cinema Company (KNCC) have entered into a three-screen agreement for the first deployments of Dolby Cinema in Kuwait. The first site is expected to open later in 2018 at the 360 Mall in Kuwait City. KNCC, operating under the Cinescape brand.



Khaled Al-Marzouq, Business Development Manager at KNCC

The news comes hot on the heels of recent announcements of upcoming openings in the UK with Odeon and with Kinopolis in Germany.

"We are really pleased to be able to continue to drive momentum in our strategy to expand the Dolby Cinema footprint in the Europe and Middle East region" said Doug Darrow, Senior Vice President, Cinema Business Group, Dolby Laboratories. He added: "We're delighted that in Kuwait it will be with such a progressive leader in the region's entertainment business. Customers in Kuwait will now be able to experience the ultimate cinema presentation for all genres of film. Dolby Cinema combines spectacular image, moving audio and inspired design to deliver a superior and immersive experience for movie-goers."

Each Dolby Cinema is equipped with the Dolby Vision laser projection system which delivers high dynamic range with enhanced color technology and a contrast ratio which far exceeds anything on the market today. The result is a dramatically different viewing experience that presents



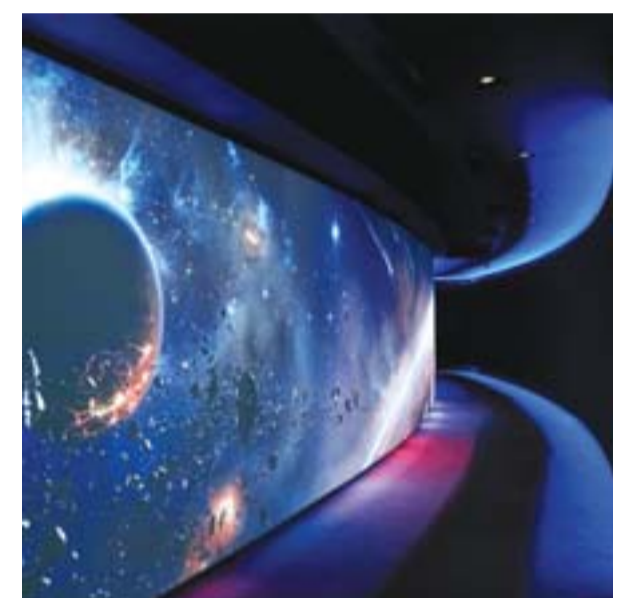
strikingly vivid and realistic images, making viewers feel like they are inside the movie's world.

With Dolby Atmos, guests are transported inside the story with immersive sound that flows all around them, even overhead, creating breathtaking realism and a powerfully moving experience.

With Dolby's inspired design, the Dolby Cinemas in Kuwait will provide customers with the ideal cinema environment from the entrance to the end of the film story.

Khaled Al-Marzouq, Business Development Manager at KNCC said: "We are committed to bringing our Cinescape customers the very best in movie entertainment and are really looking forward to offering Dolby Cinema: a more dramatic and engaging film viewing experience for cinema goers, and the format beloved of Hollywood directors. We are really proud to be the first location in Kuwait to be offering film lovers this state-of-the-art film experience."

To learn more about how Dolby transforms today's audio and visual experience, check out our latest video: On a quest for the spectacular - Dolby. For the latest Dolby news find us on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn.



Ahli United Bank delivers three cars to winners of its salary transfer campaign

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced the delivery of three special cars to three of its customers who won the draw in the recent salary transfer campaign. The campaign is considered one of the best of its kind in Kuwait following the very positive response from the Bank's customers due to the significant prizes offered and the ease of the entry conditions.

Amani Mousa Al-Qahtani has received the keys to a BMW 730Li Executive, Ali Hussain Al-Awadi has received the keys to a BMW 420i Coupe M Sports and Bannaa Mohammad Baddah Al-Ajmi has received her keys to a Mini Cooper F56. The winners received their grand prizes on Thursday in the Ali Al-Ghanim Showroom in the presence of Tareq Muhmood, AUB's Senior Deputy CEO, AUB's Head of Branches, Amer Najem and Ali Bahbahani, Shared Services Director at Ali Al-Ghanim and Sons Automotive Company.

On this occasion, Tareq Muhmood congratulated the winners saying: "We are keen to provide the best banking services that meet the aspirations of our customers. From this perspective we launched our salary transfer campaign which has offered a variety of grand prizes and various other benefits".

The winners expressed their appreciation in winning and commended the Bank's leadership for its continuous efforts to reward its customers through its promotional campaigns, and for understanding customer's requirements and continuing to provide products and services that fulfills their needs.

AUB had announced earlier the roll out of its Salary Transfer Campaign, which ran until 30 June 2018, during which time they offered customers who had transferred their salaries to the Bank the chance to enter the grand prize draw to win one of three cars.

The campaign also offered the Bank's customers the opportunity to choose from an extensive number of instant cash gifts valued at KD 300 for salaries of KD 1,000 and above, KD 200 for salaries less than KD 1,000 or to receive a Qard Hasan with a maximum value of KD 8,000 with a flexible repayment period of up to five years, in an effort to provide more room for reduced monthly installments.



Amani Mousa Al-Qahtani receives the keys to a BMW 730Li Executive



AUB staff delivers the key of the BMW to the second winner

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

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, Kuwait's best investment bank and corporate consultancy firm, organized in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and employees of the Bank, the 26th weekly draw for Al-Sunbula Account.

The lucky 5 winners who received 1,000 KD each are: Sayer Bader Mohammad Al-Sayer, Abdulaziz Saeed Yousef Bin Saif, Abdulaziz Shlaiweeh Mehmas Al-Otaibi, Dlayel Hussain Saad Al-Thuwaini and r. Omar Abdullah Sheikh Al-Najjareen.

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%, as well as monthly profit opportunities in Al-Sunbula Account draws.

Furthermore, Warba Bank has launched its latest Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request opening the Sunbula account in an easy electronic manner through the Bank's website without having to visit any of the Bank's branches, by following 5 simple steps that might take up to 5 minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at any-time, anywhere, and the bank will receive, process and pass the new application for approval through the new and unique automated system used to implement this service. The staff will then contact the client to determine the appropriate time to visit in order to obtain the required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.



Technology

At 60 now, NASA shoots for revival of moon glory days

US space agency has seen glorious achievements, crushing defeats

TAMPA: Sixty years ago, spurred by competition with the Soviet Union, the United States created NASA, launching a journey that would take Americans to the moon within a decade. Since then, the US space agency has seen glorious achievements and crushing failures in its drive to push the frontiers of space exploration, including a fatal launch pad fire in 1967 that killed three and two deadly shuttle explosions in 1986 and 2003 that took 14 lives.

Now, NASA is struggling to redefine itself in an increasingly crowded field of international space agencies and commercial interests, with its sights set on returning to deep space. These bold goals make for soaring rhetoric, but experts worry the cash just isn't there to meet the timelines of reaching the moon in the next decade and Mars by the 2030s. And NASA's inability to send astronauts to space—a capacity lost in 2011 when the space shuttle program ended, as planned, after 30 years—is a lasting blemish on the agency's stellar image.

While US private industries toil on new crew spacecrafts, NASA still must pay Russia \$80 million per seat for US astronauts to ride to space on a Soyuz capsule.

How it started

In 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first satellite into space with Sputnik 1, while US attempts were failing miserably. The US government was already working on reaching space, but mainly under the guise of the military.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower appealed to Congress to create a separate, civilian space agency to better focus on space exploration. He signed the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act into law on July 29, 1958. NASA opened its doors in October 1958, with about 8,000 employees and a budget of \$100 million.

Space race

The Soviets won another key part of the space race in April 1961 when Yuri Gagarin became the first person to orbit the Earth. A month later, John F. Kennedy unveiled plans to land a man on the moon by decade's end.

"No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish," the US president said. The Apollo program was born. In 1962, astronaut John Glenn

became the first American to orbit the Earth. In 1969, NASA astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon. American astronauts of the era were national heroes—military pilots with the combination of brains, guts and grit that became known famously as "The Right Stuff," the title of the classic Tom Wolfe book.

Armstrong's words as he set foot on the lunar surface—"one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind"—were heard by millions around the world. "Apollo was a unilateral demonstration of national power," recalled John Logsdon, professor emeritus at George Washington University's Space Policy Institute. "It was Kennedy deciding to use the space program as an instrument of overt geopolitical competition that turned NASA into an instrument of national policy, with a very significant budget share," he told AFP. A total of five percent of the national budget went to NASA in the Apollo era. Now, NASA gets about \$18 billion a year, less than a half percent of the federal budget, "and it is no longer the same instrument of national policy," Logsdon said.

New era

More glory days followed in the 1980s with the birth of NASA's shuttle program, a bus-sized re-usable spacecraft that ferried astronauts into space, and eventually to the International Space Station, which began operation in 1998. But what is NASA today?

President Donald Trump has championed a return to the moon, calling for a lunar gateway that would allow a continuous stream of spacecraft and people to visit the moon, and serve as a leaping off point for Mars. Trump has also called for the creation of a "Space Force," a sixth branch of the military that would be focused on defending US interests. NASA has long been viewed as a global leader in space innovation, but today the international field is vastly more populated than 60 years ago. "Now you have something like 70 countries that are one way or another involved in space activity," said Logsdon. Rather than competing against international space agencies, "the emphasis has shifted to cooperation" to cut costs and speed innovation, said Teasel Muir-Harmony, curator at the National Air and Space Museum.

How can NASA take advantage of this?

NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine told a recent panel



This 1960 NASA file image shows pilot Neil Armstrong seen next to the X-15 ship after a research flight at the Dryden Flight Research Center in California. — AFP

discussion he is keen to work with other countries that are striving toward space. He mentioned the possibility of boosting cooperation with China, and how he recently traveled to Israel to meet with commercial interests that are at work on a moon lander.

Bridenstine said the reason for his visit was to find out "how are you doing this, what are you doing and is there a way NASA can take advantage of it?"

NASA is backing away from low Earth orbit, looking to hand the space station over to commercial interests after 2024, and spending millions in seed money to help private companies like SpaceX and Boeing build capsules to carry humans to space in the coming years.

In this environment, Bridenstine said figuring out what NASA does, versus what it buys as a service from commercial providers, will be "one of the fundamental chal-

lenges I think I am going to face over my tenure." Bridenstine said Trump's budget requests for NASA have been "very generous." With its eyes on a crew mission to the moon in just five years' time, NASA plans to devote about \$10 billion of its nearly \$20 billion budget for 2019 to lunar exploration. Bridenstine's predecessor at NASA's helm, retired astronaut Charles Bolden, sounded a note of caution against repeating the mistakes of the shuttle era, when the United States ended its human exploration program without another spacecraft ready to take its place.

"We cannot tolerate another gap like that," Bolden said. "It is really critical for NASA to facilitate the success of commercial entities to take over" in low Earth orbit, some 250 miles (400 kilometers) above the planet. "And then for NASA to do what it does so well. Be the leader in lunar orbit." — AFP

Twitter shares plunge in black week for social media

WASHINGTON: Twitter shares took a pounding on Friday after it reported a decline in its user base, extending a stock market bloodbath for what had been a sizzling social media sector. Shares in Twitter tumbled 20.5 percent to close at \$34.12 despite a record profit for the short messaging service, as financial markets focused on the new realities for social media firms moving to curb abusive behavior and boost privacy. The woes for Twitter came a day after Facebook lost an unprecedented \$120 billion in market value following its earnings report that sent investors into a panic over cooling growth for the social network star.

Twitter said it posted a best-ever profit of \$100 million in the second quarter, following a loss of \$116 million a year earlier. Revenue rose 24 percent to \$711 million.

But the San Francisco-based firm said its base of monthly active users fell by one million from the past quarter to 335 million in the period amid a purge of fake and abusive accounts and a crackdown on toxic "bots." Twitter said it also expected user numbers to drop in the current quarter by a figure in the "mid-single-digit millions."

The fall in users is a result of "prioritizing the health of the platform, and, to a lesser extent, GDPR," Twitter said, referring to Europe's General Data Protection Regulations that limit how internet firms can handle user data.

Wall Street 'off guard'

Analyst Daniel Ives at GBH Insights said markets have



SANTA MONICA: In this file photo, a monitor is pictured in a kitchen area at tech company Twitter's office space in Santa Monica, California. — AFP

abruptly begun to consider "a new risk factor that has been introduced"—how security and privacy affects the bottom line. "It got the Street off guard in terms of the magnitude of the effect it had on earnings," Ives said.

Jennifer Grygiel, a Syracuse University professor who specializes in social media, said the market is coming to grips with a tougher picture for the sector as companies seek to curb manipulation and abusive conduct while coping with new regulations on privacy and data protection.

"What you're seeing is a market correction as the industry adjusts for increased operational expenses as governance and ethical business expectations have been raised globally," she said.

"Social media is not going anywhere. What has changed is that the public and regulators are no longer buying into (the) rhetoric and myths that social media is too big to moderate." Chief executive Jack Dorsey said the past quarter's results reflect investments "in the long-term health" of Twitter, noting efforts to weed out abusive and inappropriate behavior. "We'll continue to invest heavily in making Twitter a healthier place

writer Sven Olov Karlsson noted in a local newspaper column.

"Maybe it wasn't so wise to get rid of leaf trees and create a monoculture of pine which can spread fire at 80 metres per minute."

'Fire spreads no matter what'

Nearly all forests in Sweden are less than a century old. Described as "production forests", they are 83 percent conifers whose tall height deprives other species of sunlight. For Rolf Edstrom, spokesman for Norrskog, a forest owners association with over 12,000 members, "it doesn't matter whether the forest is new or old, the fire spreads no matter what", after weeks of drought and scorching temperatures as high as 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit). According to Johan Sjoström, a fire technology expert at the RISE Research Institute of Sweden, said wildfires are "very rare today because we extinguish them".

"We didn't do that before because we didn't have the same resources," he told the Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter. Magnus Kindbom, director of forests at the influential Federation of Swedish Farmers, said "the entire forestry industry is generally working on increasing the amount of leaf forests." But environmental protection associations are sceptical and argue for the protection of woodlands.

They claim the share of protected forest areas is as low as four percent while the industry says it's as high as 25 percent.

'We are fighting money'

Non-governmental organizations warn that there are considerable challenges to ensuring biodiversity for plants and animals amid the fight against global warming.



STOCKHOLM: Firefighters in helicopters use a local lake to fill water tanks in order to tackle a forest as fire burns in Korskrogen near Ljusdal, Sweden. — AFP

One in 10 species in the country's forests is on the red list of the Swedish Species Information Centre. Rolf Edstrom said that the forest industry is aware of this and on the path to a "cultural revolution".

"Protected and ancient forests, bird populations, all the indicators are going in the right direction," he said. But Lina Burnelius, who is responsible for forest issues at Greenpeace's Sweden branch, disputes this claim and said the forest landscape is segmented.

"In order for species to survive, they have to live together with other species, and if we only have trees of the same kind and age, nothing can exist around it," she said. Neither can the reindeer in Lapland

because that's the right thing to do," Dorsey told analysts on a conference call.

New tools to fight abuse

Dorsey noted that Twitter is investing in "new tools to address problem behaviors that distort and distract from the public conversation." In recent weeks, Twitter has stepped up efforts to weed out accounts that promote violence or hate speech, and some reports suggested the move could lower the user base by millions.

Earlier this week, Twitter said it had removed more than 143,000 apps from its service since April in a fresh crackdown on "malicious" activity from automated accounts. Twitter shares had more than doubled over the past year as it showed signs of sustaining profitability after years of losses. But a lingering concern has been the stalled user base, with Twitter struggling to move beyond its core group of celebrities, journalists and politicians.

Both Twitter and Facebook moved to crack down on bots and fake accounts after learning of efforts to manipulate the social platforms during the 2016 US presidential election. Dorsey told analysts that Twitter had a "solid quarter" and suggested that daily usage was a better measure of its future growth. Twitter said daily active users rose 11 percent from a year ago, without giving a specific figure. Analysts say Twitter has been on a more sustainable track a year after it explored a sale of the company, although its user base is far below that of the 2.2 billion of Facebook and the billion-plus for Facebook-owned Instagram.

But some say Twitter's unique position as a real-time network that allows users to follow news and events will eventually pay off. Brian Wieser at Pivotal Research Group said efforts to curb fake accounts "should be viewed positively because these efforts improve Twitter's position with regulators and with advertisers, who see the user base as higher quality when purges occur." RBC Capital Markets analyst Mark Mahaney said in an upbeat note this week that Twitter is "one of the largest and most influential social networks" and provides "meaningful value to users." — AFP

Life on Mars: Japan astronaut dreams after lake discovery

TOKYO: Japanese astronaut Norishige Kanai came back to earth last month but is still dreaming of space, especially after the discovery of an underground lake brought mankind one step closer to unraveling the mystery of life on Mars.

"I was so excited about the news," the 41-year-old doctor told AFP in an interview on Friday, calling it "a major discovery that inspires dreams". International astronomers announced on Wednesday they had detected the largest body of liquid water ever found on the Red Planet, a breakthrough that may hold clues to whether life has ever formed on Mars—or even exists today. Kanai, who spent 168 days on the International Space Station, is firmly convinced that we're not alone in the universe and there is life out there.

"I believe there is," he said. "In the vast universe, anything could be possible." "I have high hopes that finding extraterrestrial life forms could open a new page in learning." The soft-spoken spaceman, nicknamed "Nemo" for his background as a diving medical officer in Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force, blasted into space for the first time in December.

Growing pains

Following in the footsteps of other media-savvy astronauts, Kanai tweeted about his stay at the space station in Japanese. But his social media foray came with some growing pains: he was forced to apologize and issue a correction after mistakenly claiming he had grown by nine centimeters just weeks after he arrived.

When a colleague suggested the growth was unlikely, despite the fact that astronauts' spines do extend in the zero-gravity environment of space, Norishige had himself re-measured. It turned out a mix-up over centimeters and inches was to blame, and he said Friday that he had in fact grown by just two to three centimeters during his stay. He has been shrinking since he arrived back on Earth on June 3, but is still one centimeter taller, he said. "It's interesting to see how long it will take to get back to my original height," Kanai, whose Twitter profile depicts him in cartoon form with a broad grin, concedes he wasn't always the likeliest candidate to join Japan's space agency JAXA, though he is now the agency's youngest astronaut.

He was a "reserved, cautious" boy, rather than adventurous. "I was a granny's boy," he said. "When she was sewing, we did it together. I had a rather 'girly' childhood." But one of the skills he picked up as a child turned out to have a surprising application during the strict JAXA screening process. In the final selection stage, 10 candidates spend a week in a capsule performing various tasks including folding paper cranes, which the agency says tests patience and steadiness under stress. Luckily Kanai was a dab hand at origami from his childhood.

"I don't know if it gave me an advantage... but I knew how to do it. I'm dexterous and like to do repetitive small tasks. That task was easy for me," he said. Even as he spoke, he deftly folded a piece of origami paper into a crane, without so much as leaning on a table for support. He so enjoyed making small cranes that he folded more than 100 of them in the test capsule. — AFP



Norishige Kanai

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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What's On



LOYAC concludes 'Young Loyacers' program



LOYAC recently concluded its 'Young Loyacers' program, successfully held for the ninth year. The conclusion ceremony was held in the presence of 120 of the program's children. Speaking on the occasion, LOYAC's community services manager, Yusra Al-Essa thanked all bodies that helped achieve the program's success adding that the program was so keen on highlighting its principles through voluntary activities for children.

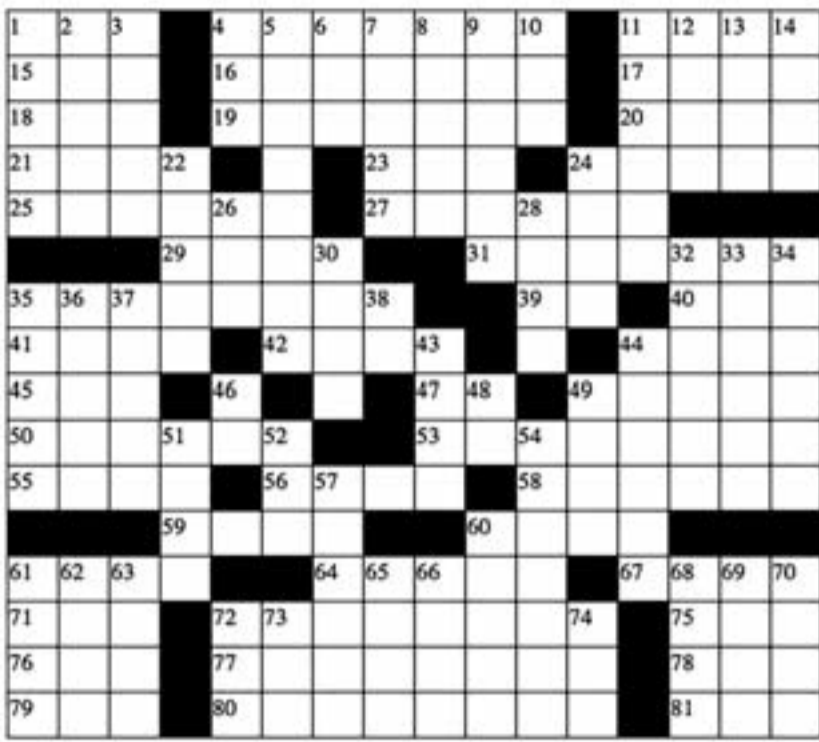
Also speaking on the occasion, 12 year Mohammed Al-Hammadi expressed his joy for taking part in the program and thanked all LOYAC excursion and recreation supervisors. Al-Hammadi added that the best trip he went to with the program was the one they made to the marine rescue center. Child Najd Al-Shehab stressed that Zumba was her favorite activity.

Some of the other kids like Shahim Al-Thafeeri said they greatly benefited from visiting the Down Syndrome Center while Awatif Al-Shehab admired visiting Sultan Trading Center. Notably, the program, designed to develop children's social relations, skills, perceptions, moral and social values, was organized in the period of July 1-26 with participation of over 120 children. In addition, LOYAC expressed its gratitude to TriStar Bikes Company for allowing the young LOYACERS participants explore the bikes at its showroom in Shuwaikh.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1971



ACROSS

- Standard time in the 7th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 105th meridian west.
- The capital and largest city of Venezuela.
- A bachelor's degree in library science.
- (informal) Of the highest quality.
- Kauri pine.
- Radioactive iodine test that measures the amount of radioactive iodine taken up by the thyroid gland.
- A vacuum tube in which a hot cathode emits a beam of electrons that pass through a high voltage anode and are focused or deflected before hitting a phosphorescent screen.
- An insignificant place.
- In ancient Greek mythology any of 9 daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- A landlocked republic in eastern Africa.
- Arranged in a sequence of grades or ranks.
- A quantity of no importance.
- Soviet cosmonaut who in 1961 was the first person to travel in space (1934-1968).
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
- Any of a group of antidepressant drugs that inhibit the action of monoamine oxidase in the brain and so allow monoamines to accumulate.
- Weight to be borne or conveyed.
- Thickening of tissue in the motor tracts of the lateral columns and anterior horns of the spinal cord.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- Relating to the blood vessels or blood.
- Make more attractive by adding ornament, colour, etc..
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- A genus of Mustelidae.
- Medieval artillery used during sieges.
- The act of scanning.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- United States artist whose work reflected social and political themes (1898-1969).
- Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- A bachelor's degree in theology.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- A nucleic acid that transmits genetic information from DNA to the cytoplasm.
- Grass mowed and cured for use as fodder.
- Biennial or perennial herbs of north temperate regions.
- A light touch or stroke.

DOWN

- A Portuguese province on the south coast of China and two islands in the South China Sea.
- Lean end of the neck.
- Brightly colored tropical freshwater fishes.
- Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc..
- Lacking gonads.
- (used especially of commodities) In the natural unprocessed condition.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- A Hindu disciple of a swami.
- The opening of a subject to public discussion and debate.
- The compass point midway between south and southeast.
- A large fleet.
- (computer science) A data transmission rate (bits/second) for modems.
- A Loloish language.
- A city in northeastern Egypt at the head of the Gulf of Suez and at the southern end of the Suez Canal.
- The feeling of being bored by something tedious.
- Prolific Spanish playwright (1562-1635).
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- Informal terms for money.
- (physics and chemistry) The smallest component of an element having the chemical properties of the element.
- Disparaging terms for the common people.
- Not established by conditioning or learning.
- A worker who attaches something by nailing it.
- Small evergreen shrub of Pacific coast of North America having edible dark purple grape-size berries.
- Ratio of the hypotenuse to the opposite side.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- An informal term for a father.
- Expose to fresh air, as of old clothing.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
- An island northwest of Wales.
- An independent group of closely related Chadic languages spoken in the area between the Biu-Mandara and East Chadic languages.
- A unit of length of thread or yarn.
- Small tough woody zamia of Florida and West Indies and Cuba.
- An insect or other arthropod between molts.
- Make a vibrant noise, of grasshoppers or cicadas.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Being or befitting or characteristic of an infant.
- A plant lacking a permanent woody stem.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- Any of a group of Indic languages spoken in Kashmir and eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan.
- (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- A federally chartered savings bank.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are finally experiencing a love and appreciation of yourself. You have deep desires to spend time surrounded by family and loved ones and a desire for security. Surrounding yourself with those you love will fulfill this desire and this is where you find the most peace in your life at this time. This is one of those days you are feeling a deep desire to be needed and loved. Someone may express great levels of respect they have for you and you may discover you hold an importance in the life of this person that you never realized. Aries, you were needed all along and today the depth of that may be revealed to you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Whether it is sexual, the desire for power, or the desire for wealth, these are all areas that seem to turn you on and set you in motion today. You may find yourself in a very sensual mood at this time. Things seem to affect you on a much deeper level now. The mysterious, secretive, and even that which is taboo seem to call to you and draw you in. You may desire to learn people on a deeper level. You want to know them from the inside out. You may also desire to do some soul-searching of your own and learn yourself in the same manner.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may feel like taking a chance today. Stepping out of your comfort zone could bring great reward your way. You may feel drawn to surround yourself with those closest to you. Spending time with family, children, or lovers will satisfy a great need to be admired and appreciated today. Expect great conversations with those you love, and peace and happiness should come very naturally today. Gemini, you are actually learning to appreciate problems you encounter as you now realize you will benefit from the lesson learned in the future.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You face a bit of a challenge today. You may experience opposition in the work place or in another aspect of your life. You may want to take a moment to sit back, relax and re-evaluate your outlook. Open your mind to alternative solutions. You may find today a difficult one to express yourself today and this may frustrate you. Today finds you very talkative. Occasionally you find problems are easier worked out when talked out and this is one of those times. Even though you are not one who frequently finds themselves asking for help, today may be a great day to make that phone call, seek advice, and work through what is causing your conflict.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may be facing a very emotional issue in your life today. It may seem your desire to be respected by others is very strong. You may find yourself even demanding this from others today. You may find yourself becoming very organized and structured. A strong will takes hold. You may discover you may not only have a knack for organizing things, but you have one for organizing people as well. This makes you a great leader and this quality could be acknowledged in the workplace today. Leo, your ability to work with haste and little emotion makes you a natural in a position of leadership or management. You may find that you are not as appreciative of those around you. You will find others looking to you for support and advice and you are just the one to lead them in the right direction.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today may chaotic to say the least. You may find yourself at odds with others and it may seem as if everything is falling to pieces. This is a time to let patience take over and step back and take a deep breath. Give it time and peace will find its way back into your world. Seems you find frustration in every direction you turn. You may be at odds with someone in the workplace and find yourself in a similar situation at home. Days like these are the best for long drives alone, hot baths, or just spending some time alone until the storm passes.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may find yourself wanting to broaden your horizons. You know this is a big world and your life is contained in a tiny square of it. It may be time to take a step out of that box and find what the world has to offer you. You could find it difficult to communicate with others today because you find your mind is a million miles away. Curiosity has taken a hold on you and you can't seem to stay focused on the here and now. You may find yourself longing to belong. You may find yourself focusing on building stronger relationships with those close to you. You may find someone challenging your beliefs and find yourself doing a great deal of soul searching before you were able to get your point across.



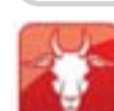
Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

You may feel as if you have run head on into a brick wall. As you may feel the desire to keep pushing right along this would be one time taking a step back and rethinking your approach may be in order. You may find taking some time to truly analyze the situation you are in may be just what is needed in order to reach the destination you desire. You are high energy and determined to stay focused and move ahead. Use some of this energy to focus on solutions to your problems and this may be a time



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

It seems as everything is working in your favor today. Everyone may seem drawn to your presence. Socially your personality is magnetic, and others seem to compete to attach themselves to you. Your grasp for all that is abstract, and spiritual is strong. You will find that you are able to share your ideas and get your point across to others with ease. You may find yourself in an emotional confrontation with someone. This may cause you to begin to do a bit of soul-searching and to question some of your beliefs and ways. You may find great peace when you are able to analyze your situation and get to the root of your emotions.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Boundaries mean nothing to you. You know this is a huge world and you have been confined to a small little piece of it. You are ready to experience life and all it has to offer. A longing to not only experience new places and things but also to get in touch with your emotions. This could be the beginning of a spiritual journey for you. You may find your career path taking on a whole new and unexpected direction. It seems your interests and goals may be changing right along with your desires and needs in your life. Education and travel are very appealing to you now and seem to be something you long to experience more of.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You feel as if you need to be appreciated and loved. Children, your loved ones, and family are who you crave to have near you at this time. You tend to give yourself freely and those closest to you appreciate this. Now is a time that taking a chance can result in receiving a big reward. Someone close to you may share some very personal issues with you and seek your advice. You may become and mentor this person who has a great deal of respect for you. You are always able to get to the root of the problem and have a solution ready at hand. You are not only the friend others want to have. You are the friend others try to be like. You are a natural leader and may find yourself leading a project or a group of your peers today.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Put on your track shoes. Today it seems as if you will be jumping one hurdle after the other. Blockages and obstacles seem to be in your way in every aspect of your life. Frustration could take over your mood today. Stop and take a breath and remember there is a reason for everything. Think in a positive manner and realize you may be being held back for a reason. You may need to be in the right place in the right time and every obstacle could be preventing you from making it to the wrong place at the wrong time. See this as protection rather than seeing it as a negative setback. All will come out well in the long run

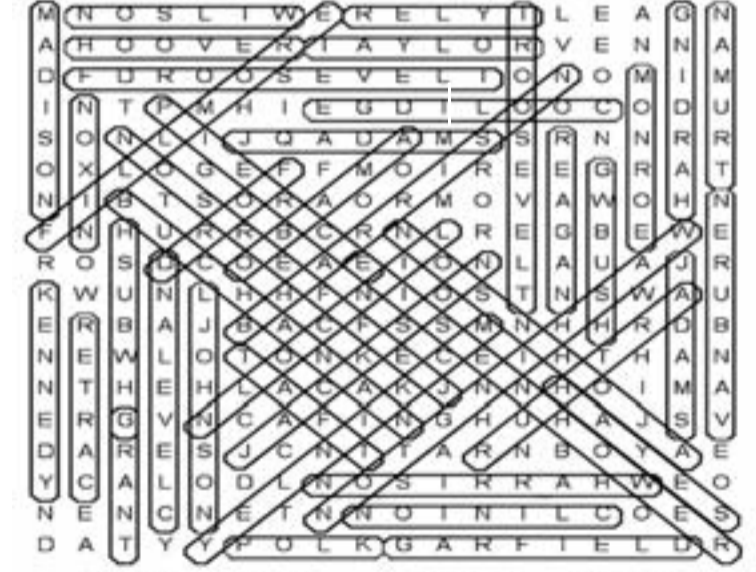
Wordsearch Puzzle

USA State Capitals

Find and circle all of the state capitals. The remaining letters spell a quote by Theodore Roosevelt.



USA Presidents



- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|---------------|------------|
| WASHINGTON | TAYLOR | B HARRISON | KENNEDY |
| J ADAMS | FELLMORE | MCKINLEY | L JOHNSON |
| JEFFERSON | PIERCE | T ROOSEVELT | NIXON |
| MADISON | BUCHANAN | TAFT | FORD |
| MONROE | LINCOLN | WILSON | CARTER |
| J Q ADAMS | A JOHNSON | HARDING | REAGAN |
| JACKSON | GRANT | COOLIDGE | G H W BUSH |
| VAN BUREN | HAYES | HOOVER | CLINTON |
| W HARRISON | GARFIELD | F D ROOSEVELT | G W BUSH |
| TYLER | CLEVELAND | ARTHUR | OBAMA |
| POLK | | | |

The hidden sentence is: LEAVE NOTHING FOR TOMORROW WHICH CAN BE DONE TODAY

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2018



View of the full moon during the 'blood moon' next to the ancient Greek goddess Iriene holding a child symbolizing peace and justice in central Athens. The period of total eclipse, when earth's shadow is directly across the moon and it is at its reddest, will last 1 hour, 42 minutes and 57 seconds, making it the longest viewable lunar eclipse of the century. — AFP

Stick it like Gianni: Italian scores with football album collection

Newspapers recalling decades of sporting glory line the walls, cupboards overflow with stickers of footballing legends and on a desk, pristine packets lie tantalisingly waiting to be opened: welcome to the home of Gianni Bellini, the man with a claim to the biggest football sticker album collection in the world. Bellini boasts 4,000 complete albums filled with some two million stickers and another 400,000 yet to stick in. "Every day after I've finished work and picked up my grandson from school, I spend at least 4 to 6 hours working on them," Bellini tells AFP.

The 54-year-old typographer lives in the small town of San Felice sul Panaro around 30 kilometers (18 miles) from Modena—the heartland of renowned sticker maker Panini. He began his collection around age 13, before taking a small break a few years later, "more interested in girls" than stickers, he admits. But soon after getting married

aged 19, Bellini picked up where he left off, and published ads in newspapers around the world looking for fellow collectors to exchange albums with. "I received 600-700 letters a month, it was the start of correspondences and friendships, many of which I still have today," he laughs.

And his wife Giovanna, who is also a football fan, doesn't mind her husband's diehard hobby. "I support him and I'm happy too. That way he's always at home, where I can keep an eye on him, he doesn't go to the bar," she jokes. Every day, Bellini checks for new products online and keeps up with his some three hundred correspondents. "I send about 5,000 emails a year," he says, poring over a large diary where everything is logged. His entire collection is also archived on his computer. "It's an amazing feeling to finally have the album in your hands," says Bellini as he opens a fresh packet from Mexico. "But once that emotion is over, you're already thinking about the next album."

Hidden treasure

Bellini spends 4,000 to 5,000 euros a year on his albums which are carefully stored at a temperature of 23 degrees. Nothing is for sale because "the real collector buys, exchanges, but does not sell," he says. Bellini's most prized album is that of the 1970 World Cup in Mexico: "Panini's first international album," he says proudly. On the other hand, the thought of the 1986 Egyptian championship album still makes him shudder: the album got lost when he sent it to be translated and he only found another copy 20 years later.

For Bellini, the albums are also a record of shifts in modern culture because "over the years, you see the changing hairstyles, shirts etc." The Panini factory in Modena has become almost a second home for him as he buys their albums and stickers direct. Although the Italian publisher represents only around half of his col-



Gianni Bellini, owner of the largest football sticker collection in the world, receives a delivery package with football stickers coming from Mexico, in San Felice sul Panaro, province of Modena.— AFP photos



Gianni Bellini holds an autographed picture of Italian former footballer Riccardo Ferri.



Gianni Bellini, owner of the largest football sticker collection in the world, poses for a picture in his studio.



Gianni Bellini shows a card of France's forward Antoine Griezmann.



Gianni Bellini holds an autographed picture of Alberto Juantorena, the Cuban former runner who won both the 400 and 800 m Olympic titles.



Gianni Bellini holds a card of France's goalkeeper Hugo Lloris.



Football stickers and albums stand on the desk of Gianni Bellini.

Indian megastar **Chopra** engaged to **Nick Jonas**

Indian film superstar Priyanka Chopra is engaged to young American singer Nick Jonas after a whirlwind two months of dating, a report said Friday. People magazine, citing unnamed sources close to the pair, said Jonas, 25, proposed to Chopra in London for her 36th birthday after shutting down a Tiffany store in New York to choose a ring. Representatives for the two stars did not respond to requests for comment. But director Ali Abbas Zafar appeared to allude to the engagement when he announced that Chopra was leaving the film "Bharat," a historical drama about modern India.

"The reason is very very special," he tweeted. "She told us in the Nick of time about her decision and we are

very happy for her." Chopra, who won the Miss World pageant in 2000, has become one of Bollywood's most identifiable stars and, more recently, one of the few to achieve success in the West. She has starred in the thriller series "Quantico" on US network ABC and, in her career as a singer, has released songs with US chart-toppers including Pitbull and The Chainsmokers. Jonas first found success as a child as the frontman of The Jonas Brothers with his two siblings.

Also an actor on theater and in television, Jonas returned to music as a young adult with a new, mature image and has often been seen as a sex symbol. He has been romantically linked to a number of prominent

women including Miley Cyrus and Selena Gomez. People magazine said that, while Jonas and Chopra have known each other for some time, they began dating just two months ago and the relationship was serious enough that she introduced him to her mother in India. — AFP

In this file photo Indian Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra (left) accompanied by US singer Nick Jonas arrive for the pre-engagement party of Akash Ambani and fiancée Shloka Mehta in Mumbai. — AFP



In this file photo fans take photographs with a mural of Prince at the Governors Ball Music Festival in New York. — AFP

Prince heirs take his copyrights lead, nix 'Purple Rain' tribute

Prince was notorious for enforcing copyright to his songs, and now his heirs have made sure that litigiousness has extended beyond the grave, demanding the removal of social media of a video of a "Purple Rain" singalong tribute. A photojournalist for the Star Tribune, the daily newspaper in Prince's hometown of Minneapolis, posted on Twitter a video of a street crowd spontaneously singing the Purple One's celebrated ballad on the day of his death in 2016. The video, which was retweeted more than 13,500 times, recently vanished.

The photographer, Aaron Lavinsky, said that the Universal Music Publishing Group, which holds rights to Prince's songs, had ordered it removed. The publisher, he said, was acting under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, an often controversial 1998 US law that allows copyright holders to issue takedown notices to online material and exempts internet com-

panies from liability. "DCMA takedowns are an important tool for artists who need to protect their intellectual property online, but a major corporation abusing system to remove a news video shot by a newspaper photographer is inappropriate," Lavinsky tweeted.

Representatives for Universal, the largest music label conglomerate and parent of the publisher, did not immediately return a request asking for comment. Prince vigorously took aim at online postings during his life, with his team demanding that fans take down footage of live performances and their own covers of his songs. Most famously, Universal in 2007 demanded that a mother, Stephanie Lenz, remove a half-minute video from YouTube of her toddler son dancing to Prince's "Let's Go Crazy." — AFP

Carrie Fisher makes posthumous return to 'Star Wars'

"Star Wars: Episode IX" begins filming next week, Disney said Friday, in a shock announcement revealing it will feature both Carrie Fisher in a posthumous appearance and series star Mark Hamill. The final installment of the Skywalker saga—which began in 1977 with "Episode IV: A New Hope"—is due for release worldwide in December next year. It picks up the saga after the protagonist, Hamill's Luke Skywalker, appeared to have been killed off in the last episode. Fisher's Princess Leia was still alive at the end of 2017's "The Last Jedi" but the actress herself died a year earlier, in December 2016.



In this file photo US actress Carrie Fisher (right) poses with a storm trooper as she attends the opening of the European Premiere of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" in central London. — AFP

"We desperately loved Carrie Fisher," said J.J. Abrams, who is back at the helm for "Episode IX," having directed "Episode VII: The Force Awakens" in 2015. "Finding a truly satisfying conclusion to the Skywalker saga without her eluded us. We were never going to recast, or use a CG character," he added in a statement. Disney said Fisher's role would be gleaned from previously unreleased footage from "The Force Awakens," with the blessing of her daughter, Billie Lourd. It is not the first time Fisher's likeness has featured in a "Star Wars" movie despite being absent from its filming. "Rogue One," a 2016 spin-off from the main series, directed by Gareth Edwards, had been in theaters for a couple of weeks when Fisher's death from a heart attack was announced. — AFP

Emma Thompson: I grew up with 'primitive model' males

Emma Thompson is suddenly feeling her age. The change sweeping Hollywood in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal and the #MeToo movement has left the British actress and director musing on the "primitive model" males that women of her age have had to grapple with. "I feel like I was still part of a really backward generation, which was very binary in its views on males and females," said the double Oscar winner whose film performances include star roles in "Love Actually", "Nanny McPhee", "Sense and Sensibility" and the Harry Potter series. "I feel like I grew up surrounded by quite primitive, raw models," she told AFP.

But the Weinstein scandal has been a massive catalyst for change. "We've got a long way to go. But it is very interesting at the moment, there is a lot of changes occurring," said Thompson, who has long campaigned for equal rights and pay. "I think the generation below mine, and with my daughter's generation (her daughter Gaia is 18) you are going to see quite a lot of changes soon, because they are writing new stories," she added. That said, Thompson who plays a judge struggling to fight her corner in the male-dominated higher courts in her new film, "The Children Act", insisted that women are still excluded from large parts of the movie industry.

"I think I've seen (only) one woman electrician. You try to be an electrician as a woman, impossible!" she said. A human rights activist as well as a feminist, Thompson, 59, made her name playing strong and enigmatic women in the 1990s when she and former husband Kenneth Branagh were the golden couple of British cinema.

'We can't have it all'

But the feminism of that time, "that dreadful period of 'Women can have it all'" appalled her. "I screamed loudly at the top of my voice in public, 'No we can't!'" "The whole point is there's an imbalance. When men were going out to work, they didn't do the domestic work as well. When women go out to work they still have to do all of that," she added. "It's not about everybody having

everything, it's about us understanding what our priorities are, how we are going to change the world of work."

For Thompson that means first all not falling in the trap "about us being like men. Forget men. We've been talking about men for centuries, they need to come to us. It's for us to bring the feminine into the world, and to rebalance all this shit..." "Those old men, they're all going now, they're all dinosaurs. Thank God." Thompson—the daughter of "The Magic Roundabout" creator Eric Thompson and renowned actress Phyllida Law—is well aware of her own privilege.



In this file photo British actress Emma Thompson poses during a photocall for the film "The Meyerowitz Stories (New and Selected)" at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

"I had access to a drama career, to some very great feminist literary critics and all of that. So you know, I was lucky, much luckier than my mother's generation." Outside her "small bubble of privileged, white, highly-educated women", she said there "is a long way to go for very many. For the women of color, it is very hard." And the problems women face go deeper than gender discrimination, Thompson argued. — AFP

IT'S A SMALL WORLD: IN JAPAN, MOSS WINS HEARTS



In this picture Oichi Kiyomura, a Japanese moss wholesaler, collects different types of moss near Nikko, Tochigi prefecture. — AFP photos



A Japanese tour leader shows different types of moss to tourists during a moss viewing tour at Kita-Yatsugatake forest near Sakuho town, Nagano prefecture.



A man walks through Kita-Yatsugatake forest, known for its different types of moss.

Kaori Shibo bent her head down and peered through a magnifying glass in a forest in central Japan, emitting a delighted gasp. The object of her adoration? Moss. "Oh, this baby's sporophyte is breaking out! I've never seen this before," an enchanted Shibo, 41, shouted, her head nearly close enough to kiss a fallen tree log in the forest in Yatsugatake. She was out on a stroll with around 20 other people who are part of a growing community in Japan obsessed with plants known as bryophytes, including moss, liverworts and hornworts. "When you stare at a tiny, tiny piece of green, you find a vast world expanding from there," explained fellow moss enthusiast Masami Miyazaki.

"It's like a micro universe," the 42-year-old said. The group was out exploring just days into Japan's rainy season, perfect weather for an expedition to spot some of the many mosses, liverworts, and lichens thickly coating the forest's trees and rocks. The forest, which surrounds Shirakomanoike lake and spreads across the northern Yatsugatake mountain range, is a popular spot for micro-plant enthusiasts.

More than 500 varieties can be observed in the Yatsugatake mountain range alone, according Masanobu Higuchi, Japan's leading bryology expert and the hike's leader. "I am infatuated by moss not just because of their pretty shapes and colors," Shibo said. "I am transported by the fact that you can find them anywhere around you but never realize how magnificent they are."

A staple of Japanese gardens

In recent years, moss enthusiasts have multiplied in Japan, with hikes catering to those eager to spot different



Japanese gardener Chisao Shigemori sits in front of a Japanese garden covered with different types of moss in Kyoto.



A tourist takes pictures of moss during a moss viewing tour at Kita-Yatsugatake forest.

varieties and shops selling the plants in terrariums well suited to small Japanese homes. The Northern Yatsugatake Moss Association began organizing moss viewing hikes in 2011, which attracted around 40 people over the year.

But this year, 140 people scored tickets to the association's hikes, which are held each month until October, with demand outstripping the number of spots available. Moss has been popular with traditional Japanese gardeners for centuries, and the plants grow well in the country's humid climate. "A beautiful natural landscape that is taken and compacted, that is the essence of Japanese gardens," said Chisao Shigemori, a prominent Japanese garden designer. Speaking to AFP at the carefully groomed Japanese garden at Kyoto's Tofukuji temple, he said moss is considered the best ground-covering plant for such traditional settings because it helps replicate natural landscapes in miniature. "The landscape of mountains and contrasting densities of green can be all expressed by moss," he said. At the temple, much of the garden is covered with juniper haircap, known as "sugi-goke" or cedar moss in Japanese. The spiky stems resemble miniature cedar trees and the moss is very popular with Japanese garden designers.

The 'Moss King'

While moss is a purely aesthetic pleasure for some Japanese, for others it is also big business. Nicknamed the 'Moss King', 64-year-old Oichi Kiyomura spends most days digging through wild bushes, across slopes and even up cliffs, looking for moss he can scoop into trays and sell



Oichi Kiyomura, a Japanese moss wholesaler, adjusts a basket of moss at his garden near Nikko, Tochigi prefecture.

to enthusiasts. It's a far cry from his former career, running nightclubs, but Kiyomura, who is based in the mountains of Nikko north of Tokyo, says his moss business is lucrative. He says he makes at least 30 million yen (\$270,000) a year, hinting that is a modest estimate.

His moss conversion came one day when he was out mushroom picking with a friend. "It was something I had never expected, but I found a really beautiful community of moss, clustered in the shape of small domes. It was my first encounter with moss," he said. It was a type known locally as "arahashiraga-goke", popular among bonsai farmers for its silk-like fine leaves. "I thought there was no way that people would ignore something so beautiful if I started selling it."

He purchased vast lots of land, including some alongside a shuttered golf course left behind when Japan's economic bubble burst, and started gathering the micro-plants. He now sells to temples, traditional garden designers, bonsai farmers and terrarium hobbyists. He has even developed a greening system that allows moss to be grown on building roofs in cities to help bring down temperatures. Kiyomura acknowledges some detractors find moss rather pedestrian and uninteresting, but he defends his obsession with the plants. "I love moss, even more than women," he joked. "I would live with it even if no one cared about it anymore." — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Elgort becomes face of Ralph Lauren Polo Red Rush

Ansel Elgort is the new face of Ralph Lauren fragrance Polo Red Rush. The 'Baby Driver' actor has teamed up with the label to promote the men's scent, the fourth addition to the Polo Red franchise, and is thrilled to have been chosen to be the global brand ambassador for the brand. He said: "Being the face of Polo Red is really unbelievable to me. I feel like things have come full circle because I've been a fan of the brand for a

long time. Ralph Lauren is really iconic. And [with the fragrance], there's two different bottles which is also cool. [Polo Red] is more for daytime, and Rush is more for nighttime. And it's such an iconic logo, so it's really cool to be a part of it now. Ginny Wright, global deputy general manager of Ralph Lauren Fragrances, says that Ansel, 24, was chosen to be the face of the fragrance because he can reach the millennial men male market. Ginny said:

"Millennial men are the hardest to reach. They have different values and interests. We're looking at those music lovers, people who are car enthusiasts, as well as female gift givers 'cause that's a huge part of the men's fragrance business, too." — Bang Showbiz



Ansel Elgort

Rihanna's makeup artist reveals her top products

Rihanna's makeup artist Priscilla Ono has revealed her top beauty products. Priscilla is the makeup artist of the stars, and she has shared the versatile products that she uses every day, to create a full makeup look.



Rihanna

The Fenty Beauty match stick is a favorite of Priscilla's as it's so adaptable. She said: "I feel I can do a full face using just these because they are so versatile. "You can use the matte shades as contour or concealer and the shimmer shades for blusher, eyeshadow, lip, whatever you want." Mario Badescu Facial Spray with Aloe Herbs and Rosewater is another essential part of the artist's makeup bag, as she believes that spraying your face with a hydrating product before you apply your makeup is the key to glowing skin.

She said: "I love the Mario Badescu Rosewater spray because of the scent but you can use any kind of hydrating spray." Another Fenty product that she loves is the Fenty Gloss Bomb Universal Luminiser. She said: "I love this because I don't have to worry about carrying 20 shades of lip gloss in my kit because this has been designed to suit every skin tone and it adapts to everyone." Priscilla has revealed that the key to killer brows, is to use both the Anastasia Beverly Hills Brow Wiz to color your eyebrows, and a bar of Pearls transparent soap, to hold them in place.

She said: "I always do brows first and I find the Anastasia Beverly Hills Brow Wiz in Soft Brown works for almost everybody." "Using soap instead of brow gel keeps your eyebrows really nice and stiff so they don't move. You can use any soap it just needs to be a clear/non-coloured one and make sure you avoid anything scented." — Bang Showbiz

Christian Louboutin: My shoes are erotic

Christian Louboutin admits his famous shoes can be viewed as an erotic accessory. The legendary footwear designer accepts that his iconic red soled shoes can make women feel super sexy and spark a "porn thing" for men but he says the secret of the shoes allure is how it makes ladies feel when they wear them.



Christian Louboutin

In an interview with The Times newspaper, he said: "Some of my shoes could absolutely be seen as a porn thing, or a bed thing, but there are lots of others in my collection. And it also depends on your perception. I was in one of my shops and this woman arrived who was very classical, and she tried on this high pump and she said, 'Oh my God, I look super sexy.' Then later on the same day another woman comes in who is opulent, sexy with a lot of breast. And tried the same ones, and said, 'Oh, I look so chic!'"

The 54-year-old French

fashion expert has been obsessed since he was a six-year-old child and can vividly remember pushing his 18-year-old sister up the stairs to the sixth-floor apartment that lived at. He revealed: "She had these cork wedges and I loved looking at her going up in them as I was pushing her on the ass." Despite his immense success as a footwear creator, Louboutin has no desire to design clothes, and once turned down the opportunity to head a huge brand, which he will not name. He said: "I was infuriated. I really insulted the guy. I was like what?! I felt so bad afterwards but I have no passion for clothes ... I would be bored in five minutes. You are carried by your shoes ... whereas you simply carry your clothes. Louboutin believes that shoes are the most important part of a person's outfit and hold far more importance than a person's clothes.

He mused: "It's because fashion has become so basic that it's the details that make the difference. No one has a problem with a T shirt from Zara, jeans from wherever. In the end it's going to be about whether you look like physically, and the finishing parts. The jewelry; but first the shoes." —BangShowbiz

Victoria Beckham unveils Reebok collection

Victoria Beckham has revealed her new Reebok collection. The 44-year-old's designer showed off her first unisex range for the first time on last Saturday and the campaign was shot by her 19-year-old son, Brooklyn. The former Spice Girl's partnership with the sportswear giant was announced last year and she has said that the clothing line is inspired by retired NBA basketball player Shaquille O'Neal and the 1990s, the decade which launched her career.

Victoria explained in a statement that she got her inspiration for the collection last year when she visited the Reebok archives in Boston. She said: "When I think of Reebok, I think of the '90s and basketball - and therefore, of course, I think of Shaq. "For me, this capsule really represents a celebration of that era, Reebok and Shaq's shared history in basketball, and the great heritage pieces I discovered in those archives." The fashion icon - who has three other children, Romeo, 15, Cruz, 13 and seven-year-old Harper, with her soccer legend husband David Beckham - was thrilled to be able to work with her photographer son Brooklyn on the campaign.

Victoria took to Instagram to unveil the first item of her collection, with a picture of herself sat on a white sofa wearing a white T-shirt with a bright red logo of Shaquille dunking a basketball paired with navy blue trousers and a nude makeup look. She wrote: "EXCLUSIVE!! Inspired by the 90s basketball and @shaq My Merch Collection drops next week ? on 26th July?! "Here I am in the limited edition tee from the collection that features an exclusive print in our signature sunset orange just for #VBDoverSt and my web-



Victoria Beckham

site! [sic]" She later posted a series of photographs featuring a blonde model in a series of locations, wearing a range of branded items such as cropped tees crop tops and hoodies. She wrote: "Love seeing my Merch Collection through @BrooklynBeckhameyes x victoriabeckham.com #ReebokxVictoriaBeckham. [sic]" — Bang Showbiz

Oimo festival of culture and crafts



Participants wearing Kyrgyz headdresses known as Elechek, traditional headgear of married women, take part in the Oimo festival of culture and crafts in downtown Bishkek on July 26, 2018. — AFP photos



A model presents a creation by Kyrgyz designer Aygerim Kayipova.



Models present creations by Kyrgyz designer Perizat Toychubekova.



A model presents a creation by Kyrgyz designer Nargiza Toktosunova.



Models present creations by Kyrgyz designer Aysuldu Usupbayeva.



Models present creations by Kyrgyz designer Nargiza Toktosunova.



Models present creations by Kyrgyz designer Alina Baktybekova.



Brides show their Henna painted hands, the day before their wedding in Gabes town, in southeastern Tunisia. — AFP photos



A bride shows her Henna painted hands, the day before her wedding.



A Tunisian farmer harvests Henna plants at his farm in Gabes town, in southeastern Tunisia.

Henna losing its allure as Tunisia's 'red gold'

In and around the Tunisian coastal city of Gabes, henna has long been a key driver of the economy—so much so that the plant is known as “red gold”. But a water crisis and changing consumer habits are making farmers think twice about planting henna shrubs, despite their coveted leaves that have for centuries been ground down to paint nails, tint hair and ink temporary tattoos, especially for weddings. “Gabes is dying because of the lack of water,” says farmer Houcine Akrouf, as he digs intricate channels around his green plants to maximize water flow in the early morning sunlight. Akrouf is hard at work, because the local water supply will today run from a canal onto his land—a rare thing nowadays, due to government rationing.

Urbanization and rapidly rising demand for water from industry and agriculture have put immense pressure on Tunisia's water reserves, according to the World Bank. And a 2016 study of Tunisia's water services funded by Sweden's government found that losses from the irrigation network reach 40 to 50 percent. For farmers like Akrouf, that means waiting 15 to 20 days for access to the water supply. “It's very long for the henna plant which needs lots of water,” he tells AFP. The situation is so bad he has uprooted most of his henna shrubs and replaced them with pomegranate trees—a much less thirsty species.

“Henna does not make me any money,” he says. “It isn't profitable anymore and I need to live and support my family.” When it comes, the water supply costs 2.8 dinars (\$1.10, 0.93 euros) per hour. In mid-summer, the wait can reach up to 40 days, admits Amel Ghiloufi, head of the region's plants department at the agriculture ministry. And

pollution of the water supply from a chemical plant has seen farmers abandon land in the oasis on the Mediterranean coast in recent decades.

Production down 20 percent

The water crisis is having a dramatic impact on henna output. Only 645 tons of the plant were harvested in the Gabes region in 2016/17 - down 20 percent from the previous season, Ghiloufi says. But other factors, including a labor shortage, are also driving the long-term decline. And it's not only supply side pressures that undermine the market—demand for local henna is also falling, as people opt for foreign alternatives. Over the centuries, henna leaves have been dried and reduced to a fine powder before being mixed with water, to create the paste coveted by people in Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

The paste is used to color hair, palms of hands, arms and feet with simple patterns that last for a month or so. But the process can be messy and people don't always want to keep the art work for that long. So imports of a treated version of henna from Sudan, Yemen and India are increasingly popular, with added chemicals limiting penetration of the skin and making it easy to wash from hands. Ahead of weddings, the ready-to-use dye is handed out in decorated boxes to guests at bachelorette parties.

The processed imported versions are taking over from the local product. And while once popular as a grandmother's remedy for anything from migraines to skin problems, younger people are more skeptical of henna's healing powers. But for Ghiloufi the only way “to revive the sector is to break new ground”, by promoting henna's natural benefits and diversifying into new markets. In the capital Tunis, shampoos based on the plant have begun to find their way into health stores. Only a few entrepreneurs sell Tunisian henna abroad—and they do so without state support—so exports are minimal, despite the “good quality” produced by Gabe's farmers, says Ghiloufi.

'Out of fashion'

In Jara, the main tourist market in the center of Gabes, huge stalls overflow with henna and incense—but the streets are empty. Traders complain that the trickle of



A bride shows her Henna painted hands, the day before her wedding in Gabes town.

tourists is not enough to compensate for locals' disinterest. “Henna is sold all the year round. Our market was always full of clients who come from all over Tunisia!” says 85-year-old Hassen Mrabet, who has been growing and selling henna for half a century.

“Now sales are limited to the wedding season in July and August,” he adds. Another trader bemoans the rising popularity of other beauty products and treatments, as lifestyles change. New forms of “dye and manicures have replaced henna today”, according to 49-year-old Ismail. “Tunisians have changed their habits and turned their backs on their traditions: henna is out of fashion.” — AFP

“Tunisians have changed their habits and turned their backs on their traditions; henna is out of fashion”



A bride shows her Henna painted hands.



Tunisian sellers display powder Henna, “red gold”, at their shops in the souk of Gabes town, in southeastern Tunisia.



A bride shows her Henna painted hands and legs.

Rado DiaMaster diamonds your time to shine

Minimalist design, classic style and durable, modern materials are the key attributes of Rado's DiaMaster collection. New models for 2018 include those using precious diamonds in a way that has great significance in the Rado 'master of materials' story.

Now, combining the high-tech materials Rado has created over years of experience and adding a sprinkling of full-cut diamonds, Rado has combined two of the hardest materials available in watchmaking to stunning effect. Softness and femininity are added thanks to mother-of-pearl dials and leather straps.

The 'Dia' in the DiaMaster name comes from the original Rado term 'DiaStar', coined in 1962 when the Swiss brand first succeeded in its mission to create a scratch-resistant watch designed to stand the test of time. It was taken from the word 'diamond' - the hardest natural material which is of a hardness Rado has striven to equal through innovation.

The jewel in the DiaMaster crown

With cases made using Rado's signature, pioneering

plasma high-tech ceramic and dials featuring classic design decorated with a ring of precious stones, the DiaMaster Diamonds is both a watch of contrasts and one that radiates harmony. The DiaMaster Diamonds benefits not only from the scratch-resistant, lightweight and hypoallergenic properties of this pioneering material, but also the metallic look that only plasma ceramic can achieve. Created through a complex carburizing process the molecular structure of the surface of white high-tech ceramic is transformed to give it a unique metallic shine without using any metal.

As the jewel in the crown of the current DiaMaster collection, the dazzling new Diamond models bring together all of Rado's materials know-how - both traditional and natural, pioneering and innovative - to present a watch that brings a touch of glamour to your workday outfits, or adds a hint of understated chic to your evening style. With the DiaMaster Diamonds, it's always your time to shine.



Classifieds

Sunday, July 29, 2018

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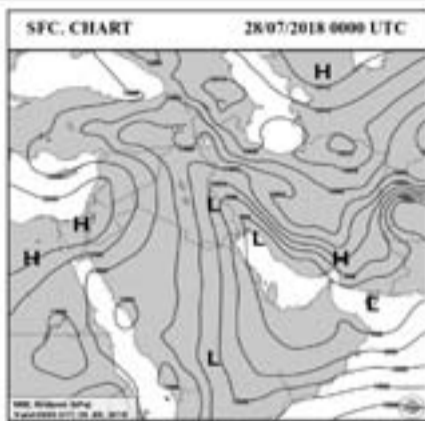
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Dusty with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 65 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

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

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	34 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	34 °C
ABDALY	47 °C	33 °C
BUHAYAN	— °C	— °C
JAIBRA	46 °C	33 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	46 °C	33 °C
SALMIYAH	42 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	44 °C	35 °C
NU'WAISIB	47 °C	34 °C
WAJRA	45 °C	33 °C
SALMIY	44 °C	29 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	MAX.	MIN.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
Sunday	07:29	Very hot and rising dust over open areas	47 °C	34 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Monday	07:30	Very hot and rising dust over open areas	48 °C	34 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Tuesday	07:31	Very hot and Dusty and some high clouds will appear	47 °C	36 °C	NW	20 - 65 km/h
Wednesday	08:01	Very hot and rising dust over open areas	48 °C	37 °C	NW	20 - 50 km/h

PRAYER TIMES		RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
Fajr	03:36	MAX. Temp.	46 °C
Sunrise	05:06	MIN. Temp.	36 °C
Zuhr	11:54	MAX. RH	25 %
Asr	15:30	MIN. RH	07 %
Sunset	18:43	MAX. Wind	N 71 km/h
Iha	20:10	TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

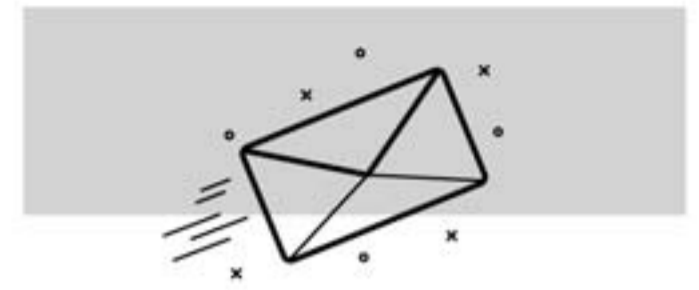
Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

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Kuwait Airways	171	KLM	22425747
Jazeera Airways	177	Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536	British Airways	22425635
American Airlines	22087425	Air France	22430224
	22087426	Emirates	22921555
Jet Airways	22924455	Air India	22438184
FlyDubai	22414400	Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Qatar Airways	22423888	Egypt Air	22421578

Flight Schedule

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 29/7/2018				Departure Flights on Sunday 29/7/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	MEA	405	Jeddah	11:55
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	JZR	776	Doha	12:05
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	QTR	1075	Tbilisi	12:15
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	SAW	702	Dammam	13:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	RJA	645	Amman	14:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	WAN	865	TBXZ	14:30
AEE	956	ATH	02:25	JZR	802	Tbilisi	14:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	FEG	442	Asyut	14:50
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	14:55
WAN	416D	Beirut	02:40	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
WAN	714	AGP	02:45	ATH	060	Dubai	15:05
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ubai	501	Jeddah	15:45
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	Asyut	775	Riyadh	15:55
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
JZR	551	Alexandria	04:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	SYR	342	Dammam	16:55
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
JZR	1541	Cairo	04:35	SAW	710	Latakia	17:00
THY	1414	TXZ	05:05	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	KAC	052	Dubai	17:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:20	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	FEG	242	Alexandria	17:45
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
QTR	8511	Doha	05:30	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	KAC	243	Chennai	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	383	Dhaka	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	SWA	511	Riyadh	18:15
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	JZR	164	Dubai	18:20
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	Doha	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	GFA	216	Hyderabad	18:25
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	JZR	608	Amman	18:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
JZR	143	Doha	07:05	JZR	650	Lahore	18:35
MSR	2616	Sohag	07:40	WAN	135	Doha	18:40
KAC	358	Kochi	07:50	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:00	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JAI	215	Delhi	20:35
WAN	312	Asyut	09:50	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
WAN	342	Sohag	09:55	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
SAW	703	Dammam	10:30	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
WAN	134	Doha	11:10	JZR	1540	Cairo	22:10
JZR	903	Baku	11:10	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
SAW	701	Dammam	12:30	THY	1403	AYT	22:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:50
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
JZR	239	Amman	13:00	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40

Egypt hands 75 death sentences over 2013 sit-in

CAIRO: An Egyptian court said yesterday it would transfer the cases of 75 people convicted of security-related offences, including senior Muslim Brotherhood figures, to Egypt's top religious authority to decide whether they should be sentenced to death. They are among more than 700 people accused or convicted of illegal protest or murder over a 2013 sit-in that ended in the deaths of hundreds of Brotherhood supporters and dozens of police when security forces broke it up violently. Those convicted face potential sentences ranging up to life in prison and execution.

Since President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi took power in 2014, authorities have justified a crackdown on dissent and freedoms as being directed at terrorists and saboteurs trying to undermine the state. Death sentences have been handed down to hundreds on charges such as belonging to an illegal organization or planning to carry out an attack. The dispersal of the sit-in at Rabaa Adawiya square in Aug 2013 came weeks after Sisi, as military chief, ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi after protests against Brotherhood rule.

Rights groups have criticized the trial of so many people in the same case, saying they include journalists and many peaceful protesters. Egyptian law requires any capital sentence to be referred to Grand Mufti Shawqi Allam, Egypt's highest Islamic legal official, for an opinion before executions can take place. The 75 cases referred to the mufti include those of senior Brotherhood leaders Essam Al-Erian and Mohamed Beltagi and prominent Islamist preachers Safwat Higazi and Wagdi Ghoneim, judicial sources said. Forty-four of the accused are in prison awaiting their sentence, and 31 have been tried in absentia. Also on trial was prominent photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid, widely known as Shawkan, who in May received UNESCO's Press Freedom Prize. The court postponed a verdict on his and other cases.

The mufti's decision is not legally binding, but is rarely ignored by the courts. In 2014 the mufti rejected a death sentence proposed for the leader of the outlawed Brotherhood, Mohamed Badie, who is part of the same case. Badie has since been sentenced to life in prison. Amnesty International said yesterday the trial was unfair, and that the accused had been denied the right to present an adequate defense. "Egyptian authorities have never questioned or prosecuted any of the security



CAIRO: Egyptian photojournalist Mahmoud Abdel Shakour Abouzied, also known as Shawkan, makes a gesture mimicking taking a photograph from inside a soundproof glass dock during his trial yesterday. —AFP

force personnel who took part in the massacre," it said in a statement. Amnesty says more than 800 protesters were killed. The government has said many protesters were armed, and that 43 police were killed.

The final sentencing in the case is expected on Sept 8, after the mufti has given his ruling, judicial sources said. Many death sentences issued under

Sisi have not yet been carried out, but local rights groups say the number of executions has risen in recent years. Sisi's supporters say harsh measures are needed to ensure the stability needed to revive Egypt's battered economy after the turmoil unleashed by the 2011 uprising that toppled long-time leader Hosni Mubarak.

"We (Egyptians) need to get out of the rut we are in ... I want to do that for you," Sisi said at a youth conference at Cairo University yesterday as he promoted his new defense minister, Mohamed Zaki, to the rank of general. Sisi said he was "saddened" by a recent but limited social media campaign calling for his departure. — Reuters

Trump eyeing 'Arab NATO'...

Continued from Page 1

Potentially a big obstacle to the planned alliance is a 13-month-old rift pitting Saudi Arabia and the UAE against Qatar, home to the largest US air base in the region. Other Arab nations have accused Qatar of supporting terrorism, which it denies. While one source said the administration is concerned the quarrel could be an obstacle to the initiative, he and an Arab official both said Riyadh and Abu Dhabi had assured Washington the rift would not pose a problem to the alliance. The NSC spokesperson denied the rift was a hurdle.

As Trump pursues his "America First" policy, the

White House is eager to have US allies worldwide shoulder more of the burden in confronting regional security threats. The UAE is ready to deploy more troops across the Middle East to counter its foes as it believes it can no longer rely on Western allies like the United States and Britain, UAE minister Anwar Gargash said on Thursday.

Setting up a regional anti-missile defense shield, which the United States and Gulf countries have discussed for years without result, would be a goal for the alliance, a source familiar with the plan said, as well as training to upgrade the countries' militaries. Tension with Iran has increased since Trump announced in May that the United States was pulling out of a 2015 international deal to limit Tehran's nuclear ambitions. On Monday, Iran dismissed a warning from Trump that it risked dire consequences "the likes of which few throughout history have suffered before" if it made threats against the United States. — Reuters

Century's longest blood moon eclipse...

Continued from Page 1

Earth's shadow from 1714 to 2328 GMT - six hours and 14 minutes in all. The period of complete eclipse - known as "totality", when the moon appears darkest - lasted from 1930 to 2113 GMT. At the same time, Mars hovered near the moon in the night sky, easily visible to the naked eye.

Amateur astronomers in the southern hemisphere were best-placed to witness the rare sight, especially in southern Africa, Australia, and Madagascar, though it was also visible in Europe, South Asia and South America. More than 2,000 people including many children armed with binoculars gathered in the Tunisian capital of Tunis. "I hope this eclipse will bring us happiness and peace," said Karima, 46, without taking her eyes off the sky.

However, bad weather thwarted the cosmic display in several parts of the world. Widespread monsoon rainstorms and thick clouds hid the moon across much of India and its neighbors, which should have had a prime view. Similarly, eager observers who had assembled on cliffs and beaches in the English county of Dorset were left in the dark due to an overcast sky. "It's disappointing," Tish Adams, 67, told AFP. "I took a few photos but there was nothing but a streak of pink in the sky."

Meanwhile frustrated crowds of would-be moon admirers gathered on a hill in cloudy north London consoled themselves by breaking into a rendition of Welsh singer Bonnie Tyler's 1983 hit "Total eclipse of the heart". Those in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro had more luck, snapping the red moon in the clear night sky with their phones and cameras. "I thought it was very pretty and I liked the planet Mars even more, which you could see right next to the moon," said Talita Oliveira, 34.

Mars appeared unusually large and bright, a mere 57.7 million km from Earth on its elliptical orbit around the sun. A total lunar eclipse happens when Earth takes position in a straight line between the moon and sun, blotting out the direct sunlight that normally makes our satellite glow whitish-yellow. The moon travels to a similar position every month, but the tilt of its orbit means it normally passes above or below the Earth's shadow - so most months we have a full moon without an eclipse.

When the three celestial bodies are perfectly lined up, however, the Earth's atmosphere scatters blue light from the sun while refracting or bending red light onto the moon, usually giving it a rosy blush. This is what gives the phenomenon the name "blood moon", though Mark Bailey of the Armagh Observatory in Northern Ireland said the color can vary greatly. It depends partly on "how cloudy or transparent those parts of the Earth's atmosphere are which enable sunlight to reach the moon", he told AFP. "During a very dark eclipse the moon may be almost invisible."

The long duration of this eclipse was partly because the moon made a near-central passage through Earth's umbra - the darkest, most central part of the shadow. "For those alive today, it's a unique event," said Sven Melchert, head of a local society of astronomy enthusiasts in Heppenheim, western Germany, cited by the DPA news agency. The moon was also at the farthest point on its orbit from Earth, making its movement across the sky slower from our perspective, thus spending longer in the dark.

NASA, meanwhile, called out social media hoaxers claiming that Mars would appear as big as the moon during the eclipse. "If that were true, we'd be in big trouble given the gravitational pulls on Earth, Mars, and our moon!" the NASA website stated. Mars instead appeared as a very bright star. "In the middle of a lunar eclipse it can look as if a red planet has taken up residence near the Earth - they are both eerie and beautiful," said Robert Massey of the Royal Astronomical Society in London. — AFP

"We have confirmed 33 deaths and only one person managed to survive the bus crash. Our team is trying to recover the bodies," Anupam Srivastava, commander of India's National Disaster Relief Force, told AFP. "The surviving passenger managed to alert officials about the deaths and the crash," he added. Police said the slippery mountain terrain where the latest accident took place made the road a danger.

Accidents on India's notorious roads claim the lives of more than 150,000 people each year. Most accidents are blamed on poor roads, badly-maintained vehicles and reckless driving. Earlier this month, 48 people were killed and many others badly injured in northern India when an overcrowded bus hurtled into a gorge in the Himalayan foothills. — Agencies

Mongolia thwarts 'kidnapping' of Turkish teacher

ULAANBAATAR: A Turkish teacher targeted in a suspected kidnap attempt thwarted by Mongolian authorities yesterday thanked his supporters as he left hospital after a checkup following his ordeal. When asked who had attempted to abduct him, Veysel Akcay simply said "I don't know." The drama unfolded Friday as Mongolian authorities grounded a suspected Turkish air force jet after witnesses said assailants snatched a Turkish man associated with a religious group Ankara has branded as terrorists.

In recent weeks, Turkey's intelligence agency has conducted operations abroad against associates of US-based preacher Fethullah Gulen - who Ankara says was behind a 2016 failed coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. As many as five men grabbed Akcay from outside his home in Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar Friday morning and threw him into a minibus, according to friends and eyewitnesses. The 50-year-old is director of a school in Mongolia that is alleged to be associated with Gulen, although teachers there denied the connection in response to questions by AFP. When he failed to show up for work, concerned family and friends notified the police.

Meanwhile, Akcay's abductors had taken him to Genghis Khan international airport, where a small passenger jet landed around 1:00 pm (0500 GMT). The plane - with call sign TT4010 - is operated by the Turkish air force, according to data on flight tracking site flightradar24.com. It was the beginning of a more than eight-hour standoff between the captors and Mongolian authorities, who refused to allow the plane to leave the runway.

As authorities summoned Turkish officials from their embassy in Mongolia, parliamentarians and hundreds of protesters clutching signs demanding Akcay's release gathered at the airport. As the standoff dragged on, Mongolian vice foreign minister Battsetseg Batmunkh warned Turkish embassy officials that any attempt to

abduct a person from Mongolia's territory would constitute "a serious violation of Mongolia's independence and sovereignty".

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu denied the accusations during a telephone call to his Mongolian counterpart Tsogtbaatar Damdin, according to the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But officials were not convinced: "We are an independent nation. Do you think anyone can do abductions in our country?" parliamentarian Baasankhuu Oktaybri wrote on Twitter. The plane took off at 9:25 pm Friday without Akcay, who was taken for questioning by police and later sent to a hospital for medical checks. "I thank you all," he told his supporters as he left hospital.

Sandwiched between China and Russia, Mongolia was once described by former US Secretary of State John Kerry as an "oasis of democracy". However the incident "might turn into a full diplomatic crisis between Mongolia and Turkey, a relationship that has been active and vibrant for some years," said Julian Dierkes, an expert on Mongolian politics at the University of British Columbia. The Turkish aid agency "has undertaken many projects in Mongolia, many Mongolian students have studied at Turkish universities", a relationship that could be "damaged", he said.

Since the failed coup in July 2016, Turkey has been relentlessly tracking down those it suspects of being supporters of Gulen, who denies being behind the attempted overthrow of Erdogan. Gulen's movement built up significant influence in Turkey and overseas, particularly in Central Asia, Africa and the Balkans, especially via its education network. Ankara has outlawed the movement as a terror organization but followers insist they promote peace and moderate Islam.

Turkey has carried out a series of overseas operations against suspected members of the movement in places such as Kosovo, Gabon and more recently Ukraine. Last week a Turkish blogger accused of links to Gulen was deported from Ukraine as part of an operation by MIT while another individual was detained in Azerbaijan recently and sent back to Turkey. In Turkey more than 77,000 people were arrested over alleged links to the movement during a two-year state of emergency imposed after the coup bid in a crackdown criticized by Ankara's Western allies. — AFP



ULAANBAATAR: Students hold up banners in support of their teacher, Turkish school director Veysel Akcay, at the airport on Friday. —sAFP

Rainstorms kill 49 in northern...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, a bus carrying university workers plunged off a mountain road into a valley in western India yesterday, killing 33 people, police said. Only one passenger is believed to have survived the accident in Raigad district of Maharashtra state. The bus was taking staff of Dapoli Agriculture University to the popular hill station of Mahabaleshwar for a picnic, a senior Raigad district administrator, Vijay Suryawanshi, told AFP.

Sports

Betts finishes off Twins in 10th as Devers gets Red Sox even

Brewers overpower Giants 3-1

MINNESOTA: Mookie Betts led off the bottom of the 10th inning with a home run as the Boston Red Sox snapped a two-game losing streak with a 4-3 victory over the visiting Minnesota Twins on Friday night at Fenway Park. It was Betts' 25th homer of the season and his first career walk-off homer. The blast over the Green Monster in left field came on the second pitch of the inning from Matt Belisle (1-1). Eddie Rosario had a two-run go-ahead double off Red Sox closer Craig Kimbrel with two outs in the ninth, and Jorge Polanco also had two hits for Minnesota, which had a four-game winning streak snapped. Rafael Devers tied the game leading off the bottom of the ninth against Fernando Rodney when he lined his 15th homer of the year just over the glove of Max Kepler into the bullpen in right.

Pirates 5, Mets 4

David Freese capped a big night with a walk-off single as Pittsburgh broke a two-game losing streak with a win over visiting New York. Freese drove in all five Pirates runs, including a two-run homer. Michael Conforto hit a three-run homer for the Mets, who had their three-game winning streak snapped. In the ninth tied 4-4 against Tim Peterson (2-2), the Mets' seventh pitcher, Josh Harrison had an infield single, Gregory Polanco singled and Elias Diaz was walked intentionally before Freese lofted the ball to deep right-center for the win.

Orioles 15, Rays 5

Adam Jones homered and drove in four runs, and Jonathan Schoop homered in a fifth consecutive game and had three RBIs as Baltimore routed visiting Tampa Bay. Andrew Cashner (3-9) broke a four-game losing streak and won for the first time this season at home. It was his first victory since May 21. Chris Archer (3-5) started for the Rays in what might have been his final time on the mound with Tampa Bay as the July 31 trade deadline nears. Archer gave up four runs (three earned) in six innings before the Orioles broke things open with an eight-run seventh.

Indians 8, Tigers 3

Pinch hitter Brandon Guyer smashed a three-run homer to highlight a four-run eighth, Francisco Lindor homered twice and drove in three runs and Cleveland rolled to a win at Detroit. Yonder Alonso also homered and drove in two runs for the Indians, who have won 11 of 14 meetings with Detroit this season. Cody Allen (3-4) pitched 1 1/3 innings of scoreless relief to get the victory. Victor Martinez homered for the Tigers. Losing pitcher Joe Jimenez (4-2) was charged with three runs while getting only one out.

Reds 6, Phillies 4

Mason Williams broke a fourth-inning tie with a three-run home run and Eugenio Suarez homered in his

fifth straight game, lifting host Cincinnati past Philadelphia. Suarez tied a club record when he connected for a solo shot in the second inning. He became the eighth Reds player to homer in five straight, last accomplished by Jay Bruce in 2016. The Cincinnati bullpen threw 4 2/3 innings of one-run relief, helping the Reds get even in the four-game series.

Nationals 9, Marlins 1

Max Scherzer earned his 14th win of the season on his 34th birthday and teenager Juan Soto homered for the third straight game as Washington defeated host Miami. The only run allowed by Scherzer was unearned, and Soto went 3-for-5 with three RBIs. Soto finished a double short of the cycle. Scherzer (14-5) retired the first 10 batters he faced and struck out the side in the third and sixth innings. He finished with 11 strikeouts to reach 200 on the season and gave up three hits and one walk in eight innings.

Dodgers 4, Braves 1

Clayton Kershaw gave up one run over a season-high 7 2/3 innings and drove in a pair of runs to help Los Angeles win at Atlanta. Kershaw (4-5) gave up six hits, struck out eight without a walk and improved to 4-0 in 10 career starts against the Braves. It was his first career start at SunTrust Park. Kershaw drove in two runs with a two-out single in the fourth inning to complete a three-run rally. He also walked three times, making him the first pitcher with three walks and a single since Whitey Ford in 1959 and the first Dodger pitcher with three walks since Don Sutton in 1976.

Blue Jays 10, White Sox 5

Lourdes Gurriel Jr led a five-homer barrage with two solo shots, Marcus Stroman pitched into the seventh inning and visiting Toronto pummeled Chicago. Randal Grichuk hit a two-run homer, and Curtis Granderson and Kendrys Morales each added solo blasts for the Jays. Gurriel also hit a double in going 3-for-5 and matching a club record (Tony Fernandez, 1986) with his ninth straight multi-hit game.

Rangers 11, Astros 2

Robinson Chirinos slugged his third home run against Houston this season, leading visiting Texas in a rout. Chirinos delivered the decisive blow with two outs and a 2-2 count in the fifth inning, belting a fastball from Astros left-hander Dallas Keuchel (8-9) 404 feet to left field. The Astros, playing without middle infielders Carlos Correa (back) and Jose Altuve (right knee), managed only two hits against Yovani Gallardo (5-1) in 5 1/3 innings after mustering just one off Rockies right-hander Jon Gray on Wednesday.

Cardinals 5, Cubs 2

Luke Weaver pitched six strong innings as St Louis



BOSTON: Jake Cave #60 of the Minnesota Twins dives into second base past the tag of Xander Bogaerts #2 of the Boston Red Sox in the bottom of the seventh inning at Fenway Park on July 27, 2018. — AFP

defeated visiting Chicago. Paul DeJong went 3-for-3 with a triple and three RBIs for the Cardinals, who improved to 8-6 in the season series against the National League Central leaders. Weaver (6-9) allowed two runs on eight hits. He didn't walk a batter and struck out five to defeat the Cubs for the first time in four tries this season. He suffered a 7-2 loss last Saturday in Chicago in his previous start.

Rockies 3, Athletics 1

Kyle Freeland pitched six shutout innings, Nolan Arenado homered and host Colorado beat streaking Oakland. Adam Ottavino pitched the ninth for his fourth save, and Carlos Gonzalez had three hits for the Rockies, who have won eight of 10. The As had won 13 of their last 16 games to move to 18 games above .500 and climb into the playoff hunt. Heading into the weekend, Oakland was a game behind Seattle for the second American League wild card.

Angels 4, Mariners 3 (10 innings)

Kole Calhoun hit a game-ending home run in the 10th inning to lead Los Angeles past visiting Seattle. Calhoun's 12th home run of the season came on the first pitch against Mariners reliever Juan Nicasio (1-5). Albert Pujols had a second-inning double to give him 3,061 hits and move him past Craig Biggio and into sole possession of 24th on the all-time hit list. Next up at No 23 is Ichiro Suzuki, who has 3,089 hits.

Diamondbacks 6, Padres 2

Arizona erupted for six runs in the third inning off San Diego starter Luis Perdomo, and right-hander Zack Greinke held the hosts to a solo homer by Manuel Margot over seven innings in a win. Greinke improved to 12-5 on the season and 11-2 lifetime against the Padres while giving up six hits and no walks with six strikeouts. Steven Souza Jr's two-run double-one of four in the inning was Arizona's biggest hit in the third-inning assault on Perdomo, who got only one out in the inning before being pulled. Seven straight Diamondbacks reached base ahead of his departure.

Brewers 3, Giants 1

Chase Anderson outduelled Madison Bumgarner and Ryan Braun drove in two runs, delivering Milwaukee a win at San Francisco. Jeremy Jeffress got Buster Posey to ground out with the bases loaded and two outs in the eighth inning, helping the Brewers hold on for their fourth win in their last five games. Following the win, the Brewers acquired two-time All-Star third baseman Mike Moustakas from the Kansas City Royals for outfielder Brett Phillips and right-hander Jorge Lopez.

Yankees-Royals, ppd.

The game between Kansas City and New York at Yankee Stadium was postponed roughly 30 minutes after its scheduled first pitch due to rain. The contest will be made up as part of a day-night doubleheader. — Reuters



Conor McGregor

MMA's McGregor makes plea deal to avoid jail time

NEW YORK: Irish mixed martial arts superstar Conor McGregor pleaded guilty in a Brooklyn criminal court to disorderly conduct, cutting a deal that allows him to avoid prison time over a New York brawl. The 30-year-old, who is nicknamed "The Notorious," had been charged with multiple counts of assault and criminal mischief after attacking a bus filled with Ultimate Fighting Championship contenders at the Barclays Center in April.

The frenzied attack injured two athletes. McGregor pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of disorderly conduct in a fleeting court appearance, and was handed a punishment of five days' community service and an anger management program. All felony counts were dropped. But he was served with "orders of protection," to stay away from three people. McGregor stood before the judge, looking somber in a dark suit and striped tie, for the brief appearance. "I

just want to say I'm thankful to the DA (district attorney) and the judge for allowing me to move forward," a visibly relieved McGregor told reporters outside the court.

"I want to say to my friends, my family, my fans — thank you for the support." "Now it's about getting back to business," said his manager, Audie Attar. He had faced up to seven years in prison if convicted on all counts, and was released on \$50,000 bail following his arrest. Last month, following an earlier court appearance, McGregor expressed "regret" over the attack on the bus of rival fighters. The Irishman pocketed around \$100 million for the superfight he lost in August in Las Vegas against welterweight champion Floyd Mayweather.

Their matchup was one of the richest boxing bouts of all time. McGregor is ranked fourth on the Forbes list of the world's highest-paid athletes, with an estimated wealth of \$99 million, behind Mayweather in at number one, and soccer sensations Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. He was filmed lobbing a dolly through a window of the bus in a New York stadium at the end of a media event on April 5. The bus was moving slowly through the Barclays Center loading dock at the time. The father-of-one was also captured on surveillance cameras throwing a chair toward a passenger window of the bus. — AFP

IAAF maintains ban on Russia

BUENOS AIRES: Russia's ban from international athletics over widespread doping has been maintained by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), the president of the sport's governing body, Sebastian Coe, said on Friday. Russia has been suspended from international athletics since November 2015 after the McLaren report discovered widespread doping. The Russians had hoped to be reinstated but IAAF officials meeting in Argentina on Friday unanimously upheld the ban and said that although Russia had taken positive steps in the right direction it had not done enough to merit inclusion.

"We have brought about change and it's change that is very viable," said Coe. "But we weren't yet at that point where every element of that criteria had been met." Russia's political and sporting leaders have repeatedly denied state involvement in doping, a key sticking point in lifting the ban, although Russian athletes cleared by the IAAF were allowed to compete as neutrals at last year's world championships. Such athletes will again be allowed to compete as neutrals in the European Championships, which are scheduled to start in Berlin on Aug 7.

Anti-doping rules

Meanwhile, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) has welcomed new anti-doping regulations in the sport that put greater responsibility on national federations. Following an International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) council meeting, national federations will be divided into three categories with differing obligations based on

African, world players to meet in Africa Game

LOS ANGELES: NBA players with direct ties to Africa will play a world team in the third NBA Africa Game next month in Pretoria, South Africa, the National Basketball Association and National Basketball Players Association announced on



BUENOS AIRES: The head of the International Association of Athletics Federations' (IAAF) Russian taskforce team, Rune Andersen, speaks during a press conference in the framework of the IAAF Council's Meeting in Buenos Aires, on July 27, 2018. — AFP

their level of success and the perceived risk of doping.

"For too long the strict requirements of the anti-doping rules have fallen largely onto athletes," AIU chairman David Howman said in a statement. "The IAAF Council should be congratulated for adopting innovative new rules that also make all of its member federations accountable on anti-doping matters. This will help ensure lasting and meaningful change in athletics."

The doping scandal involving Russian athletes, which saw the country's track and field team banned from the 2016 Rio Olympics, has cast a long and enduring shadow over athletics. The AIU was set up a year ago as part of the IAAF's effort to separate itself from anti-doping and corruption and rebuild athlete

Friday. Luol Deng (Los Angeles Lakers, South Sudan), Bismack Biyombo (Charlotte Hornets, Democratic Republic of the Congo), Joel Embiid (Philadelphia 76ers, Cameroon) and Serge Ibaka (Toronto Raptors, Republic of the Congo) will be among the players competing for Team Africa in the Aug 4 game at the Sun Arena, with Biyombo and Embiid the co-captains.

Rudy Gay (San Antonio Spurs, US) and

and fan confidence in the sport. The AIU first raised the idea of the new rules with the IAAF council in November and after discussions with all stakeholders recommended the amendments at this week's meeting in Buenos Aires.

The IAAF said four member federations - Kenya, Ethiopia, Belarus, Ukraine - would constitute the current watchlist of Category A, which includes the members most at risk of doping. Athletes from those countries will have to undergo at least three out-of-competition doping tests in the 10 months prior to a world championships or Olympics. The power to categorize members into one of three groups will rest with the AIU board and the new rules will come into effect from 2019, a year before the Tokyo Olympics. — Agencies

lowing the 16th edition of Basketball Without Borders Africa. In honor of the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, it will be played in support of the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Two previous games, in Johannesburg in 2015 and 2017, were sell-outs.

Players Association Executive Director Michele Roberts and NBA Commissioner Adam Silver will attend the game along with Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, NBA Global Ambassador Dikembe Mutombo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and others. There are more than 80 current and former NBA players from Africa or with direct family ties to the continent, the NBA said. — Reuters

Sports

Dressel books Pan Pacs berth with 100m butterfly victory

First victory of the US Swimming Championships

IRVINE: Caeleb Dressel finally bagged his first victory of the US Swimming Championships on Friday, powering home to win the 100m butterfly in 50.50sec and punch his ticket to the Pan Pacific Championships. Dressel, who joined Michael Phelps as the only swimmers to win seven titles at a single World Championships with a stunning campaign in Budapest last year, also set himself up for next year's Worlds in South Korea, with this meet and Pan Pacs serving as qualifiers for the biggest international meeting before the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The 21-year-old, who signed his first professional sponsorship deal with Speedo this month after departing the amateur US collegiate ranks, had endured a frustrating start to the championships in Irvine, south of Los Angeles. Sixth in the 100m freestyle on Wednesday, he scratched the 200m free and finished second in the 50m butterfly - not good enough to send him to Pan Pacs or Worlds.

"I don't know if nervous or anxious is the correct word to use, just excited," he said of his state of mind heading into the 100m fly. After finishing in front of Jack Conger (51.11) and Michael Andrew (51.68), he was still excited: "Excited to make the team." Dressel said the 100m free was "just a really bad swim" and even said it was "refreshing" after the non-stop winning of last year. All in all, Dressel said, there was no need to panic, or even worry. "I did what I needed to do and right now we're on the team," he said. "That's what this meet is for. There's a lot left in the tank."

Kalisz wins 400 IM

Double medley world champion Chase Kalisz said the same after winning the 400m IM in 4:08.25. Kalisz improved his own season-leading time, but with a personal best of 4:05.90 he wasn't impressed by that. "The time wasn't so great, but that's not what it's about," Kalisz said. "It's about getting on the team and setting yourself up for Tokyo."

Kalisz seized control on the breaststroke leg and powered home ahead of Jay Litherland, who was second in 4:10.21. Ally McHugh sprung an impressive surprise in the women's 400m medley, surging to the front on the final freestyle leg to win in 4:34.80 - third-fastest time in the world this year. McHugh, 21, headed 19-year-old Brooke Forde, who was second in 4:35.02 as world and Olympic relay gold medalists Melanie Margalis and Leah Smith settled for third and fourth. Kelsi Dahlia added the women's 100m fly title to the 50m fly she won on Thursday, clocking 56.83.

Katie McLaughlin, who won relay gold at the 2015 World Championships before a neck injury disrupted her career, was second in 57.51. World record-holder Lilly King sprinted onto the World Championships team with a 50m breaststroke victory in 29.86sec - 42-hundredths of a second off the world mark she set last year. Andrew came back from the 100m fly to win the men's 50m breast in 26.84, but the 19-year-old was shut out of the podium in the 50m backstroke - won by double Olympic backstroke gold medalist Ryan Murphy in an American record of 24.24. — AFP



IRVINE: Caeleb Dressel swims to a first place finish in the Men 100 LC Meter Butterfly Final during day 3 of the Phillips 66 National Swimming Championships at the Woollett Aquatics Center on July 27, 2018. — AFP

Aussie skipper makes history in Clipper race

LONDON: Australian mariner Wendy Tuck became the first female skipper to win the Clipper Round The World yacht race when the 11 month marathon finished where it started in Liverpool yesterday. The 53-year-old—who like the other skippers is a professional yachtswoman but in charge of amateur crews—totalled 143 overall points in her boat Sanya Serenity Coast over the eight leg race covering 40,000 nautical miles in what was the 11th edition of the biennial race. "I hate banging on about women," Tuck told The Daily Telegraph.

"I just do what I do but I am very proud," Tuck added she was experiencing "a bit of shock, disbelief, joy, sadness—you name that emotion, I'm probably feeling it right now". Tuck edged out another female skipper Britain's Nikki Henderson, who made her own history in being at 25 the youngest ever captain in the race, who totaled 139 points. "We didn't get the win but I am so proud of how my team dug deep and kept fighting right until the end," said Henderson, who is the daughter of a Conservative Party lawmaker Anne Milton.

The previous youngest skipper to compete was Alex Thomson, who at the age of 26 led a team to win the Clipper Round The World race in 1998. Thomson finished second in the grueling solo round-the-world Vendee Globe race in January last year. This edition of the race did not pass off without its share of incident and tragedy. In November the Greenings yacht, one of 12 which originally left Liverpool, ran aground off the coast of South Africa forcing the vessel to be withdrawn due to damage.

And in the same month 60-year-old retired English solicitor Simon Speirs was killed when he was swept overboard on the leg from South Africa to Australia while racing on board the GREAT Britain yacht. He had been on the foredeck of the vessel to help change a sail when the incident happened. Speirs became separated from the boat which was in the Southern Ocean, in what were rough seas with 20 knots of wind and gusts at 40. An investigation into why his tether failed to keep him attached to the boat is currently under way. — AFP

Philippines pull out from Jakarta basketball event

MANILA: The Philippines have withdrawn from the basketball tournament at the Asian Games with its governing body saying it needed to focus on its appeal against punishment levied on it for the on-court brawl during a World Cup qualifier this month. Thirteen players from the Australia and Philippines teams, as well as two Filipino coaches, were suspended for their role in the fight during the game in Bulacan on July 2, which was abandoned when the hosts had only one player left on court. The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) also fined the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP), which runs basketball in the country, 250,000 Swiss francs (\$250,000). The SBP said in a statement that the national team and governing body needed time to "regroup" and prepare for the process of appealing the FIBA decision.

"We have reached the conclusion that, with the forging considered and after consulting with the basketball community, the time and chance to participate in the 2018 Asian Games would not be optimal," it continued. "We apologize to the Asian Games organizers, to the fans of the Philippine team, and to the Asian basketball community for this withdrawal." —Reuters

Isner turns tables on Zverev to reach Atlanta semi finals

LOS ANGELES: American John Isner showed why he is playing some of the best tennis of his career on Friday, beating Mischa Zverev 7-5, 4-6, 6-1 in the quarter-finals of the Atlanta Open. Isner needed one hour and 37 minutes on Stadium Court to oust Zverev and reverse a run of defeats to the seventh seeded German. Zverev had won all three of his matches against Isner last year. But the 33-year-old Isner has been rising up the rankings as he levelled their career head-to-head rivalry at 3-3. "It was a weird match. The balls were bouncing everywhere, it was tough to control. I was happy to get through in three sets," Isner said.

The 6-foot-10 Isner is at number nine in the ATP world rankings. He reached a career-best No. 8 last week after making it to the semis of Wimbledon. Isner will next face fourth seed Matthew Ebden, who breezed past Marcos Baghdatis 6-3, 6-2 in one hour, 12 minutes. The Aussie is into his second semi-

final of the season, following a run to the final four at the Libema Open. Isner is now two victories from winning his second title of the year. The match shaped up to be a service battle as both players needed just a break each to split the first two sets.

Isner ended up losing just two points (38/40) on his first serve and this was the fourth straight contest they went to a deciding set. Ebden, 30, has not dropped a set this week, saving the only break point he faced to eliminate Baghdatis. Isner has won three of his four career matches against Ebden, but the Aussie defended his home turf with a four-set victory at this year's Australian Open. In the other quarter-finals, Ryan Harrison outlasted Chung Hyeon 6-7 (3/7), 6-2, 7-6 (7/5) and Cameron Norrie was leading 7-5, 3-0 in the second set when Nick Kyrgios retired due to a left hip problem.

Cincinnati Open

Meanwhile, former world number ones Andy Murray and Victoria Azarenka have been handed wild cards to compete at the Cincinnati Open next month, the tournament's organizers have said. Murray pulled out of this year's Wimbledon saying his right hip was still not ready for the demands of a Grand Slam. That was after the Scot made a comeback in June at Queen's Club following almost a year out with the injury that required surgery in



ATLANTA: John Isner returns a forehand to Mischa Zverev of Germany during the BB&T Atlanta Open at Atlantic Station on July 27, 2018. — AFP

Australia in January.

Two-times grand slam winner Azarenka, who won the Cincinnati Open in 2013, will return to the women's draw for the first time since 2016 as she continues her comeback following a prolonged legal battle over the custody of her son Leo last year. "The resumes for Vika and Andy really speak for themselves," tournament Director Andre Silva

told the organizers' website. "I think many tennis fans are eager to see each of them back on the court, and we are pleased to offer them both wild cards to play the Western & Southern Open." A further seven players - three men and four women - will be handed wild cards for the tournament, which begins on Aug 11, around two weeks before the US open starts on Aug 27. — Agencies

'Back to work' as Vettel dominates Grand Prix practice

BUDAPEST: Sebastian Vettel said he was relieved to be "back at work" following a difficult few days after he posted the fastest time for Ferrari in second practice for this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix. The German bounced back following an embarrassing 'home' exit in last Sunday's German race and the death on Wednesday of Ferrari chairman Sergio Marchionne by outpacing both Red Bulls. "I think it is probably best to get in the car because everybody knows what to do," he said.

"Obviously, it was not easy, but I think today the work has been ok. Having a lot of work in front of you is probably the best thing to get your head away and focus on the job we have to do here. "It is probably quite good to have a race straightaway and focus on the next thing to do." In a car that carried a black diagonal stripe in memory of Marchionne, who died earlier this week, the German delivered consistent speed in stifling heat at the Hungaroring.

He crashed out of last weekend's German Grand Prix after leading until a rainstorm created treacherous conditions in which title rival Lewis Hamilton excelled as he stormed to victory from 14th on the grid. Vettel acknowledged that he had to overcome some emotional and mental strain in recent days. The German, who trails fellow-four-time champion Hamilton by 17 points in the title race, added that he was happy with his day's work. "It has been one of our better Fridays," he said. Vettel clocked a fastest lap in one minute and 16.834 seconds, enough to keep him 0.074 seconds clear of his rivals in a tight session that saw most of the field struggling for grip.

'Without houses and walls'

Max Verstappen was second fastest ahead of his Red Bull team-mate Daniel Ricciardo, Kimi Raikkonen in the second Ferrari and Hamilton, who was fifth ahead of his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas. Romain



MOGYOROD: Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel steers his car during the qualifying session ahead of the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix at the Hungaroring circuit in Mogyorod yesterday. — AFP

Grosjean was seventh for Haas ahead of Carlos Sainz of Renault and Pierre Gasly of Toro Rosso and Esteban Ocon of Force India.

Vettel added: "Qualifying is very important here for the start as overtaking is very difficult. Whoever is ahead after the first couple of corners, that will be crucial. "I was happy this afternoon, it was better than the morning and we are ok for one lap. It has been one of our better Fridays." Asked how he felt following his crash last Sunday and the death of Marchionne, he added: "Probably it's good to have a race straightaway and to get my head straight and to focus on the next thing to do. It's a way to cancel it all out and forget it all properly."

Ricciardo was fastest for Red Bull in the morning session, but was frustrated by traffic in the afternoon when many drivers complained of slower cars blocking their runs. Vettel was fastest early on and was succeed-

ed by Bottas. Hamilton, Bottas again and then Verstappen before he resumed on top of the times in the closing period. Red Bull were expected to challenge at the right and twisty circuit that has been compared to Monaco "without houses and walls" but Verstappen said he anticipated a "difficult" weekend.

"The car was good," he said. "But we still lose quite a lot on the straight unfortunately. It's difficult to say at the moment. I think we can improve our car a little bit more, but if it's going to be good enough for pole position—I'm not sure." He added that Mercedes were more competitive than it appeared because their drivers—Hamilton and Bottas—had not been able to record true times. "They couldn't get a lap on the 'ultra' and they both went a bit wide or whatever so I'm expecting them to be there. "Ferrari looks quick. In the long run, Mercedes look competitive as well so it will be very close and it all depends on qualifying." — AFP

Sports

Crusaders juggernaut flattens Hurricanes to enter Super final

Defending champions charge into their 13th Super Rugby final

CHRISTCHURCH: Defending champions Canterbury Crusaders charged into their 13th Super Rugby final with a comprehensive 30-12 victory over the Wellington Hurricanes in Christchurch yesterday. The platform was set by the All Blacks-laden pack who drove relentlessly into the Hurricanes, allowing fly-half Richie Mo'unga the time and space to dictate play.

In a match billed as the final before the final, with the conference format putting the top two teams from the regular season this year on the same side of the play-off draw, the Crusaders struck early and never fell behind. The eight times champions enjoyed 54 per cent of possession, forcing the Hurricanes to make 134 tackles and miss 31 more. Their ability to launch a long-range counter from turnover ball, and to score either side of half-time, proved crucial as they built a 18-7 lead at half-time and immediately moved to 25-7 after the resumption.

Captain Sam Whitelock said the Crusaders fed off the direction given by Mo'unga and a passionate defense. "Richie's done it all year. He's pretty quick over those first couple of steps and is hard to keep up with. "And defense reveals what the team means to you and the boys worked hard for each other." Hurricanes skipper Brad Shields, playing his last game before heading off to England, said the turnover proved costly. "You've

got to build phases down the right end of the field and a couple of times we let them off the hook pretty easy and turned around and they scored pretty easy."

The four tries to two outcome saw the Crusaders protect a remarkable record of being undefeated in 20 play-off matches on home soil. Hurricanes coach Chris Boyd said before the match that the result would be determined by the forwards and that's how it turned out with the Crusaders turning on a merciless display. It gave Mo'unga the chance to outshine his more illustrious All Blacks opposite Beauden Barrett. Mo'unga finished with 15 points, starting with a try in the 15th minute after the Crusaders had hammered away at the line for several minutes.

Julian Savea leveled for the Hurricanes before the Crusaders used turnover ball to pile on 11 points in the countdown to the break with a try to George Bridge and two Mo'unga penalties. It was a familiar pattern at the start of the second half when the Hurricanes lost the ball when pressuring the Crusaders line and the immediate counter attack ended with a try to David Havili more than 80 meters downfield. It was turnover ball again which saw a Mo'unga crossfield kick produce a try to Braydon Ennor. The Hurricanes bagged their second try in the final play of the day when left wing Ben Lam crossed for his record 16th try this year.—AFP



CHRISTCHURCH: Crusaders' Scott Barrett (center) is tackled by Hurricanes' captain Brad Shields (left) and Gareth Evans (2nd right) during the Super Rugby semi-final match between New Zealand's Canterbury Crusaders and Wellington Hurricanes yesterday. — AFP

Ramos 'ruthless and brutal' in Champions League final: Klopp

LONDON: Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp has slammed Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos for his foul on Mohamed Salah in May's Champions League final, saying the Spanish defender brought down the forward like a wrestler. Salah had a remarkable first season with Liverpool, scoring 44 goals in all competitions and helped the club reach the Champions League final against the Spanish giants. The Egyptian talisman went down under a challenge from Ramos inside the first half an hour of the match and suffered shoulder ligament damage which forced him off the pitch. "We are opening that bottle again?" Klopp asked in a news conference ahead of Liverpool's International Champions Cup game against Manchester United at the Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor.

"It is action-reaction-action-reaction and I don't like that but - if you watch it back and you are not with Real Madrid - then you think it is ruthless and brutal. "I saw the ref taking charge of big games at the World Cup and nobody really thinks about that later. But in a situation like that somebody needs to judge it better. "If VAR is coming then it is a situation where you have to look again. Not to give a red card but to look again and say: 'What is that?' It was ruthless."

Salah left the pitch in tears in Kiev with huge questions hanging over his participation at the World Cup in Russia. Liverpool goalkeeper Loris Karius, who it later emerged had suffered a concussion during the match, made couple of blunders to concede two goals against Madrid who won 3-1. Karius clashed with Ramos early in the second half and was seen holding



Sergio Ramos

the side of his head after the collision, which came before he made the mistakes that led to the goals. Ramos later brushed off allegations that he had deliberately injured Salah, saying he was being unfairly painted as a pantomime villain.

"I'm not sure it is an experience we will have again - go there and put an elbow to the goalkeeper, put their goalscorer down like a wrestler in midfield and then you win the game. That was the story of the

game," Klopp said. "Ramos said a lot of things afterwards that I didn't like. As a person I didn't like the reactions of him. He was like: 'Whatever, what do they want? It's normal'. "No, it is not normal. If you put all of the situations of Ramos together then you will see a lot of situations with Ramos ... It is like we, the world out there, accepts that you use each weapon to win the game. People probably expect that I am the same. I am not." — Reuters

Bremen snap up Everton misfit for reported club record

BERLIN: Werder Bremen have signed Everton misfit Davy Klaassen after paying a reported club record of 14 million euros (\$16.3m) for the Netherlands international, it was confirmed on Friday. The midfielder has quit Goodison Park having failed to make an impact in the 12 months since Everton paid Ajax £24.30m (27.3m euros) for him and Bremen have reportedly given Klaassen a four-year deal.

Having made just 16 appearances in total, and only three Premier League starts for Everton last season, Klaassen now hopes to kick start his career in the Bundesliga with Werder. The Dutch international will replace Danish midfielder Thomas Delaney who left Bremen for Borussia Dortmund last month in a deal reportedly worth 20 million euros.

Klaassen is expected to be a like-for-like replacement at Bremen for Delaney, who scored three goals in 32 league games last season. Having been told by new Everton boss Marco Silva there was no place for him in his plans, Klaassen believes he has found a suitable home with the Bundesliga club. "It was important to me to know exactly where the journey was going on the pitch and the ambitions of the club have convinced me," he told the Werder website.

"After my exchange with (Bremen coach) Florian Kohfeldt I have a very good feeling that I can make an important contribution here with my abilities. "I want to prove that I can make a big impact here. "The head coach wants to play a very open and attacking style of football and I am really excited about that." Bremen coach Kohfeldt headed up a delegation of Werder officials who flew to England earlier this week to convince Klaassen to come to north Germany. "We made our club goals very clear to him: what we want to achieve, how we want to play and what a special club Werder is," the Bremen boss told magazine Kicker.

"With him we brought the exact player we wanted to Bremen. "We have been watching him for a long time and are



Davy Klaassen

glad that this opportunity has opened up. "With his strategic sense, Davy is able to set a rhythm for the game, impresses with his creativity and is strong and aggressive at the same time.

"He will be a strong part of our game." Bremen, who finished 11th in Germany's top flight last season, start their 2018/19 Bundesliga campaign at home to Hanover 96 on August 25.—AFP

Barcelona under fire as men team fly business class, women relegated

BARCELONA: Barcelona's first mixed-sex tour was overshadowed by controversy after it emerged that the men's football team flew in business class to the United States while the women's team was relegated to the back of the plane in economy. The Spanish giants posted photos and videos of the two teams boarding the Portland-bound plane together but photos posted by the female players online showed they were flying in economy, sparking an outcry on social media after this was noticed by supporters of the women's team. "There was one photo of the team captains in business class before the men took their seats in business class and the women returned to their economy seats," wrote one much discussed fan-run account which tweeted extensively about the topic, @BarcaWomen.

"If any of the women were in Business Class, then we certainly didn't see them. If FC Barcelona is going to say that they are about Equality, then the actions must be there to back it up." But Alexia Putellas of the women's team said the teams flew in separate sections of the plane because the female squad had been added to the tour at a late stage after the club had already chartered its flight and all the business seats had already been assigned to the men. "The club made an effort to organize everything practically at the last minute... I wish we would always travel like this, in these conditions," she told reporters in Portland after the team's first training session.

Sports daily Marca reported that there were only 36 spaces at the front of the plane and each female player was booked three seats for comfort. "A controversy was generated without taking into account everything that we do. The club hired a chartered plane, but at the beginning it was not anticipated that the female team would be on the tour. It's a logistics problem," Barcelona vice president Josep Vives said in a statement. Maria Teixidor, director of the women's team, defended the club from what she said was unfair criticism.

"To all of you who these days decided to criticize the conditions of the women's team's trip, I say that Barca asked its female players to travel with its male players so that in the future they can travel in business class on their own plane," she wrote in a letter on Barcelona's official website. "That will be the day that we can talk about equality because women's sport will have the same media coverage, sponsorship deals and fan interest as men's sport." The women's team will return to Spain on July 29 - this time in business class, according to the club. The men's team will stay in the United States until August 4, where they will play friendlies against Tottenham, Roma and Milan.—AFP

Rockets, Capela reportedly reach \$90m deal

The standoff between the Houston Rockets and restricted free agent center Clint Capela appears over, as Capela signed a five-year, \$90 million contract with the club, ESPN reported Friday.

As a restricted free agent, Capela could have signed the team's \$4.3 million qualifying offer and reached free

agency in July 2019. But he had not yet signed it, instead holding out hopes for a deal in the \$100 million range, putting him on par with Thunder big man Steven Adams (four years, \$100 million) and Jazz eraser Rudy Gobert (four years, \$102 million).

Capela is a strong defensive presence, and keeping him was essential for the Rockets, who already lost wings Trevor Ariza and Luc Mbah a Moute to free agency. The 6-foot-10 Capela, the No. 25 overall pick in the 2014 NBA Draft, averaged 13.9 points, 10.8 rebounds and 1.9 blocks per game in 74 games last season.

New York Knicks coach David Fizdale traveled to All-Star forward Kristaps Porzingis' native Latvia to get to know his franchise player and to see how his rehab from

major knee surgery is progressing. Porzingis tore the ACL in his left knee on Feb. 6 and isn't expected back until December.

"We've talked about his rehab. We've talked about how we want to play, our style of play. Talked a lot about the culture that we're building," the new Knicks coach told Latvian television network LSM. "We wanna make sure that he comes back strong and healthy and we don't want to rush it. We've had some really good conversations." The 7-foot-3 Porzingis, who turns 23 on Thursday, also is eligible for a five-year, \$157 million contract extension. Talks haven't progressed and may not until after Porzingis has recovered from the ACL tear.

Once again, Devin Harris is a Dallas Maverick. Yahoo

Sports reported that the veteran point guard, 35, agreed to a one-year, veteran minimum deal with the club.

Harris, 35, was traded from Dallas to the Denver Nuggets in February, but the team is bringing him back after losing Yogi Ferrell in free agency. The fifth overall pick in the 2004 NBA Draft, Harris was traded on draft night to Dallas, where he spent the first four years of his career. He was traded to the New Jersey Nets in 2008, but returned to Dallas in 2013 as a free agent.

California native Paul George explained to USA Today Sports why he never even bothered to meet with Lakers president Magic Johnson and instead re-signed with the Oklahoma City Thunder.—Field Level Media

25 Betts finishes off Twins in 10th as Devers gets Red Sox even

26 Isner turns tables on Zverev to reach Atlanta semi finals

27 Crusaders juggernaut flattens Hurricanes to enter Super final



Race-row Ozil fires Arsenal to a big win

In Germany, Ozil racism row sparks #MeTwo debate



SINGAPORE: Arsenal's Mesut Ozil (left) controls the ball in front of Paris Saint-Germain's Antoine Bernede during the International Champions Cup football match between Arsenal and Paris Saint-Germain in Singapore yesterday.—AFP

SINGAPORE: Mesut Ozil fired Arsenal to a 5-1 friendly win over Paris Saint-Germain yesterday as he cast aside a turbulent week after quitting Germany's national team claiming racism. Ozil put Arsenal ahead in the 13th minute before Alexandre Lacazette's quickfire double and late strikes from Rob Holding and Eddie Nketiah against a youthful PSG side. The International Champions Cup win in Singapore was also a boost for Arsenal's new manager Unai Emery against his former club, now under Germany's Thomas Tuchel.

Ozil, named as captain after his torrid week, was quickly into his stride with midfield partner Henrikh Mkhitaryan against a PSG line-up shorn of its World Cup stars. He opened the scoring with a tap-in at the far post after Mkhitaryan released Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang in space and the Gabonese forward passed back across the face. Ozil's exquisite flick during a length-of-the-pitch move nearly produced Arsenal's second but Gianluigi Buffon saved well from Nigeria's Alex Iwobi. The Italian great also denied Aubameyang and Mkhitaryan, while at the other end teenager Timothy Weah twice went close and Christopher Nkunku curled one over.

After the break, an Nkunku free kick drew a flying save from Arsenal substitute Emiliano Martinez, before Weah went down for a 59th-minute penalty which Nkunku converted with aplomb. But Lacazette hit back with two goals in four minutes—first a sumptuous, near-post heel-flick which sailed past the nonplussed Buffon, and then a close-range header. Substitute defender Holding added the fourth with a towering header on 87 minutes, before Nketiah swept home Arsenal's fifth with the last kick of the game. Ozil, who is of Turkish heritage, sent shockwaves through Germany this week when he quit the national team complaining of "racism and disrespect" from football authorities.

#MeTwo debate

Meanwhile, thousands of people in Germany with migrant backgrounds are sharing stories of everyday discrimination under the hashtag #MeTwo, inspired by football star Mesut Ozil's resignation from Germany's national team over racism. "When I'm the only non-white person in a crowded train and the police gets in, I'm the only one who is asked to show ID," tweeted Der Spiegel reporter Hasnain Kazim, as the discussion trended on German

Twitter Friday.

The campaign was launched earlier this week by Turkish-origin author and rights activist Ali Can, who dubbed it #MeTwo - a play on the #MeToo movement that highlights women's experiences of sexual harassment, and a comment by Ozil about having "two hearts". Ozil dropped a bombshell on Sunday when he announced in a stinging letter that he would no longer play for Germany after he faced racist abuse for posing for a picture alongside Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"I have two hearts, one German and one Turkish," wrote Ozil, who accused the German Football Federation (DFB) of failing to stand up for him after critics questioned his patriotism and singled him out for blame after Germany's World Cup flop. The controversy has prompted heated debate in German media about racism and integration. "We need a #MeToo debate for people with a migrant background," Can, who has lived in Germany since he was a toddler, said in a video posted online on Tuesday.

"I am more than just one identity. I feel at home in Germany... at the same I can feel connected to another country," he said.

"The two sides blend together, one doesn't exclude the other." The #MeTwo hashtag quickly went viral as thousands posted about their run-ins with prejudice and racism in Germany. "You're well integrated for a Turk" and "Don't you wear a headscarf?" were cited as "classic examples" of remarks endured by Twitter user Hatdische Indsche. Many also complained about discrimination from landlords in the search for a flat or house, because of their skin color or foreign-sounding names.

"When you can't get an answer, but your German girlfriend gets instant replies to the same offer. After we got married and she changed her name, she stopped getting answers too," wrote Twitter user Oguz Yilmaz. Malcolm Oscar Uzoma Odeh-Ohanwe, who tweets as MalcolmMusic, recounted being called "a monkey" at high school years ago when he was a dread-locked teenager. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas praised the campaign, saying it was "impressive and painful" to see how many stories were flooding in. "If you think racism in Germany is no longer a problem, I recommend reading through all the #MeTwo tweets," he tweeted. "Let us raise our voice with them: against racism, anytime, anywhere."—Agencies

Thomas virtually secures Tour de France title

ESPELETTE: Britain's Geraint Thomas virtually secured his maiden Tour de France triumph after finishing third in the penultimate stage time trial in the Basque country yesterday. Thomas, of Team Sky, held a 2min 05sec overnight lead on Dutch rival Tom Dumoulin (Sunweb) ahead of the 31km race against the clock from Saint-Pee-Sur-Nivelle to Espelette. Dumoulin is the world time trial champion, and he stayed true to form by powering over the technical course in a time of 40 min 50sec to leave Thomas 14secs in arrears.

But it was only enough to secure his virtual runner-up place in the race, Dumoulin's second in a Grand Tour this

year after he finished runner-up to Chris Froome at the Giro d'Italia in May. Froome, the defending and four-time Tour de France champion, produced the second best performance of the day, finishing just one second behind Dumoulin to move back up to third place overall. Froome had been pushed down to fourth, and off the podium, when Primoz Roglic's attack and consequent stage win in the final day in the mountains Friday left the Kenyan-born Briton struggling.

But Slovenian Roglic, of Lotto-Jumbo, failed to follow up his feat on the time trial. He finished seventh at 1:12 behind Dumoulin. Thomas, who has helped Froome win several of his six Grand Tour titles, celebrated at the end of the stage by jumping into the arms of his wife. Barring catastrophe today, when the peloton rides from Houilles to Paris in festive spirit before the sprinters take over for a battle on the Champs Elysees, Thomas will win Team Sky's sixth yellow jersey from the last seven editions of the race. Bradley Wiggins won their first, in 2012, while Froome won the race in 2013 and 2015-2017.—AFP



ESPELETTE: Great Britain's Geraint Thomas, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, rides during the 20th stage of the 105th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, a 31-kilometer individual time-trial between Saint-Pee-sur-Nivelle and Espelette, southwestern France yesterday.—AFP