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رمضان
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Budgets panel links debt to reforms and non-oil income

MP demands study on financial sustainability

Palestinian minister in Kuwait with 'message of thanks'

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Palestinian Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Minister Riyad Al-Maliki said that Kuwait is under great pressure because of its tough stance in support of Palestinians. "Kuwait's position on Palestinian issues in the UN Security Council showed the greatness and prestige of Kuwait, and the credibility that raised the status of the Arabs in the international forum," he noted. In a press statement held at the Palestinian Embassy yesterday, Al-Maliki expressed thanks and appreciation for the role of Kuwait in supporting the Palestinian people.

He thanked His Highness the Amir, the government and Kuwaitis for their historic and honorable positions in support of the rights of Palestinian people and their aspirations for freedom and independence. He said that he came to Kuwait carrying a message of "thanks and appreciation" from President Mahmoud Abbas to His Highness the Amir.

The minister said that Washington has already begun to implement the 'deal of the century' by recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, where the deal calls for building a New Jerusalem for the Palestinians from the surrounding villages and communities. He pointed out that US administration began to implement the elements of the deal of the century through attempts to liquidate the Palestinian cause. On other hand, Maliki affirmed that the Palestinian government will make all possible efforts to unify the Palestinian factions - because the continuation of the division has significant negative effects on the Palestinian cause.

He said that Hamas has refused to give up its security superiority in the Gaza Strip. "We hope that the



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received the Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Al-Maliki at Seif Palace. Al-Maliki handed a letter from Palestine's President Mahmoud Abbas to His Highness the Amir. — KUNA

Hamas leadership would respond to everything agreed upon in Egypt," he said, adding that the siege imposed on Gaza 12 years ago has made Gaza the largest open prison in the world. During his visit, Maliki held talks

on the expected steps in the United Nations, especially after the United States vetoed a draft resolution calling for the protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Head of the National Assembly budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said yesterday that the government borrowing program must be linked to key budget reforms and raising non-government revenues. Abdulsamad's statement came a day after an expanded meeting with the government which pushed MPs to approve a debt law to allow the government to borrow up to KD 25 billion over the next three decades.

He said the meeting was attended by first Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad and Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf along with the budgets committee, members of the financial and economic affairs and legal and legislative panels. Abdulsamad said the government explained to the lawmakers that the level of cash flow available to the government from the state reserve fund was fast decreasing because the fund was being used to finance the budget deficit.

The Finance Minister said after the meeting, that assets at the state reserves fund dropped to \$87 billion last year after funds from the reserve were used to pay around KD14.6 billion in budget deficits over the past three years. Abdulsamad said the committees pointed out that borrowing should be linked to certain reforms in the budget in addition to guarantees to make the borrowing within the regulations and spending it in a prudent manner. The lawmaker said the meeting also underscored the importance of increasing non-oil revenues and tackling the roots of structural distortions.

In the meantime, MP Khalil Al-Saleh yesterday called in a letter on the Assembly Financial and Economic Affairs Committee to study the basis of the government financial and economic sustainability program. In his letter, the lawmaker demanded that the panel should study why the proposed corporate and business tax was removed from the program while the government kept its plan to review charges and prices of public services and commodities. Saleh said the program raises fears over the government's ability to stop squandering of public funds, diversifying sources of income and tackling distortions in the budget.

Guard your tongue (2)

Ramadan Kareem

By Hassan Twaha Bwambale

If you really believe in Allah, then say good words or remain silent. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "He who believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him say good words or else remain silent." (Saheeh Muslims # 47) Commenting on this prophetic narration, Al-Imam An-Nawawi (RL) said in a long speech, "... and whenever speaking about an issue and remaining silent are the same, then it is Sunnah to stay silent." (Refer to Ihya'ulUlumud-Deen 3/200)

You may end up in the hellfire because of just one negative word. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said what can be translated as, "A servant of Allah may utter a word without thinking about its repercussions and, because of it, he will slip into the hellfire farther than the distance between the east and the west." (Al-Bukhari # 6, 478 and Muslim # 2, 988)

Abdullah Bin Masoud (RA) used to warn his fellow bona-fide Companions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and all those who believed in the Prophet (PBUH) saying, "I warn you against curiosity (about others) and excessive talking. It is enough for you to say only what communicates your message." (See As-Samt by IbnAbi Ad-Dunya, page 241.)

A good word might raise you high in Paradise. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said what can be translated as, "A servant of Allah may utter a word that pleases Allah without deeming it of any significance due to which Allah will raise him high in rank (in Paradise). Conversely, another one might speak a word that displeases Allah without considering its dire consequences, and for that reason he will sink down into hell." (Al-Bukhari # 6, 478)

If you are a sincere believer, by virtue of Allah's grace, and then say a good word, among other deeds, you may be raised high in Paradise. A good word is also a form of charity. Don't claim moral and religious authority to judge others: About this, Jundub bin Abdillah (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) narrated what can be translated as: "A man said, 'By Allah, Allah will not

Continued on Page 24

Iran to boost uranium enrichment

TEHRAN: Iran said yesterday it has launched a plan to boost uranium enrichment capacity with new centrifuges, raising the pressure on European diplomats scrambling to rescue the crumbling nuclear deal after Washington pulled out. "If conditions allow, maybe tomorrow night at Natanz, we can announce the opening of the centre for production of new centrifuges," said Vice-President Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization, according to conservative news agency Fars. "What we are doing does not violate the (2015 nuclear

agreement," he said, adding that a letter was submitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) "yesterday regarding the start of certain activities".

He specified this was just the start of the production process and "does not mean that we will start assembling the centrifuges". Under the 2015 nuclear agreement that Iran signed with world powers, it can build and test parts for advanced centrifuges, but specific restrictions exist on what technology can be researched and in what quantity within the first decade of the deal. Salehi also emphasized that these moves "do not mean the negotiations (with Europe) have failed."

European governments have been trying to salvage the nuclear deal ever since the United States announced its withdrawal last month and said it would reimpose sanctions on foreign companies

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ISFAHAN, Iran: An Iranian technician works at the Isfahan Uranium Conversion Facilities (UCF), 420 kms south of Tehran in this file photo. — AFP

Death toll from Tunisia migrant shipwreck hits 60

TUNIS: The death toll from a ship packed with migrants that sank off Tunisia has risen to at least 60, with dozens still missing, the United Nations migration agency said yesterday. The overloaded boat went down near the southern island of Kerkenna. At least 100 people were killed or are missing, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said. "Among the 60 victims transferred to the forensic department at Habib Bourguiba hospital in Sfax, 48 are Tunisians ... 12 are non-Tunisian, the identifications are in progress," Lorena Lando, chief of mission of the IOM in Tunisia said in a statement late on Monday. Human traffickers increasingly use Tunisia as a launch pad for migrants heading to Europe as Libya's coastguard, aided by armed groups, has tightened controls.

Tunisian authorities, which on Sunday said they had recovered 48 bodies, provided no new figures but said the coast guard was still searching for dozens of missing migrants. The UN refugee agency UNHCR said 52 people were confirmed dead with 60 missing and voiced concern about incidents along the central



SFAX, Tunisia: People receive the bodies of their loved ones in the Tunisian town of Sfax after more than 60 migrants drowned in the Mediterranean. — AFP

Mediterranean route. "That's why UNHCR is advocating for safe routes for refugees to travel so that these unnecessary deaths don't take place. People should be able to find protection and travel in a legal, safe way," UNHCR spokesman William Spindler told a briefing.

Countries must offer refugees "legal pathways" including resettlement, family reunification and student visas, he said. UNHCR estimates that about 17,000 refugees in North Africa are in need of resettlement.

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Saudi intercepts ballistic missile

RIYADH: Saudi air defenses yesterday intercepted a ballistic missile that targeted the western city of Yanbu after being fired from rebel-held territory in neighboring Yemen, a Saudi-led military coalition said. The missile fired at the coastal city did not cause any casualties, coalition spokesman Turki Al-Maliki said in a statement released by the official Saudi Press Agency. Iran-backed Houthi rebels have in recent months ramped up missile attacks against neighboring Saudi Arabia, which leads a military coalition that has fought the insurgents since 2015.

The latest strike comes as coalition-backed Yemeni forces advance on the rebel-held Red Sea port of Hodeida, the main conduit for humanitarian supplies into a country teetering on the brink of famine. United Nations envoy Martin Griffiths was in the rebel-held capital Sanaa on Monday for talks with Houthi rebels about de-escalating the fighting around Hodeida. In late May, air defenses intercepted Houthi missiles over the southern cities of Najran and Jizan, according to Maliki, who said there were no casualties. Saudi Arabia earlier this month tested a new siren system for the capital Riyadh and the oil-rich Eastern Province, in a sign of the increasing threat posed by the rebels' arms.

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Local

Defense Minister commends Mubarak Al-Abdullah College

Sheikh Nasser delighted most lecturers are Kuwaiti



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and top military officials pose for a group picture with the graduates during a ceremony at the Mubarak Al-Abdullah College of Joint Command and Staff. — KUNA photos



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends the graduation ceremony.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honors a graduate.

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has expressed pride that Mubarak Al-Abdullah College of Joint Command and Staff had become in parallel with the world's top military colleges.

In a ceremony held Monday to celebrate the graduation of the 22nd batch of the commanding and staff training course, Sheikh Nasser said he was delighted to see that most lecturers at this prestigious military institution were Kuwaiti, the army said in a press statement.

He thanked the United Kingdom for its support which helped Mubarak Al-Abdullah College reach this remarkable success. He cited the participation of a large number

of officers from sisterly and friendly countries as a clear proof on the world-class level of its military education and training. He wished the graduates more success in their practical and personal lives.

Meanwhile, the commander of Mubarak Al-Abdullah College for the Joint Command and Staff, Rear Admiral Abdullah Dashti welcomed the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and other distinguished guests.

Dashti noted that the studying joint command and staff was one of the most important qualifications for officers.

Later, Sheikh Nasser distributed graduation certificates and awards to graduates and honored the outstanding performers. —KUNA



Minister thanks UK's support

Later, Sheikh Nasser distributed graduation certificates and awards to graduates and honored the outstanding performers. —KUNA



Commander of Mubarak Al-Abdullah College for the Joint Command and Staff, Rear Admiral Abdullah Dashti delivers his speech.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and top military officials arrive to the venue.

News in brief

3,140 expats terminated by July

KUWAIT: The Civil Services Commission (CSC) recently informed a parliamentary committee that studies ways to replace expatriate manpower with national labor forces that the number of expats laid off in the public sector would increase to 3,140 by the beginning of July, said informed sources. The policy of replacing expat employees with citizens was going according to schedule, the sources said, adding that a new batch of citizens with university degrees, who had been registered with CSC and awaiting appointment, would be nominated for jobs by the end of July. — Al-Qabas

Minister meets Kyrgyz envoy

KUWAIT: Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf discussed yesterday with Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Kuwait Samargyul Adamkulova ways of strengthening economic relations between the two countries. During the meeting, they also discussed enhancing relations through the follow-up of the First meeting results of joint Kyrgyz-Kuwaiti intergovernmental commission held in Kuwait last April 24-26. The ministry pointed to the interest of the Kyrgyz side in holding a joint committee on an annual basis and taking advantage of Kuwait's experience in the management of state property and land identification by using GIS program. — KUNA

Kuwait deputy chair of FAO Council

ROME: The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Council on Monday elected Kuwait as Deputy Independent Chairperson. The Council if the organization's "Governance Structure" that takes over its executive powers and implement its policies. Kuwait's Permanent Representative to FAO Yousef Al-Juhail stressed the importance of the move, which followed nomination by the Near East and North Africa (NENA) group and supported by the G77 and China. Juhail said that electing Kuwait for the post came "in recognition of the country's active role in the organization tasked mainly with issues of food security and humanitarian impact. Taking over this post for a two-year term is a big success for Kuwait due to its effective efforts exerted inside the organization's bodies and along with member states, as well as its regional and international efforts, he noted. — KUNA

Man gravely injured in collision

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: One person was seriously injured when he became trapped inside a mini bus after it collided with a truck yesterday. Both vehicles caught fire which prompted quick response from firefighters who rushed to the scene and managed to put out the blaze and rescue the trapped person. An investigation was opened into the accident.

Fake cop arrested

Andalus criminal detectives finally managed to unfold the mystery surrounding several robberies reported recently in Kuwait, during which the robber had impersonated a policeman and used his camouflage to steal phones from a number of mobile phone stores. Case papers indicate that detectives recently suspected a person in police uniform in Farwaniya, especially when he

became nervous upon seeing them. The man failed to produce a military ID when asked, which prompted the detectives to check on him. It was soon afterwards discovered that the man was a fraud, and that he had used the same uniform to carry out robberies at several mobile phone stores where he would pretend to purchase a phone or an accessory before fleeing with the item without paying. The suspect confessed and led the detectives to a number of the mobile phones he had stolen.

Trespassing

Kuwaiti authorities yesterday handed over to their Iraqi counterparts six Iraqi fishermen who had been arrested after illegally entering Kuwaiti national waters, the Interior Ministry's relation and security media department said in a statement.

Kuwait-UK meeting

Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah will head Kuwait's delegation on the 12th meeting of the Kuwait-UK Joint Steering Group due to be held in London on June 26-27, while the British side will be headed by the British Minister of State for Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt, said Kuwaiti foreign ministry's assistant undersecretary for Europe affairs Waleed Al-Kubaizi. Kubaizi added that the meeting would be dedicated to discussing various topics such as education, defense, cyber security, immigration, visas, investment, improving commercial exchanges, health care and exchanging research and expertise. Further, Kubaizi said that several preliminary meetings had been held with representatives of the participating government bodies.

Company loses contract for being behind schedule

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) recently cancelled a contract signed with a contracting company because it failed to meet the schedule of building Granada Co-op Society's supermarket, and broke several deadlines it had promised to respect. MPW's decision involves withdrawing the project from the contractor and completing it by others at the contractor's expense, explained MPW's assistant undersecretary for construction projects affairs Ghaleb Al-Sofoug, who noted that that the decision was the last of a series of penal measures gradually taken against the contractor.

Food boxes

Al-Manshar Rotana Hotel had been cooperating with Kuwait Food Bank (KFB) since the beginning of Ramadan to distribute food boxes to needy families in Kuwait. It has so far donated 150 boxes of basic food supplies, said KFB Manager Salem Al-Hamar. Meanwhile, Al-Manshar Rotana Hotel's General Manager Pierre Zayoun expressed his joy for joining KFB in such a generous initiative during the holy month of Ramadan. He also noted that this partnership comes as part of the hotel's social responsibility activities.

Foul fish

Public Authority for Food and Nutrition (PAFN) inspectors recently inspected the fish market in Sharq area where they confiscated and destroyed around 66 kilograms of foul fish, said the authority's acting public relations manager Mohammed Jeraq.

9510 patients

Chairman of Kuwait Patients Helping Fund Society (KPHFS), Dr. Mohammed Al-Sharhan said that 9510 patients, out of the total of 16275 who had applied requesting financial help, have benefited from the society's help with a total cost of KD 3,225,824. Al-Sharhan added that KPHFS follows sets of rules and regulations that would help achieve donors' interest and help patients actually in need of help. "Not all the cases circulated on social media networks actually need help", he underlined noting that the society has its own specialized medical committee and social researchers who study each case for two days to decide whether it needs help. Al-Sharhan added that the society focuses on the humane side of each case regardless of race, gender or religion. "We have helped non-Muslim patients", he stressed urging those wishing to find out more about the society work to visit it in person instead of 'staying eye-glued to mobile phones' defaming others without verifying any piece of news.

Local

Amir receives report on Kuwait Expo, meets new National Fund members

Amir offers condolences to Bahraini King, Guatemalan President

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan who gave His Highness a briefing on Kuwait Expo 2018 which was held on the 6th to 10th of Feb 2018.

Roudhan, who is also Chairman of the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Development, also introduced to His Highness the Amir members of the fund on the occasion of formation of the new board. The meetings were attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarah Al-Sabah.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry organized the Kuwait Expo 2018 under the patronage of His Highness the Amir, featuring several different exhibitions such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Commercial Exhibition and knowledge based small and medium enterprises (SME's) and world manufacturers exhibition. Some 140 companies from 30 different countries participated in Kuwait's Expo 2018. The opening ceremony was attended by four Ministers of Commerce and Industry from Kuwait and different countries and 45,000 visitors.

Roudhan also introduced the new members of the National Fund to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. He also presented a report on Kuwait Expo 2018 to him. In other news, His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met separately with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah at Seif Palace yesterday.

Condolences

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Bahrain's King Hamad bin Issa bin Salman Al-Khalifa over the passing of head of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs Sheikh Abdullah Bin Khaled Bin Ali Al-Khalifa, asking Almighty Allah to bestow his mercy upon his soul. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to the Bahraini King. In the meantime, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales on the victims of Fuego volcano eruption. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to Guatemalan President. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a report on Kuwait Expo 2018 from Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of the SME Development Fund Khaled Al-Roudhan, as well as members of the fund's Board of Directors.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives a report on Kuwait Expo 2018 from Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of the SME Development Fund Khaled Al-Roudhan, as well as members of the fund's Board of Directors.

Amir's representative delivers message to Jordan's King

AMMAN: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh visited Jordan on Monday where he delivered a verbal message to King

Abdullah II. His Highness the Amir's message to the Jordanian Monarch tackled means of promoting the brotherly relations between the two countries and peoples, besides issues of mutual interest, as well as latest developments in the region. — KUNA



AMMAN: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh meets with Jordanian King Abdullah II. — KUNA

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Official has great expectations for 5G technology

KUWAIT: Smart phone users and the local telecommunications industry would soon reap the benefits of the fifth generation of mobile data wireless technology (5G), said a Kuwaiti official yesterday. The 5G Wireless Systems, with the ability to transmit 10 or more gigabytes per second

in its initial stages of use, represent an epoch in the history of technology, Salem Al-Uthaina, the chairman of Kuwait's Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), said in a statement.

He revealed that 5G will use additional spectrum in the existing LTE frequency range and new Millimeter wave bands (24-86 GHz), which can support data rates of up to 20 gigabits per second. Uthaina went on to say that CITRA welcomes such cutting-edge technology that would prove instrumental in transforming Kuwait into an ultimate tech hub. — KUNA

Foreign Minister meets Palestinian counterpart

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met yesterday with the visiting Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Minister of Palestine Riyad Al-Maliki.

Maliki expressed during the meeting his deepest thanks and appreciation for the State of Kuwait for its full support of the Palestinian case at world forums especially the recent draft resolution it submitted to the United Nations Security Council calling to making arrangements to guarantee safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories, including the Gaza Strip. Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tabboub and senior foreign ministry officials attended the meeting. — KUNA

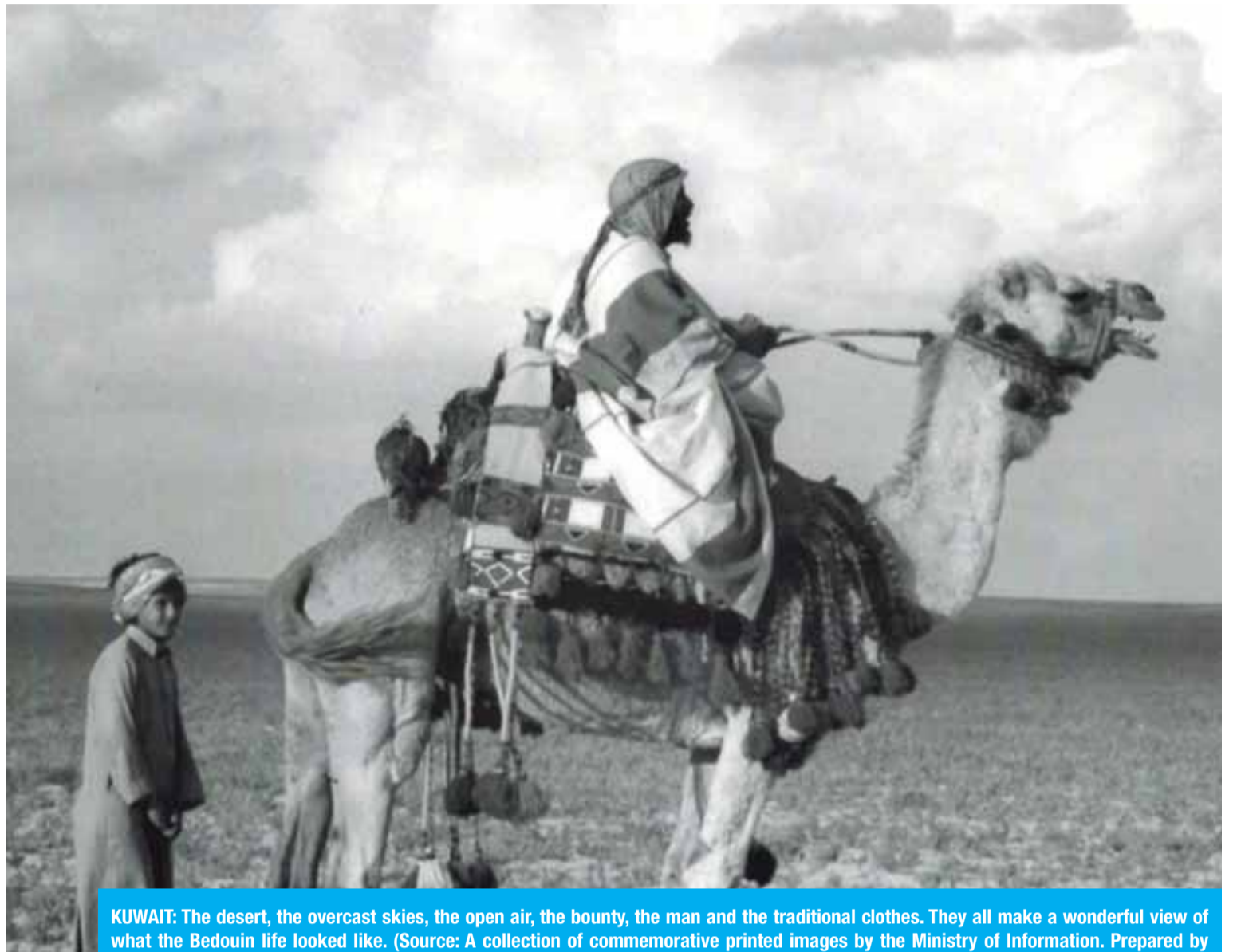


KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Minister of Palestine Riyad Al-Maliki. — KUNA

Local



History of Kuwait



KUWAIT: The desert, the overcast skies, the open air, the bounty, the man and the traditional clothes. They all make a wonderful view of what the Bedouin life looked like. (Source: A collection of commemorative printed images by the Ministry of Information. Prepared by Mahmoud Zakaria Abu Alella, heritage researcher at the Ministry of Information)

Taraweeh and qiyam fill mosques in Ramadan

By Nawara Fattahova

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.



Not only lifestyle and social activities change during the holy month of Ramadan, but even religious rituals. In Ramadan, there are two special prayers that are additional to the five regular prayers - taraweeh and qiyam. The mosques are fuller during this holy month compared to the rest of the year. During the last 10 nights of Ramadan, attendance soars, and worshippers spill out into the yards outside. The Grand Mosque particularly pitches huge tents for thousands of worshippers, although it hasn't done so this year due to construction works.

people pray taraweeh at the mosque immediately after the Isha prayer, while some pray it at home. Some mosques start the qiyam prayer at 11 pm, while other mosques at midnight, and some even later. The length of the prayers differs depending on the sermon of the imam and the break between the prayers.

Also, one of the last 10 nights is the Al-Qadr night, during which good deeds are multiplied manifold, so most Muslims prefer to be in the mosque. At the Grand Mosque, the number of worshippers reaches 50,000 people during the qiyam, and more than 100,000 on the 27th night of Ramadan.

Taraweeh follows the Isha prayer, and qiyam prayers are performed in the last quarter of the night during the last 10 nights of Ramadan. Both of these prayers are not obligatory, but Muslims aim to do more good deeds and be closer to God through these prayers. Most

Email us at local@kuwaittimes.com with your favorite symbols of Ramadan and Ramadan photos.

Boursa Kuwait's ghabqa gave thanks to the media



Group picture for Boursa Kuwait team with local media.



Naser Al-Sanousi, Marketing Director and Fahad Al-Reshaid, Head of Corporate Communications at Boursa Kuwait among the media.

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait recently held a Ramadan ghabqa for members of the media, thanking the esteemed members for their support and coverage of the company throughout the years. The event was held

at Sahara Golf Club. Media members and Boursa Kuwait staff were equally ecstatic at the event, which was a celebration of the strong relationship between the company and the media. The ghabqa also helped

develop new relationships between Boursa Kuwait and the media, as well as build up existing ones.

Boursa Kuwait recognizes the important role the media plays in helping it communicate and deliver its

mission to operate an efficient, fair and transparent capital market platform that services all relevant asset classes, whilst focusing on clients' interest through excellence in everything it does.



Attendees at the event.



Boursa Kuwait team.



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait continues distributing suhoor meals to outdoor cleaning and construction workers as part of its activities during the holy month of Ramadan.



Local



International Flavors

Fini roti, Sel roti and potato pickle: Nepal's popular dishes

By Faten Omar

Nepalese cuisine combines a range of ingredients, techniques and characteristics from its neighboring countries with its own gastronomic history. Rita Hama, wife of the Nepalese ambassador to Kuwait, welcomed Kuwait Times to her kitchen and told us the story of the popular dishes she prepared. "I will prepare three dishes - Fini roti, potato pickle and Sel roti. Fini Roti is traditionally made on special occasion like Tihar, Dashain, weddings, etc. Potato pickle is known as alu ko achhar and is a very famous dish. "We can have it at any time with any food. It tastes a little hot and sour," she said.

The story of Sel Roti

A long time ago, there lived a poor family in a village. The family consisted of a father, mother, son and daughter. Both the daughter and the son worked in order to meet daily necessities. One day, the son decided to go abroad in order to work to make the life of his family easier. A long time passed, but he never returned home. Due to this, his family was in sorrow. Time went by and the festival of siblings called Tihar arrived. The daughter was making Sel roti and at the same time was praying to God: "Today is the day when siblings meet and celebrate. All siblings in my village are in a great festive mood, except me. Just like how this Sel roti makes a full circle and meets where it originated, I hope my brother is also reunited with me regardless of where he is."

Suddenly, like a miracle, her brother arrived home with a lot of money that evening. When his family, including his sister, saw him, tears of joy came out from their eyes. They then celebrated Tihar together with great jubilation. It is said that ever since then, Sel roti is made during the festival as well as on other special occasions.



KUWAIT: Rita Hama, wife of the Nepalese ambassador to Kuwait. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Fini roti, Sel roti and potato pickle.

**Fini roti
Ingredients**

- 1/2 kg refined flour
- 1 kg ghee
- 200 gm rice flour
- A cup of water
- 2 tablespoons of cooking oil

Preparation

- Make dough out of refined flour with water.
- Mix the rice flour with 2 spoons of oil, 2 spoons of water and 100 g of ghee.
- Stretch out the dough and then apply the rice flour on it and then roll it and cut at every 3 inches.
- Give the pieces the shape of a chapatti.
- Heat ghee in a utensil and then cook both sides of the chapatti for 2 minutes.
- Serve with vegetables, meat or potato pickle as snacks.

**Potato Pickle
Ingredients:**

- 4 potatoes.
- 200 gm sesame powder.
- 5-7 green chilies
- 2 cucumbers
- 1 small lemon
- 100 ml cooking oil
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 100 gm green peas.
- Salt according to taste

Preparation

- Boil the potatoes and peel them.
- Cut the cucumbers and potatoes in small pieces.
- Heat oil in a utensil and cook turmeric, chilies and green peas for one minute.
- Mix the heated ingredients with the cucumbers

and potatoes.
• Serve with food.

**Sel roti
Ingredients:**

- 1/2 kg of rice flour.
- 100 gm sugar.
- 200 ml milk.
- 50 gm ghee.
- 500 ml cooking oil

Preparation

- Mix ghee, sugar and flour together.
- Add milk to the mixture and mix again.
- Heat oil in a utensil and pour the mixture in a round shape and cook it for 3 minutes. Serve with vegetables, meat or potato pickle as a snack.



The ingredients.

Marriott Hotels hold Ramadan ghabqa for media



KUWAIT: Marriott Hotels in Kuwait organized a Ramadan ghabqa for the local media on Thursday 24th of May, at Al-Thuraya Ramadan Tent at the JW Marriott Kuwait City. The event was very successful and was attended by more than 100 media representatives from different newspapers and magazines in Kuwait. The event included a wide range of activities, live music and various prizes. The ghabqa was a great opportunity for Marriott Hotels to raise awareness about the different offers and promotions available throughout the holy month of Ramadan.

The JW Marriott Kuwait invites guests to enjoy the perfect Ramadan experience at the breathtaking 'Al-Thuraya Tent'. The tent offers traditional settings complemented by live cooking stations, scrumptious seasonal specials and breathtaking ambience. 'Al-Thuraya'

embodies the special occasion, accompanied by stunning Ramadan decoration and soothing live oud music, all combining together to create the ultimate invitation into the homely setting. It is the ideal spot for friends or family to come and enjoy shisha following ghabqa offerings. Guests will also stand the chance to win valuable prizes every week, including free airline tickets to various destinations, free gift vouchers and a lot more. Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait also offers an amazing Ramadan experience where the panoramic eight story high Atrium Restaurant is transformed into a beautiful Ramadan tent offering fascinating oriental and international buffets every night for iftar and delicious a la carte menus for suhoor. The weekly raffle draw to win valuable prizes, makes "Atrium" the perfect Ramadan venue to enjoy unforgettable time with friends and family."



**Held at
Al-Thuraya
Ramadan Tent**

Furthermore, guests can celebrate Ramadan in style at the 'Blendz' restaurant at Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait. 'Blendz' offers sumptuous iftar buffets featuring a variety of

oriental and international dishes. Adding to the magical atmosphere, guests can enjoy a wide selection of shisha flavors at the restaurant's outdoor terrace and stand a chance to win prizes such as airline tickets and much more.

'Arraya' Ballroom also offers a wide range of buffets for iftar and ghabqa perfect for corporate events. George Aoun, Cluster General Manager at Marriott Hotels in Kuwait, said: "on behalf of Marriott Hotels Kuwait management and associates, I would like to wish Kuwait's nationals and residents Ramadan Mubarak." Aoun added: "Marriott Hotels in Kuwait always try to offer their guests exceptional Ramadan experiences, including rich iftar and ghabqa buffets, live entertainment and valuable prizes at competitive prices."





Deal or no deal, regime set to return to south Syria

Italy's Conte takes aim at migrants in maiden speech

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AMMAN: Demonstrators face Jordanian anti-riot police and security forces during a protest in Amman, Jordan. — AFP

Demonstrators denounce IMF-backed reforms

Jordan at crossroads over economic protests

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II has warned that the country is "at a crossroads", as protesters angered by anti-austerity measures took to the streets again overnight despite the prime minister's resignation. Around 2,000 demonstrators gathered close to the prime minister's office in central Amman to denounce IMF-backed reforms, hours after premier Hani Mulki stepped down on Monday.

"We are demanding a change to the government's economic program, not just a change in prime minister," said university student Ahmad Abu Ghazzal, 23. "We're sick of seeing changes in the cabinet—it's not good enough and it doesn't have any results," he said. The king blamed the country's economic woes on regional instability, the burden of hosting hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees and a lack of international support.

"Jordan today stands at a crossroads: either it can come out of the crisis and provide a dignified life to our citizens, or, God forbid, it can go into the unknown—but we have to know where we are going," he told a group of journalists late Monday, according to the official Petra agency. Protesters shouted slogans against the government and the International Monetary Fund as they gathered overnight under a heavy police presence. Some carried Jordanian flags and chanted "we want rights and

duties, not tips and handouts! and "down with the IMF!" Some brought children or presented trays of sweets to security forces.

Last month, the government proposed a new income tax law, yet to be approved by parliament, aimed at raising taxes on employees by at least five percent and on companies by between 20 and 40 percent. It was the latest in a series of austerity measures since Amman secured a \$723-million loan from the International Monetary Fund in 2016.

Since January, resource-poor Jordan, which suffers from high unemployment and poverty, has seen repeated price rises including for staples such as bread, as well as extra taxes on basic goods. Fuel prices have risen five times since the start of the year, while electricity bills have surged by 55 percent since February. The measures have sparked some of the biggest economic protests in five years. Jordan, a key US

ally, has largely avoided the unrest witnessed by other countries in the region since the Arab Spring revolts broke out in 2011, although protests did flare late that year after the government cut fuel subsidies.

“

We want rights and duties, not tips and handouts!

”

Resignation not enough

The latest protests started last week when unions called for nationwide demonstrations. They have rocked several other cities, including Irbid and Jarash in the north, Zarqa in the east, and the southern city of Maan, which saw deadly riots in the 1980s over rising food prices. After accepting Mulki's resignation, the king asked Education Minister Omar al-Razzaz to form a new government, a government source said. But the premier's departure did not stop people from demonstrating after breaking the Ramadan fast in Amman and other cities. "When the protests began they weren't just

directed against Mulki as a person, they were against the income tax draft law and the price hikes," said Bushra Abu Jabbara, a 34-year-old pharmacist. "We want the government to respond to our demands and withdraw the bill, which hasn't happened yet," she added. A majority of deputies — 78 out of 130 MPs—have said they will vote against the draft legislation. Mulki's resignation was "a positive sign" the government was taking the protesters' demands seriously, Jordanian political analyst Samih al-Maitah said. "The income tax draft law is almost certain to be dropped now," he said. The bill is one of a tranche of measures aimed at slashing Jordan's public debt from over 90 percent of GDP to 77 percent by 2021.

King Abdullah said gas supply cuts due to attacks on an Egyptian pipeline to Israel and Jordan had cost the kingdom some \$5.6 billion. He added that the closure of the borders with the kingdom's main export markets, war-torn Syria and Iraq, and the cost of securing those frontiers, had added to Jordan's economic woes. The UN refugee agency says it has registered more than 650,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan since the conflict in Syria began in March 2011. Jordan says it hosts 1.3 million Syrian refugees, and has repeatedly called for more international help. —AFP

US pushes for Venezuela to be suspended from OAS

WASHINGTON: The United States and six influential members of the Organization of American States urged the body Monday to reject Venezuela's elections and to begin moves to kick Caracas out of the club. There is anger among pan-American nations at Venezuela's slide into chaos and autocratic rule, fueled by what US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo dubbed President Nicolas Maduro's attempt to "dismantle democracy." At the opening of the 48th annual meeting of the group, the United States was joined by Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico and Peru in proposing a resolution to reject the result of last month's "unconstitutional" election in Venezuela.

The motion is expected to come up for a vote later Monday or on Tuesday. If it passes as expected, it would set in motion moves that could lead to Venezuela being symbolically

suspended from the regional body—although Caracas has already announced its own intent to pull out. In May, Maduro was returned to power in a vote that was largely boycotted by the opposition and denounced as an unconstitutional assault on democracy by Washington and most of Venezuela's neighbors.

Maduro's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza was present as the OAS meeting opened to defend his government and to hear Pompeo reiterate the US call for Venezuela's suspension. Suspending the South American country, which sits on the world's biggest proven oil reserves, "would show that the OAS backs up its words with action and it sends a powerful signal to the Maduro regime, only real elections will allow your government to be included in the family of nations," Pompeo said.

Applause from delegates

The top American diplomat accused Maduro of "dismantling democracy," and urged more Latin American states to join the US in imposing increased economic and diplomatic sanctions on his administration. The Venezuelan leader later hit back, accusing the United States of developing a "blackmail campaign" and threatening the governments of Latin America into compliance. "Every time an

OAS General Assembly approaches, we see the same movie," Maduro said during a function in Caracas. "We call on all OAS nations to do this today—regarding Venezuela—and in the future wherever necessary for the good of the region and the world," Pompeo said, to applause from some delegates. Arreaza protested that the situation in Venezuela was a domestic one, placed on the agenda of an international meeting "in a spurious manner"—but other senior officials from across the Americas disagreed.

"We must have a continent free of dictatorships," OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro, a stern critic of Maduro, said as he inaugurated the 48th annual meeting of the organization in Washington. The draft resolution, seen by AFP, calls on members to reject the results of last month's "unconstitutional" Venezuelan election. It further urges the body to use "the mechanisms for the preservation and defense of representative democracy" contained in the Inter-American Democratic Charter—a first step toward suspension.

Under Article 21 of this charter, an extraordinary general assembly of OAS member states can suspend a country from the body, the main forum for Western Hemisphere countries to develop shared democratic norms. The political crisis in Venezuela dominated the opening



WASHINGTON: Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza listens the Organization of American States (OAS) 48th General Assembly in the OAS Main Building in Washington, DC. — AFP

exchanges of the annual meeting in Washington, although Nicaragua also came under fire for its own harsh crackdown on opposition protesters.

A draft text, which should be voted yester-

day, declared support for the people of Nicaragua and for all parties to engage "constructively in peaceful negotiations to strengthen democratic institutions and hold free, fair and timely elections." —AFP

International

Deal or no deal, regime set to return to south Syria

Govt regains control over Syria with Russian backing

BEIRUT: Seven years after giving birth to Syria's revolt, the country's south looks set to fall back into regime hands likely through a rare consensus emerging among rival powers. The government has regained control of much of Syria with Russian backing, and a win in the south would cap a string of victories this year. Its strategic value comes from geography: the south borders Jordan and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, but also lies close to Damascus.

As a result, it's a prized region for nearly all stakeholders in Syria's warped war: the regime and rebels, plus Iran, Jordan, Israel, Russia, and the United States. Typically bitterly divided over Syria, most of those powers seem to agree on a government comeback in the southern provinces of Daraa and Quneitra. "The southern front is the first example of international consensus for the regime's return," says Nawar Oliver of the Turkey-based Omran Institute. The government has amassed troops in Daraa and Quneitra for weeks and dropped leaflets over Daraa city, the cradle of the 2011 revolt, demanding rebels give up.

Oliver says the south may fall without a fight. "It's clear there's a consensus between powers—the Americans, the Israelis, the Jordanians and the Russians—that the better choice is for regime forces to deploy there without entering into a military operation," he tells AFP. Rebels still hold most of Daraa and Quneitra, but pro-regime forces, including around 500 Iranian military advisers and members of Lebanese movement Hezbollah, are

deployed elsewhere in the south.

Sentinel in the south

The strange aligning-of-the-stars over southern Syria is the product of talks led by Moscow, which has leveraged military support to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad into a mediator role. It called last week for urgent negotiations with the US and Jordan on the south, and on Thursday President Vladimir Putin discussed Syria with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Israel sees the south's fate in virtually existential terms, seeking to roll back its arch-nemesis Iran from Syria's border with the occupied Golan.

"International powers have reached near-consensus on the Damascus regime's return to Syria's south, with its Iranian ally distanced from the border," says Sam Heller of the International Crisis Group. Perhaps in exchange the regime may be allowed to exert control over the neighboring province of Daraa. "But some parties don't trust the regime to rein in its Iranian ally and commit to distancing it from this sensitive area," says Heller.

Last month, Israel conducted unprecedented strikes on what it said were Tehran's installations in Syria, accusing Iranian fighters there of firing rockets at the Golan. "The whole point of the Israeli zone in Quneitra is to provide sentinel on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights," says Nicholas Heras of the Center for a New American Security. Iran, in return, would ask for "freedom of movement along the land route from Tehran to

“**Civilians don't trust the regime or Russia**”

of Middle East research. "His ongoing detention is further proof of the Bahraini authorities' relentless determination to squash the right to freedom of expression... It is absolutely outrageous that he has to spend another single day behind bars solely for expressing his opinion online."

The International Federation for Human Rights said the conviction showed Rajab was "a political prisoner, subject to degrading treatment and who has to be silenced at any price". Bahrain, a Shiite-majority country located between regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran, has been ruled for more than two centuries by the Al-Khalifa dynasty. Authorities have jailed dozens of high-profile activists and disbanded both religious and secular opposition groups since protests demanding political change erupted in 2011.

They have stripped hundreds of those convicted of their citizenship, leaving many stateless. The Bahraini government has accused Iranian authorities of backing the protest movement in a bid to overthrow it. Tehran denies involvement. Amnesty has categorized Rajab as a prisoner of conscience, and leading rights groups around the world have condemned his trials as an attack on freedom of expression.

Rajab is already serving a two-year sentence for "disseminating rumors and false information" in television interviews critical of the government. He has served multiple stints in prison since 2012, all linked to his role in the protests. Bahrain, playing a key military role in the Gulf, is home to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet and a British military base. US President Donald Trump has eased restrictions on arms sales to Bahrain since taking office in January last year.—AFP



RMEILANE, Syria: Vehicles from the US-led coalition battling the Islamic State group patrol the town of Rmeilane in Syria's Hasakeh province. — AFP

Beirut," says Oliver. That land bridge remains a major concern for both Israel and the US, as it allows Iran to supply Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Win without war

Russia is also seeking to appease Jordan, which hosts 660,000 Syrian refugees. Moscow, Amman, and Washington announced a ceasefire in southern Syria last year that Heras says was a precursor to the upcoming deal. "The dirty, not-so-secret, secret is that the US government believed from day one that the southwest Syria de-escalation zone was just an interim step toward a broader deal with Russia," says Heras.

With a regime offensive looming, Russian-led talks are Jordan's "last, best hope" to avoid a new refugee influx, he adds. Amman could also gain from renewed trade through southern Syria if the Nassib border point is reopened. "The Jordanians need Assad to win without war, and that is exactly what Russia is offering with the reconciliation process," Heras says. Syrian

Foreign Minister Walid Muallem hinted a deal was in the works on Saturday, but introduced yet another condition: the withdrawal of US-led forces from their eastern Syria base.

Back in Daraa, civilians watch apprehensively as world powers piece together the puzzle. "The way the media is reporting it, the regime sent reinforcements and wants to storm Daraa, and foreign countries hold daily meetings," says Daraa resident Ahmad Abu Hazem. "Meanwhile, people have no idea what'll happen." Rebels, too, appear to have been left out.

"We were not consulted when the de-escalation deal was reached, and we're not looped in to current discussions," says a commander from the Southern Front, the leading local rebel coalition. Although a full-blown assault would be catastrophic, a deal with the regime remains hard to swallow. "Every family has someone who's been arrested or killed, since Daraa was the first to revolt," says the commander. "Generally, civilians don't trust the regime or Russia."—AFP

Bahrain upholds 5-year jail term of activist Rajab

DUBAI: A Bahraini appeals court yesterday upheld a five-year jail sentence in a case against high-profile activist Nabeel Rajab linked to social media, a rights group and family member said. Rajab, a leading figure in 2011 protests against the Gulf state's Sunni-minority monarchy, was convicted of insulting the state, "deliberately disseminating ... false or malicious news" and "publicly offending a foreign country", a reference to Saudi Arabia.

The charges are linked to tweets and retweets made via Rajab's account and critical of the Saudi-led coalition, including Bahrain, fighting in Yemen in support of its beleaguered government since 2015. He also tweeted criticism of the Bahraini government's treatment of prisoners. Tuesday's verdict, reported by the London-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy and confirmed to AFP by a family member of Rajab, can still be appealed at Bahrain's Court of Cassation, its highest court.

Rights groups were swift to condemn the verdict, with Amnesty International describing it as "outrageous" and calling for Rajab's immediate release. "The Bahraini Court of Appeal has missed a vital opportunity to do the right thing and set Nabeel Rajab free," said Lynn Maalouf, Amnesty's director

Macron walks fine line as Netanyahu seeks anti-Iran front

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron meets Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday on the second leg of his European trip amid deep differences over how to contain Iran's ambitions in the Middle East. It will be the third meeting of the two leaders in Paris since last July, and while they agree on the threats posed by Tehran's missile projects and foreign interventions, they differ strongly on the response.

Netanyahu has pursued his strident attacks against Tehran during his visit to Europe, warning during a stop in Berlin on Monday that its activities risked fuelling a new influx of migrants towards Germany. Iran was intent on fuelling "a religious war inside Syria and the consequences will be many, many more refugees and you know where exactly they will come," he told German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Netanyahu has been emboldened by US President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the 2015 accord curbing Iran's nuclear program—and the threat of harsh sanctions against European firms doing business in the country. Yet Macron has led a staunch defence of the accord, whose other signatories France, Britain, Germany, China, Russia and the EU—have maintained a common front so far.

"Benjamin Netanyahu's goal is to not find himself isolated along with Washington," said David Khalfa of the Institute for European Prospective and Security in Paris. "At a minimum he's looking to force Europeans to reinforce the existing accord" via the US sanctions, but also the prospect of joint Saudi-US-Israel bloc setting the agenda in the Middle East, Khalfa said.

Macron has warned that letting the deal fall apart will only inflame tensions, especially if harsh sanctions smother the economic relief Iranians began to enjoy

after it was signed in 2015. He and Netanyahu are scheduled to hold a press conference after their talks and launch a season of cultural exchanges between their countries this year.

Balancing act

But relations have been further strained by the killing of 123 Palestinian protesters in Gaza by Israeli forces since March, including at least 61 people on May 14 alone. Macron denounced the "violence by Israel's armed forces" even as he noted the country's security concerns, a position deemed too simplistic by Israeli officials while also being derided by his leftwing critics in France. French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe cancelled a planned trip to Israel last month.

Several pro-Palestinian groups are planning protests against Netanyahu in cities across the country, while three journalist unions have called his visit "intolerable". The journalist unions denounced the killing of Palestinian journalists by Israeli forces, as well as women, children and people working for emergency services in Gaza. Against this backdrop, talks on seeking an end to the Palestinian conflict have fallen to the wayside, not least after Trump broke with decades of protocol by recognising Israel's claim of Jerusalem as its capital.

Last week, the European Union urged Israel to reconsider its decision to demolish a Palestinian Bedouin village in the occupied West Bank, saying it undermines "prospects for a lasting peace".—AFP



French President Emmanuel Macron

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International

Italy's Conte takes aim at migrants in maiden speech

Italian PM reaffirms rejection of economic austerity

ROME: The leader of Italy's new populist government vowed yesterday to redistribute migrants in the EU and review EU sanctions against Russia, in his first policy speech to lawmakers since being sworn in. Giuseppe Conte addressed the Senate ahead of two parliamentary confidence votes expected to confirm his new cabinet, formed from a coalition of far-right and eurosceptic parties. His eurosceptic government was sworn in on Friday after almost three months of political turmoil that alarmed EU officials and spooked financial markets.

A lawyer with little political and no government experience, Conte was nominated by far-right League leader Matteo Salvini and the head of the anti-establishment Five Star movement Luigi di Maio—both of whom are now his deputy prime ministers.

Conte's maiden policy speech reaffirmed several of the coalition's key manifesto themes, including a tough line on migrants, rejection of economic austerity and conciliatory gestures towards Moscow.

"We want to reduce our public debt, but we want to do so with growth and not with austerity measures," he told senators. "We will strongly call for the Dublin Regulation to be overhauled in order to obtain respect for a fair distribution

“ Call for Dublin Regulation to be overhauled ”

of responsibilities and to achieve an automatic system of compulsory distribution of asylum seekers." On Russia, which faces EU sanctions over the Ukraine crisis, Conte said: "We will promote a review of the sanctions system."

Summits on horizon

Both former premier Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party—a campaign ally of the League—and the outgoing centre-left Democratic Party have said they will not vote in favor of the new government. But the alliance between the anti-establishment Five Star Movement and far-right League is expected to pass the confidence votes in the Senate yesterday and in the lower Chamber of Deputies on Wednesday as the two parties hold a majority in both houses.

On the 53-year-old prime minister's agenda in his first weeks in office are a Group of Seven summit in Canada this week and a key EU summit at the end of the month. Conte's low profile has fuelled speculation that he will take a back seat to his two powerful deputies.

Salvini is to be interior minister in the new cabinet and Di Maio will hold the economic development portfolio.

Since being sworn in Conte had limited himself to a Facebook post in which he said that he



ROME: Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte gestures as he speaks during a confidence debate at the Senate in Rome. — AFP

had spoken with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron and would meet the two leaders at the G7 summit. On Monday, Di Maio met represen-

tatives of food deliverers in Italy's gig economy. Afterwards Di Maio described the workers as "the symbol of an abandoned generation," and underlined the need to give them "job security and a dignified minimum wage". Salvini has wasted no time addressing immigration. Visiting Sicily, where thousands of migrants have arrived in recent years, he declared at the weekend that Italy "cannot be Europe's refugee camp".

The 45-year-old has repeatedly promised to cut arrivals and accelerate expulsions from a country where around 700,000 migrants have arrived since 2013. "The good times for illegals are over—get ready to pack your bags," he said Saturday. European Union interior ministers are meeting on Tuesday to discuss possible reforms of the bloc's controversial Dublin regulation, whereby refugees must file for asylum in the first member state they enter. Salvini has blasted the regulation as unfairly burdening Mediterranean countries and leading to "an obvious imbalance in management, numbers and costs". —AFP

News in brief

Iron-ore mine blast kills 11 in NE China

BEIJING: Eleven people were killed and nine injured yesterday in an explosion at an iron-ore mine in northeast China's Liaoning province, state media reported. Twenty-five people are trapped in the mine run by China National Coal Group Co, according to state broadcaster CCTV. Some of the trapped victims were able to contact people outside, the report said. The injured have been rushed to hospital and the municipal government of Benxi, where the accident occurred, has dispatched a rescue team, CCTV said. The incident took place while drilling a mining shaft, the broadcaster said. — AFP

Fighter pilot dies in Indian jet crash

AHMEDABAD: An Indian Air Force pilot was killed yesterday after his fighter jet crashed near the country's border with Pakistan, officials said. Sanjay Chauhan was on a routine training mission in the remote Kutch desert region of Gujarat state when he crashed, air force officials said. "The pilot died in the crash and we have ordered an inquiry in the accident," an IAF official said. It was not immediately clear what caused the single-seat Jaguar jet to crash. More than 30 fighters have crashed in India since 2012, with most accidents blamed on ageing jets. More than 170 Air Force pilots have died in accidents in the past three decades, mostly in incidents involving Soviet-era MiGs—unflatteringly dubbed "flying coffins". — AFP

US sanctions won't impact India-Russia defense ties

NEW DELHI: India's defense minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Tuesday that US sanctions on Russia military exports would not impact long-standing ties between New Delhi and one of its key arms suppliers Moscow. US President Donald Trump in August signed a law threatening sanctions on any country doing business with Russia's defence and intelligence sectors. The sanctions regime affects American allies like India, which has purchased Russian military hardware and expertise for decades. There had been speculation last year when the sanctions were signed into law that the \$6 billion weapons deal could be scuttled. But Sitharaman said the long-running negotiations "have reached the final stage". — AFP

Turkish cartoonist jailed for insulting Erdogan

ISTANBUL: Turkish police have jailed one of the country's most prominent cartoonists to serve out a 14 month sentence first handed down last year on charges of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkish media reported yesterday. Nuri Kurtcebe, 69, was detained and sent to prison Monday after a police check found him on a bus travelling in the northwestern Turkish city of Yalova, the private Dogan news agency reported. His lawyer Erdem Akyuz told the media that the authorities were enforcing the sentence after an appeal was turned down by an upper court. Kurtcebe was sentenced to a one year, two months and 15 days jail term for several caricatures he drew in 2015. — AFP

Calls grow in Germany to expel disputed US envoy

BERLIN: Leading German politicians yesterday called for the new US ambassador to be expelled after the staunch ally of Donald Trump was accused of meddling in domestic politics and aggravating already tense ties. Richard Grenell took up his Berlin posting on May 8 and immediately irked Germany when he tweeted the same day that German companies should stop doing business with Iran as Trump quit the nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic.

He stoked further outrage last weekend with reported comments to right-wing website Breitbart of his ambition to "empower other conservatives throughout Europe, other leaders". Grenell also raised eyebrows with his plan to host a lunch on June 13 for Austria's arch-conservative Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, described by the US envoy as a "rock star". "What this man is doing is unheard of in international diplomacy," Martin Schulz, former chief of the Social Democratic Party and an ex-European Parliament president, told national news agency DPA.

"If a German ambassador were to say in Washington that he is there to empower

the Democrats, he would have been kicked out immediately. "I hope that Kurz's visit will lead Mr Grenell's tenure as ambassador in Germany to be short," added Schulz, playing on the German word for short "kurz". Schulz had earlier tweeted that the US envoy did not behave like a diplomat but like a "far-right colonial officer". Amid the row, Germany's foreign ministry is seeking clarification from Grenell about his comments, with the topic to be raised at a pre-arranged meeting Wednesday between the envoy and senior official Andreas Michaelis. "There will certainly be a lot to discuss and that's why it's good that the ambassador will be a guest tomorrow of state secretary Michaelis," said Foreign Minister Heiko Maas.

Awful interview

But the opposition far-left Die Linke party's chief Sahra Wagenknecht said Grenell had disqualified himself as ambassador. "Someone like US ambassador Richard Grenell, who thinks he can lord over Europe and determine who is governing here, can no longer stay in Germany as a diplomat," Wagenknecht told Die Welt daily. "If the government takes the democratic sovereignty of our country seriously, then it shouldn't just invite Grenell to a chat over coffee, but expel him immediately," she added. The appointment of Grenell, a hawkish supporter of Trump's "America First" stance, was long held up by US senators who objected to his allegedly disparaging tweets on female politicians and

apparent refusal to take seriously claims of Russian meddling in the US election. The storm comes as ties between Germany and the United States are strained after Trump ditched the Iran nuclear deal and imposed punishing tariffs on European aluminium and steel.

Underlining the souring transatlantic relationship, Chancellor Angela Merkel has warned that Europe can no longer rely on the US to protect it and must "take its destiny into its own hands". Politicians in the US too balked at Grenell's comments. Democratic Senator Chris Murphy tweeted that the envoy's interview with Breitbart was "awful—ambassadors aren't supposed to 'empower' any political party overseas".

Why is he ambassador

For Juergen Hardt, foreign policy spokesman of Merkel's centre-right bloc, Grenell is simply seeking to weaken the EU. The US wants to prevent "the European Union from further integrating and becoming a stronger political and economic power", Hardt told broadcaster hr-Info. Although Merkel herself belongs to the conservative camp, commentators said Grenell was not trying to bolster the chancellor's party base, but rather its opponents from the far-right.

"It is bad enough if that's what he is thinking, let alone saying it," said the daily Berliner Zeitung. Media outside Germany also weighed in, with Washington Post columnist Anne Applebaum arguing that Grenell clearly intended to back "nativist,



BERLIN: In this file photo then newly accredited US Ambassador to Germany Richard Allen Grenell stands in front of a military honor guard during an accreditation ceremony for new Ambassadors in Berlin. — AFP

pro-Russia and anti-pluralist" forces in Europe. Grenell had certainly fulfilled his task if he was sent to Germany to destabilize Merkel's coalition or the Atlantic alliance, she said, "but if those are not his orders... then a different set of questions has to be asked".

"Why is the US ambassador in Germany giving an interview to Breitbart? Why is he involving himself in partisan politics? For that matter, why is he an American ambassador at all?" The Financial Times urged Berlin to respond to Grenell's "undiplomatic behavior" by holding its line on adhering to the Iran nuclear deal, responding firmly to US tariffs as well as stepping up to its defense responsibilities. —AFP

Top EU court rules same-sex partners have residence rights

LUXEMBOURG: Same-sex partners of EU citizens have the right to live in any member state whatever their nationality, even in countries that do not recognize gay marriage, the bloc's top court ruled yesterday. EU laws on freedom of movement extend to the non-European spouses of EU citizens and the European Court of Justice judgment means this also includes same-sex partners.

The decision, based on a case from Romania, risks further embittering relations between more socially tolerant member states to the west of the EU and conservative countries to the east. The Luxembourg-based court recognized that EU member states "have the freedom whether or not to authorise marriage between persons of the same sex". However, it added "they may not obstruct the freedom of residence of an EU citizen by refusing to grant his same-sex spouse, a national of a country that is not an EU member state, a derived right of residence in their territory."

The court was ruling in the case of Romanian man Relu Coman and his American husband Robert Hamilton, who were married in Brussels in 2010 and two years later sought to move to Romania. The Romanian authorities refused to give Hamilton permission to live in the country for more than three months on the grounds that he could not be classified as Coman's spouse because the laws there do not recognize same-sex marriage.

The couple brought a case for discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, arguing that Coman's right to freedom of movement, guaranteed by EU law, had been curtailed by the restriction placed on his husband. The case went to the Romanian Constitutional Court, which asked the ECJ whether under EU law Hamilton should be regarded as Coman's spouse. "In the directive on the exercise of freedom of movement, the term 'spouse', which



BUCHAREST: Adrian Coman (L) and his father attend a press conference in Bucharest, Romania. — AFP

refers to a person joined to another person by the bonds of marriage, is gender-neutral and may therefore cover the same-sex spouse of an EU citizen," the ECJ said.

Victor for equality

EU member states are free to decide whether or not to allow same-sex marriage in their own territories, the court said, but refusing to recognize a union lawfully made in another EU country "may interfere with the exercise of that citizen's right to move and reside freely". The court said the obligation to recognize same-sex marriages for the purpose of granting residence rights "does not undermine the national identity or pose a threat to the public policy" of the country involved. "We can now look in the eyes of any public official in Romania and across the EU with certainty that our relationship is equally valuable and

equally relevant, for the purpose of free movement within the EU," Coman said in a statement released by ILGA-Europe, which campaigns for rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. "We are grateful to the EU Court and to the many people and institutions who have supported us, and through us, other same-sex couples in a similar situation. It is human dignity that wins today."

The Romanian courts will now have to rule on Coman and Hamilton's case based on the ECJ judgment. Evelynne Paradis, ILGA-Europe executive director, said Tuesday's ruling was a victory for "equality, fairness and pragmatism". The court "has confirmed that rainbow families should be recognized equally in the eyes of the law on freedom of movement. Now we want to see the Romanian authorities move swiftly to make this judgment a reality," Paradis said in a statement. — AFP

Ethiopia lifts state of emergency as political crisis eases

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia yesterday cut short a state of emergency imposed after the resignation of the former prime minister, a move hailed as a positive sign the new government is breaking with the past. Parliament voted to lift the six-month decree early, citing the country's "relative stability and calm" since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

took over in April, the state-run Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) reported.

Former premier Hailemariam Desalegn quit on February 15 after years of political crises marked by protests against his regime and mounting criticism over government's crackdown on dissent. A day later government ordered the state of emergency. Hailemariam's shock resignation kicked off a behind-the-scenes succession battle within the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

The choice of Abiy, the first leader from Ethiopia's largest ethnicity the Oromo, raised hopes of reforms in the EPRDF, which controls all seats in parliament and is regularly accused by rights groups of persecuting dissidents. Since taking office, Abiy has visited major cities across

Ethiopia, and appealed to anti-government protesters to give his administration time to work. He has also continued a campaign of releasing jailed dissidents, which began under Hailemariam.

Last month, his administration pardoned Andargachew Tsige, a top member of armed opposition group Ginbot 7 who was arrested in Yemen in 2014 and extradited to Ethiopia. Yesterday, ENA reported the House of Peoples' Representatives approved the emergency decree's repeal in a "majority vote" and "after a detailed analysis of the security situation in the country."

"The state of emergency was already irrelevant because of the opening-up of the political space and the release of political prisoners," Ethiopian political analyst Hallelujah Lulie said. "It's a way of Abiy asserting his pow-

er, and it can also be taken as a way of highlighting a departure from the establishment that imposed the state of emergency," Hallelujah added. The repeal and prisoner releases were welcomed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which in a statement said these were "positive indications" of an improving rights situation in Ethiopia.

Disenchantment with the EPRDF erupted into violence in late 2015 when the Oromo and later the second-largest ethnicity, the Amhara, began months of unprecedented anti-government protests. That unrest, which left hundreds dead and resulted in tens of thousands of arrests and the imposition of an earlier 10-month state of emergency in October 2016, was seen as a key factor in Hailemariam's resignation. —AFP

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Where's Melania? US First Lady's vanishing act sparks speculation

She is known for her privacy and White House independence, often breaking with her husband's schedule. But Melania Trump's unusual 25-day absence from public view following surgery for a "benign" kidney condition has raised questions. The first lady had been scheduled to re-emerge in the public eye late Monday at a private reception for families of US soldiers killed in action—her first public appearance since being hospitalized last month. But the Melania mystery only deepened when the White House event took place with no media access, and another day went by with no press sighting of her. After that reception, Mrs Trump put out a tweet that said she and Trump "were honored to pay tribute to our fallen heroes. Thank you to the Gold Star families that joined us in celebration & remembrance."

Accompanying the text were photos of the reception, including one of her sitting next to the president. Mrs Trump, 48, has not been spotted since May 10, when she joined the president in greeting three American hostages released by North Korea. Shortly afterwards, she entered Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for what the White House described as a benign kidney procedure. Despite the operation's routine nature, Melania remained there for five days, returning to the White House on May 19.

On Sunday, her spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham confirmed that Melania will not accompany the president to the G7 summit in Canada, nor to planned North Korea nuclear talks in Singapore. It is a noticeable shift from weeks prior to her kidney surgery, when she engaged in several high-profile events. In April, she represented the Trumps at former first lady Barbara Bush's funeral, rolled out her "Be Best" awareness campaign to help children, and orchestrated an elaborate state dinner for the Macrons of France.

Following her surgery, her absence at events where the public has come to expect to see her alongside the president was well documented, leading her to take to Twitter to castigate reporters. "I see the media is working overtime speculating where I am & what I'm doing," she tweeted Wednesday, assuring she was "here at the @WhiteHouse w my family, feeling great, & working hard." The tweet sparked a conspiracy theory that Trump himself may have written Melania's message, given that "working overtime" is a favorite phrase of the president when he tweets about the press.

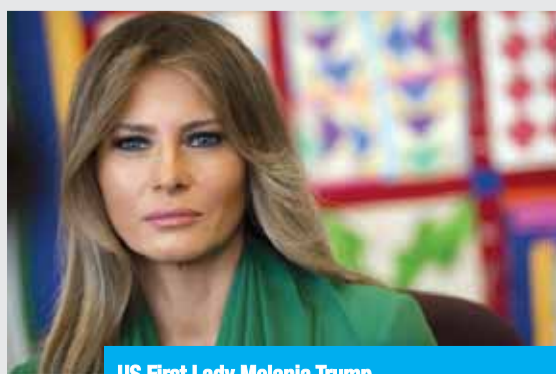
Comedian Sarah Silverman retweeted the first lady's post, adding: "Who is this? where's Melania?" The first lady skipped ceremonies, including a Memorial Day wreath-laying. And she was not seen Friday boarding the helicopter that shuttled the president, Donald Trump Jr, and daughters Ivanka and Tiffany to Camp David for a weekend retreat. Spokeswoman Grisham dismissed the media speculation about Melania as "nonsense." "Mrs. Trump has always been a strong and independent woman who puts her family and certainly her health above all else, and that won't change over a rabid press corps," she told Fox News.

Imagination 'running wild'

Meanwhile, the rumor mill churns online. Some have speculated she has moved back to New York or is cooperating with special counsel Robert Mueller, while others offer she may be healing after some secret plastic surgery. Such a weeks-long disappearance by a modern-day first lady is indeed rare, said Ohio University history professor Katherine Jellison, an expert on president's wives. "I'm amazed Mrs Trump has been able to do it," she told AFP.

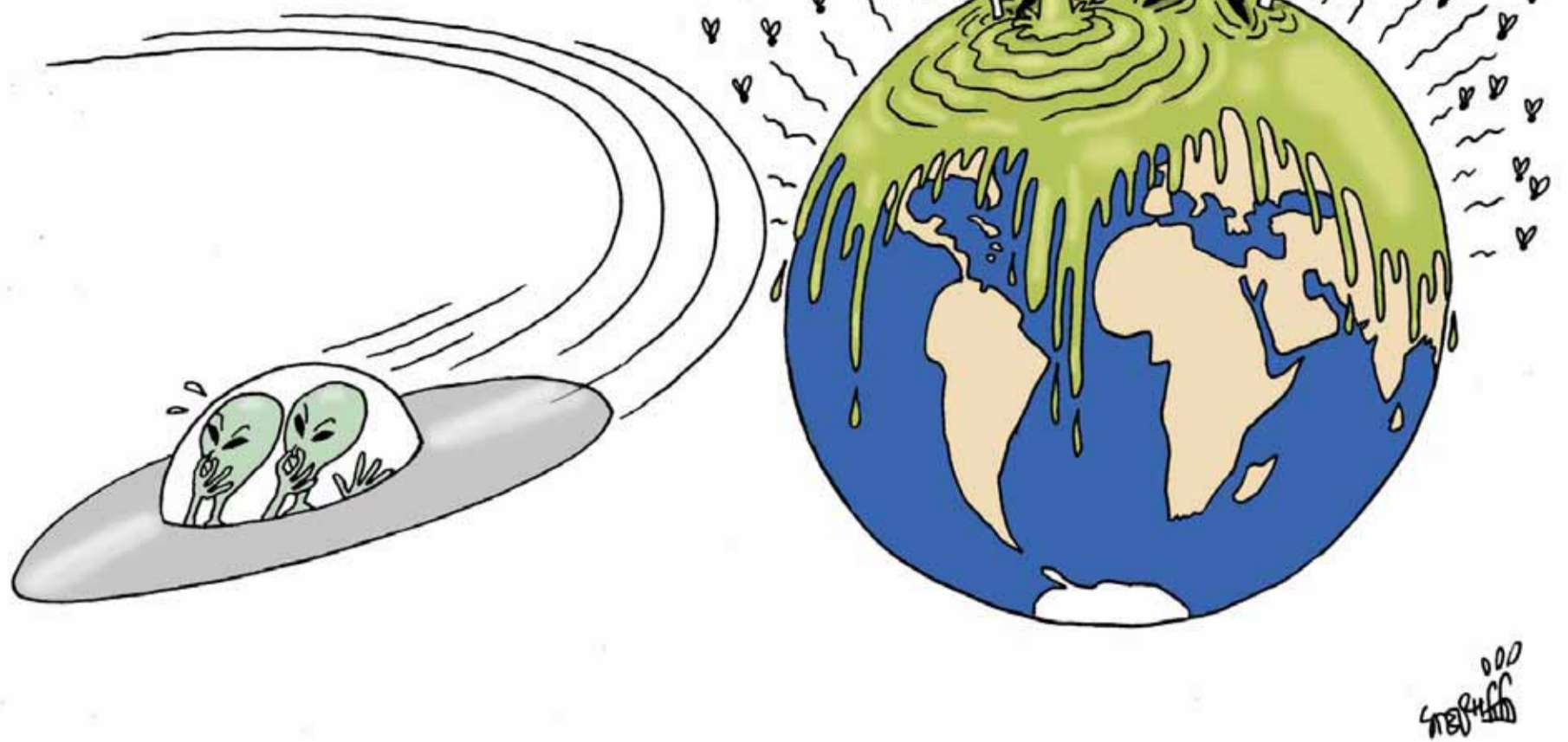
The first lady is not an elected position, and Melania Trump is under no obligation to keep the American people abreast of her health, activities or whereabouts. Several 19th century first ladies spent long periods out of view. But over the past half century, it has become the expectation that people know the basic narrative of the first lady's activities. Melania Trump, never one to obsess like her husband about media attention, has laid low before.

She went quiet in March as a media storm raged about revelations that her husband's lawyer paid porn star Stormy Daniels \$130,000 before the 2016 election to keep silent over her alleged affair with Trump years earlier. White House silence, including about why Melania spent five days in hospital for a routine procedure, is only fueling the speculation. "Without greater detail about her 'benign' condition, the public imagination is running wild," Jellison said. "For most of the 20th century and certainly in the 21st century, a first lady hasn't had the option of not being a public figure—regardless of unfortunate personal circumstances." — AFP



US First Lady Melania Trump

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Southeast Asia's plastic 'addiction' blights world's oceans

On her lunch break, Bangkok office worker Chinapa Payakha emerges from a 7-Eleven store with two plastic bags. One holds a Big Gulp soft drink. The other carries her lunch, with a banana in its own plastic wrapper. "For office life, plastic bags are necessary," said Chinapa, 34, whose shopping habits illustrate the challenges facing anti-plastic campaigners in Thailand, where plastic bags are handed out in abundance on any visit to a shop or market. As World Environment Day on Tuesday takes place and the United Nations calls for the "biggest-ever worldwide cleanup" of plastic pollution, experts are focused on Southeast Asia, home to four of the world's top marine plastic polluters.

From major cities like Bangkok and Jakarta to beach resorts in the Philippines and Vietnam, plastic bags and bottles are the ubiquitous face of pollution in the region. Globally, some eight million tons of plastic is dumped into the ocean every year, killing marine life and entering the human food chain, according to the UN Environment Program. Five Asian countries — China, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam and Thailand — accounted for up to 60 percent of the plastic waste leaking into the ocean, according to a 2015 report by the environmental campaigner Ocean Conservancy and the McKinsey Center for Business and Environment.

The five economies have "generated exploding demand for consumer products", the report said, but lacked the waste management infrastructure to cope with the surge in plastic garbage. Three years on, a "trash emergency" on the Indonesian island of Bali and the Philippines' decision to close the tourist island of Boracay showed governments are recognizing the impact of plastic waste, said Susan Ruffo, Ocean Conservancy's managing director for international initiatives. "But this is not just a government responsibility — corporations, civil society and citizens all have a part to play," she said, adding that engagement was improving.

Could opposites attract at Trump-Kim summit?

When Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un sit down in Singapore next week it will be among the most improbable diplomatic summits in history, with principals who could not be more different—but who also share some surprising similarities. Trump was the oldest US president ever to take office when he was sworn in last year, and will turn 72 two days after the meeting.

The North Korean leader is still in his mid-thirties and remains among the youngest heads of government in the world—but has already been in power for more than six years. He has overseen a rapid advance in Pyongyang's nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, bringing the US mainland within the range and sending tensions soaring last year as the two men exchanged personal insults and threats of war—Trump promising "fire and fury", and Kim describing him as a "mentally deranged US dotard".

But recent months have seen an about-turn in their rhetoric—last-minute summit cancellations and reinstatements notwithstanding. "I think they are going to get on well," predicts John Delury, a professor at Yonsei University in Seoul. "The kind of counter-intuitive thing is I think they are going to listen to each other." Both Trump and Pyongyang are renowned for incendiary commentary, but Kim has displayed a marked tendency to listen to his counterparts in his new-found diplomatic role—until earlier this year he had not left the North since inheriting power from his father.

Plastic addiction

In Thailand, where two million tons of plastic waste is produced a year, plastic is an "addiction," said Geoff Baker, an anti-plastic campaigner with Grin Green International. "Everywhere you go they just throw plastic at you," said Baker, who caused a stir on social media in April when he covered himself in 700 plastic bags, walked into a 7-Eleven and stared disapprovingly at people buying plastic-wrapped bananas.

The recent death of a pilot whale in Thailand with 80 pieces of plastic rubbish in its stomach garnered headlines locally, but drew more attention outside the country. Still, some Bangkok residents say companies are not doing enough to address the problem of plastic pollution. Watcharapon Prabsangob, a 28-year-old engineer, emerged from a store with a small bag carrying a coffee drink and straw. He said he tried to refuse the bag but the clerk moved too fast. He said that businesses should do more to stop customers from taking plastic bags.

CP All, which has over 10,000 7-Eleven stores across the country, said it would launch a campaign on Tuesday to reduce plastic bags in some outlets in the southern province of Satun as part of a green tourism campaign. It made no mention of the other 76 provinces including Bangkok, where 10 million residents use 80 million plastic bags a day, the capital's administration says. The food retailer Tesco Lotus said it would offer redeemable points from Tuesday to customers who do not take a plastic bag at check out. But the scheme runs out at the end of June. Months after the military seized power in a 2014 coup, the junta made waste management a priority and set goals for 2021.

They included cutting the use of plastic bags and bottles in government agencies and businesses, and plastic bans in tourist destinations. A tax on plastic bags was also mentioned, along with a target to recycle up to 60 percent of plastic by 2021. Baker

said he has "yet to see any real change coming from these promises". But a spokesman from the government said it was committed to minimizing plastic use. "We have been trying to raise awareness. People are so used to the convenience of plastic that they don't think about the consequences," said the spokesman, Weerachon Sukhonpatipak.

Wake-up call

Other governments have set ambitious goals too. Indonesia, ranked second behind China in the 2015 study of mismanaged plastic waste from populations living near coastal areas in 192 countries, has pledged \$1 billion a year to reduce marine plastic debris by 70 percent by 2025. There have been several attempts to impose taxes on plastic packaging to help address the waste problem. Industry Minister Airlangga Hartarto has opposed the tax measures, saying in January it would hurt the local food and drink industry.

In the Philippines, the threat to marine

life should be a "wake-up call" for people to cut their use of plastic, said Jonas Leones, a senior official in the environmental department. The Philippines, like its regional neighbors, has not imposed a nationwide ban on plastic bags, but some local authorities regulate their use. Some shopping malls have also replaced plastic with paper bags and encouraged reusable bags.

In Malaysia, the new housing and local government minister, Zuraida Kamaruddin, said in an interview with the local news website Malaysiakini that she wants to introduce a nationwide ban on plastic bags within a year. Anchalee Pipattanawattanakul, an ocean campaigner with Greenpeace in Southeast Asia, said the region needs a coordinated strategy on plastic waste. "ASEAN says the problem needs to be addressed," she said, referring to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. "But there is no action plan that will actually decrease the use of plastic." — Reuters



THANH HOA, Vietnam: A woman gathers shells in a coastal forest littered with plastic waste stuck in branches after being washed up by rising coastal tide in Thanh Hoa province, around 150 km south of Hanoi. — AFP

He had a long conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping on a beach in Dalian, and at the first inter-Korean summit in the Demilitarized Zone that divides the peninsula, attentively heard out the South's President Moon Jae-in as they chatted over tea in the open air for more than half an hour. Trump too has asked questions and listened carefully to the answers on his trips to China and South Korea, Delury added. "They are going to get in the room, they are going to ask good questions, open-ended questions. It's not going to be Trump gets in there and says 'Give me your nukes or else', but as Trump says it's a relationship, we are building a relationship, we are changing a relationship." "And to do that you ask probing questions, you listen, and then you come back. So that's my optimistic view."

Parallel lives

Trump reached the White House via a career in property development and reality television, followed by an unprecedentedly populist presidential campaign that upended the US political establishment. In contrast, Kim Jong Un was the chosen heir, groomed for years to take his place at the top of Pyongyang's political pyramid, and has no need to worry about re-election or tomorrow's media headlines—or responding to them on Twitter. But the two leaders share some parallels.

Both have appointed trusted family members to key positions. Dynastic descent from the North's founder Kim Il Sung is the basis of Kim's personal legitimacy—Pyongyang's propaganda promotes the similarities between them in looks, mannerisms and even handwriting. His sister Kim Yo Jong has emerged as one of his closest aides, acting as his envoy to the Winter Olympics in the South, spending almost the whole of the first Panmunjom summit at his side and accompanying him on his trip to Dalian. In Washington, Trump's daughter Ivanka is an assistant to the president and her husband Jared Kushner

is a close adviser, while his son Donald Jr was part of his election campaign.

The two leaders are also uncompromising in their demands for personal loyalty. In the month from February 28 Trump sacked or lost the services of his White House communications director Hope Hicks, chief economic adviser Gary Cohn, national security adviser HR McMaster, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and veterans affairs secretary David Shulkin. The latest North Korean changes of personnel emerged at the weekend, with reports that the defense minister and chief of the general staff had been replaced, after Kim appointed a new director of the military's General Political Bureau described as a "highly trusted" lieutenant.

Holding the hands of history

Kim has shown uncompromising ruthlessness—he had his uncle Jang Song Thae executed for treason in 2013, unmistakably asserting his authority over the old generals who surrounded him, and his half-brother Kim Jong Nam was murdered at Kuala Lumpur airport last year in a killing widely blamed on Pyongyang. But according to people who have interacted with him, Delury said, in meetings he is "really well prepared, he knows his brief, he's got his notes but then he looks up from them, he's not someone who's going to just read the riot act and then stare at you blankly."

And as well as nuclear weapons, a long hand clasp could be high on the agenda in Singapore. Both men have shown a predilection for grasping the palms of their fellow leaders, Trump with the likes of French President Emmanuel Macron and, more awkwardly, with British prime minister Theresa May. In turn, Kim held hands with South Korean President Moon Jae-in for several minutes at a farewell ceremony at the end of their first summit. — AFP

Business

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12 European stocks edge higher though RBS sale hurts London**13** Qantas defends online listing of Taiwan as a part of China**14** For the first time in Kuwait, VIVA to physically demo '5G' services

AMMAN: People buy fruits and vegetables at a market in downtown Amman. — AFP

Old Amman market feels the pinch

Residents finding it increasingly hard to make ends meet

AMMAN: Every morning Salama Ali sets up shop in the old market of Jordan's capital Amman, hoping to scratch out a living in one of the Arab world's most expensive cities. The mother of five in her 40s stakes out a space on the sidewalk and arranges her eggs and homemade cheese amid the city's dust, traffic and early morning heat. "Life has become very, very difficult," Salama said as she put the final touches on her display.

Residents in the capital are finding it increasingly hard to make ends meet in a city ranked the Arab world's most expensive in terms of cost of living, according to a recent report by The Economist Intelligence Unit. It takes about two hours by bus from her home in Madaba to reach Amman, where a week of anti-austerity protests by citizens suffering from high unemployment and repeated price hikes pushed Prime Minister Hani Mulki to resign on Monday.

Salama says she wakes before dawn each morning to milk her sheep, make cheese and yoghurt, collect fresh eggs and prepare for the market. "The cost of living is high. Each year is harder than the one before it... everything is getting worse," she said. She and her husband struggle to keep their business going and their children fed. According to official estimates, 18.5 percent of Jordan's population is unemployed, while 20 percent are on the brink of poverty.

Salama's neighbor on the stretch of sidewalk, Umm Qusay, has nine children to provide for. She also raises sheep and sells eggs, homemade cheese and yoghurt—and she, too, rarely breaks even.

"Everything is expensive. There's barely enough from what we sell to feed our children and buy sheep feed," said Umm Qusay. "This year is the worst yet," said the woman in her

40s, covering her face with a dark brown scarf. "Rising prices and taxes have destroyed people's lives," she said.

'This is injustice'

Jordan has seen the cost of basic goods and services like bread, fuel and electricity steadily rise during the past year. Last month, the government proposed a new income tax law, yet to be approved by parliament, aimed at raising taxes on employees by at least five percent and on companies by between 20 and 40 percent.

The measures are 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. "What is happening is shameful, this is injustice," said Mohammed Abu Arida, 48, who sells apricots and peaches on

a wooden platform further down the sidewalk.

"The prices have killed us. We don't have anything left. It's like the government wants the shirts off our own backs," he said. Most goods are subjected to a 16 percent sales tax, in addition to customs duties and other taxes that sometimes exceed three times the product's original value. In Amman's old fruit and vegetable market, where basic foodstuffs are cheaper than supermarkets, the exhaustion is palpable.

There are no stalls here. Vendors line the sidewalks, propping their goods on wooden carts and makeshift tables. "The situation isn't tolerable anymore," said 65-year-old Abu Mohammed, as he moved between the stalls and crossed items off his list. "The prices can't go any higher if our incomes remain the same. Look at the market, it's almost at a standstill," he said. — AFP

British ministers back new Heathrow runway

LONDON: British ministers backed plans for a new runway at London's Heathrow airport yesterday, opening the way for a parliamentary vote after decades of delays, although the project could still face challenges before building starts. Heathrow is Europe's busiest airport but is now operating at full capacity. In the past, plans to expand the airport have faced opposition from local communities and environmentalists but the current 14 billion pound (\$18.5 billion) expansion plan is making progress.

The cabinet gave its blessing to the new runway plan yesterday, said transport minister Chris Grayling, and lawmakers should now vote on the issue within 21 days. The decision comes after almost half a century of indecision on how and where to add new airport capacity in densely populated southeast England. If it goes ahead it will be the first full-length runway built in the London area for 70 years.

"Expansion at Heathrow presents a unique opportunity to deliver a multi-billion pound boost to our economy, strengthen our global links and maintain our position as a world leader in aviation," Grayling said in a statement. In an attempt to satisfy opponents of the scheme, he said that the new runway would be delivered within existing air quality obligations, and include a 6.5-hour scheduled night flight ban, plus compensation for local residents and a new independent body would be set up to monitor aviation noise.

The expansion plan could face legal challenges in future, however, with four local councils and environmental group Greenpeace amongst those who could seek a judicial review of the project. Heathrow, owned by Ferrovial, Qatar Investment Authority and China Investment Corporation among others, still has to secure planning permission, with construction slated to start in 2021 and the new runway operational by 2026. An independent commission recommended Heathrow as the site for a new runway in 2015, saying that adding capacity there would bring the country the greatest economic benefits and government has based its policy on



LONDON: In this file photo taken on February 18, 2015 a British Airways 747 aircraft flies over roof tops as it comes into land at Heathrow Airport in west London. — AFP

these findings. Business leaders and politicians have argued that a bigger Heathrow is even more important since Britain voted to leave the EU in 2016, as the expanded airport will enhance trade links and provide a boost to economic growth.

Despite the opposition of some politicians within the ruling Conservative party, including foreign minister Boris Johnson, lawmakers are expected to vote in favour of the plan, according to polling by ComRes last month. A third runway would help Britain catch up with European rivals. Paris and Frankfurt have four runways while Amsterdam has six.

British employers group, the Confederation of British Industry, called Grayling's announcement "fantastic". "Expanding our aviation capacity, and creating new flight

routes to rapidly growing markets, is mission critical to ensuring Britain can compete on the post-Brexit world stage," CBI deputy director-general Josh Hardie said.

For their part, airlines are keen for the new runway to be built but have cautioned over its cost as they don't want airport charges to rise to pay for it as this would mean they will have to increase ticket prices. The 14 billion pound cost of the project will be privately financed and Grayling said on Tuesday that airport charges would be kept close to current levels. Reacting to the expansion news, Heathrow's biggest airline, British Airways-owner IAG said: "We will be looking to the regulator to protect customers and keep charges flat in real terms." — Agencies

Airline boss stirs gender debate

SYDNEY: Promises by the global airline industry to do more to promote gender equality veered off course when one of its top executives suggested his CEO role was too difficult for a woman. The issue of gender imbalance in aviation was a hot topic among over 200 airlines represented at the annual meeting of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in Sydney, with the predominantly male gathering agreeing more had to be done.

Asked about the issue among Middle East airlines in particular, and why his job as head of his country's flag carrier couldn't be done by a woman, outspoken Qatar Airways Chief Executive, Akbar al Baker, gave a typically provocative answer. "Of course it has to be led by a man because it is a very challenging position," he said, drawing gasps from those present. It was not clear whether he was serious or trying to make a joke. The comments came minutes after Al Baker - who has a reputation for hitting out at rivals and suppliers over poor performance.

He later said Qatar Airways was the first carrier in the region to have female pilots and the company had women in senior roles. "So we actually encourage women. We see that they have huge potential in doing senior management positions," he said. Alan Joyce, the gay CEO of Qantas Airways who campaigned for marriage equality in Australia, said ensuring a diverse workforce in general could help to drive profits. "If you get the best talent, the best people, the best jobs you're going to perform better," he said, sitting alongside Al Baker at a press briefing. "I think one of the reasons Qantas turned it around so dramatically is that we've embraced diversity." Gloria Guevara Manzo, the first female president of the World Travel and Tourism Council, said investors needed to start pushing companies to do more. "When you have diversity, your company's results are better," she told Reuters earlier on the sidelines of the Sydney airline talks. "It's not just for the sake of it." — Reuters

Business

Qantas defends online listing of Taiwan as a part of China

'It's not airlines that define what countries are'

SYDNEY: Qantas chief Alan Joyce yesterday defended the carrier's move to list Taiwan as part of China on its websites after Australia's foreign minister said private firms must be able to conduct business "free from political pressure". The Chinese Civil Aviation Administration sent a notice to 36 foreign airlines in April, asking them to comply with Beijing's standards of referring to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau as Chinese territories.

Despite Taiwan having been governed separately for around seven decades, with its own government and own military, China considers the democratic island a renegade part of its territory to be brought back into the fold, by force if necessary. In late May, AFP found several foreign airlines were still listing Taiwan as a country, including Qantas. Joyce told reporters at an annual meeting of global airlines in Sydney that "our intention is to meet the requirements", but there were some technical delays.

He defended the Australian carrier's decision to comply with Beijing's demands, stressing that "it's not airlines that define what countries are, it's governments". "And at the end of the day, the Australians, like a lot of countries, have a 'One China' policy," Joyce added. "So we're not doing anything different than (what) the Australian government is doing in that case and I think that's the case for a lot of airlines."

Qantas International chief Alison Webster said the carrier had been given an extension to make the

changes. "We have some complexity to work through," she said. "The IT and technology that underpins our websites and the connectivity takes time for us to get to grips with changes that need to be put into the programming stages of that." Qantas' decision comes amid souring Australia-China relations. Canberra has introduced a raft of reforms to espionage and foreign interference legislation, with Beijing singled out as a focus of concern.

'Difficult and sensitive'

Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop yesterday acknowledged that the website was a matter for Qantas, but said: "Private companies should be free to conduct their usual business operations free from political pressure of governments."

Asked about Bishop's remarks, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said: "I don't know what is implied by that."

"There is only one China in the world. Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau are all part of China," she said,

adding that this was an "objective fact" accepted by the international community. "Therefore China's request is legitimate. Any business that wants to operate in China should abide by Chinese laws and respect the 'One China' principle. This is a basic requirement." But Taipei hit back, saying it is lodging a protest with Qantas.

"We call on all governments and international firms to uphold their dignity and principles, using moral courage to resist China's unreasonable



SYDNEY: This picture taken on June 1, 2018 shows ground staff preparing a Qantas Airbus A380 aircraft for flight at the Sydney International airport. —AFP

demands," Taiwan's foreign ministry said yesterday, calling the island a "sovereign country". Air Canada is one of the airlines that has made the changes, and its chief executive Calin Rovinescu said the carrier was "not a government" and was "not making any kind of a political statement".

"We do, like so many of the other airlines, take the same view that when we operate into the various jurisdictions, we'll comply with the requirements of the various jurisdictions," he added. "As difficult and

sensitive a decision as this is, our view is that we would comply with the Chinese government requirement." Beijing has in recent months renewed its push to force Western companies to comply with its naming standards—which Washington has labelled "Orwellian" — or risk losing access to China's huge market. Clothing supplier Gap and hotel chain Marriott have also come under pressure to amend websites or products that were perceived as slights to China's sovereignty. —AFP

“Free from political pressure”

Starbucks chief Schultz retiring

WASHINGTON: Howard Schultz, who built a small Seattle coffee chain into the global powerhouse Starbucks, announced Monday he was retiring from the company, fueling speculation he may seek the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020. Schultz, 64, has been serving as executive chairman of Starbucks since stepping down as chief executive in April of last year and handing over to Kevin Johnson.

Schultz will leave the company at the end of the month and take on the honorary title of chairman emeritus, Starbucks said in a statement. Schultz's announcement triggered immediate speculation that he may consider entering politics as a Democrat and run for the White House two years from now. Schultz told The New York Times he hadn't decided on his next move yet, but "for some time now, I have been deeply concerned about our country - the growing division at home and our standing in the world." Schultz, who has been openly critical of President Donald Trump, said "one of the things I want to do in my next chapter is to figure out if there is a role I can play in giving back."

"I intend to think about a range of options, and that could include public service," he said, when asked if he was weighing a presi-

dential run. "But I'm a long way from making any decisions about the future. "I want to be of service to our country, but that doesn't mean I need to run for public office to accomplish that," Schultz told the Times. Schultz joined Starbucks in 1982 as director of operations and marketing and helped transform the Seattle-based company into a global behemoth with more than 28,000 outlets in 77 countries.

"I set out to build a company that my father, a blue-collar worker and World War II veteran, never had a chance to work for," Schultz said in an open letter to past and present Starbucks employees. "Together we've done that, and so much more, by balancing profitability and social conscience, compassion and rigor, and love and responsibility."

Racial bias awareness training

In its statement, Starbucks did not mention any political ambitions for the departing executive but said Schultz was "looking forward to spending more time with his family this summer." "He is also writing a book about Starbucks social impact work and the efforts to redefine the role and responsibility of a public company in an ever-changing society," it said.

Schultz's departure comes a week after the company closed more than 8,000 US stores to provide racial bias awareness training to around 175,000 employees. The move followed the April 12 arrest of two black men



SEATTLE: In this file photo taken on March 22, 2017, Starbucks Chairman and CEO Howard Schultz speaks at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders. —AFP

in a Philadelphia Starbucks, which sparked outrage, protests and soul-searching about racial tensions that have been exacerbated under President Trump. Speaking to CNN about the closure, Schultz said "we realize that four hours of training is not going to solve racial inequity in America or anyone coming into our stores who may have a problem. "But we have to start the conversation." Starbucks shares were down 1.31 percent to \$56.32 in after-hours trading on Wall Street. —AFP

Britain banks £2.5bn for slice of RBS

LONDON: Britain's government yesterday said it had sold a small chunk of state-rescued Royal Bank of Scotland for more than £2.5 billion (\$3.3 billion, 2.8 billion euros), albeit at a loss. Britain on Monday resumed privatisation of the Royal Bank of Scotland, which at the height of the global financial crisis a decade ago underwent the world's biggest bailout by taxpayers.

The Conservative government headed by Prime Minister Theresa May has sold a 7.7-percent stake in RBS, leaving it still with a majority holding of 62.4 percent, much of which it plans to offload through to 2023. "Over £2.5 billion worth of government-owned RBS shares were sold last night as part of the government's policy to return the bank to private ownership," the Treasury said in a statement.

A total of 925 million shares were each sold for £2.71. However, this was at a total loss of £2.1 billion, with the government having spent about £5.0 per share in a rescue costing the taxpayer £45.5 billion. "If the rest of the government stake is sold at a similar price then the total loss comes to something in the region of £21 billion," said Michael Hewson, market analyst at CMC Markets UK.

The government noted however that the sale would help to reduce the country's mountain of debt. "This sale represents a significant step in returning RBS to full private ownership and putting the financial crisis behind us," finance minister Philip Hammond said in the statement. "The government should not be in the business of owning banks. "The proceeds of this sale will go towards reducing our national debt - this is the right thing to do for taxpayers as we build an economy that is fit for the future," Hammond said. —AFP

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Business

For the first time in Kuwait, VIVA to physically demo '5G' services

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched the fifth-generation "5G". Being the first telecom company in Kuwait to bring the unrivalled 5G to reality by physically showcasing the customers' experience with the technology, reflects its continuous commitment to its customers to deliver up-to-date technologies that meet their aspirations. This launch is the initial phase for demonstrating the capabilities and readiness to VIVA to offer the 5G services, while the full-fledged services to customers will be offered upon receiving the regulatory approvals.

Eng Zarrar Khan, Chief Technology Officer at VIVA commented: "The 5G is one of the latest technologies in the generation of communications, therefore VIVA is proud to bring this unique service that will enable customers to exchange information and communicate at high speed." He added: "We have confidence, knowledge and innovation, which will enable us to lead the 5G era, and confirm VIVA's pioneering position in providing innovative services for

the customers in Kuwait."

What made VIVA launch unique is that for the first time, media and public interacted with the 5G services being offered by VIVA. These services include ultra-high-speed internet access, Virtual Reality media and gaming, ultra-low latency drone control and video streaming. The launching ceremony was accompanied by a pavilion to explain about 5G; the editors were able to review the virtual neighborhood services by themselves.

In January 2017, VIVA succeeded in advanced technical experiments in its lab. This technology is the coming fifth-generation wireless broadband technology in the telecom world after the 4th generation (LTE). 5G aims at higher capacity and better latency than current 4G (LTE) which will allow a higher density of mobile broadband users. 5G will be providing multiple gigabit speeds in cityscape areas which will allow people and machines to step into a new era of information technology and help better in implementing the internet of things (IoT).



Al Sayer name winners of Toyota Genuine Parts raffle draw

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Co. (MNSS) Group Spare Parts Division, a subsidiary of AL SAYER Holding, held the first electronic raffle draw to select the winners of Toyota Genuine Parts special promotion on Thursday 24 May 2018 at the Ministry premises. Names of the winners of iPhone x 64 GB from the first raffle are as follows:

Names of Winners	
First Prize	Hamad Ameen Abdulmoneim
Second Prize	Abdul Rahma Abdullah Mohammed
Third Prize	Salman Rajaan Salman
Fourth Prize	Ahmed Waleed Yousef

The special promotion from Toyota Genuine Spare Parts commenced on 16 April will continue till 15 July 2018 to feature the remaining draws on 24 June followed by final draw on 24 July including the Grand Prize Draw for an all-new 2018 Toyota Camry. For every KD 5 spent on Toyota Genuine Parts at any ALSAYER Parts outlet of Service facility, customers will be eligible to participate in the upcoming two raffles on 4 iPhone X mobiles per draw, plus a chance for all customers to win the Grand Prize.

Mohamed Naser Al Sayer continues to guarantee highest level of customer satisfaction through quality assured genuine products at fair competitive prices. Al



Sayer Toyota Genuine Spare Parts operates 17 exclusive outlets across Kuwait to offer an enhanced customer experience through better accessibility and convenience. All the winners can collect their prizes from Group Marketing Department located at Toyota New Cars Delivery Center in Ardiyaby presenting the official letter from Ministry.

AUB organizes training for private and premium staff

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) recently organized an exclusive training for its Private and Premium Banking staff in Kuwait, Egypt and Dubai on Trust and Taxation matters in the United Kingdom (UK). The event, which was held at the Bank's head office over two days, was led by Duncan Taylor, Head of Fiduciary Marketing at AUB in London; Jeremy Mahoney, Director of AUB Trustees (Guernsey) Limited and Richard Jordan, Partner Private Wealth Tax, Trusts and Estates Team from Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, a London-based firm.

During the seminar, speakers explained the applicability of trust arrangements and the overall advantages of an offshore trust. It was explained that a trust is a legal arrangement which sets out legal and financial rights and obligations between two or more people and is primarily used to hold assets for another party. Moreover, trusts can protect assets for those who may not be able to manage their own affairs.

In addition, the speakers focused on the three pillars of offshore trusts, which include tax planning, flexibility and confidentiality. Moreover trust, or Waqf in the Islamic Shari'ah, is a crucial topic

and has widespread use in Islamic societies to provide more finance for education, health and environmental issues, as well as public services. The terms of the trust and accompanying letter of wishes must be compliant with the Islamic rules of inheritance.

The seminar included an update on the United Kingdom Commercial Real Estate Taxation laws. Overseas investors acquiring interests in UK commercial real estate will be subject to a tax from April 2019. In recent years, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has imposed a variety of new taxes on residential property owned by overseas investors.

From 2019, interests in commercial property owned by overseas investors will be subject to UK tax for the first time. One new coherent system of taxation will apply to capital gains made on any interest in real estate from April 2019. A final draft of the legislation is due this summer and will be keenly discussed by lawyers and accountants in the City of London, in particular Medhat Tawfik, Senior General Manager, Private Banking & Wealth Management at AUB said, "We are very pleased to be hosting important educational training sessions adding more value to our staff. The underlying aim is to equip our employees in the Private and Premium banking services with the right knowledge and understandings of the latest topics to be able to provide sound advice to our valuable customers." AUB continues to facilitate leading discussions around trending topics that add value to both staff and customers.



Ford launches 2018 edition of Conservation and Environmental Grants

KUWAIT: Coinciding with World Environment Day on June 5, Ford Motor Company yesterday launched the 17th edition of its Conservation and Environmental Grants program, with \$105,000 made available to successful entries from around the Middle East and North Africa region.

World Environment Day is the United Nation's most important day for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the protection of our environment. Since it began in 1974, it has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in over 100 countries. Each World Environment Day is organized around a theme that focuses attention on a particularly pressing environmental concern. The theme for this year's World Environment Day is "beating plastic pollution", and Ford is increasing the total fund offering for 2018 with a \$5,000 special category grant for the project that best displays a plan to tackle the scourge of plastic on our environment.

Accepted from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Yemen, the touted Conservation and Environmental Grants projects should be focused on one of three main areas: Environmental Education, Protection of the Natural Environment and Conservation Engineering.

Two further categories will receive financial support for the winning projects: Best in Research - projects that show use of research in finding, and implementing, solutions to a specific environmental issue - and Best in Community Engagement, for the project that best demonstrates community engagement during its undertaking. Individuals or organizations with on-going projects focused on any of the main areas of focus are invited to apply by downloading the form here, and email it to FMEGrant@ford.com. Applications will be received from June 5, with closing date for submissions on July 15, 2018 at 9pm AST (Arab Standard Time). Jury voting will take place, virtually, in August, with winners announced in September of this year.

"Our planet faces increasing environmental challenges: such as greater congestion in cities, the rise of the global population, and the ongoing implications of climate change - and so we continue to work tirelessly to maximize our energy and water efficiency and minimize the waste and emissions footprints of our manufacturing plants and vehicles," said Mark Ovenden, president, Ford Middle East and Africa.

"The Ford Conservation and Environmental Grants program is one of many initiatives Ford has invested in to preserve our environment for future generations. With this year's World Environment Day theme of Beating Plastic Pollution in mind, the program will be including an additional special category to be awarded a \$5,000 'beating plastic' grant."

For years, Ford has been working with renewable materials, from farm elements to plastics. In partnership with Coca-Cola, Nike and Procter & Gamble, Ford proudly co-founded the plant-based PET Technology Collaborative (PTC), a strategic working group focused on accelerating the development and use of 100 percent



plant-based PET materials and fibers. Ford also boasts the first automotive use of Coca-Cola's Plant Bottle plastic, used in the seat fabric, trim, carpets and headliner in an electric Ford Focus battery demonstration vehicle. The World Wildlife Fund's Bioplastic Feedstock Alliance (BFA) can, too, rely on Ford as a partner, as it works to support the responsible development of plastics made from plant material, and helps build a more sustainable future for the bio-plastics industry.

Success Stories

Projects in the past year alone have helped tackle the issue of turtle by-catch in Tunisia, supported Morocco-based project "Go Energyless" in producing and supplying low-cost coolers made of clay and other natural materials to local communities, and helped students change community perceptions of conservation through the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan's Nature Ranger program. In its 17 years of existence, the Ford Grants program has become one of the largest corporate initiatives of its kind in the region, created to empower individuals and non-profit groups that are donating their time and efforts to preserve the environmental well-being of their communities.

Since its inception, the Ford Motor Company Conservation and Environmental Grants program has received support and recognition from various governmental and non-governmental environmental authorities from around the Middle East, including the World Wide Fund for Nature, and the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED).

Recipients are chosen by an independent panel of judges consisting of academics and leaders from regional environmental organizations. The judges are seasoned environmentalists or academicians from the region carefully selected based on geographical coverage, age and gender equality. They look for initiatives that demonstrate a well-defined sense of purpose, a commitment to maximizing available resources, and a reputation for meeting objectives and delivering planned programs and services.

Gulf insurance Group stays in the lead in financial ratings

KUWAIT: Gulf Insurance Group (gig), the leading insurance service provider in Kuwait and MENA region, announced that Moody's Investors Service agency has affirmed the insurance financial strength rating of A3 with a stable outlook for the Kuwait-based group with operations across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).



Khalid Al Sanousi

Moody's agency revealed gig's insurance financial strengths rating reflects the group's strong and leading position in its target markets with a qualified market share in the region, well-established brand recognition, strong and consistent profitability, good capitalization and strong management which has implemented prudent and sophisticated risk management measures.

Factors that lead to an upgrade of the group's rating are significant improvements in the sovereign ratings and economic environments of its non-Kuwaiti subsidiaries in addition to improvements in assets quality. The group has established a strong brand across the MENA region and ranks among the top 10 MENA insurance groups. The stable outlook on gig reflects Moody's expectation that the group will maintain its solid market position and brand in its key markets while maintaining good capitalization and delivering strong results.

Khaled M Al Sanousi, Group Senior Manager said: "We are proud to remain recognized for our accomplishments in the region and by Moody's Investors Service. The Group's well-established and comprehensive Enterprise Risk Management Framework with appropriate tools and techniques helps to identify, measure and manage risks on a Group level. We are the first insurance company in Kuwait to be triple-rated from international credit rating agencies. In addition to Moody's, we are also rated at A level by Standard & Poor's and A.M.BEST. The presence of a strong and unified 'gig' brand across the companies we operate in helps us provide world class offerings and excellence in our industry."

CBK signs memo of understanding with PACI for e-services



KUWAIT: Within the constant cooperation between the Commercial Bank of Kuwait and other state institutes, CBK recently signed a memo of understanding with the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) to activate e-services that would facilitate banking transactions for the bank's clients. Speaking on the occasion, CBK's board chairman Sheikh, Ahmed Duaij Al-Sabah stressed on the bank's keenness to provide the latest creative services for its clients such as using e-signature, which would enable a client use it and the civil ID's pin code to conduct integrated banking transactions without the need for paper forms. "It will open a new horizon towards a new digitalized banking world", he added noting that this was not strange from CBK that had already started using the customer service Kiosks and was the first to introduce ATM machines in Kuwait over 35 years ago. On his part, PACI director, MUSAED AL-ASSOUSI stressed that the authority's keenness on cooperating with various public and private sector institutions. He also noted that e-signature was one of the most important uses of the civil ID and that it was significant for e-transactions safety.

Technology

Europe up against a titanic Asian juggernaut in e-car battery drive

Only two European companies planning to build plants

LONDON/FRANKFURT/STOCKHOLM: Chinese electric vehicle giant BYD is looking at launching battery production in Europe, joining Asian rivals aiming to cash in on a green car revolution and threatening attempts by Brussels to nurture a home-grown industry. Keen to capture a European car battery value chain that will be worth an estimated 250 billion euros (\$290 billion) by 2025, the European Commission launched an alliance of local companies last year aiming to build 10-20 huge battery factories.

"We are considering cell production outside of China and that includes Europe," Julia Chen, Global Sales Director at BYD Batteries, told Reuters, speaking about the production of both automotive and home storage batteries. BYD, which also makes electric buses, cars and solar panels, said it was not clear where in Europe a battery site might be. "It would be possible wherever there's a market."

The company, which is backed by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway, joins Korea's SK Innovation, Japan's GS Yuasa Corp and China's Contemporary Amperex Technology (CATL) in looking to locate battery plants in Europe. South Korea's LG Chem, Samsung SDI both have European factories due to open soon while China's GSR Capital already produces battery cells at a UK plant it bought from Nissan.

While Asian electric vehicle (EV) cell battery factories in Europe would bring jobs, Brussels is concerned companies in the bloc are missing out on a growth industry and risk becoming dependent on foreign technology. But some investors say they are wary of backing European EV battery suppliers after seeing local solar panel firms founder in the face of cheap Chinese imports over the past decade.

European battery companies would need billions in EU support to rival Asian firms that have received similar state subsidies and Brussels may be better off promoting next-generation solid-state EV batteries instead, investors say. "I don't believe anyone in Europe can be competitive with the Asians," said Gerard Reid, founder of Alexa Capital, which

advises firms in the energy, technology and power infrastructure sectors.

'Green' batteries

Electric and hybrid vehicles are expected to account for 30 percent of the global auto market by 2030, according to metal consultants CRU, up from 4 percent of the 86 million vehicles sold last year. Global automakers plan to invest at least \$90 billion in electric cars and batteries, the most expensive component in the vehicles, to finance hundreds of new models over the next five years.

For now, carmakers in Europe have been importing batteries from Asia, but as production ramps up that will become less viable. Setting up production in Europe would cut shipping costs by a quarter. But some carmakers are not waiting for a European industry, instead signing contracts with Asian firms coming to the region. German's BMW said it was not involved in the European alliance while Europe's biggest automaker, Volkswagen, said it plans to get batteries from LG Chem's Polish factory due to open this year. Mercedes maker Daimler has awarded a contract to CATL. Supporters of the initiative argue Europe can carve out a niche by selling green batteries produced with renewable energy and ethically sourced raw materials.

Financing round

Northvolt, which has held talks with European automakers, aims to launch its \$5 billion gigafactory in late 2020 and produce 32 gigawatt hours of battery capacity each year by 2023. But investors have been cautious about pouring money into new European battery ventures. Northvolt's first financing round, intended to raise 80 million euros to 100 million euros to help set up a test factory, took slightly longer than expected, a spokesman said. Much of the profit from the battery value chain is generated by producers of raw materials, such as cobalt and lithium, and those who assemble cells into complex systems, experts say.

"There's been a bit of imbalance in that value chain and



BANGALORE: Tarun Mehta, Co-Founder and CEO of Ather Energy, gestures while addresses the media during the launch event of Ather 450 (C), electric scooter, in Bangalore yesterday. Ather Energy launched the electric scooter along with Ather 340, a variant of previously unveiled scooter on the occasion of World Environment Day. —AFP

that's one of the reasons you see a limited amount of players in Europe," said Northvolt founder and Chief Executive Peter Carlsson. "But we think that the model that we're applying is changing this." Carlsson, who used to work for U.S. electric car pioneer Tesla, says Northvolt can make a profit through economies of scale, by using cheap hydropower and controlling the processing of raw materials.

But Northvolt and TerraE will probably need about \$2 billion each in government funding to build their gigafactories - given the state support provided for similar projects in Asia and the United States, said Asad Farid, an associate director at private bank Berenberg who specializes in battery technology. Four months after the European alliance launch the world's

biggest automotive supplier, Germany's Robert Bosch abandoned plans to make battery cells, saying it was too risky.

Solid-state solution?

Investors are wary because of their experience with solar panel manufacturers as well as rapid advances in technology that are slashing the price of battery packs, which consultants Arthur D Little puts at \$190-250 per kilowatt hour now. "In battery manufacturing ... it's very much about scale. So the established producers in Korea, China and Japan have clear advantages over new entrants," said Simon Webber, lead portfolio manager on the global & international equities team at Schroders. —Reuters

Apple focuses on speed and parental controls in software upgrades

SAN JOSE: Apple Inc on Monday unveiled software upgrades that would let older iPhones run faster, help parents limit their children's screen time and make its Siri voice assistant work more like a rival feature from Amazon.com. Taken together, the moves announced at Apple's annual Worldwide Developers Conference in San Jose amounted to focusing on keeping its base of 1.3 billion users satisfied with their devices and catching up with some competitors. Apple shares closed up 0.8 percent at \$191.83 after the news, and rose to \$192.40 in extended trading.

Apple faced a backlash late last year when it emerged that the company slowed down some older iPhones with flagging batteries. The latest version of Apple's operating system for the iPhone and iPad, iOS 12, will make older devices, such as the iPhone 6, work better. Software chief Craig Federighi said iOS 12 could carry out simple tasks, such as opening apps, up to twice as fast as its predecessor, iOS 11. The new system will work on a range of products that date back to 2013.

The company also will allow broader use of in-app voice controls, which it had limited to a handful of apps, such as PayPal and Uber. Amazon, by contrast, was much more open to controlling apps with its Alexa assistant. Apple also rolled out group video chat sessions with up to 32 users, putting it in direct competition with companies such as Cisco Systems Inc and Microsoft Corp's Skype.

Overuse by children

In response to criticism that Apple contributed to computer overuse by children, iPhone and iPad users



SAN JOSE: Apple CEO Tim Cook speaks during the 2018 Apple Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC) at the San Jose Convention Center. —AFP

will now be able to limit the time children spend in apps, as well as which apps they can use. "Some apps demand more of our attention than we might realize," Federighi said. The parent control system sits atop a broader system that adults, too, can use to monitor and limit their screen time.

Carolina Milanese, an analyst at Creative Strategies, said the flexibility of Apple's system set it apart from others designed only for parental monitoring, offering the ability for teens and adults to impose their own limits. "It's a clear admission from Apple: 'Our installed base is so big, and no two users are the same, so we're not going to tell you what works for you,'" she said.

New features help protect users' anonymity online. The company said its Safari web browser for both Macs and iPhones will keep users from being tracked without their permission by websites that use "like" or

"share" buttons from social media companies. Apple unveiled new steps to make it hard for advertisers to distinguish among users, building on its effort, begun last year, to prevent such tracking.

Apple also rolled out new tools for augmented reality, saying users would be able to share worlds in games, for instance. LEGO, the maker of interlocking toy blocks, showed off an app in which two players using iPads could put out a virtual fire blazing on a physical house made of LEGOs. Federighi said Apple had been working on a "multi-year" effort to make it easier to move iPhone and iPad apps onto Mac computers, a significant change because Apple's iOS is often a top destination for developers, who frequently choose Android phones as the second platform. Federighi said the tools will come out next year. —Reuters

Facebook fan page operator has privacy responsibilities: EU

LUXEMBOURG: The operator of a fan page on Facebook is also responsible for protecting visitors' personal data and cannot hide behind the social network, the European Union's highest court ruled yesterday. The case stems from a dispute between a German fan page on Facebook which used the social network to store cookies on visitors' hard drives to collect data about them.

When a German data protection authority ordered the operator of the fan page, an education company, to deactivate it because visitors were not informed about the collection of their personal data, the company argued it was not responsible for the processing of personal data by Facebook and that any action should be brought against the social network.

"According to the court, the fact that an administrator of a fan page uses the plat-

form provided by Facebook in order to benefit from the associated services cannot exempt it from compliance with its obligations concerning the protection of personal data," the Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ) said in a statement about the ruling.

The administrator takes part in deciding what data to collect and how to process it, for example by defining a target audience and asking for demographic data or information on the lifestyles and interests of visitors to the page, the ECJ said. The Luxembourg-based court also reaffirmed an opinion given by a legal adviser in October which said the German data protection authority had the power to take action against Facebook even though its European headquarters are in Ireland.

Facebook had argued only the Irish regulator had jurisdiction over its activities, but several other EU regulators have taken action against the company for allegedly breaching privacy legislation. The ECJ said a regulator was entitled to exercise its powers against a company even if the responsibility for the collection and processing of data belonged to that company's



This file photo taken on March 22, 2018 shows a computer screen displaying the logo of the social networking site Facebook, taken in Manchester, England. —AFP

establishment in another member state - in this case Facebook Ireland. The case predated the entry into force two weeks ago of a new EU data protection regulation

which introduces a "one stop shop" principle whereby companies only have to deal with the authority in the member state of their main EU establishment. —Reuters

Washington sues online titans over political ads

SAN FRANCISCO: The US state of Washington on Monday announced it was suing Google and Facebook for not abiding by local law requirements regarding keeping records of political ads and their backers. Campaign finance laws in that state call on ad sellers to keep track of who is behind ads and how much is spent, and make the information available to the public, Washington attorney general Bob Ferguson said in a release.

Suits filed in state court accuse Facebook and Google of failing to meet these obligations since the year 2013. "Washington's political advertising disclosure laws apply to everyone, whether you are a small-town newspaper or a large corporation," Ferguson said in the release. In the last decade, Washington candidates and political committees reported about \$3.4 million in payments to Facebook and \$1.5 million to Google related to advertising, according to the state attorney general.

Google and Facebook dominate the market for online advertising. Google and Facebook are among internet firms dealing with criticism and concerns about online platforms being used to spread division and misinformation with the potential to sway elections. Facebook last month said it began implementing a policy requiring labeling and verification of identities of those paying for political messages.

The move came in response to criticism over Facebook's 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. Facebook said its new handling of political ads has taken hold in the United States on Facebook and Instagram. It intended to implement the same policy worldwide in the coming months —AFP

SpaceX delays plans to send tourists around the Moon

WASHINGTON: SpaceX will not send tourists around the Moon this year as previously announced, and will delay the project until the middle of next year, US media reported on Monday. "A new timetable for the flight-now postponed until at least mid-2019 and likely longer-hasn't been released" by the California-based company, said the report in The Wall Street Journal.

The reason for the delay is unclear. But it is a "sign that technical and production challenges are disrupting founder Elon Musk's plans for human exploration of the solar system," said the report. "SpaceX also is confronting industry doubts about market demand for its Falcon Heavy rocket," it said. The tourists would ride aboard a Dragon capsule, hoisted into space on SpaceX's most powerful rocket to date, the Falcon Heavy, which made its first test flight only four months ago. —AFP

Health

Cleaning up the 'sacred lake': Locals tackle Titicaca pollution

'It hurts me that we are cleaning up what others throw away'

SANTIAGO DE HUATA, Bolivia: Under a blazing sun on the arid banks of Lake Titicaca, high in the Andes Mountains, around a dozen indigenous women work tirelessly to collect cans, bottles and plastic bags. The women—with their long black braids, traditional red bell-shaped skirts, thick woollen jackets and felt bowler hats—hope to set an example for other local residents and tourists who leave tons of garbage by the lake every year.

But their efforts may amount to nothing more than window dressing—wastewater from the surrounding region is contaminating the lake, which many local people rely on for fishing to make a living. At 8,500 square kilometers (about 3,300 square miles), Titicaca—which straddles the border between Bolivia and Peru—is as big as the French island of Corsica. And at an altitude of more than 3,800 meters (12,500 feet), it is the world's highest body of fresh water that is navigable by large vessels.

The local Aymara people call it a "sacred lake,"—legend has it that from these waters emerged Manco Capac, son of the Sun God, and his wife Mama Oello, who then founded the ancient city of Cusco, the capital of the Inca empire. On the beach of Santiago de Huata, a town on the Bolivian shore of the lake, the women use latex gloves to lift bits of rubbish one by one and put them in huge biodegradable bags. Such clean-up days are organized once or twice a year to raise awareness about the devastating pollution.

Cows and sheep

In the dry season, when the water level is low, the scale of the disaster is all the more evident. "We find plastic, paper, bottles and all types of rubbish," even "used diapers," says Helena Condori, a tradeswoman in the Peruvian village of Juliaca on the opposite shore of the lake. "It hurts me that we are cleaning up what others throw away." But she is full of enthusiasm despite the immense task at hand, because "it makes us feel that Peru and Bolivia are more united than ever." The women have already cleaned the beach at

Puerto Perez, also on the Bolivian side. But environmentalists and local officials point to a bigger problem: the wastewater now flowing into the lake.

Less than 30 years ago, people could still drink the lake water, but no more. It is "a problem that is causing serious pollution," says Fanny Zeballos, an environmental engineer for the non-governmental organization Agua Sustentable (Sustainable Water). The organization supports the clean-up initiative, although Zeballos acknowledges it "will not be enough."

'I feel that I'm dying too'

Bolivian local councilor Reina Silva, who is also taking part in the clean-up day, says the effects of the pollution are all too plain to see. "Our animals feed on totora (plants) and they die of diarrhea. Our cows and sheep drink water and die. That's how we know that it's polluted," she said. "I feel bad—I feel that I'm dying too." Agua Sustentable puts together the team of local women and provides the equipment to measure the level of pollution in the lake. This time, they have collected about 100 kilos (220 pounds) of rubbish. Juan Jose Ocola, head of the bilateral Lake Titicaca Authority operated by the two countries, says pollution is concentrated on some banks but does not

Affect the entire lake.

"Lake Titicaca is exposed to a serious pollution problem, as it's the receptacle for all the pollutants that are produced" in the surrounding area, he says. The contamination comes mainly from three urban centers, home to some 1.6 million people: Puno and Juliaca on the Peruvian side, and El Alto, next to the capital La Paz, in Bolivia. Ocola said that although the local women are making "major" efforts, two things are badly needed: the construction of water treatment plants and new garbage dumps. Peru has already announced the construction of 10 water treatment plants, at the cost of \$400 million, while Bolivia has earmarked \$80 million for a similar project in El Alto.—AFP



PUERTO P?REZ, Bolivia : Aymara Indigenous women, arrive to clean the shore of the Titicaca lake in Puerto Perez, La Paz department. —AFP

Recycling plastic: Japan style

TOKYO: At a recycling plant outside Tokyo, workers in face masks pick through an unending torrent of plastic rubbish, fuelled by a national obsession with pristine packaging—and famously strict rules that ensure much of it is reclaimed and reused. Some 10 tons of recyclable plastics are brought in every day to be processed at the Ichikawa Kankyo Engineering center, where workers hover over conveyor belts removing any stray items or contaminants. The plastic is then compressed and squeezed into huge "bales", moved around

by forklift trucks into large hangars. Critics charge that Japanese consumers and retailers use too much plastic, as a mania for elaborate packaging results in almost everything being wrapped even single pieces of fruit.

There is no national legislation banning single-use plastics, and penalties or disincentives for using plastic bags are rare. But Japan also has complicated and strictly enforced rules on separating waste to help maximize the reuse and recycling of garbage.

Local governments across Tokyo and the rest of Japan each have their own rules on how residents must separate their waste, producing flowcharts that explain which items fit into which category. Plastics are separated from cans, paper and other recy-

clables, with collections for different categories on different days of the week.

Most at a minimum have categories for burnable, unburnable, recyclable and plastics, with many also requiring people to separate out cardboard and different types of plastic. That ensures more than one fifth of plastic waste is recycled in Japan and the majority of the rest is burned either as fuel, or to generate power or heat, according to the Plastic Waste Management Institute. Around 10 percent is incinerated without producing any energy and less than 10 percent ends up in landfill.

About eight million tons of plastic waste are dumped into the world's oceans every year, the equivalent of one garbage truck of plastic being tipped into the sea every minute of every day.—AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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What's On

Malabar continues relief campaign for people affected by Cyclone Mekunu



Malabar Gold and Diamonds continuing the relief activities in the Cyclone Mekunu stricken areas and contributing in a variety of ways. The company started the relief activities in Salalah, Oman right after the Cyclone is affected. Team of Malabar Gold and Diamonds lead by Muneer Moideen, Asst. Branch Head, actively

involved in the relief activities day and night by distributing groceries, water bottles, Iftar kits etc. Over 10,000 residents from Salalah, Mirbat, Thaka, Haffa, Daris, Dalkuth, Rakyuth are benefited from the relief campaign. Najeeb K, Regional Head, Malabar Gold and Diamonds, Oman commented by saying: "We would like to express our deepest sympathy and

offer our sincere help to those suffering from the impact of the Cyclone Mekunu. We are hoping the earliest possible recovery and praying to the almighty for the restoration of the affected areas. Considering the number of requests we are receiving, we are extending our relief campaign to the other affected areas as well." Malabar Gold and Diamonds is

always at forefront when it comes to CSR activities. The group sets aside a fixed percentage of its net profit for the benefit of the needy in the respective markets it operates in. They undertake social welfare activities all year long, focusing on five priority areas such medical, educational sector, environment as well as housing and women empowerment.



KIB celebrates girgian with children at Farwaniya Hospital

Kuwait International Bank (KIB) organized a visit to the children's department at Farwaniya Hospital on the occasion of girgian. The visit aimed at celebrating this joyous occasion with children and spreading the spirit of girgian by distributing gifts and sweets amongst them.

Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "Visiting sick children and their families to celebrate the joy of girgian is a tradition we are committed to upholding every year during Ramadan. This visit comes as part of our unwavering commitment to humanitarian activities, as well as our dedication to engaging with all segments of the community under our new slogan 'Bank for Life.'"

Najia pointed out that the initiative

aimed at sharing the wonderful and joyous spirit of traditional events that take place in Ramadan, such as girgian. The Bank is particularly adamant on putting smiles on the faces of sick people and bringing hope to their hearts. Additionally, KIB is dedicated to increasing its visits to civil institutions and hospitals, as part of its leading social responsibility program aimed at all segments of the community.

It is worth mentioning that girgian is among the most important initiatives and activities within KIB's Ramadan campaign. The Bank aims at organizing a number of humanitarian activities throughout Ramadan to support the community, enhance the lines of communication, as well as strengthen religious values.



KFH distributes iftar meals in Farwaniya Governorate

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) continues "Feed the Fasting" campaign in distributing iftar meals in a mosque in Farwaniya Governorate part of its Ramadan program "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 4", that reflects the commitment in the corporate social responsibility and efforts to strengthen ties with the all segments of the society, especially in the month of Ramadan.

KFH voluntary team prepares and distributed iftar meals daily at four locations in collaboration with the Capital and Hawalli Governorates. The locations are: Nayef Palace, Alshamlan Mosque, Souk Al-



Mubarakiya and Hawalli Park.

KFH's Ramadan program "Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 4" 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.

KFH's efforts in Ramadan underline the bank's pioneering role in the social responsibility, while contributing in strengthening the social ties. KFH voluntary team prepares and distributes Iftar meals daily on different locations until end of Ramadan.



'Seventh Art Forum' honors Dawood Hussein

As part of activities of the 'Seventh Art Forum' held at The First Movie Group's headquarters in Jabriya, the group recently honored

Kuwaiti comedian Dawood Hussein for his long career that started in 1977. The honoring ceremony was followed by a seminar during which Hussein justified his recent absence by lack of proper scripts especially after he had almost covered all types of characters. He added that he had also taken part in a number of Egyptian movies and that he had been mentored by the late comedian, Abdul Hussein Abdul Redha. Meanwhile, Director Ramadan Khasrouh stressed that Hussein still owned undeveloped or used potentials in acting tragedy and that the group was so glad to honor Hussein.



Spectacular performances at Mega Arts Fest Paradigm

The Indian Community School (Senior) was abuzz with the much awaited Mega Arts Fest, Paradigm, held on its campus on the 12th and 13th of May, 2018. The ICSK (Senior) Annual Mega Arts Fest, Paradigm, provides a mammoth platform to the students to exhibit their talents and build up confidence. The festival includes music, dance, and poetry along with visual arts. The fifth edition of Paradigm got off to a colorful start with 118 items comprising 58 off stage and 60 on stage items under three categories: Category 3, Category 4 and Category 5.

The inaugural ceremony was dazzling with the presence of star dignitaries. H.E. Mzolisa Bona, Ambassador of South Africa to Kuwait was the Chief Guest for the day. The other dignitaries included the Board of Trustees - Shaikh Abdul Rahman (Chairman),

Vinukumar Nair (Vice Chairman), Agnello A.S. Fernandes (Joint Secretary), Dr V. Binumon (Principal and Senior Administrator), Dr Sam T. Kuruvilla (Vice Principal, ICSK Senior), Principal, (Khaitan) Gangadhar Shirsath and Principal (Junior) Sheryl Dennis.

To pay homage to the countries, audience stood up to the Kuwait and South African National Anthem. Dr V. Binumon, Principal and Senior Administrator ICSK delivered the welcome address to the august gathering.

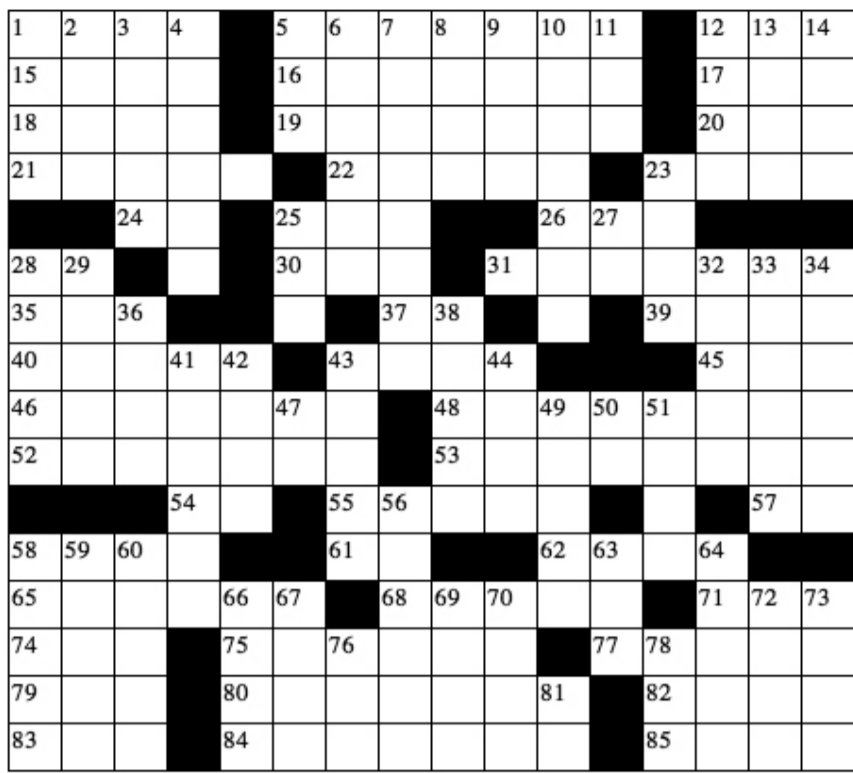
The two day fest culminated with a valedictory ceremony held on 13 May, 2018. General Ali Hamadan Al-Daihani, Manager Farwaniya Governorate of Kuwait, the Chief Guest graced the occasion. Luminaries, K.G. Abraham- Managing Director, NBTC Group, Dr T.P Sasikumar -Space scientist, Life

Mentor, Thought Leader, Writer, Hypnotherapist and Educationist, Mariam Al Dasti-Head of the Primary and Middle Sections of the Ministry of Private Education, marked their presence to bless and congratulate the participants and winners.

The much awaited Prize distribution reckoned with Kalathilak and Kalapratibha, the highest honour in the Arts Fest. Under Category 3, Master Sanskar Mishra of class 8 E won the kalapratibha and Christina Susan Viji of class 8 E won the Kalathilak. In Category 4, Master Jove Cheruparambil Jose of class 9 A was awarded kalapratibha and Kaavya Vaidyanathan of Class 10 A was conferred with Kalathilak. Category 5, Master Moses Kurien Mathew of class 12 E was conferred kalapratibha and Miss Diya Ajay of class 11 H won kalathilak.



CROSSWORD 1928



ACROSS

- 1. The act of moving along swiftly (as before a gale).
5. Shape anew or differently.
12. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
15. A stick that people can lean on to help them walk.
16. Someone who deliberately foments trouble.
17. The 21st letter of the Greek alphabet.
18. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
19. A city in southeastern Spain.
20. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
21. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
22. Large short-tailed lemur of Madagascar having thick silky fur in black and white and fawn.
24. Destruction of heart tissue resulting from obstruction of the blood supply to the heart muscle.
26. Being one hundred more than two hundred.
28. A unit of power equal to 746 watts.
30. The 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
31. Sweet liqueur made from wine and brandy flavored with plum or peach or apricot kernels and bitter almonds.
35. Alsatian artist and poet who was cofounder of Dadaism in Zurich.
37. A monarchy in northwestern Europe occupying most of the British Isles.
39. An outlying farm building for storing grain or animal feed and housing farm animals.
40. English aristocrat who was the first wife of Prince Charles.
45. A mature blood cell that contains hemoglobin to carry oxygen to the bodily tissues.
46. Tropical American insectivorous bird having a long sharp bill and iridescent green or bronze plumage.
48. A constitutional monarchy in southeastern Asia on Borneo and the Malay Peninsula.
52. Form a mental image of something that is not present or that is not the case.
53. Aromatic gum resin.
54. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
55. Largest crested screamer.
57. A member of the military police who polices soldiers and guards prisoners.
58. Slightly open.
61. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
62. Rock that form the continuous lower layer of the earth's crust.
65. The wood of the sabcu which resembles mahogany.
68. Worn or shabby from overuse or (of pages) from having corners turned down.
71. Range of what one can know or understand.
74. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
75. A deficiency of red blood cells.
77. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
79. An associate degree in applied science.
80. Soviet cosmonaut who in 1961 was the first person to travel in space (1934-1968).
82. In bed.
83. The compass point that is midway between north and northeast.
84. Minute single-celled green freshwater organism having a single flagella.
85. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.

DOWN

- 1. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
2. City in southwestern Colombia in a rich agricultural area.
3. Take away the weapons from.
4. Cause to run off the tracks.
5. Gear (including necessary machinery) for a particular enterprise.
6. Make richer.
7. A white trivalent metallic element.
8. Located at or near the back of an animal.
9. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
10. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
11. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
12. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
13. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
14. Port city that is the capital and largest city of Latvia.
23. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
25. The smallest multiple that is exactly divisible by every member of a set of numbers.
27. A New England state.
29. (Greek mythology) The last king of Troy.
32. A person of Iranian descent.
33. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
34. Live in or as if in a tent.
36. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
38. A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
41. A syllabic script used in writing Sanskrit and Hindi.
42. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
43. Any of several tall tropical palms native to southeastern Asia having egg-shaped nuts.
44. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
47. An associate degree in nursing.
49. Property that is leased or rented out or let.
50. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
51. (cosmology) The original matter that (according to the big bang theory) existed before the formation of the chemical elements.
56. Characteristic of or relating to winter.
59. A string of more than 3,000 islands east of Asia extending 1,300 miles between the Sea of Japan and the western Pacific Ocean.
60. Lower in esteem.
63. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
64. Jordan's port.
66. An enclosure made of wire or metal bars in which birds or animals are kept.
67. Relatively small fast-moving sloth.
69. A river in northern England that flows southeast through West Yorkshire.
70. Water falling in drops from vapor condensed in the atmosphere.
72. A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
73. A quantity of no importance.
76. Animal reproductive body consisting of an ovum or embryo together with nutritive and protective envelopes.
78. 10 grams.
81. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You will experience a great deal of clarity today. You will feel a great sense of inner peace. You may experience an abundance of energy and drive. Now is a good time to share your ideas in the workplace. Your strong communication skills are perfect for getting your point across today. The peacefulness you are feeling will be noticed by all around you. Don't be surprised if you find yourself the recipient of many compliments today. You may even have a noticeable glow about you. Settle in and take time for the romance novel or movie you have been wanting to see. Aries, now is great time to experience greater meaning in your circumstances.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may have been feeling a great need to make amends with others. You tend to be misunderstood at times. Some may see you as controlling when this is not your intent at all. Today great opportunities to make amends and mend fences may present themselves to you. This will leave you with a greater understanding of life and all you have to offer this world. Taurus. This is a great time of understanding for you and a time to build close relationships with others.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today finds you in a very positive mood. You have learned to value adversity, as your positive approach keeps you focused on learning from your mistakes and experiences. This quality makes you very appealing to others. You may find others tend to seek and value your opinions and advice. You almost have a mystical quality about yourself today. You place great value on love and forgiveness of those closest to you. Gemini, you may find much peace surrounding you today. Enjoy and relax!



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Events today may solidify your belief that you cannot change others. The only person you can change is yourself. Today finds you doing a great deal of soul searching. Changing your attitude and focus and being determined to focus on only the positive in your world will help you accomplish your dreams. Dismiss all that holds you back. This may be something as simple as a negative thought or attitude or a person that seems to always pull you backwards. Rid yourself and your life of all negativity and push forward.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today may have you deep in thought about your future. You have found an inner peace and clear understandings of what you want and exactly what your plans are to achieve this. You place value on your loved ones and want to protect and nurture these relationships. While inwardly you are at peace that may not be the case when it comes to your social life. Socially you may feel as a misfit today. Today you may feel misunderstood and as if you are unable to communicate your feelings to others. Stick to yourself today, to what you know, and in comfortable surroundings. This is not a great day to be out and about.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Call it intuition, psychic ability or whatever you like. This is a time where you seem to be in touch. You know what others want and you know how to provide it. Seems all are drawn to you and fascinating by your intelligence and problem-solving skills. You find yourself in touch with your emotions and deeply in touch with the emotions of those surrounding you. You are in love with your life and those who are in it. Forgiveness and making things right with those close to you plays a big part in who you are and what is important to you at this time. Virgo, you are on the right track to live a life full of peace and harmony.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

It seems as though your life and the world around you have begun to take on a much deeper meaning to you. Forgiveness, understanding, and empathy play big roles in your life at this time and you seem to be seeking peace and harmony in all aspects of your life. Past experience seems to lead through your problems with ease. You know where you have been and what you have experienced, good and bad. You have learned from your mistakes. You are driven and focused and ready for new beginnings. You have your goals set high and the level of drive and determination you are feeling will lead you no where but to success.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find yourself entering a period of soul-searching. You may feel as if you are feeding off of the mystical, emotional, and instinctive qualities you possess. There is great depth to these feelings. You feel led to be forgiving, understanding, and compassionate to all in your life. You may experience relationships being mended today and barriers dissolving. Scorpio. This is a time of peace in your life.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Dream on! You may find yourself focused on the "what ifs" and "why nots" of this world. Let yourself go there. It is not often that you allow your mind to drift off and relax to point you are able to be in a dreamy state. Enjoy this and let your troubles go for a while. Perhaps a long walk in the park, a good book, or a hot candlelit bath is just what you need. You may find this totally clears your mind and sets the stage for your creativity to reach new levels. Whether you use this in an artistic way or a new creative way of thinking you may find this to be a very profitable asset to you. This is a great time to share your ideas with others and begin a new project.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Others are drawn to you. You are different and intriguing. You are forgiving and feel these emotions at a much deeper level than most. While others watch you handle your life situations with grace and style you may find them turning to you for advice. You are admired for your wisdom. Your independence is radiant and well noted by those who may find you eccentric. You make life seem easy and are admired for the way you live it. Capricorn, you may have heard common sense is not that common, but you were blessed with an overdose of it.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You find yourself becoming the "go to" person as others seek your advice for very personal issues. Many complicated issues you may face will cause deep feelings within to stir. Your level of sensitivity should reach new heights. Great harmony will be experienced. Now is a great time to surround yourself with friends and loved ones and may be surprised how easily you are able to work together. Aquarius. Hard work and dedication will take you far in this life. Continue on the path you are on and you may reap great reward.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This day may prove to be very successful in the workplace. You are on point. Focus, cool, and collected best describe you. You are able to solve any problem that comes your way. Today is a day you will shine. You may find solutions to problems that have long been bothering you. Today answers will come to you quickly and seem to come out of nowhere. What once was so complex to you seems so simple you almost find it frustrating you were bothered by the problem for so long. Someone may come into your life today that may play the role of mentor to you in the near future. Be open to this idea and don't allow your independent nature to push them away.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Old West 3

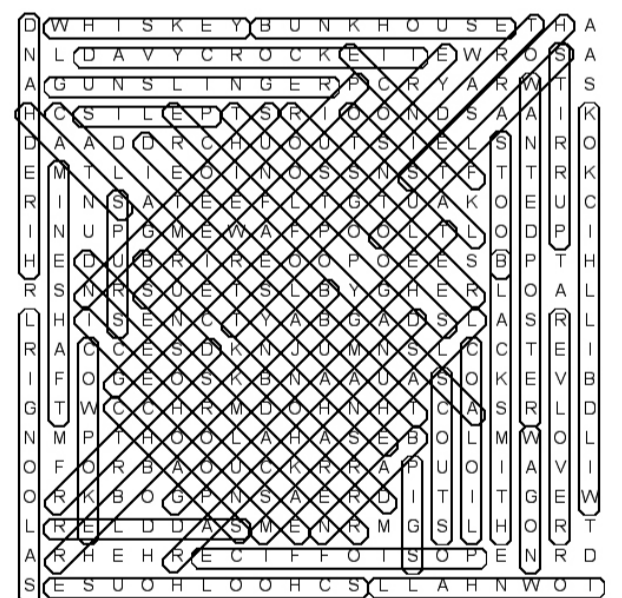
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 46 letters spell a John Wayne quotation.

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

- ANVIL APOTHECARY BANK BARBER BOARDING HOUSE BOUNTY HUNTER BRIDLE BUFFALO BILL CODY CATTLE CHURCH COAL MINE DALTON GANG DEPUTY DODGE CITY FRONTIER GERONIMO GOLD RUSH HAYLOFT HOLSTER HORSE TROUGH HORSESHOE JAIL JESSE JAMES KEROSENE LIVERY MAYOR MERCANTILE PASTURE PIG FEED PLOW TRAIL BOSS PROSPECTOR RANGE WAGON TRAIN WRANGLER SADDLEBAG SAGEBRUSH SASPARILLA SETTLERS SILVER DOLLAR STABLE STOCKADE TOWN TOWN BOSS TRAIN STATION WAGON TRAIN WRANGLER WYATT EARP

Yesterday's Solution

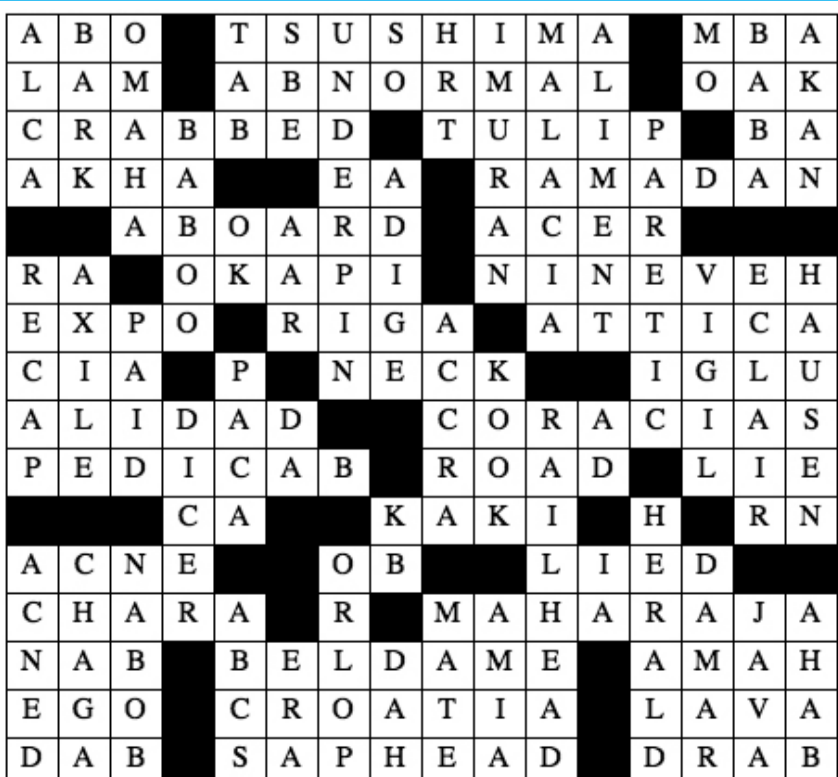
Old West 2



- ASSAY OFFICE BANK ROBBER BARN BLACKSMITH BOOTS BUCKBOARD BUNKHOUSE CALAMITY JANE CHAPS COAL OIL COWPOKE DAVY CROCKETT DOCTOR DRESSMAKER FENCE GENERAL STORE GOLD NUGGET GUNSLINGER HATS HIRE HAND HORSES ICE HOUSE LASSO MARSHALL MINE SHAFT OUTLAWS PELTS PIGS PIONEERS POST OFFICE RANCH HAND REVOLVER RUSTLER SADDLER SALOON GIRL SCHOOLHOUSE SCOUTS SHOOTOUT SHOTGUN SPURS STIRRUP TOWN HALL TRADING POST TUMBLEWEED WAGON WANTED POSTER WHISKEY WILD BILL HICKOK

The hidden message is: ALWAYS DRINK UPSTREAM FROM THE HERD

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku

9x9 grid for Daily SuDoku with numbers 1-9 in some cells.

Yesterday's Solution

9x9 grid for Yesterday's Solution with numbers 1-9 in some cells.

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 2018



Tania Met, of Spain's Gardener's theatre rehearses her moves for the Rosita character during the Living Statues International Festival, in Bucharest, Romania. — AP



Musician Manasseh Mathiang poses for a portrait in the office of the art group AnaTaban, whose name means 'I am tired' in Arabic, in Juba, South Sudan. — Reuters



A girl sits outside a school whose wall has a mural by the art group AnaTaban, which means "I am tired" in Arabic.



Musician Single Dee (right) and producer Shako, members of the art group AnaTaban, whose name means "I am tired" in Arabic, work in a recording studio.



The landscape of Juba, the capital city of South Sudan is seen.

Armed with poetry and rap, South Sudan's young artists battle for peace

A group of artists and musicians in South Sudan is on a mission - to mobilize young people across the country through music, graffiti and poetry to help bring peace to the war-torn nation. In 2011, the streets of the capital Juba were full of revelers, celebrating the world's newest nation. But hope for the future has soured after more than four years of civil war, with about a third of the country's 12 million people forced from their homes by conflict. Arts movement AnaTaban, or "I am tired" in Arabic, is trying to address anger over failed promises and suppression of independent voices by advocating for peace and unity among young people through media they like - rap music, slam poetry, and YouTube videos.

"As South Sudanese we are branded to be violent people but we are being unconventional in a very intentional way," said poet Ayak Chol Deng Alak, 32, who helped set up AnaTaban in Juba in 2016. The group is now aiming to spread nationwide. "We have seen conventional activism failing. If it is for our country, we might as well get the information out. It doesn't really matter how, as long as we are not hurting anyone in the process," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Born in an Ethiopian refugee camp where treatment from an aid agency saved her life, Alak is now a doctor and published poet in South Sudan, but her campaigning has come with risks. Alak and other AnaTaban members say they have been interrogated, their cars confiscated, and some live apart from their families who have moved abroad for safety. While being interviewed by two Thomson Reuters Foundation journalists at her apartment in Juba, Alak was taken outside for questioning by a man who wanted to know who her guests were. South Sudan's government did not respond to requests for comment on its treatment of AnaTaban members. Previously the government has denied blocking anyone's freedom of speech.

Youth power

South Sudan plunged into conflict in 2013 after clashes between troops loyal to President Salva Kiir and his former deputy Riek Machar deteriorated into a military confrontation. Tens of thousands have died in fighting between the two sides. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has reported that more than 100 activists and journalists have been killed, arrested, detained, fired or censored since mid-2016, with newspapers closed, often by the government. UNMISS was only able to verify violations in government-controlled areas because insecurity

and movement restrictions hindered work in opposition-held territory. Talks in Ethiopia last month to revive a failed 2015 peace pact and end the war broke up without a deal. Manasseh Mathiang, a musician and another founding member of AnaTaban, said it was crucial to engage young people in the drive to forge a better country for the future.

Almost 90 percent of South Sudanese are under the age of 45, according to a 2008 census. But illiteracy tops 70 percent, UN figures show, and unemployment is rife. "The youth of South Sudan for so long have not had the opportunity or the platform to speak and to express themselves," Mathiang told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in the group's headquarters in Juba.

"We've got to let the youth know they have the power - they have power to speak and they have power to change the narrative ... We'd like to see AnaTaban in all the states in South

on YouTube in August 2016, featuring artists, slam poets and activists, is dedicated "to all those we have lost in this senseless war and to all those who are still here and are tired enough to make the changes we need". The group's social media campaigns are quickly shared, and it has branches in neighboring Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia.

Striking AnaTaban murals adorn the grey walls of streets and buildings in central Juba, quoting Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro and the late John Garang, revered as the father of the nation. In Kenya's capital Nairobi, another AnaTaban founder, Jon Pen de Ngong, meets regularly with South Sudanese activists to collaborate on political writings and poems. The former child soldier said he fled to Kenya after colleagues were abducted, poisoned and killed. He received a death threat - a dog's jawbone with a bullet lodged inside.

"We thought we had a country ... This not

“ We thought we had a country ... This not what we fought for ”



Ayak Chol Deng Alak, 32, a doctor and poet, poses for a portrait in front of a mural by the art group AnaTaban, whose name means 'I am tired' in Arabic, in Juba, South Sudan.



Actor Jacob Bul Bior, 29, poses for a portrait in front of a mural by the art group AnaTaban, whose name means "I am tired" in Arabic.

Sudan," he said. Peter Biar, chairman of the South Sudan Young Leaders Forum, based in Juba, said AnaTaban was one of a growing number of youth groups - both in rebel and government-controlled territory - striving for a better tomorrow. "The only change that is possible in this country is a non-violent change - and this is what we are going to attempt," said Biar, who works to bring together academics, church and youth leaders to advocate for peace and development.

Social media

Biar said AnaTaban has given hope to disillusioned young people in the capital through art and music. AnaTaban's first music video, posted

what we fought for," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. The exiles hope a peace agreement will be reached so that they can "go back and claim our rights as South Sudanese", said Jackline Sadrack of AnaTaban's Uganda chapter. Despite the failure to reach a peace deal so far, South Sudan's youth remain hopeful. "I have this opportunity through my music to play a role in speaking on behalf of my people and what we desire as a people. Most of my songs are about how I would want peace in my country," said Mathiang. — Reuters

Lifestyle | Feature



Ken Chan, the executive chef at the five-star hotel restaurant Le Palais in Taipei, demonstrating his cooking during an interview with AFP in Taipei. — AFP photos



Ken Chan at the five-star hotel restaurant Le Palais in Taipei, displaying two dishes during an interview with AFP in Taipei.



Ken Chan at the five-star hotel restaurant Le Palais in Taipei gesturing during an interview with AFP.

Dropout to Michelin stars: The rise of chef Chan in Taiwan

Ken Chan has come a long way since he started out wheeling a trolley in a dim sum restaurant, becoming the first chef in his adopted home of Taiwan to win three Michelin stars. Hong Kong-born Chan, 53, worked through tough apprenticeships back home before rising through the ranks on Taiwan's culinary scene over the past three decades to become executive chef at luxury five-star hotel restaurant Le Palais in Taipei.

Serving mainly Cantonese cuisine as well as Sichuan, Fuzhou and Taiwanese dishes, Le Palais became the first and only restaurant in Taiwan to receive three stars when Michelin launched its Taipei guide earlier this year, describing the food as "truly outstanding". Chan's menu is relatively affordable compared with three-star restaurants in the rest of the world, with dishes ranging from steamed prawn dumplings and baked barbecue meat buns, priced from Tw\$250 (\$8), to an eight-course set including lobster salad, bird's nest soup, braised abalone with goose foot and steamed tiger grouper at Tw\$6,980.

Taiwan's most-recognized chef, Andre Chiang, famously gave up the two Michelin stars attached to his eponymous Restaurant Andre in Singapore, closing it in February to focus on other projects, including his Taipei restaurant RAW. But Chan says he believes receiving the stars will boost the island's burgeoning foodie credentials. "It inspires everybody to aim higher and higher," he told AFP. Chan attributes his accolade to "luck", but it is also testament to perseverance. After dropping out of school in Hong Kong aged 12, Chan began working in a restaurant in the city, pushing a dim sum trolley around the tables from which customers would choose dishes.

He already had a love of cooking passed down from his mother and remembers how she would give him two Hong Kong dollars to buy ingredients in the market to feed the family, as she was working full-time to make ends meet. Having to carefully think how to spend the money to create the best meal has influenced his approach in the kitchen now, says Chan. "I told my staff 'You shouldn't just aim to finish the job but should do it well, as if you were cooking for your parents,'" he said.

A dying art?

Life in the Hong Kong restaurant business was far from glamorous. Chan was tasked with washing the underwear of a chef he worked under and recalls being hit on the head with a spatula when his "master" was in a bad mood, even being thrown into a river for making mistakes. "Back then if you wanted to learn something, you had to beg the master to teach you," he said. "I had to buy drinks and fruit to treat my masters so they would casually teach me one or two steps." Chan believes young people now are too pampered and unable to handle pressure. "I have to ask them to learn," he said.

With just HK\$270 (\$34) in his pocket, Chan began a new chapter in Taiwan 30 years ago at the age of 23, after his mother died and his girlfriend dumped him. His first job was as a chef in a vegetarian restaurant and he recalls feeling isolated because he only spoke Cantonese, the dominant language in Hong Kong, not Mandarin which is spoken in Taiwan. But he says a sense of pride made him stay and he began to build a reputation for his Cantonese cuisine. Chan worked up to becoming head

chef at another five-star hotel restaurant in Taipei, before taking the executive chef position at Le Palais in 2010.

At the time, the restaurant had only been open for a few months and Chan was despondent over the lack of customers on his first day. "I didn't go home that night and locked myself in the office to ponder over how to run the restaurant," he remembers. He came up with a new menu of 27 dishes and replaced around a third of the staff as part of a major overhaul. Chan worries that traditional skills in Cantonese and Taiwanese cooking will eventually be lost as the old masters age and young chefs struggle to create the same flavors. But for now, he says his own goal is to keep reinventing himself. "I don't see myself as a veteran chef," he told AFP. "My mentality is that I am like a child just learning to walk and I have to constantly learn new things." — AFP



Actors play two red beret soldiers celebrating the burning of a young child they had snatched from her mother on May 30, 2018, in Harare, in a scene from a play "1983 the Dark Years". — AFP photos



Actress Proficiency Cadder (left) plays holding her head distraught at the news of how she was conceived of rape.



Actress Proficiency Cadder (left) plays falling to her knees as a soldier approaches.

Bold Zimbabwean play recalls dark chapter of Mugabe era

A muscular man in military fatigues and a red beret stands holding a hunting rifle over a prone woman. The actress playing the helpless villager wakes up, letting out a piercing scream. "Finish them," shouts another soldier to gasps from the stunned audience as a summary execution is played out before their eyes. A new play, "1983: the Dark Years," is rekindling memories of one of Zimbabwe's most painful episodes: the "Gukurahundi" massacres, in which thousands of people were slaughtered at the height of the Mugabe era. That the play is being performed in Zimbabwe at all testifies to the free expression that has blossomed since former president Robert Mugabe resigned last November.

Since then, theatres have staged audacious productions that have both poked fun at officials past and present as well as seeking to shine a light on their alleged misdeeds. Previously such productions would have been harassed by the government and its supporters or banned outright. But the fact that a play about Gukurahundi—a term that means "the rains which wash away the chaff"—has been tolerated by officials is even more striking.

Mugabe's successor, President Emmerson Mnangagwa, is widely held to have been involved in the bloody campaign. The operations, supervised by Mnangagwa who was then the security minister, were intended to crush dissidents in the Midlands and Matabeleland provinces but spiralled into a series of civilian massacres. The 1982-87 crackdown was widely seen as an effort by then-prime minister Mugabe to vanquish his ally-turned-foe, the ethnic Ndebele liberation leader Joshua Nkomo. Mugabe always refused to apologize for the killings — 20,000 mostly Ndebele victims according to some estimates—by the army's now-disbanded North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade, describing it merely as "a moment of madness".

"Talking about this is trouble"

Past mentions of the violence, including a report into the killings by the Catholic church and an art installation, drew angry reactions and bans from the government. Mnangagwa in January insisted that Zimbabwe should look to the future, not the past, when asked about the killings during an interview at the World Economic Forum in Davos. "1983" begins with a female character played by 28-year-old actress Proficiency Cadder digging into her past after learning that she is the daughter of a soldier who raped her mother at the height of the violence. "Talking about this is trouble enough already my daughter," she is warned by her uncle who was there to witness the atrocities. "Forget about it."

He then described in graphic detail how the soldiers forced the mother of Cadder's character to kill her own baby. "You may never know your father unless and until he comes here to this village and says 'where are my children'," said the uncle. The play unusually blends the distressing narrative with elements of song, dance and even humor to recount the dark period of Zimbabwe's history. Written by Bhekumusa Moyo in 2011, the play was banned by the government the following year and was only unbanned following Mugabe's resignation.

"We are listening"

"There are so many children from Matabeleland who, up to today, they do not know their backgrounds. It affects their living," director Adrian Musa told AFP. "Many children from Matabeleland were affected by Gukurahundi—even now they are affected." Audience member Bester Moyo, who grew up in Matabeleland's largest city Bulawayo, said the play had brought back bitter memories of the suffering she endured along with her family. "We were so troubled during that time as a family that we fled to live in the bush in

our property was destroyed. We became destitute," she said.

"I was young but I still have the vivid memories... it is not enough to say I am sorry," Davies Guzha, a director of Harare's Theatre in the Park where the play was staged, said that Gukurahundi needed to be discussed openly. The Theatre in the Park was also responsible for staging "Operation Regasi", a comic play that mocked Mugabe's final months in power. "We believe we are doing the right thing. We believe that the discussion around Gukurahundi was long overdue," he said.



During one performance of "1983", Guzha introduced the audience to Sello Nare—a retired judge who will chair the government's recently-announced national peace and reconciliation commission that will investigate the Gukurahundi massacres. "We are listening. We have heard what has been said and all what the play is all about," said Nare. — AFP

An actor plays a red beret soldier snatching a baby from a pleading and desperate mother.

Van Gogh painting sells for over 7 million euros

A painting by a young Vincent Van Gogh was sold at an auction in Paris Monday for more than seven million euros (\$8.2 million), the Artcurial auction house said. "Raccommodeuses de filets dans les dunes" (Women mending nets in the fields) dates from 1882 and was bought by an American collector in a hot bidding battle that boosted the selling price far above the estimated value of between three to five million euros. "It's a world record for a Van Gogh landscape, in the Dutch period, sold at auction," Artcurial said.

"There are no more than two or three auctions of Van Gogh works in the world each year," the auction house

added. In France, Monday's event was the first auction of a painting by the Dutch artist in more than two decades. Van Gogh painted the work early in his career when he was 29 years old. "We already find all the characteristics of a Vincent painting, especially his treatment of landscape... a remarkable work, a milestone in the artist's career," said Bruno Jaubert, associate director of modern art at Artcurial. It was the only landscape Van Gogh did at the time, painted in the countryside near The Hague, Jaubert said.

The former owner was a European collector who had lent the work to the Van Gogh Museum in

Amsterdam for eight years until 2015. The last sale at a Paris auction of a Van Gogh painting was in the mid-1990s of his "Le Jardin au Auvers" (The Garden at Auvers) which went for \$10 million. — AFP

In this file photo the painting 'Raccommodeuses de filets dans les dunes' (Women Mending Nets in the Dunes) by late Dutch artist Vincent Van Gogh is presented at Artcurial auction house in Paris. — AFP



Lifestyle | Music & Movies

Harvey Weinstein set to plead not guilty in NY

Fallen movie mogul Harvey Weinstein was expected to plead not guilty yesterday to rape and sexual assault charges in New York, opening a legal battle for the #MeToo movement that dreams of seeing him behind bars. The 66-year-old Weinstein was charged with rape and another sex crime in New York late last month, nearly eight months after his career imploded in a blaze of accusations of sexual misconduct. Weinstein was due in a Manhattan court at 10 am (1400 GMT) for a formal reading of the charges: he has been indicted for allegedly forcing a woman to perform in descent act on him in 2004, and for allegedly raping another at a Manhattan hotel in 2013.

If convicted, that crime could put him in prison for as many as 25 years. Two women are named in this indictment. But nearly 100 have said since October they were harassed or sexually abused by Weinstein over several decades. That has turned the one-time toast of Hollywood into the catalyst of the MeToo movement. Salma Hayek, Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie are among more than two dozen actresses who say they were sexually harassed by the producer. A few, including Asia Argento and Rose McGowan,

said they were raped. The fall of Weinstein triggered a tsunami in US society as many women came forward with similar accusations against other powerful men in the entertainment world, the media and government.

New lawsuits

Benjamin Brafman, Weinstein's lawyer, is one of America's most celebrated criminal defense attorneys. His past clients include former IMF boss Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who escaped criminal prosecution for alleged sexual assault in 2011. No details about the identity of the two accusers were given by the prosecutor. Brafman said the rape complaint came from a woman who had a 10-year affair with Weinstein, but the information was not confirmed.

The accusation of forced fellatio comes from Lucia Evans, a marketing consultant who, in 2004, was an aspiring actress. She told her story in October to the magazine The New Yorker. Her story resembles many other reports of unwanted contact from stars such as Ashley Judd or Paltrow. But especially countless were young unknown or just emerging stars who hoped to see the revered producer make them Hollywood stars.

Evans tells how he spoke of a possible place in his show for aspiring models "Project Runway", before forcing her into doing indecent acts, and then went about the day as if nothing had happened. The prosecutor will still have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Weinstein committed illegal acts, and with these two women specifically.

No one, however, expects the lawsuits will be dropped, as was the case for Strauss-Kahn. Indeed, it is the same Brafman who defended the former IMF director against the same Manhattan prosecutor, Cyrus Vance. Last week three actresses filed a new lawsuit against Weinstein alleging sexual assault. They urged other victims to come forward and join the complaint. Melissa Thompson, one of the women filing the class action lawsuit, said she was sexually assaulted by Weinstein during a 2011 meeting to discuss a new marketing tool. Following public revelations last year about his predatory behavior, Thompson said she was referred to Brafman and another attorney at his firm, Alex Spiro.

"Thompson was led to believe that Brafman and Spiro were representing victims against Weinstein," said the law firm representing her,



Hagens Berman. "Deceptive tactics were used to entice her to turn over her visual and audio evidence of Weinstein's conduct (which she did)," it said. "Melissa did not learn that Brafman was actually then or would later be Weinstein's lead criminal defense attorney until after turning over the video as evidence." — AFP

Harvey Weinstein arrives for a court appearance yesterday in New York City. — AFP

Going 'Overboard': Hollywood's glut of gender-swap remakes

From the polarizing "Ghostbusters" remake to the controversy over female versions of James Bond and Doctor Who, Hollywood's proclivity for gender-swapped retreads is among its most enduring and contentious. The trend—seen as empowering or annoying, depending on who you ask—is getting fresh attention with "Ocean's 8" due for release on Friday, "Overboard" still in theaters and "What Men Want" coming out in January. The new "Overboard" swapped Goldie Hawn from the 1987 comedy for Eugenio Derbez and Kurt Russell for Anna Faris, and has grossed a healthy \$70 million worldwide on an estimated \$12 million budget.

But it was disliked by the vast majority of critics, according to online reviews collator Rotten Tomatoes, which dismissed it as a "remake that fails to clear the fairly low bar set by the original." There's nothing new in Hollywood, and gender-swapping has been popular since Howard Hawks cast Rosalind Russell for "His Girl Friday" (1940) in a part played by a man in the source movie, "The Front Page" (1931). A slew of female-led remakes followed—from "The Incredible Shrinking Woman" (1981) and "The Next Karate Kid" (1994) to "American Psycho II: All American Girl" (2002) but were largely seen as pale imitations.

"Ghostbusters" (2016) could well be studied in future film history classes for the bizarre backlash it received from the legion of "ghost-bros" who swore lifelong loyalty to the 1984 original. Much of the criticism was grounded in straightforward misogyny—with a certain kind of male moviegoer scandalized both by the presumption of a remake and by the very idea of women trying to be funny.



'Men are insecure'

With two months to go until its release, its trailer had become the ninth most-disliked YouTube video in history, with over one million users down-voting it into oblivion. Various entertainment media estimated the eventual losses for Sony and its partners at somewhere in the \$55-75 million region, despite the film garnering mainly positive reviews. The fact that these movies keep coming out despite the missteps is a sign of progress and a "minor miracle," according to Kelly Konda, of the We Minored in Film entertainment blog.

"This used to be a one-and-done ordeal... However, with 'Ghostbusters,' Hollywood took a big swing on a female-led project, and didn't overreact to its failure," he wrote. The premise of "What Women Want" (2000) — Mel Gibson as a marketing executive who is sud-

denly able to hear women's thoughts—lends itself more obviously to a gender-flipped remake than most.

Taraji P. Henson, who does the honors in "What Men Want" (2019), told AFP at the recent CinemaCon industry gathering in Las Vegas her role was an empowering statement for women, but also a learning experience. "You kind of just brush it off as 'men like sex, eating and farting.' I was like, 'How are they going to make this interesting?'" said the "Empire" and "Hidden Figures" star. "But then I read the script and I'm like, 'Wow, men are really insecure about their looks, just like women!' I think that's going to be great, for women to see that."

'Kickass ensemble of women'

Some Hollywood watchers have argued that

while female-flipping may seem progressive, in reality it militates against those really fighting pay inequality, harassment and other forms of sexism. "Even though I can get excited for a movie like 'Ocean's 8'... at the end of the day it still seems to signify that women's movies still need some sort of male appeal to get made," said Hazel Cills of female-focused pop culture website Jezebel. "A gender-swapped movie implies that women aren't important enough to get their own, original stories, and thus must piggy-back on franchises helmed by men that have already proven to be successful."

It was an issue that came up when Sandra Bullock, Cate Blanchett and the rest of the "Ocean's 8" cast hosted a news conference at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art earlier this month. Bullock admitted that initially she "honestly didn't think it would work, or get made" while Blanchett agreed that, a few short years ago, such a project would have been out of the question. Gary Ross ("Seabiscuit," "The Hunger Games") directed while Steven Soderbergh, who made the male versions starring George Clooney, Brad Pitt and Matt Damon, serves as a producer.

"The thing that stuck with me about 'Hunger Games' was the impact it had on girls seeing a protagonist like that, that they could relate to," Ross said. "I was with a friend one night and we were talking about this, and I realized that there had never been this kind of ensemble. There had been a lot of male versions of this. There had never been this kickass ensemble of women coming together like this." — AFP



In this file photo US filmmaker Woody Allen attends the 'Wonder Wheel' screening at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. — AFP

'I should be the poster boy of #MeToo': Woody Allen

American filmmaker Woody Allen has backed the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and said he would have been a "poster boy" for the cause if he hadn't been unfairly maligned. "It is a good thing they are exposing them," Allen told Argentina's Canal 13 television network. The publication of bombshell articles about movie mogul Harvey Weinstein in October has triggered a watershed moment that has since felled the careers of dozens of powerful men across a variety of industries.

"I should be the poster boy of the MeToo movement. I've worked in movies for 50 years, I've worked with hundreds of actresses, and not a single one has ever suggested any kind of impropriety at all," he continued, adding that the women working in production in his films had all been paid the same as men. The 82-year-old actor and director said that he was frustrated he was being bracketed with abusers exposed by the movement over allegations he molested his adoptive daughter, Dylan Farrow, in 1992 when she was seven years old. He was cleared of the charges, first leveled by his then-wife Mia Farrow, after two separate months-long investigations.

"People who have been accused by 20 women, 50 women, 100 women of abuse and abuse and abuse, and I—who was only accused by one woman in a child custody case, which was looked at and proven to be untrue—I get lumped in with these people," Allen said. "This is just so crazy. This is something that has been thoroughly looked at 25 years ago by all the authorities, and everybody came to the conclusion that it was untrue. And that was the end, and I've gone on with my life. "And now, for it to come back now, it's a terrible thing to accuse a person of. I'm a man with a family and my own children. So of course it's upsetting."

The allegations resurfaced in the wake of the #MeToo movement, leading a string of actors Allen has worked with to distance themselves from him. Moses Farrow, the adopted son of Mia Farrow and Woody Allen, released a lengthy personal essay last month, disputing the story and accusing his mother of abuse. — AFP



'Solo' running on empty but still top at North American theaters

"Solo: A Star Wars Story" clung to the top spot in North American theaters this weekend but again fell below expectations, taking in \$29.4 million, just over a third its opening-weekend receipts, said box office tracker Exhibitor Relations. That left the movie well behind two recent predecessors in the popular sci-fi franchise: 2016's "Rogue One" made \$64 million in its second weekend while last year's "The Last Jedi" did even better, at \$72 million.

Some film analysts blame "Star Wars" fatigue. Even by the standards of today's sequel/prequel-heavy Hollywood, the franchise from Disney-owned Lucasfilm has been prolific. Starring Alden Ehrenreich as a younger version of the swashbuckling space pilot, "Solo" has amassed a cumulative global total of \$264 million, pushing it into 15th place for 2018. A strong second with \$23.2 million was Fox's "Deadpool 2," the 11th installment in the X-Men series, starring Ryan Reynolds as the fast-talking "Merc with the Mouth."

In third spot was a new release,

"Adrift" from STX Films, at \$11.6 million. The movie stars Shailene Woodley and Sam Claflin in the true-life story of a young couple whose sailboat is slammed by a hurricane in mid-ocean, leaving Claflin badly injured, the boat in ruins and Woodley having to find the way back without navigation or communication tools. In its sixth week out, Marvel's "Avengers: Infinity War" took \$10.6 million for fourth place.

The film, starring Robert Downey Jr., Benedict Cumberbatch and Scarlett Johansson, has grossed \$643 million domestically and is the fourth biggest global release of all time, with \$1.97 billion. In fifth place domestically was Paramount's rom-com "Book Club," which made \$7 million. It stars Jane Fonda, Diane Keaton, Candice Bergen and Mary Steenburgen as aging friends whose decision to read the steamy "Fifty Shades" trilogy ends up stimulating more than just their intellects. — AFP

Superstar Gergiev makes no apologies for singing Putin's praises

Russia has two tsars, one in the Kremlin and the other who sits equally imperiously on the throne of the Mariinsky theatre in St Petersburg as the country's biggest classical music star. The globetrotting conductor Valery Gergiev is, as it happens, a great admirer of his opposite number, Russian President Vladimir Putin. Without him, Russia might have shared "the fate of Syria," he told AFP. "Twenty years ago Russia was at a low ebb and I am not saying that Putin, on his own, has given it back its international importance, but I'm afraid that's the case," he added.

Gergiev—who sees Putin five or six times a year—has been fiercely loyal to the Russian leader, supporting his annexation of Crimea, giving Pussy Riot short shift and flying to Syria for a concert in the ruins of Palmyra. He has also performed in the breakaway republic of South Ossetia—which is only recognized by Moscow. And this month Gergiev will again be center stage with Putin—who coasted to another electoral victory in March—as Russia hosts the World Cup finals.

The president's huge popularity "is something the western world has difficulty understanding", Gergiev said, but to him and many other Russian citizens the reason is clear—he has guaranteed stability and restored Russia's pride. The vast country, he argued, does not want to be plunged back into the chaos that followed the fall of the Soviet Union. "We certainly don't want the fate of Syria, Iraq or Libya," he said. "One thousand times no to that."

World Cup concert

Gergiev will conduct a star-studded gala concert in Moscow's Red Square with the cream of Russian talent and French-Italian tenor Roberto Alagna the night before the World Cup kicks off on June 14. For his part, Putin has pumped 21.6 billion rubles (\$700 million) into a new opera house at the Mariinsky and praised Gergiev as "one of the outstanding musicians of our time", lavishing him with a Hero of Labor medal after revering the Soviet honor.

Even those in the West who have attacked Gergiev for his "collusion with a tyrant", do not deny his talent nor his drive. "Gergiev is a great conductor," said Peter Tatchell, the British rights activist who once gatecrashed an opening night in London to protest at Russian laws against "gay

propaganda". Gergiev hit back that he is not homophobic, saying "in all my work I have upheld equal rights for all people". Hugely charismatic on the podium, even at 65 the conductor clocks up an average of 275 concerts a year. "I took eight days off in January. If I get two weeks in August it will be great," Gergiev told AFP during a stopover in Paris, where he will give three concerts in the autumn. He said he draws strength from music and his passion from his roots in the Caucasus.



In this file photo Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) shakes hands with Mariinsky Theatre's Artistic Director, Valery Gergiev, during an awarding ceremony at the Kremlin in Moscow. — AFP

Hyperactive

Having lost his father at the age of 14, he left his native North Ossetia at 18 for St Petersburg. "My mother gave me the force to go that bit further," he said. But as well as winning him a global following, Gergiev's hyperactivity has also drawn brickbats. After eight years at the head of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, The Guardian accused him of spreading "his considerable talent far too thinly, so that routine and sometimes under-prepared performances have been far too frequent." Similar criticism has followed him to Germany where he now leads the Munich Philharmonic. "I have been hearing that criticism for 20 years and that has not stopped me leading great western orchestras," he replied, batting it away as adroitly as he does attacks on his politics. — AFP



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S GROUP KUWAIT MARKS 30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

By Faten Omar

This year, the International Women's Group Kuwait (IWG), celebrates its 30-year anniversary - serving the international women community in Kuwait and bringing them together with their Kuwaiti peers. On this occasion, IWG member Narjes Al-Shatti spoke to Kuwait Times about the background and the history of IWG. "IWG Kuwait chapter is a branch of the Denmark-based International Women's Group, which has branches worldwide. All the groups do organize similar programs and activities," she said.

The IWG was founded in the 19th century. "The IWG initiative started when the Queen of Denmark hosted the ambassadors' spouses to introduce them to the culture of her country. She organized social, entertainment and cultural activities so that members can talk about their respective countries to the other members," Shatti explained.

In 1988, the wife of Danish ambassador to Kuwait along with Tula Naqi, wife of one of Kuwait's highly regarded merchants and Layla Rajab, wife of the son of the late Tareq Rajab who founded the first museum of Islamic arts in Kuwait inaugurated IWG-Kuwait. Together, they started their activities by offering support through social and cultural events. The group's goal is to be a part of the greater community while learning and exploring other cultures. The group is a non-political, non-religious, non-commercial and open to all nationalities. IWG regularly organize activi-

ties presented by the diplomats' wives where they showcase their home countries.

Shatti said that she joined IWG in 1993 after the British ambassador's wife at the time invited her to join in recognition of her efforts in social outreach. "I was nominated by Tula Naqi to replace her as the Public Relations coordinator for IWG. I have been serving as IWG board member since then - representing my country Kuwait. I have learnt so much since I joined IWG," she said.

"I learned how to deal with diplomats and I have become aware of many cultural issues I wasn't familiar with before. We are always in contact with the ambassadors and other top dignitaries in the society. The Queen of Denmark who founded the group, said that this group is for those who 'walk the red carpet,'" Shatti added.

After 1993, IWG expanded the group so that diplomats' wives can nominate members of their community to join the group under their sponsorship and to represent their countries in events when the wives are absent. "IWG started with less than 50 members and now we have over 150 members," she said, adding that IWG's future plan is to establish a permanent location for the group to practice their activities freely.

When asked what she wishes for IWG, Shatti said "After 30 years of serving Kuwait tirelessly, I believe IWG has gone far beyond its original role as a mere social and recreational organization for women of the foreign diplomats in Kuwait. It has become a platform of meaningful cultural and social exchange that has quietly enriched Kuwait's social



scene, while also promoting Kuwait's image and celebrating everything that Kuwaitis take pride in. Therefore, I believe that it is about time that the Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs extends more of its support by taking the initiative to take IWG under its auspices, so that IWG can continue doing what it does best while also adapting to challenges and changes of the future."



Classifieds

Wednesday, June 6, 2018

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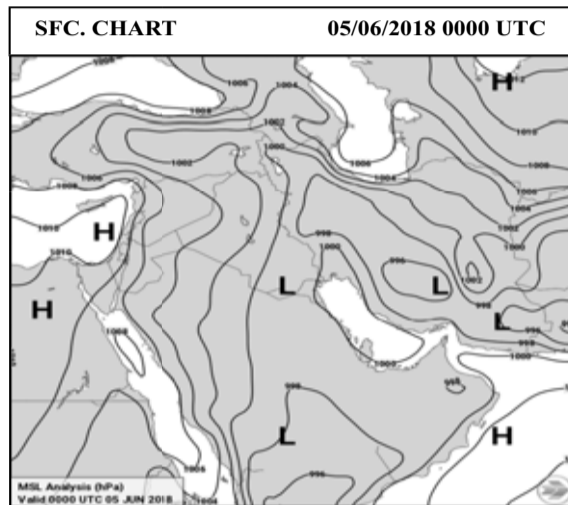
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate freshening at times north easterly wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain

BY NIGHT: Partly cloudy and with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 10 - 35 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
-----------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	33 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	44 °C	32 °C
ABDALY	47 °C	30 °C
BUBYAN	00 °C	00 °C
JAHRA	47 °C	34 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	42 °C	31 °C
SALMIYAH	36 °C	31 °C
AHMADI	38 °C	32 °C
NUWASIB	41 °C	33 °C
WAFRA	45 °C	34 °C
SALMY	46 °C	33 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	06/06	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	46 °C	33 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	06/07	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	49 °C	33 °C	N-NW	15 - 40 km/h
Friday	06/08	Very hot causing rising dust	49 °C	34 °C	N-NW	20 - 45 km/h
Saturday	06/09	Dusty	48 °C	34 °C	NW	25 - 55 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:14
Sunrise	04:48
Zuhr	11:46
Asr	15:21
Sunset	18:45
Isha	20:16

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	43 °C
MIN. Temp.	28 °C
MAX. RH	48 %
MIN. RH	15 %
MAX. Wind	SE 39 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
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsia	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
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Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	a22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 6/6/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 6/6/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	MSC	502	Alexandria	00:10
KAC	102	London	00:50	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
JZR	267	Beirut	01:25	MSC	406	Sohag	01:05
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	JZR	528	Asyut	01:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	417	Manila	01:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	THY	773	Istanbul	01:45
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	363	Colombo	01:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:25	JZR	502	Luxor	01:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	677	Dubai	02:00
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	MSR	619	Alexandria	02:35
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:45
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR	142	Doha	03:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	PGT	831	Istanbul	03:25
JZR	1539	Cairo	03:40	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
KAC	796	Madinah	03:45	RBG	216	Sohag	03:45
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
PAL	668	Manila	05:00	JAI	571	Mumbai	05:05
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	103	London	05:45
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	702	Taif	06:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	JZR	1770	Jeddah	06:35
BAW	157	London	06:10	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	RJA	649	Amman	07:00
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	KAC	167	Paris	07:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	PAL	669	Manila	07:40
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	BAW	156	London	08:20
WAN	342	Sohag	07:30	KAC	165	Rome	08:25
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	KAC	511	Mashhad	08:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	KAC	117	SNN/New York	09:05
JZR	529	Asyut	08:10	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	521	Al Najaf	09:30
IRC	6552	ABD	08:50	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	IRC	6553	ABD	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	JZR	535	Cairo	09:45
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	KAC	101	London	10:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:10
JZR	703	Taif	11:00	JZR	750	Madinah	10:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
KIS	6032	Mashhad	12:00	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
JZR	1771	Jeddah	12:05	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
WAN	134	Doha	12:20	IRM	1189	Mashhad	11:10
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	JZR	554	Alexandria	11:20
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20
CLX	792	Luxembourg	12:45	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
KAC	522	Al Najaf	13:00	KUG	080	Al Najaf	12:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	KIS	6033	Mashhad	13:00
				IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00

News

Qatar 'stronger' despite bitter diplomatic rift

DOHA: On the first anniversary of a bitter Gulf diplomatic rift, Qatar's foreign minister yesterday declared his country stronger than ever and said it was open to dialogue with its regional rivals. Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani also rebuked Qatar's foes for "imaginary victories" against the small Gulf state, the target of a Saudi-led boycott. "One year on and Qatar and its people are stronger," Al-Thani, one of the most prominent voices in the region's worst diplomatic crisis for years, wrote on Twitter.

"(There's) a lot of talk about imaginary victories and isolating Qatar, but after one year, the reality proved the opposite as Qatar emerged as an international partner that can be trusted." On June 5, 2017, an alliance of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt abruptly severed ties with Doha, accusing it of supporting terrorism and

Iran. Qatar soon found its only land border closed by Saudi Arabia, its state-owned airline barred from using neighbors' airspace, and residents expelled from the quartet's countries.

Despite hopes that the rancorous rift between the former allies—which include some of the richest countries on earth—would be resolved quickly, the crisis has endured. Qatar claims the dispute is an attack on its sovereignty and punishment for pursuing an independent foreign policy. Diplomatic efforts led by Kuwait and the United States have so far stalled. Al-Thani said the "door is still open for dialogue" between the Gulf rivals. However, he also told Qatar state-funded broadcaster Al Jazeera yesterday that Doha would continue with its purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense missile system. Saudi leaders have asked French President

Emmanuel Macron intervene to prevent the deal going ahead, raising fears of military action in the dispute.

'Smear campaign'

Despite the impact of the crisis, many in Qatar view the past year's events as a victory for Doha. Qatari papers were jubilant yesterday, with headlines such as "Triumphant Qatar stays United" and "Qatar shines as smear campaign against it fails". Taxi companies offered free rides to customers to mark the anniversary and some in Qatar have even called for June 5 to be made a national holiday.

Qatar's National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) released a report on the eve of the anniversary claiming more than 4,000 human rights abuses had been committed against Qataris by the alliance over the past

year. Qataris have been exposed to arbitrary arrest and routinely denied freedom of movement, according to the report by the government-appointed body detailing alleged abuses including one case of forced disappearance. "From the beginning, all the blockading countries have tried to use the people to achieve their political goals," NHRC chairman Ali bin Smaikh Al-Marri said.

There was no immediate reaction from the Saudi-led bloc. In August, Saudi Arabia will welcome millions of Muslim faithful for the hajj pilgrimage to Makkah, the holiest city in Islam. The Saudi government yesterday confirmed Qataris wishing to undertake the umrah pilgrimage to Makkah were welcome, but accused the Qatari authorities of a "negative attitude". The umrah is a lesser pilgrimage that takes place outside of hajj. — AFP

Bad air day: India city chokes on world's worst pollution

KANPUR: Soot turned the white handkerchief around Abhash Kumar Sharma's face to black as the police officer tried to direct gridlocked traffic in the Indian city with the world's dirtiest air. It was all he had to ward off the pollution blamed for filling Kanpur's hospital beds with growing numbers of chronic lung and cancer cases. "It is the same story for everyone who spends such long hours out in this city," said Sharma, who does not get a mask for his duties. "The pollution gets into your eyes and it often stings."

The city of three million people has been smarting since a World Health Organization (WHO) report last month put it at the head of 14 Indian cities in the world's top 15 with the dirtiest air. The pain has building up for much longer, but as the world marks Environment Day, the fallout has reached crisis point for many in Kanpur. Sunil Dahiya, senior campaigner with Greenpeace India, said "the models available to us make it certain that hundreds of thousands of people are dying in India each year because of air pollution". A senior doctor at the Murari Lal Chest Hospital, Anand Kumar, said the number of patients has jumped from about 40,000 in 2015 to 64,000 last year.

'Where are the trees?'

"More than 50 percent of these patients, maybe more, come with breathing-related issues," the doctor told AFP. "Even the severity is worsening. Many who earlier

recovered in a day or two now need days and much stronger medication to get better." The number of chronic pulmonary disease and lung cancer cases is rising among non-smokers, particularly women, he added. "There is no reason for it (other) than primarily atmospheric pollution." Children under five are also suffering more, he added.

In one overcrowded ward, 74-year-old Ram Lakhan, who spends long periods in hospital barely able to breathe, blamed his suffering on cars. "Where are the trees now? We only have vehicles, pollution and traffic jams. "With all the greenery gone, we are only breathing what is available—pollution," he said. "I've never had it this bad before. I only used to feel breathlessness and discomfort in bad winters, when there was smog. But it has been hard even in summers for the last two or three years," he added.

In the crippling traffic, it took an hour to drive the seven kilometers from the hospital to the Uttar Pradesh state pollution control office where chief officer Kuldeep Misra also took aim at the 1.15 million vehicles on city roads. "This is an industrial city but vehicles here pollute more than industry," he said. Misra was sceptical about Kanpur being the world's dirtiest city as the UN report was based on "old data". "The report caused ripples," he acknowledged. "But we're not sure about the tag."

'No magic wand'

The WHO report was based on 2016 Indian data on the number of particles under 2.5 micrometers—the smallest and most dangerous. It said Kanpur had an average PM2.5 concentration of 173 micrograms per cubic meter—about seven times the normal safe level. Misra believes Kanpur's water pollution is worse than the air because of its huge leather industry and tanneries. The tanneries are often blamed for polluting the revered Ganges river, which passes through the city. Misra said the authorities planned to take action, but it would take time. "There is no magic wand," he added.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt all cut ties with Qatar a year ago, accusing the country of links to Sunni Islamist extremists and supporting Shiite Iran. Iran is the key regional ally of Lebanon's Hezbollah, and Saudi Arabia's arch nemesis. "Bishara plays a key role in Qatar's approach to the region and the world through media and research," said Theodore Karasik of the Gulf State Analytics research group. "His role is indisputable," Karasik said. "Given the harsh intra-Gulf fight, and the likelihood of a permanent cleavage, the Palestinian intellectual is likely to continue to find safety in Doha."

On social media and regional TV broadcasts considered close to Saudi Arabia and its allies, Bishara has been slammed as "Doha's Rasputin", a Mossad agent and the "godfather of terrorism". "What has been written about Bishara in the Gulf media has been widely exaggerated," said Andreas Krieg, a defense expert at King's College London who has consulted for the Qatari government. "He is a Christian Palestinian who used to have an Israeli passport. He once was a socialist but has changed his political views over time," Krieg said. "To call him a godfather of terrorism makes no sense."

Continuing controversy

Bishara was a controversial figure long before his involvement into Qatari politics. He resigned from the Knesset in 2007, amid investigations into his alleged role alongside Hezbollah in the war with Israel the year before. He was also stripped of parliamentary

immunity over what authorities said were anti-Israeli comments and ties to Syria. His books are banned in Saudi Arabia and in 2014 Riyadh demanded Qatar shut down the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, a high-profile, Doha-based think tank headed by Bishara. "Since the UAE and Saudi view any form of dissidence and opposition as a threat to the state, the liberal narratives of Bishara's centre and media outlets run counter to policies in Abu Dhabi and Riyadh promoting the myth of authoritarian stability," said Krieg. Other critics say the mustachioed politician has only his personal interests at heart. And no matter the outcome of the Gulf crisis, analysts say he will likely survive politically. "If Qatar changes path then, of course, Bishara will run somewhere else," said Karasik. — AFP

in penitence. These are the ones who 'truly' believe and whose hearts grow calm at the remembrance of Allah. Most assuredly, it is by the remembrance of Allah that hearts grow calm." (Ar-Raad 13: 27 - 28)

The tongue is a blessing that if used wisely, will benefit us both here on earth and in the Hereafter. Abdullah bin Busr (RA) narrated that a man approached Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and said, "O Messenger of Allah, indeed, the legislated optional acts of worship in Islam are too much for me. So inform me of something to adhere to. He said, "Let not your tongue cease being moist with the mentioning and remembrance of Allah." (Al-Albani rated it as Saheeh in Saheeh At-Targheeb # 1, 491.)

Finally, I would like to share with you an intriguing piece of information that I heard from a nutritionist. He said, "99 percent of our food choices are influenced by the tongue." In other words, if your taste buds like the food, you will go ahead and eat it without considering whether it is nutritious or not. As such, you may end up contracting some preventable diseases due to your dietary habits. Therefore, not only is your tongue a double-edged sword in religious affairs, the same applies also to your mundane affairs. So, if you are wise, control your tongue and don't let it control you. This Ramadan, consult a nutritionist to advise you on a healthy diet.

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 or visit www.tiescenter.net.



KANPUR: Smoke rises from a burning field near the industrial area in the Indian city of Kanpur. The city of three million people has been smarting since a World Health Organization (WHO) report last month put Kanpur at the head of 14 Indian cities in the world's top 15 with the dirtiest air. — AFP

Time may not be on the side of 50-year-old Shiv Kumari, a patient at the overcrowded chest hospital who wears an oxygen mask to help her breathe. "Pollution, dust or smoke makes me breathless. I feel that I am choking. I cough and feel as if something sharp is pinching my throat," she told AFP. "It has become too difficult to live in this kind of an atmos-

phere. Look at this machine," she said, pointing to her automatic breathing aid that cost more than \$1,500. "How can a poor person afford something like this, especially when it's so important for survival in this pollution?" "The government should do something to fix this," she added before readjusting her mask as she started feeling breathless again. — AFP

Azmi Bishara: From Knesset black sheep to the Qatar insider

DUBAI: A controversial Arab Israeli former legislator who fled his homeland over a decade ago, Azmi Bishara is now among the key diplomatic players in the crisis that estranges Qatar from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf peers. Once a Knesset black sheep over his pro-Palestinian stance, Bishara left Israel in 2007, accused of advising Lebanese Shiite militia Hezbollah, a charge he denied.

'Qatar's Rasputin'

A former Marxist and founder of Balad, an Arab Israeli political party, Bishara has since reinvented himself as an Arab public intellectual, close to Qatar's circles of power. He is an Israeli Arab, defined as descendants of Palestinians who remained on their land when Israel was created in 1948. They account for around 17.5 percent of Israel's population today. Bishara is a major personality in Qatari media and has a Twitter following of more than 1.4 million. Critics of the 61-year-old Christian from Nazareth accuse him of permanently shifting alliances—politics that have seen him labeled a supporter of "terrorism", along with his host Qatar.



Azmi Bishara

Saudi intercepts....

Continued from Page 1

Riyadh accuses its regional rival Tehran of supplying the Houthis with ballistic missiles, a charge Iran denies. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other allies

intervened in Yemen in 2015 to push back the rebels and restore the internationally-recognized government to power after the Houthis ousted it from swathes of the country including the capital Sanaa. Nearly 10,000 people have been killed since the alliance launched its intervention in Yemen in March 2015, contributing to what the UN has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis. — AFP

Iran to boost uranium enrichment...

Continued from Page 1

working in the Islamic republic by November. The remaining parties—Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia—have vowed to stay in the accord but many of their companies have already started to wind down Iranian operations. On Monday, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned the Europeans that "Iran will never tolerate both suffering from sanctions and nuclear restrictions" and called for preparations to speed up uranium enrichment.

Iran insists its nuclear program is for civilian uses only, but opponents in the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia accuse it of seeking to build an atomic bomb. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reacted swiftly to Salehi's announcement, charging that the Islamic republic's aim was "unlimited enrichment of uranium to create an arsenal of nuclear bombs" to destroy his country. Under the 2015 agreement, Iran is permitted to enrich

uranium to 3.67 percent. It has previously stated it could "within days" return to enrichment of 20 percent—still within the limits of civilian use but allowing for a much quicker jump to military-grade levels of 80-90 percent.

Keen to preserve the nuclear deal—with which Iran has so far been fully compliant according to international inspectors—European governments are working on measures to protect their businesses from US sanctions. But Iran had already been denied much of the economic benefits it had hoped for from the deal, thanks to the continued reluctance of international banks to facilitate trade and a raft of non-nuclear US sanctions that were never lifted.

With the US pulling out of the deal entirely, several large firms have said it will be impossible to continue operating in Iran except in the unlikely scenario that they win bulletproof exemptions from Washington. France's PSA, which manufactures Peugeot and Citroen cars, on Monday became the latest to announce its plans to pull out of Iran, where it sold nearly 445,000 cars last year. French energy giant Total is also preparing its departure from a \$4.8-billion gas project in Iran, with its CEO saying last week that the chances of a US exemption were "very slim". — AFP

Guard your tongue (2)...

Continued from Page 1

forgive so-and-so.' At this, Allah - the Almighty - said, "Who is he that swears by Me that I will not forgive so-and-so? Verily, I have forgiven so-and-so and have rendered your good deeds null and void." (Muslim # 2, 621)

So, never use your tongue to curse people, judge them, and slander them - or commit any sins of the tongue. Allah (SWT) is the Only One who can judge us. On another hand, avoid entertaining people with lies: making yourselves clowns, telling lies being driven by the urge of making people laugh. This is very dangerous. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned us of the evil consequences of that, especially if we die before we repent. He said what can be translated as: "Woe to him who tells lies when speaking to people in order to make them laugh! Woe to him, woe to him!" (Al-Albani rated it as Hasan. Refer to Saheeh At-Tirmidhi # 2, 315 - among others.)

Remember Allah (SWT) and mention Him constantly: Whenever you have free time, instead of gossiping, backbiting, and slandering people, praise and remember Allah (SWT). It is very meritorious and rewarding to remember and mention Allah (SWT) constantly, especially during this auspicious month of Ramadan. Your heart will grow calm by mentioning and remembering Allah (SWT).

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as: "Still those who disbelieve say, 'If only a sign would be sent down to him from his Lord, then we would believe him!' Say, "Indeed, Allah leaves to stray whomever He so wills. Yet He guides to Himself whoever turns to Him

Death toll from Tunisia migrant...

Continued from Page 1

The IOM said 68 people had been rescued after the vessel sank - 60 Tunisians, two Moroccans, one Libyan, one Malian, one Cameroonian national and three Ivorians. It said 1,910 Tunisian migrants reached Italy between Jan. 1 and April 30, including 39 women and

307 minors, 293 of whom were unaccompanied. Security officials said the boat was packed with about 180 migrants, including 80 from other countries in Africa. Survivors said the captain had abandoned the boat after it started sinking to escape arrest by the coastguard. Unemployed Tunisians and other Africans have often tried to cross in makeshift boats from Tunisia to Sicily in southern Italy. The North African country's economy is in crisis since the toppling of autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali in 2011 threw Tunisia into turmoil with unemployment and inflation soaring. Yesterday, new Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte promised a crackdown on immigration. — Reuters

Sports

Detroit Tigers lose 7-4 to New York Yankees in Game one of doubleheader

McCutchen and Crawford hit back-to-back home runs

DETROIT: Aaron Judge endured a historically bad day, but the New York Yankees' results Monday were only half bad. The Yankees split a doubleheader in Detroit, taking the opener from the Tigers 7-4 before falling 4-2 in the nightcap. Judge struck out eight times overall—a major league record for a doubleheader. He fanned five times in the second game and went 0-for-9 during the twinbill. In the first game, New York's Austin Romine hit a three-run homer during a sixth-run fourth. Luis Severino (9-1) limited the Tigers to two runs (one earned) on four hits while striking out 10 and walking none in eight innings. Aroldis Chapman got the last out for his 14th save. In the second game, Leonys Martin reached base three times and scored twice, Victor Martinez had two hits and an RBI and James McCann scored and knocked in a run for the Tigers. New York had its five-game winning streak snapped.



Jeffrey Marte had four hits and a home run

combined for five innings of one-run ball. Pierce Johnson (3-2) got the win after going two shutout innings, striking out two.

PADRES 11, BRAVES 4

San Diego pounded out nine extra-base hits, including four solo homers, to defeat visiting Atlanta. Eric Hosmer, Cory Spangenberg and Raffy Lopez homered in the first four innings to give the Padres a 3-2 lead. San Diego exploded for seven runs in the fifth against Atlanta starter Julio Teheran (4-4) and reliever Luiz Gohara to break the game open. Rookie Franmil Reyes hit his fifth homer in a span of 10 games for the Padres' final run in the sixth.

ANGELS 9, ROYALS 6

Jeffrey Marte had four hits, including a home run, and Mike Trout and Justin Upton each had three hits to lead Los Angeles over visiting Kansas City. The Angels rallied from down 5-2 in the fifth inning to win for the third time in four games. The Angels scored once in the fifth and three times in the sixth before Trout's RBI single in the eighth put the Angels ahead for good. Upton and Albert Pujols added RBI singles in the eighth, all three runs charged to Royals reliever Tim Hill (1-2). Cam Bedrosian (2-1), the fourth of five Angels relievers, picked up the win. Blake Parker pitched the ninth and earned his fourth save. — Reuters

GIANTS 10, DIAMONDBACKS 3

Andrew McCutchen and Brandon Crawford hit back-to-back home runs to ignite a seven-run fourth inning, sending San Francisco to a victory over visiting Arizona. Pablo Sandoval and Nick Hundley also homered for the Giants, who won their fifth straight while snapping the Diamondbacks' winning streak at three. After Derek Holland lasted only four innings, four Giants relievers



DETROIT: Brett Gardner #11 of the New York Yankees singles to drive in Clint Fraxier as catcher James McCann #34 of the Detroit Tigers works behind the plate during the second inning of game two of a doubleheader at Comerica Park on Monday in Detroit. — AFP

Greatness named 2018 Kuwait Youth Basketball champions

KUWAIT: After an exciting and competitive last 2 weeks, the second annual Kuwait Youth Basketball Tournament held at Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), came to an end last Sunday by announcing "Greatness" as the champion winning the final game 70-61 over "Elite Squad".

"Elite Squad" led the first and second quarters with 16 - 21 and 26 - 34 respectively but "Greatness" reduced the gap in the third quarter and ended the quarter leading by 4 points (44 - 40). Despite the many attempts by "Elite Squad" in the fourth quarter to end the game to their favor, "Greatness" retained their lead and ended the game 70 - 61 and were announced the champion of the second round of the Kuwait Youth Basketball Tournament. Youssef Al-Failakawi was the top scorer for the winning team and the game with 28 points while Imran Nzairwas the top scorer for "Elite Squad" with 19 points.

An awards ceremony followed the final game and Najib Zantout, Head of the organizing committee, handed over the awards to the teams. The winning team received the trophy, KD 500 prize in addition to the first-place medals, while "Elite Squad" players received second place medals. Hamad Adnan, was awarded top scorer of the tournament scoring 139 points and received prizes from the main sponsor, "Hardee's".

The Kuwait Youth Basketball Tournament is an annual event launched in 2017 to encourage the youth to practice sports in a competitive atmosphere during the holy month of Ramadan. The tournament targets the youth under the age of 21 years with the possibility of joining two



Winning team receiving trophy.

players over this age, which adds expertise to the participating teams. This year's tournament started on Thursday 24th of May 2018 with the participation of eight teams including a number of professional players in two groups.

Zantout said: "We are very pleased with the spirit and the level of the teams participating in the tournament this year. The results of most games were close and winners were only announced towards last minutes."

"On behalf of the organizing committee, I would like to thank Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) for their fruitful cooperation in hosting this year's event and I would also like to thank all our sponsors, especially the main supporter "Hardee's" and the participating sponsors, "Honda Alghanim", "The Sultan Center" and others."



Hamad Adnan receiving best scorer award.

Serena faces Wimbledon fight as Paris party falls flat

PARIS: Serena Williams admits her dream of an eighth Wimbledon title could either be saved or shattered in a Paris doctor's office this week. The 36-year-old American stunned the French Open on Monday by withdrawing from her eagerly-anticipated last-16 grudge match with bitter rival Maria Sharapova just minutes before the two icons of the women's game were due to clash on Court Philippe Chatrier.

A pectoral muscle injury had slammed the brakes on the ruthless Williams's serving arm so she decided not to take up the opportunity to extend her 14-year, 18-match win streak over the Russian. "So I'm going to get an MRI tomorrow (Tuesday). I'm going to stay here and see some of the doctors, see as many specialists as I can," said the 23-time Grand Slam title winner.

"And I won't know that (her Wimbledon status) until I get those results." In Paris, Williams was playing her first Grand Slam since winning the 2017 Australian Open when she was two months pregnant and first since she gave birth to daughter Olympia in September.

However, in the end, her Paris schedule caught

up with her. Since Tuesday last week, she had played six matches in six days, with her singles duties alternating with doubles alongside sister Venus. That compared to just four matches in Indian Wells and Miami this year since her 2017 Australian Open win. "I have made every sacrifice that I could. So it's extremely disappointing," she added. "But also, I made a promise to myself and to my coach and to my team that if I'm not at least 60% or 50%, then I probably shouldn't play." The fact that I physically can't serve at all is a good indication that maybe I should just go back to the drawing board and stay positive and try to get better and not get to a point where it could be a lot worse."

SHARAPOVA MESSAGE

With Wimbledon not starting until July 2, Williams has a degree of time on her side in which to get healthy. A rematch with Sharapova at the All England Club could have even greater significance as it was there in 2004 that the Russian, then a slender 17-year-old, stunned Williams to lift the title.

It also lit the fuse on a relationship which has generally been close to explosive ever since. Monday's scheduled match was due to take place just two days after Williams had blasted Sharapova's autobiography for being "100 percent hearsay" when it came to references about the aftermath of that 2004 Wimbledon final. "I think Serena hated me for being the skinny kid who beat her, against all odds, at Wimbledon," Sharapova

wrote in 'Unstoppable'. "Not long after I heard Serena told a friend, who then told me, 'I'll never lose to that little bitch again'."

Sharapova, the champion in Paris in 2012 and 2014, goes on to play a first quarter-final at the Slams since losing to Williams at the same stage at the 2016 Australian Open. It was in Melbourne that Sharapova tested positive for meldonium after which she served a 15-month doping ban.

"I was looking forward to my match against Serena and am disappointed that she had to withdraw," said Sharapova in a statement. "I wish her a speedy recovery and hope she returns to the tour soon."

It was not the greatest day for women's tennis on Monday. As well as Serena's withdrawal, the match featuring third seed Garbine Muguruza, the 2016 champion, and Lesia Tsurenko last just two games. Ukrainian world 39 Tsurenko retired at 0-2 down due to a leg injury which required an on-court medical assessment as well as lengthy off-court treatment — after the first game.

World number one Simona Halep needed just 59 minutes to beat Belgium's Elise Mertens for the loss of only three games. She next plays Angelique Kerber who saw off Caroline Garcia, the last home player in the draw, also in straight sets.

Fourth round losers in the men's and women's tournaments all receive 222,000 euros (\$260,000), a fact not lost on Italy's Fabio Fognini whose five-set defeat to Marin Cilic occupied 3hr and 37min. Women's tennis "is another sport," he said mischievously. — AFP

Belgian police detain 13 in tennis match-fixing

BRUSSELS: Belgian police yesterday held 13 people as part of a major international investigation into match-fixing in tennis, barely a month after a report warned of a "tsunami" of corruption in the lower levels of the sport.

Officers swooped on 21 addresses in Belgium, while simultaneous raids were launched on properties in the US, Germany, France, Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Netherlands. The raids were part of an international probe into an Armenian-Belgian criminal network suspected of bribing players to throw games.

Belgian prosecutors said the matches involved were on the low-level Futures and Challenger circuits, away from the gaze of television coverage and where meagre prize money leaves players susceptible to backhanders. The "investigation showed that an Armenian-Belgian criminal organisation actively would have bribed professional tennis players from 2014 to the present day," the prosecutors said in a statement.

This was done "in order to obtain a pre-arranged match result with the aim of betting on these fixed matches based on insider information, thereby fraudulently boosting winnings," they added. A judge will decide later on what further action to take against the 13 who have been held.

The suspects mostly fit the same profile, prosecutors said—no income, no job and facing financial problems. They would be given money to bet on lower-division matches where prize money was around \$5,000 to \$15,000.

"These tournaments are usually not filmed, which would make the players easier to corrupt and the organisers of fixed matches generate a lot of cash, making themselves guilty of match fixing, corruption, money laundering, participation in the activities of a criminal organisation," the prosecutors said.

Belgian authorities, first alerted to suspicious betting activity in 2015, said the criminal network "would not shrink from violence" and used its contacts to move large sums of money abroad anonymously.

BLIGHT ON THE GAME

The latest blow to tennis's reputation comes as the French Open reaches the quarter-final stage, with Novak Djokovic aiming to reach his 32nd Grand Slam semi-final when he faces unseeded Italian Marco Cecchinato at Roland Garros.

Cecchinato was himself embroiled in a match-fixing scandal on the Challenger circuit, earning an 18-month suspension in July 2016 before being cleared of any wrongdoing. Tuesday's arrests come after the Independent Review of Integrity in Tennis report warned in April that the lower levels of the sport were engulfed in betting-related corruption.

The report said the problems stemmed from too many players in the likes of the Futures and Challenger circuits not earning enough to make a living, coupled with the rise of online betting.

There are around 15,000 professional tennis players but only the top 250 women and the top 350 men even manage to break even before coaching costs, lawyer Adam Lewis, who chaired the review panel, warned in April.

After surveying more than 3,000 players as well as tournament organisers, officials and betting operators, the panel found "evidence of some issues" at Grand Slams and Tour events, but it did not uncover evidence of a widespread problem at those higher levels.

The panel was set up in 2016 following allegations made by the BBC and Buzzfeed that leading players, including Grand Slam winners, were involved in suspected match-fixing and that evidence had been suppressed. In a further demonstration of the woes blighting the lower rungs of the game, Ukrainian Dmytro Badanov was handed a life ban and fined \$100,000 last month for fixing a Futures match in Tunisia in 2015. Just days before the Badanov ruling, Argentinian player Nicolas Kicker was found guilty of fixing two matches on the second-tier Challenger Tour, and faces a life ban as a result. — AFP

Sports

England recall Jake for injured Woakes for Australia ODI series

Buttler credits IPL for recent Test success

LONDON: England called up Nottinghamshire seamer Jake Ball as cover for the injured Chris Woakes in their squad to face Australia in a five-match one-day series this month.

Woakes joined Ben Stokes on the sidelines through injury when he suffered a thigh strain in England's victory over Pakistan in the second Test.

Both will be unavailable to take on Scotland in Sunday's one-off one-day international and for the "first part" of the series against Australia.

Ball played the last of his 17 ODIs to date at Perth in January in the 4-1 series victory over Australia. He has taken 21 wickets, with a best of five for 51, but averages 45.28.

"Nottinghamshire seamer Jake Ball has been drafted into England's ODI squad for the Royal London series against Australia as cover for all-rounder Chris Woakes," the England and Wales Cricket Board said in a statement.

"Woakes, who will be unavailable for the first part of the series with a right quad strain, joins Ben Stokes (left hamstring tear) on the injured list.

"Both players have commenced their injury rehab programmes and will be hoping to respond to treatment with the aim of featuring in the latter stages of the series."

England wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler says his stint in this year's Indian Premier League (IPL) helped his return to the test arena by forcing him to concentrate on making runs rather than losing his wicket.

Buttler was dropped from England's test side at the end of 2016 following a poor run of form but his consistency in limited-overs cricket, along with his high-flying IPL run, earned the 27-year-old a surprise test recall last month.

The hard-hitting batsman, who recorded five half-centuries in his last six matches for Rajasthan Royals, made two against Pakistan, scoring 67 and 80 in two Tests.

"Those couple of weeks in the IPL gave me huge amounts of confidence, playing in front of those crowds, the pressure of being an overseas player," Buttler told British media.

"The tough thing with test cricket is that if you get out early, you've got a long time to think about it. In T20, you just move on."

England squad to play Australia in the five-match one-day international series:

Eoin Morgan (captain), Moeen Ali, Jonathan Bairstow, Jake Ball, Sam Billings, Jos Buttler, Tom Curran, Alex Hales, Liam Plunkett, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Jason Roy, Ben Stokes, David Willey, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood.



Ball has taken 21 wickets



Jake ball

Fixtures:
Jun 13: 1st ODI, The Oval (1200 GMT)
Jun 16: 2nd ODI, Cardiff (1000 GMT)
Jun 19: 3rd ODI, Trent Bridge (1300 GMT)

Jun 21: 4th ODI, Chester-le-Street (1300 GMT)
Jun 25: 5th ODI, Old Trafford, (1000 GMT)
Note: Matches starting at 1000 GMT day games, others day/night. — Agencies

After mad dash to wire, Russia's stadiums open for World Cup

MOSCOW: Although some pushed it down to the wire, all 12 stadiums have been completed in time for the June 14 to July 15 World Cup in Russia. From Moscow's grand Luzhniki Stadium, which also hosted the 1980 Summer Olympics, to the worrisomely late Samara Arena, here is a look at where the football games will be played.

MOSCOW (Luzhniki Stadium)

Capacity: 80,000
Opening: 1956 (renovated 2017)
Estimated cost: \$385 million (330 million euros)

Matches: June 14 - Russia vs Saudi Arabia; June 17 - Germany vs Mexico; June 20 - Portugal vs Morocco; June 26 - Denmark vs France; July 1 Round of 16; July 11 - Semi Final; July 15 - Final.

The historic crucible of Soviet and Russian sport, Luzhniki is the national squad's home ground and venue for major political events, such as big speeches by President Vladimir Putin. It was gutted and rebuilt for the World Cup, turning it into a football-specific venue. Only its original facade remains.

MOSCOW (Spartak Stadium)

Capacity: 45,000
Opening: 2014
Estimated cost: \$235 million

Matches: June 16 - Argentina vs Iceland; June 19 - Poland vs Senegal; June 23 - Belgium vs Tunisia; June 26 - Serbia vs Brazil; July 3 - Round of 16.

Russia's most popular team by a wide margin, Spartak Moscow had no place to call home until the red and white arena opened to great fanfare four years ago. Spartak fans also think their stadium has the best atmosphere, although that point is up for debate.

SAINT PETERSBURG (Saint Petersburg Stadium)

Capacity: 68,000
Opening: 2017
Estimated cost: \$700-\$775 million

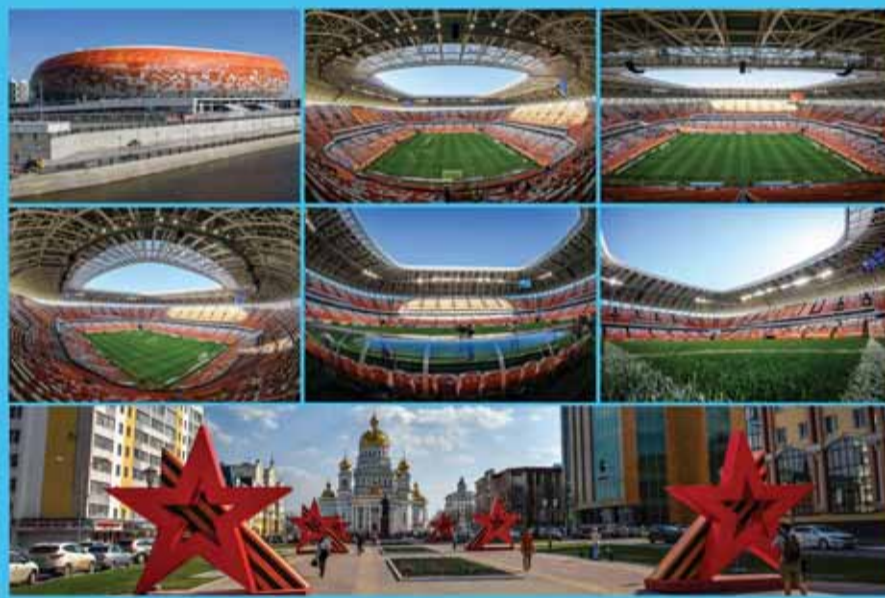
Matches: June 15 - Morocco vs Iran; June 19 - Russia vs Egypt; June 22 - Brazil vs Costa Rica; June 26 - Nigeria vs Argentina; July 3 - Round of 16; July 10 - Semi Final; July 14 - Third Place playoff.

Under construction for more than a decade due to bureaucratic red tape and graft, the majestic arena cost about three times more than planned. Russia's most high-tech arena, with a retractable roof and pitch, will host some of the tournament's most glamorous matches, including ones played by Argentina and Brazil.

KAZAN (Kazan Arena)

Capacity: 45,000
Opening: 2013
Estimated cost: \$230 million
Matches: June 16 - France vs Australia; June 20 - Iran vs Spain; June 24 - Poland vs Colombia; June 27 - South Korea vs Germany; June 30 - Round of 16; July 6 - Quarter Final.
Built for the 2013 University Games,

MORDOVIA ARENA - SARANSK



Kazan Arena has grand ambitions, with Russian authorities thinking of proposing it as a future Summer Olympics venue.

SOCHI (Fisht Stadium)

Capacity: 48,000
Opening: 2014 (renovated 2017)
Estimated cost: \$380 million + \$65 million for renovation
Matches: June 15 - Portugal vs Spain; June 18 - Belgium vs Panama; June 23 - Germany vs Sweden; June 26 - Australia vs Peru; June 30 - Round of 16; July 7 Quarter Final.

Situated not far from Putin's vacation home on the Black Sea and surrounded by snow-capped mountains, Fisht Stadium is Russia's most scenic football venue. Sadly for locals, Sochi has no team and the stadium's future purpose remains unclear.

VOLGOGRAD (Volgograd Arena)

Capacity: 45,000
Opening: 2018
Estimated cost: \$260 million
Matches: June 18 - Tunisia vs England; June 22 - Nigeria vs Iceland; June 25 - Saudi Arabia vs Egypt; June 28 - Japan vs Poland.
Reminiscent of the "Bird's Nest" stadium that hosted the 2008 Summer Games in Beijing, Volgograd Arena was built on the site of the Battle of Stalingrad, the heroic turning point of World War II in which two million people died. The stadium is now the focal point of a major city renovation project.

NIZHNY NOVGOROD (Nizhny Novgorod Stadium)

Capacity: 45,000
Opening: 2018
Estimated cost: \$275 million
Matches: June 18 - Sweden vs South Korea; June 21 - Argentina vs Croatia; June 24 - England vs Panama; June 27 - Switzerland vs Costa Rica; July 1 Round of 16; July 6 - Quarter Final.

With elegant, wave-like stands resembling those of Marseille's Stade Velodrome, the Volga River stadium will be home to a brand-new local team after the World Cup.

ROSTOV (ROSTOV ARENA)

Capacity: 45,000
Opening: 2018
Estimated cost: \$320 million
Matches: June 17 - Brazil vs Switzerland; June 20 - Uruguay vs Saudi Arabia; June 23 - Korea Republic vs Mexico; June 26 - Iceland vs Croatia; July 2 Round of 16.

The southern Russia city sits just 60 kilometres (40 miles) from the war zone in east Ukraine, where a four-year conflict has killed more than 10,000 people. Russia is taking extensive security measures to make sure the fans are safe.

SAMARA (Samara Arena)

Capacity: 45,000
Opening: 2018
Estimated cost: \$305 million
Matches: June 17 - Costa Rica vs Serbia; June 21 - Denmark vs Australia; June 25 - Uruguay vs Russia; June 28 - Senegal vs Colombia; July 2 Round of 16; July 7 Quarter Final.

Samara Arena made international headlines when FIFA noticed a few months ago that it still had no pitch. The grass was finally delivered from Germany in April, and the stadium-while not looking as majestic as originally envisioned after some corners were cut-is ready for action.

SARANSK (Mordovia Arena)

Capacity: 45,000
Opening: 2018
Estimated cost: \$265 million
Matches: June 16 - Peru vs Denmark; June 19 - Colombia vs Japan; June 25 - Iran vs Portugal; June 28 - Panama vs Tunisia.

No matter which way you put it, Mordovia Arena is a bit of a mystery. Never famous for its football, Saransk had a miniature airport and no modern hotels until the World Cup, with the region best known for being a wilderness where Russia put most of its female penal colonies. The city now has a brand-new arena that will house a third division side.

YEKATERINBURG (Yekaterinburg Arena)

Capacity: 35,000
Opening: 1957 (renovated 2018)
Estimated cost: \$210 million
Matches: June 15 - Egypt vs Uruguay; June 21 - France vs Peru; June 24 - Japan vs Senegal; June 27 - Mexico vs Sweden.

To locals' distress, fans had a good laugh at Yekaterinburg's expense for building an arena with two vertiginous stands entirely outside the arena. The stands overlook a nearby highway, although organisers say they also offer a nice city view. The stands will only seat Russians and be dismantled after the tournament, slimming down the stadium to 27,000 seats—a solution FIFA applauds. — AFP

Capitals down Knights to move within one win of Stanley Cup

WASHINGTON: The Washington Capitals beat the Las Vegas Golden Knights 6-2 on Monday to move within one win of the first NHL Stanley Cup championship in their 43-year history. The Capitals now lead the best-of-seven Stanley Cup finals three-games-to-one and will try to finish off the Golden Knights in game five in Las Vegas tomorrow. The Caps withstood a quick opening barrage from Vegas, scoring three first-period goals to seize control. Russian Evgeny Kuznetsov produced four assists, including one on T.J. Oshie's power-play goal 9:54 into the first period to open the scoring.

Nicklas Backstrom with three assists and Oshie with a goal and two assists had three points apiece and goalie Braden Holtby made 28 saves for Washington. "One win away-it's the hardest one," said Washington captain Alex Ovechkin, whose assist on Devante Smith-Pelly's goal with 21 seconds left in the first.

That strike made it 3-0 after Tom Wilson's goal at 16:26. The Golden Knights had looked more likely to take charge, producing five of the game's first seven shots. But James Neal missed from point-blank range-just one of a string of Vegas shots to clank off the post-and the close call appeared to galvanize the Caps.

Oshie scored from the slot off the rebound of a Kuznetsov shot, collecting the puck with his skate and firing over Marc-Andre Fleury. Wilson scored off a give-and-go with Kuznetsov and Smith-Pelly scored from below the left circle.

A LITTLE LUCK

"We knew this game was very important for us," Ovechkin said. "Obviously we have a little bit of luck on our side, they hit the post. But we just grinded it out, we use our chances, stick to the system, stick to the plan, and we get the result."

Vegas coach Gerard Gallant called it a "frustrating" first period. "I thought we played our best period of the finals so far," he said. "We hit two posts, we had some good chances and we got nothing out of it." John Carlson made it 4-0 with a one-timer from the left circle on a power-play at 15:23 of the second before Vegas narrowed the deficit with goals from Neal and Reilly Smith in the third.

Fleury made 17 saves for the Golden Knights, but Michal Kempny scored just 1:13 after Smith to stretch Washington's lead to 5-2 and Brett Connolly scored a 5-on-3 power-play goal to make it 6-2 with less than two minutes remaining.

Vegas have now lost three straight games-after losing three games total in the first three rounds of the playoffs. They face a mountain to climb to become the first debut team in major US sports history to win the title in the first season of their existence. The last NHL team to rebound from a 3-1 series deficit to win the Stanley Cup was the 1942 Toronto Maple Leafs-who rallied from 3-0 down against the Detroit Red Wings. The Capitals, meanwhile, are on the brink of bringing Washington its first major sports title since the NFL's Redskins won the 1992 Super Bowl. — AFP

Beckham backs North America World Cup bid

LONDON: David Beckham has thrown his weight behind North America's bid to host the 2026 World Cup as the vote looms, saying the fans' passion for football would make the event "very special".

The US-Canada-Mexico joint bid is battling against Morocco for the right to stage the tournament, with FIFA members picking the winner at a vote in Moscow on June 13. "A football competition as big as the World Cup deserves to be in great places and if the US, Canada and Mexico get that it will be very special," said former LA Galaxy star Beckham in a video released by Major League Soccer. The former England captain, who played for the Galaxy for six seasons and was awarded an MLS franchise in Miami earlier this year, said he had experienced the passion for the game in all three countries.

"I've been able to have played in one of these countries and I've been to the other two as well and also played in Canada for the Galaxy but I know the passion that runs through all three of those countries," he said. "Don't get me

started on the passion that runs through Mexico because the players that I've played against, I've played against them as a nation before and there's not many nations that are as passionate as them."

The former Manchester United and Real Madrid star said he attended matches the last time the United States hosted the event, in 1994, but that the game has grown enormously in recent years.

"I've seen how much the game has grown in the last 10 years and it's incredible to have happened so fast and changed in so many different ways," said Beckham. "People are really getting behind the game now throughout the US and it's great to see, it's great to have been a part of. I'm excited about 2026 because if that really happens, if it does happen, I know for sure that as a fan I'll be going to that World Cup."

A long-awaited report from FIFA inspectors last week left the North American bid as the clear front-runner after giving it a rating of four out of a possible five according to its criteria.

Morocco, bidding to become only the second African nation to host the tournament, received only 2.7 out of five, but advanced to the Moscow vote despite red flags being raised over several critical components of the bid. The 2026 World Cup will be the first to be expanded to 48 teams, posing a severe test for the hosts. — AFP

Sports

Manchester United agree deal to sign Brazil midfielder Fred

Mourinho's task will be to harness Fred's passing ability

LONDON: Manchester United announced yesterday they have agreed a deal to sign Brazilian international midfielder Fred from Shakhtar Donetsk as Jose Mourinho seeks to topple reigning Premier League Champions Manchester City.

The 25-year-old will cost the English giants a reported fee of about £52 million (\$69 million) and give Mourinho a powerful-looking midfield, with the Brazilian set to slot in alongside Paul Pogba and Nemanja Matic. A statement on the club's website said: "Manchester United is delighted to announce it has reached agreement with Shakhtar Donetsk for the transfer of Frederico Rodrigues de Paula Santos (Fred).

"A further announcement will be made in due course." United finished second in the Premier League behind City but were a whopping 19 points behind their fierce rivals.

And beating City to the signature of Fred, who was a target for the English champions in January, could prove to be a significant first step. Fred caught the eye in Shakhtar's run to the last-16 of the Champions League, where the Ukrainians only lost out on away goals to Roma. A stunning free-kick in the first leg of that tie was a glimpse of what Fred's talented left foot can produce.

However, he is far more of a creator than goalscorer as his record of just 15 goals in five years at

Shakhtar suggests.

United are in need of midfield reinforcements with Michael Carrick retiring and Marouane Fellaini out of contract.

Mourinho's task will now be to harness Fred's passing ability, while also finally getting the best out of Pogba in his third season since an £89 million move from Juventus.

Fred will hope to make the same impact on the Premier League as Brazilian international team-mates Willian and Fernandinho, who also arrived in England via spells with Shakhtar.

Fred is more of a creator than goalscorer



United fans are unlikely to get much of a glimpse of Fred at the World Cup in Russia, though, as he is yet to start an international under current coach Tite.

Handed his debut by Dunga in 2014, Fred's international career was disrupted after testing positive for the diuretic hydrochlorothiazide during the 2015 Copa America.

He was banned from international football for a year by South America's governing body CONEMBOL, but only missed four months for Shakhtar as FIFA did not extend the ban to cover all confederations until February 2016. Fred did not return to the national team until a 3-0 friendly win over Russia in March and Tite was keen for his transfer to be completed before the World Cup starts on June 14.



Frederico Rodrigues de Paula Santos (centre).

"Players are always thinking of their careers. What you say is please resolve it as soon as possible so we can get them focused back on the task in hand with

the national team," he said after Saturday's 2-0 win over Croatia at Anfield. "If I was a club manager, I would be looking to sign him." — AFP

Ake strike gives Dutch 1-1 draw against Italy

TURIN: Nathan Ake headed in a late equaliser as the Netherlands held 10-man Italy 1-1 in Monday's international friendly in Turin between two heavyweights who failed to qualify for the World Cup.

Simone Zaza had put Italy ahead after 67 minutes in Juventus' Allianz Stadium but the hosts were hit two minutes later when defender Domenico Criscito was sent off for a tackle on Ryan Babel. Bournemouth centre-back Ake got the equaliser past the hosts two minutes from time, and almost added a second in injury time. Both sides are rebuilding after failing to reach the World Cup finals in Russia.

New Italy coach Roberto Mancini's first three games in charge have resulted in a 2-1 victory over Saudi Arabia, 3-1 defeat by France, and 1-1 draw against the Dutch. "It was a friendly, I don't know if that was really a red card," said Mancini.

"Nevertheless it was an enormously naive error. Playing down to 10 men for 20 minutes was tough, as we were already feeling tired," Mancini said he was optimistic with what he had seen in his first two weeks in charge.

"It's difficult after 10 days to develop really complex tactical situations, but we saw some good things against France and again today," said the 53-year-old. "We've got to get playing and gaining experience and that's what the friendlies are for."

"The lads have got the right mentality, the balance of these days is positive but we have to put some things right. There is optimism, people are enthusiastic about this young national team and this helps us." The Dutch are also forging a new era under Ronald Koeman after failing to qualify for both Euro



TORINHO: Dutch defender Nathan Ake (3R) vies with Italian players during a friendly match between Italy and the Netherlands at the Allianz stadium in Torino on Monday. — AFP

2016 and the World Cup.

Four-time world champions Italy proved wasteful in the first half despite dominating play with chances from Andrea Belotti, Simone Verdi and Criscito. Torino striker Belotti-starting in place of Mario Balotelli had the ball in the net within three minutes but the goal was ruled offside. Lorenzo Insigne-wearing the captain's armband on his 27th birthday-then set up Verdi who fired over, with Criscito's header cleared off the line by Ruud Vormer.

Koeman's side got into their stride more after the break but Italy nevertheless opened the scoring when second half substitute Zaza picked up a Federico Chiesa centre. But minutes later Criscito was sent off for a mist-

imed tackle, giving three-time World Cup runners-up the Netherlands a numerical advantage. "I'm happy with the goal because I had sad memories of the national team, I felt a little emotional," said Zaza, who has been recalled by Mancini having not played since missing a penalty kick in Euro 2016 against Germany. "We're a young group and we need time to prepare. Unfortunately in a way we have a lot of time to prepare for the next tournament." The Dutch-World Cup runners-up in 2014 — follow last week's 1-1 draw against Slovakia, having beaten Portugal 3-0 last Match. For Italy it was another 1-1 draw in Turin after recent games against England, Spain and Macedonia. — AFP

Iran announce WCup squad without Ali Gholizadeh

TEHRAN: Iran has announced its final 23-man line-up for the 2018 World Cup as it arrives in Russia with arguably its most accomplished squad ever and the wind in its sails after an unbeaten run through qualifiers.

Iran has some strong choices up front, including Alireza Jahanbakhsh, who became the first Iranian to top the scoring table of a major European league with 21 goals for Dutch side AZ Alkmaar. There are also big hopes for 23-year-old striker Sardar Azmoun, who has racked up 23 goals for Iran since making his debut in 2014.

The only change to the line-up when it was finalised on Monday was the decision to drop 22-year-old winger Ali Gholizadeh, who has just signed with Belgium's Charleroi.

Iran has an unprecedented number of players from international leagues this year, with 12 of the squad currently playing with European clubs. Among them are Masoud Shojaei, 33, and Ehsan Haji Safi, 28, who were supposed to have been banned for life last summer after playing an Israeli team for their Greek club Panionios.

Iran does not recognise the Jewish state and bars its athletes from

appearing against Israelis, but cannot openly ban players because it breaches international regulations.

After much confusion over the issue, Shojaei returned to the national squad in March and Haji Safi was never actually banned. Iran's national team has been coached for the past seven years by Portugal's Carlos Queiroz, a former enforcer for Alex Ferguson at Manchester United and one-season boss at Real Madrid.

Queiroz has led Iran to its first back-to-back appearances at the World Cup, but will be hoping to improve on its winless appearance in Brazil. Iran, nicknamed "Team Melli", had an unbeaten run in qualifiers, becoming the first to book their place from the Asian Football Confederation.

But they face a tough group in the World Cup, with Spain, Portugal and Morocco.

IRAN WORLD CUP SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand (Persepolis), Rashid Mazaheri (Zob Ahan), Amir Abedzadeh (Maritimo/POR)

Defenders: Majid Hosseini (Esteghlal), Milad Mohammadi (Akhmat Grozny/RUS), Mohammad Khanzadeh (Padideh), Morteza Pouraliganji (Alsaad/QAT), Pejman Montazeri (Esteghlal), Ramin Rezaeian (Ostende/BEL), Roozbeh Cheshmi (Esteghlal) **Midfielders:** Saied Ezatollahi (Amkar Perm/RUS), Ehsan Haji Safi (Olympiacos/GRE), Omid Ebrahimi (Esteghlal), Masoud Shojaei (AEK Athens/GRE), Ashkan Dejagah (Nottingham Forest/ENG). — AFP

FIFA files criminal complaint against ticket firm Viagogo

GENEVA: FIFA yesterday said it had filed a criminal complaint against the secondary ticketing firm Viagogo's sale of 2018 World Cup tickets, opening a new battle between sports organisations and websites seeking a share of their profits.

"As part of its efforts to protect the fans and prevent unauthorised ticket resales for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, FIFA filed a criminal complaint on 4 June 2018 based on a breach of the law on unfair competition against Viagogo AG with the public prosecutor's office in Geneva," world football's governing body said in a statement.

"Over the past months, FIFA has received numerous complaints from individuals, consumer protection bodies and other market players over the opaque and deceptive business conduct of Viagogo AG," it added. The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment. FIFA noted that in seeking legal action it was joining other sports bodies, including UEFA, which has previously taken Viagogo to court. The European confederation stepped up its battle against secondary ticket sites ahead of the Euro-2016 tournament, when it established its own online resale platform and asserted that no one but UEFA could legitimately sell match tickets.

WORLD CUP WARNING

With the World Cup set to kick off in just nine days, FIFA also warned fans to stay clear of any "unauthorised transfer and/or resale of tickets". It also said that anyone with a ticket that can be traced to an unauthorised resale site may be refused entry to World Cup matches. "FIFA reminds all fans that FIFA.com/tickets is the only official and legitimate website on which to buy 2018 FIFA World Cup tickets," the statement further said.

Viagogo describes itself as "a global online platform for live sport, music and entertainment tickets", that aims to "helps ticket sellers ranging from individuals with a spare ticket to large multi-national event organisers reach a global audience".

The company is no stranger to controversy, including accusations of steep price markups as well as battles with the artists and sports entities that drive its business. Last month, English singer Ed Sheeran and his promoters announced that tickets for his concerts sold on Viagogo would be deemed invalid. The company was founded in 2006 by American businessman Eric Baker, who had previously been the pioneer behind StubHub, the secondary ticket giant widely used by North American sports fans, which was subsequently bought by online retailer ebay.

In April, Britain's Competition and Markets Authority singled out Viagogo as the sole secondary ticket seller which had refused to make changes that the regulator deemed necessary to protect consumers. Key among those recommended changes was providing better information to the seller about the ticket, including whether there was a risk it could be rejected at the venue. — AFP

Iceland fired up for World Cup thunderclap

REYKJAVIK: An inhospitable climate and the smallest population of any World Cup nation have failed to dampen Iceland's burning desire to make history at this month's tournament in Russia in their own unique way.

What other national team coach, for instance, addresses the fans in a local bar before a home international, as Heimir Hallgrímsson did before Iceland's recent game against Norway? For good measure, Norway coach Lars Lagerback, who led Iceland on their glorious Euro 2016 odyssey that ended in a quarter-final defeat by hosts France after knocking out England, also turned up to assist in continuing the tradition.

Despite sub-zero temperatures that make it virtually impossible to grow grass on pitches for much of the year, the game is thriving in the Nordic island nation. With a modest population of about 340,000, the country's men's team is ranked 22nd in the world, with the women three places better in 19th. The previous smallest country to have reached the World Cup finals was Trinidad & Tobago in 2006, with 1.3 million people.

"Our training is the whole year outdoors, and we have very strong kids," coach Freyr Sverrisson told Reuters as he kept a watchful eye on young players during a session at the Haukar Hafnarfjörður club south-west of Reykjavik.

The club also offers basketball, handball, skiing, karate and chess, but football is fast becoming the dominant sport, especially with widespread investment in full-size indoor pitches and outdoor astro-turf surfaces.

"Soccer was always very popular, but after the Euros it's getting bigger," says Sverrisson, who coached the country's Under-16 team from 2002 to 2016. It wasn't just the footballers that put themselves on the map in France - the "thunderclap" performed by Iceland's fans provided some of the most memorable moments in the stands.

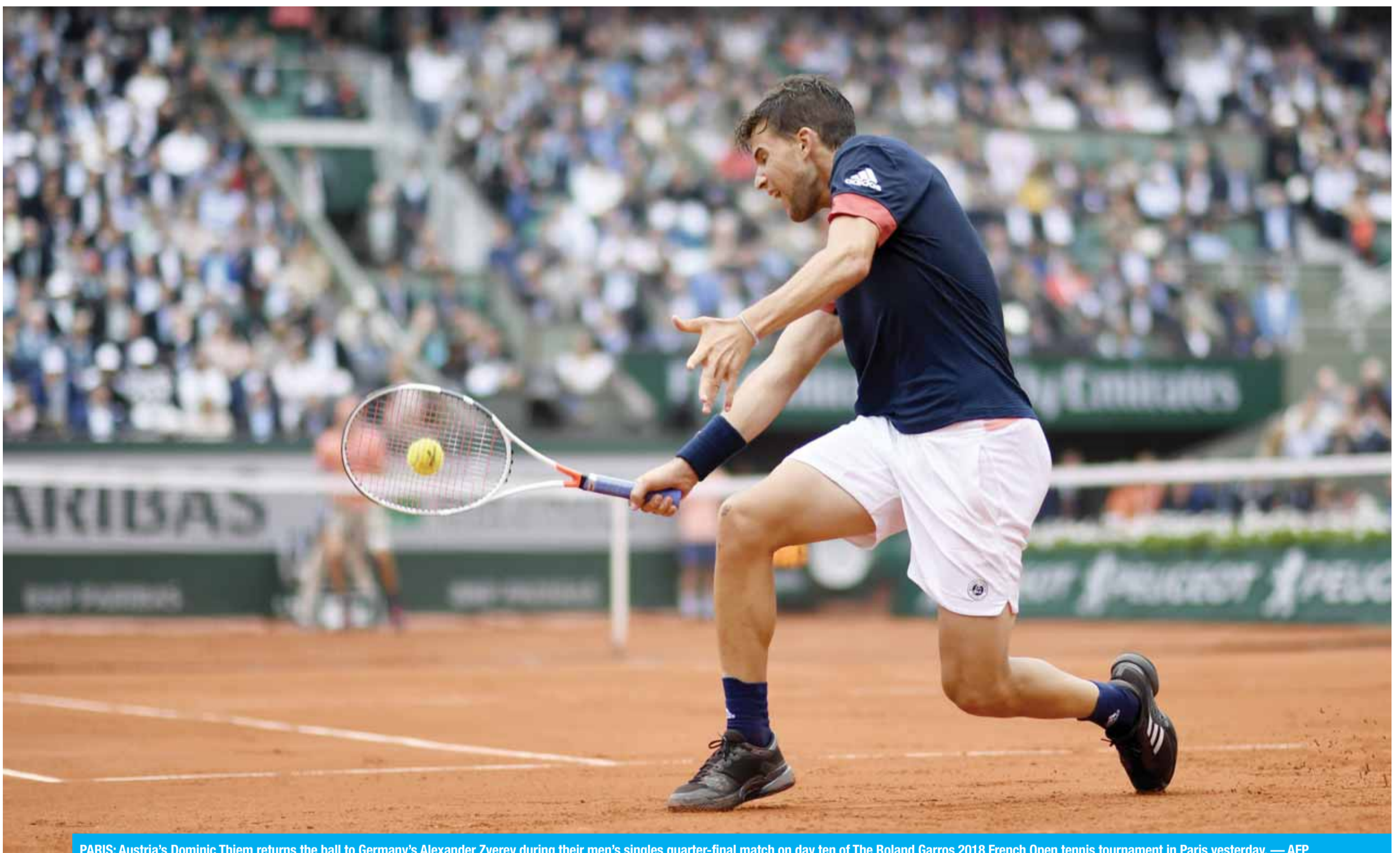
With their faces painted in the red, white and blue tones of the Icelandic flag and plenty of Viking imagery, they provide loud and colourful support to a team punching way above its weight on the international stage.

"It's amazing, the support is so huge," goalkeeper Runar Runarsson told Reuters. "From my family, from my friends, from people I don't even know, the support is huge. They're so happy." Set to face Argentina, Nigeria and Croatia, Iceland have a tough task to make it out of Group D in their debut World Cup. But, regardless of the results, the tiny nation and its colourful fans are guaranteed to make an impact in Russia. — Reuters

25 Detroit Tigers lose 7-4 to New York Yankees in Game one of doubleheader

26 England recall Jake for injured Woakes for Australia ODI series

27 Manchester United agree deal to sign Brazil midfielder Fred



PARIS: Austria's Dominic Thiem returns the ball to Germany's Alexander Zverev during their men's singles quarter-final match on day ten of The Roland Garros 2018 French Open tennis tournament in Paris yesterday. — AFP

Thiem crushes Zverev to make last four

Austrian widened his advantage with clinical display of hitting

PARIS: Austrian Dominic Thiem destroyed a lacklustre and battle-weary Alexander Zverev 6-4 6-2 6-1 yesterday to reach the French Open semi-finals for the third consecutive year. Claycourt specialist Thiem's relentless accuracy from the baseline proved too much for second seed Zverev who looked jaded after a gruelling path to his first Grand Slam quarter-final.

After an even start full of high quality ball-striking, Thiem broke serve at 3-3 and quickly got on top, stretching his opponent all over Court Philippe Chatrier. Second seed Zverev, 21, needed his left thigh strapped in the second set and looked disconsolate as Thiem widened his advantage with a clinical display of hitting.

Thiem, seeded seventh, needed only 15 minutes to go 4-0 up in the third with Zverev barely running for wide balls. Zverev began to let rip, snatching one game

back, but the outcome was inevitable and Thiem put him out of his misery with a routine backhand winner into a wide-open court.

"It was very tough for him today," Thiem, who fell to eventual winners Djokovic and Rafael Nadal in the last two years, said on court. "He is one of the fittest guys on Tour but to play three five-setters in a row is tough in Grand Slam.

"I love it here and I will do everything to make one more step this year," Thiem, 24, will play either Djokovic or Italian Marco Cecchinato hoping to become the first Austrian to reach a Grand Slam final since Thomas Muster in 1995.

Zverev had needed five sets to beat Dusan Lajovic, Damir Dzumhur and Karen Khachanov and his first-week graft caught up with him on a damp and cool yesterday. Thiem lost to Zverev in the Madrid final but is

the only player to beat Nadal on clay this year and he oozed confidence from the outset against the tall German. Striking the ball harder and with more spin and holding serve with ease he always looked the more likely player to make the first move and his chance came in the seventh game.

CROSSCOURT BACKHAND

A forehand error by Zverev offered up a couple of break points and Thiem converted with a dipping crosscourt backhand that left Zverev wrong-footed.

Zverev saved one set point on the Thiem serve at 5-4, racing to dig up a drop volley, but was powerless on the next as Thiem flung down an ace. The signs were worrying for Zverev as he carelessly conceded serve at 1-1 in the second set, slicing a backhand wide.

Thiem's first sign of frailty came in the next game

when an under-cooked dropshot and double-fault offered Zverev the chance to break back but the Austrian won a superb rally with both players at the net. Zverev then watched a Thiem lob land smack on the baseline as he fell 3-1 behind and his energy levels dropped.

After dropping serve to trail 4-1 Zverev called for the trainer and had a bandage applied to his left leg hardly surprising considering the way he had been moved around by his close friend. Zverev went off court for more treatment at the end of the second set but any chance of him becoming the first player to win four consecutive five-set matches in a Grand Slam during the professional era were over. With Nadal's coach Carlos Moya an interested spectator Thiem moved swiftly on to a victory that will not have gone unnoticed by the defending champion. — Reuters

Cavaliers face now-or-never home stand in NBA Finals

CLEVELAND: Defending champion Golden State has seized command of the NBA Finals as the series shifts to Cleveland, where the Cavaliers must continue their home playoff magic to sustain any title hopes. The Warriors, seeking their third crown in four seasons, could complete a sweep in the best-of-seven showdown with road wins Wednesday and Friday after taking a 2-0 edge with a 122-103 home triumph Sunday. "I don't think we're close to our ceiling, which

is good for us," said Warriors forward Draymond Green. "We can play so much better. We're going to need that going out on the road."

While the Cavaliers made the greatest comeback in NBA Finals history from 3-1 down to beat Golden State in 2016, no team has ever rallied from 3-0 down to win the title.

"We have to make sure that we really bring it in game three because that's really the game right there," Cavs guard Kevin Love said. "This is a team you don't want to be down 0-3 against."

The Cavaliers are 8-1 at home in this year's playoffs, losing only in their first-round opener against Indiana.

"We feed off our crowd. We really get up to play at home. We know that come Wednesday we're going to have to be better," Love said. "Just being in front of our crowd will be huge for us."

But the Cavaliers, facing Golden State in the finals for the fourth year in a row, are only 4-4 against the Warriors at home in all finals. "We have to do a better job at home," Cavs guard J.R. Smith said. "We can't

keep taking positives from losses. We're doing some good things, but it's not translating into W's so we've got to figure it out."

The Cavaliers were the most recent victims of an NBA Finals sweep, being blanked by San Antonio in 2007 in the first finals trip for LeBron James, now playing in an eighth consecutive finals and ninth overall. "It sucks to lose, that's for sure, but it definitely won't stop me from preparing to be better," James said. "We've played some really good basketball on our home floor. But that shouldn't give us any comfort. We should still be uncomfortable."

"Just because we're going home doesn't mean we can relax. This is the last team in the world you want to relax against." James won two titles with Miami and achieved his goal of bringing a crown to his home region, but the four-time NBA Most Valuable Player would fall to 3-6 in the finals with a loss this year. The Warriors have imposed themselves upon the Cavs early and see that as crucial for more success.

"We've got to come out with a sense of urgency to

start," Warriors forward Kevin Durant said. "They have only lost one game so they are very confident there. We've just got to come out, stick to our game plan, keep playing hard and we'll be fine."

It will be hard for Golden State to top game two, when Stephen Curry sank a finals-record nine 3-pointers in a 33-point effort. "We had some slip-ups and things we can correct going into game three," Curry said. "But the energy and effort and physicality and all that from the jump was pretty dialed in and it gave us a lot of momentum and confidence." Warriors guard Klay Thompson, playing despite a left ankle injury in the opener, says Golden State has a strong focus knowing the Cavaliers rallied from 2-0 down to beat Boston in the Eastern Conference finals. "It's nothing to feel happy about being up 2-0," Thompson said. "This team plays great at home and we expect their other guys to play even better at home, too, not just LeBron, so we're not going to relax at all." Cavaliers coach Tyronn Lue stressed the need for a body-banging style from his squad. — AFP