



2 Kuwait: Minor accidents to be settled by reconciliation



19 The beat is fading for Ramadan drummers



27 Peru gets out of jail to win the 'World Cup of prisons'



رمضان
Ramadan

IMSAK	03:05
FAJR	03:14
DHUHR	11:46
ASR	15:21
MAGHRIB	18:44
ISHA	20:15

US vetoes UN draft resolution on 'protecting' Palestinian civilians

Kuwait-drafted text calls for 'measures to guarantee safety'

Ministers overpower MPs 2-0



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim dribbles some Cabinet ministers during an annual Ramadan sporting event yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: In an annual Ramadan sporting event, the government team (Kuwait ministers) beat the National Assembly team (Kuwait lawmakers) 2-0 in an indoor soccer match yesterday as part of the 39th Al-Roudhan Ramadan Tournament. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim led the team in the encounter - sponsored by His

Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The first half ended goalless, but the game was tensed up during the second half, with Minister of Commerce Khaled Al-Roudhan scoring twice. "The government has won after years of difficulty ...," Al-Ghanim said in his remarks following the game. "The game was a

chance to show that there are no differences between the Assembly and the government. And if there are any, they are for service of the homeland," Al-Roudhan said. The indoor soccer event is an annual tradition that sees ministers and lawmakers setting aside an evening to compete in sport, not politics, during the holy month of Ramadan. — Agencies



JERUSALEM: A Palestinian girl takes a selfie outside the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque compound during Muslim holy month of Ramadan. — AFP

UNITED NATIONS: The United States vetoed Friday an Arab-backed UN draft resolution calling for measures to protect the Palestinians but failed to win any backing for its own text condemning Hamas for the violence in Gaza. The two failed votes at the Security Council came a few hours after a young Palestinian woman was shot dead by Israeli soldiers near the Gaza border fence. At least 123 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since the protests began at the end of March. No Israelis have been killed.

US Ambassador Nikki Haley declared that "it is now completely clear that the

UN is hopelessly biased against Israel," saying council members were "willing to blame Israel, but unwilling to blame Hamas." Ten countries, including China, France and Russia voted in favor of the draft put forward by Kuwait on behalf of Arab countries. Four countries - Britain, Ethiopia, the Netherlands and Poland - abstained. Kuwait's Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said the US veto "will increase the sense of despair among the Palestinians," fuel further violence and "feed the sentiments of hatred and extremism."

Continued on Page 24

Ramadan Kareem

Levels of fasting

By Hassan Twaha Bwambale

The word Ramadan comes from the Arabic root word 'Al-Ramadh,' which means excessive heat. It also means burning sins. Abdullah bin Umar (RA) said, "Indeed Ramadan was named so because sins are burnt in it." (Imam IbnAsaakir). This year, Ramadan has occurred just before the summer solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. Out of Allah's mercy and grace, Ramadan cycles throughout all seasons in 33 years or so.

We are all well aware of the concept of fasting and what it means to fast during the month of Ramadan. What many people don't know is that there are actually three levels of fasting. Below we will discuss those levels in detail. Fasting, as we all know, is an integral component of Islam and among the pillars of Islam (acts that characterize a Muslim). There are three levels of fasting - they are:

(A) The fast of the masses, which entails abandoning food, drinks and satisfying one's carnal desires during the daylight hours. Allah (SWT) says in Al-Hadeeth Al-Qudsi describing the situation of a fasting person: "... he abandons his food, drinks and enjoying his conjugal rites because of Me. Therefore, fasting is for Me and I am the one to determine the nature and amount of rewards for a fasting person." The majority of the Muslims fall under this category. Our long-sought goal should be to keep Allah (SWT) in our minds all the time with the realization that He watches over us all the time. The ordinary fast is the most basic level of fasting and pertains to controlling the desires of the stomach and other bodily needs. This is the minimum requirement for fasting to be considered successful.

(B) The fast of special people entails not only abstaining from sensual pleasures, but also includes keeping one's eyes, tongue, hands, feet, the senses of hearing and seeing, as well as other parts of the body away from committing sins. Abu Huraira narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Whoever doesn't abandon false speech or acting upon it, there is no need for him to abstain from food and drinks." (Imam Al-Bukhari 1903).

In this Hadith, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) informs us that real fasting is to abstain from sins as much as possible. You can't claim you are fasting yet

Continued on Page 24

Egypt President Sisi sworn in for 2nd 4-year term

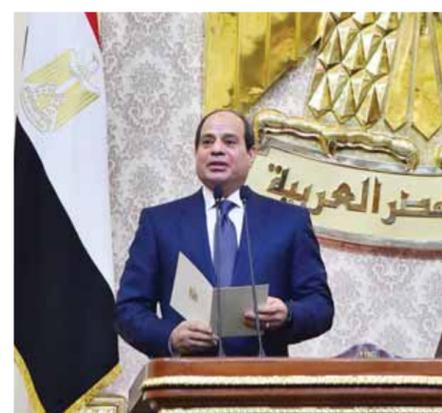
CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi vowed to tackle jihadists and revive the economy as he was sworn in yesterday for a second four-year term after a wave of arrests. Sisi took the presidential oath before a packed parliament after winning 97 percent of valid votes in March's presidential election. Fighter jets drew an Egyptian flag in the sky above Cairo and military helicopters flew over the city centre as the president made his way to parliament, where he was greeted with a 21-gun salute.

"Together we face economic, social and political challenges and their negative effects on all aspects of life," he said. Speaking at a ceremony that followed a series of arrests targeting civil society critics and opponents, Sisi called for "consensus" and unity. "Only those who have opted for violence, terrorism and extremism will be excluded from common spaces," he

said. Sisi has regularly been accused by human rights defenders of violating public freedoms and silencing opponents.

Two of those arrested in recent months are Wael Abbas, a blogger and journalist, and Shadi Ghazali Harb, a youth leader during the 2011 revolution that toppled longtime dictator Hosni Mubarak. Before addressing public officials and religious authorities, the president led a minute's silence for the Egyptians who had died "for the country". Egypt has been hit by a series of deadly militant attacks in recent years. Jihadists have killed hundreds of soldiers, policemen and civilians, mainly in the northern Sinai peninsula but also elsewhere in Egypt. "Together we fought brutal terrorism that sought to undermine the unity of our homeland," he said.

Seven years after the January 2011 uprising, Sisi will face two major challenges in his second term: security and economic recovery. Since February 9, the army has been conducting a vast military campaign to "cleanse" the country of terrorists. The fighting has so far killed at least 200 jihadists and 35 soldiers, according to official figures. Since taking office, Sisi has enacted a series of reforms aimed at stabilising an economy hit by security threats and runaway inflation. — AFP



CAIRO: Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi gives a speech during his swearing in ceremony for a second four-year term in office, at the parliament meeting hall in Cairo yesterday. — AFP

Saudi King reshuffles Cabinet with eye on culture and religion

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia announced another Cabinet reshuffle yesterday with a heavy focus on culture and religion, as the kingdom undergoes a major image overhaul. This is the second significant government change since the appointment of Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, son of the king, as heir to the region's most powerful throne. The Crown Prince serves as deputy prime minister under his father, King Salman.

State news agency SPA announced King Salman had replaced the country's Labor and Islamic Affairs ministers-and named a prince linked to the purchase of a Leonardo da Vinci painting of Jesus as Culture Minister. Saudi Arabia for decades has combined its culture and information ministries. The decree announced the culture ministry was now a separate entity under Prince Badr bin Abdullah, the man named by the New York Times as the mystery buyer of Da Vinci's "Salvator Mundi" for a record-breaking \$450 million at auction last year.

The Wall Street Journal later reported that he was acting on behalf of Prince Mohammed. The Louvre Abu Dhabi has said the religious painting was "acquired" by the Emirati authorities and would be put on display there. Non-Muslim worship is banned in Saudi Arabia, but the kingdom has hosted high-ranking Christian clerics in recent months, notably from Lebanon and France. In April, the Vatican signed a memorandum for a meeting with Saudi officials every three years.

Ahmed bin Suleiman Al-Rajhi, an engineer and private sector businessman, was yesterday named Labor and Social Development minister.

Sheikh Abdulatif bin Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh was named the new Islamic Affairs minister. Prince Mohammed, who has steadily consolidated his grip on power has spearheaded a string of policy changes in ultraconservative Saudi Arabia, including reinstating cinemas and allowing women to drive.

Often referred to by his initials, MBS, the prince pledged a "moderate, open" Saudi Arabia in a televised keynote speech in October, telling international investors his country wanted "to live a normal life." Saudi Arabia has been dominated by a harsh strain of conservative Islam since the 1979 seizure of the Grand Mosque of Makkah by around 400 extremists, a reaction against

Continued on Page 24

Palestinian Ambassador hails Kuwait's efforts

KUWAIT: The Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub highly commended Kuwait's efforts as a representative of the Arab nations in the UN Security Council, noting that Kuwait managed to block a US resolution in favor of Israel.



Rami Tahboub

"This proves that Kuwait's voice is high against the injustice practiced against our people," he stressed, adding that Kuwait works on having the international community shoulder its responsibilities and avoid treating the Palestinian people's peaceful fight for freedom equally with the Israeli occupation's practices against an unarmed people.

Local

Health minister cancels tenders worth KD 10 million

Ministry to introduce electronic price control system



By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr. Basel Al-Sabah canceled tenders worth KD 10 million after an intensive review showed some malpractices. The minister had issued a ministerial resolution to review all tenders, practices and direct orders made to provide ministry facilities with various needs, said informed sources. The process resulted in discovering that some tenders can be substituted, while some had been approved for three years without signing any contracts, the sources said. Following the review,

the minister gave orders to cancel a number of tenders of a total value of over KD 10 million, the sources added.

Price control

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan announced that the ministry is currently working on building a new system to electronically monitor prices and provide consumers with the prices of over 500 items sold at various outlets on a weekly basis. He added that the new system will allow consumers compare prices at various outlets. Responding to an

inquiry by MP Riyadh Al-Adasani, Roudhan stressed that this system will create competitiveness amongst various outlets and lead to reducing prices by holding promotional offers for consumers' benefit.

Roudhan said 63 stores had been closed for violating MoCI laws and regulations. He noted that the ministry inspects various co-ops and department stores using 30 inspection teams. In addition, Roudhan said that the ministry monitors all Ramadan promotional offers and sales and that its inspectors work 24/7 to control prices.

Election law

Head of the parliamentary interior and defense committee MP Askar Al-Enezi affirmed the committee's keenness on preparing a report requested by the parliament about proposals made to amend the election law and rename electoral constituencies before the next parliamentary term commences. Enezi added that the committee will listen to and study all proposals before issuing its final report, so that the new law distributes constituencies fairly and selects a suitable voting system representing all sects.

local spotlight

WHO in Kuwait soon



By Muna Al-Fuzal

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The health ministry in Kuwait has begun official procedures for the opening of an office of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Kuwait in the next few weeks. This office will take decisions recommended by WHO that match the policies of the health ministry. This is good news for those who are concerned about public health in Kuwait.

I believe such an office in Kuwait will support health security, which is no less important than food or social security. Protecting the lives of people is important, especially since we are an open, mixed and young society with the possibility of the entry and exit of many people who may carry illnesses or diseases that might be contagious or dangerous, along with the prevalence of obesity. All these issues require an office here of the WHO.

I trust the presence of a WHO office will play a key role in following up these matters closely and prepare research to help in protecting Kuwait's health in the short and long term. For example, Ministry of Health (MoH) Undersecretary Dr. Mustafa Redha told Kuwait News Agency on Thursday that the ministry has taken all precautionary and urgent health measures to prevent the arrival of the Nipah virus from India to the country after it was detected in the southern state of Kerala. He added that the ministry is keen to prevent this virus from reaching Kuwait through coordination and communication with WHO specialists.

He said Nipah may cause severe illness in both animals and humans, and that the symptoms of the disease appear similar to the symptoms of influenza, such as high body temperature and headaches, and that the main treatment for the prevention of the disease lies in reducing the risk of transmission and intensive health-care. The MoH is coordinating with the interior ministry and the General Authority for Food and Nutrition to prevent the arrival of the virus to Kuwait.

At the same time, a health official in India said on Thursday that two fatal cases of Nipah were confirmed in Kerala. In Kuwait, we have people coming and going from Kerala daily, and some of them are new laborers. Do they get checked on arrival at the airport or should we wait until all medical exams are done and then get to know if they are infected or sick? This I believe is an important issue now. I have no answer for it. But, I think an office of WHO can support and lead MoH on how to handle such cases when they appear.

Another example is the issue of obesity in Kuwait. It terrifies me when I see obese kids and teenagers with no effort by anyone to help them think twice about the impact of all this fat on their health. I don't see actual parental or societal or school efforts in this regard.

In 2017, the dean of the Faculty of Public Health at the Medical Sciences Center at Kuwait University revealed some key info that we need to work on in a symposium titled "Obesity - the first enemy of public health in Kuwait" on the occasion of World Obesity Day. He said that the rates of obesity in Kuwait have reached frightening levels in adults and children alike according to statistics, and represent a real danger to the health of individuals and can cause chronic diseases that lead to death. He noted the importance of launching programs of action to end the phenomenon of obesity in the next 10 years to avoid the dangers facing the next generation.

I think he is absolutely right to make this call. He stressed the importance of awareness and communication to resolve this health problem through the development of regulatory and legal measures for the food market that contains products with high levels of saturated fat, salts and sugars, and called on parents, schools and decision makers to promote the eating of healthy foods through an early childhood diet, in addition to promoting physical activity. According to WHO, at least 2.8 million people die each year worldwide as a result of being overweight or obese.

These are two examples of urgent issues. I wish the health ministry speeds up the procedures of the office to raise awareness among the population and support the work of procedural research to change this rapid trend towards obesity - especially childhood obesity - and its integration in school curricula and environments to evaluate the situation. It should also learn how to deal with diseases and viruses from abroad, especially with new workers who may spend a long time here until the end of all medical checks. I personally wish to see MoH ban all outdoor advertisements for fast food, because it causes damage on the national level rather than boost sales among kids and teenagers.

Minor accidents settled inside police stations

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's relations and security media department announced that starting today - Sunday, June 3 - articles 2/41 and 5/41 of the traffic law and its amendments pertaining dealing with minor traffic accidents in police stations will be put into practice

to save time and effort. The department added that these accidents will be settled inside police stations by reconciliation.

According to the new measure, drivers involved in minor accidents will only have to photograph their vehicles and immediately move them to avoid blocking traffic and head to the nearest police station without having to wait for a police patrol to respond, the ministry's investigations manager Maj Gen Fahd Al-Doussary stressed.

"Drivers involved in minor accidents will be fined according to article 133 if they do not remove their vehicles," he warned, noting that this measure aims at resolving the problem of traffic congestions resulting from minor accidents. This measure will initially start from the Capital governorate before being gradually implemented in other governorates.



KUWAIT: The Archeology and Museums Department at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) organized a workshop recently on recording relics in excavation sites.

Kuwait member of WHO medicine safety group

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti Health administrator confirmed Kuwait as a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) medicine safety group.

This came after the Ministry's latest achievement in developing its capabilities in monitoring and detecting low quality and counterfeit medicine to prevent any pharmaceutical accidents.

Kuwait as a member of this program will help further develop the health sector, the assistant undersecretary for pharmaceutical and food control of the Health Ministry, Dr. Abdullah Al-Bader, said yesterday. He added, becoming a member of the medicine safety group will help Kuwait keep up with the high standard of health services the more developed countries have to offer, to prevent pharmaceutical accidents by addressing the problem of pharmaceutical drugs and activating a reporting process to inform the people about side effects. —KUNA

PAAET to look into recommendations

KUWAIT: Following the parliament's approval of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training's (PAAET) final statement for the fiscal year 2016-2017, PAAET Director Dr. Ali Fahad Al-Mudhaf stressed that the authority intends to look into all recommendations made by the parliament's budgets and final statements committee and take them into full consideration to avoid mistakes in the future.



Dr. Ali Fahad Al-Mudhaf

In my view

Sixth anniversary of my mother's passing



By Abdullah Bowair

Local@kuwaittimes.net

It has been almost six years since my beloved mother passed away. The seventh anniversary of her death will fall on Nov 15, 2018. Bringing this up is so painful to me. I still remember the day when she died. I will never forget when I took her to Rumaithiya polyclinic, where she passed away.

Aside from high blood pressure and diabetes that are dominant among many citizens and expats, my mother had no medical complaints. There, on that day, my mother was changing the dressing on her toes. She was completely relaxed knowing that it was going to be the last dressing change. Suddenly, she screamed and stopped talking, and liquid dribbled out of her mouth.

I have no idea what happened. Did the polyclinic doctors fail to conduct first aid procedures? A doctor entered the dressing room to check on her and said her pulse was very weak. They called an ambulance, which we followed in panic to Mubarak Hospital, where three ICU doctors failed to revive my mother's heart. Did they do their best to save the patient?

I hear a lot about influential people who always get great special treatment everywhere. Destiny is not accepted for those people, for whom doctors usually spare no efforts until the patient is saved, which I believe never happened with my mother.

Violations detected at Mangaf Co-op

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's inspectors and auditors detected some serious financial and administrative violations at Mangaf Co-op Society, assistant undersecretary for the cooperation sector affairs Abdulaziz Shuaib said. A report was filed at the police station and the individuals involved were detained pending referral to the public prosecution. Shuaib added that the suspected co-op employees include the supermarket's manager who had been recently appointed after his predecessor and some other employees were dismissed, adding that violators include a supply company engaged in illegal transactions with the co-op. Shuaib added that 20 employees who had been dismissed will be reappointed and that a full inspection team will be sent to further examine the co-op's documents.

ACK, NBK sign cooperation agreement

KUWAIT: The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) has signed a Cooperation Agreement with the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK). This significant agreement will enhance cooperation between the two parties and is in line with ACK's core value to enable human potential within a culture of care.

The agreement will benefit ACK students and offer them well-rounded internship programs provided by

NBK to not only gain valued workplace experience but also develop their personal skills. Both parties have agreed to support the students and this mutual cooperation will elevate the potential of ACK students and prepare them for the labor market. Representing ACK, the agreement was signed by Engineer Sager Al-Sharhan - Deputy Managing Partner - Industry and on NBK's behalf, Mohammed Al-Othman,

General Manager of Consumer Banking Group. ACK is about to conclude the current academic year and when students return for the fall semester in September it will mark the commencement of the 15th academic year. At ACK, we put all the efforts to produce knowledgeable, skilled and professional candidates for Kuwait's growing economy by providing experiential education and training.



Local

UNSC failure to provide int'l protection for Palestinians disheartening: Kuwait

Arab League values Kuwait's efforts to protect Palestinians

KUWAIT: The UN Security Council's failure to adopt the Kuwaiti-sponsored draft resolution, aimed at providing international protection for Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, is disheartening, said a Kuwait senior diplomat late Friday.

The vote on the draft resolution saw 10 countries, including Kuwait, China, and France, voting in favor of the draft while four nations abstained and the US using veto. A voting session on a similar US-backed resolution on the matter was held, garnering three opposing votes from Kuwait, Russia and Bolivia while 11 nations-including France, China, and the UK-abstained. The sole vote in favor of the resolution came from the US.

Delivering his speech to the Council's voting session on the Kuwaiti-backed draft, Kuwait's permanent representative to the UN headquarters in New York, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said that the failure to adopt the resolution would encourage Israel to continue its decades-long aggression against the Palestinian, which escalated in the past few months.

Through the rejection of the draft resolution, the Council was sending a message that Israel was beyond the boundaries of international law and that the people of Palestine were unworthy of basic human rights and protection, noted Ambassador Otaibi. The Kuwaiti diplomat said that despite knowing the true aggressors, the Security Council had failed to hold Israel accountable for its actions, a matter that will have grave consequences on the Palestinian people. Ambassador Otaibi thanked all those who

voted in favor of the draft resolutions; however, he urged the international community to 'wake up' and address the plight of the Palestinian people in a just and impartial manner to help protect their dignity and humanity.

Intensive efforts
Meanwhile, Arab League Secretary



Council failed to hold Israel accountable: Otaibi

General Ahmed Abul-Gheit has valued Kuwait's recent intensive efforts at the UNSC to provide an international protection for Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Kuwait submitted a draft resolution to the UNSC on May 18, in which it condemned Israel's use of force against the Palestinian people and called for a protection of civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories from the Israeli atrocities. The UNSC delayed a vote on the Kuwaiti-proposed draft resolution on June 1, and eventually failed to adopt it after the US vetoed the resolution. Abul-Gheit, in a statement yesterday, lauded the Arab Group's efforts at the UNSC in backing the Kuwaiti-sponsored resolution, and, strongly, denounced Washington's use of veto to block it.



NEW YORK: Kuwait's permanent representative to the UN headquarters in New York, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, gestures during a UN Security Council session on Friday. — KUNA

He also expressed disappointment at the UK's abstaining, along with Netherlands, Poland, and Ethiopia, from voting on the draft resolution. He also voiced his sorrow over UNSC's inability to bear its responsibilities to impose measures aimed to end Israeli escalated violations against the Palestinian people. In recent months, Israeli occupying forces killed and wounded hundreds of unarmed Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Abul-Gheit noted, adding such crimes have been widely con-

demned by the international community.

Washington's current approach in undermining any resolution aimed at stopping the bloodshed of innocent Palestinians would only lead to encouraging the Israelis to continue their hostile and oppressive actions that clearly violate international legitimacy and law, he said.

It would also diminish the chances of making the appropriate atmosphere to resume peace negotiations between the Palestinians

and Israelis, and achieve a just and comprehensive settlement for the Palestinian cause, he added.

Furthermore, Abul-Gheit affirmed the League's keenness to continue its 'firm' and 'solid' commitment to work in favor of supporting the Palestinian cause and protecting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, of which most notably establishing an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. —KUNA

Israel only country taking no heed of UN resolutions: Sabeeh

GENEVA: Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh has said that Israel is the only world country that takes no heed of the UN resolutions, of human rights, and has gone too far in oppressing the Palestinian people. Sabeeh, also Minister of State for Economic Affairs, made the statement to KUNA Friday on the sidelines of a solidarity event with the Palestinian people organized by the Arab Labor Organization (ALO) on the sidelines of the 107th International Labor Conference (ILO) in Geneva.

The minister hoped the next session of the ALO would be held in Jerusalem "as the capital of the Palestinian state after the (Israeli) occupation is defeated." Kuwait hoped that all reports by the UN organizations on Israel's violations against the Palestinians would turn into implantable resolutions on the ground. She stressed how the Director General of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Guy Ryder commended Kuwait's support to the Palestinian labor.

Meanwhile, meetings between GCC

Ministers of labor and Ryder came out with fruitful results, which will contribute to ties' development, Sabeeh said. She added that the meetings touched on the issue of job opportunities for GCC citizens at ILO bureaus in Geneva and Beirut, affirming that such possibility will allow Gulf nationals to exchange expertise within the labor domain.

Sabeeh added that the GCC group had expressed its view over the UN discussions on an international instrument for refuge and immigration, saying that the Gulf countries implemented certain set of rules when it came to immigration laws. The GCC states have signed agreements in the labor sphere with 13 nations, regulating the hiring of foreign labor in their lands, said the Kuwaiti Minister. Minister Sabeeh took part yesterday in the 107th International Labor Conference, delivering a speech on women's empowerment in the labor sphere in GCC. The ILO annual conference began on May 28 and will continue until June 8. — KUNA



GENEVA: Kuwait's Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh attends a solidarity event with the Palestinian people organized by ALO. — KUNA

MPs remarks on charity, societies taken seriously

KUWAIT: The notes made by Kuwaiti lawmakers on a number of charity and public societies monitored by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor are highly appreciated and seriously taken, a ministry official said yesterday. The ministry's power over these societies is governed by laws enacted by the National Assembly, besides bylaws and resolutions the ministry designed to protect civil society institutions and help them to play their due national role, Undersecretary Saad Al-Kharraz added in a press statement. The ministry deals with all societies on equal footing, with no interference in their internal affairs, which are controlled by their general assemblies, he noted.



Saad Al-Kharraz

Al-Kharraz said the ministry had previously formed follow-up neutral independent committees to look into the MPs notes on the societies, for ensuring sound measures. — KUNA

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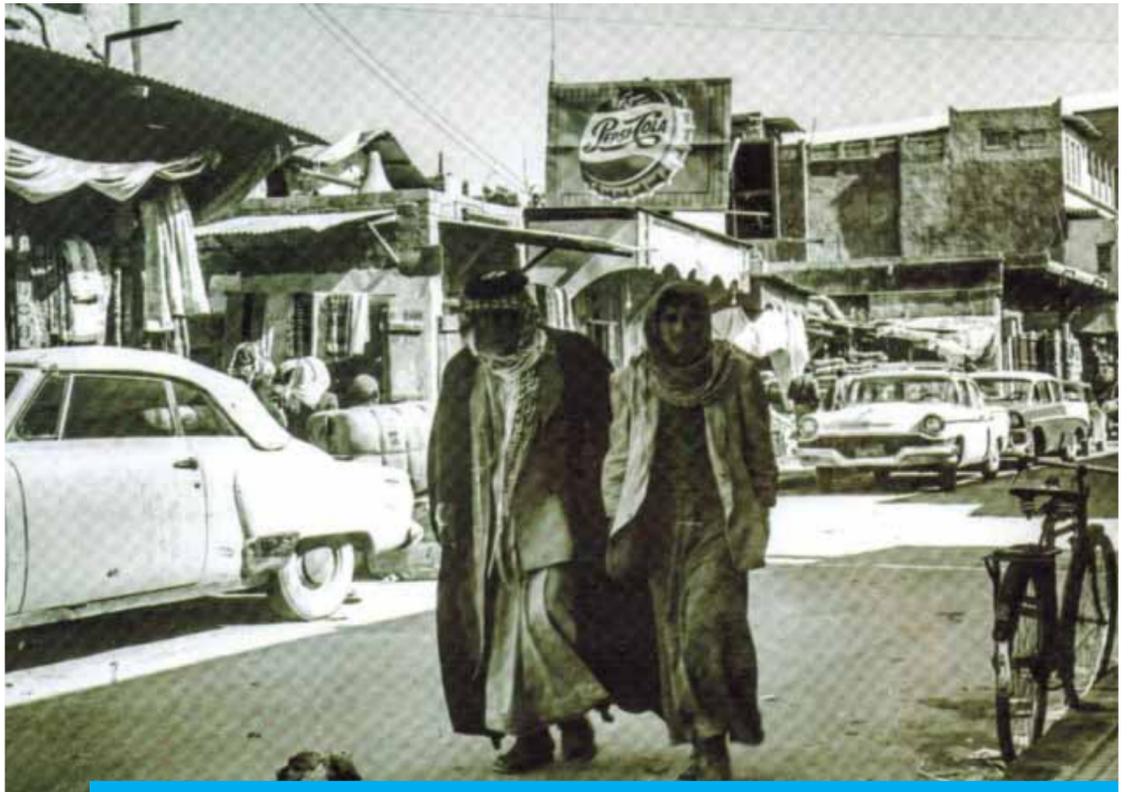
* This campaign is limited to participants in Kuwait only. Ministries and their departments, companies and NGOs cannot enter the festival.
* Kuwait Times employees, spouses and their second-degree relatives also cannot participate.

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Local



History of Kuwait



KUWAIT: This photo that dates back to the 1960s shows pedestrians in winter clothes walking in the old markets area of Kuwait City. (Source: 'Pictures of the old markets of Kuwait' by Ali Al-Rais, Center of Research and Studies on Kuwait 2017. Researched by Mohammad Zakaria Abu El Ella, heritage researcher in the Ministry of Information)

Ramadan: Month of charity and generosity

By Ben Garcia

with your favorite symbols of Ramadan and Ramadan photos.

Kuwait Times celebrates Ramadan in Kuwait with 30 days of the Icons of Ramadan. We highlight our favorite activities, events, symbols and foods that are popular during this holy month, along with Kuwait's Ramadan culture, history and traditions.

People crowd grocery stores and supermarkets before Ramadan to stockpile food in preparation for family gatherings. People also donate to less-fortunate individuals and to charity organizations as charity and generosity are an integral part of Islam. Ramadan is a month of obedience and good deeds, but also a month of giving and sharing. Grocery stores and hypermarkets come up with several sales gimmicks encouraging people to shop in their stores, and most food products are heavily discounted. Many families cook extra food to share with passersby and the needy. Email us at local@kuwaittimes.com



KIB holds special girgian celebration at The Avenues



KUWAIT: In line with its ongoing commitment to celebrating traditional Ramadan events, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) organized a one-of-a-kind girgian event at Grand Avenues, The Avenues. The event was held from 8:00 pm to 1:00 am and featured a never-before-seen experience in Kuwait where hundreds of children and visitors collected girgian sweets and candy in a completely unique way.

On this occasion, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "We are adamant on celebrating these joyous events that bring everyone together from across the entire community. KIB is more than just a bank, it's a partner in every aspect of people's lives: a 'Bank for Life'. This means we remain by your side while we celebrate girgian and uphold one our long-

standing cherished traditions."

Najia pointed out that this year's celebration comprised a full program of fun, entertaining surprises. The event featured a pool of candy where participants were tied and suspended above then lowered into the pool. The one-of-a-kind girgian event had participants collect as much candy as they can in a fun-filled way that was sure to put a smile

on everyone's face.

KIB remains committed to serving diverse segments of the local community, thereby cementing its leading position at the forefront of the Islamic banking industry. Accordingly, the bank has long supported impactful social responsibility activities and initiatives during the holy month of Ramadan.



Local



Gulf Bank hosted Ramadan ghabqa for its staff at the Millennium Hotel

Gulf Bank gives staff a distinctive Ramadan experience



Group photo of Gulf Bank family.



Tony Daher, Chief Executive Officer and Ahmed Al-Ameer, Assistant General Manager for External Communications, among the Gulf Bank staff.

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank's annual ghabqa saw staff members and senior bank executives revel in the spirit of the holy month and share the joys of Ramadan. The ghabqa was held at the Al-Taj Ballroom in the Millennium Hotel on May 30, 2018. Two MCs spearheaded a fun, festive atmosphere which captured the camaraderie other staff, who enjoyed a night of surprises, games and raffle prizes. The ghabqa was an indicator of the Bank's dedication

to its staff, the backbone of its success. Investing in its employees is a core tenet of the Bank, and events such as these are a clear example of that initiative.

After the recent success of its Ramadan video message, which featured renowned Kuwaiti actor Abdulrahman Al-Aqel playing the role of cultural icon Abu Tbaila, the ghabqa continued to touch on the messages of goodness and tradition playing a key role

in society today. The ghabqa was a truly familial event, showing the very best of what the Holy Month has to offer.

Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager of Human Resources at Gulf Bank, said on the occasion, "Every year, I look forward to the annual ghabqa, a chance for the bank's staff to relax and unwind with their colleagues in a familial atmosphere, in the spirit of the holy month of Ramadan. I would

like to thank all staff members for their involvement in tonight's gala, and I want to say that the Bank is nothing without its people, the backbone of our success. I feel like I say this every year, but the Bank has truly outdone itself this year. What a wonderful night." The evening was further enhanced by the sounds of soft oriental music. The bank's recently released Ramadan video message also played in the background.



Salma Al-Hajjaj, General Manager for Human Resources and Jennah Al-Mattar, Assistant General Manager of HR, among the Gulf Bank staff.



Gulf Bank staff.



Al-Raya company organizes ghabqa for media



By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Al-Raya, the leading operating and developing real estate company, held a Ramadan ghabqa in honor of the media at Sultan Ibrahim Restaurant in Salmiya. The event was attended by the company's senior management represented by CEO Jassim Al-Fajri, Vice President of the Investment Department Adnan Al-Salem, a number of employees from various departments and the media.

Speaking at the event, Fajri said: "Today we are delighted to meet with the Kuwaiti press who are a partners in our company's success through their support." Fajri pointed out that the company today occupies a leading position in the development and operation of interna-

tional and regional tourism properties, which have a clear impact on the advancement of this promising economic sector in the countries in which it operates, especially Saudi Arabia, where it operates a number of hotels. This makes the company the first choice for customers who are seeking comfort and flexibility while performing religious rituals, he said, adding that the company is considering a number of strategic expansions in promising markets across the world.

The ghabqa witnessed a large media presence and featured a draw on a two-person Umrah trip. "We at Al-Raya are committed to developing our services and operations in line with our customers' expectations, and we expect to achieve high growth rates at the end of the

year and in the years to come. We promise to be a trust-worthy source of high performance and quality of service," Fajri affirmed.

Al-Raya Company was founded in 1994 as a real estate and investment development company that supports the economic development witnessed by Kuwait and the region, and participates in the revitalization and development of the real estate and investment sectors through strategic development plans and effective.

The company has succeeded in achieving a leading and reliable reputation in the religious tourism and real estate sector by providing a comprehensive range of real estate and investment services and products that enrich the experience of customers and investors to meet their

aspirations. The company operates a number of hotel projects in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia including Sky Tower Hotel in Makkah and Nusk Al-Madinah Hotel.

Al-Raya has expanded its strategic services to expand its operations across a number of branches in the Middle East and Africa:

- Al-Raya United Company, a Kuwaiti-Egyptian company in the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- Al Raya United Company Branch of Saudi Arabia.
- Jaddarah Hotel's Management and Operation in Saudi Arabia.
- Al-Raya United Turkish Company, a Turkish real estate company.



International

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GAZA: Palestinian mourners carry the body of 21-years-old Razan Al-Najjar during her funeral after she was shot dead by Israeli soldiers in Khan Younis yesterday. —AFP

Israel to probe killing of Gaza nurse

Israeli soldiers shoot dead Palestinian in Hebron

JERUSALEM/GAZA: The Israeli military said yesterday it was investigating the apparent killing by its troops of a Palestinian nurse on Friday during protests along the Gaza border. Health officials and witnesses said Israeli forces shot dead 21-year-old Razan Al-Najjar, a volunteer medic, as she ran towards the border fence, east of the south Gaza city of Khan Younis, in a bid to reach a casualty. The Israeli military said Palestinian militants had attacked its troops along the border with gunfire and a grenade. In a written statement yesterday, the military said it would investigate Najjar's death.

Thousands of people attended Najjar's funeral in Gaza yesterday, including some she had treated when they were wounded at previous border protests. Her body was wrapped in a Palestinian flag and carried through the streets on a stretcher by mourners. "With our souls and blood we redeem you martyr Razan," cried mourners as the body was brought to her home for a last farewell before burial. Residents said Najjar was a popular figure at the protest sites and pictures depicting her as an angel circulated on Palestinian

social media.

Her death brought to 119 the number of Palestinians killed in weekly demonstrations launched on March 30 in the Gaza Strip, an enclave controlled by the Islamist group Hamas and long subject to grinding Israeli and Egyptian embargoes. The UN Middle East peace envoy Nickolay Mladenov said on Twitter: "Medical workers are #NotATarget!" "#Israel needs to calibrate its use of force and Hamas need to prevent incidents at the fence. Escalation only costs more lives," he added.

Condemnation
Israel has drawn international condemnation for its use of deadly force during the mass demonstrations. It says many of those killed were Hamas members and militants trying to launch attacks under cover of the protests. The Palestinians

say most of the dead and the thousands wounded were unarmed civilians against whom Israel was using excessive force. In a statement published by the Palestinian official news Agency Wafa on Friday, Health Minister Jawad Awwad condemned Najjar's killing and said it violated international law.

The Israeli military said in its statement: "The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) constantly works to draw operational lessons and reduce the number of casualties in the area of the Gaza Strip security fence. Unfortunately, the Hamas terror organization deliberately and methodically places civilians in danger." The protests, dubbed the "Great March of Return"



Thousands of people attend Najjar's funeral

have seen thousands gather to demand the right of return to their families' lost homes or lands, now in Israel. Israel rules that out, concerned it would lose its

Jewish majority. Two-thirds of the two million Palestinians in Gaza are war refugees or their descendants.

Separately, Palestinian man who tried to hit Israeli soldiers with a small tractor in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron was shot dead, the army said. "The 35-year-old terrorist from Beit Umbar, northwest of Hebron, attempted to run over an (Israeli military) officer and soldier with a small Bobcat tractor," the army said, correcting an earlier statement saying the alleged assailant was driving a car. The troops ordered the driver to halt, but "the terrorist turned around and continued driving with the intention to attack nearby civilians," it said in a statement.

A soldier on a nearby roof who saw what was happening then "fired at the terrorist, who was killed," it said. Neither the Israeli army nor Palestinian officials published the alleged attacker's name. Hebron, in the southern West Bank, is the only Palestinian city in the territory containing a Jewish community, comprising several hundred Israeli settlers under heavy military guard among some 200,000 Palestinians. —Agencies

Summit back on, Trump says after meeting Kim envoy

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said Friday he will meet North Korea's Kim Jong Un as originally scheduled on June 12 for a historic summit after extraordinary Oval Office talks with a top envoy from Pyongyang. After more than an hour of discussion with Kim Yong Chol, Trump told reporters that denuclearization - and a formal end to the decades-old Korean war - would be on the table in Singapore. But the US president warned he did not expect to immediately sign a deal to bring a halt to the reclusive regime's nuclear program. "I never said it goes in one meeting. I think it's going to be a process, but the relationships are building and that's very positive," he said, after waving farewell to the North Korean leader's right-hand man.

Ending the war

The Korean War has been largely frozen since an armistice ended hostilities, but not the underlying conflict, in 1953. Since then, there have been occasional clashes on the divided peninsula. "We talked about ending the war," Trump said. "Historically it's very important, but we'll see. We did discuss that, the ending of the Korean War. Can you believe we're talking about the ending of the Korean War?" Washington is determined that Kim should agree to what US officials call the "complete, verifiable and irreversible" end of North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs.

Kim says he is committed to "denuclearization" in some form, but he is expected to demand security guarantees in return. Most expert observers are skeptical of a rapid breakthrough, and Trump admitted it would be a long and difficult process. "We're not going to go in and sign something on June 12. We never were. I told him today, 'Take your time,'" he said, adding nevertheless that he expects "a really positive result in the end."

Kim Yong Chol, the most senior North Korean to visit the United States in 18 years, spent almost 90 minutes



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump poses for photographs with North Korea's Kim Jong Chol at the White House on Friday. —AFP

in the Oval Office. Afterwards, Trump and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo walked the North's delegation to their cars, smiling and shaking hands in front of the media before the motorcade pulled away.

Security guarantees

Meanwhile, discussions between US and North Korean officials continued in Singapore and in the Demilitarized Zone dividing the Korean peninsula. On Thursday, Kim Jong Un told Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that his commitment to denuclearization remains "unchanged and consistent and fixed," but experts warn he will seek concessions from Washington. In addition to an end to the war, he is likely to want international recognition as well as guarantees against any strike by the US forces stationed in South Korea.

Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, however, said Yesterday that the presence of American troops in South Korea is not "on the table". For the North, denuclearization has long been code for the withdrawal of US troops from the peninsula and the end of its nuclear umbrella over the South - something unthinkable in Washington. Pyongyang has previously insisted that it needs nuclear weapons to defend against a US invasion. But it remains to be seen if either side has changed its position following the whirlwind diplomacy of the last few weeks. As expected, Kim Yong Chol handed Trump a letter from Kim that may clear up some of the questions. —AFP

Sanchez sworn in as Spain PM

MADRID: Spain's Socialist chief Pedro Sanchez was sworn in as prime minister yesterday after ousting veteran conservative leader Mariano Rajoy, with Catalonia's separatist president promptly calling for talks over the region's independence drive. Sanchez, a 46-year-old economist with no government experience, has made a spectacular comeback to the front line of politics. But he faces a tough road ahead, leading a minority government with support of diverse parties ranging from far-left Podemos to Catalan separatists.

He took the oath of office before King Felipe VI in the Zarzuela Palace near Madrid in the presence of Rajoy just a day after toppling him in a historic no-confidence vote. That move was sparked by fury over a corruption scandal that struck Rajoy's conservative Popular Party (PP). "I promise to faithfully fulfill the duties of the post of prime minister with conscience and honor, with loyalty to the king, and to guard and have guarded the constitution as a fundamental state rule," he said. He was the first Spanish prime minister to take the oath without a Bible or crucifix. Sanchez has yet to name his cabinet and it is only when their names are published in an official government journal in the coming days that he will fully assume his functions.

Catalan challenge

No sooner had he taken office than Catalonia's separatist president Quim Torra called for talks. The wealthy region's independence drive shows no sign of dying down despite deep divisions among its 7.5 million inhabitants. "Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, let's talk, let's address this issue, let's take risks, you and us," Torra said. He spoke as his own regional executive was sworn in at an emotional ceremony in Barcelona. Many participants wore yellow, the color that has come to symbolize the separatist cause. "We need to sit down at the same table



MADRID: Spain's new Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez takes the oath of office during a swearing-in ceremony at the Zarzuela Palace yesterday. —AFP

and negotiate, government to government," Torra said. "This situation we're going through cannot go on for even one more day." As opposition leader, Sanchez was deeply critical of Catalonia's secession bid. He backed Rajoy's imposition of direct rule on the region in October after separatist leaders declared independence. But he softened his tone as Catalan separatist lawmakers in the national parliament backed his no-confidence motion. He has said he wants to "build bridges" with the new regional government.

Comeback kid

The EU-friendly Rajoy, 63, had been in power since 2011. His ousting comes at a time of political instability in Europe, with a new eurosceptic, anti-establishment government taking office in Italy. Sanchez has promised his "main priority" will be to respect Madrid's deficit reduction commitments to the European Union. He has also vowed to implement the 2018 budget drawn up by Rajoy's government. His arrival at the prime minister's office crowns an astounding comeback.

Sanchez led the Socialists to two crushing general election defeats in 2015 and 2016, and was forced out by fellow members - but re-elected him as party head in May 2017. —AFP

International

Catalonia leader calls for talks with new Spain PM

Regional executive sworn in at emotional ceremony

BARCELONA: Catalonia's separatist president Quim Torra called yesterday for talks with Spain's new prime minister as the Catalan regional executive was sworn in at an emotional ceremony full of pro-independence symbolism. The swearing-in will automatically bring an end to Madrid's direct rule over the wealthy, northeastern region imposed in October after a failed bid to break from Spain. "Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, let's talk, let's address this issue, let's take risks, you and us," Torra said, just minutes after Sanchez himself was sworn in in Madrid.

Sanchez takes office after ousting veteran conservative leader Mariano Rajoy from power in a no-confidence vote on Friday. "We need to sit down at the same table and negotiate, government to government," Torra said. "This situation we're going through cannot go on for even one more day." Sanchez, a 46-year-old economist who as opposition leader was sharply critical of Catalonia's secession bid, has promised to try to "build bridges" with the region's new government which is still determined to work towards independence.

Torra's call for talks came as his handpicked 13 councilors took oath in the regional presidency in Barcelona - some of them wearing yellow, the color that has come to symbolize the separatist cause. "Do you promise to faithfully fulfill the duties of the post you're taking on at the service of Catalonia in accordance with the law and with loyalty to Catalonia's regional president?" Torra asked

each one. "Yes I promise," they responded to strong applause.

An empty chair with a yellow ribbon stood in the chamber to represent Catalan separatists who are in jail over their role in last autumn's independence push and those like ousted Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont who fled abroad. Letters were read out by loved ones of those affected, during a ceremony that saw several onlookers break down in tears.



Swearing-in ends months of political limbo

End of political limbo

The swearing-in ends months of political limbo in the northeastern region after the independence bid last October caused Spain's biggest political crisis in decades. Under the terms of emergency legislation brought in to take over the Catalan administration, Madrid must lift direct rule once a Catalan government is fully formed and cabinet members are sworn in. Spain's central government last month recognized the powers of newly-elected Catalan president Torra but refused to ratify his first choice of councilors because four of them face charges linked to the failed independence drive. The Spanish government called their nomination "a new provocation".

Earlier this week, Torra nominated a new administration which did not include them, prompting Madrid to give its green light. The 55-year-old former editor has been under pressure from some segments of his own separatist camp to adopt a more conciliatory stance, in order to allow a



BARCELONA: Catalan regional president Quim Torra addresses an official swearing-in ceremony for the new government at the Generalitat Palace yesterday. — AFP

new Catalan government to take office and end Madrid's direct rule.

Torra was chosen by Puigdemont to be Catalonia's next leader after separatist parties kept their absolute majority in regional elections in December. The election result was a severe blow to the Spanish government. It had called the

polls in the hope of heading off the secessionist push in the region, which is home to around 7.5 million people and is about the size of Belgium. Puigdemont is currently in Berlin awaiting potential extradition to Spain, where he faces jail on charges of rebellion and misuse of public funds. — AFP

Erdogan rival faces uphill struggle after breakthrough

ANKARA: Nationalist Meral Aksener may have broken the mould by challenging Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the presidency barely eight months after creating a new party but she faces an uphill struggle to even be the top opposition candidate. The first woman to stand for the presidency in Turkish history, Aksener, 61, broke away from the Nationalist Movement



Meral Aksener

Party (MHP) that dominated nationalist politics for the last half-century and in October launched her own faction - the İyi Parti (Good Party).

While the MHP and its longstanding leader Devlet Bahçeli, 70, formed an alliance with Erdogan for the June 24 election, Aksener moved in outright opposition to the Turkish strongman. The formation of the new party was seen as a tectonic shift in Turkish politics, given the importance of the nationalist electorate, with many analysts saying she has a decent chance of challenging Erdogan. But with markedly little television airtime, Aksener faces a tough challenge to rally support especially with the other main opposition candidate, Muharrem İnce of the secular Republican People's Party (CHP), gaining momentum.

And her reputation as a diehard nationalist and her past as ex-interior minister means it is unlikely she will make inroads among the Kurdish minority who comprise around a fifth of the electorate. "Looking at the election mathematics, İnce will most likely be the runner-up and Aksener will follow," said Fuat Keyman, director of the Istanbul Policy Centre think tank. If no candidate wins 50 percent in the first round, there will be a run-off vote between the two frontrunners on July 8. Odul Çelep, associate professor of political science at Isik University in Istanbul, said it would likely be İnce rather than Aksener making it to a run-off. İnce, he said, could both "solidify the party base but also rally more non-partisan, independent and floating voters around him".

'Antidote to the ills'

Aksener defines herself as a nationalist and committed follower of Turkey's secular founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk yet also socially conservative and a practicing Muslim. She shies away from comparisons to European far-right politicians such as Front National's Marine Le Pen in France. She has also been challenged on her policy towards Syrian refugees in a country which is hosting some 3.5 million people who fled the Syrian civil war.

Aksener came under fire for saying that she would have an "iftar" meal which breaks the daily fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan with Syrians in 2019 - but only in their homeland. Known for her fiery rhetoric and dubbed by some foreign media as Turkey's "iron lady", Aksener has denied suggesting refugees be thrown out. As part of her campaign, she has promised to end a string of measures put in place by Erdogan, such as the state of emergency imposed after the failed coup of 2016, and the block on Wikipedia. She has also pledged to scrap the presidential system due to take effect after the vote. — AFP

Lebanon's spearfishers fight to preserve stocks

TRIPOLI, Lebanon: Hunting fish with spear guns may seem like a counterintuitive way to save Lebanon's dwindling marine life, but a growing community of freedivers argues it is a potent awareness-raising tool. At 5:00 am, three men park their car in the northern port of Qalamun. Grabbing their fins, masks and spear guns, they board a boat and set out to sea. Wrapped in tight camouflage wetsuits as they skim across the silvered water, these amateur underwater hunters resemble their counterparts the world over.

Rachid Zock and his friends say that by promoting regulated spearfishing, they are also defending Lebanon's fast-depleting aquatic wildlife. Zock, 38, a freediving and spearfishing instructor, says he has seen Lebanon's fish populations drop in the three decades he has been exploring its waters. "I started fishing underwater aged seven, and I used to see so many fish of different shapes and sizes. But they've diminished over the years," he says. The divers float, head down on the water like tree leaves.

Suddenly, one of them duck dives, piercing the surface as he heads vertically into the blue. Others watch through their masks to make sure he is safe, as he fins a dozen metres down, clutching his spear gun. He can stay down

for more than two minutes on a single breath.

Overfishing

The fish populations living off Lebanon's northern coastline have shrunk in recent years, fishermen say. And the European Commission estimates that 90 percent of fish species surveyed in the Mediterranean are overfished, it said in April 2017 following a study. The EC launched an initiative with non European Union countries - dubbed MedFish4Ever - to address the issue after a ministerial conference last year. But Lebanon, which had 7,000 fishermen in 2014 and where fishing only makes up a tiny part of the economy, has not signed up.

Faysal Tawokji, 25, says he has been diving to set up underwater fish traps every day for 12 years. "I was catching 40 kilos (just over 88 pounds) of fish a day in 2016 but that decreased to half the next year," he says. His income has not improved since. "I've lost hope and decided to leave Lebanon - because of the small catches and the competition from imported fish at half the price," says the young fisherman.

Chance to replenish

Retired fisherman Hassan Mallat, 74, says Lebanon's fish stocks are hit by pollution, bad practices and overfishing. "Some fishermen have deliberately tightened their net holes to grab more produce," he says, looking up from below his old goggles. "They are preventing small fish from growing and multiplying. Bigger fish that succeed in fleeing toward the shore to lay eggs are caught by traps." Spearfishing instructor Zock says that, when treated properly, the sea's resources replenish themselves. — AFP



QALAMUN, Lebanon: Rachid Zock, a 38-year-old Lebanese freediving and spearfishing instructor, shows a grouper fish that he hunted with a spear-gun while diving off on March 4, 2018. — AFP

Italy's new PM Conte begins work

ROME: Italy's new prime minister Giuseppe Conte attended a military parade on his first full day in office yesterday, while his outspoken deputy Matteo Salvini was to head to Sicily as part of his campaign against illegal immigration. The military parade, which Conte attended alongside President Sergio Mattarella, marked Republic Day for the foundation of the Italian Republic in 1946. Conte was finally sworn in on Friday afternoon at the head of an anti-establishment and eurosceptic government, ending months of uncertainty since elections in March.

The 53-year-old academic heads a government of ministers from the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) and the far-right League Party, the first populist coalition in a founding EU member. A political novice, he inherits a daunting list of issues from his predecessor Paolo Gentiloni, including the financial travails of companies such as Ilva and Alitalia, a Group of Seven summit in Canada and a key EU summit at the end of the month, as well as the thorny question of immigration.

Immigration is the bugbear of Conte's interior minister, Salvini, the 45-year-old leader of the anti-immigrant, anti-Islam League, who announced Friday he would visit Sicily to see the situation for himself at one of the main landing points for refugees fleeing war, persecution and famine across North Africa and the Middle East. "The immigration question remains a hot-button issue, even if the number of new arrivals has fallen," said Salvini, an ally of French far-right leader Marine Le Pen. "I'll be in Sicily on Sunday. The situation is now calm but only because of the rough seas." More than 150 migrants, including nine children, disembarked from a rescue ship late Friday in Sicily. Salvini had said after being sworn in that he would ask his ministry's experts "how to reduce the number of arriving migrants and increase the number of expulsions."

As premier, Conte will be responsible for pushing through the anti-austerity and pro-security promises that the two populist parties campaigned on. Salvini and Economic Development Minister Luigi



ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte (right) shakes hands with President Sergio Mattarella during the swearing in ceremony of the new government at Quirinale Palace on Friday. — AFP

Di Maio, head of the M5S, also serve as deputy premiers to Conte. While Conte has hardly made any public statements since being appointed, both Di Maio and Salvini have been much more outspoken. EU Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker called yesterday for Conte's new eurosceptic Italian government to be treated with respect, having earlier told Italians to work harder and stop blaming the EU for the country's problems.

"We should show respect towards Italy," Juncker said in an interview with the German press group Funke Mediengruppe. Juncker said Italy must not suffer the same fate as thrice-bailed out Greece whose dignity was "trodden under foot" by its creditors when left-wing Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras took office in 2015. "That must not happen again in the present case with Italy," Juncker said. "Italians have a clear understanding of what is good for their country. They will sort it out." — AFP

Zimbabwe's contested voter roll a key battleground

HARARE: Padded out with babies, dead people and phantom voters, Zimbabwe's electoral roll has long been a contentious feature of its elections and is accused of being the rotten core of vote rigging. The list of voters eligible to cast ballots in elections due on July 30 will be a major focus for foreign observers deployed to the country in an effort to ensure the vote's credibility. In previous ballots, manipulating the voter roll has been one of the strategies used to fix results.

In 2013, observer group Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network described the voter roll that was the basis of former president Robert Mugabe's final election victory - a 61 percent landslide - as "a systematic effort to disenfranchise" voters. They estimated that around one million electors had been robbed of their political voice. President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who took over from Mugabe with support from the military last November, has vowed a break with the past-promising an election free of violence, intimidation and fraud.

To allay fears of phantom voters, Zimbabwe has produced a new register featuring biometric voter data for the first time. In recent weeks, voters have even been able to inspect and verify their details to avoid problems on polling day. "The biometric voter registration process captures one's biometric details hence it is envisaged that it will get rid of multiple registrations and dead people on the voters roll," said Tawanda Chimhini, director of the Election Resource Centre, a non-profit poll monitor.

'Something to hide?'

But poll watchers and opposition parties warn that will not be enough to ensure the election's credibility. Demand for an independent audit of the register has intensified in recent weeks after voter registration closed on Friday. "There must be an external audit of the voters roll," said Douglas Mwonozora, secretary general of the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party. — AFP

International

Protesters slam 'immoral' Trump policy on immigrant families

Demonstrators chant 'families belong together'

WASHINGTON: Human rights groups took to the streets in cities across the United States on Friday to protest the Trump administration's policy to separate asylum-seeking Central American immigrant children from their parents. Hundreds of people chanted "families belong together" in front of the Justice Department in Washington, accusing the government of violating human rights and traumatizing children for political reasons.

"This is indeed an emergency - every single day children are ripped apart from their parents and the Trump administration must immediately cease this policy," said Jessica Morales, chairwoman of We Belong Together, an immigrant advocacy group. The protests came after President Donald Trump's administration confirmed that it had split hundreds of families who crossed the southern border without immigration documents since October.

Last month, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced an official policy of arresting and separating all parents from their children if they cross the border illegally. The government sees the policy as a necessary deterrent to illegal immigration, but the critics say it is cruel to refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence in Central America. "This attorney general made a decision to separate our kids from their parents. This is immoral, it's a crime, and we are not going to accept that," said Gustavo Torres, executive director of the immigrant advocacy group CASA.

The backlash has placed Trump, who has promised to halt illegal immigration, on the defensive, ironically blaming Democrats for a policy choice his administration has made. The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit challenging the policy, calling it a violation of human rights. "Separating families is more than cruel and unnecessary - it's torture," the ACLU said.

“

This is immoral, it's a crime

”

Surge of asylum requests

The policy aims to stem a surge of poor families mostly from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras pouring into the United States. Citing the daily violence in their home countries, thousands each week cross the US-Mexico border and immediately turn themselves in to authorities asking for asylum. They are part of a broader rebound in illegal immigration that has deeply angered Trump. In April alone, 50,924 people were detained after crossing the border without papers, including 4,314 unaccompanied children and 9,647 family units, according to US Customs and Border Patrol.

Late last year, the Trump administration quietly began separating some illegal border crossers from their children, sending the youngsters to holding facilities for several weeks before either transferring them back to parents or to relatives already living in the United States. From October to April, about 700 children were separated from their parents. With illegal border crossings and asylum requests undeterred, Sessions announced last month a "zero tolerance" policy that will see every unauthorized border crosser charged with a crime even before they can request asylum.

"Today, we are here to send a message to the world: We are not going to let this country be overwhelmed... If you cross this border unlawfully, then we will prosecute you," Sessions said. "If you are smuggling a child, then we will prosecute you and that child will be separated from you as required by law," he said, adding: "If you don't like that, then don't smuggle children over our border."

Migrants fleeing real dangers

The administration says the families who send or bring their children across the border are working with



NEW YORK: Hundreds of immigrant rights advocates and others participate in rally and demonstration at the Federal Building in lower Manhattan against the Trump administration's policy that enables federal agents to take migrant children away from their parents at the border on Friday. — AFP

organized human smugglers who teach them exactly what to say to be placed into the asylum processing. That gives an incentive for people to head to the United States, they argue. The immigrants say they are fleeing real dangers in their home countries. In the two weeks that followed Sessions's announcement, authorities arrested 658 children together with 638 adults, US Border Patrol deputy chief of operations Richard Hudson told lawmakers last week.

The children are believed to have been taken away from their parents, but Hudson would not confirm that. At the Washington protest, Guatemala native Exel Estrada, who came to the United States at 15 and just finished his first year in a US college, said the Trump administration is "against all immigrants". "I too was an unaccompanied minor, I too was in a detention center," Estrada said. "If there were policies like these four years ago, I would not be standing here today." — AFP

US grand jury questions social media advisor to Trump supporter

WASHINGTON: A social media expert who worked with influential Donald Trump ally Roger Stone during the 2016 US presidential race testified before a federal grand jury on Friday after being subpoenaed by the special counsel investigating potential collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia. Jason Sullivan arrived at the federal courthouse in Washington at around 9 am and left the courthouse at around 11:30 am. After his closed-door grand jury testimony ended, Sullivan declined to comment on what questions Special Counsel Robert Mueller's team had asked him.

Knut Johnson, one of two lawyers who accompanied Sullivan to the courthouse, said because the testimony was part of an "ongoing investigation," neither Sullivan nor his lawyers wished to discuss details of it. Johnson said Sullivan was "open" and "truthful" in his statements to the grand jury. Sullivan received two subpoenas last month from Mueller's office, one summoning him to testify before the Washington grand jury and the second requiring him to provide documents and other data to investigators, according to copies of the subpoenas seen by Reuters.

Sullivan is a social media and Twitter specialist who worked for an independent political action committee formed by Stone, a long-time Trump adviser and backer, to support Trump's campaign. Stone has said Sullivan is one of eight of his associates approached by Mueller's investigators. This outreach to Stone's associates suggests Mueller may be focusing in part on Stone and whether he may have had advance knowledge of material detrimental to Trump's 2016 Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton that US intelligence agencies have concluded was hacked by Russia and sent to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to publish.

"Welcome To The Age of Weaponized Social Media," said a strategy document Sullivan prepared for Stone and seen by Reuters. Sullivan described a "system" he devised for creating Twitter "swarms" as "an army of sophisticated, hyper-targeted direct tweet automation systems driven by outcomes-based strategies derived from REAL-TIME actionable insights." In an emailed statement on Friday, Stone said, "All of the social media activities undertaken by Jason Sullivan were perfectly legal and within the norms of effective political communication."

"I reiterate that I had no advance notice of the content, source and exact schedule of the Wikileaks DNC disclosures," Stone added. "I received nothing from Wikileaks or Julian Assange or anyone else including allegedly hacked emails and passed nothing into Donald Trump or the Trump campaign." Stone previously has denied having an inside track to Wikileaks or others who hacked or published Democratic Party and Clinton-related emails that surfaced during the campaign. Stone has said no one from Mueller's team has tried to contact him. In September Stone appeared before the House Intelligence committee for almost three hours and denied accusations of collusion between the president's associates and Russia during the 2016 election. Trump has denied collusion and called Mueller's investigation a "witch hunt". The Senate Intelligence Committee is also stepping up an investigation into Wikileaks and how the website obtained and distributed hacked emails during the campaign, said a congressional source, speaking on condition of anonymity. — Reuters

Trump's power daughter Ivanka strikes a nerve

WASHINGTON: She is the powerful, glamorous first daughter, a woman even liberals hoped would be a moderating influence on her presidential father. Today, the reputation of divisive White House figure Ivanka Trump is under siege. The impeccably presentable working mom has emerged as a lightning rod for many Americans disappointed with the Trump clan, but particularly among Democrats who had envisioned her as a voice of reason in Donald Trump's rollercoaster administration.

The wife of close Trump adviser Jared Kushner had vowed to influence her father on multiple subjects, from child care to climate change. But she has been branded "complicit" for letting Trump undo key pay equity rules, cowardly for her failure to speak up forcefully on issues including her father's misogyny, and accused of co-opting feminism by convincing women that candidate Trump had their best interests at heart.

Most recently, a comedian hurled a gendered four-letter expletive at her for not adequately addressing immigration concerns. She has attended private discussions with world leaders, including a dinner with South Korea's president to discuss the US nuclear standoff with Pyongyang. And she briefly sat in for Trump at a G-20 meeting, earning accusations of nepotism by those miffed by her insufficient diplomatic qualifications for the role.

Nicaragua buries victims of latest political violence

MANAGUA: Mourning families held funerals across Nicaragua on Friday for 16 people killed in one of the bloodiest days of protest in the country, where weeks of anti-government demonstrations have left more than 100 dead. Anguished relatives sobbed over the caskets of their loved ones at a series of funerals in the capital Managua, shocked over the brutal repression of what was a peaceful Mother's Day march on Wednesday.

Hundreds of people packed into a church in Managua for the funeral of 14-year-old high school student Orlando Cordoba. He was hit by a bullet while marching in a protest against President Daniel Ortega's government at the Central American University. The teenager's body was draped with a blue-and-white scarf bearing the legend "Free Nicaragua". "Lord give me peace in my heart... I never expected this," said his weeping mother, Yadira Cordoba, as she clung to his coffin while it was being closed. Policeman Armando Reyes asked fellow police to leave the funeral of his son Francisco Reyes, 34, who was shot in the head during Wednesday's march. "It wasn't a dog that died," he said. "I am very hurt. I never imagined they would take my son's life. They murdered him without a problem, they are murderers," the dead man's mother, Guillermina Zapata, told AFP. Similar emotional scenes were repeated at other funerals as victims were laid to rest after what protest umbrella group Civic Alliance described as the "worst massacre" since protests started on April 18.

Ortega, 72, has dominated Nicaraguan politics since leading the Sandinista revolution that ousted dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979. He took over the country as head of a ruling junta and then president until 1990, then returned to power in 2007 - and looks determined to stay there, despite the protests and the devastating loss of his once-solid support from the business elite. The seven-week-old protests began over a much-hated pension

reform and ballooned into a mass threat to Ortega's rule. The embattled president denies repressing them, and called Wednesday's unrest a "conspiracy" by the opposition aimed at "terrorizing" the people. He has rejected calls to step down and the Catholic Church, which has tried to mediate the conflict, has refused to resume the talks as long as government "repression" continues. Casting further shadows over the talks, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights warned that Silvio Jose Baez, the auxiliary bishop of Managua who had been mediating them, had received "death threats" and that his life was in danger, in a statement released in Washington.

The Organization of American States meanwhile said Ortega's government had agreed to a timeline for proposing electoral reforms by the end of the year. However, the announcement will scarcely placate the opposition, which is calling for the immediate overhaul of a system it says has been hijacked by the president.

'Everybody loves Ivanka'

Trump has acknowledged that his daughter - poised and charming - can serve to soften his rough edges, as she did on the campaign trail. "Everybody loves Ivanka," the president mused last September. "Sometimes they'll say: You know, he can't be that bad of a guy, look at Ivanka." Experts see a first daughter with extraordinary power. "She attracts criticism too because she set herself up to be the conscience of the Trump administration," Iowa State University history professor Stacy Cordery, an expert on first families, told AFP Thursday.

Americans, she added, are more comfortable when the president's children maintain low profiles. Ivanka "has an unprecedented and highly visible, yet amorphous role," Cordery said. "That runs counter to American history and tradition." Ivanka has refused to describe herself categorically as Republican or Democrat. But her mysterious role as special assistant to the president has been questioned from the start.



MANAGUA: Relatives and friends of 14-year-old Orlando Cordoba, allegedly killed by the police during a Mother's Day protest against Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, attend his wake on Friday. — AFP

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'He's afraid of the people'

The protests resumed Friday, but in far smaller numbers. Of the several dozen protesters who gathered at the Metrocentro plaza in Managua - the focal point of the protests - many said their fellow demonstrators were too afraid to come out after Wednesday's crackdown. — AFP



WASHINGTON: Ivanka Trump arrives outside the White House on the South Lawn before US President Donald Trump delivers remarks and participates in the White House Sports and Fitness Day on May 30, 2018. — AFP

Critics argue she has not pushed back enough publicly against her father. She presented herself as a champion of equal pay for equal work, vowing to "fight for this right alongside of him," only to support Trump's rollback of a key equal pay initiative once he was president. But she has not remained silent on controversial issues. Last August, when her father failed to directly condemn neo-Nazis after deadly violence in Charlottesville, Ivanka issued a clear denunciation, tweeting that "there should be no place in society for racism". Months later, she broke with her father when he supported accused child predator Roy Moore in his failed Senate bid. — AFP

Mexican marines accused of murder, kidnapping

MEXICO CITY: In March, Daniel Trejo, a 41-year-old car mechanic in the Mexican northern border city of Nuevo Laredo, was violently pulled from his home at night by men dressed as Marines. It was the last time his wife saw him. On Wednesday, the United Nations cited "strong indications" that Mexican security forces were behind the disappearance of 23 people in and around the city between February and mid-May. The Nuevo Laredo Human Rights Committee (CDHNL), a group that documents accusations of abuse against security forces, has said there were more cases from that period and that if reports from January were included, the total would exceed 50 so far this year.

"They came into my house, breaking the door... They pointed guns at me and my husband, and when they saw that I was an American citizen, I thought, 'They're going to kill me,'" said Jessica Molina, Trejo's wife. "They took him without an arrest warrant, even though he showed them he was working all day in his garage in Laredo, Texas," she said, adding that no reason was given for her husband's arrest. The Navy declined to comment when contacted by Reuters.

No official government source has confirmed that Marines were involved in Trejo's disappearance or other cases. Late on Friday, the Attorney General's office issued a statement saying it had begun investigations into 28 possible forced disappearances in Nuevo Laredo's home state of Tamaulipas where the Navy had been accused of involvement.

Mexico's government issued a statement on Thursday that officials from the foreign ministry, interior ministry and attorney general's office met with Navy commanders after the UN report. The government said officials would coordinate with the UN human rights office, go to Nuevo Laredo to interview witnesses, find the victims and punish those responsible. — Reuters

International

Mattis accuses Beijing of South China Sea 'intimidation, coercion'

Chinese general slams 'irresponsible comments'

SINGAPORE: China's military build-up in the South China Sea and its deployment of high-end weapons systems in the disputed waters is designed to intimidate and coerce neighbors, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said yesterday. His broadside at a security summit in Singapore drew a sharp rebuke from a Chinese general, who lashed out at "irresponsible comments" on the contested sea and insisted Beijing was simply defending its territory.

Speaking just 10 days before President Donald Trump is due to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Mattis also said the US military continues to support diplomats pushing for the "complete, verifiable and irreversible" denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Beijing has deployed a range of military hardware including anti-ship missiles, surface-to-air missiles and electronic jammers across the South China Sea, where it has built islets and other maritime features into hardened military facilities, Mattis said.

China has also landed heavy bombers on Woody Island in the Paracel Islands. "Despite China's claims to the contrary, the placement of these weapon systems is tied directly to military use for the purposes of intimidation and coercion," Mattis told the Shangri-La Dialogue. He also blasted Chinese President Xi Jinping for reneging on a 2015 promise made at the White House that Beijing would not militarise the island features in the South China Sea.

But Chinese Lieutenant General He Lei issued a fiery response, telling the summit that "irresponsible comments from other nations cannot be accepted". "As long as it is on your own territory you can deploy the army and you can deploy weapons," he said. "It is for the sake of defending ourselves," he added, and warned Beijing would take "firm measures" if other countries sent ships and aircraft

Asia-Pacific region and that allies should stick with Washington instead of aligning with Beijing. But the message might be a tougher sell for Mattis, who is generally popular on the international scene, after his boss this week imposed metals tariffs on some of America's closest allies in the name of "national security".

Washington Post columnist Josh Rogin asked Mattis whether he thought it was unproductive for Trump to pick fights with allies on trade. "Certainly we have had some unusual approaches, I'll be candid with you," Mattis replied. "But I'm reminded that so long as nations continue dialogue, so long as they continue to listen to one another and to pay respect to one another, nothing is over based on one decision, one day."

In a dig at China, which the Pentagon has accused of using "predatory" economics to exploit neighbors, Mattis said the US supports the peaceful resolution of disputes, "free, fair and reciprocal trade and investment" and adherence to international rules and norms. Despite frequent warnings from Washington about China's rising might and the pitfalls of its "Belt and Road" global infrastructure initiative, Beijing has faced few consequences for its South China Sea build-up and sweeping territorial claims. One modest exception came last week when the Pentagon disinvited China from

“ US supports peaceful resolution of disputes ”

close to what it considers its islands in the South China Sea. China claims almost the entire resource-rich sea, through which \$5 trillion in shipping trade passes annually, with competing claims from Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Tariffs on close allies

Mattis's address in Singapore returned to a theme that he and other senior US officials have hammered home since Trump took office - that America is here to stay in the



SINGAPORE: US Defense Secretary James Mattis delivers his speech during the first plenary session of the 17th Asian Security Summit of the HSS Shangri-La Dialogue yesterday. —AFP

biennial maritime exercises in the Pacific. Mattis characterized this action as an "initial response". But "there are much larger consequences in the future when nations lose the rapport of their neighbors", he warned. "They believe that piling mountainous debts on their neighbors and somehow removing the freedom of political action is the way to engage them. Eventually these things do not pay off."

Delegates hoping for clarity on Trump's intentions for a scheduled June 12 summit with North Korean leader Kim did not get much

from Mattis, though he said the issue of the permanent deployment of about 28,500 US troops in South Korea will not be "on the table". Mattis has tried to avoid weighing in on the summit, deferring questions to the State Department and Trump's national security team. "On the Korean peninsula, we hold the line with our allies, supporting our diplomats who lead this effort," Mattis said. "Our objective remains the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula." —AFP

In rush to electrify, Cambodia stirs the living and dead

SREKOR, Cambodia: Nat Sota worries about the spirits of her ancestors. They have been lying in watery graves since Cambodia's newest hydroelectric dam flooded her village of Srekor, and with it, the nearby burial ground. "We don't know whether they can swim or not," she said, sitting under a wooden house on stilts near the dam's reservoir. Nat Sota has earthly concerns too. Only the red roof of the village primary school is now visible above the water, and she worries for her two young grandchildren if they are unable to get an education.

She is among 62 of the village's ethnic Kreung, Bunong and Lao minority families who have refused the government's offer to move them to a newly-built village. Instead they have decamped to a settlement near the reservoir that flooded their homes, and are now stuck in limbo. They say the government's proposed site to is too far from

the Sesan River, where their people have fished for generations, and the cash offer not enough to cover the loss of property and crops.

The plight of this community in a remote corner of northern Stung Treng province highlights the human cost of Cambodia's push to bring power to the entire country. "By 2020, all villages have to have access to the electricity supply," said Victor Jona, a spokesman for the department of energy at the Ministry of Mines and Energy. The Southeast Asian nation is well on its way, according to World Bank statistics. In 2000, only 16 percent of Cambodians had access to electricity. That increased to 31 percent by 2010, and almost half the population was connected to the grid by 2016. Much of that progress has been driven by dams. Between 2010 and 2014, hydropower's contribution to the energy mix jumped from 3 to 61 percent, the World Bank said. Cambodia is considering two new dams, both of which would dwarf the Lower Sesan 2 in terms of size and output, as well as the impact on land and fisheries. The government has provided fair compensation to those who had to make way for seven dams built so far, Jona said, citing the Lower Sesan 2 as a "good example."

He noted that most of the 860 families in villages affected by the dam have relocated to



SREKOR, Cambodia: Kheun Fut steers a canoe through this flooded village while his father Noy Fut salvages metal sheets from the roof of his former house on May 15, 2018. — Reuters

new sites, where authorities have built schools and health centres, as well as providing houses and farmland. "Some people are not happy with the compensation," he conceded. In a letter to provincial authorities, the 62 families holding out in Srekor asked the government to

recognize their new settlement as an "indigenous community" with rights to the land. The government should provide cash compensation for their lost homes and crops, they said, and build infrastructure including a well, school and a health center. —Reuters

Placid Singapore braces for Trump-Kim storm

SINGAPORE: Singapore hotel rooms are being snapped up, police are preparing to lock down the city and thousands of journalists are set to jet in for the greatest media circus on Earth - the US-North Korea summit. Top officials are scrambling to salvage the historic meeting between President Donald Trump and the North's leader Kim Jong Un planned for June 12 in the city-state. If the summit - already cancelled once by Trump before plans got back on track - does go ahead, then tiny, placid Singapore will be the unlikely ground zero for one of the biggest geopolitical events of recent times.

The delegations of US and North Korean officials, along with their security details, are expected to be huge. But they are likely to pale in comparison to the gigantic media pack set to swarm the tropical city-state. Some 3,000 people are expected to apply for media accreditation, sources involved in planning the event who spoke on condition of anonymity told AFP. It should easily eclipse the contingent of journalists at the last comparable event in

Singapore, the 2015 meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Taiwan's then-leader Ma Ying-jeou. Hundreds of journalists witnessed that meeting.

Media invasion

There was a foretaste of the coming invasion this week as reporters camped out at the upscale Fullerton hotel to get a glimpse of Kim Chang Son, Kim's de facto chief of staff, who is in Singapore to lay the ground for the meeting. Meanwhile top hotels rumored to be summit venues - the frontrunner is the five-star Shangri-La, where the Xi-Ma meeting took place - are almost fully booked. But while world leaders hold their breath amid rising hopes a summit could lead to Pyongyang permanently abandoning its nuclear weapons program, some Singaporeans were more concerned about the potential disruption to their peaceful lives.

Chang Anthony posted on Facebook that the meeting in the squeaky-clean city-state - calm and stable to the point of sometimes being mocked as boring - was "going to cause us inconvenience". "Can government declare a (public holiday) for this special day?" he asked. "Oh crap, two most unpopular leaders in the world coming here for world peace," lamented Timothy Klein on the site. Security will certainly be onerous, with large numbers of police set to be deployed and extensive road closures expected around the summit venue.



SINGAPORE: This picture taken on June 1, 2018 shows US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un themed cocktails at a bar. —AFP

Free drinks for delegates

But Lim Tai Wei, a fellow at the National University of Singapore's East Asia Institute, played down fears the event could cause widespread disruption. "You have to bear in mind that the country has the experience of hosting the Xi-Ma meeting in 2015, and also previously having

hosted past US presidents," he told AFP. While some may lament the sudden influx of media and diplomats, businesses see it as an opportunity. In a city famous for the "Singapore Sling" cocktail, watering hole Escobar is proving the country's bartenders can still rise to the occasion with two special summit drinks. —AFP

Knight riders to the rescue: Vietnam vigilantes bust crooks

HO CHI MINH CITY: Vietnam's "street knights", hurtling through the streets of Ho Chi Minh City, are not your typical medieval warriors. Their stallions are scooters. They wear rubber flip-flops, not metal boots. And their shining armor is a tracksuit jacket billowing like a cape. The band of bike-riding unpaid vigilantes chases down petty criminals in Vietnam's largest city and the neighboring province

of Binh Duong, where residents grumble about rising crime and ineffectual policing.

"Whenever there's a call I show up," said one of them, Nguyen Thanh Hai, who gets 50 to 100 calls for help every day about robberies, drugs, and even kidnappings. "Even at midnight, when I can barely keep my eyes open," Hai, 47, keeps a notebook recording details of the roughly 4,000 criminals he has helped catch and turn over to police during 21 years as a part-time crime fighter, though he gets no monetary reward. "You don't think about money when you do this," he added.

He is among a group of about 30 men in Ho Chi Minh City, and 1,500 in the province, who have modified their bikes with police-like sirens and upgraded engines that can reach speeds of more than 170 kph. Videos of their high-speed chases have gone viral on social media. One shows thieves weaving between trucks and cars along a twisting, suburban highway, with the group in hot pursuit.

"My little son gets so excited when he sees me on YouTube," said Pham Tan Thanh, a 31-year-old Binh Duong taxi driver who becomes a street knight in his spare time. "He always asks me when I'm going to go out again."

The men don't see themselves as heroes, they said, but they do appreciate the occasional gesture of thanks, with Southeast Asia's famously pungent-smelling durian fruit being a favorite.

Crime is low in Communist-ruled Vietnam, but petty theft and similar minor crimes are a growing problem in urban areas like Ho Chi Minh City, home to 8.6 million people. Last year, the former Saigon ranked as the third least-safe city worldwide, after Caracas and Karachi, on the Safe Cities Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit, which rates personal security in 60 cities. Some crime victims, hoping for a faster response, turn to the vigilantes before the police. —Reuters

Hard choices for US, N Korea at high-stakes summit

WASHINGTON: After a burst of hectic diplomacy, Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un's nuclear summit is on course to go ahead - but if it is to live up to the hype, both sides will need to make difficult concessions. In what would be the first breakthrough in the fraught process, North Korea and the United States may sign a peace deal that could pave the way for a cautious thaw in ties. "Can you believe that we're talking about the ending of the Korean War?"

Trump asked rhetorically, marveling at his own diplomatic audacity. The two countries have been technically at war for decades, even if their conflict was frozen by an armistice 65 years ago. But what Washington is really seeking is the North's nuclear disarmament. Pyongyang, however, has long insisted on becoming a respected nuclear state and - while it may have suspended nuclear and missile tests - surrendering its bombs is off the table.

So how can the circle be squared? How can the two parties arrive at what Washington says must be the "complete, verifiable and irreversible" denuclearization of the Korean peninsula? Many are skeptical. "We'll know right away if it's a failure," Center for Strategic and International Studies analyst Boris Toucas told AFP. "For example, if Kim won't give written guarantees on denuclearization or if there's just a declaration of good intent without a roadmap." The summit would be a challenge for the most seasoned diplomats and just last year neophyte statesman Trump was mocking Kim as "Little Rocket Man," while the young autocrat sneered at the "mentally deranged dotard."

Man in a hurry

The stakes have been raised still further by the accelerated timeframe. Trump may have conceded there will be no grand deal at the first meeting, but he wants a win before his first term ends in 2021. North Korean leaders have been seeking face-to-face talks with a sitting US president for a quarter of a century, but Trump only agreed to meet Kim in March and now seems to be in a hurry. So much of a hurry, in fact, that many in Washington worry he will naively make concessions without securing the North Korean arsenal.

But the cynics were also cheered that Trump now publicly accepts that the meeting is probably only the start of the process, and some former officials think some progress can be made. Ambassador Joseph Yun was the US special representative for North Korea until days before Trump accepted the summit invitation, and is a veteran of backchannel talks. He said that if the summit is to count as a success, both sides will have to make rapid concessions to build trust before a longer process leading to eventual disarmament and normalization can begin. "The basic proposition that the United States is trying to tell North Korea is: 'You are safer without nuclear weapons than with nuclear weapons,'" said Yun, now an advisor at the US Institute of Peace.

North Korean leaders have long assumed the opposite: Only with weapons can they secure the Kim dynasty's survival and become a respected nuclear power like India, at the diplomatic top table. But certain security guarantees may convince Kim to follow the diplomatic path after the summit. "One, I believe in this particular instance would require what I call an 'end of war declaration,' that the Korean War, which technically ended with an armistice in 1953, is over," Yun said. "Then you would require to have that, in effect, a peace treaty negotiation. And then, of course, along with that you need diplomatic normalization. So you can see it's a long drawn out process."

If the United States agrees to begin - as Trump appeared to suggest it might - peace talks to end the war and to open a diplomatic liaison office in Pyongyang, Kim might see the talks as useful. Frank Aum, a former top advisor on North Korea to US defense secretaries and now also an expert at USIP, said Kim will have military demands. —AFP

Analysis

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COMMERCIAL : 24835618P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netStunned US allies
seek new friends;
tensions mount

America's traditional allies are desperately seeking new friends as Donald Trump hails the leaders of North Korea and China instead, but may have to rely on themselves to ride out the storm, analysts said. In the latest blow from the country that is supposed to be their closest friend, the EU, Canada and Mexico found themselves hit Friday by punishing US tariffs on steel aluminum imports. Recent months have also seen Trump pull out of the Iran nuclear deal, open a US embassy in Jerusalem, leave the Paris climate pact and lambast NATO allies for not paying their way.

European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker said Thursday that "each time I think of Trump, I am lost," while EU trade commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom said Friday that the tariffs would further harm transatlantic ties. "The Europeans and Canadians are on their own when it comes to the US, at least until the next election," Judy Dempsey, editor in chief of Strategic Europe, the blog of the Carnegie Europe think-tank, told AFP. "The Europeans are competitors for Trump in trade, on values and human rights. With the authoritarian regimes he does not face that and he seems much more comfortable with the Russians, with North Korea, with the Chinese," Dempsey added.

Full-frontal assault

Trump's onslaught on Washington's allies has been all the more disorientating as he turns on the charm with a string of authoritarian states long seen as US rivals. When not coaxing North Korean leader Kim Jong Un into a landmark nuclear disarmament summit, Trump has admirably called Chinese leader Xi Jinping a "world class poker player" amid their own trade dispute.

Trump has also defended his efforts to have a "good relationship" with Russian President Vladimir Putin, despite the assessment of US intelligence agencies that Moscow meddled in the 2016 US presidential election. "Trump's full-frontal assault against his allies has blurred lines and caused incomprehension," Elvire Fabry, senior research fellow at the Jacques Delors Institute think-tank in Brussels, told AFP. The question for Europe now is how to counter a president who has called the EU a "vehicle for Germany", praised Britain's Brexit vote, and lashed out at NATO for freeloading.

Fabry said the Europeans were now pushing a "new narrative" in which, as the world's biggest market of 500 million people, they will lead a push to preserve the "regulated globalization" that Trump is trying to overturn, Fabry said. For that, they have tried to enlist the same country as Trump has: China. In a symbolic step, EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini appeared alongside the Chinese foreign minister in Brussels on Friday just hours after the US tariffs took effect to call for a "rules-based global order". She also cited trade deals that the EU is negotiating with several countries including Mexico—which was also hit by the new tariffs.

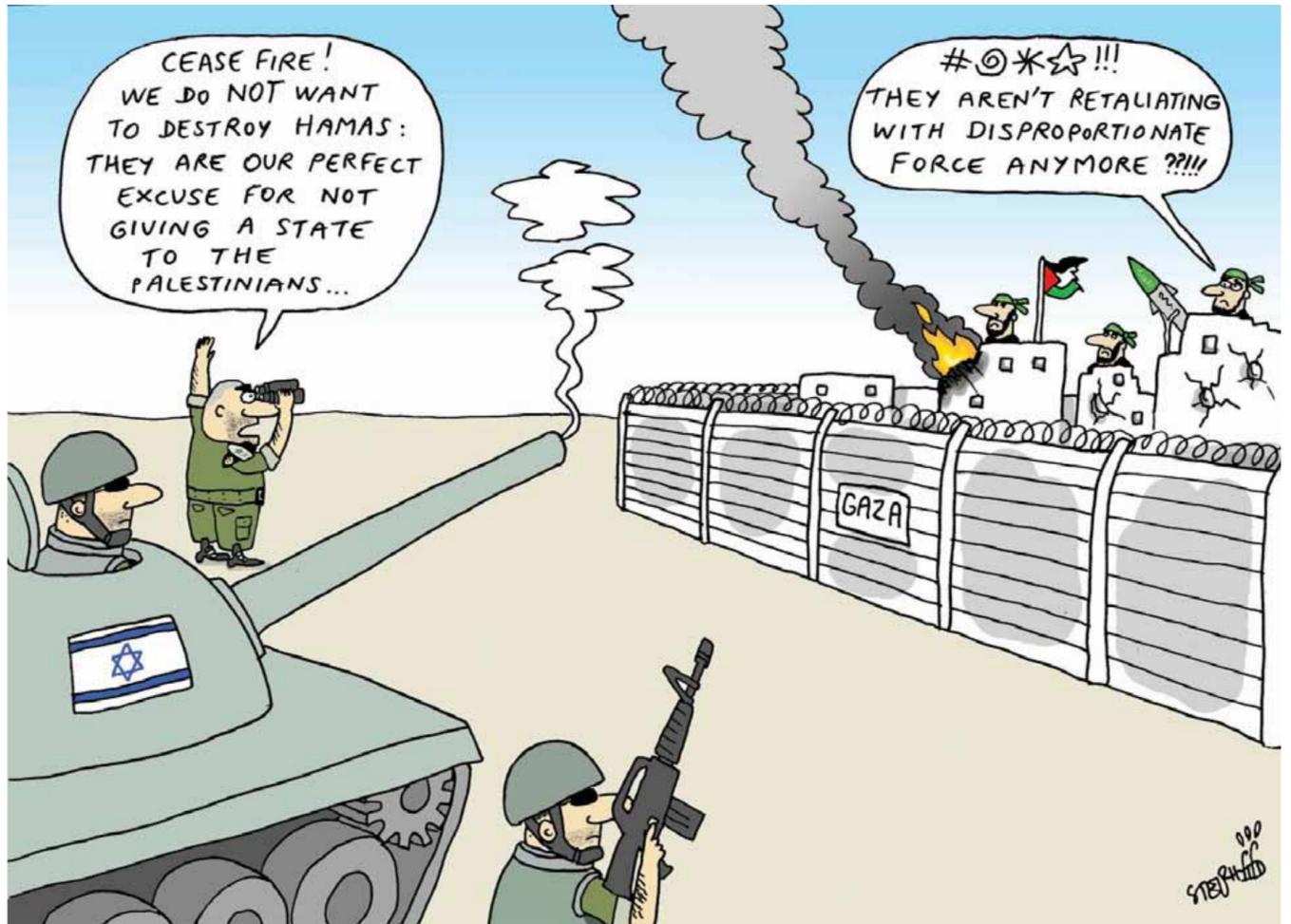
Pull together

But Dempsey warned that Europe had to rely on itself. "They can build on those trade relationships, but they are not a substitute for Europe's future direction," Dempsey said. Just what that direction is, however, remains unclear. Europe is already under strain from internal crisis, with the rise of a populist government in Italy sparking fears of fresh turmoil in the eurozone and Spain shaken by the ousting of its prime minister on Friday.

Dempsey said that Europe was badly lacking the strong leadership of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose power seemed to have been sapped by her struggle to form a coalition government and by her frosty relationship with Trump. "Europe needs to pull together and show unity," Dempsey said, urging Merkel to get behind the EU reform program of French President Emmanuel Macron.

Europe is putting its credibility on the line with its confrontation with Trump, said EU energy commissioner Miguel Arias Canete, who became the first western official to visit Tehran after Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal. The EU has joined Russia and China in trying to keep the deal alive despite heavy US sanctions on Iran. "Can Europe stand strong in the face of US interests? The Iranians have their doubts. I think this subject is crucial and will determine the role of the EU," Canete told AFP.

The tensions threaten to come to a head when Trump meets NATO leaders at a summit in Brussels on July 11 and 12. "The very concept of an 'ally' risks being called into question" at the summit, said Fabry.—AFP



On the path to authoritarianism

Dr James J Zogby
President Arab American Institute

When Donald Trump was elected, I, like many others feared what his presidency might do to the country. A year and a half into his term in office, our concerns have been justified. He and his team are dismantling health care reform, erasing needed environmental protections, casting aside international treaties and agreements, exacerbating income inequality, and putting vulnerable communities at risk. What I find as troubling as these policies, however, is the profound damage he has done to civil discourse and our political culture, and the danger he poses to our democracy. There are warning signs that he is taking us down the path to authoritarian rule from which it will be difficult to recover.

What are those signs? An aggrieved and angry constituency, and a charismatic leader who is able to prey on their discontent by creating a breakdown of trust in democratic institutions and a fraying of social cohesion. These are the guideposts on the path to authoritarianism and they describe the trajectory of the Trump presidency. A new president and Congress can undo some of Trump's destructive policies as quickly as they were implemented. But the damage inflicted on our culture and institutions will take generations to repair.

There was a time when I would caution folks not to pay attention to Trump's tweets or to listen to his night-club-style stand-up comedy routines. They were, I would argue, distractions. He was making outrageous and obviously false statements only to take press attention away from the destructive policies he was pursuing. In this, I was only partially right. He was, to be sure, engaging in classic misdirection. But, as we have come to see, the tweets and rally speeches carry their own poison.

As a case in point, in just the past week Trump has launched a number of "twitter rants" in which he repeatedly attacked a variety of "enemies". There were 75 tweets, in all, with one-half of them targeting his foes: the

media, the Department of Justice, the FBI, the courts, Democrats, and, of course, Hillary Clinton.

There were 10 tweets accusing the FBI of planting a "highly paid spy" in his campaign, calling the law enforcement agency "corrupt" and "dishonest"; 18 tweets denouncing the "Fake witch hunt" against him; another 10 attacking the media as "corrupt", "dishonest"; having a "double standard"; and finally another dozen mentions of Democrats, whom he accused of planting a "highly paid" spy to infiltrate his campaign (which he termed #Spygate) and coddling MS-13 killers. In the end, he says those who were guilty of collusion were the Department of Justice, the FBI, the Democrats, and Russia.

While all of this might be described as political gamesmanship or dismissed as the idle ranting or mere frustrated and disgruntled chatter, it is in fact quite dangerous. Trump is, after all, the president and his tweets are read by millions. They are given an even larger audience when repeated by the well-established right-wing echo chamber of Fox News and a host of websites and talk radio programs. All of this has enabled him to spin a narrative of distrust and discontent that has taken hold among his aggrieved supporters. Central to his narrative is an intensely divisive "us versus them" mindset, a complete disregard of civility, and a dangerous erosion of confidence in some of the basic institutions of our society.

In an especially revealing interview a few months ago, Trump explained to the interviewer that the reason he focused on discrediting and demeaning the media and other institutions was so that when they came after him, his supporters would be inclined to disbelieve what was being reported. And this is what has come to pass. Not only has Trump used his tweets and speeches to foster mistrust of the courts, the DOJ, and FBI, he has also preyed on his supporters' social, political, economic, and cultural discontent by targeting for blame a number of minority racial and ethnic communities. This has contributed to fueling xenophobia and racism, legitimating displays of unconscionable bigotry. One example of the

impact of this world to which Trump has given birth was on display this week when a Trump-supporter, TV star Roseanne Barr launched an offensive and racist twitter rant late one night. In one particularly egregious tweet she described former Obama aide Valerie Jarrett as being the offspring of the "Muslim Brotherhood and the Planet of the Apes". The ABC television network, that carried her show, promptly responded by denouncing her comments and canceling her contract. Barr quickly apologized in a tweet, but her supporters flooded her twitter account with protests supporting her and amplifying her racism. At first, Barr pleaded with them to stop defending her, saying that her tweet was wrong and inexcusable. Then, true to form, Barr shifted gears assuming the role of the victim of unfair elites.

Since Barr is known to be a supporter of Trump (and he is a supporter of hers), all eyes were on the president to see how he would respond. Here's what he wrote: "Bob Iger of ABC called Valerie Jarrett to let her know that 'ABC does not tolerate comments like those' made by Roseanne Barr. Gee, he never called President Donald J Trump to apologize for the HORRIBLE statements made about me on ABC. Maybe I just didn't get the call." The net effect of Trump's tweet was to dismiss the uproar over Barr's racism, to turn the tables by accusing the network of a double standard, and to validate his (and Barr's) supporters sense of being victims of a hostile media.

It took America two generations to put the lid on the type of overt displays of racism Barr exhibited in her tweet. To be sure, racism didn't go away but people learned to be ashamed enough not to be public about it. In just a few years, Trump has blown the lid away giving comfort to bigots of all stripes. He has used this and his other rhetoric to build his movement of discontent, all the while discrediting his opponents whether they be from the "other party", law enforcement, or the media. This is how democracies are wounded and the path to authoritarianism is paved. There is danger ahead.

Governing Spain,
a headache for
new PM Pedro
Sanchez

Spanish Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez heads a minority government supported by a hodgepodge of disparate parties, including far-left Podemos, Catalan separatists and Basque nationalists, which will struggle to govern. Here are the main challenges facing Sanchez, who became prime minister Friday after a no-confidence vote in parliament ousted Mariano Rajoy, who has governed since 2011:

Pleasing Brussels and Podemos

With just 84 deputies in the 350-seat parliament, the Socialists are also a "minority within its coalition" of parties that toppled Rajoy in parliament with 180 votes in favour of the no-confidence motion, top-selling newspaper El Pais observed. "Governing...with so little support will inevitably generate instability and contribute to deteriorating confidence in institutions," the centre-left daily wrote Friday in an editorial. Several analysts predict Spain will face early elections within a year.

Sanchez will only be able to implement policy initiatives "that allow him to obtain an easy majority" in parliament, such as a reform of an unpopular security law, said Fernando Vallespin, political scientist at the Autonomous University of Madrid. The Socialist leader promised his "main priori-

ty" would be to respect Madrid's deficit reduction commitments to the European Union and to implement the 2018 budget designed by Rajoy's conservative Popular Party government.

This puts him on a collision course with Podemos, whose pony-tailed leader Pablo Iglesias has repeatedly called for greater social spending. Iglesias wants Sanchez's government to include members of his party, which was born in 2014 out of fatigue with Rajoy's harsh austerity measures imposed during Spain's financial crisis. To please his ally, Sanchez could reverse a labor market reform designed by Rajoy in 2012 that makes it easier and less expensive for companies to fire workers, said Vallespin.

Managing Basques and Catalans

Sanchez's decision to respect the 2018 budget—which his Socialists had voted against—was aimed in large part at wooing the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). Its support had been crucial for the success of the no-confidence vote against Rajoy. But even with this concession, PNV lawmaker Aitor Esteban warned Sanchez's minority government would be "weak and difficult, complicated."

"This is going to be a constant bang, boom," he added. Esteban said he hopes Sanchez will maintain its policies towards the "Basque and Catalan nations". The Socialists have traditionally been more open to dialogue than Rajoy's PP to resolve tensions over separatist pushes in Catalonia and the Basque Country.

This stance could prove unpopular for Sanchez, already accused by the right of coming to power with the help of "friends" of recently disbanded Basque separatist group ETA. When it comes to Catalonia, Sanchez has said he wants to "build

bridges" with the region's new separatist government. "The right-wing opposition will certainly focus its attacks on this point... The Sanchez government will need to be very careful," said political scientist Joan Botella of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. The hard line adopted by the Socialists in recent months against Catalonia's separatist push should protect them from criticism, he added.

Nonstop election campaign

With the prospect of early elections high, there is a risk that a Sanchez government will be seen as running a permanent

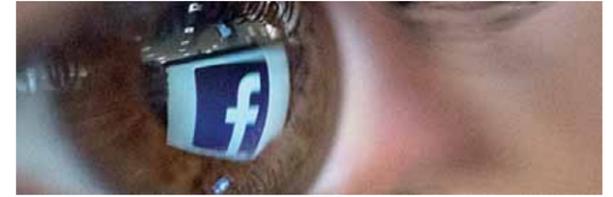
election campaign, said Vallespin. "What the Socialist party wants is to lead news-casts every day," he said. Sanchez will have to be careful not to "lose too much voice in the centre" of the political spectrum. His success will "depend a great deal on his ability not to fall into the radicalism which Podemos will try to impose on him," Vallespin added. A Socialist-led government will be "marginally negative for economic policy", said Eurasia Group analyst Federico Santi. "It would likely result in a slow-down in the fiscal adjustment, introduce the risk of fiscal slippage, put earlier reforms at risk," he added.—AFP



MADRID: Spain's new Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez (left) shakes hands with outgoing premier Mariano Rajoy next to Spain's King Felipe VI during a swearing-in ceremony at the Zarzuela Palace near Madrid yesterday.—AFP

Business

SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2018

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BIESHEIM: In this file photo taken on December 12, 2014 employees handle an aluminum roll at a factory in eastern France. —AFP

EU joins battle against Trump tariff

Finance ministers from USA's top trading partners all outraged

WHISTLER: The EU on Friday launched its first counteroffensive against Washington's punishing steel and aluminum tariffs while the US began meetings in Canada with outraged finance ministers from its top trading partners. Meanwhile in Washington, US President Donald Trump floated the possibility of scrapping the 24-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement in favor of separate bilateral deals with Canada and Mexico.

And in another leg of Trump's multi-front trade offensive, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross arrived in Beijing to continue freight talks with Chinese officials. Trump has vowed to press ahead with tariffs on as much as \$50 billion in imports from China. Brussels and Ottawa on Friday filed legal challenges at the World Trade Organization against Washington's decision. The EU, Canada and Mexico also threatened stiff retaliatory tariffs as they pushed back against Trump's moves.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Friday he was dumbfounded by Washington's national security basis for the tariffs, given that US and Canadian troops had fought together in World War II, Afghanistan and elsewhere. "This is insulting to them," he told NBC News. British Prime Minister Theresa May said she was "deeply disappointed" and reiterated a call for Britain and the EU to be "permanently exempted" from the "unjustified" metals tariffs. At the Group of Seven ministerial meeting in Canada, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin faced stern reactions from his counterparts, who accused

Trump of jeopardizing the world economy with steps that would prove job killers for all concerned.

Trump and the 'G6'

"The French, British and Germans held firm," French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire told reporters. "Everyone expressed their complete incomprehension of the American decisions and everyone said it was up to the Americans to take the next step since they were the ones who imposed the tariffs." Le Maire had earlier Friday referred to the talks as a "G6 plus one," with the United States standing apart, adopting a joke circulating among attendees at the weekend.

Talk of trade did not completely drown out the meeting's agenda, which included tax evasion and crypto-currencies, but the meeting's chair, Canada's Finance Minister Bill Morneau, allowed participants to register grievances with Mnuchin one at a time, according to a Canadian source. German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz told reporters he had let Mnuchin know the tariffs were "unacceptable."

The US imposed the tariffs in March, but gave Canada and the EU—the biggest sources of foreign aluminum and steel for the US—a grace period that ended at midnight Thursday. Trump's decision had already drawn furious responses from Canada's Trudeau, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron. The EU is preparing to slap tariffs on US products including bourbon, motorcycles and blue jeans worth up to 2.8 billion euros (\$3.3 billion).

"If players in the world don't stick to the rule book, the system might collapse. That is why we are challenging the US and China at the WTO," EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom said. Macron told Trump in a telephone call that the tariffs were "illegal," and Merkel said the measure "risks touching off spirals of escalation that in the end hurt everyone." Canada unveiled a package of counter-tariffs on US imports valued at Can\$16.6 billion (US\$12.8 billion). And Mexico said it would impose retaliatory duties on a variety of US goods, including steel and a host of agricultural goods such as pork, apples and cheese.

'Incomprehensible'

The prospect of a global trade war has roiled financial markets this week even if they were back in positive territory on Friday due to upbeat US economic data. Berenberg Bank economist Holger Schmieding argued that the direct impact of a US-EU trade war on the world economy would actually be rather small. Nevertheless, "Trump's contempt for international rules can deal a significant blow to business confidence, especially in trade-oriented nations," Schmieding said.

The WTO's former chief, Pascal Lamy, also said the damage would likely be limited in concrete terms. "We have to keep things in proportion," he said on the French radio station France Info. He estimated that the economic impact of the tariffs would amount to "a very small part of trade flows as a whole." But others have estimated the impact as up to a full point off global growth if the conflict expands and retaliation goes into effect.

The German carmakers' federation described the imposition of tariffs as "incomprehensible." "In a connected, global economy, customs barriers don't benefit anyone, including the United States," the VDA federation said. Germany's carmakers are especially braced for the latest threat from Trump, who earlier this month launched proceedings that could eventually slap 25 percent tariffs on auto imports. "I know he has a very particular problem with German cars," warned Malmstrom. —AFP

“ French, British and Germans held firm ”

Jordan protests snowball on price hikes, income tax

AMMAN: Hundreds of Jordanians demonstrated in the capital Amman for a third consecutive day yesterday against price hikes and an income tax draft law driven by IMF recommendations to slash its public debt. Protests have gripped the country since Wednesday, when hundreds flooded the streets of Amman and demonstrated in other cities at the call of trade unions, to demand the fall of the government.

Last week the government adopted an income tax draft law, yet to be approved by parliament, aimed at widening the country's tax base and reaping 300 million dinars (\$420 million, 360 million euros) for the treasury each year. It is the latest in a series of economic reforms since Amman secured a \$723-million three-year credit line from the International Monetary Fund in 2016.

The loan, intended to support economic and financial reforms, has the long term objective of reducing Jordan's public debt from about 94 percent of GDP to 77 percent by 2021. "This will be accomplished through reforms to bolster economic growth and gradual fiscal consolidation," the IMF says on its website. Prices have steadily risen in recent years in Jordan, a country of 9.5 million which is burdened by poverty and unemployment, since January.

On Thursday, the government announced it would raise fuel and electricity prices from Friday, sparking protests across the country. It later froze its decision under orders from King Abdullah II.



AMMAN: Demonstrators confront anti-riot policemen as they protest against a proposed income tax draft law in front of the Prime Minister's office. —AFP

But Friday night, hundreds of protesters were back on the streets outside the prime minister's office in Amman, calling for the government to fall, AFP reporters said. Some demonstrators blocked roads with their cars, while others held signs reading: "The people of Jordan will not kneel".

Protests hit in several other cities, including Irbid and Jarash in the north, Zarqa in the east, and the southern city of Maan, which was rocked by deadly riots in the late 1980s over rising food prices. Police said some demonstrators overnight "attacked" law enforcement agents and "tried to attack public and private property". They warned they would resort to force if necessary.

Under the proposed new law, anyone with an annual income of 8,000 dinars or above would have to pay income tax, while businesses would face steep tax increases. Evaders would be heavily fined.

A majority of deputies — 78 out of 130 MPs— issued a statement Friday saying they would vote against the draft legislation. They said the income tax law does not serve the economic and social interests of the people. Trade union representatives were due to meet with Prime Minister Hani Mulki to demand that he revoke the bill or face further protests, said the president of the country's trade union federation, Ali Obus. —AFP

Adidas takes lead over Nike in WC shirt deals

BERLIN: Adidas can declare itself the winner over arch rival Nike in the upcoming soccer World Cup even before the first match kicks off as it is kitting out the most teams. However, the German sportswear brand, which is also the official sponsor of the tournament, expects only a limited financial impact, partly because this year's World Cup takes place in Russia, where the economy is in the doldrums.

"The World Cup in Russia does carry lower financial opportunities than the similar event four years ago in Brazil," Adidas Chief Executive Kasper Rorsted said earlier this month.

"At the same time, we're looking forward to it. It's going to be a fantastic way of bringing our brand to life globally," Rorsted added. Since the last tournament in 2014, Adidas has grown sales rapidly in areas other than soccer, capitalizing on booming demand for its retro basketball sneakers and springy Boost running shoes to outpace Nike, particularly in the U.S. market.

Nevertheless, soccer remains important for the image of the German brand, which has supplied the World Cup match ball since 1970 and has a deal to sponsor the event until 2030. It also announced last week it will extend its partnership with the UEFA Champions League until 2021. After Nike kitted out more teams for the first time in Brazil in 2014, Adidas has fought back, this year sponsoring 12 of the 32 participating teams, including strong contenders like Germany and Spain, along with hosts Russia.

Nike, which only got heavily involved in soccer when the World Cup was played in the United States in 1994, is supplying shirts for 10 countries, including Brazil, France and England. "The World Cup is such a powerful moment in sport, and we look forward to amplifying its energy," Nike Chief Executive Mark Parker said in March. —Reuters

Business

NBK Economic Update

Oil price rise boosts fiscal position while credit growth remains modest in March

Domestic real estate activity picked up sharply

KUWAIT: News on the Kuwait economy over the past month has been mixed. The strong rally in oil prices should lift confidence and has led us to narrow our forecast for the fiscal deficit this year, while very subdued inflation supports real household incomes and benefits consumers. However, business credit remains weak, suggesting that the better financial outlook is yet to translate into stronger investment. Meanwhile, the decision to postpone the introduction of VAT to 2021 avoids a nearer-term hit to the consumer sector, but it highlights the risk of pushing back the pace of reforms given the now more comfortable fiscal position and may affect credit outlook.

Oil price rise improves the fiscal position

Oil prices have continued to climb over the past month, with Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) - typically priced at a small discount to Brent - rising 8% m/m to \$67/bbl on average in April and then above \$75 in mid-May. The rise has been supported by tighter market fundamentals arising from solid global demand growth and cuts in oil supply by OPEC and other key producers led by Russia, a reduction in Venezuelan output and impending US sanctions following the re-election of President Maduro, as well as the US's decision to withdraw from the nuclear deal with Iran. Kuwait has largely complied with the supply cuts. Its production stood at 2.71 million b/d in March, down 0.14 mb/d from the reference point in October 2016.

As a result of the run up in prices, we have upgraded our forecast for Brent crude to \$65/bbl this year and \$60 in 2019 (\$61 and \$56 for KEC, respectively), both from \$55 before - compared to \$50 in the official budget - which remain conservative if prices stay at near current levels for the remainder of the year. The revision has positive implications for the government's budget revenues, some 90% of which are derived from oil. However, the impact on the budget balance is partially offset by an upgrade to our spending forecast following revisions to the draft budget made by parliament. Under our new assumptions, the deficit for FY2018/19 narrows to 6% of GDP from 10% before, before mandatory transfers to the Future Generation Fund. This does not include the government's off-balance sheet earnings on its investments overseas, which amount to in excess of 10% of GDP.

Against this improving fiscal backdrop, the National Assembly's Budget committee announced that the introduction of VAT will be delayed until 2021. When implemented, the measure is likely to yield 1-1.5% of GDP in additional revenues, which would represent a boost of around one-third to the state's non-oil receipts. Excise duties on selected products including tobacco and carbonated drinks are likely to be introduced when parliament resumes in October, but will yield about one third of the expected revenue from VAT. The improved fiscal

position entails less domestic borrowing, thus adding to already high liquidity in the banking system.

Real estate sales jump on transaction surge

Real estate activity surged in March, with sales jumping to a more than three-year high of KD353 million, up 38% y/y. Sales in the investment (i.e. apartment) sector were particularly strong at KD155 million, nearly double their February levels, while the volatile commercial sector also saw strength (KD85 million). Having seen significant declines in 2015 and 2016, market activity appeared more stable in 2017 and the latest data support the view of further improvement. However, March's rise in sales was driven by an increase in the number of transactions which may have been driven by seasonal or one-off factors. Moreover, our own calculations suggest that prices for houses and apartments continue to ease on a three-month basis.

Inflation edged up in April, but remains very low

Inflation edged slightly higher in April, but remained low at just 0.7% y/y from 0.6% in March. March's figure was the second lowest since 2004. Soft inflation numbers are being driven in particular by weakness in key food (-0.4% y/y) and housing (-1.4%) components, which between them account for half of the index. Prices in the other categories - our version of 'core' inflation - rose by 2.6% y/y, unchanged from March though still below the average rate for last year. We forecast inflation to average 1.5% for 2018 overall, but the risks to this figure appear on the downside.

Credit growth softens in March

March saw a continuation of the recent soft trends in bank lending, with credit growth easing to its lowest since 2012 at 1.9% y/y, and down from 2.5% in February. Growth fell across all the main sectors, with business credit growth slowing to just 0.7% y/y, albeit dragged down by continued deleveraging in the non-bank financial sector (mostly investment firms) as well as a large one-off corporate repayment late last year. Excluding these, business credit rose by around 4% y/y.

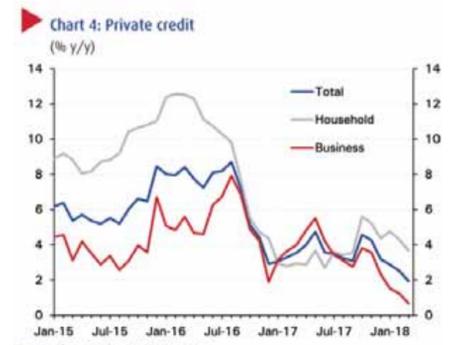
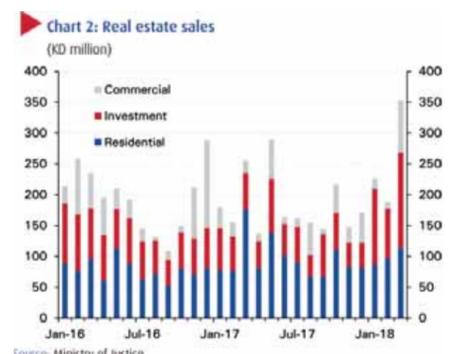
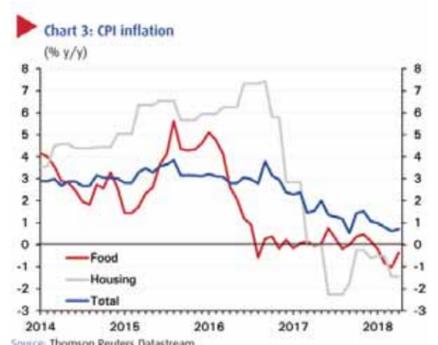
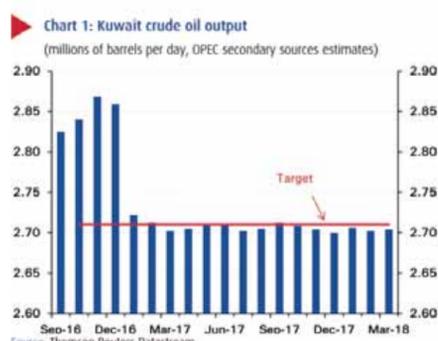
Meanwhile, growth in credit to households excluding lending for securities purchase, which typically drops at the end of the quarter, stood at a solid 7.1% y/y, slightly down from February's 7.4%. Including securities lending (around 17% of consumer lending but now down 10% y/y) credit growth slipped to 3.7% y/y from 4.3% in February.

There was also softness in deposit growth, which declined to an 18-year low of 0.5% y/y from 2.5% in February. Deposits actually saw a decent 1% m/m rise in March, but the year-on-year figure was depressed by a base effect following an even larger jump in March 2017.

well into double digits. "We are addressing market concerns through credible policy actions," Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek, the government's pointman on the economy, wrote on Twitter after the downgrade review was announced.

He said these actions included a "tightened and simplified" monetary policy, a tighter fiscal policy and speeding up reforms after the elections. Meanwhile, Fitch Ratings placed the long term foreign currency ratings of 25 Turkish banks on watch negative, citing risks to performance, asset quality and liquidity after the lira's depreciation.

Fitch said it expected a "deterioration in banks' financial metrics" while risks to financial stability "also remain significant". Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci issued a much less market-friendly statement than his cabinet colleague Simsek, accusing both Fitch and Moody's of supporting "games against Turkey which have manipulative and speculative ends". He said there were "no concerns, no problems" about the health of Turkish banks, dismissing the ratings actions as "over-hasty and having a purpose". —AFP



Weakness in deposit growth has been exacerbated in recent months by declines in government deposits, which contracted by an average of 3% y/y in 1Q18 despite the boost to the government's finances from higher oil prices.

Stock market has retreated so far in 2Q18

Despite a healthy earnings season and higher oil prices, the stock market has been in retreat since the overhaul of Boursa Kuwait at the start of 2Q18 - a move that restructured the market with a view to improving liquidity and investor interest. The All-Share index was down 3.9% quarter-to-date by mid-May. These moves reduced the capitalization of the Kuwaiti market by KD 1.1 billion to KD 27.9 billion. Most other GCC markets are also down so far this quarter. Factors weighing on stocks include regional geopolitics, especially the rise in tensions between the US and Iran, escalating fears of a trade war

between the US and China (which has since subsided), and the potential impact of tightening global monetary policy.

Dinar rises alongside rebounding US dollar

After weakening through most of 2017, the US dollar has seen a sharp recovery over the past month, rising nearly 5% m/m on a trade-weighted basis to mid-May fueled by a combination of strong economic data, rising short and long-term interest rates and some 'safe haven' flows on the back of escalating geopolitical tensions with Iran and China. These movements have affected the Kuwaiti dinar, which is pegged to a basket of currencies with undisclosed weights but primarily favoring the US dollar. The dinar has seen a modest dip of 0.7% versus the dollar, whilst climbing 4-5% versus the euro and the British pound.

Turkey 'addressing economy concerns' after Moody's threat

ISTANBUL: Turkey yesterday said it was addressing the concerns of financial markets about the economy after Moody's threatened a further downgrade of the rating on the ability of the government to pay back its debts. Moody's, which had already downgraded Turkey's ratings to Ba2 in March, said it was placing the assessment on review for a possible new downgrade due to uncertainty about the future direction of economic policy.

Turkey is in the throes of a campaign for June 24 elections where President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is seeking a new mandate and a thumping parliamentary majority. But the campaign is overshadowed by concerns about the economy at home and abroad, with the lira under constant pressure, the current account deficit bloated and inflation

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.395075	0.408975
Czech Koruna	0.005513	0.014813
Danish Krone	0.043055	0.048035
Euro	0.343141	0.356841
Georgian Lari	0.121263	0.121263
Hungarian Forint	0.01195	0.01195
Norwegian Krone	0.032608	0.037808
Romanian Leu	0.058542	0.075392
Russian ruble	0.004826	0.004826
Slovakia	0.009046	0.019046
Swedish Krona	0.029871	0.034871
Swiss Franc	0.298744	0.309744

Egyptian Pound	0.014313	0.020031
Iranian Rial	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000197	0.000257
Jordanian Dinar	0.423108	0.432108
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021247	0.045247
Omani Rial	0.781344	0.787024
Qatar Rial	0.079005	0.083945
Saudi Rial	0.079780	0.081080
Syrian Pound	0.001285	0.001505
Tunisian Dinar	0.113647	0.121647
Turkish Lira	0.061771	0.072071
UAE Dirhams	0.081139	0.082839
Yemeni Rial	0.000986	0.001066

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.890
Canadian Dollar	233.265
Sterling Pound	403.525
Euro	352.390
Swiss Frank	303.275
Bahrain Dinar	805.495
UAE Dirhams	82.870
Qatari Riyals	84.105
Saudi Riyals	81.665
Jordanian Dinar	428.490
Egyptian Pound	16.957
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.919
Indian Rupees	4.485
Pakistani Rupees	2.617
Bangladesh Taka	3.780
Philippines Peso	5.752
Cyprus pound	18.020
Japanese Yen	3.780
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.802
Malaysian Ringgit	76.815
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.545
Thai Bhat	10.420
Turkish Lira	67.425

Bayt Career Advice

What you should do between graduation and employment

Many of our youth have no idea how to deal with the gap between the day they throw their graduation cap high in the air and the day they land their first job. Graduation season is upon us and students are excited to start their journey in the real world and be a member of the workforce. They are eager to apply what they have learned in their academic years in terms of theories and practical knowledge into the real work environment. However, landing their dream job is not as easy as it may seem to be.

In today's competitive world, fresh graduates who land their dream job as soon as they step out of university are considered to be lucky. Many graduates might have to wait a good period of time to reach their dream job. That said, the months spent between graduation and employment should be used wisely. From the career experts at Bayt.com, we have some tips on this matter. Homework isn't only for academic purposes. After graduation, you get to do some homework too to land your dream job. Start by doing a market research, keep up-to-date with the trends happening and which companies are currently hiring. Explore the industry you have chosen and look more into it in terms of reviews, vacancies, turnover, and such.

Academic backgrounds and degrees are never enough on their own; you have learned the theories and skills but never practiced them. Where do you gain the skills needed? And how do you know what they are? Practicing and mastering skills and competencies prior to starting your dream job will make a difference once you put a foot in the industry. The gap you have before starting the job is the perfect time to gain the needed skills. There are some strategies that graduates need to know before starting their career. Here's the drilldown:

1. Keep your current job

Some graduates may have held other jobs as waiters or baristas while completing their university degree. It is recommended to keep that job during the gap period. If it was a part-time one, try to get it as a full time job to keep up with your expenses until the happy day comes and you land your dream job. At some point, you will have to be fully independent, and that is a great skill to have. Save up for your goals, whether they are to own a car or having your own business.

2. Keep an open-mind

Consider other options while you are unemployed. Fresh graduates are what employers look for when hiring interns. Internships are a great way to develop skills, including communication skills, leadership, time management and more. Every skill you acquire will be essential in every job you take until retirement. Have an open mind set to start your career as an intern or a trainee. Also, if you manage to prove yourself during the training or

internship period, the employer might consider you for a full time position as they prefer to hire someone who is familiar with the inside operations, products and services that they offer.

3. Professional networking

At some point you will have to learn the magic of effective networking. Learn how to dress professionally and have a firm handshake in formal conversations. Attend networking events and career fairs; be always ready to meet people. In some cases, networking reveals new job opportunities that are not up on the market yet.

4. Explore opportunities

Be flexible in your job search. Some graduates limit themselves to a specific industry or city. When you feel you are stuck with no luck in landing your dream job, you may want to consider being a bit more flexible with your job search. Look of opportunities in other cities, or countries, or maybe another area that is close by. In some cases, you may find greater opportunities in different industries too. Keep an eye on Bayt.com's 10,000+ jobs on a daily basis.

5. Stay honest

As you are going through your job search and time is passing, you will eventually reach a point where you are asked to justify the gap between graduation and employment. Don't make things up to fill in your CV, this is a huge mistake that people do. Build a professional CV with your academic background, experiences, volunteering and leadership activities and all other related sections. Get out to the real world and fill in the missing gaps whether they are skills, certifications or training.

6. Stay active

Rejections and other challenges you may face while applying for jobs may discourage you. Don't allow this to hold you back or limit you. Stay in the loop and informed about the industry trends. Every day the market changes, introducing new products and services, and removing old ones, and that is where you need to stay up to date. Stay active by reading more about the industry, look into what their perfect candidate looks like and check what you are missing for being the perfect fit.

From the day you step out of your academic institution to the day you land your dream job, work on yourself and never assume what you've learned is enough. Research new things and explore diverse opportunities. During that gap, get to know yourself more, and keep on widening your network. Discover and develop new skills that your future employer is looking for, or skills that will help you boost your job search. -Provided by Bayt.com

Business

Petrobras CEO resigns after truckers strike cripples Brazil

Policy that saw costs rise sharply prompted widespread anger

RIO DE JANEIRO: The CEO of Brazil's troubled state-controlled oil major Petrobras, Pedro Parente, resigned Friday in the wake of a devastating truckers' strike over high fuel prices that cast doubts over the future of the powerful company. Petrobras, a pillar of the Brazilian economy, said Parente "tendered his resignation as president of the company this morning." A new interim CEO, Ivan Monteiro, was named later Friday, the official Agencia Brasil said.

Parente quit after President Michel Temer bowed to demands from truckers for cheaper fuel, guaranteeing them discounted diesel for a period of 60 days. This eroded the autonomy granted to Petrobras in late 2016 to set its own prices—a key demand of investors, but a policy that saw costs for motorists rise sharply, prompting widespread anger. And in the aftermath of the strike, which for nine days shut down gas stations and food deliveries across Brazil, Temer rattled markets by hinting he might restore government price setting, before he backtracked.

Following a wild day on the Sao Paulo stock exchange, where Petrobras shares closed nearly 15 percent down, the energy ministry put out a statement reassuring that the pricing policy will remain. While consumers will be "protected" from price volatility, Petrobras will "maintain the current practice of market prices for producers and importers, which the current administration considers a fundamental point for attracting investments," the ministry said.

The truckers' strike was followed Wednesday by a strike of oil workers demanding Parente's resignation, and threatening an indefinite strike later this month. Temer's inability to resist the pressure left him more than ever a lame duck ahead of October elections that he will not contest. "If the truckers' strike showed people one thing, it's that the Temer government is finished," said Marco Antonio Teixeira, a political analyst at the Getulio Vargas Foundation.

'Restored reputation'

Parente headed Petrobras from July 2016 and was tasked with restoring credibility and financial health to the huge company after it was embroiled in Brazil's biggest ever corruption scandal, known as the "Car Wash" investigation.



SAO PAULO: Demonstrators protest against high fuel and cooking gas costs in front of Petrobras oil company headquarters. - AFP

Politicians and Brazilian executives had colluded for years with Petrobras' leadership to fleece the oil major through sweetheart contracts and kickbacks. The scandal has ensnared everyone from Temer, who faces two criminal charges, to ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who is now serving a 12-year prison sentence.

In a letter to Temer, Parente said he left Petrobras "with a restored reputation," but that his "remaining in the presidency of Petrobras is no longer positive." Parente defended Petrobras' pricing policy, which was partly intended to remove the company from political influence, saying that price hikes reflected "the global economy and its effects in the country."

However, Simao Zanardi—a director at Brazil's biggest oil union federation, the FUP—called Parente's exit "a victory." "He was much more an employee of the markets than he was of Petrobras," Zanardi said. The Forca Sindical trade unions group said that Parente's departure "will only bring benefits to Brazilian society." Andre Perfeito, at the Spinelli financial consultancy, said Parente jumped what looks like an increasingly troubled ship. "Parente noted the high social tensions in Brazil, that politicians are calling for his resignation, and also that much of what was promised to the truck drivers will not be possible to deliver," Perfeito said. "Getting ahead of this, he said, 'OK, I'd rather not be part of this.'" —AFP

US poor becoming more destitute under Trump

GENEVA: Poverty in the United States is extensive and is deepening under the Trump administration whose policies seem aimed at removing the safety net from millions of poor, while rewarding the rich, a UN human rights investigator has found. Philip Alston, UN special reporter on extreme poverty, called on US authorities to provide solid social protection and address underlying problems, rather than "punishing and imprisoning the poor".

While welfare benefits and access to health insurance are being slashed, President Donald Trump's tax reform has awarded "financial windfalls" to the mega-rich and large companies, further increasing inequality, he said in a report. US policies since President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty in the 1960s have been "neglectful at best", he said. "But the policies pursued over the past year seem deliberately designed to remove basic protections from the poorest, punish those who are not in employment and make even basic health care into a privilege to be earned rather than a right of citizenship," Alston said.

Almost 41 million people live in poverty, 18.5 million of them in extreme poverty, and children account for one in three poor, he said. The United States has the highest youth poverty rate among industrialised countries, he added. "Its citizens live shorter and sicker lives compared to those living in all other rich democracies, eradicable tropical diseases are increasingly prevalent and it has the world's highest incarceration rate...and the highest obesity levels in the developed world," Alston said. —Reuters

Boursa Kuwait weekly report

Boursa Kuwait ends week in the green

KUWAIT: The Premier Market Index closed at 4,690.55 points, up by 0.06%, the Main Market Index increased by 0.15% after closing at 4,816.34 points, whereas the All-Share Index closed at 4,735.72 points up by 0.09%. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover increased by 34.70%, compared to the preceding week, reaching K.D 10.18 million, whereas trading volume average was 58.32 million shares, recording an increase of 49.26%. The Market was able to record some gains for its three indices affected by the purchasing operations executed on some leading and small-cap stocks in light of a fluctuated performance due to the presence of the speculative operations in affecting the trading activity in the Market.

Despite the small gains realized by the Market on the weekly level, it witnessed many declines in some daily sessions of the week, as a result to the selling pressures it was subject to and included many stocks.

The Market was able to realize its gains in parallel with the increased trading activity compared to the previous week, whereas the total cash liquidity increased by the end of the week to reach KD 50.92 million, up by 34.70%, while the number of the traded stocks grew to reach 58.32 stock, up by around 49.26%.

The market capitalization for the Boursa increased by approximately KD 46.5 million, as it reached by the end of last week KD 26.10 billion against KD 26.05 billion in the previous week, and up by 0.18%. The market cap losses since the new market segmentation reached KD 1.76 billion, down by 6.31%. (Note: The market cap for the listed companies in the Market is calculated based on the weighted average number of outstanding shares as per the latest available official financial statements). Moreover, last week witnessed trading over 143 stock out of 175 listed stock in the Market, where prices of 66 stock increased against prices of 59 stock decreased,

and prices 50 stock remained at no change.

Sectors' indices

Six of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone, five recorded decreases, whereas the Health Care index's closed with no change from the week before. last week's highest gainer was the Oil & Gas sector, achieving 3.33% growth rate as its index closed at 1,038.09 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Insurance sector's index closed at 926.82 points recording 1.69% increase. The Consumer Services sector came in third as its index achieved 1.18% growth, ending the week at 1,064.44 points.

On the other hand, The Telecommunications sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 1.47% to end the week's activity at 790.96 points. The Industrial sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 0.86%, closing at 946.97 points, followed by the Consumer

Goods sector, as its index closed at 870.41 points at a loss of 0.66%. The Real Estate sector was the least declining as its index closed at 950.33 points with a 0.03% decrease.

Sectors' activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 116.68 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 40.05% of the total market trading volume. The Banks sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 28.65% of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 83.49 million shares. On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around K.D 29.13 million or 57.22% of last week's total market trading value. The Financial Services sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 6.44 million representing 12.66% of the total market trading value.

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Business

New and easy registration with NBK online and mobile banking

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait works continually to provide customers with the most up-to-date, innovative services that make banking simple, easy and secure. Now NBK customers can complete their daily transactions even more conveniently with a new updated registration process for online and mobile banking. Customers can use the same username and password to log in to their accounts via NBK Online and the Mobile Banking app.

"We constantly work to update our online and mobile services to meet customer banking and lifestyle needs," explained Hala Al-Shoabi, Senior Alternative Channels Manager, Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "With this new update, it will be easier for users to sign in and complete their necessary transactions. This new update will take the online and mobile banking to a whole new level of user friendliness."

Making banking even more convenient for cus-

tomers, NBK has also added new useful features for online and mobile transactions. NBK customers can manage their NBK prepaid and credit cards while traveling, including making payments and transferring funds and increasing monthly transfer limits as needed. Customers can also complete a variety of transactions via the NBK Online or Mobile Banking app including paying mobile phone service, transfer funds to local accounts or abroad, make payments to credit cards, check balances and Reward Points and much more.

To benefit from all the mobile banking features, NBK customers can download or update to the most recent version of the NBK Mobile Banking app through the associate stores App Store or Play Store on their smart phones. Once registered, customers can create username and password that works for both services: NBK Online and the NBK Mobile Banking app. These new features make it simple and easy for customers in



Hala Al-Shoabi

Kuwait or while traveling abroad to do their banking without difficulties.

"We advise customers to register with the updated service as it is easier and more convenient with additional benefits," Al-Shoabi added. "NBK ensures customers can bank no matter where they are in the world, guaranteeing uninterrupted access to NBK even when traveling." Update the NBK Mobile Banking app or sign in at NBK Online Banking via www.nbk.com to take advantage of the new system.



Win six million Emirates Skywards Miles with ABK

KUWAIT: In partnership with Emirates Skywards, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced the launch of its summer campaign title "6 Million Skywards Miles, 120 Winners". This year's promotion offers 120 lucky ABK customers the chance to win 50,000 Skywards Miles each. 6 million Skywards Miles in total will be given away through three monthly draws extending from 1st of June to 31st of August. Eligibility for the monthly draw will be based on a minimum KD 100 total transaction completed with the following banking cards:

- ABK Emirates Credit Cards used in local and international transactions through POS and cash
- ABK Emirates Prepaid Card used in local and international transactions through POS only
- ABK ATM Credit & Prepaid Cards used abroad through POS and cash

Moreover, customers with ABK Emirates credit and prepaid cards issued prior to the start of the draw will



be eligible to participate in this promotion. The points will be accumulated on the basis of the frequency of customer transactions. The more customers spend, the more points they can redeem. Simultaneously, every KD10 spent locally will grant ABK cardholders 1 raffle entry, while transactions made abroad in a foreign currency will award customers 3 raffle entries for the equivalent of KD 10 spent.

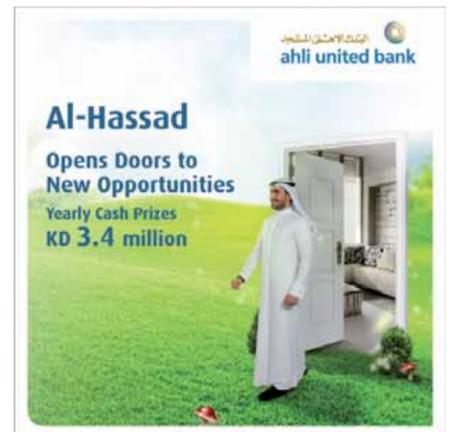
In addition, online transactions concluded on Emirates.com will award participants 6 raffle entries. ABK and Emirates Skywards have been in partnership for over 11 years. Every year, ABK holds various campaigns to reward its existing customers with extra Skywards Miles, and has allowed many lucky customers to travel by simply using their cards in purchases.

26 winners named in Al Hassad Islamic account

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading Shari'ah compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 30th of May 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each.

AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car. On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300. The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Wedad Saleh Al Saleh.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Hussain Fahad Al Azmi, Ebtesam Habeeb Salman, Faleh Seheb Al Shammari, Merji Nafea Al Mutairi, Abdulhamaid Jumaa Ismaeil, Fawzi Hussain Altourah, Saleh Abdulla Al Sayafi, Habib Nourallah Sheikhabdali, Mona Mohammad Al Binali, Qumasha Al Alabdulla, Khalaf Faleh Al Azmi, Sarah Athal Edhaib, Abdulmajeed Zayed Al Enezi, Eissa Abdullah Al Khaleel, Hebah Ghali Al Khusaili, Saleh Humoud Al Hashel, Maryam Ali A Hasan, Eman Jasim Al Tammam, Nasser Abdulla



Saleh, Ali Mohsen Dashti, Jaffar Ahmed Ashoor, Saeed Nasser Mohammed, Faud Salman Mohamed, Sara Ahmed Ebrahim and Radhiya Abdulla Yaqoob Mohammed.

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

Al Babtain Ramadan offers continue until 30 June



KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Renault in the State of Kuwait urges its customers to avail of the seasonal offers that will end on June 30. Ensuring added benefits when purchasing a new Renault vehicle, customers are also guaranteed up to KD 1,000 cash back on purchase in addition to 10 years warranty and third party insurance on specific vehicles.

Customers are urged to purchase the popular models now to enjoy limited time offers. Renault Talisman available starting from KD 5,800, Renault Koleos can be booked starting from for KD 5,999, Renault Megane starting from KD 3,799, while Renault Duster - Full Option is now available at 4,7500 KD. Customers are encouraged to visit to the Renault Al Babtain showrooms in Al Rai and drive into the new season with their brand new car!

Al Mulla CEO, CFO commemorates employee



KUWAIT: Al Mulla Group's Deputy Chairman and CEO Anwar Al Mulla along with Chief Financial Office, Abdulla Najeeb Almulla felicitated Chacko Alex Alexander for completing 40 years in service with the Group. Chacko is seen receiving his awards given in appreciation of the dedicated service extended to company which included a certificate of appreciation, a commemorative shield and cash

award as a token of gesture for his outstanding service at a humble ceremony at the Group Head Office at KFTZ. It has been Al Mulla Group's policy to express appreciation and gratitude to employees for their long term association, contribution, faithfulness and trustworthiness of employee-employer relationship that is binding and contributing towards the success of the Group.

AUB wins 'Best Human Resources Award in Kuwait'

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) has been awarded the 'Best Human Resources Award in Kuwait' from CPI Financials Banker Middle East, one of the region's most influential and leading financial magazines. AUB's success was announced recently at the Ritz Carlton, DIFC, Dubai, where winners were chosen through a subscribers-based voting process.

AUB's latest prestigious award comes from the significant achievements in different fields of Human Resources, reflecting the best practices endorsed in the Human Resources Department. The vision of AUB for Human Resources, as the cornerstone of success in the various departments of the Bank, is the core focus for Human Resources Department which seeks through an integrated program to build a cohesive and positive work culture to achieve the balance between career development and consideration of the employee's personal life.

This reflects positively on the level of job stability, loyalty and commitment of the employees to the Bank through a cooperative work environment and following an open-door policy in dealing with employees. In addition, the Human Resources Department, in conjunction with Management, is always keen to develop the skills of the Bank's employees and is encouraging them constantly through the provision of both in-house and external training programs.

Commenting on the Bank's receipt of this award, Richard Groves, Chief Executive Officer of Ahli United Bank, said: "This award is considered the result of the outstanding approach adopted by our Human Resources Department in the Bank. We are proud of this special recognition, and we consider that the appreciation received is a proof of our commitment to excellence in human resources. We look forward to increasing our efforts to strengthen Ahli United Bank's position as the preferred and best working place for employees in the banking sector."

Groves explained that the Human Resources Department is a partner in success which contributes directly to the achievements of the Bank. There is no doubt that the provision of a model environment to encourage the Bank's employees to have job stability and work in an environment conducive to creativity, quality and high efficiency is reflected positively on the level of services provided by the Bank, which contributes in raising the



level of client satisfaction and achieving the desired goals.

"I am very proud of the Human Resources Department of Ahli United Bank, and I would like to thank and congratulate them on this award on behalf of the Bank's management," added Groves. Naqeeb Amin, AUB's General Manager of Human Resources said, "We are delighted to receive this award that marks our continued effort. AUB is considered a successful model of the private sector firm's ability to attract distinguished talent."

The Human Resources Department makes continuous efforts throughout the year to attract ambitious and suitably qualified young people in various ways, starting from ongoing visits to educational institutions, students summer intern programs, in addition to participation in employment fairs and finally to the selection and recruitment of qualified candidates. These young people are assisted and trained by professional experts to become amongst the most important, prized examples of talent in the Kuwaiti banking sector.

Amin added: "We are introducing a unique and successful experience in Human Resources Department. Hence, our ability to retain a number of the Bank's employees for more than 30 years, and who have managed to accomplish their career ambitions. This highlights our success in investing in our human resources and developing our employees to reach their full potential."

Technology

Facebook sinking fast among US teens, losing to rival apps

‘Environment different from what it was just three years ago’

WASHINGTON: Facebook is rapidly losing ground against rival internet platforms in attracting and keeping US teenagers, a survey showed recently. The Pew Research Center report confirms a trend seen in other surveys, showing a sharp drop in Facebook's share of what had long been a core age segment for the huge social network.

The survey found 51 percent of US teens ages 13 to 17 use Facebook, compared with 85 percent for YouTube, 72 percent for Instagram and 69 percent who are on Snapchat. The landscape has shifted since a 2014-15 Pew survey which found Facebook leading other social networks with 71 percent of the teen segment.

According to the survey, 95 percent of the teens survey said they used a smartphone and 45 percent were online "almost constantly," with both figures showing increases from prior surveys. "The social media environment among teens is quite different from what it was just three years ago," said Pew researcher Monica Anderson, the lead author of the report. "Back then, teens' social media use mostly revolved around Facebook. Today, their habits revolve less around a single platform. At the same time we've seen this shift, teens are more digitally connected than ever."

The survey showed a split over the impact of social media on the lives of the teens. Pew found 31 percent said social media has had a mostly positive impact, with 24 percent describing its effect as mostly negative. The remaining 45 percent said it was neither. Those who reported a positive impact cited the ability to stay connected, find news and people with similar interests. Others who found social media harmful cited the potential for online bullying, spreading of false information and addiction.

Facebook is the world's biggest social network with some two billion regular users. But some surveys and analysts suggest it is losing appeal to younger users amid a rise in services like Snapchat and Facebook-owned Instagram. A report earlier this year by the research firm eMarketer said Snapchat is drawing youths away from Facebook at a quicker clip than Facebook-owned Instagram. According to eMarketer, Facebook will lose two million US users under the age 24 this year, offsetting those losses with gains among older users. A report last year by invest-

ment firm Piper Jaffray showed Snapchat is the preferred social network for US teens, with 47 percent using the platform.

Facebook to change 'trending' topics

Facebook on Friday said it is getting rid of a "trending" topics feature as it tests ways for publishers to deliver reliable breaking news. The Trending feature introduced four years ago listed stories buzzing on Facebook at any given time. "We're exploring new ways to help people stay informed about timely, breaking news that matters to them, while making sure the news they see on Facebook is from trustworthy and quality sources," Alex Hardiman, Facebook's head of news products, said in a blog post.

He said the Trending feature would be removed "soon." Facebook and other social media platforms have been criticized for their role in allowing disinformation to spread during the 2016 US election, in many cases with the help of automated "bots" or disguised Russian-based accounts. Trending was only available in a handful of countries, and accounted for a paltry fraction of clicks through to news publishers, according to Hardiman.

Facebook said it is working with 80 publishers in Australia, Europe, India, and the Americas on a "Breaking News" label to adorn posts in News Feed. The California-based social network is also testing a "Today" section dedicated to "breaking and important news" from local publishers, officials and organizations, according to Hardiman. A Facebook Watch zone for online video viewing will soon get a news section complete with live coverage, daily briefings, and "deep dives," he added. "We are committed to ensuring the news that people see on Facebook is high quality, and we're investing in ways to better draw attention to breaking news when it matters most," Hardiman said.

Spanish consumer group to sue

Elsewhere a Spanish consumer group said it will sue Facebook over the alleged misuse of the personal data of 26 million users of the social network in Spain. In a class-action lawsuit, the group OCU said it will seek "at least" 200 euros (\$230) in compensation for each Facebook user. The claim will represent "all Facebook users in Spain", not just those affected by the



PARIS: This file illustration shows a close-up of the Facebook logo in the eye of a person posing while she looks at a flipped logo of Facebook. —AFP

Cambridge Analytica data sharing scandal, in which the British consultancy obtained the data of millions of Facebook users for political purposes.

OCU said it believes "Facebook violated legislation regarding data protection", because it did not tell users how it would use their data, nor ask for their authorization. It said it had acted in coordination with other consumer rights groups in Portugal, Belgium and Italy which will file similar lawsuits in their countries. The lawsuits are the latest faced by Facebook, which counts more than two billion users worldwide, over its handling of sensitive personal data that enable it to micro-target online advertising.

A French internet users group said Monday it had filed a class-action lawsuit against Facebook and four other tech firms—Apple, Google, Amazon and LinkedIn—for the alleged

misuse of personal data. Austrian privacy campaigner Max Schrems has brought several cases against Facebook and other tech firms in several European countries, arguing they were acting illegally by forcing users to accept intrusive terms of service or lose access.

Facebook has admitted that up to 87 million users may have had their data hijacked by Cambridge Analytica, which worked for US President Donald Trump during his 2016 campaign. Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg told a hearing at the European Parliament last week that his firm will make huge investments to protect users. He also said he was "sorry" for the Cambridge Analytica breaches, but also for its failure to crack down on election interference, "fake news" and other data misuses. —AFP



A split over the impact of social media

‘Surprising’ methane dunes found on Pluto

TAMPA: Pluto is covered with surprising dunes made of methane ice, which have formed relatively recently despite the frigid dwarf planet's very thin atmosphere, international researchers said. Pluto's atmosphere has a surface pressure 100,000 times lower than Earth's, which researchers suspected might be too little to allow tiny grains of solid methane to mobilize and become airborne.

Yet mild winds blowing across Pluto's surface at speeds of some 19-25 miles per hour have forged these ripples at the border of an ice plain and mountain range, said the report in the journal Science. "The likely source of the dune grains is methane ice blown from nearby mountains," said the Science report. "Although nitrogen ice cannot be ruled out."

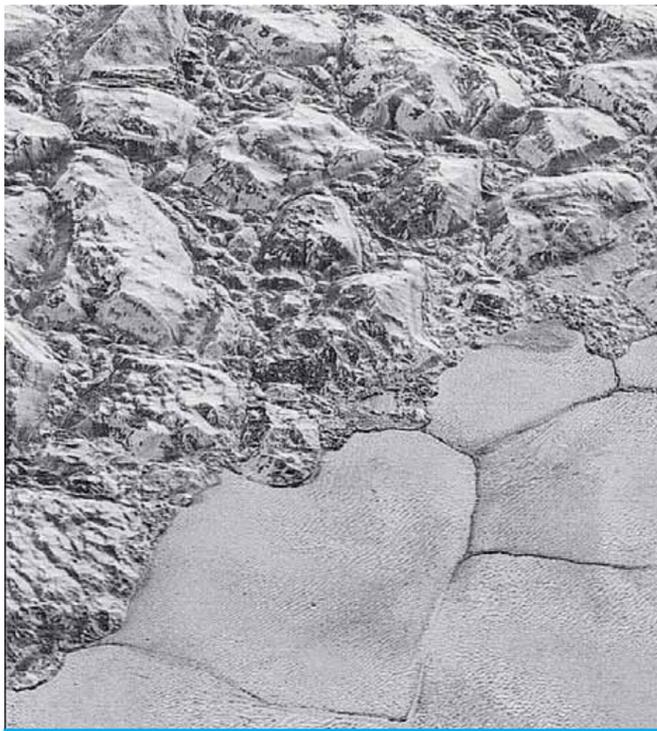
The dunes are scattered across a belt-like area some 45 miles across, and were spotted with NASA's New Horizons spacecraft when it flew by in 2015, said the report. "When we first saw the New Horizons images, we thought instantly that these were dunes but it was really surprising because we know there is not much of an atmosphere," said co-author Jani Radebaugh, associate professor in the department of geo-

logical sciences at Brigham Young University. "However despite being 30 times further away from the Sun as the Earth, it turns out Pluto still has Earth-like characteristics."

Other cosmic bodies that are known to have dunes—besides Earth—include Mars and Venus, as well as Saturn's moon Titan and the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. "We knew that every solar system body with an atmosphere and a solid rocky surface has dunes on it, but we didn't know what we'd find on Pluto," said lead author Matt Telfer, lecturer in physical geography at the University of Plymouth.

"It turns out that even though there is so little atmosphere, and the surface temperature is around -230 Celsius (-382 Fahrenheit), we still get dunes forming." Scientists also believe the dunes, which seem undisturbed, likely formed within the last 500,000 years, possibly much more recently. On Earth, to form such dunes with sand requires stronger winds, said co-author Eric Parteli, lecturer in Computational Geosciences at the University of Cologne.

"The considerably lower gravity of Pluto, and the extremely low atmospheric pressure, means the winds needed to maintain sediment transport can be a hundred times lower," he said. On Pluto, solar radiation also causes temperature gradients in the granular ice layer, which contributes to the ability of dunes to form. "Together, we have found that these combined processes can form dunes under normal, everyday wind conditions on Pluto," Parteli said. —AFP



This highest-resolution file image from NASA's New Horizons spacecraft taken December 4, 2015 and obtained June 1, 2018, shows great blocks of Pluto's water-ice crust appearing jammed together in the informally named al-Idrisi mountains, some mountain sides appear coated in dark material, while other sides are bright. —AFP

Smartphone market to stay cool this year: Forecast

SAN FRANCISCO: International Data Corporation forecast Wednesday that global smartphone sales would cool this year before heating up with help from new 5G networks and India's vibrant market. An IDC Worldwide Mobile Phone Tracker expected smartphone sales to slip two-tenths of a percent this year to total 1.462 billion in a second straight year of slight decline. But IDC predicted that the smartphone market would reignite next year, growing about 3 percent annually to 1.654 billion in the year 2022.

The "biggest driver" of the downturn last year was said by IDC to be the China market, which it expected to be down 7.1 percent this year after shrinking 4.9 percent last year. IDC forecast that the smartphone market in China would flatten out next year, while sales in India were expected to continue to boom on low-priced handsets sold by Chinese companies.

"China remains the focal point for many given that it consumes roughly 30 percent of the world's smartphones," IDC Worldwide

Quarterly Mobile Device Tracker program vice president Ryan Reith said in a release. "But, plenty of pockets of growth can be found beyond China." A "catalyst to watch" will be arrival next year of smartphones tailored for ultra-fast 5G telecommunications networks, according to IDC.

While smartphone shipments will ebb this year, the average selling price will rise more than 10 percent to \$345 and remain on an upward trend, said IDC research manager Anthony Scarsella. "This year will continue to focus on the ultra-high-end segment of the market as we expect a surge of premium flagship devices to launch in developed markets," Scarsella said.

A trend toward premium smartphones would play to Apple's strength, and IDC expected iPhone sales to grow 2.6 percent to 221 million total this year and to climb to 242 million by the year 2022. Handsets powered by Google-backed Android mobile were expected to continue to dominate the smartphone market, with a share of about 85 percent remaining relatively stable during the coming five years. "There is no question that Android is the OS (operating system) of choice for the mass market and nothing leads us to believe this will change," IDC said in its forecast. —AFP



SEOUL: In this file photo taken on April 05, 2018 a woman walks past an advertisement for the Samsung Galaxy S9 at a mobile phone shop. —AFP

Erdogan says Uber 'finished' in Turkey

ISTANBUL: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the ride hailing app Uber is "finished" in Turkey, following intense pressure from Istanbul taxi drivers for the service to be banned. Erdogan's comments, in a late night speech Friday in Istanbul, came after the government agreed new rules that are expected to severely complicate Uber's operations in Turkey.

Drivers of Istanbul's yellow taxis have over the last months waged an intense campaign to have Uber banned, saying the company is eating into their business without having a proper legal basis for work. "This thing emerged called Uber or Muber or whatever," said Erdogan. "But this issue is now finished. It's over now." "Our Prime Minister (Binali Yildirim) made the announcement. We have our system of taxis," he added.

Yildirim's government last month issued a directive sharply hiking fines and threatened blacklisting for companies whose vehicles illegally work as taxis. The official taxi drivers association said at the time the measure would be a major threat to Uber, if it was properly enforced by the traffic police. Erdogan said that while Uber may be popular in some European countries, Turkey was different. "Why did it (Uber) emerge? Because it was in Europe. But what is Europe to me? We will take the decision ourselves."

His comments come three weeks ahead of keenly-contested presidential and parliamentary elections. Many Istanbul taxi drivers—though not all—are strong Erdogan supporters and the main taxi associations back him. The 17,400 official yellow taxis in Istanbul are a pillar of the city's often patchy transport system, but critics say that poor quality service and overcharging have given Uber an opportunity. The yellow taxi drivers, on the other hand, slam Uber as "pirates" who are swallowing their incomes in an already tight market.

Uber has said it is committed to working in Turkey and insisted it is operating within the law. "We want to work in cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders to improve transportation options in Turkey and we are committed long-term to Turkey, to the end, as a loyal partner," it said in a rare Turkish statement this week. The tension in Turkey is one of a number of headaches for Uber and its new chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi, who took over last August after founder Travis Kalanick was ousted following a series of scandals.

Uber passenger shot dead

In other news, a driver with the ride-sharing service Uber was arrested on Friday for suspicion of first-degree murder after Denver police said he fatally shot a passenger in his vehicle. Michael Andre Hancock, 29, was being held without bond in the Denver County jail pending the formal filing of charges, according to jail records. It was unclear if he had legal representation.

According to a Denver Police probable cause affidavit, on Friday morning a man later identified as Hancock told a motorist on the side of a highway that he had just shot a rider who tried to attack him. Police found a sedan stopped perpendicular to traffic on a ramp and a man with gunshot wounds lying on the floor board of the front passenger seat, the affidavit said.

The Denver Medical Examiner's Office identified the dead man as Hyun Kim, 45. Police said they removed a semi-automatic pistol from Hancock's waistband, and later recovered 10 spent 40-caliber cartridges on the shoulder of the highway. Hancock was arrested, but police did not provide further details. Uber said in a statement that it was "deeply troubled" by the arrest of Hancock, a contract driver with the company for nearly three years. —Agencies

Health

Investcorp white paper to help improve GCC healthcare industry

Paper offers six remedies, highlights key priorities

BAHRAIN: Investcorp, a leading global provider and manager of alternative investments, yesterday released its white paper which examines the GCC's evolving multi-billion dollar healthcare industry, and offers recommendations on improving the operating environment, reducing costs and increasing opportunities across the industry's value chain.

At the onset, the white paper titled, "A Health Prescription for the GCC", identifies four areas of weakness in the region's healthcare industry, namely, insufficient access and quality of care, the high cost of treatment of a relatively young population and the increasing burden of funding on GCC governments - the current primary spenders on healthcare in the region. Based on tried and tested models, global best practices and deep knowledge of the GCC's healthcare industry, the paper offers six vital remedies and highlights key priorities to help improve it.

The paper recommends that the Gulf countries improve their wellness and prevention measures, for example, by promoting a healthy food and exercise regimen for their citizens and encouraging screening and health checks. Second, to help fill supply gaps with adequate care, there needs to be a focus on increasing the number of specialized facilities and improving the quality of services, by, for instance, partnering with experienced Western institutions.

Third, healthcare providers, such as hospitals and clinics, need to consolidate to benefit from economies of scale. Fourth, the paper stresses the importance of privatization to improve the overall healthcare system and infrastructure. Fifth, it recom-



Rabih Khouri



Tristan de Boysson

mends that governments try value-based care systems to incentivize good behavior and reduce costs. Finally, the paper emphasizes the need for greater cooperation between GCC nations and pooling of purchasing power and infrastructure.

Commenting on the white paper Tristan de Boysson, Co-Head of Corporate Investment for MENA at Investcorp, said: "The GCC healthcare industry is undergoing a much-needed transformation, mainly driven by the pressure on governments to shift the burden of funding to the private sector and the rise of the patient as a 'consumer' of healthcare services. The change is creating plenty of opportunities, and the buildup of a more complete eco-system."

Rabih Khouri, Managing Director, Corporate Investment MENA at Investcorp said: "Encouraging steps have already been taking place to help take the GCC healthcare industry to global standards. The magnitude of the transformation is highest in Saudi Arabia, where new regulations are being prepared as well as a substantial privatization program. I believe the transformation will considerably raise the standards of healthcare and better meet the population's expectations."

Targeted cancer treatments better traditional methods

MIAMI: Cancer treatments that attack tumors based on their individual genetic traits—not their location in the body—far outperform traditional methods, extending survival for twice as many patients, a study said yesterday. The precision medicine field of targeted therapy involves testing tumors for clues about their genetic mutations, and matching patients with new drugs designed to block cancer's growth on a molecular level.

Researchers in Texas began studying the impact of these therapies in 2007, after seeing the success of Gleevec (imatinib) — a breakthrough drug approved by US regulators in 2001 that showed huge success against chronic myeloid leukemia. The results of the first and largest precision medicine trial to look at survival across a host of cancer types and many different targeted therapies were released at the American Society of Clinical Oncology meeting in Chicago, the world's largest annual cancer meeting.

The study, called IMPACT, enrolled 3,743 patients at Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center from 2007 to 2013. All the patients had advanced cancers, or "end-stage disease," involving cancers of the gastrointestinal tract, breast, or lung. Melanoma and cancer of the female reproductive tract were also included, along with more rare types of cancer.

Those enrolled had typically tried at least four—and sometimes up to 16 other treatments that failed to halt the growth of their cancer. Patients who received molecular targeted thera-

pies either got an investigational drug then being tested in a clinical trial, or an FDA-approved targeted therapy commercially approved for another indication.

After three years, 15 percent of people treated with targeted cancer therapies were alive, compared to seven percent in the non-targeted group. After 10 years, six percent of the targeted group was alive, compared to just one percent in the other group.

Still far from a cure

On the whole, targeted therapies led to an average of four months of life without the cancer advancing, known as progression-free survival, and nine extra months of overall survival. Those who were treated with traditional approaches lived just under three months without cancer growing, and 7.3 months longer overall. Researchers say the field has grown immensely since 2007, and that further research will improve the range of therapies available to cancer patients.

"When IMPACT first opened, we tested for no more than one to two genes," said lead investigator Apostolia Tsimberidou, professor of investigational cancer therapeutics at MD Anderson. "Now patients are being tested for hundreds of actionable genes, amplifications and mutations, as well as for immune markers," she added. "Ideally, in the future, patients' tumor testing and cell-free DNA analysis will become the standard of care at the time of diagnosis, in hopes of making a difference for patients upfront, especially in those with hard-to-treat cancers."

Colon cancer treatment costs more in US

In related news, people diagnosed with advanced colon cancer pay twice more per month for treatment in the United States than in Canada, but do not live any longer, researchers said Friday. Canadian residents of British

Columbia paid an average of \$6,195 per month, compared to patients in the northwestern US state of Washington who paid \$12,345, said the study released at the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) conference in Chicago. The two regions are about 700 miles (1,100 kilometers) apart, have similar income levels, and a racial makeup that is mainly white with a significant Asian minority. Canada has a single payer health system, while the United States has a mix of private insurance and government-funded health insurance.

"To our knowledge, this is the first study to directly compare treatment cost and use, along with health outcomes, in two similar populations treated in different health care models," said lead author Todd Yezefski, a senior fellow at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington. The findings "may help us improve care and potentially lower health care costs," he added. The study tracked 1,622 patients with metastatic colorectal cancer in British Columbia and 575 in Washington state. The median age of the patients in Canada was 66, while in the United States it was 60.

More patients in the US (79 percent of those diagnosed) than in Canada (68 percent) opted to undergo the most aggressive treatment available. Both groups were treated with similar kinds of chemotherapy. Despite paying about twice as much, US patients lived an average of 21.4 months after diagnosis. Canadian patients lived an average of 22.1 months. Among those who decided not to pursue treatment, the average survival was 5.4 months in Washington and 6.3 months in British Columbia.

"As oncologists, we see the burden of high costs on patients and their families every day," said ASCO chief medical officer Richard Schilsky. "This study adds important context to the ongoing national conversation about rising treatment costs." —Agencies

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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What's On



KFH holds Ramadan ghabqa for media

Al-Fares recognizes journalists' efforts in media



Kuwait Finance House (KFH) held its annual ghabqa for media representatives as a token of appreciation for their efforts and their instrumental role in enriching the media and the economy. Also, the ghabqa comes as part of the bank's keenness to strengthen communication with media outlets. The media ghabqa witnessed remarkable attendance of journalists and reporters from different media types; print, broadcast and digital media.

Senior Manager Media and Government Relations at KFH Mohammed Al-Fares, welcomed everyone to the ghabqa and congratulated them on the occasion of Ramadan. He extended the bank's thanks and gratitude for their efforts in the media, yet hailed their important role in tracking news and highlighting different issues of interest to the society. He added that KFH attaches great interest in the media industry that has witnessed a paradigm shift while keeping abreast of technology and electronic developments.

He indicated KFH has unveiled its

Ramadan program "increase good deeds in Ramadan 4" that includes various visits and voluntary work, social and humanitarian events and activities stemming from the bank's endeavors to solidify its commitment towards the society, while supporting all social and humanitarian initiatives.

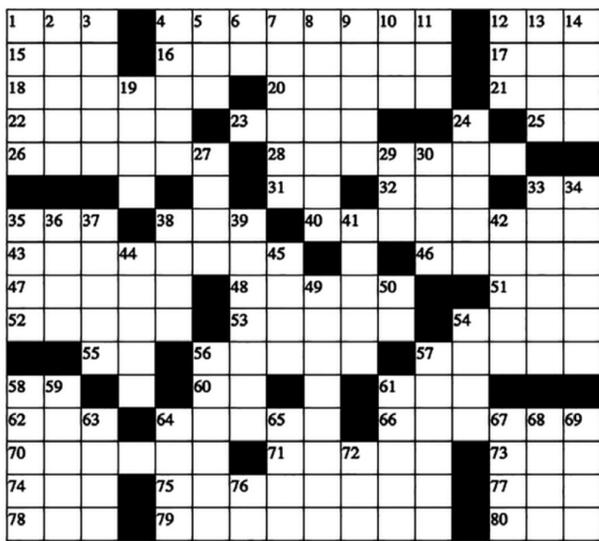
Meanwhile, the journalists applauded KFH efforts in providing the media with information that serve their career and the business content. It is worth noting that KFH issued the second edition of 'The Pioneers of Islamic Economy' book that tackles topics of the succession of generations in the service of the Islamic economy, the Islamic business model, the role of KFH in serving the community, and the personalities that contributed to the establishment of KFH and the expansion of its businesses.

It also explains the emergence of the idea of the Islamic economy, the stage of establishing Islamic banks, the difficulties faced by KFH, and the improvement of performance in numbers, profits and distributions.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1925



ACROSS

1. A reproach for some lapse or misdeed.
2. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
3. A path set aside for walking.
4. A walled city in southeastern China on the Gan Jiang.
4. The basic unit of money in Nigeria.
5. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
6. A Mid-Atlantic state.
7. 1 species.
8. Genus of herbs of Eurasia and the Americas.
9. Italian violin maker in Cremona.
10. Game in which matchsticks are alternately removed one or more of them.
11. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
12. Any of various trees of the genus Ulmus.
13. A small cake leavened with yeast.
14. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
19. The compass point that is one point east of southeast.
24. The kind and number and arrangement of teeth (collectively) in a person or animal.
27. (informal) Exceptionally good.
29. Extremely pleasing.
30. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
33. The arrangement of the hair (especially a woman's hair).
34. Verse in the meter used in Greek and Latin poetry consisting of strophes of 4 tetrametric lines.
36. A branch of the Tai languages.
37. Enthusiastic approval.
38. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
39. The levorotatory form of dopa (trade names Bendopa and Brocadopa and Larodopa).
41. God of wealth and love.
42. To fix or set securely or deeply.
44. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
45. Material used to daub walls.
49. Parasitic nematode occurring in the intestines of pigs and rats and human beings and producing larvae that form cysts in skeletal muscles.
50. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
54. Give over.
56. A sweet innocent baby.
57. Shelf that projects from wall above fireplace.
59. How a result is obtained or an end is achieved.
61. A blanket that is used as a cloak or shawl.
63. (old-fashioned) At or from or to a great distance.
64. Queen of the Olympian gods in ancient Greek mythology.
65. Thin and fit.
67. A Hindu prince or king in India.
68. Showing or causing joy and pleasure.
69. Make a raucous noise.
72. An associate degree in applied science.
76. A polyvalent metallic element that resembles chromium and tungsten in its properties.

DOWN

1. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.

Friday's Solution

B	A	A	L	A	S	S	U	A	G	E	A	S	K
A	K	K	A	S	T	E	N	C	I	L	G	C	A
L	E	A	D	H	A	T	B	A	N	D	R	A	M
K	E	B	A	B	M	A	A	R	S	A	B	A	
A	N	M	E	R	R	I	M	A	C				
L	A	U	A	N	I	N	D	A	F	L	A		
A	G	A	M	A	A	F	A	R	P	R	O	M	
A	L	B	B	A	A	I	A	W	E	A	R	Y	
G	A	O	L	D	A	C	C	A	E	N	I	T	
E	I	R	A	A	R	E	A	L	B	A	C	C	A
R	A	T	H	E	R	C	C	E	B	U	A	L	
O	N	R	A	C	R	B							
H	E	A	R	B	L	O	B	S	A	A	L	E	
T	U	G	E	L	A	P	A	C	H	A	R	A	S
T	R	H	A	R	B	I	T	R	A	L	I	M	O
P	O	A	O	N	D	A	A	T	J	E	C	A	P

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Let your creative juices flow. Use that nervous energy to be creative. That which is unique and special about you will have you in the limelight today. Those close to you will be very appreciative of these qualities. Place your focus on your problem-solving skills. Take some time for yourself today to reflect, regroup, and reorganize. Aries, leave those big decisions on the back burner today and do not let anything dull your shine! You may find yourself deep in thought struggling with a big decision but for today, let it be.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are focused and very goal oriented today. It is as if you are on a mission and will let nothing stand in your way. You are motivated and determined to fix all that is around you this not just as you think it should be. You want things your way and refuse to settle for less. This day reveals itself to be a perfect time to spend with a lover or someone close to you as you are feeling a desire to be needed and admired. You will find this will fulfill your needs and leave you with a sense of completion. Your most productive time today will be spent at home, Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may feel an emotional distance to your loved ones at this time. You are deeply focused on your ideas at this time. Personal concerns are trivial to you as your level of thinking and focus deepens to that which is new, edgy, and unusual. An abstract way of thinking. You are fascinated by the more eccentric things in life. You may find that you are surrounding yourself with like-minded individuals as you have no tolerance for those who do not appreciate your points of views on matters. Within the company of these individuals you find your communication skills to be on point today and feel as if you are in your element.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your mind is clear and your focused and determined. This is a time you find yourself to be very solution oriented and focused on solving any problems in your personal life and also in the work place. You feel a need to declutter and organize all that is around you. Ideas are what appeal to you now. You have little room for emotion. You have clear goals set. Be sure and use all available resources to accomplish these. You have a desire to surround yourself with like-minded individuals only.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may be inspired by the positive, untarnished opinions of someone younger than you today. This could cause you to analyze your outlook on life encouraging you to take a more positive outlook on things in general. You long to spend time with those closest to your heart. This provides you with a sense of peace and belonging. It feels good to be needed and even better to know you are loved. Now is a great time to take that leap of faith. Stepping out of your comfort zone may produce great rewards for you. You are being drawn toward uncharted waters and change is very appealing to you at this time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today may find you feeling a need to reevaluate many aspects of your life. Do not push yourself too hard as this time could find you highly emotional. You feel as if you need to make changes. Become more focused and push yourself more. Self-discipline is needed and beginning to exercise a form of this may be just what you need to get in gear and move forward. You will find when making up your mind and devoting yourself you will be able to move mountains today. Spend some time this evening getting to know yourself again and discovering what drives you emotionally. You are headed in the right direction.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

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



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today may find you feeling as if you are on top of the world. You could have a very special time with someone you love. Things may seem to flow for you today. Express yourself and share your feelings openly. You may be surprised at how gracefully you as a person are accepted and appreciated today. Scorpio, you may be just the one to lead that new project in the workplace today. Your hard work and dedication are being noticed. Others are starting to recognize you to be the natural born leader you are.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may find yourself extremely creative today. This is a great way to express your emotions and feelings as well as having new experiences. You may feel drawn to take chances, take a new and different approach to problem solving or just change your routine all together. You are more willing at this time to take financial risk. Hopefully this will lead you towards the stock market rather than the casino. Either direction you may choose you are in the mood to do a bit of gambling. Good luck with this, Sagittarius. May the risks you take be profitable.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may be feeling emotionally detached from your surroundings at this time. You tend to be viewed as detached by others when you are in all reality your mind is highly focused and your wheels are turning. You are fascinated by the unusual and are finding yourself lost in your thoughts. You may find it hard to focus in the workplace today. Today may not be the best day for important decisions in the work place as you have lost yourself in your thoughts. You are quick witted and are no stranger to finding yourself having to apologize for having offended someone. Bite your tongue, keep it to yourself today as this could result in a battle of words with someone close to you. Capricorn, settle in with a book tonight and give your mind a break from reality. This will provide a much-needed escape for you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

If an emotional argument is what you are seeking today may just in fact be your day. You may feel a lack of support and blocked at every turn. Use your imagination and ability to think outside of the box to find your answers. Others may see you detached or cool on a personal level today. Your tolerance levels may be low and your temper short. You are drawn now to the unique and unusual in this world. Make your ideas count. Now is a great time to try new things and visit new places. You should find today as one where you are able to make new friends and have great conversations with everyone you cross paths with.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You feel great about your accomplishments and position in life. You may feel as if you need to put forth as much hard work on your physical wellbeing as you put in other areas of your life. This may be a great time to join the gym, take the walk, or start the meal planning you have been thinking about. If you do not care for yourself physically you may not be able to continue the hard work. This is a great time to take this seriously and set your goals. You should have much success in this area of your life. You are devoted and determined, and this should work out for you as well. Pisces, this should be just what it takes to make you feel great about yourself.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Old TV Shows 4

Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.

F	A	L	L	G	U	Y	T	I	C	N	I	P	S	L	A	R	T
I	N	P	E	R	R	Y	M	A	S	O	N	A	T	A	D	O	N
T	E	L	O	U	G	R	A	N	T	B	G	A	D	L	O	L	U
L	M	B	A	N	A	C	E	K	A	E	L	E	L	H	O	H	
L	A	R	A	M	I	E	H	Y	V	I	H	K	A	Y	R	C	A
O	Y	U	G	E	S	I	W	I	E	C	O	R	M	K	G	E	
S	T	Y	L	I	M	A	F	N	C	O	U	S	J	C	T	N	S
T	R	P	E	Y	T	O	N	P	L	A	C	E	O	B	S	I	S
I	A	E	C	O	A	D	T	S	C	G	R	H	E	E	V	E	
N	H	L	H	N	T	A	A	E	H	H	E	O	N	A	N	I	G
S	O	L	T	I	D	M	I	E	L	H	E	H	L	Y	L	D	
P	T	E	O	R	L	K	N	R	G	Z	O	R	R	O	T	N	I
A	T	N	O	E	O	A	E	G	F	T	R	O	O	P	P	I	R
C	R	J	Z	O	B	S	A	M	O	S	S	O	L	B	M	E	B
E	A	A	R	E	L	R	Y	T	I	C	I	L	E	F	E	P	H
M	H	E	A	U	F	R	A	I	D	U	E	S	O	U	T	H	S
R	H	C	I	E	R	E	D	E	V	L	E	B	R	M	A		
T	H	Y	E	P	O	H	S	N	A	Y	R	M	A	R	T	I	N

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| ALIEN NATION
ALLY MCBEAL
AMEN
BANACEK
BAYWATCH
BLOSSOM
CHICAGO HOPE
CHINA BEACH
COACH
DEAR JOHN | DUE SOUTH
ELLEN
EMPTY NEST
F TROOP
FALL GUY
FAMILY
FELICITY
FRAGGLE ROCK
HART TO HART
HAZEL | HERE'S LUCY
IN LIVING COLOR
LARAMIE
LOST IN SPACE
LOU GRANT
MAJOR DAD
MARTIN
MATLOCK
MR BELVEDERE
NASH BRIDGES | PERRY MASON
PEYTON PLACE
RHODA
RYAN'S HOPE
SEA HUNT
SPIN CITY
THE ROOKIES
VEGAS
WISEGUY
ZORRO |
|--|--|---|--|

Friday's Solution

Old TV Shows 3

T	N	I	A	S	E	H	T	P	R	E	T	E	N	D	E	R			
E	O	Y	R	R	A	H	R	E	D	N	A	L	H	G	I	H	R	U	
N	B	C	E	G	O	L	D	E	N	G	I	R	L	S	O	H	A		
G	E	N	H	G	E	B	L	S	E	E	K	N	O	M	C	T	N		
A	W	I	A	N	X	M	F	E	A	H	B	A	N	K	D	G	T		
R	I	U	R	A	F	U	I	M	C	V	F	A	F	E	I	M	G	U	
D	T	Q	L	R	I	L	W	A	C	A	E	O	T	D	S	A	E	M	
R	H	X	E	N	E	L	O	O	M	L	R	N	M	S	S	T	L	E	
E	E	I	S	O	S	N	L	C	F	D	L	V	A	E	A	M	A	P	
L	D	N	A	L	R	Y	N	T	N	E	E	E	P	R	K	A	P		
L	M	N	N	R	T	E	L	A	T	U	P	R	P	L	E	S	R	T	
A	C	A	G	I	T	U	E	H	O	E	N	B	Y	T	R	U	L	T	P
G	C	M	E	O	S	N	S	S	I	D	Y	T	E	L	C	S	M		
T	L	S	L	F	G	K	G	W	N	A	O	R	D	I	A	G	Y	U	
H	O	R	S	I	Z	Z	T	F	Y	A	A	R	B	A	N	R	L	N	
G	U	N	S	M	O	K	E	S	U	I	G	Y	I	R	A	S	G		
I	D	D	W	O	H	S	Y	B	S	O	C	O	W	A	M	B	S	A	
N	Y	L	I	M	A	F	S	M	A	D	D	A	H	O	T	E	L	M	

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| ADDAMS FAMILY
AVENGERS
BATMAN
BEWITCHED
BRADY BUNCH
CHARLIE'S ANGELS
COACH
COLUMBO
COSBY SHOW
CYBILL
DRAGNET | FAMILY TIES
GET SMART
GOLDEN GIRLS
GUNSMOKE
HAPPY DAYS
HARRY O
HIGHLANDER
HOGAN'S HEROES
HOTEL
I LOVE LUCY | KNOTS LANDING
KUNG FU
LONE RANGER
MAGNUM P.I.
MANNIX
MASH
MCLOUD
MONKEES
NIGHT GALLERY
PRETENDER | QUANTUM LEAP
QUINCY
ROCKFORD FILES
ROSEANNE
STAR TREK
THE SAINT
TWIN PEAKS
WINGS
WONDER YEARS
X FILES |
|--|---|---|--|

The hidden TV show is: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GRIZZLY ADAMS

Daily SuDoku

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

Friday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JUNE 3, 2018



A Pakistani worker arranges glass bangles at a factory ahead of the Muslim festival Eid ul Fitr, in Lahore. — AFP

The beat is fading for Pakistan's Ramadan drummers

Lal Hussain saunters through Rawalpindi's empty streets at 1:00 am shattering the silence with syncopated drum beats, awakening startled Pakistanis so they can sleepily eat one last meal before the day's Ramadan fasting begins. "Wake up and eat your morning meal!" he howls along with the Bhangra-inspired beats emanating from his dhol drum.

Hussain has been faithfully hitting the streets every Ramadan for the last 35 years, walking with his tasseled drum for miles through the deserted byways and back alleys of the city's old quarter. Mothers and children peek through their windows to catch a glimpse of the drummer as he passes, while men greet him in the streets offering small amounts of cash as thanks for his service. But this centuries-old tradition is becoming rarer in Pakistan.

Millions of devout Pakistanis observe the holy fasting month of Ramadan. From sunrise onwards they abstain from food and drink, breaking their fast at sunset with a meal called iftar. Then in the hours before dawn they eat

"Need is the mother of innovation"

once more, with sehri, the morning meal, giving them a final opportunity to consume liters of water and juice and plates of food before the day-long fast. Drummers once provided the heartbeat to the sehri ritual but their future is uncertain as more Pakistanis connect to the grid and purchase smartphones.

Now, people almost universally rely on phone alarms, digital clocks or public announcements on loudspeakers to rouse them from their slumber in time for sehri. "Need is the mother of innovation," says Uxi

Mufti, former director general of Pakistan's national institute of culture and heritage. "Now when (the drummers) are not required, they are vanishing."

Every year fewer drummers fan out in the cities and villages across Pakistan during Ramadan to wake their fellow Muslims for sehri. "Hardly a dozen drummers are left in Rawalpindi," Hussain tells AFP as he makes his rounds through the city of some five million people. "There used to be a drum beater in every street but now many of them have gone. The younger generations have adopted other professions."

Even as his fellow drummers have retired or abandoned the tradition, the 66-year-old persists undaunted as he battles hepatitis C—determined to keep the practice alive for as long as possible. His dedication has endeared him to residents. "It rekindles (memories of) our forefathers, our culture, so we enjoy it in the same manner," says Yasir Butt. And with Pakistan's frequent power cuts, Hussain says he is ultimately more reliable than residents' battery-reliant phones. "There are people who tell me to continue with drum beating as they don't trust their mobile phones," he says.—AFP

In this picture, a Pakistani man Lal Hussain, center, 66, 'Ramadan drummer' beats his drum as he makes calls at doors 'wake up and eat your sehri morning meal' before their fasting during Ramadan at Bani, an old residential area, in Rawalpindi. — AFP



'Party city' Amsterdam warns rowdy Brits they may face fines

Amsterdam on Thursday warned rowdy British and Dutch tourists who "party excessively" in the city that they could face stiff fines, in the latest campaign to halt drunken mayhem on the streets. The campaign specifically targets men aged between 18 to 34 years, who are increasingly attracted by the freewheeling Dutch capital's beer-drinking and soft-drug culture, as well as the salacious draw of its red light district.

to residents, local business people and other visitors," Amsterdam Marketing said. The innovative campaign focuses on four kinds of behavior seen as causing the most trouble: public drunkenness, noise, littering and public urination. It will be highly visible on billboards around the city—particularly at its bustling Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein nightlife areas and also online from the moment a visitor does a search to book a trip.



In this file photo Dancemans are covered with neon paint during the Neonsplash Paint Party in the Heineken Music Hall in Amsterdam. — AFP

Enticed by cheap travel, groups of young men—mainly from elsewhere in the Netherlands or Britain—frequently roam the inner city's canal-lined streets at weekends, on elaborate pub crawls or to celebrate noisy stag parties. "All too often the result is drunkenness, noise in the street, litter and public urination," Amsterdam Marketing said, launching its "Enjoy & Respect" campaign. It warned that there was a "high price for bad behavior".

Under existing laws, those caught peeing in the streets can be fined 140 euros, the same fine as for raucous late-night singing outside homes and residences instead of in bars and clubs. Some 18 million tourists flock to Amsterdam every year—more than the entire population of the Netherlands—and over the past year, the city has taken major steps to push back against unruly visitors.

"Surveys on quality of life have shown this is a serious nuisance source

"Bursting for the loo?" one poster asks with a red rectangle imposed over the urinal saying "Free", while another rectangle encompassing the street says "140 euros". Another poster says "Booze & Banter?" with a red triangle over a pub saying "Free" and a red triangle over the street outside reading "95 euros".

"We want people to behave, but we are not going to wag a finger at them like a parent," Amsterdam Marketing says in a video to promote the campaign. "Instead the goal is to increase awareness to what is or isn't allowed in the city by presenting good behavior as a freedom of choice," it said. Previously, the new city coalition said it would ban so-called "beer bikes", hike tourist taxes and curb online rentals of private homes.—AFP

Lifestyle | Movies & Music

Peter Pan at 65: Boy who wouldn't grow up comes of age

Most of us need eight hours' sleep, posh skin cream and a macrobiotic diet to halt the advancing years. Peter Pan—that lucky little imp—gets by on a little faith, trust and pixie dust. J.M. Barrie's creation may never age but this year marks the 65th anniversary of the Disney movie that set imaginations soaring with tales of Lost Boys, swashbuckling pirates and an ominously ticking crocodile.

A paean to the wonder of youth but a poignant reminder that it doesn't last forever, "Peter Pan" is steeped in "a child's imagination and where it can take us," says Disney historian Mindy Johnson. "We as adults need to return to that sometimes and this is a constant reminder of that—to regain our sense of wonder, magic and imagination," she said at the Disney lot in Burbank, California.

Barrie, a Scottish writer, created Pan in stories that he told the sons of his friend Sylvia Llewelyn-Davies, naming the character for the youngest of the boys and the Greek god of the woodlands. His 1904 play and 1911 novel follow the Darling children—Wendy, John and Michael—as the mischievous Peter and his fairy friend Tinker Bell whisk them off to the magical island of Never Land.

They visit Peter's secret hideout with the Lost Boys and leap into high-flying battles with the infamous villain Captain Hook, who has his own problems as the quarry of Tick-Tock the Croc. "Here is a story, it seemed to me, which had never been quite fulfilled,

despite its wonderful career on the living stage, a story which deserved the added dimension of animation on the screen," Walt Disney said.

A million drawings

The impresario deployed his elite animation team—known affectionately as the "Nine Old Men"—and they completed around a million drawings, taking around a week each to come up with five seconds of footage. Kathryn Beaumont was 12 when she was chosen to voice Wendy, and to double as a model that the animators could attach to high-wire rigging whenever they needed reminding of what children look like flying.

She had already voiced the titular character in "Alice In Wonderland" (1951) and is the only actress in the world who can boast of spending time in both Wonderland and Never Land. Beaumont, who spent most of her working life as a teacher but still lives near the Disney studio lot, remembers Walt inviting her to visit the various departments making the movie, from animation to ink and paint.

"It was a learning experience but I was so fascinated, and the fact that he allowed me to go freely through these places to learn about all that was just wonderful," the 79-year-old said. "So I had a lovely few years working with Walt Disney and getting to know him as a person." While 2018 is a significant milestone, it also marks a darker aspect of the production—the 50th anniversary of the death of Bobby

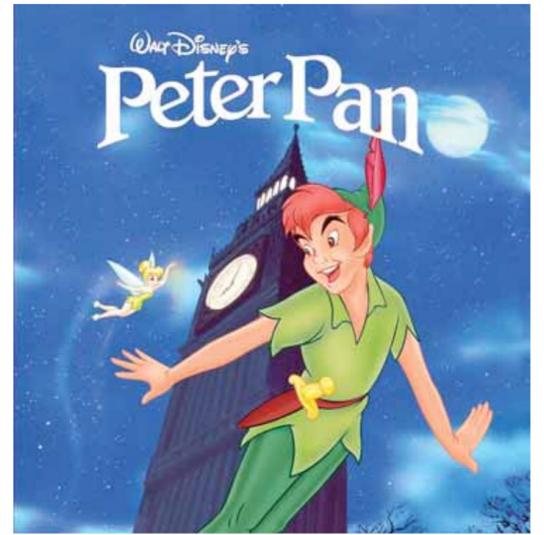
Driscoll, the child star who voiced Peter. After filming ended, Disney told Driscoll he would be better suited to "young bully" roles and then canceled his contract altogether, blaming the sudden onset of severe acne.

Delightful

Driscoll, a Hollywood outcast by his late teens, started using heroin and divorce, jail time and unemployment followed. He was found dead, alone and in penury, in an abandoned building a few days after turning 31. Beaumont shared the stage for the live-action aspect of her role with another actor but remembers her voice work with Driscoll as a "lovely experience." The movie became one of Disney's biggest hits, contributing to the struggling studio's economic recovery that had begun a few years earlier with "Cinderella" (1950).

The delightfully impish Tink went on to embody the magic of Disney, hosting a TV series and appearing at theme parks, as well as starring in her own spin-off movies. More recently, there was the smash-hit spin-off, "Hook" (1991), a moderately successful sequel—"Return to Neverland" (2002) — a 2003 live-action remake and an ill-advised 2015 prequel called "Pan." "Tink," a live-action film with Reese Witherspoon in the title role, is in the works and the 1953 movie gets a new release jam-packed with extras on Blu-ray on Tuesday to mark the anniversary.

The New York Daily News declared on February



12, 1953 that "Peter Pan" was one of Disney's best productions and closer to Barrie's conception than any other adaptation. "So many writers, artists, directors, decorators and colors stylists worked on the film that there isn't space enough to mention them all," noted the paper's reviewer Kate Cameron. "Between them, however, they have created a delightful, entertaining film that will appeal to the young and the not-so young alike."—AFP



This file photo shows Yves Lecoq, center, comedian, imitator and voice of a satirical puppet show broadcast the Canal + 'Guignols de l'Info', posing with the puppets of French journalist and TF1 presenter Patrick Poiré d'Arvor, left, and former French President Jacques Chirac on the set of the show in Saint-Denis, north of Paris. — AFP

Who's laughing now? Cult satire show zapped from French TV

"You can turn off your TV and nearly a normal activity"—after nearly three decades of skewering the rich and famous, the bobbing puppets of one of France's most revered comedy shows are about to give their famous signoff for good. Three years after Vincent Bolloré, the billionaire owner of Canal+, first tried to axe the satire show for going too far in its mockery of the French establishment, the channel said the curtain was finally coming down. Bolloré was forced to bow to a public outcry from the show's supporters in 2015, but this time there will be no reprieve, Canal+ said.

The latex puppets had become a fixture of prime-time television since their debut in 1988 with merciless send-ups of politicians and pundits, athletes and actors. Inspired by Britain's biting 1980s puppet show "Spitting Image", the Guignols took off during the 1990-1991 Gulf War, not least thanks to over-the-top reporting by a flak-jacket wearing Sylvester Stallone. He would become a perennial favorite, alongside ex-president Jacques Chirac, routinely seen indulging in his penchant for Corona beers—when he wasn't the masked hero known as "SuperLiar".

French superstar rocker Johnny Hallyday's public image as an empty-headed entertainer was also forged on the show, while Osama bin Laden would ask about his chances of getting an Oscar award for his "action movie of the year". Ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy was also known to hate how the show mocked his height of 5 feet 4 inches — since viewers would only ever see the top of his puppet's head on the show.

'We were expecting this'

More than three million people watched the 10-minute program daily at its height, giving it outsize influence on the nation's cultural and political pulse. But their barbs could draw the ire of some of their subjects, not least Vincent Bolloré, the billionaire industrialist who took control of Canal+ in 2015 after becoming the largest shareholder in its parent company, the media conglomerate Vivendi.

Criticizing the show's writers for an "abuse of derision", Bolloré quickly signaled his intent to axe the show with press suggesting he was acting on behalf of Sarkozy. The businessman eventually backed down, but only after replacing longtime writers and taking a noticeable edge off the puppets' humor. He also ended the show's free-to-air viewing to make it available only to Canal+ subscribers, a move that further pushed down audience levels.

Since then, many fans as well as the show's production team suspected the curtain's fall was only a matter of time. "We were expecting this, there were rumors, people quitting," said Yves Lecoq, one of the program's veteran voices, adding that so far he had heard nothing official from Canal+. The news quickly became the top trending topic on Twitter in France, with many lamenting the show's demise while sharing their favourite sketches. Others, however, made no secret of their delight. "What joy! Well done!" tweeted rightwing politician Nadine Morano, an outspoken Sarkozy ally who was regularly targeted by the show.—AFP

After pro-Trump bravado, Kanye turns inward on album

Kanye West succeeded in rocketing back into the headlines through his stubbornly contrarian lovefest with Donald Trump. But on a new album he offers a reminder of what made him a rap superstar—introspection. "Ye," the eighth studio album by the artist turned omnipresent celebrity, touches on the depression behind a year-long disappearance and the anxieties that still plague him, even if the seven-track work shies away from the palpable ambition of West's sprawling earlier output.

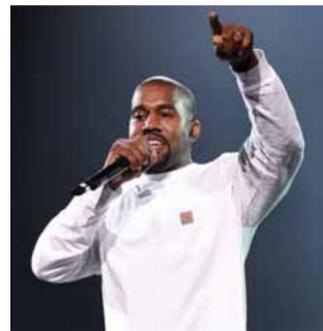
True to form, the 40-year-old released the long-mysterious project with ample servings of bravado and chaos. West invited dozens of guests including hip-hop heavyweights to listen to "Ye" for the first time in view of the snowy mountains in the tony Wyoming ski resort of Jackson Hole. Clad in a glowing shirt that read "Following the Light," a beaming West danced with guests around a bonfire as livestreams premiered the album, which nonetheless remained absent from streaming sites and iTunes hours after its official release.

The comedian Chris Rock announced for the first time the album's title, an Old English-sounding nickname for Kanye. After quipping at how few African Americans are ordinarily seen in Wyoming, Rock called West a "free black man," an allusion in part to the rapper's increasingly unorthodox politics. West has voiced admiration for Trump's outsider persona, making him one of the few major entertainment figures—and even rarer among African American stars—to back the tycoon president, who for years promoted unfounded conspiracy theories about his predecessor Barack Obama's birthplace.

"I said, 'Slavery a choice.' They say, 'How, Ye?' Just imagine if they caught me on a wild day," West raps on the album, referring to one of his most inflammatory comments as he promoted the album. But just a few lines later, West shows a more emotional side as he says he told his wife—the reality television star Kim Kardashian, by his side in Wyoming—that she should consider leaving him.

West—whose litany of past controversies include a boast that Taylor Swift may sleep with him—elsewhere on "Ye" reveals on a track with leading female rapper Nicki Minaj that he has evolved as the

father of two daughters. "Father forgive me / I'm scared of the karma / 'Cause now I see women as something to nurture / Not something to conquer."



Dark and sparse

West emerged from Chicago with rhymes about his struggles to strive and soon won critical acclaim for his innovative musical sense, blending the energy of electroclash and the lushness of strings into hip-hop. "Ye," apparently recorded in seclusion at the Wyoming ranch, harks back to West's roots with samples from soul, his vocals taking full dominance in the mixing over the beats. The album opens darkly and sparsely as West contemplates his mental state and repeatedly intones, "I think about killing myself, and I love myself way more than I love you."

He also speaks of bipolar disorder, rapping, "That's my superpower / Ain't no disability!" But West would not be himself without lyrics sure to stir conversation. He throws his lot with hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons, a longtime defender of West who has quit his business empire after multiple allegations of sexual abuse. "Russell Simmons wanna pray for me, too / Wanna pray for him 'cause he got #MeTooed."

And in an aside that could either flatter or infuriate his friend Trump, West name-checked Stormy Daniels, the pornographic actress in a court battle with the president over a purported fling that he denies. "I could have Naomi Campbell / And still might want me a Stormy Daniels."—AFP



In this file photo US director and producer Brian De Palma receives the Jaeger-LeCoultre Glory to the Filmmaker Award 2015 before the screening of the movie 'De Palma' during the 72nd Venice International Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP

They started asking him that question and they forgot about me, thank God. "I was accused of putting women in jeopardy and I said this is a suspense movie. A woman presents a more vulnerable creature. To me it was just part of the genre, and I never thought it was anything sexist," said the maker of the first "Mission: Impossible" film.

"I like women characters," said the director, whose has co-written his first nov-

Hollywood legend Brian De Palma to tackle Weinstein story

"Scarface" director Brian De Palma is to tackle the story of disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein, the Hollywood legend said. The maker of "Carrie" and "The Untouchables" said he was toying with the idea of dealing with Weinstein and the #MeToo movement the Hollywood producer unleashed after claims that he had raped and abused a string of actresses over the years.

"I have been following it very closely because I know a lot of the people involved," De Palma told AFP in Paris, where he has just published his first novel in French. "This has inspired an idea for another book," he added. "As a director you have to get actors' confidence and their love in order to be able to use their instrument in your movie. And to violate it on any level is just to me the worst thing you can do, just because of your gluttony or your lust," the 77-year-old said.

"I've heard stories over the years" about abuse and casting couches, the veteran filmmaker added. "I always reacted very strongly to anybody that was doing such things. And of course, you would hear stories about the most notorious people." De Palma said later that he was writing a script based on the scandal, "although my character will not be called Harvey Weinstein."

"But it is a horror film, with a sexual aggressor, and the story will take place within the film industry," he told the French daily, the Parisien. De Palma defended his treatment of women characters in his films, arguing that the violence they faced was necessary for the stories to work.

Is the male gaze over?

"I would get that question year after year, and I would always give the same answer," he told AFP. "But fortunately Quentin Tarantino took over that problem.

Rapper Falz fires up the internet with 'This is Nigeria'

With nearly three million YouTube views in less than a week and an avalanche of reactions on social media, rapper Falz's "This is Nigeria" has touched a nerve about the country's problems. The track and video, a cover version of US performer Childish Gambino's "This is America", sees Falz wander around a huge warehouse bare-chested as a series of violent scenes unfold. "This is Nigeria. Look how we living, nah! Look what we eating, nah!" he riffs to the camera.

Machetes replace the guns of the US version, where Gambino questions his compatriots about life for black people and police brutality. That version has been viewed more than 220 million times on YouTube in the last month. "This is Nigeria" was released on the video-sharing platform on May 25 and paints an unflinching picture of life in Africa's most populous nation.

Despite having generated billions of dollars from oil, more than 70 percent of Nigeria's 180 million people live in poverty, corruption is endemic and violent unrest commonplace. If the track arouses passions, it's because it overturns the status quo. In Nigeria, it's rare to see a music video open with anything other than scantily clad women sprawled over a luxury car or free-flowing champagne.

Music more often goes together with easy money than political conscience. "I think we are too distracted by entertainment in general, by flashy lifestyle," the 27-year-old Falz told the private Wazobia television channel this week. "We need to pause and think and look at our social space. We have a voice as artists and we need to use that voice for the right purpose, and we need to speak the true to wake people up. "The terrible state of Nigeria has become so normalized."

Spirit of Fela

Falz has won high praise in Nigeria and abroad for the track. In the United States, hip-hop star P. Diddy shared the video on his Instagram account, celebrating "artists changing the game!!!" Music journalist Joey Akan was quick to compare Falz to Fela Kuti, the icon of Afrobeat and freedom of expression during Nigeria's three decades of military rule. "'This is Nigeria' embodies the revolutionary and rebel spirit of Fela Anikulapo Kuti before him," he wrote in an opinion piece published online by CNN.

"It shows that contrary to popular opinion among local talents, there is a demand for conscious music. "Musicians tend to avoid political commentary, partly due to an ingrained fear of persecution from the powerful political class." For example, Nigeria's 2Baba last year announced a mass demonstration against economic recession but was forced to back-pedal under pressure. Global superstars such as Davido or Wizkid meanwhile continue to perform for political bigwigs and captains of industry who are prepared to pay a small fortune for private concerts.

Bad Nollywood

Falz—his real name is Folarin Falana—is not a nobody. He gave up a career in law to go into music. His father is leading Nigerian human rights lawyer Femi Falana and excerpts of his speech on corruption are in the track. One of Falana senior's most famous clients was Fela Kuti. Falz is giving a voice to the thoughts of many Nigerians who are tired of years of bad governance, and as President Muhammadu Buhari vies for a second term at elections next year.

After three years in power and repeated promises to turn the country around, they feel nothing has been done—and may even have gotten worse. In Falz's video, dancers wear long blue hijabs in a clear reference to the schoolgirls from Chibok, whose kidnapping by Boko Haram caused more outrage abroad than at home. In other scenes corrupt police officers beat up young men and drug addicts, and generators run flat out to make up for a lack of electricity from the national grid.

Lifestyle | Features



Hand balancer Gretchen in Motion, right, soprano Christina Vial and pianist Michael Borowitz rehearse to Puccini's 'Chi il bel sogno di Doretta' for Opus Opera, pairing circus acrobatics and opera, in New Orleans. — AP photos



Tenor and general director Bryan Hymel gives guidance during rehearsal.



Soprano and aerialist Rainelle Krause performs Mozart's 'Der Holle Rache' during rehearsal.



Soprano Irini Kyriakidou left, and soprano/aerialist Rainelle Krause rehearse to Delibes' 'Flower duet.'



Artists rehearse ahead of the show.



Violinist Natalia Cascante and aerialist Glenna Broderick rehearse to Massenet's 'Meditation.'



Opera pairing with circus acts to dispel stuffy image

An internationally acclaimed tenor from New Orleans is pairing circus acrobatics and opera, with a lot of help from his friends. "We want it to be fun. That's what we feel opera is," said Bryan Hymel, who has performed with opera companies around the world. The performance Saturday night will be the fourth in the hometown Opus Opera series he and his wife, soprano Irini Kyriakidou, and another couple - soprano Christina Vial and her husband, entrepreneur Patrick Comer - created to show their generation that opera really isn't stuffy.

For this one, they've teamed with the owner of Fly Circus Space, a circus training center, to create vocal and visual duets, trios and larger ensembles, with a different circus performance for each aria sung by Hymel, Kyriakidou and others. The songs are standards - ones people who don't know opera will still recognize from cartoons, movies, TV shows and ads. You'd recognize "Fiiiiiii-gaaa-ro! Fiiiiiii-gaa-ro! Figaro! Figaro!" even if you don't know it as "Largo al Factotum" from The Barber of Seville.

That's the opener, introduced by clowns David Chervov and Jean Carlos Claudio of Chicago. Baritone Weston Hurt then enters, singing Figaro's song about his ability to do anything and the incessant demands from his master and everyone in town. The evening at New Orleans' Civic Theater is the climax of Opus Opera's first season, which began last fall.

Hymel said he and his wife started Opus Opera "as a passion project," since many people their age don't think of opera as "something they should include in their palette." Rather than trying to pull 30- and 40-somethings in to full operas, "we thought we would offer kind of tastes." The first evening took that literally, with

a wine tasting: French wines paired with French art songs, with a reception afterward.

It brought in "a lot of the husbands" - men who don't go to operas, though their wives are fans, said Hymel, who has sung with opera

she got Hymel's email suggesting the collaboration, her response was, "Yes! It's brilliant! Let's do it immediately!" With Glenna Broderick, her colleague at Fly Circus Space, and colleagues from other cities, there's a wide

"A different circus performance for each aria"

companies including the New York Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Opera in London, the Deutsche Oper Berlin, the Bayerische Staatsoper, and Teatro Municipale di Salerno. He said he's also helped companies in Maine, Philadelphia, and San Francisco plan similar events.

Inspiration for Saturday's event, titled "Mystique," came from seeing online videos of coloratura soprano Rainelle Krause of Dallas, who enjoys creating what she calls aerial arias - performances in which she sings while hanging from, swinging on, rolling in, dropping along and otherwise playing with two long pieces of hanging fabric called aerial silks. She's performing three such pieces Saturday, including one created for Mystique.

Elizabeth Rose, who owns the Fly Circus Space studio in New Orleans, said that when

range of performances, including a tightrope piece, dance trapeze, hand balancing on canes, aerial work on the "corde lisse," or smooth rope, and "a duo adagio piece, like hand-to-hand acrobatics, but slow, sculptural."

The entire Fly Circus Company will join in a spectacle for the final number. Hymel will sing "Nessun Dorma," which became popular outside opera after Luciano Pavarotti sang it for the 1990 World Cup, then with the Three Tenors.—AP

BOOK REVIEW

'Matchmaking for Beginners' is romantic summer read

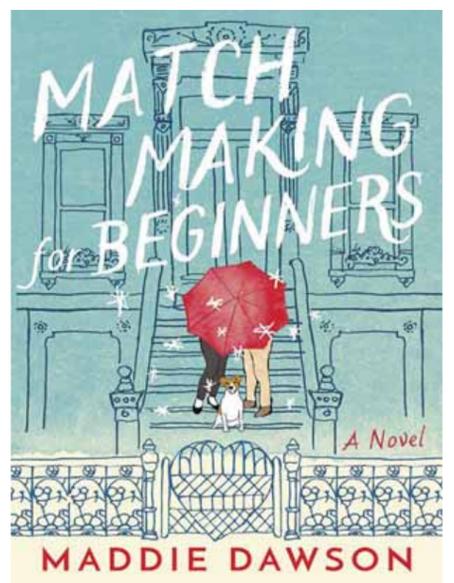
Just in time for summer, Maddie Dawson serves up a delightful, light-as-air romance that successfully straddles the line between sweet and smart without ever being silly. In "Matchmaking for Beginners," readers are introduced to Marnie MacGraw at her fiancée's family Christmas party. When she commits the unforgivable sin of refusing the hostess' rarebit, thinking it's a dish made from rabbit, Blix, a boisterous Brooklynite and Marnie's future great-aunt, swoops in to rescue Marnie and we're off.

Blix recognizes in Marnie a kindred spirit - as both

women, one just starting out in life and the other nearing the end, possess an uncanny ability to see love and its potential. Despite her extrasensory abilities, Marnie fails to recognize the flaws in her future husband who abandons her at the altar - almost. The marriage lasts just two weeks, and its demise sends Marnie into a crippling depression. She retreats to her parents and married sister, whose own domesticity becomes a model for Marnie.

Marnie tries to convince herself that she's ready-made for her own version of suburban solitude with a former beau. But Blix gets the last word as her will reveals she's

left her aging brownstone - and its quirky residents - to Marnie. The young woman is stunned and plunged into brand-new turmoil. Despite the deceptively thin volume, Dawson rolls out a cast of endearing and realistic characters and a rollickingly fun story line full of skillfully drawn twists and turns. Readers see shades of "Tales of the City" as the naively sweet Marnie is introduced to Brooklyn, which stands up on its own as a key character. The novel is simply captivating from beginning to end.





Britain's Queen Elizabeth II arrives on the second day of the Epsom Derby Festival in Surrey, southern England.



British jockey and former track cyclist Victoria Pendleton



Hats on at the Epsom Derby Festival



Racegoers attend the second day of the Epsom Derby Festival in Surrey, southern England. — AFP photos



Fascinating! Fancy hats take stage at horse show



It's a top equestrian event, but all eyes are on the hats instead of the horses. Women and girls showed off their fanciest headwear Wednesday on Ladies Day at the Devon Horse Show in the suburbs of Philadelphia. The event was first held in 1896 and lasts for 11 days. It's known as one of the nation's last old-

fashioned horse shows. The show made headlines after a horse bolted Tuesday evening, jumped a fence and fled into the crowd. But by the next day, feathers, feathery bows, ribbons and chiffon were the story. — AP



Guests arrive at the Devon Horse Show in the suburbs of Philadelphia. — AP photos



Classifieds

Sunday, June 3, 2018

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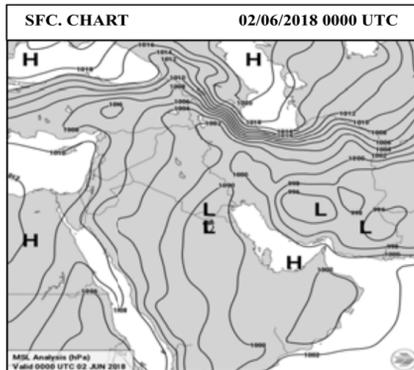
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and Partly cloudy with light to moderate easterly wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 10 - 35 km/h with a chance for drizzle.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
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STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	41 °C	32 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	32 °C
ABDALY	47 °C	31 °C
BUBYAN	** °C	** °C
JAHRA	46 °C	32 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	39 °C	31 °C
SALMIYAH	37 °C	31 °C
AHMADI	40 °C	31 °C
NUWAISIB	47 °C	31 °C
WAFRA	48 °C	30 °C
SALMY	46 °C	31 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	06/03	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	46 °C	30 °C	NE-SE	12 - 35 km/h
Monday	06/04	Hot	47 °C	30 °C	E-SE	12 - 40 km/h
Tuesday	06/05	Hot and some high clouds will appear	48 °C	33 °C	E-SE	12 - 40 km/h
Wednesday	06/06	Very hot	49 °C	33 °C	N-NW	08 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:15
Sunrise	04:49
Zuhr	11:46
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:43
Isha	20:14

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	29 °C
MAX. RH	42 %
MIN. RH	10 %
MAX. Wind	SE 50 km/h
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
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Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
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British Airways	22425635
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Egypt Air	a22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493

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

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Sunday 3/6/2018				Departure Flights on Sunday 3/6/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	WAN	312	Asyut	13:45
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FEW	341	Sohag	13:50
KAC	102	London	00:50	WAN	352	Luxor	13:55
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	IAW	157A	Al Najaf	13:55
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	KAC	618	Doha	14:10
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	364	Colombo	14:20
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	KAC	516	Tehran	14:20
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	JZR	751	Madinah	14:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KNE	537	Jeddah	14:35
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	304	Mumbai	15:05
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC	562	Amman	15:20
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	502	Beirut	15:35
JZR	1539	Cairo	03:40	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	534	Cairo	16:10
JZR	551	Alexandria	04:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	FDB	051	Dubai	16:20
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	KAC	118	New York	16:20
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	FEW	241	Alexandria	16:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	542	Cairo	17:00
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
QTR	8511	Doha	05:30	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	145	Doha	17:35
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	JZR	177	Dubai	17:40
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	555	Alexandria	18:05
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	RJA	640	Amman	19:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
WAN	342	Sohag	06:55	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	WAN	976	Baku	19:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:35
MSR	2616	Sohag	07:05	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:35
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	RBG	555	Alexandria	19:40
KAC	503	Luxor	07:50	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
JZR	384	Delhi	08:05	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	104	London	20:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:05
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:00	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	620	Doha	20:15
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC	166	Rome	20:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	KAC	172	Frankfurt	20:45
SAW	703	Damascus	10:30	JZR	553	Alexandria	20:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
JZR	703	Taif	11:00	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	564	Amman	21:50
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	WAN	416	Beirut	22:15
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	WAN	136	Doha	22:30
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
KAC	792	Madinah	13:40	THY	764	Istanbul	23:15
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	MSR	2614	Cairo	23:30
				FDB	071	Dubai	23:35
				JZR	241	Amman	23:40
				PIA	205	Lahore	23:40

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
MSC	502	Alexandria	00:15	WAN	965	Tbilisi	13:50
KAC	417	Manila	00:25	WAN	975	Baku	13:50
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
MSC	406	Sohag	00:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
MSR	2615	Sohag	00:30	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
KAC	677	Dubai	01:30	FEW	442	Asyut	14:50
THY	773	Istanbul	01:45	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	14:55
KAC	363	Colombo	01:50	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
JZR	502	Luxor	01:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
PGT	859	Istanbul	02:15	KNE	538	Jeddah	15:25
THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:55
KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
JZR	142	Doha	03:20	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
LMU	511	Cairo	05:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
JAI	571	Mumbai	05:00	SAW	710	Latakia	17:00
QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
KAC	103	London	05:45	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
JZR	702	Taif	06:05	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	FEW	242	Alexandria	17:45
RJA	649	Amman	07:00	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
QTR	8512	Doha	07:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
WAN	311	Asyut	07:25	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
WAN	351	Luxor	07:55	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
MSR	2617	Cairo	08:05	JZR	266	Beirut	18:30
BAW	156	London	08:20	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
KAC	165	Rome	08:25	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00	WAN	135	Doha	18:40
KAC	791	Madinah	09:00	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
KAC	117	New York	09:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	561	Amman	09:40	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50

News



KUBINKA, Russia: Russian S-400 anti-aircraft missile launching system is displayed at the exposition field in Kubinka Patriot Park outside Moscow during the first day of the International Military-Technical Forum Army-2017. Saudi Arabia has threatened military action against Qatar if it goes ahead and acquires Russia's top of the range S-400 air defense missile system, Le Monde daily reported. — AFP

Russia's defense missile system raises concerns

PARIS: Saudi Arabia has threatened military action against Qatar if it goes ahead and acquires Russia's top of the range S-400 air defense missile system. Le Monde daily reported. Citing information it had obtained, Le Monde said Friday that Riyadh had written to French President Emmanuel Macron asking him to intervene to prevent the deal going ahead and to help preserve regional stability.

There was no immediate official reaction from the president's office or the French foreign ministry to the

report. Saudi Arabia, backed by other regional powers including Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, broke off relations with Qatar in June last year, accusing the Gulf state of supporting radical Islamist groups and of being too close to Iran-Riyadh's arch rival in the region. They subsequently imposed economic sanctions on Qatar which has consistently rejected the charges against it.

In an effort to ease its isolation, Qatar has sought new friends, including Russia. In January, it announced that talks with Moscow on supplying the sophisticated S-400 system were at an "advanced stage". Le Monde said that in the letter sent to the French president, Saudi King Salman had expressed his "deep concern" with the discussions between Doha and Moscow and warned about the risk of escalation. Saudi Arabia "would be ready to take all necessary measures to eliminate this defense system, including military action," the newspaper wrote. — AFP

EU counts its crises as problems mount

PARIS: A populist government in Rome, political instability in Madrid, democratic crises in the east and a transatlantic trade war to the west: the European Union faces threats and challenges on multiple fronts. On Friday, Italy's President Sergio Mattarella swore in an anti-establishment and eurosceptic government comprising the Five Star Movement and the far-right League. Their agenda-increased public spending in the EU's most indebted nation, coupled with anti-German rhetoric-has led to concerns for the bloc's future and its single currency, the euro.

Also Friday, Spain's parliament ousted Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy in a no-confidence vote sparked by fury over his party's corruption woes, with his Socialist arch-rival Pedro Sanchez automatically taking over. "In Spain, it's a localized issue about corruption, but Italy is obviously very serious," John Springford of the London-based Centre for European Reform (CER) think-tank told AFP. "It is too big to fail in terms of the eurozone, and too big to save." While Italy is clearly the most pressing danger facing the 28-member bloc, it is not the only one.

Asked this week if Rome had become Europe's Achilles Heel, Gianni Riotta from the Council on Foreign Relations joked: "How many heels can Europe sport? Greece, the United Kingdom, Poland, Hungary—too many, I'd say." In eastern Europe, European Union officials fret that nationalist governments in Poland and Hungary are undermining democratic standards such as the independence of the judiciary and media freedom. Brussels launched unprecedented legal action

against Warsaw in December over "systemic threats" to the independence of the Polish judiciary.

Britain, meanwhile, is engaged in the painful and at times bitter negotiations to leave the European Union, having decided to leave the bloc in a 2016 referendum. And Greece is still recovering from its economic depression caused by a sovereign debt crisis which led to multiple bailouts by its EU partners since 2010 that exposed deep tensions in the bloc. "Europe makes me think of someone that is on the edge of a precipice, even a little bit further along. Its nails are already in the air," former German foreign minister Joschka Fischer said this week. Veteran financier George Soros, an outspoken proponent of greater EU integration, also warned in recent days that the project was facing "an existential crisis—everything that could go wrong has gone wrong".

Along with its internal issues, the EU faces some of the most serious problems in transatlantic relations since World War II sparked by a series of combative decisions by US President Donald Trump. From scrapping the 2015 Iran deal against the wishes of his EU partners to imposing trade tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, Trump has pursued his "American First" agenda with little regard for America's traditional allies.

Some analysts say they believe Trump could be the catalyst Europe needs to finally become a more cohesive bloc that comes together to act more forcefully in the face of external threats. "Trump will perhaps succeed where no one has succeeded before him: by uniting the Europeans," said Pascale Joannin, director of the Robert Schuman think-tank. This was French President Emmanuel Macron's hope after his election last May, when he came to power promising to reform the EU and arguing that its members needed to club together in an increasingly dangerous world. — AFP

Saudi King reshuffles Cabinet...

Continued from Page 1

what they saw as Saudi society's plunge into immorality with entertainment, including cinema and television, and women taking jobs.

A bloody military assault dislodged them two weeks later, leaving scores dead on both sides. Their influence, however, has remained. Over the past year, Prince

Mohammed has steered a modernization campaign that aims to sell the country to foreign audiences and investors, with hundreds of billions of dollars pledged to projects that will boost tourism and entertainment.

On Friday, the Crown Prince earned a warning from Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the jihadist group's Yemen-based branch, over his "sinful projects", which AQAP said included a WWE wrestling event hosted by the kingdom in April. Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarchy, will welcome millions of Muslim faithful on their annual pilgrimage to Makkah, Islam's holiest city, come August. The kingdom yesterday announced it had set up a royal commission for Makkah, to be chaired by Prince Mohammed. No further details were made available. — AFP

two others opposed it. A draft resolution requires nine votes to be adopted in the 15-member council and no veto from the five permanent members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

The outcome deepened the deadlock at the top UN body over how to respond to the flareup of violence in Gaza that a UN envoy has warned is close to the brink of war. "This session was another missed opportunity for this council," French Ambassador Francois Delattre said, deploring an "increasingly deafening silence" from the United Nations on the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. A barrage of rocket and mortar fire from Gaza on Tuesday was followed by Israeli strikes on 65 militant sites in the Gaza Strip in the worst flareup since the 2014 war.

Israel has fought three wars in Gaza against Hamas, which the United States considers a terrorist organization. After the failed votes, Arab diplomats said they were considering turning to the UN General Assembly to win adoption for the US-vetted resolution. It was the second time that Haley has resorted to US veto power to block a UN measure on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In December, Haley vetoed a draft resolution that rejected President Donald Trump's decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem after all 14 other council members supported it —AFP

On Berlin's 'Arab Street,' the two worlds collide

BERLIN: During the Cold War, Sonnenallee was an unremarkable street with a checkpoint that drew attention only at Easter when West Berliners visited their relatives in the East. Nicknamed "Little Beirut," it was known for its Lebanese stores and smoky cafes playing old Arab songs. Then, in 2015, the street was given new life. An influx of refugees, mostly Syrians, turned Sonnenallee into one of the busiest streets in the capital. Today, crowds of shoppers push past stalls selling fruit and vegetables.

Two confectioneries mark the Syrian presence, "Green Idlib" at the northwestern end and "Damascus" to the southeast. "Little Beirut" became known as "Arab Street." Berlin has had an Arab population since 1960, when West Germany invited in thousands of Moroccans as "guest workers" to help rebuild the country's post-war economy. In the 1980s and early 1990s, tens of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian-Lebanese migrants arrived, fleeing Lebanon's civil war.

Living in parallel societies, many of these Arab migrants barely integrated with their German neighbors. Unemployment rates among men are high and a third of the female population lives on welfare, according to government data. Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision in 2015 to take in more than one million migrants brought the challenges of integration to the fore and upended German politics. Anti-immigrant sentiment propelled the far-right Alternative fur Deutschland to third in the 2017 election.

Yet it is earlier generations of Arab migrants in places like Sonnenallee who often show the greatest resentment to the newcomers, "more than Germans," said Rasha Alkhadra, a 42-year-old YouTube blogger from Syria. Of the nearly 695,000 migrants who applied for asylum in Germany in 2016, more than 62 percent received refugee status or humanitarian protection, which enabled them to work and receive welfare benefits, according to data from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. Among applicants from Syria, the figure was higher, at around 97 percent.

In contrast, 10 years earlier less than seven percent of asylum applicants in Germany received refugee status. A 2016 study by Bielefeld University found more than half of established migrants in Germany believe the newcomers should settle for less. "The government opened new horizons for the refugees, horizons which we did not see," said Houda Zeidan, 46, a Palestinian-Syrian who has lived in Berlin for 25 years and works as a nurse caring for the elderly. Zeidan said she came to Germany to join her husband. She said she wasn't allowed to work for three years, wasn't entitled to welfare benefits and, unlike today's arrivals, had to pay for German language classes. "When I saw what they received, I wished I was a refugee," she said.

'Maybe life was very harsh'

Among those arriving on Sonnenallee was 34-year-old Ammar Kassem, who had made a living in Damascus selling poultry to restaurants and shops. He left Syria in September 2015 and arrived in Germany a month later, having travelled through Turkey, Greece and eastern Europe. In the summer of 2016, Kassem opened a restaurant selling Shawarma and other Levantine food. Today, Kassem's restaurant, Aldimashqi, is one of Sonnenallee's most popular haunts. Syrian waiters scuffle between the grilled meat stands and the packed tables. Customers stand in line to take food away.

But business wasn't always so good. When a Syrian folk band performed to celebrate the restaurant's opening, Kassem recalled, neighbors complained to the police about the noise. Arab gangs demanded protection money, he said. He refused to pay. Then, in October 2016, masked men threatened his staff. Several residents corroborated his story. One said it was impossible for newcomers to open a business on Sonnenallee without the "unofficial approval of older, established migrants." Berlin police said they had no record of an incident at Aldimashqi, but added not all incidents are put in a report. "I realized I needed someone to support and protect me in the market," Kassem said.

An old Lebanese family helped him find a new location

Levels of fasting...

Continued from Page 1

you tell lies or give a false testimony or commit any other sin, for that matter. On this issue, Jaber bin Abdullah (RA) said, "When fasting, your ears, eyes, and mouth - among others - should shun lying and committing other sins. Moreover, there should be a change in you when fasting. In other words, you should be a better person when you are fasting than when you are not. Moreover, fasting should be a training course for you to become a reformed person (Al-Bayhaqi and IbnAbiShayba).

(C) Fasting of the crème de la crème, which entails keeping one's heart away from lowly aspirations and motives as well as thoughts that would keep one far from Allah (SWT). Anyone in this category should be pre-occupied with things that please Allah (SWT). Once, Umar's wife prepared a sumptuous meal after buying the ingredients from her own savings. After preparing it wholeheartedly, she served it to him. He told her that he would not touch it until she invited all the poor people to share it with him. This was a great lesson in empathy that we learn during the month of Ramadan, which we have to observe even after Ramadan. Umar - by this - demonstrated that he was much more preoccupied with pleasing Allah (SWT) than satisfying his carnal desires. This is the highest level of fasting, which is reached by fulfilling the first two levels of fasting and then going a step further.

Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam. As Muslims, we should all strive to attain all these three levels when we fast. Each level accrues to us so many rewards from Allah (SWT).

Why was fasting during the month of Ramadan given preference over other acts of worship? For two reasons: - It is a secret and an intrinsic act of worship; no one sees it except Allah (SWT) and the fasting person, and it can't be tainted by dissemblance. When carrying out other acts of worship, people see us. However, no one can tell for sure whether someone is fasting. Someone may claim to be fasting yet when he is secluded in a room or any other place, he eats and drinks when and where only Allah (SWT) can see him.

- By fasting, a Muslim actually conquers the devil, which capitalizes on food, drinks and other carnal desires to lure human beings into committing sins. By fasting, the devil is restrained in that it is no longer active in one's blood stream. Al-Hulaimi (a scholar and

for his restaurant and became a partner in the now thriving business. Ahmad Rezzou, 32, worked as a cashier at Aldimashqi for more than a year. He said he could tell whether customers were old or new migrants from the way they placed their orders. Syrians tended to be friendlier. "Maybe life here was very harsh to them (old migrants) so they became like this," he mused. In Damascus, Rezzou had studied to become an agricultural engineer before fleeing his homeland in 2015.

The fixer

On Sonnenallee, one of the older generation of migrants, Mansour Azzam, says he has become something of a peacemaker. Locals call him Hajji, a name given to older people who have visited Mecca for the Haj. It was Azzam who helped restaurant owner Kassem when he was looking for new premises. Azzam was born 50 years ago in Ain Al Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, close to the coastal city of Saida. Aged 12, he said he became a fighter for the Palestinian cause. He made his way to Germany in 1996, claiming the status of a political refugee.

Nowadays he lives in an apartment in Sonnenallee, above a Middle Eastern grocery and restaurant he owns. Azzam's grocery offers everything from Lebanese haloumi cheese to sour Syrian pickles. The restaurant is busy with Germans and Arabs. In his living room, Azzam served coffee, Syrian confectionery and fruit on a Damascene coffee table. On the TV, an Arab channel broadcast news from Syria's war. "When we came here, we didn't have anything. I opened businesses that were needed. I started with a bakery for Arabic bread. I was never a merchant before, I spent all my life as a guerrilla carrying my gun and sitting in the camp," said Azzam.

When the first Syrian refugees began reaching Berlin, Azzam said there was "confusion and conflict." Established shop owners and Syrians with new businesses were fighting one another. Azzam said he established a committee of shop owners to resolve problems. They meet once a month and communicate in between on a Whatsapp group. Now, he is working on establishing a committee for Arab restaurants after more than a dozen Syrian restaurants opened in the past two years. "I told them that if we don't work together, we will all lose." Azzam's business has expanded with the advent of refugees who have become a big part of his staff as well as his customers. More than half of his current 235 employees come from Syria.

Memories of home

Azzam's pragmatic approach is rare. Older Arab Muslim migrants complain the newcomers are "too liberal." In 2009, more than 80 percent of Muslim migrants from the Middle East regarded themselves as "very religious" or "true believers," according to government data. Raed Saleh, a Palestinian-German Social Democrat politician in Berlin, said new and old Arab migrants had very different perceptions of their homelands. "Those who have been living in Germany for 40 years and could only visit their countries of origin every two years for 15 days have a very different idea of that country than those who have just left," said Saleh.

Mohammad Altaweel, a Lebanese migrant who has lived in Berlin for four decades and has a publishing house in its Neukoelln district, expressed surprise that Syrian women were very different from those depicted in Bab Alhara, a popular Syrian television drama set in the early 1900s. In the TV drama, the women cover their faces and tend to the home. "There are many gays and lesbians among the new arrivals. We didn't have this in our community before. We wouldn't even hear of this," he said.

Altaweel came to West Germany in 1975, fleeing Lebanon's civil war, and studied journalism. He told how he started from scratch as a student and then as a business owner. "Syrians were treated very differently from us when we arrived. Syrians are allowed to study here at the government expense, as long as they want...They were given residencies. When we came here, they didn't give us residencies. Do you know much I suffered until I got mine?"

Zeidan, the nurse, sipped coffee in a Turkish cafe in the nearby district of Kreuzberg where she lives. After more than two decades in Berlin, she is fluent in German but says she would never brag, "I speak German well." "I pay more than a third of my income for them to live. Many Germans would envy the refugees for their status," she said, her short hair tied in a ponytail and her jeans tucked into long boots. — Reuters

pious man) said, "All acts of worship are performed either by doing some actions or avoiding some shameful deeds. Fasting restrains the act of satisfying one's carnal desires illicitly; and this in itself represents patience.

On the other hand, doing acts of worship that are required of us requires a lot of patience. Therefore, fasting is half of patience (and this explains why Ramadan in some instances is referred to as the month of patience)." (MukhtasarMinhaaj Al-Qasideen 44). - There are a lot of benefits that accrue to a Muslim who observes the fast, especially during the month of Ramadan. Abu Huraira (RA) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Whoever fasts during the month of Ramadan out of faith in Allah and expecting rewards from Him, will get all his previous sins forgiven." - Fasting was also prescribed to the people before us - albeit differently: Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, "O you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you so that you may earn piety (guarding yourselves against sin and in the long run against Allah's anger and punishment)." (2: 183)

Points to ponder

(1) Allah (SWT) informs us in the verse above that fasting was also prescribed to those before us in order to comfort us, since there is some difficulty in it. He also wants to avert some complaints from some people with weak faith who would ask: Why did Allah (SWT) single us out by commanding us to fast? It is also an indication that inasmuch as Allah completed His bounties and favors upon us, He also completed them upon those whom He willed among the generations that preceded us.

(B) The phrase "so that you may gain piety," implies that fasting is a shield that keeps us away from committing sins- the act that, if well observed, will keep us away from the Hellfire. - Al-Hasan bin Ali (RA) said, "Allah (SWT) made Ramadan a field track for His servants to compete in earning His pleasure by obeying Him: some people excelled in that and thus became victorious, and others lagged behind, thus becoming the unfortunate losers." So try this Ramadan to be one of those who excel and become victorious!

Courtesy of the TIES Center: the TIES Center aims at empower Kuwait's expats through social and educational services that promote a positive and productive role in society, and to facilitate opportunities for intra- and interfaith interactions that promote social solidarity. For more information, please call 25231015/6 or e-mail: info@tiescenter.net.

Sports

Crusaders consolidate lead, Waratahs win high-scoring derby

Crusaders, without injured Sam Whitelock

BRISBANE: A late Luke Romano try ensured the table-topping Canterbury Crusaders downed the Waikato Chiefs 34-20 in their Super Rugby clash yesterday while the NSW Waratahs won a 15-try derby extravaganza.

It was a double celebration for the Crusaders as they strengthened their lead in the competition with their 10th consecutive win, and marked the record 200th appearance and 199th Super game by long-serving prop Wyatt Crockett.

The Waratahs regained their lead in the Australian conference with a free-flowing 52-41 win over the Queensland Reds in Brisbane after the Melbourne Rebels had earlier topped the conference with a 20-10 win over the Auckland Blues.

For the Crusaders it was an anxious final 30 minutes after Luke Jacobson's second try saw the Chiefs close to 27-20 at the 50-minute mark. But the champions' defence held to deny the Chiefs a potentially match-leveling try and with two minutes remaining Romano drove over to put the result beyond doubt and extend the Crusaders competition lead to nine points over the Wellington Hurricanes.

The Crusaders, already without injured Sam Whitelock and Ryan Crotty, were forced into a late reshuffle when Jack Goodhue and Jordan Taufua were ruled out. Despite the disruptions they dominated the opening 20 minutes and jumped to a 10-3 lead from a converted try to Heiden Bedwell-Curtis while All Blacks

fly-half rivals Richie Mo'unga and Damian McKenzie traded penalties.

"All the boys that came in, there were late changes, and credit to those boys. They've worked hard back home and when they got the opportunity they took it," captain Matt Todd said, crediting the Crusaders lineup as a key difference.

"We put a lot of work into that during the week and it's pleasing when we can get points out of it." Jitters hit the Crusaders midway through the first half allowing the Chiefs to strike back with tries in quick succession to Sean Wainui and Jacobson. That forced the Crusaders to resort to their trump card, a dominant forward pack, which allowed them to control the remainder of the half.

'OFFENSIVELY FANTASTIC'

The Waratahs responded to the Rebels' second-ever win in New Zealand with a try-scoring spree with Wallaby star Israel Folau scoring a double among his team's eight tries. The Reds led early but the Waratahs proved their dominance to lead 40-19 early in the second before Queensland scored two late tries. The total of 93 points was the most scored in an Australian Super Rugby derby. "Offensively fantastic, we were able to walk in some tries, but on the flipside of that the Reds walked some in at the back-end as well, so glad we got the win," Waratahs skipper Michael Hooper said.

“They’ve worked hard back home”



File photo shows Chiefs versus Rebels at Waikato Stadium.

In Auckland, Bill Meakes scored twice and Dane Haylett-Petty added a third while Terrence Hepetema scored the sole try for the Blues. The Blues, languishing at the bottom of the New Zealand conference, are out of playoff contention and have little to play for other than to be a spoiler in the competition.

But they could not even manage that, despite having

a territorial edge for large parts of the game, as they slumped to their 10th loss in 13 games while the Rebels advanced to seven wins out of 13 matches.

Importantly for Australian morale, it is their second win over a New Zealand side in a fortnight after the Waratahs snapped a 40-match losing streak with their win over the Otago Highlanders two weeks ago. — AFP

Australia say no to NZ demands for Samu release

WELLINGTON: Canterbury Crusaders flanker Pete Samu appeared to have lost his chance to play for Australia against Ireland this month after New Zealand Rugby said yesterday its demands for his release have not been met.

In a trans-Tasman tug-of-war, neither country has officially revealed New Zealand's stipulations to release Samu, but it is believed they sought NZ\$50,000 (US\$35,000) to release the 26-year-old Australian-born player from his Crusaders contract.

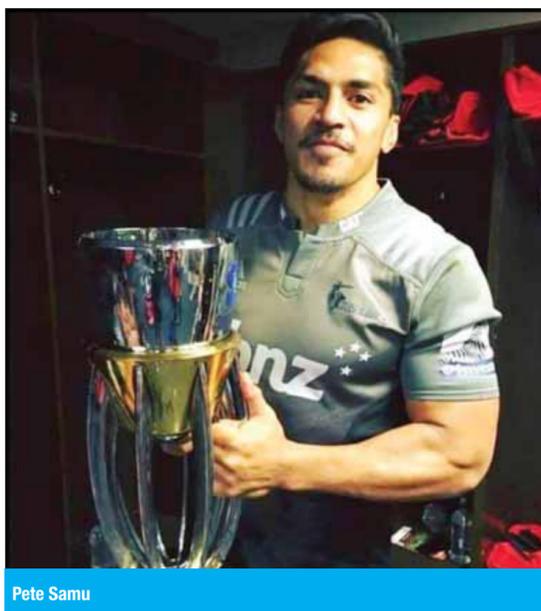
However, New Zealand Rugby's head of professional rugby, Chris Lendrum, said in a statement that the issue had not been resolved. "We have attempted to resolve this matter in good faith but our proposals have not been accepted," Lendrum said.

"New Zealand Rugby remains open to resolving the issues," Wallabies coach Michael Cheika, who was forced to omit the explosive flanker when he named his squad but left space for an extra loose forward, expressed bewilderment that money was stopping Samu playing for his country of birth.

"I was a bit surprised to find out that there's a compensation issue around this," Cheika told Macquarie Sports Radio. "I thought the rule that's been around, about players getting to play in a national week, are preserved.

"The kid's very keen to play for Australia. I feel a bit for him too, it's a national call up, first time." New Zealand Rugby, which has already released Wellington Hurricanes flanker Brad Shields to play for England against South Africa, has said it is entitled to block Samu's release because while he is eligible for two countries, his contract commits him to New Zealand.

Shields was shown leniency because of his long service in New Zealand. Samu has already signed to switch to the ACT Brumbies next year and Crusaders chief Hamish Riach backed his bid to play for the Wallabies.



Pete Samu

"He's Australian, he's committed to the Brumbies next year, the Wallabies want him and he's clearly going to play international rugby for the Wallabies at some point," Riach said. "So we're quite happy for that to be sooner rather than later." Samu originally played for Randwick in Sydney, before switching to Tasman in the New Zealand provincial championship from where he was spotted by the Crusaders and earned a Super Rugby contract in 2016. — AFP

Niemann, Stanley lead as Woods climbs Memorial leaderboard

DUBLIN: Tiger Woods ignited the crowd with a sensational hole out for eagle, but a storm delay dampened his charge at the Memorial where he was six shots behind halfway leaders Joaquin Niemann and Kyle Stanley.

Woods, a three-time champion at Muirfield Village, bounced back after three-putting his opening hole. He birdied four holes from the third through the ninth to make the turn at three-under for the tournament.

With 97 yards to the flagstick at the par-five 11th, Woods landed his wedge shot some six feet behind the flag, fans roaring their delight when his ball spun back into the hole for an eagle. "I had 97 yards and normally it is a 60-degree sand-wedge for me but it was perfect with the slope there behind the flag so I took off about 15-yards on a 56 and I hit a little dead one in there," Woods said. "It just worked out perfectly."

The noise was so loud that many of Woods fellow competitors, including World No. 1 Justin Thomas, simply stopped play. A surging Woods then hit the flagstick at the par-three 12th, but moments later play was suspended due to the threat of thunderstorms.

The former world number one resumed play staring at a six-foot birdie putt and with an expectant crowd awaiting his move to six-



DUBLIN: Tiger Woods hits his second shot on the 18th hole during the second round of The Memorial Tournament Presented by Nationwide at Muirfield Village Golf Club on Friday in Dublin, Ohio. — AFP

under he failed to hit the hole and walked off with a par. It was the first of three birdie putts Woods faced over his closing seven holes. He rolled in just one-a 12-footer for birdie at the par-five 14th-and he also dropped a shot after missing the green at the 17th and signed for a five-under 67.

COULD HAVE BEEN A 62?

"I did not putt well today. It could have been easily a nice little 62 or 63," said Woods who finished the day with a five-under total of 139. "I turned it into a 67."

After the miss on 12, Woods said, "I missed everything". Woods admitted that the first weather delay he's faced in his comeback from injury this season had him a little worried about how his surgically repaired back would respond.

"I was hoping the delay wouldn't be that

long," he said. "I really didn't sit down as I was walking back and forth to keep it loose and keep myself warm because these are the things I don't know yet."

There were no such worries for 19-year-old Chilean Niemann, who closed with a birdie in a 68 to join Stanley on 11-under par 133. Stanley had eight birdies in his six-under par 66 and he and Niemann were two strokes in front of South Korea's An Byeong-hun, who signed for a 67 for 135.

Japan's world number 10 Hideki Matsuyama and former world number one Jason Day were among a group of five players on 136. Australia's Day, an Ohio resident and Muirfield member who has never found much success in the Memorial, carded a 68 and Matsuyama posted a 71. They were joined at eight-under by American's Wesley Bryan, JB Holmes and Bryson DeChambeau. — AFP

Aussie Smith surges to lead in weather-hit US Women's Open

MIAMI: Australian Sarah Jane Smith fired a second-round 67 to grab a four-shot clubhouse lead as dangerous weather halted play at the US Women's Open in Alabama on Friday. Smith carded her second straight five-under round for a 10-under total of 134 at Shoal Creek, where thunderstorms led to extensive delays on a course that had been soaked earlier in the week.

Seventy-eight players were unable to complete the second round, which was to resume early today morning. Smith's fellow Australian Su Oh made it into the clubhouse on six-under 138 after a second-round 68.

Oh said her effort included "nothing outstanding" although she putted well and dealt calmly with the challenges of the soggy course. "It's weird, because it's playing longer because it's so soft, but it's hot so the irons are going really far," said Oh, who said she was also constantly on the lookout for mud that might affect the flight of her ball.

Smith had shared the overnight lead with Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn and South Korea's Lee Jeong-eun-who uses the numerical designator "6" with her name to distinguish her from five other Korean pros with the same name.

Ariya had birdied her first hole and was six-under for the tournament through eight holes when the horn sounded to end play for the day.

Lee, meanwhile, slipped down the leaderboard with a second-round 75 that left her eight adrift.

Smith, 33, is hoping for a breakthrough victory despite lacklustre results so far in a season in which her best finish was a tie for 26th at the Kia Classic. "I was definitely nervous, but not like I've been in the past," Smith said of heading out early with a share of the lead. "I was actually kind of happy with how I handled it a bit more today."

Smith teed off on 10 and promptly birdied 11, 12 and 13. She nabbed two more birdies before the turn and another at the par-five third before her only bogey of the day, a three-putt at eight. "I just felt really easy," said Smith, who is seeking a first win since joining the tour in 2006.

Smith said a switch back to her old irons, a reversion to a conventional putting grip and advice from coach Sean Foley-who basically told her to just stick with it-had helped her pull her game together.

Now she'll just try to stay on an even keel throughout the weekend. "I hope to show up like it's another day," said Smith, whose husband, Duane, is her caddie. "I'm happy with the way I'm playing. I feel comfortable on the greens which has been something that has been a little bit off. So it's nice to feel like I'm seeing the greens really well and seeing some putts go in. Hopefully that keeps going." — AFP



Sarah Jane Smith

Sports

Foltynewicz bedazzles Nats with 2-hit shutout, boosts Atlantas' NL East lead

Aroldis earns his 13th save by striking out the side in the ninth

ATLANTA: Atlanta Braves right-hander Mike Foltynewicz picked up in June where he left off in May when he threw a two-hit shutout with 11 strikeouts to beat the visiting Washington Nationals 4-0 on Friday at SunTrust Park. It was the first complete game and first shutout for Foltynewicz (5-3), who has allowed one or fewer runs in five straight starts. Foltynewicz retired 20 consecutive batters between the first and eighth innings. It was the 10th time in Foltynewicz's career that he's fanned double digits, the second time this season. He punched out Bryce Harper to end the game. The Braves rallied for four runs in the seventh inning against Washington starter Stephen Strasburg (6-5). The big hit was a three-run homer from Dansby Swanson, his fourth home run. Strasburg left the game with a cramp in his left hand with two outs in the inning.

YANKEES 4, ORIOLES 1

Aaron Judge homered and starter Sonny Gray pitched six strong innings as New York defeated host Baltimore in the opener of a weekend series at Camden Yards. Gray (4-4) turned in one of his best starts this season for the Yankees. After struggling in the first two innings, giving up one run on two hits and hitting a batter, he recovered to go six innings as New York won for the third straight time. Aroldis Chapman earned his 13th save by striking out the side in the ninth. Orioles starter Andrew Cashner (2-7) allowed three runs on nine hits in six innings, giving up single runs in the third, fifth and sixth innings.



Springer belted his team-leading 12th home run

CUBS 7, METS 4

Kris Bryant capped a three-run seventh inning with a go-ahead RBI single and Kyle Schwarber launched a three-run homer in the eighth inning as Chicago came back to beat host New York at Citi Field. The Cubs have won five of six. The Mets have dropped seven of nine to fall under .500 (27-28) for the first time this season. The late rally made a winner out of left-hander Randy Rosario (1-1), who tossed 1 2/3 hitless innings of relief. Schwarber's three-run homer off Paul Sewald (0-4) in the eighth provided some valuable insurance for the Cubs. Mets right-hander Zack Wheeler carried a five-hit shutout into the seventh before the Cubs came back.

TIGERS 5, BLUE JAYS 2

JaCoby Jones ripped a two-run triple during a four-run second inning and converted reliever Blaine Hardy won his second consecutive start as host Detroit downed Toronto. Hardy (2-0) limited the Blue Jays to two runs on three hits in six innings. Shane Greene pitched the ninth and collected his 14th save. Nicholas Castellanos supplied three hits, including a solo homer, in Detroit's third straight victory. Miguel Cabrera came off the DL and went 1-for-3 with a walk.

ASTROS 7, RED SOX 3

George Springer belted his team-leading 12th home

run, one of three homers for host Houston in defeating Boston at Minute Maid Park. Springer, who went 3-for-4, added a walk and a single against Red Sox ace left-hander Chris Sale (5-3), who surrendered four runs on six hits and one walk with six strikeouts over six innings. Boston nearly erased a 4-1 deficit in the top of the fourth when Mitch Moreland and J.D. Martinez recorded back-to-back home runs off Astros right-hander Gerrit Cole (6-1), who settled in to complete seven innings of three-run ball.

WHITE SOX 8, BREWERS 3

Tim Anderson's two-out, two-run triple in the sixth inning broke open a tie game, and five Chicago relievers held visiting Milwaukee hitless for the final 5 2/3 innings in the first game of a three-game interleague series. Hector Santiago started for the White Sox and was pulled with one out in the fourth after allowing three runs on five hits and five walks with one strikeout. He was followed by Chris Volstad, Luis Avilan, Joakim Soria, Bruce Rondon and Nate Jones, who allowed a combined three baserunners, all on walks. Avilan (2-0) got the win after getting the final out of the sixth inning. Chase Anderson (4-4) took the loss for the Brewers after allowing four runs (three earned) in 5 2/3 innings with one strikeout and one walk.

TWINS 7, INDIANS 4

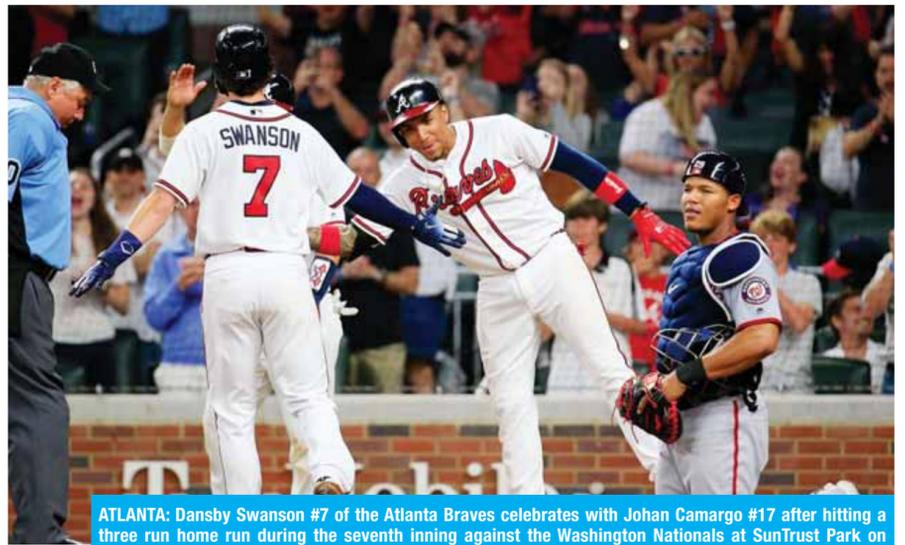
Eduardo Escobar hit a pair of home runs and Jose Berrios (6-5) cooled off Cleveland's red-hot bats as host Minnesota snapped a three-game losing streak at Target Field. Escobar ignited the Twins with a three-run home run in the first inning and added an insurance solo blast in the seventh inning. The Indians had scored seven or more runs in each game of their six-game win streak that ended. Cleveland starter Carlos Carrasco (6-4) didn't make it out of the fourth inning. He surrendered six runs on seven hits, including three doubles and a home run, in 3 2/3 innings.

ATHLETICS 16, ROYALS 0

Right-hander Frankie Montas threw eight shutout innings while Matt Olson and Dustin Fowler bombed a pair of home runs apiece, delivering Oakland a rout over host Kansas City. Promoted from Triple-A last week and making just his fourth career start, Montas (2-0) pitched his second straight impressive game to help the A's win a fifth straight on the road. The 25-year-old rookie, who recorded his first career win in a 2-1 triumph over Arizona on Sunday, was lifted after throwing 99 pitches in eight innings. He allowed seven hits and did not walk a batter, striking out two. The A's scored seven runs in both the third and ninth inning.

PIRATES 4, CARDINALS 0

Jameson Taillon pitched eight shutout innings for his first win since April 8 as visiting Pittsburgh beat St. Louis. Edgar Santana pitched a scoreless ninth to complete the shutout. Adam Frazier was 2-for-4 with a dou-



ATLANTA: Dansby Swanson #7 of the Atlanta Braves celebrates with Johan Camargo #17 after hitting a three run home run during the seventh inning against the Washington Nationals at SunTrust Park on Friday in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

ble, a triple and two runs scored for the Pirates, and Corey Dickerson was 2-for-4 with an RBI double and a run scored. Taillon (3-4) allowed four base runners, on three singles and a walk, and struck out six while racking up 104 pitches. Two of those hits came in the fifth, putting Marcell Ozuna and Dexter Fowler on first and second with no outs, but Taillon struck out Yairo Munoz and Kolten Wong and got Francisco Pena to ground out.

DODGERS 11, ROCKIES 8

Yasiel Puig, Chris Taylor and Matt Kemp homered, Dennis Santana (1-0) got the win in his major league debut and visiting Los Angeles beat Colorado. Puig finished with four hits to tie a career high. Colorado's Nolan Arenado homered, and DJ LeMahieu also tied a career high with four hits in his return from the disabled list. With 80 percent of their staff on the disabled list including ace Clayton Kershaw, who was added before the game—the Dodgers didn't employ a starter but instead used six relievers. Kenley Jansen got the last four outs for his 13th save after surviving a ninth-inning Colorado rally.

DIAMONDBACKS 9, MARLINS 1

Second baseman Daniel Descalso hit the first of Arizona's franchise-record-tying six homers and Clay Buchholz won his first game since 2016 as host Arizona routed Miami. Descalso walked and scored in the first inning, and his two-run homer in the second inning triggered a long-ball barrage that included two homers by Ketel Marte and one apiece by Jake Lamb, David Peralta and John Ryan Murphy. Marte, a switch-hitter, is the sixth player in franchise history to homer from both sides of the plate in the same game. Buchholz (1-1) gave

up six hits and one run in a season-high seven innings in his third start as the Diamondbacks won for the third time in four games following a stretch in which they lost 15 of 17. He struck out nine and walked one in his first victory since Sept. 21, 2016, with Boston.

ANGELS 6, RANGERS 0

Albert Pujols and Ian Kinsler each hit two-run home runs early in the game, and 21-year-old rookie right-hander Jaime Barria (5-1) took it from there in Los Angeles' victory over Texas at Angel Stadium. Pujols connected off the Rangers' 45-year-old starter Bartolo Colon (2-3) in the first inning, and Kinsler's blast came in the second. Barria threw six scoreless innings, allowing four hits and one walk while striking out six and making 89 pitches. Colon, who won a Cy Young Award with the Angels in 2005, was in the Cleveland Indians' minor league system in 1996 — one year away from making his major league debut—when Barria was born.

REDS 7, PADRES 2

Jose Peraza, Tucker Barnhart and Scooter Gennett led the Cincinnati offense and a pair of right-handers, starter Tyler Mahle and reliever Michael Lorenzen, combined to hold host San Diego scoreless for 8 2/3 innings. Mahle (4-6) gave up five hits and two walks with five strikeouts in five innings. Lorenzen got a rare four-inning save, his first save of the season. He retired the first 11 Padres he faced before Hunter Renfroe's two-out double in the ninth led to a two-run rally. The Reds spoiled the major league debut of Padres right-hander Walker Lockett (0-1), who allowed four runs on four hits and five walks against two strikeouts in 3 2/3 innings as San Diego saw a three-game winning streak come to an end. — Reuters

Rain delay frustrates England in second Test against Pakistan

LEEDS: Rain meant there was no play before lunch on the second day of the second Test between England and Pakistan at Headingley yesterday. Persistent early morning drizzle saw the pitch and surrounding square remain fully covered and prevented play from starting as scheduled at 11:00am local time (1000 GMT).

England, seeking to bounce back from their nine-wicket thrashing in the first Test at Lord's and end the two-match series all square at 1-1, finished Friday's opening day on 106 runs for two wickets, just 68 runs behind Pakistan's lowly first-innings 174.

Joe Root, the England captain, was 29 not out on his Yorkshire home ground, with nightwatchman Dominic Bess unbeaten on nought. Pakistan only need to avoid defeat at Headingley to seal a first series win in England for 22 years.

Rain delays, which would reduce the amount of time available to England to win the game, were likely to be a boost to the tourists. Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed won the toss on Friday and decided to bat on a good pitch but humid and overcast conditions created an environment that assisted swing and seam bowling.

With England bowling a fuller length than at Lord's pacemen Stuart Broad, James Anderson and the recalled Chris Woakes took three wickets apiece. Pakistan were indebted to teenager Shadab Khan's 56 — the 19-year-old's third fifty in as many Tests.

England were without Ben Stokes after the all-rounder suffered a hamstring tear that threatens to keep him on the sidelines for at least a month. Keaton Jennings, who replaced the dropped Mark Stoneman in one of three changes to England's XI, shared an opening stand of 53 with Alastair



HEADINGLEY: England's captain Joe Root makes the crease on the second day of the second Test cricket match between England and Pakistan at Headingley cricket ground in Leeds, northern England yesterday. — AFP

Cook before he was caught behind off Faheem Ashraf. Cook, appearing in a record-breaking 154th consecutive Test as he went past the mark he had previously shared with Australia great Allan Border, made 46. England's all-time leading Test run-scorer did not look in any trouble until he gloved a hook off fast bowler Hasan Ali to wicket-keeper Sarfraz, shortly before Friday's close.

Defeat for England would see them slip to an 18-year low of seventh in the International Cricket Council's Test rankings. England have not been so far down

the standings since being ranked seventh in October 1999.

They started that year fourth but a team led by Nasser Hussain won just one of eight Tests during the next 12 months before the appointment of former Zimbabwe all-rounder Duncan Fletcher as coach led to an upturn in England's fortunes. Now England, who have lost six of their last eight Tests, are battling to avoid a third straight series loss following recent reverses in Australia and New Zealand. Defeat in Leeds and a 2-0 series result would see England overtaken by Pakistan as well as Sri Lanka. — AFP

Vaughan steps up attack on Broad

LEEDS: Former England captain Michael Vaughan stepped up his spat with paceman Stuart Broad yesterday as rain prevented any play on the second morning of the second Test against Pakistan at Headingley.

Vaughan, who played 82 times for his country, is now an outspoken media pundit and angered Broad after England's first-test rout at Lord's by suggesting they should consider dropping the 31-year-old bowler for his lacklustre performance. The loss was the first time England had been beaten in the opening test of a home summer since 1995.

Saha ruled out of Afghanistan Test, Karthik in

MUMBAI: India's Wriddhiman Saha has been ruled out of this month's one-off Test against Afghanistan with a thumb injury that will need up to six weeks to heal, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said yesterday.

The 33-year-old wicketkeeper injured his right thumb while playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad against Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League playoffs on May 25. Saha will be replaced by Dinesh Karthik for the match starting June 14 in Bengaluru, when Afghanistan will make their debut in the five-day format after being granted full

Broad, who has taken 414 test wickets at an average of 29 since making his debut in 2007, responded by saying the criticism "lacked logic" and claimed that Vaughan had not "got much insight into the changing room".

On the field Broad took three wickets on Friday as England ran through Pakistan on the first day at Headingley. Undeterred, Vaughan continued his attack yesterday, telling the BBC: "My concern is that he is speaking like that after one good day."

"You have got to be careful when you choose a time to come out and attack like Stuart did last night. England are still 68 runs behind Pakistan. They haven't won this test match yet. The comments last night were geared as though England had won the game. He's a senior member of the team and I don't think it was the right time to plan that attack!" — Reuters

member status along with Ireland last June. "He was under observation by the medical staff of the BCCI and the management has decided to give him adequate rest before the start of the England Test series," the BCCI said in a statement.

"Saha's recovery period is expected to be around five to six weeks." India will also be without regular captain Virat Kohli against Afghanistan. The batting mainstay opted to play for the English county championship side Surrey in June but was ruled out after injuring his neck while fielding during the IPL.

Saha has been India's regular glove-man since the retirement of former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni in December 2014. He has played 32 Tests and averages above 30 with the bat. India begin their tour of England in July with three Twenty20 internationals and three one-day internationals before a five-test series starting in August. — Reuters

Sports

France beat Italy, Tunisia held, Korea lose, Aussies rampant

Italians pulled a goal back through defender Leonardo Bonucci

PARIS: France underlined their World Cup credentials with their three forwards all involved in the goals that secured an impressive 3-1 friendly victory over Italy on Friday. Just under two weeks before the finals start in Russia, Tunisia were held 2-2 by 10-man Turkey, Australia won 4-0 against the Czech Republic and South Korea suffered a 3-1 home defeat after Bosnia's Edin Visca scored a hat-trick.

France showed the full extent of their firepower as defender Samuel Umtili scored at the end of a Kylian Mbappe move while Antoine Griezmann and Ousman Dembele found the net. The Italians pulled a goal back through central defender Leonardo Bonucci, who fired home after the returning Mario Balotelli, new coach Roberto Mancini's favourite, saw his free kick parried into the path of the Azzurri captain.

But France were a cut above Italy, who missed out on the World Cup, with Umtili putting Les Bleus ahead after keeper Salvatore Sirigu failed to deal with Mbappe's shot. Griezmann converted a second-half penalty and Dembele curled a splendid shot into the top corner as France hit the Italians on the break. France have been drawn with Peru, Denmark and Australia in Group C at the finals starting this month.



Koreans lacked efficiency



in Geneva after Caglar Soyuncu scored a last-minute equaliser against the African side drawn in Group G with Belgium, Panama and England.

Cenk Tosun put Turkey ahead with a penalty early in the second half before Anice Badri equalised two minutes later. Striker Tosun was then sent off just past the hour when he became involved in a verbal altercation with a Turkish fan and had to be restrained by his team mates.

Ferjani Sassi fired the Tunisians in front with nine minutes remaining, before Soyuncu's late strike denied them victory, but the result extended their unbeaten run to nine games. South Korea, who have a tough group which includes Germany, Mexico and Sweden, succumbed to a disappointing defeat by Bosnia, with Visca scoring all the goals for the visitors.

Jae Sung-lee immediately levelled on the half-hour after Visca scored his first goal but the Koreans lacked efficiency in front of goal unlike Bosnia who took their chances. Australia's finishing was clinical as they found net with four of their five shots on target.

Matthew Leckie scored in each half either side of Andrew Nabbout's strike with a Jakub Jugas own goal 10 minutes from time rounding off a convincing win for the Australians. — Reuters



NICE: France's forward Antoine Griezmann (2ndR) vies for the ball with Italy's defender Danilo D'Ambrosio (R) during the friendly football match between France and Italy at the Allianz Riviera stadium in Nice, south-eastern France on Friday. — AFP

TUNISIA HELD

Tunisia were held to a 2-2 draw by 10-man Turkey

Peru gets out of jail to win prisoners 'World Cup'

LIMA: It sounds like a punchline: How does a team of prisoners win the World Cup? On penalties!

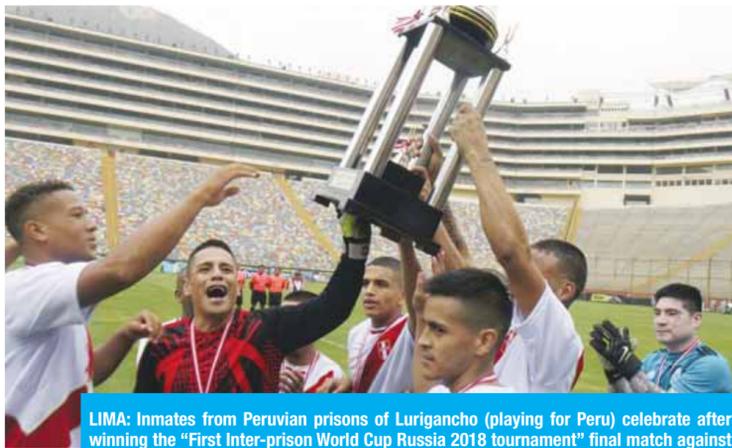
That's how Peru did it, getting out of jail to beat Russia in a tense final at the giant Lima Stadium last week. It wasn't the real thing—that begins in Russia later this month—but a deadly serious competition nevertheless that Peru's prison authorities are calling the first World Cup of prisons.

Anticipation of the Andean nation's first appearance at a World Cup finals in 36 years has reached fever pitch, and for its chronically overcrowded prisons, the shadow prison tournament provided a rare, sweet breath of freedom. "At last I can breathe a little air," sighed Francis Valero, a tattooed 27-year-old locked up in Lima's Lurigancho jail for drug trafficking. "We are hoping this will help us get reintegrated into society for good conduct." Each of the 16 prisons included in the unique competition took the name, and the colors, of a country participating in the finals. All the matches observed the national anthems of each participating "national team" and officiating at the matches were a trio of professional referees.

The initial phases of the monthlong competition, which involved shackled inmates crisscrossing the country in buses amid high security, was played in dusty exercise areas. The prize for the finalists? Playing in the wide open spaces of the capital's massive 60,000-capacity Lima Stadium.

HIGH SECURITY

For security reasons, the stands at the stadium were almost empty. The few family



LIMA: Inmates from Peruvian prisons of Lurigancho (playing for Peru) celebrate after winning the "First Inter-prison World Cup Russia 2018 tournament" final match against inmates from Chimbote prison (playing for Russia), at the Monumental stadium in Lima, on May 25, 2018. — AFP

members permitted per player were vastly outnumbered by 200 armed police wearing bullet-proof vests. But that did not stop them from living the moment as if they were fans, and players, in a real World Cup finals.

Peru, represented by Lurigancho prison, beat "Russia"—a team from Chimbote prison in northern Peru—on penalty kicks after it ended all square at full time. The champions received a cup, gold medals and sports outfits as prizes. "I feel free for a moment, I know that I will go back very soon. This title, I dedicate it to my family, the sacrifice was worthwhile," said victorious Lurigancho player Thomas Manuel Aguirre, serving a sentence for aggravated robbery.

"The magic of football is that it has what establishes the rules of a community," said National Penitentiary Institute head Carlos Vasquez told AFP. "In football, just like in a community, we face a team and we have to understand that it's not an enemy but the other side, you have to play by the rules of the game."

dence back to 100 per cent for the World Cup. "We also support his recovery because without a doubt he will be the difference for our team. "I've been in his position when I was younger, being injured isn't easy even when getting back from injury doing daily workouts even when the bone is still hurting is still difficult.

"Neymar is ready. He is fit. He's not had a good injury and it takes time to recover. But he's training well, he's feeling well." Neymar could play some part as a substitute at Anfield, but Selecao boss Tite is unlikely to take any unnecessary risks, with their opening World Cup fixture against Switzerland looming on June 17. That said Neymar must surely have some game-time, with a friendly against Austria in Vienna on June 10 serving as Brazil's other warm-up fixture.

COUTINHO RETURNS

Brazil, five-time world champions, have spent the week training at Tottenham ahead of their opening World Cup warm-up fixture. The match with Croatia gives the Liverpool crowd the opportunity to see former Reds star Philippe Coutinho.

Brazil forward Coutinho left Liverpool for Barcelona in January, while his international colleague Roberto Firmino will also be hop-

'CRITICAL OVERCROWDING'

Like a real tournament, the tournament was grouped into four "host" prisons in cities in Ancon, Chimbote, Ica and Lima. The semi-finals were played in Lurigancho, which has the dubious reputation of being the most overcrowded of Peru's 69 prisons. Built to house 3,500 prisoners, it is home to 9,700 inmates, many of them categorized as "highly dangerous."

"Overcrowding is critical in Peruvian prisons, where there are 187,000 inmates. But you sense it less when there is order," Vasquez said, after handing out the winners' medals after the final. "The inmates may have violated the rules, they may have committed a crime, but football unites them along with the nation with the country's participation in the World Cup." For inmate Omar Jaramillo Mendez, in jail for aggravated robbery, it was a chance to get a feel for life outside prison walls again. "For us it represents something important, that we, as human beings, reintegrate into society and become better people in the future," he said. — AFP

ing to feature on his home club ground. It is uncertain what kind of reception Coutinho will receive, with Liverpool legend Kenny Dalglish this week requesting the "boo boys" to stay away from the match.

"We haven't had that conversation about Philippe returning to Anfield," Ferdinandinho said. "But I believe he's happy because he spent a couple years at Liverpool, had some fantastic games where his performances managed to take him to Barcelona and the Brazilian national team. "I believe it will be an honour for him to return to a city and home he knows well." Brazil have an injury doubt over Renato Augusto and he is likely to miss Sunday's fixture due to a right knee issue. But Brazil's squad has had a relaxed feel to it this week ahead of the more serious work.

There is a sense of wishing to right wrongs of the past, with the 7-1 semi-final defeat to Germany at their home World Cup four years ago still weighing heavily on their minds. Yet Brazil have always been regarded as the most watchable team in world football and intend to carry on their role as great entertainers, win, lose or draw in Russia. "We cannot promise the title, but we can promise great matches," said captain Thiago Silva this week. "By the time of the World Cup you will see great football." — AFP

Morocco into 2026 W Cup vote despite stadium, infrastructure fears

LAUSANNE: Morocco's bid for the 2026 World Cup was cleared to advance to a runoff vote against a bid from North America on Friday despite a FIFA evaluation report which classified the African bid's stadia, accommodation and transport as "high risk."

A long-awaited report from FIFA inspectors left the US-Canada-Mexico bid as the clear front-runner after giving it a rating of four out of a possible five according to its criteria. Morocco received only 2.7 out of five, but advanced to the June 13 vote in Moscow despite red flags being raised over several critical components of the bid.

A FIFA summary of the bid task force's findings warned that "the amount of new infrastructure required for the Morocco 2026 bid to become reality cannot be overstated." "The Bid Evaluation Task Force considers it its duty to emphasise the significant overall risk, on a compounded basis, of a bid that has so many facilities (from stadiums and training sites to major transport infrastructure and accommodation projects) that would need to be built or completely renovated," the summary stated.

In 17 of 20 categories rated by FIFA in the report, the North American bid was rated as "low risk". Morocco was deemed low risk in seven categories, with others classified as medium or high risk.

The report's release followed intense speculation earlier Friday that Morocco's bid would not be cleared to advance to the Moscow vote on the eve of next month's World Cup. The North American bid had long been seen as the overwhelming favourite but has faced increasingly stiff competition from Morocco in

recent months.

While the North American bid showcases an array of gleaming, large capacity stadia and an established transport and tourism infrastructure, Morocco's bid relies heavily on the country's passion for football, its relatively compact size and its proximity to Europe.

NO KNOCKOUT BLOW?

Africa has only hosted the global showpiece once before, in South Africa in 2010. But although the FIFA evaluation report released Friday leaves Morocco's bid on the ropes, it is not necessarily a knockout blow.

In 2010, a FIFA evaluation committee flagged Qatar's bid for the 2022 World Cup as "a health risk for players, spectators, officials" over ferocious heat in the Gulf state in June & July. Qatar duly won the vote in a shock result in Zurich: FIFA later moved the tournament to November and December 2022.

The corruption-tainted nature of the 2010 vote prompted FIFA to overhaul its bidding process for the World Cup.

Whereas previously the 24 members of the FIFA executive committee used to determine World Cup races, now the hosts will be decided by a vote of 207 individual FIFA member nations.

Under the revised bidding rules, designed to weed out substandard bids, the Task Force in theory had the power to dismiss Morocco's bid, which would have left the bid from the United States, Canada and Mexico without a rival in the vote.

The 2026 World Cup will be the first to be expanded to 48 teams, posing a severe test for the hosts. — AFP

Neymar fitness in the spotlight as Brazil face Croatia

LIVERPOOL: Brazil will keep a close eye on the fitness of star striker Neymar when the World Cup contenders face Croatia in a friendly at Anfield today. Neymar, who scored four goals in the 2014 World Cup, has not played any form of football since February after breaking his foot.

The 26-year-old Paris Saint Germain ace sat out training on Thursday as a precaution. But his Brazil team-mate Fernandinho has given a positive assessment of Neymar's condition just two weeks before the start of the World Cup on June 14.

"By the movements and dribbles he has been doing in training, he has shown he is well," said the Manchester City midfielder. "He is confident which is important, he shows that he isn't scared of our defenders as he takes them on without fear.

"This is the first steps to getting his confi-

Ramos releases WCup anthem for Spain

MADRID: Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos released Friday an anthem for Spain's 2018 World Cup campaign which he co-wrote with Spanish flamenco fusion singer Demarco Flamenco. The 32-year-old Spain captain uploaded on his Instagram page a short video teaser of the song, which he is seen performing with Flamenco, a former gas canister distributor.

"I always keep my promises. This is what my friend Demarco Flamenco and I have been working on. Warming up for the World Cup," Ramos wrote alongside the video which has been seen nearly four million times. The mid-tempo ballad

called "Otra estrella en tu corazón", or "Another star in your heart" was made available on iTunes and other online platforms on Friday.

The lyrics include: "Come on, Spain, raise your voice; scream loudly, shout that goal. Thinking big we will achieve the best, fighting together, towards the star with honour. We have to try. May La Roja shine once more." Demarco, whose real name is Marco Jesus Borrego, told Spanish public broadcaster RTVE he wrote the lyrics with Ramos. "He worked on it from his end, I did it from mine," he said. The 38-year-old, who like Ramos is from the southwestern region of Andalusia, released his first album last year.

Ramos also sang lead vocals for Spain's Euro 2016 song "La Roja Baila", or "La Roja dances". Spain won its only World Cup in 2010. It won the European Championship in 1964, 2008 and 2012. — AFP

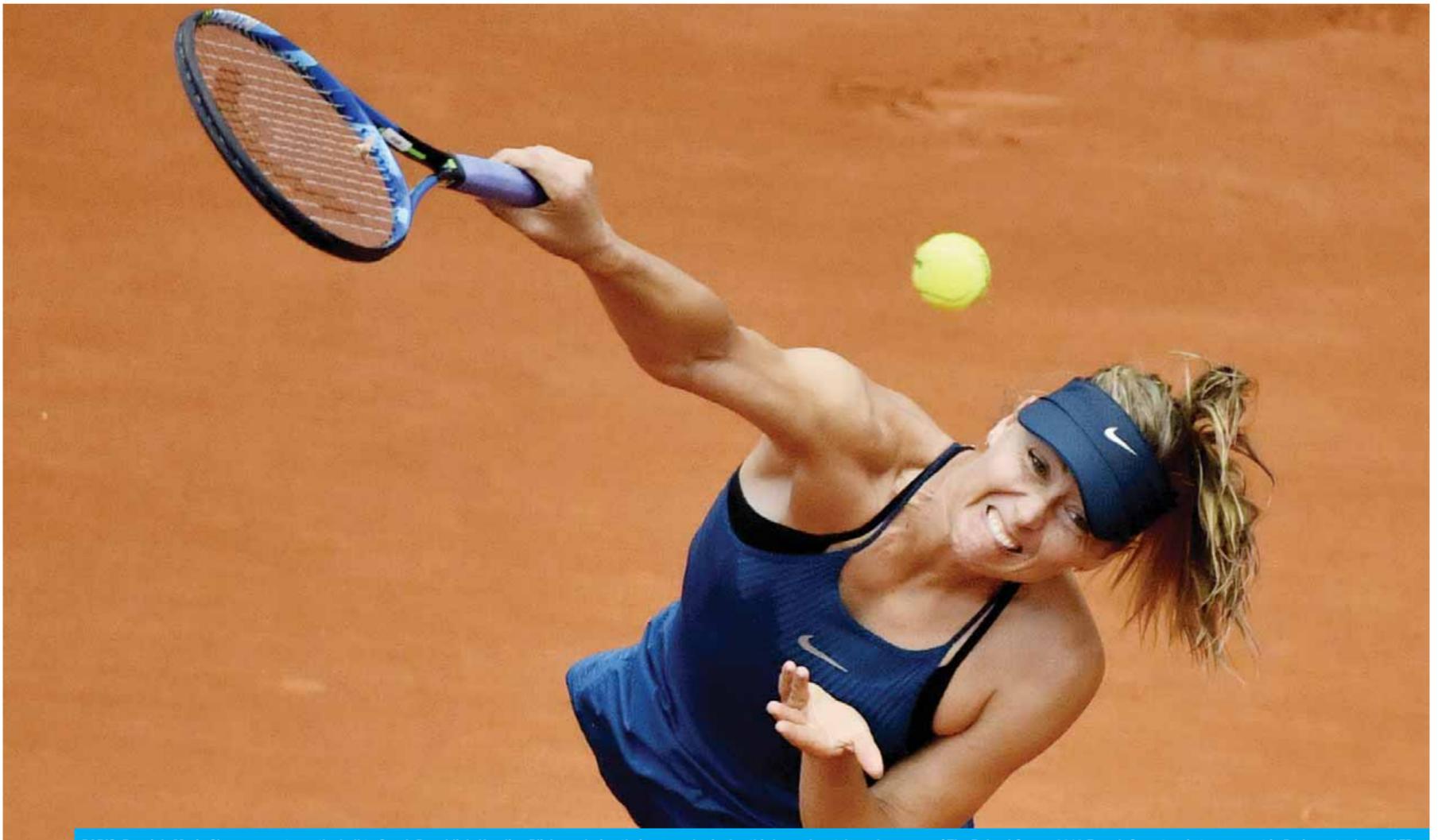
25 Niemann, Stanley lead as Woods climbs Memorial leaderboard



26 Foltyniewicz bedazzles Nats with 2-hit shutout, boosts Atlanta's NL East lead



27 France beat Italy, Tunisia held, Korea lose, Aussies rampant



PARIS: Russia's Maria Sharapova returns the ball to Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova during their women's singles third round match on day seven of The Roland Garros 2018 French Open tennis tournament in Paris yesterday. —AFP

Sharapova sets up Serena clash

Nadal faces childhood friend Gasquet

PARIS: Maria Sharapova marked her first appearance on Court Philippe Chatrier in three years with a 6-2, 6-1 rout of Karolina Pliskova to set-up a potential French Open last-16 duel with old rival Serena Williams yesterday, while 10-time champion Rafael Nadal was due to face childhood friend Richard Gasquet.

Five-time Grand Slam champion Sharapova, the winner in Paris in 2012 and 2014, hadn't played on Roland Garros' showpiece arena since a quarter-final exit in 2015. The 31-year-old served a doping suspension in 2016 and was refused a wildcard in 2017.

However, she made up for lost time by firing 18 winners past an under-cooked Pliskova, the sixth seed, in just under an hour. She will next face either 23-time Grand Slam champion Williams or German 11th seed Julia Goerges.

Sharapova and Serena have met 21 times, with the American leading the head-to-head record 19-2 after

18 consecutive wins dating back to 2004. "I knew I had to play well against a tough opponent. I managed to stay aggressive and I played smart as well," said Sharapova.

Williams, the champion in 2002, 2013 and 2015 and playing her first Slam since giving birth to her daughter in September, last played a major at the Australian Open in 2017 while two months pregnant.

She has dominated the headlines in Paris as much for her play-she came back from a set and break down to beat Ashleigh Barty in the second round-as for her striking all-black catsuit. The 36-year-old Williams, now ranked at 451 in the world, boasts a 2-0 career lead over Goerges.

It may not be easy on the eye with Williams's renowned power-hitting up against the 29-year-old German who leads the aces count on the WTA Tour in 2018 with 212. Former champion Garbine Muguruza

reached the last 16 for the fifth successive year with a comfortable 6-0, 6-2 win over Australia's Sam Stosur.

Spanish third seed Muguruza, the 2016 winner in Paris and the reigning Wimbledon champion, fired 15 winners past Stosur, the 34-year-old 2010 runner-up and former US Open champion. "I knew this would be very tough against a former US Open winner and a player who has made the final here," said 24-year-old Muguruza.

"If I didn't play my best tennis, I realised that it would be very hard." The Spaniard goes on to face Lesia Tsurenko of Ukraine who knocked out Slovakian 19th seed Magdalena Rybarikova 6-2, 6-4. Estonian 25th seed Anett Kontaveit made the last 16 for the first time by downing Czech eighth seed Petra Kvitova who saw her 13-match win streak end in a horror show of 57 unforced errors. Kontaveit next faces US Open champion Sloane Stephens, the American 10th seed, who saw

off Italy's Camila Giorgi 4-6, 6-1, 8-6. Defending champion, world number one and top seed Nadal, chasing an 11th Roland Garros title, takes on Gasquet having won all of their 15 meetings.

If he wins in straight sets, he will take his run of consecutive completed sets to 34, just seven shy of the record held by Bjorn Borg between 1979 and 1981. Italy's Fabio Fognini made the last 16 for the second time with a 6-3, 4-6, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 win over Britain's last man standing Kyle Edmund.

Fognini joins compatriot Marco Cecchinato in the fourth round, the first time that more than one Italian has made the last 16 since 1976. Women's top seed Simona Halep, twice a runner-up, has been shunted out to Court 18 for her third round clash against experienced German Andrea Petkovic. Halep leads their head-to-head 6-1, including a clash in the semi-finals in Paris in 2015. — AFP

Thompson fined but not suspended over incident

OAKLAND: Cleveland Cavaliers forward Tristan Thompson was fined \$25,000 by the NBA on Friday but was not suspended for an altercation with Golden State's Draymond Green in the NBA Finals opener.

The 27-year-old Canadian's actions late in the Warriors' 124-114 overtime home victory Thursday were reviewed by league officials with concern Thompson could have been suspended for game two Sunday at Oakland.

Instead, Thompson was fined for failing to leave the court in a timely manner after being ejected and for shoving the ball in Green's face with 2.6 seconds remaining in overtime after being taunted by the Warriors forward for being ejected.

In addition, the flagrant level 2 foul issued to Thompson in challenging a shot by Golden State's Shaun Livingston was downgraded to a Flagrant 1 after the league review. Cavaliers coach Tyrone Lue said before the punishment announcement that, "I know the league will do the right thing" in Thompson's situation.

Cavaliers teammate George Hill was also confident Thompson would not be banned, saying, "I don't think it was a big deal. We'll let the NBA figure that out. If we're going to be that petty to do that, so be it."

Thompson was ejected after contesting Livingston's final shot to avoid a shot-clock violation turnover with the outcome long since decided. That's when Green waved goodbye and continued taunting Thompson, who responded by shoving the ball into Green's face, prompting players from both teams to separate the two.

"I'm not too concerned if Thompson is going to be available or not," Golden State guard Klay Thompson said. "I thought it was unnecessary when he shoved the ball in Draymond's face. That was very uncalled for. You don't do that when two people are just talking."

Many teams simply allow the shot clock to expire in

such situations but the Warriors have typically taken shots. "I don't know why I got thrown out," Cleveland's Thompson said after the loss. "I contested a shot that shouldn't have been taken."

"It's like the unspoken rule in the NBA. If you're up by 10 or 11 with about 20 seconds left, you don't take that shot. I made the contest and next thing I know I was being kicked out for making a contest we learn in training camp." Referee Tony Brothers said he whistled Thompson because his challenge appeared to deliver a blow to Livingston's head. "His elbow is up high and appears he hits him in the head when he's coming toward him, so that's why I called the foul and ejected him," Brothers said.

Warriors coach Steve Kerr said the team will always try to avoid a turnover, even in a relatively meaningless moment. "I guess Tristan thought that was offensive," Kerr said. "I didn't think that was being offensive."

There was also no punishment for Cavs forward Kevin Love, who stepped onto the court just before the Thompson incident with Green to protest the call against his teammate. — AFP



Tristan Thompson