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6 India seeks a warrant for fugitive celebrity jeweler



8 Pope accepts resignation of three bishops in sex scandal



28 Neymar lands in Russia, Messi casts doubt over WCup future



رمضان
Ramadan Kareem

IMSAK	03:03
FAJR	03:13
DHUHR	11:48
ASR	15:22
MAGHRIB	18:48
ISHA	20:21

Kuwait, Saudi and UAE offer \$2.5 billion in aid to Jordan

Cash-strapped Jordan rocked by mass protests



MAKKAH: Jordan's King Abdullah II (right) attends a meeting in Makkah with Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz (2nd right), Kuwait's Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (2nd left) and UAE's Vice President Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. — AFP

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait have offered \$2.5 billion in aid for Jordan to ease its economic crisis following a wave of anti-austerity protests, the Saudi state media announced yesterday. Jordan has been rocked in recent days by mass protests against price rises and a proposed tax hike as the government pushes measures to slash the country's debt, leading to the prime minister's resignation.

A four-nation summit in the holy city of Makkah, hosted by Saudi King Salman, offered Amman a bailout in the form of a deposit in the Jordanian central bank, World Bank guarantees as well as budgetary support over five years. The decision was taken in the Muslim holy city where King Salman hosted a summit with Jordan's King Abdullah, Kuwait's Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and UAE Vice President Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid.

Jordan is pushing fiscal consolidation measures required under an IMF financing program including tax increases and subsidy cuts that have weighed on poorer and middle-class families. Jordan's newly designated prime minister, Omar Al-Razzaz, said on Thursday he would drop a proposed income tax bill, conceding to a key demand of protesters who had already brought down the previous government.

"In light of the close brotherly ties... it was agreed that the three countries (Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait) would provide an economic aid package to Jordan totaling \$2.5 billion," the official Saudi Press Agency said. The crucial summit was attended by Jordan's King Abdullah II, who offered his gratitude to the three countries, adding the package will "contribute

Continued on Page 24

Fasting and materialism

Ramadan Kareem

By Hatem Basha

People often complain about the materialistic trend that has dominated our culture today. People are more concerned with satisfying the materialistic needs that seem to be growing continuously in a vicious, unquenchable cycle. We are more obsessed with getting the latest fashion in clothes and gadgets. The search for luxury in all aspects of life is endless. The consumerist passion is growing at the expense of the true inner human values.

People are more obsessed with acquiring more than they need or consume. Instead of consuming to live, many people reverse the logic and live to consume more and more. This materialistic culture entraps and enslaves people so they think of nothing else but how to 'get more and have more'. Every day we are flooded with thousands of advertisements that brainwash us into buying and consuming more than our basic needs. The advances in mass production, the competition among industrial nations, means of communications and transportation have made the problem more severe.

Materialism has greatly affected both the individual and the society. Fasting is an effective way to curb this severe competition for the materialism. Ramadan reminds Muslims of the other side of their being, which is the spiritual side. Fasting trains Muslims to transcend all the basic instinctive needs of the body to nurture the spirit. The important lesson is that if we are capable of exercising self-restraint over the basic things like food, drink and sex. We are in a better position to resist the material appetites that surround and entice us every day.

Abstaining from these physical needs has profound implications on the psychological and spiritual levels. Fasting teaches Muslims self-restraint, patience and endurance. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) described it as a shield in a famous hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, who said that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "Fasting is a shield. So the fasting person should avoid obscene speech and should not behave foolishly and ignorantly, and if somebody fights with him or insults him, he should tell him twice, 'I am fasting'".

The hadith acquires a new significance in the modern materialist world since fasting can help believers resist the lures and enticement of being trapped in following one's desires and lusts. A key aspect in fasting is that it develops the sense of sympathy and feeling of the poor and the needy.

Continued on Page 24

US offers North Korea 'unique' guarantees

SINGAPORE: The US has offered North Korea "unique" security guarantees to persuade it to give up its nuclear arsenal, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said yesterday, on the eve of a historic summit in Singapore. The White House said preparatory negotiations had "moved more quickly than expected" and Trump would leave today evening after his talks with Kim Jong Un, seemingly ruling out the possibility the unprecedented tete-a-tete would run to two days.

The meeting, long sought by Pyongyang, will be the first ever between a serving US president and a North Korean leader, and will focus on the nuclear bombs and ballistic missiles the North has spent decades developing. The Trump administration will only accept complete denuclearization of the North, Pompeo stressed. In return, Washington would offer "different and unique" guarantees "to provide them sufficient certainty that they can be comfortable that denuclearization is not something that ends badly for them".

He refused to go into details. But the North has long sought an end to the US military presence in the South, where Washington has around 28,000 troops stationed to protect it from its neighbor. Pyongyang has demanded the end of

Continued on Page 24



PURI: Indian artist Sudarshan Pattnaik, 65, finishes a sand sculpture depicting US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at Puri beach, ahead of the US-North Korea summit. — AFP

US-bound flight diverted to Ireland

NEW YORK: A United Airlines flight from Rome to Chicago was diverted to Shannon Airport in Ireland yesterday after "a message" was discovered on board, Irish police said. The message referred to a bomb on the plane, a

source with knowledge of the investigation said. The 207 passengers and 11 crew members disembarked the Boeing Co 767-330 at Shannon Airport at 2:15 pm, according to Jim Molloy, a representative of Ireland's police force. The passengers of flight UA971 were in the process of being searched, he said in an emailed statement. He gave no further details about the nature of the threat.

United said in a statement that the landing was due to "a potential security concern" but declined to comment fur-

ther. "After assessing the situation our crew made the decision to divert to the nearest available airport," it said. "Additional security screenings will be performed on all customers and baggage." The airline said on Twitter that the flight was now canceled and would depart for Chicago on Tuesday. The US government was aware of the incident and trying to establish if there was any kind of violent intent behind the threat, a US government source familiar with the investigation told Reuters.

The handwriting on the note was being analyzed to see if it matched with any other such notes, which are periodically found on aircraft, the source added. Police were also taking handwriting samples from the passengers, the Irish Times reported. The message was found in the plane toilet, it said, without citing sources. The United jet completed its descent after jettisoning some of the fuel loaded for its transatlantic crossing, according to recordings on air traffic control site LiveATC.net. — Reuters

'Shocking' die-off of Africa's oldest baobabs: Study

PARIS: Some of Africa's oldest and biggest baobab trees—a few dating all the way back to the ancient Greeks—have abruptly died, wholly or in part, in the past decade, researchers said yesterday. The trees, aged between 1,100 and 2,500 years and some as wide as a bus is long, may have fallen victim to climate change, the team speculated. "We report that nine of the 13 oldest... individuals have died, or at least their oldest parts/stems have collapsed and died, over the past 12 years,"

they wrote in the scientific journal Nature Plants, describing "an event of an unprecedented magnitude."

"It is definitely shocking and dramatic to experience during our lifetime the demise of so many trees with millennial ages," said the study's co-author Adrian Patru of the Babes-Bolyai University in Romania. Among the nine were four of the largest African baobabs. While the cause of the die-off remains unclear, the researchers "suspect that the demise of monumental baobabs may be associated at least in part with significant modifications of climate conditions that affect southern Africa in particular."

Further research is needed, said the team from Romania, South Africa and the United States, "to support or refute this supposition." Between 2005 and 2017, the researchers probed and dated

Continued on Page 24



OLTUKAI, TANZANIA: Maasai people gather under a baobab tree at Oltukai, 100 km west of Arusha, Tanzania, during a political rally organized by the incumbent Monduli Member of Parliament. — AFP

Local

Amir sends cable of thanks to Saudi King for his hospitality

Sheikh Sabah welcomes outcomes of summit



MAKKAH: This handout picture released by the Saudi Royal Palace yesterday shows Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (left) attending a meeting in Makkah to discuss the economic crisis in Jordan. —AFP and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets Jordanian King Abdullah II during the meeting.



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



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with UAE's Vice-President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashed Al Maktoum.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of thanks to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for the hospitality offered to him during his visit to sisterly Saudi Arabia where he attended a summit on shoring up the Jordanian economy in Holy Makkah on Sunday night.

His Highness the Amir expressed profound joy for meeting his brothers, the Jordanian King Abdullah II

and the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and the Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashed Al Maktoum. His Highness the Amir welcomed the outcomes of the summit and expressed his best wishes for King Salman bin Abdulaziz and the people of sisterly Saudi Arabia under the wise leadership of the King.

His Highness the Amir and his accompanying delega-

tion had returned in the early morning yesterday from Saudi Arabia after attending the four-party summit in Makkah on shoring up the Jordanian economy. His Highness the Amir was received at the airport by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and senior officials.

His Highness the Amir was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah

Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, Chief of Staff of His Highness the Amir's Office Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, Chief of Amiri Protocol Department Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah and Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah. In other news, Jordanian King Abdullah II, accompanied by a delegation, is set to arrive in Kuwait today on a fraternal visit. —KUNA

Crown Prince receives NUKS representatives

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Seif palace representatives of the administrative bodies at the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS). During his meeting with NUKS representatives at Kuwait University and in Britain, USA, Egypt and France, His Highness the Crown Prince urged the students to exert more efforts in their academic careers to serve their country.

His Highness also called on them to be good representatives of their country at all international forums, stressing that the political leadership will not hesitate in providing the amenities that will help them continue their education. The meeting was attended by Undersecretary of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan for Local Affairs Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Crown Prince met with the National Security Apparatus (NSA) chief Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, as well as Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Director General Lieutenant General Khaled Rakan Al-Mekrad. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with representatives of the administrative bodies at the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS). —KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Director General Lieutenant General Khaled Rakan Al-Mekrad.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Security Apparatus (NSA) chief Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

Zain celebrates Kuwait's top high school graduates

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, hosted a special ceremony to honor the outstanding achievements of Kuwait's top high school graduates. The ceremony was held at Zain's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, and witnessed the presence of the students' families and the company's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan.

Every year, Zain recognizes the achievements of top-performing students who excelled in their educational journey, and this year the company was determined to gather the outstanding students together to shed light on their efforts and accomplishments in the presence of their families.

Addressing the students, Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan said during her speech: "Today we celebrate a new generation of our outstanding high-school graduates and their dear families at Zain's Wonderful World. I congratulate you for achieving excellence, and we are very proud of your youth."

Roudhan continued: "At Zain, we are aware of the crucial role education plays in developing and advanc-

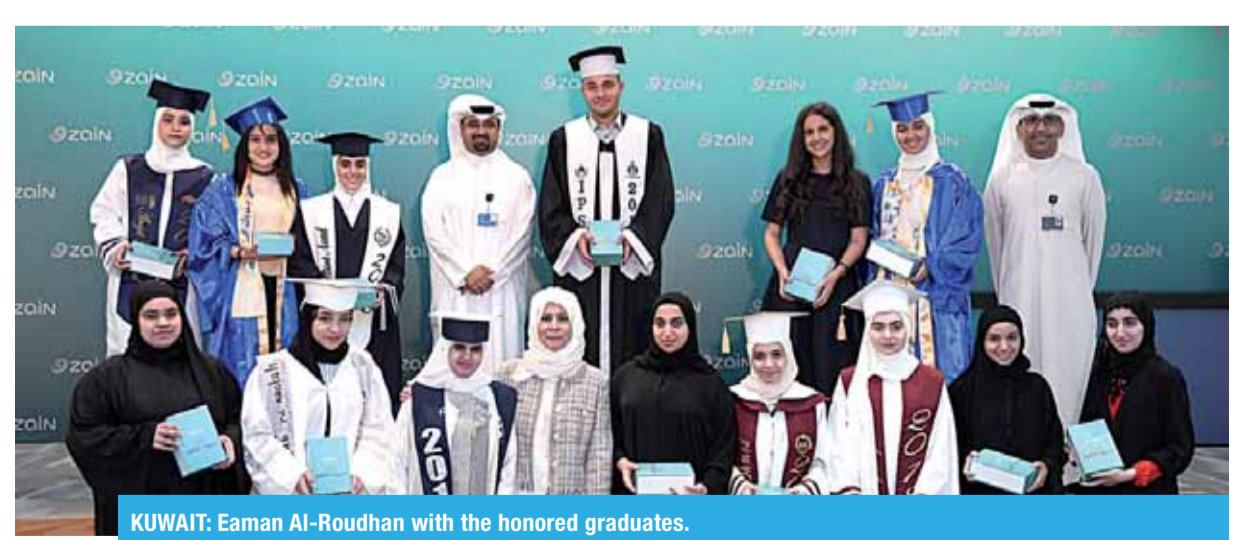
ing societies. Our recognition of your efforts today is part of our belief in the importance of education and science, as well as our support of the youth to advance our civilization as Muslims and Arabs. Our civilization was always built on our scientific and cultural progress."

Roudhan added: "I would like to remind you that this is only your first step in the journey of success and achievements, where you will face many challenges ahead of you. The future is in front of you, and I invite you to be honest with God and with yourselves, and be strong while facing the challenges of life, especially that soon you will enter college life, and after that the work environment, which is filled with responsibilities."

Roudhan concluded: "you are the future, and the future will be bright. Our trust in you is endless, and with your eagerness and your thirst for excellence, you will represent a new generation filled with hope and optimism for this nation, and reflect your ambitions in real life."

As a leading national company, Zain firmly believes in the importance of contributing to the progress of the education sector, and looks to empower and prepare the youth for the important roles they will play in the further progress of the country.

Zain is fully committed to supporting young people in their development through a wide variety of community activities and events, including award programs, educational programs, and career development initia-



KUWAIT: Eaman Al-Roudhan with the honored graduates.

tives. The company's solid CSSR strategy is what drives Zain to continue being committed to support all sectors of society.

Zain believes the development of the communities in which it operates is a very important part of the company's overall success. The company considers education as a core element in the community development process, and it will continue to support it to contribute to the further progress of the education sector.



Eaman Al-Roudhan honors one of the graduates.

Local

DGCA signs contract to develop navigation systems

Customs to adopt RFID technology at Kuwait airport exits



KUWAIT: DGCA Chairman Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah (right) signs a contract with Deerns CEO Jan Karel Mak to provide management and supervision services aimed at implementing a range of technical facilities at Kuwait International Airport. — KUNA



Minister for Housing and Services Jenan Bushehri (center) is seen during an inspection tour at the airport.

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) signed yesterday a contract worth KD 10.19 million (\$33.6 million) with Dutch Deerns company for providing management and supervision services aimed at implementing a range of technical facilities at Kuwait International Airport.

Under the five-year contract, the Dutch company will provide services to develop meteorology and navigation systems at Kuwait International Airport, and to update technical guidelines, DGCA Chairman Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said in a statement. It will also contribute to the development of navigational capabilities, especially after the addition of new runways and a control tower to boost air traffic capacity before the opening of the main airport (I2), he added. The contract was signed by Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, and Deerns CEO Jan Karel Mak. Founded in 1928, Deerns Company has many branches in the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Brazil and the United States.

RFID technology
Separately, Customs officials at Kuwait International Airport will employ RFID technology for the inspection of arrivals starting Thursday. RFID, or radio frequency identification, uses wireless electromagnetic frequencies to identify and track moving objects.

Directorate General of Customs head Jamal Al-Jalawi said that a total four exits at the airport, which await travellers upon their arrival, will be equipped with the technology. One of the exits will be assigned to passengers who are without hand luggage, while those carrying luggage will leave the airport from the remaining three, he was quoted as saying in a statement. These exits will aim to ease arrival procedures for travellers and to ensure that their departure from the airport is not affected by any delay, suggested the official.

Meanwhile, he said that the State Minister for Housing and Services Jenan Bushehri recently carried an inspection tour of the airport. The visit was to review plans to renovate the airport and activate newly-adopted luggage inspection technology, which will protect the

country from the trafficking of illegal substances.

Added value
Bushehri said that female inspectors would add quality manpower to the Directorate General of Customs' operations. Women working as inspectors will compensate any possible shortage among inspection staff, Bushehri said in a statement during the visit. Bushehri commended keenness of Kuwait women in enrolling in difficult jobs, which used to be restricted for men. The Kuwaiti women, she added, were working side-by-side with their male colleagues. Jalawi said meanwhile that said recruiting of women to work as inspectors was crucially important. "Female inspectors demonstrated capabilities and efficiency, and have been carrying out major tasks that protect the country from the smuggling of dangerous materials," he said.

Landline cut
In other news, the Ministry of State for Services Affairs announced on Sunday suspension of the programmed cutting system of tele-



Minister of State for Services Jenan Bushehri speaks with female inspectors at Kuwait International Airport.

phone landlines for this month due to Eid Al-Fitr. Based on recommendations by minister Bushehri, there will be no cut of telephone landlines in June because of Eid Al-Fitr, expected Friday, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of State for Housing Affairs Bothaina Al-Subaie said in a press statement. The ministry took the move to share citizens and expats celebrations of Eid Al-Fitr, she added. Cutting service is very effective

to push subscribers to pay telephone bills, she said, noting that warnings are sent ahead of the move. Meanwhile, Subaie congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as the Kuwaiti people on Eid Al-Fitr. — KUNA

Mubarak Port to create over 16,000 jobs

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A recent economic study showed that the presence of Mubarak Port, a cargo airport and an industrial zone requires the provision of supporting logistics services, so it was suggested to build a logistics services zone over an area of 2.7 sq km on Boubyan island to serve around 8.1 million containers, which can be expanded in the future. The study also expected logistics service prices to be highly competitive with a low cost of electricity.

Furthermore, the study by the Durat team expected the zone's revenues to reach KD 1,267,023,500, its construction cost to be KD 1,017,857,143 and the total job opportunities it will provide to be 16,109. The study also highlighted that since transportation is the lifeblood of regional and international economies, it would be highly significant to provide all types of land and marine transportation options on Boubyan Island to help turn it into a regional commercial hub. In addition, the study showed that the cargo airport would be built over an area of 6 sq km

with a total cost of KD 41,787,500 and expected revenues of KD 43,920,635.

School nurses
The Ministry of Health (MOH) recently requested the finance ministry's approval to offer a tender to provide buses for school nursing staff members for public bidding. The tender costs KD 1.46 million to provide the buses for two years starting from September.

Water reserves
Well-informed sources at the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) said as part of the ministry's efforts to increase Kuwait's strategic reserves of water and provide enough water supplies, a few water projects will be launched soon. The sources added that MEW finally received approval from the Civil Tenders Commission (CTC) to offer for public bidding a tender to build and maintain two concrete freshwater reservoirs with a capacity of 85 million imperial gallons each in Western Funaitees. The sources said that once all proceedings are complete, MEW will sign a contract with the winning company to execute the project within 24 months starting in Jan 2019 and ending in Jan 2021 at an estimated cost of KD 4.5 million.

Tenders canceled
Following months of correspondence with various judicial and monitoring bodies requesting the cancellation of

two tenders (#260 and #261), Minister of Public Works Hossam Al-Roumi urged the CTC to cancel both tenders and added three more to bring the total number of tenders he cancelled to five - 242, 243, 257, 260 and 261. Informed sources said the cancelled tenders were all for road projects. The sources added that Roumi's letter did not mention any new reasons for requesting the cancellation despite the soundness of the procedures followed.

Appointment delayed
Dossiers of 10 senior officials at the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) are still not settled before making the final decision about merging MGRP with the Public Authority for Manpower by the beginning of the next parliamentary term in October, said informed sources. The sources warned that in anticipation of the decision about the merging process, the appointment of these officials had been delayed.

Electricity towers
The execution sector at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare officially commenced work at the Southern Abdullah Al-Mubarak project by removing seven high-voltage electricity towers without affecting the northern region's power supply, said informed sources, noting that the project includes 3,260 housing units.

NBK organizes events for children at its hospital

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continued organizing initiatives for the month of May designed especially for children undergoing therapy at its Specialty Hospital and Stem Cell unit. The May plan comprised several fun - educative activities as the healthy way of brushing teeth in collaboration with 'Asnan Tower', a slime activity, one of the trendiest game and children's favorite and an activity consists of building their own wooden toy by knowing the forms of structure in collaboration with Makers Academy, a part of the international exhibition 'Makers Faire'.

The fun events come as part of a program designed to engage with children and runs all year long. Children and the Hospital's team took part in those activities and fun workshops to end the spring season.

"NBK is keen on being part of the children's happy moments during their treatment," said Joanne Al-Abdul Jaleel, NBK Public Relations Officer. "The activities were marked by awareness and intellectual challenges. We are aware of the importance of providing a healthy environment for children to be able to stand for their treatment strong and happy. We are proud seeing our children happy every week we visit them for a new initiative".

"We take great pride today in integrating a program designed to ensure the best care for the sick children and their families," noted Abdul Jaleel. "We teamed up with the medical staff to make the children and their families happy. NBK also organized story telling sessions and movie

nights for children at the Specialty Hospital and Stem Cell Therapy Unit during the month of April, as part of a fun-activity program that was launched to support children while they get their treatment and extends all the year round. NBK Children's Hospital stands as a landmark for the bank's social initiatives towards children. NBK expanded the hospital's capacity and opened the only Stem Cell Therapy Unit for children in Kuwait, further expanding its hospital's abilities to treat children with cancer and blood diseases.

NBK's social initiatives reflect the bank's high sense of duty and responsibility towards the community. It is a well rooted tradition that has been carried out by NBK each year in its efforts to continuously have an active role in Kuwait's society.

Shopper mugged at co-op

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: An Asian man reported that his handbag was stolen from a shopping cart at Salwa Co-op Society. Responding to the report, Hawally detectives immediately formed a special investigation team that managed to identify the thief, who was identified as a 28-year-old citizen. Security sources said the suspect took the bag into the co-op's mobile phone branch, where he opened it and took KD 100 in cash, in addition to the victim's ID. The suspect was summoned by Salwa detectives before whom he confessed. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

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Local



KIB concludes its Ramadan campaign, wishing everyone a blessed Eid Al-Fitr



Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB Nawaf Najia (center right) and KIB team at the girgian celebration at The Avenues.



Celebrating girgian with children at Farwaniya Hospital.

KUWAIT: With the conclusion of Ramadan, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) concluded its Ramadan campaign for this year, which was launched at the beginning of the holy month under its new slogan 'Bank for Life'. As always, the campaign featured a host of various activities and social events for the bank's customers, employees as well as all segments of the local community. The campaign came as part of the bank's leading role as a national financial institution, committed to being a partner in every aspect of people's lives.

On this occasion, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, lauded the diverse number of initiatives within the bank's Ramadan campaign, which reflect its active role in promoting social unity and upholding deeply-cherished societal values held during this holy month.

With the start of Ramadan, KIB kicked off the holy month by distributing its Ramadan calendar timings as a gift to its customers at its head office and at branches across the country. The bank also launched its annual 'Mashla' initiative to provide essential food supplies to needy families in Kuwait throughout the holy month of Ramadan. A team of dedicated volunteers from KIB, as well as volunteers from Hassad Group helped prepare and deliver the food packages. As has become its annual custom, KIB also launched its annual iftar meal initiative for those fasting during Ramadan. The iftar meals consisted of nutritious, complete daily meals, which continued to be distributed throughout the Holy Month of Ramadan.

This year's Ramadan campaign included an abundance of community-based initiatives and activities that reflected long-held traditions and customs. KIB organized a one-of-a-kind girgian event at The Avenues. The event featured a pool of candy where participants were tied and suspended above then lowered into the pool to collect as much candy as they can in a fun-filled way.

Additionally, the bank organized visits to the elderly care center and the Kuwait Orphanage, both community care centers under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. KIB also organized a visit to the children's department at Farwaniya Hospital on the occasion of girgian to spread joy and happiness amongst them.

As per its ongoing commitment, KIB also continued to support youth and sports activities throughout Ramadan. Accordingly, the bank participated in a number of annual sports activities and programs, including the late Jassim Al-Sharhan Ramadan annual football tournament and Al-Qattan football tournament. Additionally, KIB sponsored and participated with a team of notable international and local athletes in Al-Roudhan Tournament, who competed for first place. This Ramadan, KIB also organized the 8th Ramadan Football Tournament for its staff.

As part of its leading role in fostering strong religious values across different segments of the local community, KIB organized the annual Ramadan Quran competition for children of the bank's customers, as well as employees and their children. This year's Ramadan Quran competition was divided into four categories based on participants' ages. Of which, three categories were dedicated to children of employees and customers. Participants born in 2010 and later were required to memorize surat Al-Fajr, surat Al-Balad and surat Al-Shams. Those born in 2006 and later were required to memorize surat Tabarak and surat Al-Qiyama. As for the third category, participants born in 2002 and later were required to memorize surat Al-Rahman and surat Qaf, whereas the fourth category was dedicated to employees and required them to memorize surat Al-Fath. The competition winners were honored at a ceremony, in the presence of the Chairman, Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Acting Chief Executive



Children's joy of girgian at The Avenues.

Officer Mohamed Said El Saka.

As the last days of the holy month of Ramadan rolled in, and on the occasion of Eid, KIB concluded its Ramadan program with the distribution of vouchers to families in need across Kuwait. The initiative aimed at sharing the joy of Eid with the needy by spreading the spirit of celebration and happiness amongst them.

Najia concluded by saying that, as part of its commitment towards promoting religious values and princi-

ples, KIB believes in the importance of carrying out these Ramadan activities during the holy month. Accordingly, KIB continues to launch its annual Ramadan campaign, dedicating it to initiatives and activities that aim at strengthening social ties and the virtue of giving across the community. In addition to embodying the virtuous spirit of the holy month, the campaign also reflects KIB's vision and mission, thereby reaffirming its commitment to the community.



Girgian celebration at The Avenues.



KIB football team participating in Al-Roudhan Football Tournament.



Distribution of iftar meals.



Volunteers of 'Al-Mashla' initiative.



Volunteers of the iftar meal initiative.

Local



International Flavors

Mok Pa and Op Kai: Two dishes from Laos on your Ramadan table

By Faten Omar

Kuwait Times is adding more Asian dishes to your Ramadan table. Laos brings you items from their traditional cuisine; Mok Pa, which is Lao style steamed fish served usually in banana leaves, and Op Kai (stewed chicken), prepared by Phouangsavath Ngaovongsi, wife of Laos's ambassador to Kuwait. Most items in the Lao cuisine contain vegetables and herbs, rice or noodles, fish, chicken and beef. Laos is blessed with a huge variety of fresh fruits, and most meals are accompanied with freshly cut fruits such as mango, pineapple, watermelon and dragon fruit. The freshness of the ingredients is very important to Lao people who like to prepare everything from scratch rather than use pre-prepared ingredients. They believe that this makes their food more delicious. Herbs such as galangal and lemongrass are their favorite, and 'padaek' (Laos fish sauce) is found on every table.

- 3 tbsp rice soaking
- 5 pieces chili
- 5 pieces hairy basil
- 5 pieces spring onion
- 5 pieces kaffir lime leaves
- 1/2 tea sp salt
- 1 tbsp padaek (laotian fomented fish sauce)
- Banana Leave/ aluminum wrapper

Preparation:
• Wash fish with pure water and cut it a small piece.
• Soak crushed or pounded rice with lemongrass, chilies and onions.
• Clean and cut kaffir lime leaves and other vegetables.

How to cook:
Put the fish on wild pot and add lemongrass, onions, fish sauce, salt, monosodium glutamate, coriander leaves and others. Then stir the mixture and put it on the center of the banana leaf, then wrap and steam it for 30 minutes.



Op Kai and Mok Pa

Mok Pa - steamed fish (6 people)

- Ingredients:**
- 1/2 kg fish
 - 3 pieces lemongrass
 - 3 pieces onion
 - 1 pieces coriander leaves
 - 2 tbsp fish sauce
 - 1 tea sp monosodium glutamate

Op Kai - Stewed chicken (4 People)

- Ingredients:**
- 1.5 kg whole chicken
 - 3 pieces lemongrass
 - 2 pieces garlic
 - 1 piece galangal
 - 1 tsp fish sauce
 - 1 tea sp monosodium glutamate
 - 10 pieces kaffir lime leaves
 - 1 tsp salt
 - 1 tsp soy sauce
 - 1 tsp sugar
 - 1 tea sp pepper

Preparation:
• Wash chicken with pure water and cut it into small pieces.
• Crush the garlic and mix it with sugar.
• Slice lemongrass and galangal.
• Slice 1/3 kaffir lime leaves.

How to cook:
• Mix the garlic-sugar mix, salt, fish sauce,



KUWAIT: Phouangsavath Ngaovongsi, wife of Laos's ambassador to Kuwait. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

monosodium glutamate and pepper together, and put them on the chicken for an hour.

• Put a pot on the stove and add two tablespoon of butter, chicken, lemongrass, and kaffir lime leaves. Stir them all for five minutes and pour water.

• Cover the pot for 25 minutes, then put the mixture on a plate and serve.



The ingredients.



Ramadan, the perfect time for family gatherings

By Faten Omar

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.

Ramadan is about spending precious time bonding with family, which helps make the holy month an extra-special time of the year. The family usually gathers around at iftar time to break their fast as parents, siblings and relatives share their meal together. Most of people's memories in Ramadan are about those large, joyful gatherings.

Family time in Ramadan does not end at iftar, though. After iftar, families usually gather to do some activities together such as playing traditional games or watching Ramadan's soap operas. Gathering for a meal in Ramadan means much more than just

the food. It is as much about satisfying your spiritual and emotional needs for companionship, as it is about satisfying your hunger. And who else are better to build that companionship with than our families?

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



KFH organizes girgian event at Jahra Hospital

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the confectionary (girgian) celebration for kids at Jahra Hospital. This comes as part of KFH's Ramadan program 'Increase Good Deeds in Ramadan 4' that affirms the pioneering role of the bank in the social responsibility, while contributing in strengthening the social ties.

The event included many activities that had a positive effect on the kids, who believe that such activities organized by a prestigious institution, play a role in

strengthening the society ties. It is worth noting that KFH is keen to hold similar events every year, as part of its social responsibility, which reinforces the values of the society.

KFH Ramadan program 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.



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Malaysia wants to be friendly, not indebted, to China

Page 8

Page 9

Trump habit of ripping up docu headache for record-keepers



A handout picture taken in the search and rescue zone in the Mediterranean sea on June 9, 2018 and released yesterday by SOS Mediterranee NGO shows migrants being rescued before boarding the French NGO's ship Aquarius. — AFP

Spain offers to take in migrant ship

Italy and Malta refuse to let stranded vessel dock

ROME: Spain offered to take in a ship stranded in the Mediterranean with 629 migrants aboard after Italy and Malta refused to let the vessel dock in their ports. The migrants, including pregnant women and scores of children, were saved by the French charity SOS Mediterranee on Saturday. They were taken on board its ship Aquarius, which is now between Malta and Sicily. But Malta and Italy - whose new populist government has vowed a tough new stance on immigration - have both refused to take the migrants in, triggering concern in the international community about their plight.

Spain's new Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez agreed to allow the ship to dock in its eastern port of Valencia. "The prime minister has given instructions for Spain to honor international commitments on humanitarian crises and announced that the country will receive the ship Aquarius," his office said in a statement. "It is our obligation to help to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe and to offer a safe port to these people."

'Swift resolution'

The UN had called on Malta and Italy to immediately allow the boat to dock, describing the situation as "an urgent humanitarian imperative". It suggested that the hundreds on board "are running out of provisions." The EU and the bloc's

biggest member state Germany made similar pleas. "The priority of both the Italian and Maltese authorities should be ensuring these people receive the care they need," European Commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas told reporters, calling for a "swift resolution".

Italy's refusal to take in the migrants is the first sign of the new government's hardened stance on immigration. Its far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini showed no sign of backing down yesterday. "Saving lives is a duty, turning Italy into a huge refugee camp is not. Italy is done bending over backwards and obeying, this time THERE IS SOMEONE WHO SAYS NO," he wrote on Twitter followed by the hashtag #closethedoors.

The Maltese government insisted it was "acting in full conformity with its international obligations". SOS Mediterranee tweeted late Sunday that the Aquarius had received instructions from the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre to stand by in its current position 35 nautical miles from Italy and 27 nautical miles from

Malta. "We haven't moved since last night, people are starting to wonder why we've stopped," journalist Anelise Borges, who is aboard the Aquarius, said in a tweet. MSF Sea (Doctors Without Borders) said the medical situation of those on board was "stable for now but unnecessary delay to disembarkation in safe port puts vulnerable patients at risk."

"Particularly seven pregnant woman, 15 with serious chemical burns and several critical drowning hypothermia patients," MSF Sea said.

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said Sunday that Rome had sent two patrol ships with doctors on board "ready to intervene and ensure the health of anyone on board the Aquarius who might have the need". The migrants were rescued in six separate night-time operations in the central Mediterranean on Saturday. "The people we saved yesterday were in a difficult condition, at least 50 were at risk of drowning. We need to have an idea of what port to go to, something that up to now we haven't had," Aquarius crew member Alessandro Porro

told news channel Sky TG24 on Sunday. The French organization said those brought on board included 123 unaccompanied minors, 11 small children and the seven pregnant women.

'A land of refuge'

Under EU rules migrants must apply for asylum in the European country where they first arrive. That has put pressure on Italy and Greece, the entry points for hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia since 2015. Some in Italy have offered to take in migrants. The mayor of Taranto, Rinaldo Melucci said the southern port city was "ready to embrace every life in danger". "Our land has always been one of refuge. I don't know how you can send away 629 human lives."

Naples mayor Luigi de Magistris said on Twitter that "if a minister without a heart leaves pregnant women, children, old people, human beings to die, the port of Naples is ready to welcome them".

EU leaders in December had set an end-June deadline for an overhaul of rules to create a permanent mechanism to deal with migrants in the event of a new emergency. The summer of 2016 saw a surge in mass drownings in the Mediterranean, at the peak of Europe's worst migration crisis since World War II. — AFP



Salvini shows no sign of backing down

13 dead, 31 wounded in Kabul attack

KABUL: A suicide attacker blew himself up yesterday as government workers queued for an early bus home during the holy month of Ramadan, killing at least 13 people and wounding 31, officials and hospital staff said. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the latest attack in the Afghan capital, a day before the government's separate ceasefire with the Taliban was due to start.

The blast happened at the main gate of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, police and health ministry spokesmen told AFP. Employees were gathered at the entrance of the compound waiting for a bus to take them home when the bomber blew himself up in the crowd, said rural ministry spokesman Faridoun Azhand, who was inside the building at the time. "I was in my office when I heard a big blast," another employee told AFP. "Most of my colleagues were leaving for the day to go home. I am worried about my colleagues. We are told to stay inside for now."

Police spokesman Hashmat Stanikzai confirmed the attacker had targeted the employees as they waited for the bus at around 1:00 pm (0830 GMT). They were leaving early due to the holy month of Ramadan, when most Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. The attack, which IS claimed via their Amaq propaganda agency, killed 13 people and wounded 31, Azhand told AFP. A doctor at a hospital treating many of the victims confirmed the death toll. Police and health officials said earlier that 12 people were killed and 31 wounded.

The attack was just one of several around Afghanistan yesterday. Militants raided a government building in the eastern city of Jalalabad in Nangarhar province, prompting terrified employees to jump out of the windows, officials said. A suicide bomber blew himself up at the entrance to the education department, triggering a fierce battle between gunmen and Afghan security forces. Nangarhar provincial governor



KABUL: Afghan relatives stand over the dead body of a victim at Isteqbal Hospital following a suicide attacker blew himself up among government ministry employees yesterday. — AFP

spokesman Attaullah Khogyani told AFP.

At least 10 people were wounded, city health department director Najibullah Kamawal told AFP. In another incident an explosion inside a house in Kabul killed one person and wounded three others, Stanikzai said. The three wounded were detained after police found explosives, including suicide vests, in the building which they suspect was being used by militants planning attacks in the city.

Storm before the calm?

Taliban and IS militants have stepped up their attacks on Kabul in particular in recent years, making it the deadliest place in the country for civilians. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Thursday announced police and troops would halt hostilities with the Taliban for a week - though he warned that operations against other groups, including IS, would continue. The ceasefire would last from the "27th of Ramadan until the fifth day of Eid-al-Fitr", he said, indicating it could run from June 12-19.

The Taliban said Saturday their fighters would stop attacking Afghan security forces but only for the first three days of Eid, the holiday capping Ramadan. They said they would continue attacking US-led NATO troops. It is the first time the militants have agreed to suspend fighting since the 2001 US invasion, and the move was largely welcomed by war-weary Afghans. Both sides have vowed to retaliate if attacked during the ceasefire.

If it holds, analysts had expressed cautious optimism that the agreements could help build trust between the government and the Taliban and lay the groundwork for peace talks. But with myriad armed groups in Afghanistan, there are still fears that IS could continue to carry out attacks - or even be helped by the Haqqani Network, a brutal arm of the Taliban that is suspected of partnering with IS on attacks in Kabul in the past. The latest violence comes as dozens of protesters march hundreds of kilometres towards Kabul to demand an end to the nearly 17-year conflict. — AFP

India seeks warrant for fugitive celebrity jeweler

MUMBAI: India has requested an international arrest warrant for fugitive billionaire jeweler Nirav Modi, federal police said yesterday hours after reports claimed he had sought asylum in Britain. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), probing a multi-billion-dollar scam allegedly involving Modi, said they had sent a request to Interpol to issue a so-called red corner notice seeking his detention. "A request has been sent to the Interpol," CBI official R K Gaur told AFP.

Gaur however refused to confirm newspaper reports about attempts by Modi - worth \$1.73 billion according to Forbes, placing him 85th on India's rich list - to seek refuge in Britain. The Financial Times newspaper on Monday cited officials in India and Britain as saying that the jeweler, whose clients included movie stars, had sought asylum in Britain for what he called "political persecution". A spokesman for Britain's Home Office said it does not comment on individual cases.

His high-end eponymous brand has stores in several of the world's major cities and boasts celebrity customers including actresses Naomi Watts and Kate Winslet and Bollywood megastar Priyanka Chopra. But he fled India in February for an unknown location after being accused of being at the centre of a \$1.8-billion fraud involving India's second largest public lender, Punjab National Bank (PNB).

The 47-year-old and his uncle and business partner Mehul Choksi, also a diamond merchant, allegedly defrauded PNB out of 2.8 billion rupees (\$43.8 million). This figure is said to be just a part of the total losses. Authorities say he diverted large sums of the loan money illegally to invest in foreign-based

companies. His escape had caused massive public outcry, with opposition political parties accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of helping him flee. Several Indian courts have issued arrest warrants over his failure to appear before them since he fled. The Enforcement Directorate, India's financial fraud-investigating agency, had unsuccessfully approached Interpol in March for an international arrest warrant.

Soured relations

India's government is trying to reduce the crippling debts of the country's embattled state banks, including PNB. It recently announced a \$32-billion recapitalization plan to help them clean up their books ahead of the general election in 2019. Last month PNB posted the largest ever quarterly loss for an Indian lender 134.17 billion rupees - largely because it had to set aside funds to pay other banks over the scam.

Modi's reported attempt to seek asylum in Britain comes as India's government seeks the extradition from there of liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya. Mallya is wanted in connection with allegedly unpaid loans to his beleaguered Kingfisher Airlines after he absconded to Britain in 2016. The case has soured British-Indian relations. An Indian government statement said that Shri Kiren Rijiju, deputy interior minister, told yesterday his visiting British counterpart Susan Williams that Britain "should not be viewed as a safe haven for men wanted by the law". India's PTI news agency quoted unnamed sources as saying that Williams confirmed in the meeting Modi's presence in Britain but that she had promised London's full cooperation. — AFP

International

Corruption, negligence blamed for death trap sewers in Iraq

More than 5,000 fake contracts have been signed in public sector

BAGHDAD: While they are long accustomed to the stench of corruption, two grim and eerily similar tragedies have shocked even hardened Iraqis, who blame graft and negligence for deaths and much more. In separate parts of the country, young people have stumbled into neglected sewers where they suffocated, with would-be rescuers succumbing to the same gruesome fate. The bigger of the two accidents was in Basra in oil-rich southern Iraq, where seven-year-old Karrar Al-Shomari plunged through an uncovered manhole in the Al-Moafaqiya neighborhood.

Six bystanders who had until then been relaxing in the relatively cool evening air tried to help - two were asphyxiated by the sewer's noxious fumes. "We had asked the council for a cover for the sewer a week before, and the only response we got was 'send an official request'", one of the surviving rescuers said in a video posted on Facebook, his voice shaking with rage. All four survivors were hospitalized; online videos show them hooked up to breathing apparatus. One is in a critical condition. For journalist and activist Ahmad Abdel Samad, the episode is more than an accident. It is "an atrocious crime stemming from the actions of corrupt enterprises," he said.

“ We only wish for a natural death ”

than 5,000 fake contracts have been signed in the public sector. And over the same period \$228 billion has gone up in smoke thanks to shell companies, according to Iraq's parliament. That figure is more than the country's gross domestic product and nearly three times the annual budget. Some public works never move beyond the paper they're printed on: others stop abruptly after an initial flurry of activity. An unfinished sewerage project accounts for the other recent tragedy, with a policeman dying trying to save a young man in Diwaniya around 10 days ago.

Monitoring a surveillance camera, Colonel Hussein Manafi saw Ali Farhan fall into a sewer in the eponymous capital of the southern agricultural province. He rushed to the scene, but in vain - both men died. And these were not the first fatalities at the water treatment plant: a girl died at the unfinished facility in 2015. The project got underway in 2011, when the government mandated state firm Al-Rafidein to equip Diwaniya city with a sewerage network. The state paid 218 billion dinars (more than \$175 million) for the project that should have been completed in less than three years.

'Negligence killed my brother'

Back in Basra, Iyad Mohsen buried his brother Imed - one of the two people who died trying to rescue little Karrar - on Friday. "Negligence killed my brother, leaving three children without a father and a pregnant wife", he said, lambasting "the bureaucracy" that eats away at Iraq's social and economic fabric. "The authorities said they would only put a cover back on this sewer



BASRA: Iraqi men show the sewer pit on June 9, 2018 where Imed Al-Rubaye and Adel Al-Sari died trying to save a 7-year-old child who had fallen into it. — AFP

after authorizations by the municipal council and a series of other procedures", he told AFP.

The municipal council said it was grappling with regular theft of iron. "People steal (manhole) covers to resell to iron smelters", district spokesman Najah Shaker told

AFP. But in a country wracked for decades by wars, violence and corruption, avoidable accidents arouse anger. "It seems Iraqis must all be shot dead, die fighting jihadists or by falling in sewers," said journalist Abdel Samad. "We only wish for a natural death." — AFP

Blistered and hungry: Afghans walk for peace

GHAZNI: Hobbled by blisters and stalked by hunger, dozens of Afghan protesters are marching hundreds of kilometres across the war-torn country demanding an end to the nearly 17-year conflict. Nine people began the weeks-long anti-war march in May, but their numbers have since swelled to around 50, organizers say, as their demands for an end to fighting gain traction among ordinary Afghans increasingly fed up with years of bloodshed. The arduous journey began in the southern province of Helmand, a Taliban stronghold. The group hopes to reach the capital Kabul, some 700 km away, before the end of the holy month of Ramadan this week where it plans to present a list of demands for peace to Afghan leaders. Among the protesters is Zabeer Ahmad Zindani, who was blinded in a roadside explosion several years ago that also killed his sister. "We are tired of this war and bloodshed," Zindani told AFP as the group arrived in Ghazni, the capital of the southeastern province of the same name, over the weekend. "Both sides should sit down for peace talks. We want a permanent and sustainable peace."

The group is also calling for a ceasefire - but longer than the ones announced by the Afghan government and Taliban for the Eid holiday that follows Ramadan - and a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. After weeks of walking along asphalt roads in the heat, sleeping under trees or in mosques, and weakened by fasting for Ramadan, the group is now within



This picture taken on June 8, 2018 shows Afghan peace activists shouting slogans in demand to an end to the war as they start their march from Helmand to Kabul in Ghazni province. — AFP

200 km of the Afghan capital. Initially ridiculed for their plan to walk to Kabul, the protesters now enjoy growing support as more Afghans pay attention to their cause and take to social media to cheer them on. "Your every step gives us hope for peace, continue your march until we have peace," Jamilurrahman wrote on Facebook. A user called Hamidullah posted: "May Allah give you paradise for every step you take for peace. May peace prevail in every part of our country."

The march, which is believed to be the first of its kind in Afghanistan, emerged out of a sit-in protest and hunger strike in the Helmand provincial capital Lashkar Gah. That demonstration, which began spontaneously after a car bomb attack in the city on March 23, triggered similar movements by war-weary Afghans around the country. But when the Taliban and security forces failed to heed their demands to stop fighting, some of the protesters decided to take their message directly to the country's top leaders.—AFP

Macedonia faces revising how to teach its history

SKOPJE: From piles of toys cluttering the attic of his family home in Skopje, Nikola Cvetoski eventually extracts the "Legend of Ancient Macedonia". With this big, red book written by a local politician and published two years after Macedonia's 1991 independence, "society told us that everything we had been taught was no longer the truth," he told AFP. "Suddenly, the schools were demanding that students buy this book," fumed the 65-year-old retired mechanic, who grew up during Josip Broz Tito's regime when Macedonia was part of communist Yugoslavia.

Macedonia's history textbooks now look set for another overhaul as the Balkans country closes in on a settlement with neighboring Greece in a decades-long, bitter dispute over the right to call itself the Republic of Macedonia. But revising the national narrative, built up over more than two decades, may prove harder than changing the country's name.

'National romanticism'

Under Tito, a common Yugoslav identity was promoted that eclipsed learning at school in Macedonia about the likes of

ancient warrior king Alexander III of Macedon, better known as Alexander the Great, and his father Philip II. But after the war-torn former Yugoslav Federation disintegrated during the 1990s, Macedonia like other Balkan countries saw a return of old nationalist sentiments that had been hushed by Tito's regime.

Historian Todor Cepreganov said there was a "renewal of a national romanticism" in Macedonia, which would be boosted by right-wing leader Nikola Gruevski's grip on power from 2006 to 2016. As a result, Macedonian history textbooks started to look quite different. By the 2011 edition, pupils aged 11 and 12 learned how, in the Macedonian state under Philip, the ancient king had "conquered the Hellenic colonies".

And that his son, "Alexander the Macedonian", had "managed to defeat them (the Greeks), forcing them to recognise his authority", the textbook reads. Indeed, even if reconciliation now looks on the cards with Greece in the name row, both countries continue to stake a claim to Alexander the Great.

What's in a name?

For more than a quarter of a century, Greece and Macedonia have rowed over the right of the former Yugoslav republic to call itself Macedonia, which Athens objects to because it has its own northern province of that name. Greece fears the name, Republic of Macedonia, may imply territorial ambitions and also accuses Skopje of trying to usurp the heritage of the ancient Macedonians and stake a claim to Alexander the Great. After recent talks between the two neighbors, a resolution may now be close.

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International

Mexico leftist's pitch to Trump: Growth, not walls to fix migration

Lopez Obrador could be the perfect foil for Trump

MEXICO CITY: The politician leading the race to be Mexico's next leader said on Sunday he wants to broker a deal with US President Donald Trump to stem illegal immigration through jobs and development rather than a border wall. Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, the favorite to win Mexico's July 1 presidential election, said he hoped to craft a deal with Trump similar to the "Alliance for Progress", an aid plan launched in 1961 by then-president John F Kennedy to help Latin America.

"Our dream, which we'll achieve regardless of whether Trump accepts or not, is that the Mexican can work and be happy where he was born," Lopez Obrador said during a campaign event in the southern border city of Tapachula. Aides to Lopez Obrador, a leftist former mayor of Mexico City, say he thinks he can find common ground with Trump over migration, which has fueled tensions between the two countries.

For months the Mexican candidate has been working on his plan to improve wages and create better conditions for Mexican workers. It must also raise living standards in Central America and create more job opportunities there, said Lopez Obrador, 64. Skeptics, however, doubt Lopez Obrador could persuade Trump to abandon his proposed border wall, a signature campaign pledge that fires up his political base, or that Trump would embrace a program to create employment in Mexico, which the US president accuses of stealing American jobs.

Part of Lopez Obrador's pitch, aides say, rests on his willingness to say the buck stops with him. The candidate has said repeatedly that Mexico must do more to solve its own problems, including fighting corruption and violent crime, a view that Trump shares. "Andres' point is that it's (Mexico's) fault, it's not the fault of the United States," said campaign aide Marcelo Ebrard, who succeeded Lopez Obrador as mayor, serving from 2006-2012.

Lopez Obrador's advisers say his plan has progressed on the back of months of study of the US president. The candidate said he would detail his proposal in due course and that he also wanted Canada to be part of it. Lopez

Obrador has already talked of creating a special zone along Mexico's northern border with lower taxes and higher wages. His advisers told Reuters that measures could also be directed at the southern border and elsewhere to contain migration. If elected, Lopez Obrador would take office on Dec 1. Aides say he would push for a development deal with Trump soon after assuming power.

Kennedy's 1961 "Alliance for Progress" was a multi-billion dollar program that set out to improve democracy and living standards in Latin America. It had limited success. It is unclear how Lopez Obrador's plan would be funded or win over the current US president, who not only insists Mexico will pay for his border wall, but is also threatening to quit the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) because of US jobs moving to Mexico. "Trump will not spend a dime of taxpayer money in any form or program for aid or support in Mexico," said Arturo Sarukhan, a former Mexican ambassador in Washington.

By engaging with the United States on migration, Lopez Obrador also risks exposing himself to attacks by political opponents that he is appeasing Trump, who is deeply unpopular in Mexico. Still, if Lopez Obrador can forge a personal relationship with Trump from the outset,

and secures a strong electoral mandate, he might have more success, Sarukhan said. "These are signals of strength that I think Trump will identify," he added. The US government would not speculate on the outcome of Mexico's election, a State Department spokeswoman said. "We look forward to working with whomever the people of Mexico choose," she said.

Mexico first

An election win by Lopez Obrador would put already-strained US-Mexico relations into the hands of two mavericks with often directly opposing nationalist visions. Austerity in his habits, the Mexican candidate is in some ways quite unlike the flamboyant billionaire. Still, adversaries frequently compare Lopez Obrador to Trump. Like the American, he can be thin-skinned, tends to belittle rivals and has often clashed with the media.

Nicaragua death toll rises as bishops await word from Ortega

MANAGUA: The death toll resulting from Nicaragua's escalating crisis rose over the weekend to at least 139, according to a top rights group. Opposition activist Juan Gutierrez, age 28, died during an attack on a barricade he was fighting to defend in the municipality of Sebaco, about 90 kilometers north of the capital, the Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights (CENIDH) said. A university coalition attributed the attack to government-backed gangs along with anti-riot police.

Silvio Romero, vicar of Managua's cathedral, told reporters Sunday the Catholic Church continues to await a response from President Daniel Ortega concerning a proposal from bishops to revive talks to calm the crisis, which sparked April 18. "We have no communication" with Ortega, Romero said. "All the people are waiting for an answer. But people are beginning to say that while waiting for a written answer, there is already an answer on the streets," the vicar said, alluding to the continued repression of protests against Ortega's leftist government.

The police, meanwhile, said that "armed criminal groups" attacked a police outpost in the municipality of El Jicaral, 140 kilometers northwest of Managua, and kidnapped three of its officers. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (CIDH) wrote on Twitter that the Nicaraguan government reported the "disappearance" of the agents. The CIDH voiced "concern" while saying "we urge that this situation be clarified." On Sunday at least 127 makeshift roadblocks stood throughout the country, peasant leader Francisca Ramirez said, a strategy protestors are using to try and pressure the government to find a concrete solution to the political chaos through dialogue.

Pope accepts resignation of 3 Chilean bishops in sex scandal

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis accepted yesterday the resignation of three Chilean bishops including the controversial Juan Barros following a child sex abuse scandal in Chile which has come to haunt his papacy. The entire Chilean delegation of bishops tendered its resignation to the pope last month after a series of meetings at the Vatican. The mass resignation of an entire delegation of bishops is almost unheard of, having last happened two centuries ago.

Several members of the Chilean church hierarchy are accused by victims of ignoring and covering up child abuse by Chilean pedophile priest Fernando Karadima during the 1980s and 1990s. The scandal is the latest to rock the Roman Catholic Church, and Argentine-born Francis has said it must not happen again on his watch. But the pontiff himself became mired in the scandal when, during a trip to Chile in January, he defended Barros who was accused of covering up Karadima's wrongdoing. Karadima was suspended for life by the Vatican over the allegations of child molestation.

The announcement of Pope Francis's decision to accept the



URUAPAN, Mexico: Mexican presidential candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador speaks to supporters during a campaign rally in Michoacan state on June 08, 2018. —AFP

Some political observers worry the two could prove an explosive combination. Within weeks of Trump taking office, Lopez Obrador toured several US cities, pledging his support to Mexican immigrants, whom Trump had described as "rapists" in his election campaign. Lopez Obrador had strong words of his own, likening Trump's rhetoric about Mexicans to Hitler's vilification of Jews. However, he has since softened his tone and stresses he wants to pursue friendly, respectful ties with Trump, even if his policy will always be "Mexico First", said Hector Vasconcelos, Lopez Obrador's pick for foreign minister.

Supporters contend that Lopez Obrador, a Mexican history buff who does not speak English, could be the perfect foil for Trump, because of his Mexico-centric vision. "Nobody in their right mind could imagine him selling out to Trump," said John Ackerman, a constitu-

tional law expert at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Reconciling their differences would be a challenge. Trump has pursued a renegotiation of NAFTA to repatriate jobs from Mexico and limit Mexican exports to the United States.

Lopez Obrador, meanwhile, wants Mexico to be self-sufficient in foodstuffs and gasoline, two major US exports to Mexico. He has also signaled a more independent stance on security. The potential perils of negotiating with Trump were illustrated on Saturday at the G7 summit in Canada. Just hours after agreeing to a joint statement on several policy issues with the United States' closest allies, Trump changed his mind. He then blasted Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as "dishonest" and "weak" on Twitter and threatened to escalate a trade dispute with Canada, stunning assembled diplomats. —Reuters

Merkel-Trump G7 faceoff pic headed for history books

BERLIN: An official photo posted by the German government showing a determined Angela Merkel standing up to an intransigent Donald Trump appears destined for the history books, summing up the deep fractures left by a disastrous G7 summit. The already iconic picture by Berlin's official photographer at the gathering in Canada, Jesco Denzel, set social media alight when it appeared on Saturday, hours before Trump ripped up the hard-fought summit conclusions in an angry tweetstorm.

The image, which drew comparisons to a Baroque painting, shows Merkel standing at the center of the image leaning across a table before a seated Trump, his arms crossed in defiance. Merkel, looking focused or exasperated depending on the viewer's interpretation, is flanked by British Prime Minister Theresa May and French President Emmanuel Macron, their faces largely obscured. Shinzo Abe of Japan looks on with a world-weary expression.

Many saw a distillation of a crisis of the West in the photograph. Like virtually all German media, Berlin's daily Tagesspiegel ran the picture prominently and said Trump's caustic tweets upending the summit conclusions had "shaken the West". Trump "uses Twitter to snub American's partners in Europe and the world - is the G7 finished?"

Other observers hailed a triumph for the spin doctors in Berlin eager to present Merkel as the leading defender of the rules-based global order. "A hands-down public relations triumph for Germany," news weekly Der Spiegel said on its website of the picture that for most of the weekend seemed to capture the world's imagination. "In politics it's not just content that counts but images too."

'1:0 for the US president'

A winner, however, is of course in the eye of the beholder. Elisabeth Wehling, a political linguistics researcher at the University of California at Berkeley, tweeted that the body language clearly pointed to Trump dominating the scene. "1:0 for the US president! Sitting while the other stands is a classic strategy of gestural framing, to establish one's own authority and propagate it via pictures - it works on global media because it transcends language barriers," she wrote.

US National Security Advisor John Bolton, who stands next to Trump in the picture and appears to be saying something to Macron across the table, tweeted the picture during the summit to tout the America First message. "Just another #G7 where other countries expect America will always be their bank," he wrote. "The President made it clear today. No more. (photo by @RegSprecher)," crediting Merkel's spokesman's account for the image for good measure. —AFP



SAN JOSE: Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica demonstrate on Sunday in solidarity with the students arrested and killed in the recent protests against President Daniel Ortega in their country. —AFP

In Managua, an opposition caravan toured several of the capital's neighborhoods urging people to organize their defense against paramilitary groups who activists say are roaming the streets and gunning down demonstrators on motorcycles and trucks. The movement to push for Ortega from office has crossed international borders as Nicaraguans living abroad demonstrate in Madrid and other European capitals. —AFP

resignation was made in a Vatican statement which named the other two bishops as Cristian Caro Cordero and Gonzalo Duarte Garcia de Cortazar. Pope Francis has apologized to the victims and admitted he had made "grave mistakes" after reading a 2,300-page report on abuses in Chile. In a letter to Chileans released at the end of last month, the pontiff voiced "shame" that the Catholic church failed "to listen and react in time" to the allegations of sexual abuse by Chilean clergy. He has since received two groups of Karadima's victims at the Vatican.

Since 2000, about 80 Roman Catholic priests have been reported to authorities in Chile for alleged sexual abuse. In 2015, Francis appointed Barros as the head of the southern diocese of Osorno despite accusations he had covered up for Karadima.

'I was part of the problem'

Last month Francis promised "changes" to the Chilean church to "restore justice" in a short declaration to the bishops that was made public. The letter - handed to the bishops at the start of their meetings with Francis - evokes "crimes" and "painful and shameful sexual abuse of minors, abuses of power and conscience by ministers of the Church". It qualifies the removal of certain prelates from their roles as necessary but "insufficient," calling for "the roots" that allowed for such abuse within an "elitist and authoritarian" Chilean Church to be examined.

One of Karadima's victims whom the pope hosted at his Vatican residence and met individually said the pontiff was "contrite" and said he had been "part of the problem." "I told him that Barros was watching us when we were abused, I think that's clear to him now," Juan Carlos Cruz said. "He (the pope) said, 'I was part of the problem, I caused this,'" Cruz added. —AFP

Trump habit of ripping up docs headache for record-keepers

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump habitually tears up documents he is finished using, forcing White House record-keepers to gather up the pieces and tape them back together, news site Politico reported. "It was the craziest thing ever. He ripped papers into tiny pieces," said Solomon Lartey, a former White House records management employee. The Presidential Records Act requires that any document the president touches - memos, letters, emails - be preserved and sent to the National Archives as part of the historical record.

But Trump's habit of ripping up documents after he has used them - sometimes just once down the middle, but other times into confetti-like shreds has created a major headache for the record-keepers in the opening months of his presidency. Lartey said the entire White House records management department was tasked with reassembling the documents with Scotch tape. According to Politico, White House staffers had the torn documents collected from the Oval office and the president's residence and then turned them over to records management to be reassembled "like a jigsaw." "You found pieces and taped them back together and then you gave it back to the supervisor," Lartey said. —AFP

International

Malaysia wants to be friendly, not indebted, to China: Mahathir

Premier floats new national car project

TOKYO: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday his country will remain friendly with China, which invested billions of dollars during the previous Najib Razak government, but will not be "indebted to China". Mahathir, in Tokyo on his first foreign trip since winning a shock election last month, sought to revive the idea of an East Asia economic group which he said would be useful in the face of China's surging economic power. "We have to deal with China whether we like it or not. We should deal with it as a group," Mahathir told an international seminar in Tokyo.

Mahathir said he was not against pacts such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal, but he said the TPP should be renegotiated so smaller economies like Malaysia can compete against giants China and the United States. Mahathir said the ideal would be a broad trade pact such as the East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC), which he proposed during his previous term in office. "Yes, I am still in favor of EAEC," he said. "In the past, of course, we were not able to do this due to the objections of America, but now America seems to become isolationist again so it is not in a position to demand that

we cannot form EAEC," he added.

Mahathir, 92, returned as premier last month after a stunning election victory over Najib, promising to stamp out corruption and lower living costs. His decision to visit Japan first was seen by some analysts as an example of the government's desire to put some distance between Kuala Lumpur and Beijing. The new



E Asia economic group possible now that US is isolationist

government has said some Chinese companies are possibly linked to the graft scandal at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) that contributed to Najib's downfall. Mahathir made no reference to 1MDB in Tokyo.

Speaking at a news conference, Mahathir referred to the Chinese investments and projects during the Najib era which he believes will leave Malaysians with billions of dollars in debt. "That was his particular way of conducting friendship with China," Mahathir said. "We will be friendly with China, but we do not want to be indebted to China". The new government is reviewing a \$14 billion local rail line to be built by Chinese companies, and has already withdrawn from a high-speed rail project with neighbor Singapore.

Mahathir said he hoped to begin a new national car project to follow Proton, the company founded in 1983 during his first term but has struggled in recent years. Geely bought 49.9 percent of Proton last year, marking the Chinese automaker's first push into Southeast Asia. Malaysia had the skills and technology needed to design and produce the new car, Mahathir said, but he added that some car parts were very expensive and could be sourced from other countries, including Japan. On his own political future, Mahathir said he would stay in power as long as the people of Malaysia wanted him. "I am willing to serve, if



TOKYO: Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad delivers a speech during a press conference at the Japan National Press Club yesterday. — AFP

that is the wish of the people, as long as they want me, but of course I don't know how long I will last," he said.

The prospect of Malaysia taking another tilt at launching a new national car was met with skepticism by analysts and the public.

"Given the current global industry landscape... it's not a good idea," Yeah Kim Leng, a professor of economics at Malaysia's Sunway University Business School, told AFP. "It's a highly globalized market now, and unless you have a deep market (access), the technology and product capability, it would be difficult to compete."

Twitter user Emir Izat said Proton's shortcomings should "be a lesson" for Mahathir, adding: "Hopefully this national car project gets scrapped."

While there are still many Protons on the roads in Malaysia, their numbers have fallen dramatically in recent years, with European and Japanese models rapidly overtaking them. Another Malaysian carmaker Perodua, which produces compact vehicles, has also struggled due to the growing competition.

Mahathir served as chairman of Proton until 2016, and his continued involvement in the firm drew criticism from then-prime minister Najib. In 2016 the government approved a bailout package worth \$384 million for the struggling company but warned it would not continue to throw money at the firm. — Agencies

Koreans in London suburb tackle north-south divide

LONDON: When Kim Song-ju escaped North Korea through China he opted to head to Britain 10 years ago instead of South Korea, hoping to avoid discrimination. But while he found work and a family home in a well-established Korean community in southwest London, he also encountered the social stratification he had travelled thousands of miles to evade. "Most of my friends here are North Koreans," he told AFP through a translator in the offices of a dissident newspaper in New Malden, where he helps out during time off from his job at a Korean supermarket.

The former electrician said when he spoke to people from the south, "it's about golf or New Malden, but when we talk about life experiences it becomes difficult to understand each other". As US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hold a historic summit in Singapore Tuesday, many here are wondering if it could herald the first tentative step

unique place in the world for South and North Koreans to be living together," said Ha Jaesung, a local councillor. "But there are invisible gaps... there's a great difference between us - even our way of talking now." He admitted he was scared when he encountered a North Korean for the first time in his life at a parent-teacher evening at his children's school. "We were educated that North Koreans were to be feared," he said, adding he was shocked to find they were actually similar to him in many ways. The divide in New Malden is accentuated by employment, with North Koreans tending to work for South Koreans in low-paid service roles.

"The South and North Koreans do mingle but it's more of a business relationship," said restaurant owner Jang Eun-Jean, 52, who arrived in Britain in the 1980s. She accused North Koreans of having a "different work ethic". By contrast, Kim speculated his South Korean neighbors were jealous that North Koreans got more state benefits. Today's Singapore summit has split opinion, with South Korean immigrants voicing more optimism. "North Koreans are not as excited about it - it's not the first time the regime has tried to come to an agreement," said Choi, lamenting neglect of the north's continuing human rights abuses.

Forming friendships

But bridges are being built in New Malden. At a center for older people, around 15 North Koreans have joined those from the South to take part in traditional Korean dancing, singing and cooking. "We're finally starting to get along, mixing together," said chair Sun Hwa Griffiths. She added: "I can see people are starting to open their mind. I think a lot of people are starting to understand that we have to." A 77-year-old member, who fled starvation in North Korea with her daughter a decade ago, and asked to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals on remaining relatives, said integration had been her savior.

"At the beginning it was very difficult, particularly because of the language barrier and competitive environment," she said through a translator.

She added that relations at the center were now so improved she had forgotten who was from the north and the south. "Of course we really wish for this summit to go well and to be reunited as one nation. We are one people, sharing the same language, same blood," she said.

Ha, the councillor who once feared North Koreans, also fought recently to get three exiles admitted to a residents association board. "In the near future our children and North Korean children will be friends when they grow up," he said. "They won't think about differences. The gap will have disappeared here in four or five years." — AFP

Kim's wingman: Flight shows Beijing's influence

BEIJING: When North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hitched a ride on an Air China plane to his summit with Donald Trump in Singapore, the signal was clear: Beijing remains Pyongyang's diplomatic wingman. Kim had never flown so far from Pyongyang since coming to power in December 2011, and having China give him a lift shows that the Cold War-era allies still need each other despite recent tensions. North Korea's ruling party newspaper pointedly published photos of Kim boarding the Air China Boeing 747, a surprising display for a country that boasts its "juche", or self-reliance, ideology, according to analysts.

"It may be a practical reason, but at the same time it was a symbolic move to show its people that China has North Korea's back and China could be there for the North if the whole denuclearization process with the US doesn't work," Koh Yu-hwan, professor of North Korean studies at Seoul's Dongguk University, told AFP. The

crew used some sleight of hand en route to conceal the presence of their VIP passenger on Sunday, abruptly changing the aircraft's call sign in mid-air over Beijing before continuing southward across China, according to flight tracking website Flightradar24.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said yesterday that North Korea had requested the plane and that "China's civil airline offered the relevant service". Analysts said Beijing also had Kim's personal safety in mind given North Korea's ageing fleet. His father and predecessor Kim Jong Il was famously afraid of flying and only travelled by train. Kim has his own private jet which he used to visit President Xi Jinping in nearby northeast China in May. His sister and close aide Kim Yo Jong is believed to have used it to travel separately to Singapore, echoing the US practice of presidents and vice-presidents generally never flying together on Air Force One - or any other

aircraft - to ensure one of them survives in the event of disaster. But the US President's Boeing 747 is a far cry from Kim's aircraft, a Soviet-made Ilyushin-62 which wags have dubbed Air Force Un.

'Remain vigilant'

China and North Korea fought side-by-side against US-led UN forces and South Korea in the 1950-1953 Korean War. But relations have been rockier in recent years, with China, the North's main economic lifeline, supporting UN sanctions to punish it for its nuclear and missile tests. But amid the flurry of diplomacy on the peninsula triggered by the Winter Olympics, Kim reached out to his estranged protector, appearing suddenly in Beijing in March to finally pay his respects to Xi Jinping - six years after inheriting power.

The pair met again less than two months later. Kim's grandfather Kim Il Sung was adept at playing off Communist rivals Beijing and Moscow against each other during the Cold War to extract concessions from both. "Pyongyang may think that now it can use the same tactic over the rivalry between China and the US to its own advantage," Koh said. — AFP

Hong Kong jails top independence leader for 6 years

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's leading independence activist was jailed for six years yesterday for his involvement in some of the city's worst protest violence for decades. Edward Leung was convicted in May of rioting over the 2016 running battles with police, when demonstrators hurled bricks torn up from pavements and set rubbish alight in the commercial district of Mong Kok. Handing down his jail term, Judge Anthea Pang said Leung actively participated in the riots and described his actions as "wanton and vicious".

The 27-year-old was already in custody after pleading guilty in January to a separate charge of assaulting a police officer during the 2016 clashes. He was sentenced to one year in jail on that count, with the two terms to be served concurrently. The 2016 protest began as a seemingly innocuous rally to protect illegal hawkers from health inspectors but it quickly morphed into an outpouring of anger against authorities in Hong Kong and Beijing.

At the forefront of the clashes were young "localists", a term coined for radical groups promoting a split from mainland China which grew out of the failure of massive pro-democracy rallies in 2014 to win concessions from Beijing on political reform. At the time, Leung was the head of localist group Hong Kong Indigenous and a rising star on the political scene as the fledgling independence movement gathered momentum, infuriating Beijing.

Pang said the protesters appeared to be "sincere, earnest but wrong-headed people" with strong convictions. They "will stop at nothing to impose those views" on society, she said, which Hong Kong cannot tolerate as it poses "extremely great danger". Leung looked calm throughout the hearing and waved at supporters - some of whom reacted emotionally to the sentence - before being led away. Two other protesters were sentenced alongside Leung to seven years



HONG KONG: Pro-independence protestor Edward Leung (center) leaves the Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre for the High Court yesterday. — AFP

and three and a half years in prison.

Fishball Revolution

At least 16 people have already been jailed over the clashes, with terms of up to four years and nine months for a man convicted of rioting and arson. Unlike Leung, none were known activists. Police fired warning shots in the air as the unrest worsened and scores of people including officers were injured, with dozens arrested. It was later dubbed the "Fishball Revolution" after one of the city's best-loved street snacks. The defense said Leung, who pleaded not guilty, had no intention to riot but wanted to "protect Hong Kong culture".

Leung testified his participation in activism was inspired by the pro-democracy slogan: "Without resistance, how is there change?" according to local media.

Multiple pro-democracy activists who want a greater say in how the city is run but do not push for full independence have been prosecuted

and three and a half years in prison.

ed on protest-related charges over the largely peaceful 2014 Umbrella Movement.

Leung is the first high profile activist advocating full independence to come to court. He was previously barred from standing in legislative elections due to his support for independence as Hong Kong's pro-Beijing government cracks down on any advocacy of a split. Leung resigned as spokesman of Hong Kong Indigenous and left the group in December last year. The government's squeeze on independence campaigners has seen several activists barred from standing for office and others ejected from Hong Kong's partially elected legislature. Prominent pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong, who has campaigned for self-determination but not independence, attended the trial yesterday. "Edward Leung's six-year sentence is the harshest imposed on an opposition activist since 1997, bizarre even in Hong Kong's present era of political prisoners," he wrote on Twitter. — AFP

N Korea delegation enjoys fruits of Singapore capitalism

SINGAPORE: Shortly after a group of suited North Korean diplomats set out from their Singapore hotel yesterday for talks with US officials on the eve of a historic summit, a bigger group of North Koreans headed out in summery shirts for some shopping. US President Donald Trump will meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on a small resort island off Singapore's port on Tuesday for an unprecedented summit aimed at getting the North to give up its nuclear weapons.

For the leader of isolated North Korea and his delegation of dozens of officials, state media workers and security staff, the rare foreign trip is an opportunity to build diplomatic bridges and to explore the capitalist successes in Singapore, one of the world's wealthiest city-states. The North Korean delegation is staying at the five-star St Regis hotel where the lobby has a cream-colored marble floor, chandeliers and large art works on the walls. The hotel's lavish 47 Singapore dollar (\$35) per person buffet breakfast

costs about the same as what most North Koreans earn in a month. Among the three dozen or so North Koreans seen at breakfast yesterday were some of the regime's most powerful men, usually only spotted by North Korea watchers in photographs published in state media as they line up at official events. Four-star general and vice chairman of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, Kim Yong Chol, party vice chairman and director of its International Affairs Department Ri Su Yong and foreign minister Ri Yong Ho, were among them.

Hotel staff discouraged other guests from interacting with the North Koreans, or taking their photographs. North Korean media staff sampled Chinese dimsum, pastries and fried eggs and took souvenir photographs of each

other in the grand dining hall. Such treats are unheard of for most North Koreans, even for government officials, who have seen their chances of overseas travel wither in recent years as their country's isolation has increased under sanctions imposed over its nuclear and missile programs.

Totalitarian North Korea's governing ideology of "Juche", which champions self-sufficiency, has brought little but decades of economic stagnation, widespread poverty and, at times, starvation. Most ordinary North Koreans rely on a monotonous diet of rice, corn, kimchi and bean paste, and they lack essential fats and protein, according to testimonies from defectors and from UN officials allowed to visit. The UN World Food Program says a quarter of North Korean

children under five, who attend nurseries that it supports, suffer from chronic malnutrition.

On Sunday night, hours after Kim and his delegation arrived in Singapore, Reuters reporters saw North Korean officials, some wearing pin badges of their leaders, ordering \$100-plus-per-person dinners at the hotel's high-end Chinese restaurant. Others appeared to go for Western fast food. A group of North Korean security staff were seen coming back into the hotel with cardboard boxes, one with McDonald's takeaway. North Korea is one of the world's few countries without a McDonald's. Two North Korean officials, whose identity could not be confirmed, were seen returning from the shopping trip with bags from the NBC Stationery and Gifts shop. — Reuters

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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Trade tensions drive China auto investors from US to Europe

Chinese auto investors are increasingly pouring money into Europe rather than the United States because of intense US scrutiny of their deals under the Trump administration, according to industry sources and M&A data. More than a dozen leading M&A bankers, lawyers and consultants told Reuters the number of mandates from Chinese clients to make investments in the European auto sector were increasing, while those for the US sector were declining.

"Given the way that things are tightening up in the United States, Europe for China is the most obvious non-domestic market that they're pushing into," said Charlie Simpson, who specializes in the auto sector for consultancy KPMG's global strategy group. The trend, which comes as Washington is locked in a trade battle with Beijing, is supported by an analysis of data of auto sector investment in the US and European markets.

The United States accounted for 26 percent of the total number of Chinese deals in either of the markets in the first five months of this year, according to the figures from Thomson Reuters and research group Dealroom. That is down from 31 percent in the same periods of 2017 and 2016. There have been 19 deals in total across both markets so far this year, worth more than \$10 billion, according to the data. At the centre of the trade dispute are US allegations that China has stolen American intellectual property. There has been increased scrutiny of investments in sectors including autos, where companies are developing technologies such as electric and autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence and robotics.

Washington says it is looking to broaden the reach of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which examines deals for national security risks, to further limit Chinese efforts to acquire US technology. Thirteen of the 17 bankers, lawyers and consultants interviewed by Reuters, based in Europe, the United States or China, said their Chinese clients were increasingly choosing Europe over the United States because of growing difficulties with CFIUS. This means a large group of investors are hunting assets in Europe, mainly Chinese state-owned auto firms, listed carmakers and private equity funds, the industry sources said.

They include state-owned SAIC Motor Corp, BAIC Group and FAW Group Corp; and listed players Guangzhou Automobile Group, and Ningbo Joyson Electronic Corp, the people said. Samson Lo, head of Asia M&A at UBS, said all big Chinese carmakers who wanted to do overseas deals were steering clear of the United States. "The immediate reaction is: 'I don't think in the current environment it is for me,'" he added. FAW Group Corp and Ningbo Joyson Electronic Corp could not be reached for comments, while SAIC Motor Corp, BAIC Group and Guangzhou Automobile Group did not respond to emailed request for comments.

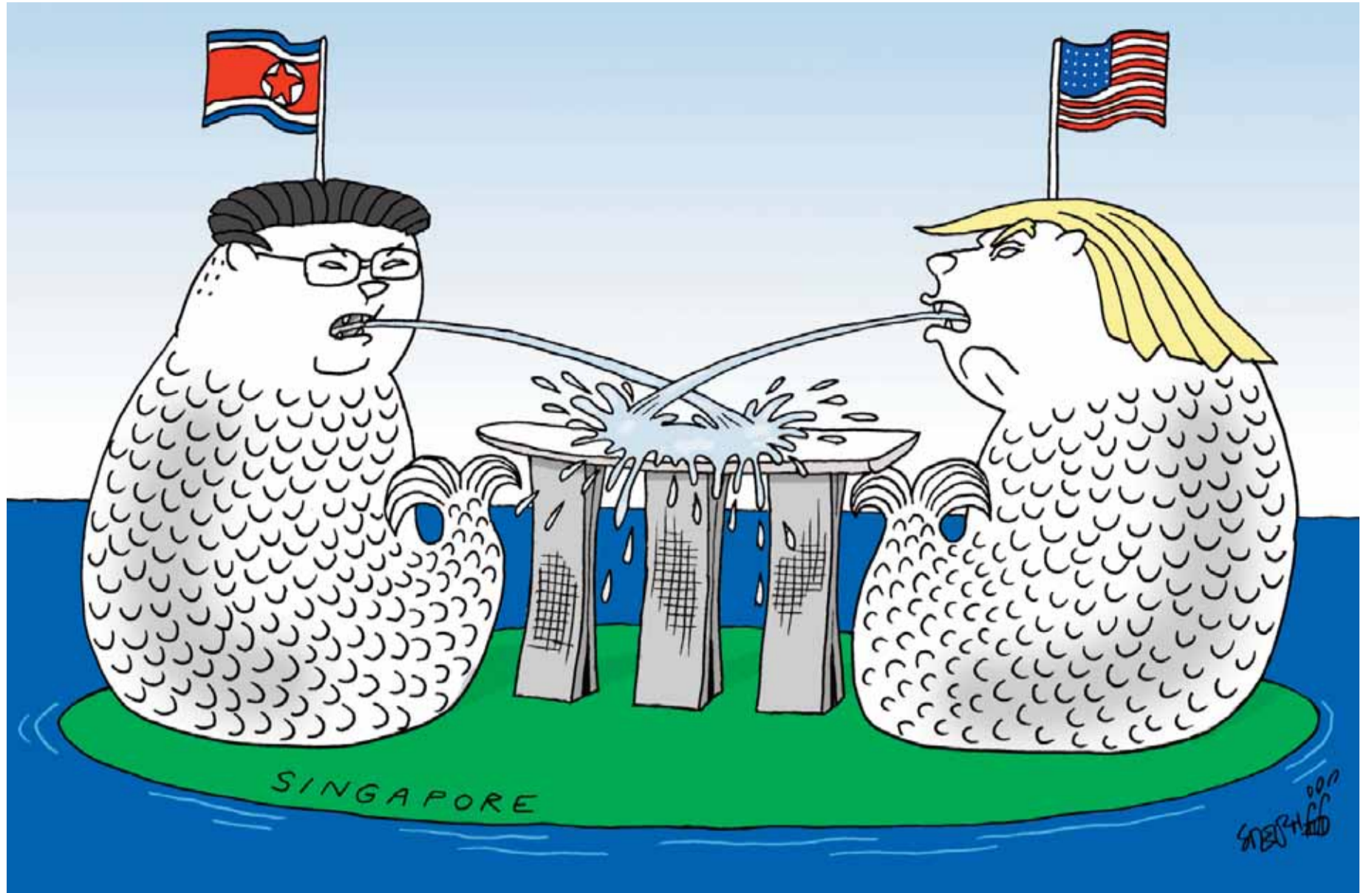
More china deals blocked

American officials say CFIUS reviewed about 250 foreign deals in total across all industries last year, an increase of 40 percent on 2016. During the roughly 14 months of the Trump Administration to March 1, the committee has blocked 12 Chinese deals, or nearly half of the 27 transactions it has completed reviews of, and the fate of nine more are still undecided, according to an analysis https://bit.ly/2sG7XP4 by the law firm Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman. By contrast, in 2016 only four Chinese deals were blocked out of 26 that were reviewed, partner Tom Shoemsmith told Reuters.

Many more would-be investors are being deterred before the review stage, according to a lawyer who represents a major Chinese carmaker that has been investing in Europe. He said a lot of deals were being ditched after informal talks with CFIUS officials who made it clear they would not pass muster. He declined to be named as this could identify his client and breach confidentiality. US President Donald Trump's administration has made the auto industry central to its "America First" trade agenda. It cited national security concerns last month when it launched an investigation into vehicle imports that could lead to tariffs similar to those imposed on steel and aluminum. This year, CFIUS blocked US semiconductor testing company Xcerra's purchase by China-based Sino IC Capital, which had expected the \$580 million deal to help it benefit from automotive opportunities. State-owned China Heavy Duty Truck Group and UQM Technologies was also forced to scrap a deal that would have hiked its stake in UQM to 34 percent from 9.9 percent and given it three out of eight board seats.

By contrast in Europe, even though Geely's recent purchase of a stake of almost 10 percent in Daimler raised fears among some politicians in Germany of its expertise falling into Chinese hands, the deal is unlikely to be challenged. Europe does not have a common position on screening foreign investments - some countries are pushing for talks to broaden checks on foreign investments, others oppose such plans that would reduce access to Chinese cash. While individual countries do examine transactions, the depth and the number of reviews was negligible compared with the United States, according to the bankers, lawyers and consultants.

However, some Chinese buyers are beginning to change investment tactics, even in Europe, as they look avoid political and regulatory complications, according to the industry sources. They are ditching their favored "direct" M&A model - buying a company and gaining total control over the technology - for other access routes such as joint ventures, patent purchases that raise less political and public concern. Other options being explored also include licensing deals - where they could gain the ability to use, modify and resell the target's technology - and bringing on a local banking or automotive or private equity player as co-investors. — Reuters



Nukes and normalization: What's on the table in Singapore

US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sit down today for an unprecedented summit that has raised hopes of progress on the troubled Korean peninsula. From Kim's nuclear arsenal to normalizing ties between the two decades-old foes, these are the issues facing the two leaders at what Trump has called a "one-time shot" at peace.

Denuclearization

This is the absolute crux of the summit and there remains a chasm between the two sides that diplomats were scrambling to close on the eve of the meeting. Washington is demanding the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization (CVID) of North Korea. In Trump's words: "They have to denuke. If they don't denuclearize, that will not be acceptable." North Korea has repeatedly expressed a commitment to the "denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" - notably in a report by state agency KCNA on the eve of the summit - but the term is open to interpretation on both sides and it remains unclear what concessions Kim is prepared to offer. South Korea estimates the North has 50 kilograms of plutonium, reportedly enough for around 10 bombs, and a "considerable" ability to produce uranium weapons. Previous agreements with the North have subsequently collapsed and experts warn Kim is highly unlikely to give up the "treasured sword" of his nuclear deterrent. Dismantling a secret nuclear arsenal built up over decades would take several years and be extremely difficult to check, they say. Siegfried Hecker, a noted US nuclear expert, said the immediate CVID of the North was "unimaginable" and "tantamount to a North Korean surrender scenario".

End to Korean war?

North and South Korea remain technically at war after the 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice that Seoul's then leader refused to sign and divided the peninsula along the Demilitarized Zone. At their summit in April Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in agreed to seek a peace treaty and Trump mused earlier this month: "Can you believe we're talking about the ending of the Korean War?" Seoul announced last week it was in three-way talks with Pyongyang and Washington for an "early" declaration that the war is over. That could precede a full treaty which would raise complex issues needing extensive negotiation, and would need to involve China, which backed the North during the conflict and is a signatory to the armistice. But Trump said: "We could absolutely sign an agreement and we're looking at it," adding: "Sounds a little bit strange, but that's probably the easy part."

Ahead of the meeting, Trump has dangled the carrot of a normalization of diplomatic ties between the former foes and

even a White House visit for Kim, which would confirm his arrival on the world stage.

"Maybe we'll start with the White House, what do you think?" he said when asked if Kim would be invited to Washington or his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. The other carrot for Kim is a possible loosening of punishing UN Security Council sanctions but here too there is discord, with Washington saying sanctions can end only when denuclearization is complete and Pyongyang wanting "phased" relief as they make progress towards that goal.

Human rights?

Another question is whether Trump will take up the issue of human rights - with North Korea accused of a host of state-sanctioned rights abuses including extrajudicial killing, torture and kidnapping. North Korea is estimated to have up to 120,000 political prisoners in its sprawling gulag system. Close US ally Japan has urged Trump to bring up the decades-old issue of its citizens abducted in 1970s and 1980s to train Pyongyang's spies in Japanese language and customs. Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch, said it was imperative that Trump bring up rights issues with Kim. "North Korea's increased dialogue with other countries is a positive step, but before the world gets too excited they should

remember that Kim Jong Un still presides over perhaps the most repressive system in the world," he said.

Security

Kim's main concern is the survival of his own regime - South Korean President Moon Jae-in told reporters that the Pyongyang leader had "concerns on whether he could trust that the US would end its hostile policy and guarantee the security of his regime when the North denuclearizes itself". So the summit was nearly derailed by talk from Trump's hawkish National Security Advisor John Bolton of a "Libya model" of disarmament. Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was deposed and killed in a Western-backed rebellion after abandoning his nuclear program.

The Trump administration has promised not to seek to bring about regime change and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has even floated the possibility of issuing security guarantees to the North. But some question why Kim should trust any guarantees given Trump's history of pulling out of accord - most recently the painstakingly negotiated Iran nuclear deal. "Why would Kim... believe any commitments President Trump makes when he arbitrarily tears up an agreement with which the other party is complying?" said Antony Blinken, who was deputy secretary of state under Barack Obama. — AFP



US President Donald Trump (center) looks at a cake being brought for him during a working lunch with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong (not pictured) during his visit to The Istana, the official residence of the prime minister, in Singapore. — AFP

Fear drives forced labor underground along the US border

Fear of tightened border patrols and tough new immigration laws is driving victims of human trafficking into hiding in the Rio Grande Valley at the southern tip of the US border with Mexico, according to a Thomson Reuters Foundation investigation. Stretching more than 100 miles along the river that divides the two nations, the Valley in Texas has long been a major entry point for Central American migrants who stay and find jobs as farmworkers, ranchhands and housekeepers. But worried and silenced by the nation's hardened attitude toward migrants, frightened workers face greater risk of falling victim to forced labor, trafficking, wage theft and debt bondage, advocates and officials told the Thomson Reuters Foundation during several trips over a five-month period.

The number of calls from trafficking victims to the National Human Trafficking Hotline fell 30 percent to 325 last year in Texas, listed by the US government as having the most human trafficking activity alongside New York and California. "The fact is they hide, even from us," said Jose Torres, a grizzled legal aid investigator who has roamed the fields of the Valley helping trafficked farmworkers for four decades. Already reluctant to reveal their plight, casualties of trafficking are even more distressed by "the Trump situation," he said. President Donald Trump wants to build a border wall with Mexico - promoted in part to stop drug smuggling and criminal immigration - and his administration plans to expel 250,000 immigrants from Honduras and El Salvador. In the Valley, National Guard helicopters fly low overhead and Customs and Border Patrol agents keep watch on city streets and remote dirt roads. Added to that, Texas has a new state law called SB4 that allows law enforcement to ask for a person's immigration status. The stepped-up policing and laws like SB4 create a "chilling effect," said Efrén Olivares, racial and economic justice director at the Texas Civil Rights Project. "We are already seeing that happening," he said. "We

are very concerned it's going to affect and revictimize human trafficking victims." More than nine in 10 people have Hispanic roots in the fast-growing Valley, and traffic clogs the imposing port-of-entry bridges spanning the Rio Grande from Mexico. Signs in Spanish hawk Mexican fare at cantinas and taquerias, where stray dogs hunt for scraps. Migrant fieldhands ride in pick-up trucks to gather oranges, cauliflower and onions, and domestic workers wait at bus stops to start their days cooking and cleaning.

Throughout the Valley, workers without legal immigration documents fear being found out and deported. Those with legal papers do not want to jeopardize family members who do not. Yolanda, a Mexican domestic worker in the country illegally for more than a decade after overstaying a visitor visa, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that her employers don't always pay her wages after she cleans their houses. "They'd say, 'Yeah I'll pay you. Yeah, I'll pay you,' but then they never paid," said Yolanda, who did not want to give her surname. "There are many bad people, people who are like that." Her husband Luis added: "There's nothing you can do about it. With this president, everything is very difficult."

Captive and helpless

Although few victims speak up, the state is home to an estimated 234,000 adult labor trafficking victims, according to 2016 research by the University of Texas. Their captors earn an estimated \$600 million a year in illicit profits. The US Department of Health and Human Services estimates a quarter of the 50,000 or so people trafficked every year from foreign countries to the United States enter through Texas.

"The number that we're serving is very small, compared to the actual numbers that are at risk or could be victims of trafficking," said Rachel Alvarez of the Refugee Services of Texas which is aiding about 20 Valley trafficking survivors. "A lot of them are very scared to go out of their home, if it's not work or to take their kids to school, because of immigration." No statistics are available just for the Valley, but campaigners voice concern about more workers - especially those laboring on isolated ranches and farms - falling prey to traffickers with no access to help. Attorney Libby Hesse from the Tahirih Justice Center in Houston described a case of a woman who fled El Salvador, where she had been targeted for being a lesbian. She

crossed illegally into the Valley with a smuggler who took her captive and demanded more money from her family. "She was forced to cook and clean and take care of kids for several months," Hesse said. "Unfortunately it's something that we see fairly frequently." A pregnant young woman from Mexico told police in the Valley city of San Juan that a smuggler had raped her and bound her with duct tape so she could not escape.

"You may not know you're being trafficked, but you then discover it when you arrive," said Alex Channer, principal analyst at UK-based Verisk Maplecroft, a human rights data research company that studies labor abuse. "You're owned and controlled by someone else." US federal authorities said they had received no reports of labor or sex trafficking cases in the Valley but blamed the silence on the traumatic nature of the crime. "We have no evidence of it happening as far as our case work is concerned," said Carl Rusnok, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesman. "(But) the whole issue of human trafficking is extremely secretive. It could be going on all around us."

Under-reported crime

Stacie Jonas, an attorney with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid that has about 120 open or pending trafficking cases currently, said employers' threats grow more credible and frightening amid anti-immigrant rhetoric. "People's fear of reporting is enhanced substantially ... It's driving immigrants underground, empowering bad employers," she told the Foundation. Human trafficking, and labor trafficking especially, is notable for being under-reported, experts say. Nationwide, some 700 criminal trafficking cases were open last year. Only five percent of the cases and about 100 victims involved labor trafficking, according to the Human Trafficking Institute, a legal and research group. In the most recent statistics available, the US government said it convicted 14 people of labor trafficking in 2016. Globally, some 25 million people are estimated to be trapped in forced labor, according to leading anti-slavery groups, many of whom fell into the hands of criminal gangs while seeking to escape poverty or violence. Many migrants fleeing brutal gang violence in Central America pay to enter through the Valley where smugglers can take advantage of the bustling commercial development and busy roadways, said San Juan Police Chief Juan Gonzalez. — Reuters

Business

TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2018

12 French farmers block refineries over palm oil imports for biofuel



13 "Fair trade, fool trade", Trump's tweets spew ire on NATO allies



14 X-cite achieves major breakthrough in cooperation with City Centre Group



KARACHI: Pakistani youth look at dresses in a shop ahead of Eid ul Fitr on the last week of the holy month of Ramadan. — AFP

Plan to get Indians flying hits turbulence

Passenger traffic in India growing 20 pct annually

BENGALURU/NEW DELHI: The slow pace of fitting out regional airports risks delaying Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious plan to launch more flights connecting smaller towns and cities and get millions more people using air travel. The program, flagged off by Modi last year, aims to boost economic growth by refurbishing idled colonial-era airstrips or building newer airports, and incentivizing airlines to offer discounted fares to connect them with bigger cities.

But work on building new airports in small towns and upgrading existing facilities has failed to keep pace, two government officials said, and could knock off course the government's lofty goal of bringing 100 million more passengers to the skies in the next five years. Under Modi's "regional connectivity scheme", the government planned to open 31 new airports by the end of 2017, but only 16 are operational so far. Some states have said they do not have enough funds to purchase basic equipment such as mandatory fire tenders, one of the officials said.

In other cases it was taking longer than planned to build air traffic control towers or set up terminal buildings equipped with baggage scanners and security systems, said the official. The federal government has now stepped in, and will procure much of the equipment itself

and lease it to state governments to get the 15 remaining airports operational by end-June. "It is a trade-off. We either keep adding more flights or calibrate the existing ones with the capacity we have," the official said. The delays highlight the hurdles Modi - who has campaigned on his ability to successfully implement growth-boosting reforms - faces as he seeks re-election in 2019.

Making flying affordable

Passenger traffic in India has grown at about 20 percent annually in recent years, making the world's fastest-growing aviation market lucrative for large and small planemakers. When launching the scheme in early 2017, the government said it wanted to make flying affordable for the common man wearing simple flip-flops by reviving more than 400 unused and under-utilized airstrips in the country's vast hinterlands.

The civil aviation ministry has given approvals, in two phases, to nearly a dozen airlines, including start-ups like Air Deccan and Air Odisha as well as established carriers like IndiGo, Jet Airways and SpiceJet, to start flights on more than 450 routes covering 56 new airports. But with even the first phase still behind schedule - flights have begun on just 60 of the 128 planned routes - the govern-

“ It will be a major challenge for airlines ”

ment plans to delay the start of phase three, the two officials said.

One of the officials said that the civil aviation ministry had not expected such a large response to the program, and was now scrambling to get airports ready on time. "If the pace of development of smaller airports is not accelerated and it does not meet the targets, it will be a major challenge for airlines," said Arindam Som, an analyst at India Ratings, a Fitch Group company. Some said that some airlines were looking at these regional routes to feed into their wider network and boost growth.

Business impact

Air Odisha and Air Deccan complain that the problems are not confined to small airports - bigger ones such as Mumbai and Delhi are already choked and have few landing slots available. Both carriers have acquired aircraft on lease but are yet to begin operations on more than 30 of the 40 regional routes they received approval for, making it difficult to generate enough revenue to staunch losses, officials at the airlines said. "These airports are dragging their feet," said GR Gopinath, founder and chairman of Air Deccan.

Airports generally get more revenue when international or larger domestic flights land, bringing in more passengers who can pay for airport services. But most regional carriers operate small planes, with some having as few as 19 seats, and are also exempt from paying landing and parking charges under the scheme. Gopinath said these considerations play a role in airports giving landing slots.

While a spokesman for Mumbai airport declined to comment on the cost implications of allotting slots for regional routes, he said it was working to incorporate more flights to meet demand. A spokesman for Delhi airport, which has given some slots to regional airlines, said the movement of smaller aircraft adversely impacts already congested airspace.—Reuters

NBK Capital: 230% over-subscription for IHC's private placement

KUWAIT: Watani Investment Company (NBK Capital) and Integrated Holding Company (IHC), the largest crane operator in the Middle East focused on the oil, gas and energy sectors, announced the successful closing of the private placement of 35% of the company's capital, with over-subscription exceeding 230%.

Led by Watani Investment Company (NBK Capital) as the Lead Manager, the private placement of around 76 million shares of Integrated Holding Company was undertaken at a price of 730 fils per share and raised more than 130 million dinars. The number of investors in the private placement exceeded 1,000, making the company eligible to list on Boursa Kuwait's premier market. The listing of the company will provide an opportunity for investors to participate in one of the most promising sectors locally and globally. This was announced during a press conference jointly organized by NBK Capital and Integrated Holding Company to announce the successful closing of the private placement of secondary shares of Integrated Holding Company in preparation for listing on Boursa Kuwait's premier market.

"Strong operating companies"

Commenting on the Private Placement, NBK Capital's CEO, Mr Faisal Al-Hamad said: "The offering attracted



Faisal Al-Hamad, NBK Capital's CEO and Jassim Mustafa Boodai, Chairman and CEO of Integrated Holding Company speaking at the press conference.

strong interest from retail and institutional investors, corporates, local and regional investment companies and funds, family offices and government investment arms. The success of the offering reflects the growing interest in investing in strong operating companies in Kuwait."

"NBK Capital is proud to have offered its investment banking advisory services to Integrated Holding Company to execute this offering, which represents a landmark transaction that will pave the way for upcoming issuances by Kuwaiti family businesses."

Faisal Al-Hamad added: "The success of this transaction was achieved through the continuous support provided by the Capital Markets Authority and Boursa Kuwait. I would also like to thank Integrated Holding Company for entrusting us with this opportunity and we look forward to executing many more of these successful transactions in the future."

Jassim Mustafa Boodai, Chairman and CEO of Integrated Holding Company, said: "We are very pleased to announce



Group photo of NBK Capital and Integrated Holding Company employees.

that the offering has closed with record figures. We look forward to listing the company on the premier market after Eid Al Fitr." "Since the company was founded more than a decade ago, Integrated Holding Company has rapidly strengthened its position in the market to play a key role in supporting the oil, gas and energy sectors and has achieved steady growth to become the largest crane operator in the Middle East. As a key partner for many of the most dynamic and complex projects in the industry, Integrated Holding Company continues to deliver operational solutions tailored to the specific needs of the industry."

"The Company achieved a net profit of KD 13.3 million in 2017 ie 60.5 fils per share, achieving a growth rate of 36%," said Boodai. "We expect the company to achieve a net profit of at least 15.8 million dinars for the year 2018 with an annual growth of 19%, equivalent to 72 fils per share. The company achieved a net profit of KD 5 million during the first quarter of 2018, compared to KD 3.3 million for the same period last year, achieving a growth of 50%. The rev-

enues for the first quarter of 2018 showed an increase of 27.6%. The company's earnings per share rose to 22.6fils in the first quarter of 2018 compared to 15.1 fils for the same period last year, an increase of 50%."

"The company has consistently paid dividends either in the form of cash dividends or bonus shares since its first year of operations in 2007. The company distributed a record cash dividend of 30% in 2017. In the future, the company aims to distribute around 50% of its profits in the form of cash dividends. "The company is ranked third in the world and the first in the Middle East in the operation of mobile cranes. Since inception, the company has focused on servicing the requirements of the oil, gas and energy sectors. Established in 2005, the company has a paid up capital of KD 22 million and is a Shariah Compliant Company engaged in the operational equipment rental of cranes and heavy equipment for the oil, gas, power and infrastructure sectors. It operates primarily through its subsidiaries in Kuwait and Qatar and is currently expanding into Oman.

Business

French farmers block refineries over palm oil imports for biofuel

Energy giant Total wants to import up to 300,000 tons a year

PARIS: Dozens of French farmers blocked access to 13 refineries across the country yesterday to protest plans to import palm oil for use in biofuels, a move they denounce as unfair competition which jeopardizes their livelihood. Energy giant Total wants to import up to 300,000 tons a year of palm oil, which environmental advocates say has caused massive deforestation chiefly in Southeast Asia.

French rapeseed and sunflower growers, who say they will lose out due to Total's imports, accuse foreign palm oil producers of failing to respect the regulatory requirements European producers must follow. Farmers parked tractors in front of refinery gates while dumping piles of haystacks, dirt, manure and potatoes.

"France imports several products that don't respect the rules applied to French farmers. It concerns South American meat and Spanish wine as well as palm oil," said Damien Greffon, who leads the FNSEA farmers' union in the Paris region. The protests are a sign of growing anger in France's farming communities which have so far not mobilized in large numbers against the government of President Emmanuel Macron since his election.

Public sector workers and railway staff have held regular demonstrations and strikes against the pro-business reforms introduced by the new centrist government

since May 2017. The farmers' protests began late Sunday and have been called for three days because "dialogue has broken down" with the government, Greffon said. Agriculture Minister Stephane Travert said Monday that the government would not back down, adding that he would meet soon with unions as well as biofuels producers to discuss supplies and pricing.

“ We want the government to be consistent ”

"I want Total and biofuel producers to reach an agreement on a base price and a contract that will benefit rapeseed producers," Travert told RTL radio. He also said there was no risk of a shortage of gasoline from the refinery blockades, though farmers have warned they are prepared for a long strike. "We're not against imports... but for consumers, we want the government to be consistent and apply the same rules to imports, otherwise French agriculture will disappear," said Samuel Vandaele of the Young Farmers' union outside a Total refinery southeast of Paris.

Longstanding grievances
Total's chief executive Patrick Pouyanné has pledged to buy 50,000 tons of French rapeseed, also known as canola oil, as part of the 650,000 tons of oil which will be used each year at the La Mede refinery outside the southern city of Marseille. The farmers also have the support of environmental activists, and are hoping to rally support among consumers worried about unfair competition stemming from free-trade accords, including the CETA deal between the EU and Canada as well as ongoing talks with the EU and South American Mercosur nations.

"In South America the average cattle ranch has 24,000 cows, while in France we have on average just 80 — and yet we're always being told to be more environmentally friendly," said Christiane Lambert, president of the FNSEA farmers' union, France's biggest. Besides a ban on palm oil imports, she wants the government to outlaw agriculture imports produced using fertilizers, herbicides and other products prohibited in the EU as part of an agriculture law that will be debated in the Senate starting June 26. Lambert is also calling for lower social charges on seasonal workers, "which are 27 percent higher than in Germany and 37 percent higher than in Italy." The government has said there is no risk of fuel shortages from the blockades, since seven refineries are still operating. — AFP



VATRY: Farmers block access to the Vetry refinery on June 11, 2018 in the French department of Marne, during a demonstration called by the FNSEA farmers' union to protest plans to import palm oil for use in biofuels, a move farmers denounce as unfair competition which jeopardizes their livelihood. — AFP

Euro rises on Italy relief, Canadian dollar dips after row

LONDON: The euro rose to a near two-week high yesterday after assurances from Italy that it would not leave the European Union calmed investors' nerves before a key European Central Bank (ECB) policy meeting. Italy's economy minister said on Sunday his new coalition government would not leave the euro or issue securities to pay off companies owed money by the state, a plan investors viewed as a first step towards exiting the bloc.

That sent Italian borrowing costs down sharply yesterday as the euro rallied half a percent to \$1.1816 towards a two-week high of \$1.1840 touched on Thursday. "The Italy comments calmed fears but let's wait for the government's policy actions this summer. That will decide the market's direction," said MUFJ currency strategist Lee Hardman. Investors are raising their bets that the ECB will signal at a policy meeting on Thursday a winding down of its vast bond-buying program by the end of 2018, following a flurry of hawkish comments by officials last week. The euro bounced despite heightened worries about a global trade war following a spat at the Group of Seven summit in Canada between U.S. President Donald Trump and other leaders over automobile tariffs and other issues.

Trumped lashed out at Canada and Europe over the U.S. trade deficit after he arrived in Singapore, where he is due to hold an historic meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un today. The Mexican peso and Canadian dollar, which has been dogged by fears that



TOKYO: A pedestrian walks past an electronics stock indicator showing share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange (L) and New York Dow Jones closing numbers (R). — AFP

Trump may scrap the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), both fell 0.6 percent. Analysts said that the fairly muted reaction in currencies reflected the low expectations markets had for the G7 summit, despite the fact that the euro is sensitive to the threat of US tariffs on cars. "The overhang of global trade wars is still very much alive but the global FX price action this week will be driven by a stream of other key events," said Viraj Patel, a currencies analyst at ING. Investors are ready for more volatility before a confluence of big events this week, including the Trump-Kim summit, policy reviews by the world's three major central banks, and a UK parliamentary Brexit bill vote. Easing Italian political concerns and speculation the ECB will announce

on June 14 when it will unwind its bond purchasing programme put the dollar under pressure last week as the euro bounced back from 10-month lows. Before the ECB meeting, the U.S. Federal Reserve is almost unanimously expected to raise interest rates for the second time this year on Wednesday. The market's focus will be on the Fed's projection on the path of future interest rates.

Elsewhere the Swiss franc weakened nearly 0.3 percent to 1.162 francs to the euro after voters rejected a plan to transform Switzerland's financial landscape. A Sovereign Money initiative barring commercial banks from electronically creating money when they lend was rejected by more than three-quarters of voters in a referendum on Sunday. — Reuters

Audi CEO named as suspect in German emissions probe

FRANKFURT: German prosecutors yesterday widened an emissions cheating probe into Volkswagen's luxury carmaker Audi to include the brand's Chief Executive Rupert Stadler among the suspects accused of fraud and false advertising. Almost three years after Volkswagen admitted to falsifying US diesel emissions tests, the Munich public prosecutor's office said it was now probing 20 suspects, and had on Monday searched the apartment of Stadler and one other board member.

The news came after Germany's Bild am Sonntag reported up to a million Daimler cars had been found to contain illegal emissions devices, showing how the fallout from Volkswagen's scandal continues to dog the industry. "Since May 30, 2018 the chairman of the board of Audi AG Prof. Rupert Stadler as well as a further member of the management board are now named suspects," the Munich prosecutor's office said. The probe could trigger a leadership crisis at Audi and its parent

Volkswagen where Stadler was in April elevated to the post of head of group sales. Volkswagen declined to comment. Audi said it was fully cooperating with prosecutors. Stadler was in a board meeting and unavailable for comment. Munich prosecutors said the two suspects were being investigated for suspected fraud and false advertising and for their alleged role in helping to bring cars equipped with illegal software on to the European market.

Stadler has been under fire ever since Audi admitted to using cheating software in November 2015 - two months after Volkswagen - but has enjoyed backing from members of the Porsche and Piech families who control Volkswagen and Audi. Before becoming Audi CEO in 2007, Stadler was a confidant of, and former assistant to, then-Volkswagen chairman Ferdinand Piech, the scion of the group's controlling Piech clan.

Audi, the biggest contributor to Volkswagen's profit, admitted in November



INGOLSTADT: In this file photo taken on May 09, 2018 Rupert Stadler, CEO of German car maker Audi, waits prior to the Audi AG general meeting. — AFP

2015 its 3.0 liter V6 diesel engines were fitted with a device deemed illegal in the United States that allowed cars to evade emissions limits. In March, Audi's 20-strong supervisory board recommended that shareholders endorse Stadler as chief executive even as prosecutors raided Audi to investigate who was involved in the use of any illicit software deployed in 80,000 VW, Audi and Porsche cars in the United States. Audi said last month it had discovered emissions-related problems with a further 60,000 cars. — Reuters

and low to mid-single digit growth in operating expenses. He added that the updated strategy involves turning around its US business and to increase its share of the home loans market in the UK. Flint was promoted to the top job after serving as HSBC's head of retail banking and wealth management. After some strong profitable years under Gulliver's before his retirement, HSBC earnings plunged in 2016 on huge writedowns and restructuring charges. However, they rebounded strongly last year, in part thanks to a strong Asian performance. — AFP

New HSBC boss eyes return to growth after restructure

LONDON: HSBC's new chief executive said yesterday he wanted a return to growth for the banking giant after a huge restructuring that saw the lender exit numerous markets and axe tens of thousands of jobs. John Flint, who replaced Stuart Gulliver in February, said he plans to invest \$15-17 billion (12.7-14.4 billion euros) primarily in growth and technology projects.

"After a period of restructuring, it is now time for HSBC to get back into growth mode," Flint said in a statement. "In the next phase of our strategy we will accelerate growth in areas of strength, in particular in Asia and from our international network." Flint said that over the next two years, the bank aims to deliver mid-single digit growth in revenue

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report										
At 02:00 PM Previous Day										
Global Stock Indices										
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %					
Dow Jones	25,241.41	25,316.53	75.12	▲	0.30	2.42				
NASDAQ	7,635.07	7,645.51	10.44	▲	0.14	10.75				
S&P 500	2,770.37	2,779.03	8.66	▲	0.31	3.94				
Financial Times	7,681.07	7,737.22	56.15	▲	0.73	0.64				
DAX	12,766.55	12,792.32	25.77	▲	0.20	-0.97				
CAC 40	5,450.22	5,460.02	9.80	▲	0.18	2.78				
Swiss	8,512.06	8,588.09	76.03	▲	0.89	-8.46				
Nikkei 225	22,694.50	22,804.04	109.54	▲	0.48	0.18				
Topix	1,781.44	1,786.84	5.40	▲	0.30	-1.69				
Hang Seng	30,958.21	31,063.70	105.49	▲	0.34	3.84				
Straits Times	3,436.37	3,441.69	5.32	▲	0.15	1.14				
MENA Stock Indices										
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %					
Kuwait	6,603.51	6,633.44	29.93	▲	0.45	2.96				
Saudi Arabia	8,278.51	8,227.09	-51.42	▼	-0.62	14.56				
Dubai	3,054.45	3,097.38	42.93	▲	1.41	-9.37				
Abu Dhabi	4,691.68	4,733.39	41.71	▲	0.89	6.67				
Bahrain	1,274.48	1,281.17	6.69	▲	0.52	-4.30				
Qatar	9,224.74	9,203.32	-21.42	▼	-0.23	8.23				
Oman	4,601.59	4,602.78	1.19	▲	0.03	-9.76				
Lebanon	1,086.42	1,086.42	0.00	▲	0.00	-5.41				
Jordan	2,099.51	2,101.39	1.88	▲	0.09	-1.28				
Egypt	16,142.72	15,921.25	-221.47	▼	-1.37	7.48				
Morocco	12,439.91	12,421.00	-18.91	▼	-0.15	0.26				
Tunisia	7,676.52	7,722.16	45.64	▲	0.59	22.20				
Global Currencies Exchange Rate										
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar		
Kuwaiti Dinar		12.3061	3.2954	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	362.40	4.3321		
Saudi Riyal	0.08126		0.2678	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	29.45	0.3520		
US Dollar	0.30345	3.7343		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0.0000	109.97	1.3146		
Euro	0.00000	0.0000	0.0000		0.8822	1.1628	129.60	1.5496		
Sterling Pound	0.00000	0.0000	0.0000	1.1335		1.3188	146.95	1.7569		
Swiss Franc	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	0.8600	0.7583		111.47	#DIV/0!		
Japanese Yen	0.00276	0.0340	0.0091	0.0077	0.0068	0.0090		0.0120		
Australian Dollar	0.23083	2.8407	0.7607	0.6453	0.5692	0.0000	83.65			
MENA Currencies Exchange Rate										
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound		
US Dollar		0.30345	3.7343	0.3749	3.6270	0.3831	3.6578	17.7350		
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2954		12.3061	1.2355	11.9525	1.2626	12.0540	58.4446		
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08126		0.1004	0.9713	0.1026	0.9795	4.7492		
Bahraini Dinar	2.6673	0.80939	9.9605		9.6743	1.0219	9.7565	47.3047		
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08366	1.0296	0.1034		0.1056	1.0085	4.8897		
Omani Riyal	2.6101	0.79203	9.7468	0.9785	9.4668		9.5472	46.2898		
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08296	1.0209	0.1025	0.9916	0.1047		4.8485		
Egyptian Pound	0.0564	0.01711	0.2106	0.0211	0.2045	0.0216	0.2062			
Global Interest Rates										
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year					
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00					
US Dollar	1.85	2.04	2.32	2.48	2.74					
Euro	-0.42	-0.40	-0.35	-0.30	-0.22					
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.49	0.62	0.75	0.93					
Swiss Franc	-0.79	-0.79	-0.73	-0.64	-0.52					
Australian Dollar	1.64	1.85	1.83	1.84	1.88					
Japanese Yen	-0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00					
Global Bond Yields										
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year						
United States	2.51	2.80	2.96	3.10						
Europe	-0.66	-0.17	0.47	1.15						
United Kingdom	0.73	1.09	1.39	1.85						
Commodities										
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %					
Kuwait Oil	72.98	73.12	0.14	▲	0.19	13.03				
Brent	74.22	73.48	-0.74	▼	-1.00	9.62				
West Texas	65.77	65.77	0.00	-	0.00	8.07				
Gold	1298.00	1296.68	-1.32	▼	-0.10	-0.35				
Silver	16.74	16.80	0.06	▲	0.37	-1.27				

Source: National Bank of Kuwait

Business

'Fair trade, fool trade', Trump's tweets spew ire on NATO allies

'Fair trade is now to be called fool trade if it is not reciprocal'

SINGAPORE: US President Donald Trump fired off a volley of tweets yesterday venting anger on NATO allies, the European Union and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in the wake of a divisive G7 meeting over the weekend. The escalating clash over trade between Washington and some of its closest global partners cast a cloud over Trump's efforts to make history in nuclear talks in Singapore today with Kim Jong Un of North Korea, one of America's bitterest foes.

Having left the Group of Seven summit in Canada early, Trump's announcement that he was backing out of the joint communique torpedoed what appeared to be a fragile consensus on the trade dispute between Washington and its top allies. "Fair trade is now to be called fool trade if it is not reciprocal," said Trump, who flew from Canada to Singapore on Sunday to prepare for the first-ever summit between a US and North Korean leader. "Sorry, we cannot let our friends, or enemies, take advantage of us on trade anymore. We must put the American worker first!"

The communique, which had appeared to have papered over the cracks that surfaced so uncharacteristically at the G7, said the leaders of the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Japan were agreed on the need for "free, fair, and mutually beneficial trade" and the importance of fighting protectionism. "We strive to reduce tariff barriers, non-tariff barriers and subsidies," the statement said, which came despite Washington appearing intent on taking more punitive steps on trade.

Trump's extraordinary outburst yesterday against NATO allies, the European Union and Canada appeared aimed at striking a chord with voters who support his "America First" agenda. At the same time, however, it put Trump in the position of going into a crucial summit at odds with countries he needs on his side to pressure North Korea to move toward dismantling a nuclear arsenal that threatens the United States.

"Not fair to the people of America! \$800 billion trade deficit," he said. "Why should I, as president of

the United State, allow countries to continue to make massive trade surpluses, as they have for decades, while our farmers, workers & taxpayers have such a big and unfair price to pay?" It was left to Trump's aides to figure out how to explain Trump's airing of grievances against trading partners instead of focusing on his coming talks with Kim, which the president's supporters hope will provide him with a major foreign policy win.

Irritants will be overcome

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo praised European countries for helping to bring about the North Korea summit, alluding to their enforcement of sanctions against Pyongyang. He expressed confidence that US relations with other G7 countries would continue to move forward, despite the weekend clash in Canada. "There are always irritants in relationships," Pompeo told reporters. He dismissed as "ludicrous" the notion that Kim would decide he could not trust the United States because of the G7 dispute.

White House spokesman Raj Shah said Trump was "rattling the cages right now on trade," insisting there was no reason to believe there would be any negative fallout for the North Korea summit. "These are really unrelated baskets of issues." But one US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, acknowledged: "The timing for all this is not very good at all." The prospect that Trump could be moving toward an even greater protectionist trade policy is likely to chill financial markets worried about tit-for-tat escalation that could lead to a full-blown global trade war.

"Business confidence, and subsequently capital spending, is at risk if this tension continues through the summer," said Tai Hui, J.P. Morgan Asset Management Chief Market Strategist for Asia Pacific. "This could cast a long shadow over global growth, which has rebounded in recent weeks after a soft start to the year." Nevertheless, markets were relatively calm on Monday after an early wobble.

Trump also lambasted fellow members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) for paying dis-

proportionately less than the United States to maintain the Western alliance. "The US pays close to the entire cost of NATO - protecting many of these same countries that rip us off on trade (they pay only a fraction of the cost - and laugh!)," he tweeted. "The European Union had a \$151 billion surplus - should pay much more for military!"

"Germany pays 1 percent (slowly) of GDP towards NATO, while we pay 4 percent of a much larger GDP. Does anybody believe that makes sense?" "We protect Europe (which is good) at great financial loss, and then get unfairly clobbered on trade. Change is coming!" Trump also renewed attacks on Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who had hosted the G7 meeting in Quebec. "Justin acts hurt when called out!" the US president said in his latest Tweet. On Saturday, he called the Canadian prime minister "very dishonest and weak."

Place in heaven

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow



WASHINGTON DC: In this file photo taken on December 22, 2017 White House Chief of Staff John Kelly picks up documents off of United States President Donald J. Trump desk during an event to sign the Tax Cut and Reform Bill in the Oval Office at The White House. —AFP

accused Trudeau of betraying Trump with "polarising" statements on trade policy that risked making the U.S. leader look weak ahead of the historic summit with Kim. "(Trudeau) really kind of stabbed us in the back," Kudlow, the director of the National Economic Council who had accompanied Trump to Canada, said on CNN's "State of the Union."

Trade adviser Peter Navarro told "Fox News Sunday" that "there is a special place in hell for any leader that engages in bad faith diplomacy" with Trump. Pompeo, at the Singapore briefing, pointedly ignored a reporter's question about Navarro's comment and left the podium while he was being pressed for an answer. Trudeau, in Quebec City for bilateral meetings with non-G7 leaders after the summit, did not comment as he arrived. But he got direct personal support from some European leaders. British Prime Minister Theresa May "is fully supportive" of Trudeau and his leadership, a senior UK government source said, while European Council President Donald Tusk tweeted: "There is a special place in heaven for @JustinTrudeau." —Reuters

Nicaraguan crisis leaves vital street market with economic bruises

MANAGUA: In taking over his family's shoe business in Nicaragua's largest market, vendor Jose Miguel Gutierrez thought he was set for life-but as his country nosedives into sociopolitical crisis, one of his two stalls stands barren. Situated in the heart of Nicaragua's capital, the chaotic Mercado Oriental market—which sells everything from buttons to lizard meat—generates tens of thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars, providing a measure of Nicaragua's economic pulse that vendors say is now beating at a snail's pace. Speaking from his empty shop there, the 32-year-old Gutierrez says he and other sellers are feeling a sharp economic pinch from the Central American country's upheaval, which he says "every day is going to get worse." Gutierrez is among those

Economic havoc

Some 4,000 delivery trucks are stranded on the country's borders, according to local media, a calamity for Nicaragua as well as its regional trading partners including Honduras and Costa Rica. Despite his support of the protestors and their blockades, the shoe seller hangs his head in despair over the state of his business, where the plastic shelves that once featured rows of spotless Nike sneakers now gather dust. His remaining stall has dwindling inventory, and he fears the unrest's evolution could shut him down all together.

Sandal vendor Veronica Samora goes to work every


morning saddled with a similar burden. A young couple peers at the 33-year-old's shop, zeroing in on a pink pair of rubber moccasins-but they balk after asking Samora the price, the equivalent of about five dollars. She lowers it, and lowers it again, but the pair simply smiles and moves on.

"People don't have money," Samora says. "They can't pay what goods are worth." Samora—who at eight years old began helping her mother at the stand—says she's selling at least 50 percent less inventory than before the crisis, "and each day that goes by, the percentage drops lower and lower." "The way we're going with this war, at some point the day will come when we won't sell anything."

In recent years Nicaragua had stood out as one of the fastest-developing economies in Central America, according to the World Bank, maintaining above average growth compared to its neighbors and the Caribbean. But the country remains plagued by inequality and is one of Latin America's poorest. Tensions came to a head in April over Ortega's controversial bid to reform the pension system—essentially reducing payouts while upping contributions — sparked mass protests that were met with a violent crackdown, morphing into a crisis now tanking the already fragile economy. —AFP




MANAGUA: A boy rests on June 9, 2018 at a shoe stall in Managua's largest market, Mercado Oriental, where vendors say they are already feeling the economic strain as the country nosedives into sociopolitical crisis in part due to the mass protests demanding President Daniel Ortega relinquish power. —AFP



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Business

X-cite achieves major breakthrough in cooperation with City Centre Group

Kuwait's largest electronic retailer opens four stores at City Centre branches

KUWAIT: X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, Kuwait's largest electronic retailer, recently partnered with City Centre to become its exclusive electronics store, a partnership that marks X-cite's unceasing success in the local market.

In coordination with City Centre in Kuwait, X-cite chose strategic City Centre branches where X-cite made its new home. Four new stores recently opened at key City Centre locations at Salmiya, Dhajeej, Jahra and Dasma. X-cite's new locations make the electronic retailer further reduce the distance to customers as it is now present in City Centre's strategic branches in the same identity, design and service that is seen in its other locations, a factor that asserts the retailer's leadership in the local market and its growing regional excellence. The new locations provide their full range of products with store areas exceeding 1000 sq/m.

On the occasion of the opening in Salmiya, Fernando Lopez- Vice President of X-cite, said: "We are proud to be collaborating with an esteemed institution like City Centre and we believe that this new partnership plays a pivotal role in our expansion and growth plans. It is, indeed, the perfect opportunity to reinforce the key pillars behind our brand: all-inclusive offerings, convenience, and excellence in customer service".

Diverse services

X-cite has established itself as a leading brand in providing the latest electronic products to its customers due to its strong ties with international brands in the electronics sector. Continuously seeking to satisfy the needs of its customers, X-cite provides diverse services that enable customers to experience products and interact with them whether it is in the retailer's showrooms or through its website that is designed to make online shopping a fast and easy experience. To ensure peace of mind, X-cite offers shoppers a wide range of supporting services including a state-of-the-art maintenance center and aftersales services at its large showrooms across Kuwait. Additional range of services includes free delivery, payment with installments, X-care warranty and Pick up in-store service.

City Centre operates the largest hypermarket in the country in terms of number of square feet. The hypermarket offers its customers the widest selection of products in all categories at the best prices including a full line of groceries with an extensive selection of imported products from the US, UK and Europe as well as fashion, footwear, household, toys, linen, stationary, luggage, perfumes and beauty.



Through its customer-centric concept, X-cite offers customers competitive quality and prices to serve every segment of its customer base, providing them with the highest level of service as well as engaging with them and earning their trust through supporting services and offerings. X-cite also enables customers to shop from the comfort of their homes through its free mobile app and website, www.xcite.com.

City Centre Group established in 1999 is the first private hypermarket in the country and has grown into a leading name in the world of retail shopping in the Middle East and the Levant. City Centre Group, which is now operating supermarkets and convenience stores, has a simple vision: Offering customers a great shopping environment at the best prices. Already renowned for its extensive range and large-scale promotions, City Centre

continues to reinvent itself, engaging with customers through social media while continuously improving their shopping experience by upgrading its store operations, with the ultimate objective to exceed its customers' expectations. City Centre and X-cite cooperation will surely enhance the shopping experience by offering a wide range of digital and non-digital electronics and appliances.

KIPCO signs MoU with B Wireless to provide free internet access

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - has signed a memorandum of understanding with B. Wireless whereby the latter will provide free internet access at Hessah Al Mubarak District for three years. KIPCO is the master planner of Hessah Al Mubarak District, Kuwait's first-ever comprehensive, mixed-use district built by the private sector. The district covers an area of 227,066 sq/m at a prime location on the outskirts of Kuwait City. Speaking on this occasion, Mr Tawfiq Al Jarrah, Executive Director of Hessah Al Mubarak District said:

"Our vision for Hessah District is to create an urban cluster that attracts the younger generation by combining leisure, work and shopping. Having an infrastructure in place that ensures ease of connectivity is one step towards realizing this vision. We are delighted to be partnering with B. Wireless on this, as we begin to shape the unprecedented experience we have promised our residents."

On his part, Mr Meshaal Alebrahim, Chief Executive Officer at B. Wireless said: "This is a new milestone for B. Wireless in its continued endeavors to provide Kuwait with fast and reliable connectivity across Kuwait, as well as a new level of high-speed performance in line with advancements made in the fast-moving digital world. We are very pleased with our partnership with a high-profile development such as Hessah Al Mubarak District, through which we are able to continue serving a larger share of customers with our leading products."

Burgan Bank names winners of Yawmi account daily draw

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

The lucky winners are:

1. Abdullateef Mohammad Naser Alhamad
2. Bader Esam Bader Alessa
3. Mariam Hassan Ahmad Almadhoun
4. Sarah Mohammad Abdullah Ali & Aliah Mohammad Abdullah Ali
5. Hussain Ali Anees Alasaad

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

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win. For more information on opening a Yawmi account, the new quarterly draw or on any of the bank's products and services, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch, or simply call the bank's Call Center.

Mercedes-AMG GT S Roadster: New member of AMG GT family

KUWAIT: Mercedes-AMG is extending its sports car portfolio with the new AMG GT S Roadster as an attractive open-air model. With this latest addition the AMG GT family now has a dozen members: four two-door Coupes, three Roadsters, two customer sports racing cars and three four-door Coupes. The basis for the high Driving Performance of the new AMG GT S Roadster is the combination of a lightweight aluminum space frame, a V8 biturbo engine, a seven-speed dual clutch transmission, a rear axle locking differential and a sport suspension with aluminum double wishbone axles. Compared to the AMG GT Roadster, the AMG GT S Roadster is rendered even more dynamic by numerous modifications to the engine, suspension, brakes, design and interior. This positions it between the AMG GT Roadster and the even more powerful AMG GT C Roadster, now providing a choice of three open-top two-seaters.

Muscular power unit for a top speed of over 300 km/h

The AMG 4.0-litre V8 biturbo in the AMG GT S Roadster delivers an output of 384 kW (522 hp) and maximum torque of 670 Nm. This is available over a wide engine speed range from 1900 to 5000 rpm. The eight-cylinder power unit delivers a sprint from standstill to 100 km/h in 3.8 seconds. The dynamic power delivery continues right up to the top speed of 308 km/h. The two turbochargers of the V8 are not positioned on the outside of the cylinder banks, but inside the cylinder "V". Advantages: a compact engine design and spontaneous response of the turbochargers.

Power transfer is based on the combination of a front mid-engine and the AMG SPEEDSHIFT DCT 7G sport transmission in a transaxle arrangement, combined with a torsionally rigid torque tube. Thanks to the wide gear ratio spread, the decidedly high torque of the V8 biturbo engine can be used to optimum effect. The weight distribution is also ideal for optimum driving dynamics at 47 (front) and 53 (rear) percent.

The AMG GT S Roadster is equipped with the AMG RIDE CONTROL suspension with adaptive damping adjustment as standard. This fully automatic, electronically controlled system adjusts the damping at each wheel to the current requirements. This improves driving safety and ride comfort. The ideal operating point can be selected at all times on the basis of extensive information relating to acceleration or vehicle speed, for example.

Jazeera Airways takes delivery of first Airbus A320neo in MidEast

KUWAIT: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, yesterday announced it took delivery of the first Airbus A320neo aircraft to arrive in the Middle East, introducing the fuel-saving and new engine aircraft to its growing fleet.

Jazeera Airways Chief Executive Officer, Rohit Ramachandran, said: "This is the first of three A320neo aircraft scheduled to be delivered to Jazeera Airways by May 2019, supporting our continued network expansion to cover destinations that are around 5 to 6 hours away



Electronically controlled rear differential

As standard, the AMG GT S Roadster is equipped with an electronically controlled locking differential at the rear axle, which is integrated into the compact transmission housing. Its sensitive and fast control raises the critical limit of vehicle dynamics to a new level. It not only further improves the traction of the drive wheels, but also increases the critical cornering speed. The greatest benefit of the electronic rear-axle limited-slip differential is the even more sensitive and proactive control, which pushes the critical threshold higher, making it even easier to drive at the vehicle's limits.

AMG high-performance composite braking system

The AMG high-performance composite brake system is adapted to the enhanced performance of the AMG GT S Roadster. The front axle features composite brake discs measuring 390 x 36 mm with 6-piston fixed callipers, with composite brake discs measuring 360 x 26 mm and single-piston fixed callipers at the rear. The brake callipers are painted in red with "AMG" lettering. There is also the option of the AMG high-performance ceramic composite braking system with brake discs in size 402 x 39 mm at the front axle and 360 x 32 mm at the rear, together with specially painted brake callipers with "AMG Carbon Ceramic" lettering. Exceptionally short stopping distances, a precise pressure point and outstanding resistance to fading even under extreme operating conditions.

Authentic sports car experience embodying sensual purity

From the expressive AMG radiator grille to the long bonnet and the muscular tail end, the two-seater guarantees a pure sports car experience even when stationary. The flat front section and forward-sloping radiator grille make the Roadster appear to hug the road. At the same time this shape lowers the vehicle's back-pressure point, enhancing the flow of cooling air and the car's aerodynamic performance. Viewed from the side, the arched roof line (when the soft top is closed) and the frameless doors are eye-catching features. The surfaces and lines of the side wall flow into the tail end with a dramatic tapered effect.

from Kuwait. The A320neo introduces new upgrades that enable us to make cost savings while improving performance and increasing the range covered by the single-aisle aircraft."

The A320neo incorporates the new CFM LEAP-1A engines and fuel-saving wingtip devices known as Sharklets. It offers savings in fuel burn, additional payload, increased range, lower operating costs and significant reduction in engine noise and CO2 emissions below the current industry standard. The first flight for the Jazeera A320neo, J9 176, left Kuwait for Dubai at 1:10pm (GMT+3) yesterday.

Jazeera Airways operates a fleet of Airbus A320s and an A320neo, all fitted with a two-class cabin configuration comprising a Business Class and an Economy Class. Business Class offers travelers priority check-in, an exclusive cabin with middle-seat free and complimentary menu, and up to 50 kilograms in free baggage allowance. Jazeera Economy Class offers travelers generous legroom in modern leather seats and free baggage allowance of 30 kilograms.



High quality and exclusivity: The interior

The interior design echoes the design lines of the exterior. The dashboard places a firm emphasis on width, creating an impression of a powerful wing. Thanks to the high bellines, concave door panelling, a dynamic, rising centre console and the low seating position, the driver is integrated into the cockpit and feels fully attuned to the Roadster.

The sport seats are upholstered in black ARTICO man-made leather/DINAMICA microfibre as standard. Numerous other materials and colours are also optionally available, such as nappa leather in black, marron/black, red pepper/black, silver pearl/black. Also available only with AMG Performance seats is number of personalised options, for instance exclusive nappa leather in saddle brown/black and macchiato beige /black.

Choice of high-quality interior trim

As standard the AMG GT S Roadster comes with the AMG Silver Chrome Interior package. This creates particular highlights with trim in high-quality silver chrome. The package consists of a centre console surround, air vent bezels and trim strips in the door armrests in silver chrome. Optional extras include the AMG Piano Lacquer Interior package - trim surfaced in luxurious, shining piano lacquer accentuates the high quality of the interior. AMG trim elements in matt silver glass-fibre, carbon-fibre and matt carbon-fibre. The Exclusive Trim package further enhances the AMG trim and brings even more individuality to the interior.

Tailor-made optional equipment for any customer requirements

On the basis of the extensive standard equipment, the Mercedes-AMG GT S Roadster offers wide scope for individual wishes. The AMG DYNAMIC PLUS package ensures even higher driving dynamics and even sportier handling characteristics. As an option the AMG rear axle steering can be ordered in conjunction with the AMG DYNAMIC PLUS package. This makes the AMG GT S Roadster even more agile, with even greater handling stability at the limits.



Technology

The HUAWEI P20 Pro and HUAWEI Mate RS makes every photo a wonderful memory



KUWAIT: Eid is a special time to rejoice the completion of the blessed month of Ramadan and what better way to celebrate the festivities than by treating your family and friends with the latest editions to the HUAWEI P series. Smartphone Camera King, HUAWEI P20 Pro and the leader of luxury smartphones- Porsche Design HUAWEI Mate RS are the perfect gifts to capture photography masterpieces and create unforgettable memories.

HUAWEI P20 Pro

Whether your loved one is a traveler or a photography fanatic, the HUAWEI P20 Pro gives them an ultimate photography experience like no other. With AI-powered real-time scene and object recognition technology, the smartphone recognizes 500 scenarios in 19 categories for you to choose the right skills at the right moment. For

capturing the magic of the night, HUAWEI P20 Pro's groundbreaking low light and night modes have defied odds to produce some of the most vibrant, clear and detailed night time shots. Speaking of details, the HUAWEI P20 Pro's new zooming capabilities - 5x Hybrid Zoom for the first time in a smartphone - elevate you to professional photographer status so you can capture beautiful shots regardless of external conditions.

Porsche Design HUAWEI Mate RS

The epitome of luxury and design, the Porsche Design HUAWEI Mate RS is built to match the lifestyles of the influential, powerful and glamorous. Treat your loved one with a sophisticated and exclusive smartphone that is the most covetable accessory today. With features like an exceptional camera that

delivers unparalleled sharpness, color accuracy, focus and contrast for every single shot. The high-end flagship smartphone unleashes a revolution in unlocking with the dual fingerprint scanner for enhanced convenience. It also features wireless charging and a storage for up to 512GB giving you more memory to store those special shots. On the exterior, you can switch from glass to frame in a subtle and suave manner giving you a chance to show off a designer smartphone with exclusive look and feel.

Availability

HUAWEI P20 Pro and the Porsche Design HUAWEI Mate RS with unprecedented camera features make a great addition to Eid Gift Guides. Huawei devices may be borrowed for Eid shoots, with prior request and approval. The HUAWEI P20 Pro is now available to purchase in Kuwait. The stunning smartphone will be available in Black, Blue and Twilight colors at a price of KWD 239.9. The Porsche Design Huawei Mate RS is now available to purchase from X-cite Electronics & Best AI Youssifi Electronics at KD 500.

Booming world of play revs E3 video game extravaganza

LOS ANGELES: Pulse-pounding new video games and more ways to enjoy them are at the center of the Electronic Entertainment Expo extravaganza officially kicked off here on Saturday. The annual industry E3 gathering known for first-looks at keenly anticipated video games was expected to feature sequels to blockbuster franchises such as "Fallout," "Halo," "Battlefield," and "Assassin's Creed."

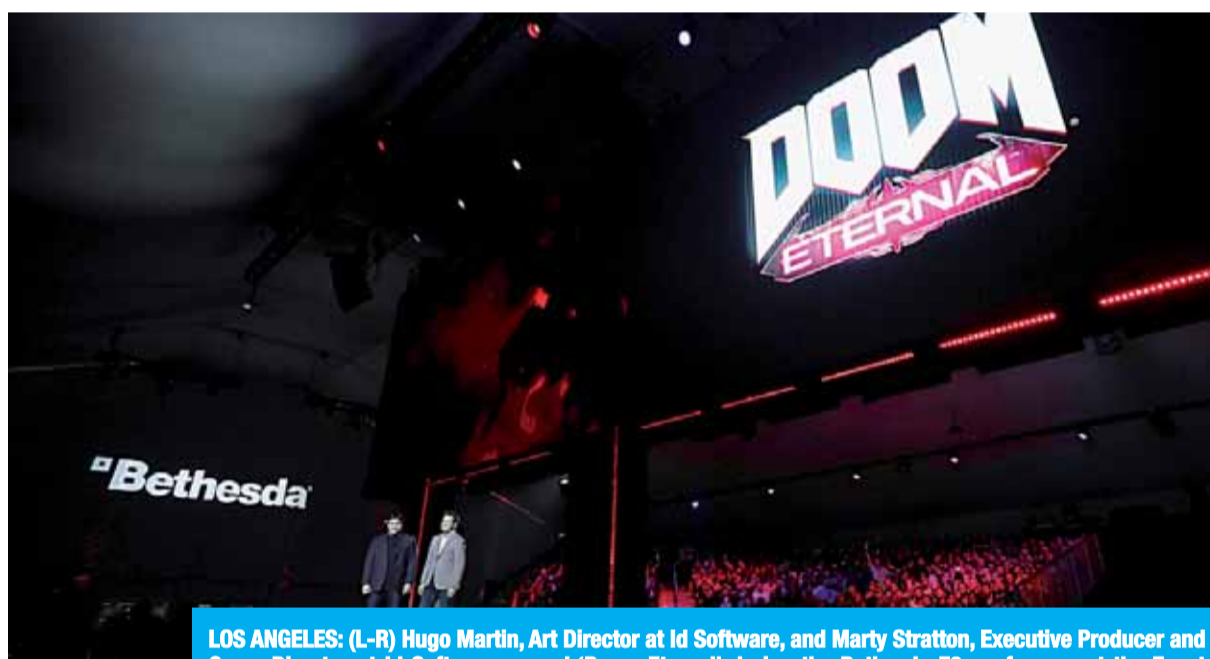
E3 promised glimpses at trends such as collaborating in online teams instead of playing solo, and blazingly popular "battle royale" death matches such as those at the heart of "Fortnite" and "Playerunknown's Battlegrounds." Behind the scenes, the gathering will explore issues like the use of artificial intelligence in games, and streaming console-quality titles from the cloud to devices other than consoles.

What E3 organizers bill as the "world's premier gaming trade show" will open the show floor to the public this year. Tickets for the event have already sold out. Visitors will be able to play portions of upcoming games and test new hardware. "Gamers raise the energy of E3 to a fever pitch, reinforcing its place as the world's preeminent event for video games," said Michael Gallagher, chief executive of the Entertainment Software Association, which is behind E3.

E3 was long centered on the Microsoft, Nintendo, and Sony consoles, but a rise of play on personal computers and games becoming spectator sports has broadened the focus of the event. "ESports has also made huge advancements, hitting the mainstream with televised matches on prime-time cable channels and tournament prize-pools that are putting traditional sports to shame," E3 organizers said in a release.

Microsoft playing hard

The head of Xbox on Sunday said Microsoft is hard at work on a next-generation console along with a cloud service that would let players stream games to any device. Microsoft is adding five new game studios, one it is creating in Southern California and another four it is buying, Xbox team chief Phil Spencer said. "We are making one of our greatest single year's investments in teams by adding five new creative stu-



LOS ANGELES: (L-R) Hugo Martin, Art Director at Id Software, and Marty Stratton, Executive Producer and Game Director at Id Software, reveal 'Doom Eternal' during the Bethesda E3 conference at the Event Deck at LA Live. —AFP

dios," Spencer said at a media event ahead of the formal start of the Expo.

Microsoft has criticized for lacking hit video games exclusively for play on Xbox, while Sony has dominated this console generation with PlayStation 4 models boasting a cornucopia of coveted titles. The Xbox event was packed with cinematic snippets or play of 52 games. Of those, 18 titles were tailored exclusively for the Xbox console.

Spencer said his team is "deep into architecting the next Xbox" in a commitment to console gaming at a time when mobile and personal computer play are soaring. Microsoft rival Sony is reportedly working on a PlayStation 4 successor. Sony will show off coming video games, and perhaps insights into the future of its console or cloud services, at a theatrical event here late Monday. Microsoft is also working on a "cloud network" to stream console-quality games to internet-linked devices including smartphones and tablets, according to Spencer.

"The world of gaming is on an historic growth path," Spencer said at the late Sunday Xbox media event. "We commit the full breadth of resources at Microsoft to deliver on the future of play." Included in the Microsoft

arsenal is the use of artificial intelligence to make game worlds and characters more realistic.

Wasteland allies

US video game powerhouse Bethesda Softworks hosted a media event of its own late Sunday as it built on the momentum of winning franchises including "Fallout." The coming "Fallout 76" will be a prequel to the award-winning series of games, and be set in the post-apocalyptic hills of West Virginia. Unlike its predecessors, "Fallout 76" will be an open world hosted online and populated by other players instead of computer generated characters, Bethesda Game Studios director Todd Howard said.

In the game "each of those characters is a real person," Howard said. "We always wanted to see what our style of game could be with multi-player. We knew we had to do it in a big way." Players can work together in the wasteland to take over nuclear missile silos, obliterating the opposition, Howard said. Players can also opt to go solo. Bethesda will be refining the game with help from players who sign on at Bethesda.net. "It's new for us, a little bit scary," Howard said of the multiplayer Fallout set to launch in November. —AFP

Microsoft looks past next-gen Xbox to cloud games

LOS ANGELES: The head of Xbox on Sunday said Microsoft is hard at work on a next-generation console along with a cloud service that would let players stream games to any device. Microsoft is adding five new game studios, one it is creating in Southern California and another four it is buying, Xbox team chief Phil Spencer said.

"We are making one of our greatest single year's investments in teams by adding five new creative studios," Spencer said at an Xbox media event ahead of the formal start of the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo here this week. Financial details of the acquisitions of Playground Games, Ninja Theory, Undead Labs, and Compulsion Games were not disclosed.

Microsoft has been pelted with criticism for lacking hit video games exclusively for



LOS ANGELES: A man walks past an Xbox sign during the Xbox 2018 E3 briefing in Los Angeles, California on June 10, 2018, ahead of the 24th Electronic Entertainment Expo. —AFP

play on Xbox, while Sony has dominated this console generation with PlayStation 4 models boasting a cornucopia of coveted titles. The Xbox event was packed with cinematic snippets or play of 52 games, including new installments to blockbuster franchises such as "Fallout" and "Halo." Of those, 18 titles were tailored exclusively for the Xbox console.

Spencer said his team is "deep into

architecting the next Xbox" in a commitment to console gaming at a time when mobile and personal computer play are soaring. Microsoft rival Sony is reportedly working on a successor to PlayStation 4. Meanwhile, Microsoft is also working on a "cloud network" to stream console-quality game play to an array of internet-linked devices including smartphones and tablets, according to Spencer.

"The world of gaming is on an historic growth path," Spencer said at an Xbox media event ahead of the formal start of the Electronic Entertainment Expo here this week. "We commit the full breadth of resources at Microsoft to deliver on the future of play." Including in the Microsoft arsenal is artificial intelligence that will be used to make game worlds and characters more realistic. —AFP

Cryptocurrencies tumble after S Korea hack

HONG KONG: Cryptocurrencies plunged in Asia yesterday after a hack on a South Korean exchange sparked fresh concerns about the safety of the digital units. The attack on Coinrail comes months after Japanese firm Coincheck said it had lost more than \$500 million in a January hack. Coinrail did not specify the value of the currency that was taken in the attack at the weekend but said it was working with authorities and other coin developers to track down the culprits.

The firm, which trades more than 50 cryptocurrencies, added that it had frozen all exposed coins-Fundus X, Aston, and Enper-and other units had been taken offline in a "cold wallet". The news sent cryptocurrencies tumbling, with bitcoin losing about 13 percent, ethereum down 12 percent and ripple almost 20 percent lower as traders fret over the safety of their investments. "This is 'If it can happen to A, it can happen to B and it can happen to C,' then people panic because someone is selling," said Stephen Innes, head of Asia-Pacific trade at OANDA. "The markets are so thinly traded, primarily by retail accounts, that these guys can get really scared out of positions," he said. "It actually doesn't take a lot of money to move the market significantly."

Cryptocurrencies have plunged since the end of 2017, when bitcoin hit a record high near \$20,000, having surged from less than \$1,000 just 11 months earlier. The unit is now worth around \$6,780. South Korea is one of the biggest markets for trading in digital currencies but the boom in their popularity has forced the government to tighten regulations, following similar moves in other countries. Japan in February carried out raids on a number of exchanges following the Coinbase hack, which exceeded the \$480 million in virtually currency stolen in 2014 from another Japanese exchange, MtGox. —AFP

China's Xiaomi announces pioneering listing plan

SHANGHAI: Smartphone maker Xiaomi yesterday became the first Chinese company to announce plans to issue securities on mainland China markets under a trial program aimed at encouraging the country's tech giants to list at home. Xiaomi, one of the world's largest smartphone manufacturers that is planning a primary listing in Hong Kong, said in a regulatory filing that it will also issue Chinese Depository Receipts (CDR) on the Shanghai Stock Exchange. After watching technology heavyweights Alibaba and Baidu list on Wall Street, Chinese authorities have devised a program under which companies listed outside the country can simultaneously list CDRs at home. The objectives of the plan include helping to develop China's still relatively immature and volatile share markets while allowing domestic investors to invest in the country's big tech champions.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) finalized the rules governing the trial program last week but it remains unknown when it could start. Alibaba and Hong Kong-listed Tencent have expressed an interest in the plan. Xiaomi's filing said the CDRs would be listed at the same time as its main debut in Hong Kong, with its initial public offering expected to raise \$10 billion, valuing it at \$100 billion. —AFP

Taiwan's first settlers camp out in city for land rights

Indigenous challenge exacerbated by island's small size

TAIPEI: Taipei's Peace Memorial Park is an oasis of calm in the bustling city, home to morning walkers and lunchtime strollers - along with a camp of indigenous protesters demanding justice. For several months, the small group has lived in tents in a corner of the park, with a makeshift kitchen and a cluster of painted rocks, photographs and posters tracing Taiwan's indigenous history and their fight for land rights. They want the repeal of regulation, announced last year, which they say denies their right to ancestral land.

The guidelines are on the delineation of traditional territory and its return to indigenous people. But they are limited to state-owned land and do not include private land - which the group says denies them a sizeable piece of territory. "We have been betrayed by the government," said Panai Kusui, an indigenous leader and singer. "We are the original inhabitants of this island, the collective custodians of all land before the concept of public land and private land. This regulation denies us what is rightfully ours," she said. Taiwan's indigenous people make up about 2 percent of its 23.5 million people, and have long suffered marginalization that has left them poorer, less educated and more jobless than their Chinese counterparts.

Centuries of pain

In an unprecedented move, newly elected President Tsai Ing-wen in 2016 apologized to the indigenous people for "centuries of pain and mistreatment" and promised to improve their lives. One step was to recognize their ancestral land: the government's Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP) in February 2017 declared 1.8 million hectares - about half of Taiwan's total land area - to be traditional territory.

About 90 percent of this is public land that indigenous people can claim, and to whose development they can consent, said Kolas Yotaka, a legislator with the ruling Democratic Progressive Party who belongs to the Amis tribe. The remainder is privately owned and cannot be

claimed. "The legislation allows us to take back control of most of our ancestral land. It's a big deal," Kolas told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in her office. "No one is disputing that we are the original owners of the land. But today, 98 percent of the population is non-indigenous, and we cannot go back to how it was 400 years ago," she said.

First to come, last to prosper

Taiwan's first inhabitants are believed to be Austronesian tribes who hunted and farmed on the island thousands of years before Han settlers from mainland China arrived in the 17th century. With the arrival of settlers, indigenous people faced violence and loss of land, and their marginalization continued at the hands of Japanese colonizers in the 19th century.

After the Kuomintang took control in 1945, indigenous people's access to traditional lands was further limited, as authorities built modern cities, high-speed rail lines, and created national parks and tourist facilities. The Indigenous Peoples' Basic Law, passed in 2005, granted a wide range of rights to Taiwan's tribal people. But its implementation was stalled, said Panai, who was joined at the protest site last year by English singer Joss Stone on the latter's tour of Taiwan. "Indigenous leaders would like to see a return of all traditional territories," said Scott Simon, co-chair in Taiwan studies at the University of Ottawa. "But any legislation is always subject to negotiation and compromise."

President Tsai has acknowledged past failures to implement the Indigenous Peoples law, and has promised a justice commission, as well as better education, healthcare and economic opportunities. The CIP has asked the nearly 750 indigenous communities in Taiwan to apply for recognition of their traditional territory under the 2017 legislation. More than 250 have already submitted their claims, said Kolas. "There are divisions even between the indigenous people over the legislation, but a majority have welcomed it," she said. "We've been neglected for so long - we are losing our language, our tradition. But at least there is now a process

Tsai has acknowledged past failures



TAIPEI: Indigenous activist and singer Panai Kusui has camped out for months in a park, protesting against a regulation that delineates traditional territory on the island. — Reuters

for us to define our land and get it back," she said.

Sacred territory

Indigenous land rights are contentious the world over. In poorer countries in Asia and Latin America, tribal people lack property rights and face violence from state officials, miners and loggers eyeing their land. In wealthy nations such as Australia and Canada, indigenous people are negotiating with governments for a greater say over land and resources. In Taiwan, which China claims as its sacred territory, focusing on indigenous people may also be a way to establish a cultural identity that is different from China's, analysts say.

But the challenge is exacerbated by the island's small

size: it has a total area of just under 14,000 sq miles. Kolas has drafted the Indigenous Land and Seabed Act that comprehensively defines land and sea rights. It passed its first reading on May 25. "We need jobs, we need opportunities to improve our economic status," she said. "If we kick out the hotel or the mining company without negotiating for better terms, what's the option? We have to demand more rights, but we have to do it smartly," she said. But activists say they must have rights over all traditional territory to ensure "environmentally friendly and culturally sensitive" developments that also create opportunities for them. "The deterioration of our culture and economic status are tied to the loss of our land. We will not stop protesting until the regulation is repealed," said Panai. — Reuters

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

Global Medical Center Welcomes Dr. Marzouq Al-Bader Consultant vascular and general surgery

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What's On

Exceptional experience during Eid Al-Fitr at Sheraton Kuwait and Four Points

The Sheraton Kuwait and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait Hotels express sincere congratulations and blessings for the approaching Eid Al-Fitr, and invites you to indulge in a luxurious Eid spirit through its legendary restaurants which extends from Sheraton Kuwait to the Avenues Mall, the largest mall in Kuwait where they can choose from a wide selection of menus around the world keeping up with its high level of hospitality standards and outstanding services.

Sheraton Kuwait restaurants at the Avenues-Grand Avenue is welcoming you to try an exceptional dining experience by enjoying lavish dining at Al-Hambra restaurant and enjoy selections of Oriental and Mediterranean set menu dishes. For more variety, try the Le Tarbouche, Bukhara and Shahrayar Restaurants that provides delicious traditional dishes with various cuisines and special setting. Our visitors could also relax in the elegance of the English Tea Lounge located at the 2nd Avenues.

For the patrons of the Sheraton Kuwait, our restaurants are waiting you to spend unforgettable times with family and friends with unique cultural experiences of hospitality where you can experience the exemplary fine dining of a genuine Italian cuisine at Riccardo restaurant, lavish buffet and a La Carte

dining experience at the Al-Hambra restaurant specially prepared for this occasion. Lebanese delicacies in a distinctive traditional ambiance at Le Tarbouche restaurant with the best cold and hot mezzas, Bukhara restaurant offers a rich treasure of Indian dishes prepared with the finest authentic spices, as well as Iranian cuisine from Shahrayar restaurant, relish the best barbecue with freshly baked Tannur bread. Enjoy traditional English tea in a luxurious and classic ambiance with original flavors at the English Tea Lounge with a variety of delectable scones and snacks.

Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait is welcoming you at the La Mamma Pizzeria to celebrate a unique Eid where you can enjoy an assortment of appetizing antipasti, freshly prepared pasta and pizza baked on a wood fired oven to meet your culinary desire.

Special Eid Al-Fitr and Summer Offers on rooms and suites are available to match the holiday celebrations.

On this occasion Fahed Abushaar - Complex General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait and Mounir Amer - General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait, the Executive Committee and all the associates wish the people of Kuwait and all residents a Happy Eid!



INJAZ celebrates partners in success during ghabqa



In celebration of the holy month of Ramadan and its traditions of giving, INJAZ Kuwait recently organized a ghabqa for its staff and partners in success. The event brought together the organization's volunteers and supporting entities in a familial setting at the Movenpick Hotel in Bedaa.

Guests enjoyed a magical night full of the customary Arabic hospitality and Ramadan spirit, set against a backdrop accompanied by traditional Eastern music. During the event, INJAZ Kuwait showed its appreciation and honored many of its partners and volunteers who helped the organization throughout the years.

Laila Hilal Al-Mutairi, CEO of INJAZ Kuwait, hailed the efforts of staff and volunteers, commending them on their hard work. "INJAZ's journey of success continues with your efforts and with the help of our esteemed partners, who have dedicated their time to develop and inspire the youth into becoming the visionary leaders of

our future. We strive to build and maintain these relationships with our partners in success to empower the youth to fulfill their ambition towards a better economy, and to foster a culture of volunteering in this society," she said. "I would like to thank each member of our staff for their utmost commitment and professionalism in the work that they do, and extend my deepest gratitude to all organizations and companies in the public and private sector who contributed their patronage and support. The results of this are manifested in the apparent growth of INJAZ Kuwait and its achievements that have surpassed even the most optimistic of expectations," Mutairi added.

During the evening, guests enjoyed several entertaining segments, including collecting girgian, a special booth to take commemorative photos. A video of the volunteers' experiences and efforts was also played at the event, which was met with resounding success.



Al-Raya Company hosts ghabqa for senior citizens

Al-Raya Company, the leading operating and developing real estate company, held a Ramadan ghabqa in honor of senior citizens, in the presence of company management and employees.

Speaking at the event, Jassim Al-Fajji, CEO of Al-Raya said: "Al-Raya Company was created by the Kuwaiti society, and we owe it to all categories of the society to show them our support." Al-Raya Company is happy to share the joy of the holy month with the elderly 'who are our mothers and fathers,' he said.

"The elderly are part of the old generation of Kuwait, and who have carried its banner and contributed to its development." Fajji said. "As we honor them today, we are proud to give them moments of happiness in an atmosphere inspired by Kuwait's long tradition of Ramadan."

During the ghabqa's program, the elderly interacted happily and contributed with the activities with a smile on their faces. The ghabqa offered an oud playing performance and entertainment shows. The event concluded its activities by distributing gifts to the elderly.

Al-Raya Company was founded in 1994 as a real estate and investment development company that sup-

ports the economic development witnessed by Kuwait and the region, and participates in the revitalization and development of the real estate and investment sectors through strategic development plans and effective. The company has succeeded in achieving a leading and reliable reputation in the religious tourism and real estate sectors by providing a comprehensive range of real estate and investment services and products that enrich the experience of customers and investors to meet their aspirations.

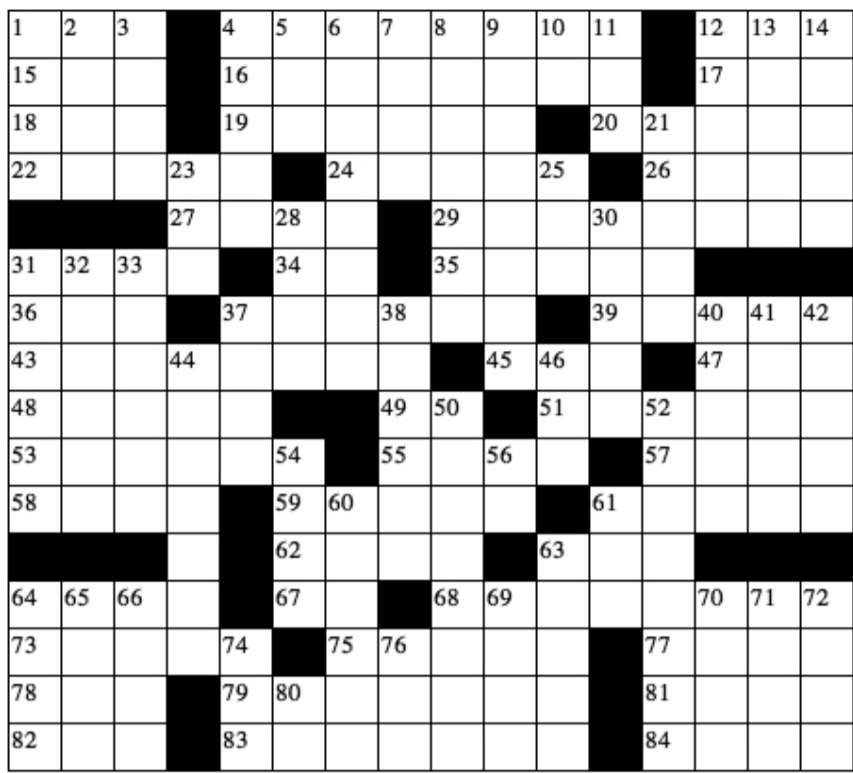
The company operates a number of hotel projects in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia including Sky Tower Hotel in Makkah and Nusk Al-Madinah Hotel. Al-Raya has expanded its strategic services to expand its operations across a number of branches in the Middle East and Africa, including:

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



Stars

CROSSWORD 1933



ACROSS

- 1. A state-chartered savings bank owned by its depositors and managed by a board of trustees.
4. A hard mass of dried feces.
12. A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
15. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
16. A city in the northern panhandle of Texas.
17. The capital and largest city of Japan.
18. United States diplomat and jurist who negotiated peace treaties with Britain and served as the first chief justice of the United States Supreme Court (1745-1829).
19. An artistic movement in France beginning in 1907 that featured surfaces of geometrical planes.
20. A mountain peak in the Andes in Argentina (21,654 feet high).
22. Of or relating to Oman or its people.
24. Held back.
26. The villain in William Shakespeare's tragedy who tricked Othello into murdering his wife.
27. A small cake leavened with yeast.
29. Marked by foolish or unreasoning fondness.
31. A capacious bag or basket.
34. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
35. The basic unit of money in Saudi Arabia.
36. A member of the Shoshonean people of Utah and Colorado and New Mexico.
39. A toxic protein extracted from castor beans.
43. Gregarious burrowing rodent larger than the chinchillas.
45. An inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others.
47. United States musician (born in Japan) who married John Lennon and collaborated with him on recordings (born in 1933).
48. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
49. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.
51. A genus of bristly herbs and shrubs of the family Boraginaceae.
53. Of or relating to the spleen.
55. The food served and eaten at one time.
57. A city in northern India.
58. Employed in accomplishing something.
59. Remote and separate physically or socially.
62. Have supper.
64. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
67. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
68. Born out of wedlock.
73. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
75. Sole genus of the family Naiadaceae.
77. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
78. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
79. Small creeping evergreen shrubs.
81. Relatively deep or strong.
82. A flat wing-shaped process or winglelike part of an organism.
83. Covered with paving material.
84. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.

- 4. A sheet or band of fibrous connective tissue separating or binding together muscles and organs etc.
5. Any of various systems of units for measuring electricity and magnetism.
6. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
7. An elaborate song for solo voice.
8. Genus of terrestrial orchids having usually a single pair of broad shining leaves near the middle of the stem.
9. A weakly magnetic black mineral found in metamorphic and plutonic rocks.
10. A soft gray malleable metallic element that resembles tin but discolors on exposure to air.
11. A person regarded as greedy and piglike.
12. Big-eyed scud.
13. A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
14. French biochemist who (with Francois Jacob) explained how genes are activated and suggested the existence of messenger RNA (1910-1976).
21. Garlic mayonnaise.
23. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
25. Time for Earth to make a complete rotation on its axis.
28. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
30. Of or relating to or characteristic of Morocco or its people.
32. Inflammation of the ear.
33. Someone who is tested (as by an intelligence test or an academic examination).
37. A village in eastern Ireland (northwest of Dublin).
38. An insane person.
40. Expandable metal or wooden wedge used by printers to lock up a form within a chase.
41. cause to accept or become hardened to.
42. A member of a people who have no permanent home but move about according to the seasons.
44. Any of the yeastlike imperfect fungi of the genus Candida.
46. A colloid in a more solid form than a sol.
50. A long and mournful complaint.
52. A large estate in Spanish-speaking countries.
54. Remove with or as if with a ladle.
56. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
60. A day devoted to an outdoor social gathering.
61. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
63. State in northeastern India.
65. Consisting of or involving two parts or components usually in pairs.
66. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
69. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
70. A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
71. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
72. Thin fibrous bark of the paper mulberry and Pipturus albidus.
74. A crystalline rock that can be cut and polished for jewelry.
76. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
80. An informal term for a father.

DOWN

- 1. A magic power or magic spell.
2. A fraudulent business scheme.
3. Common Indian weaverbird.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may be sought out for advice today. Be confident in guiding those close to you. Those younger than yourself may seek advice from you and you will be able to get to the root of the problem and help with finding a solution for them.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You long for peace in your life. Today is the day to make that call, give the apology, or take whatever steps necessary to make amends. Nothing good comes from conflict and this may be just the barrier that is preventing you from being totally at peace.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today may find you feeling unorganized and as if nothing is going your way. You may find you are in a situation that cramps your style and leaves you feeling awkward.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today may find you a bit zoned out. You may not be quite yourself. Your thoughts are scrambled, and you just can't think very clear.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may find yourself in quite an awkward situation today. You may have a career opportunity that would greatly benefit you financially. The problem being, this may go against your beliefs, leaving you to make a very difficult decision.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This may be a wonderful time to drop your guard and let the more sensitive caring side of yourself come out to play for a while. You may find by showing sensitivity to others you become more approachable and are able to communicate on a new level that others relate to.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You feel a desire to understand not only yourself but others also. You like to read people. Learn who they really are and what makes them make the choices they make.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today may be a great day to pick up that journal and express yourself in through writing. You may find this the most peaceful way to express all the thoughts and issues you have been struggling with.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may experience some very personal issues today and feel as though you are unable to totally put your heart into things. This may have you feeling a bit down as you do some soul searching and try to work through your issues.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself in great demand by others today. Others admire you for your wisdom. They seek you out for advice. You may feel almost as if this is your calling.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your mental clarity and dominant personality should find you plowing through any problems that come your way. Your ability to think outside the box will let no obstacle stand in your way.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are entering a carefree stage of romance in your life. You may feel as though you are on a mission to save the world. You see and appreciate in all that surrounds you. You yearn for a soul-mate.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Physics 1

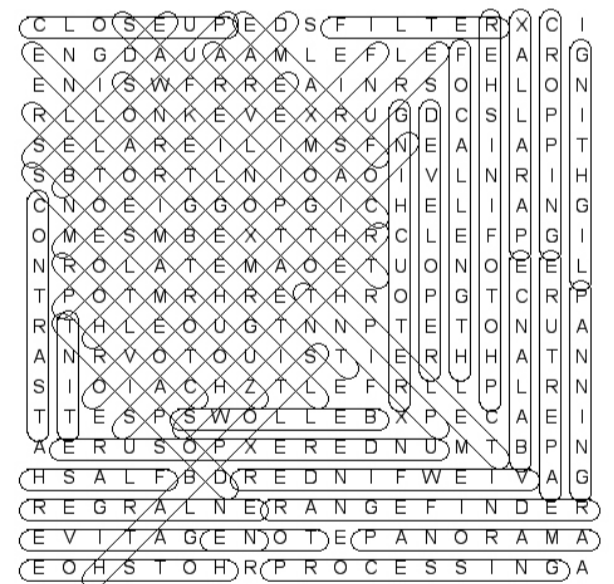
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 30 letters spell an Albert Einstein quotation.



- ACCELERATION ELECTRON LAWS QUARK
ACOUSTICS ENERGY LENGTH REFRACTION
AMPLITUDE ENTROPY LEVER SOUND
ATOM EXPERIMENT MASS STRING THEORY
BLACK HOLE FARADAY MECHANICS TESLA
BUOYANCY FREEZING POINT MOMENTUM TRAJECTORY
CENTRIPETAL FULCRUM NEWTON THERMOMETER
COLD FUSION GRAVITY OPTICS VECTOR
CONVECTION HAWKING PASCAL VISCOSITY
DENSITY IMPEDANCE PENDULUM WAVE
DISPLACEMENT ISOTOPE POWER WEDGE
DOPPLER KELVIN PRINCIPLES WORK
EINSTEIN

Yesterday's Solution

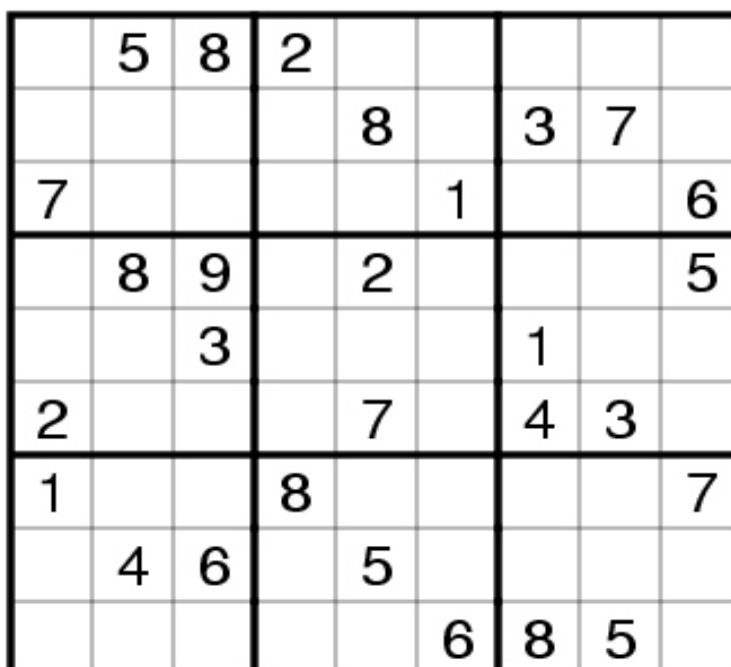
Photography



- APERTURE ENLARGEMENT OVEREXPOSURE SATURATION
BALANCE ENLARGER PANNING SHUTTER
BELLOWS FILTER PANORAMA SLIDE
BLOWUP FIXING BATH PARALLAX STOP BATH
CAMERA FLASH PHOTOFINISHER TELEPHOTO LENS
CLOSE UP FOCAL LENGTH POSITIVE TINT
COLOR FRAME PRINT TONE
CONTRAST HOT SHOE PROCESSING TRIPOD
CROPPING LIGHT METER RANGEFINDER UNDEREXPOSURE
DARKROOM LIGHTING RETOUCHING VIEWFINDER
DEVELOPER NEGATIVE SAFELIGHT ZOOM LENS

The hidden sentence is: SINGLE LENS REFLEX CAMERA

Daily SuDoku

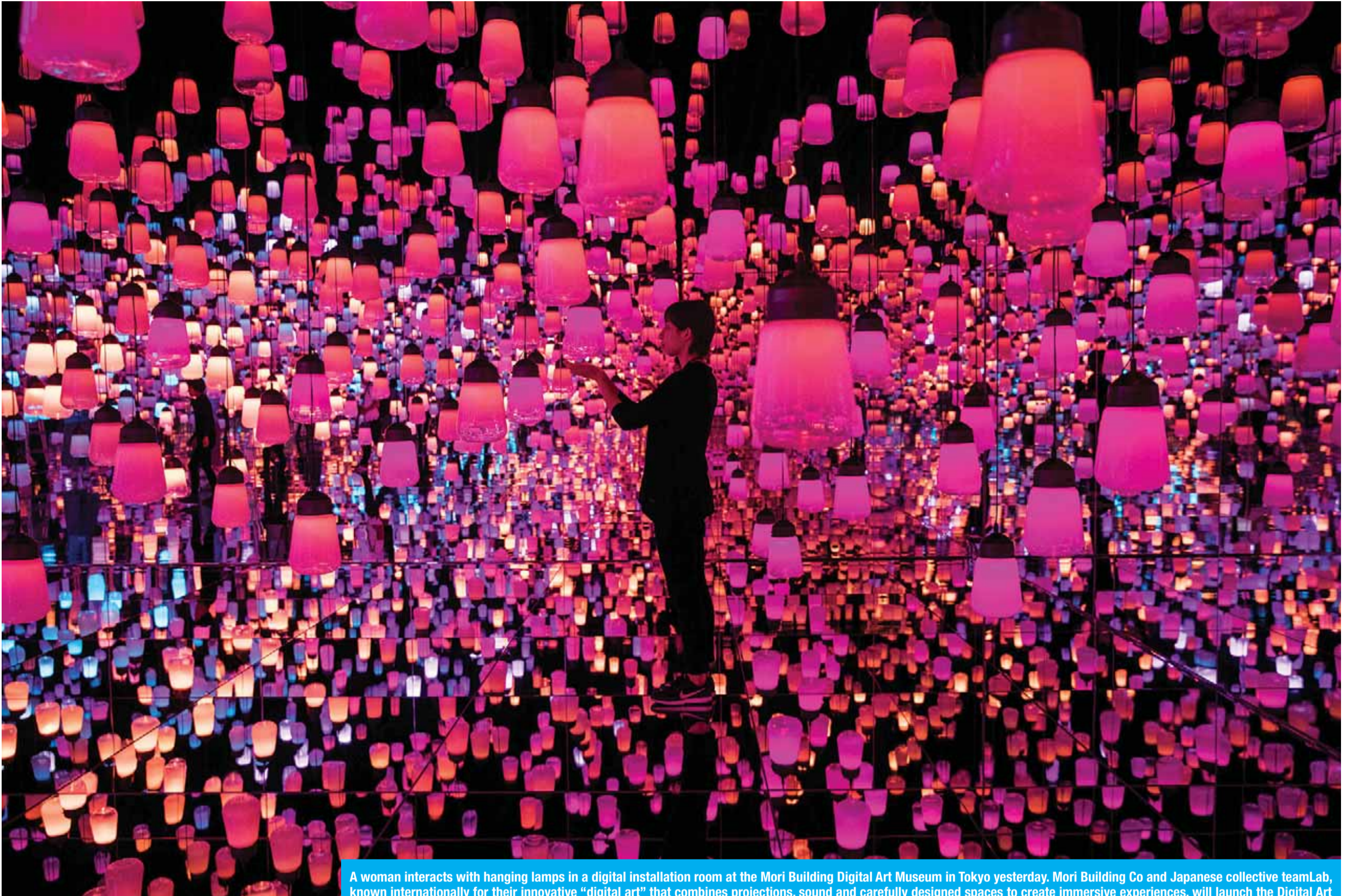


Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2018



A woman interacts with hanging lamps in a digital installation room at the Mori Building Digital Art Museum in Tokyo yesterday. Mori Building Co and Japanese collective teamLab, known internationally for their innovative "digital art" that combines projections, sound and carefully designed spaces to create immersive experiences, will launch the Digital Art Museum in Tokyo on June 21. — AFP

Muslim rapper at Bataclan 'sacrilege', says French right

Right-wing French leaders have condemned as "sacrilege" a decision to allow a provocative Muslim rapper to play the Bataclan concert hall in Paris where jihadists massacred 90 people three years ago. Medine—who caused an outcry when he attacked hardline secularists in a controversial 2015 song, "Don't Laik", a week before the Charlie Hebdo killings—is to play the Bataclan for two nights in October. French opposition leader Laurent Wauquiez said he was shocked that "someone who sings about 'crucifying secularists' and calls himself 'Islam-scum'" should appear at the venue "less than three years after Islamist barbarism cost the lives of 90 of our compatriots."

"It is sacrilege and dishonours France," the leader of

the Republicans party tweeted. Far-right leader Marine Le Pen said that "no French person can accept that this guy spew out his rubbish at the Bataclan. "We have had enough of complacency and worse, of this incitement to Islamist fundamentalism," she added in a tweet. An online petition organized by her National Front party calling for the concerts to be banned had over 15,000 signatures by yesterday. Neither the Bataclan's co-director Jules Frutos nor the rapper responded to AFP requests for comment.

Fatwa lyric

But a former leader of one of the Bataclan's victims' groups, Emmanuel Domenach, sent stinging replies to both Wauquiez and Le Pen's tweets: "It's crazy as you use the

victims of terrorism for your sterile controversy. "What level of dishonour does that put you in?" he asked. The bearded Medine, who comes from the northern port of Le Havre and is of Algerian descent, has denied that he was an Islamist. But he became the bete noire of hardline secularists after 11 people were killed in the jihadist attack on the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine in January 2015 only a week after his "Don't Laik" song was released, a play on the French word for secular.

In it he said, "Let's crucify the secularists like at Calvary... put fatwas on the heads of these idiots." Medine said later that the song was to "secular fundamentalists what Charlie Hebdo cartoons were to religious fundamentalists." The rapper has also admitted that "he went too far" in the song. "Provocation is only useful when it provokes a debate, not when it triggers an iron curtain," he told an academic conference on rap, the music magazine Les Inrocks reported. However, Aurore Berge, an MP from French President Emmanuel Macron's ruling Republic on the Move party, said having him headline a concert at the Bataclan was an "insult" to the victims of the slaughter. Bruno Retailleau, the leader of the opposition Republicans in the French Senate called on the government to prosecute the rapper in the same way a firebrand comedian Dieudonne was convicted of glorifying terrorism in 2015. — AFP



English musician Robbie Williams celebrates after winning a England V Soccer Aid World XI charity football match for Soccer Aid for Unicef at Old Trafford in Manchester, northwest England. — AFP

Robbie Williams to perform at World Cup opening ceremony

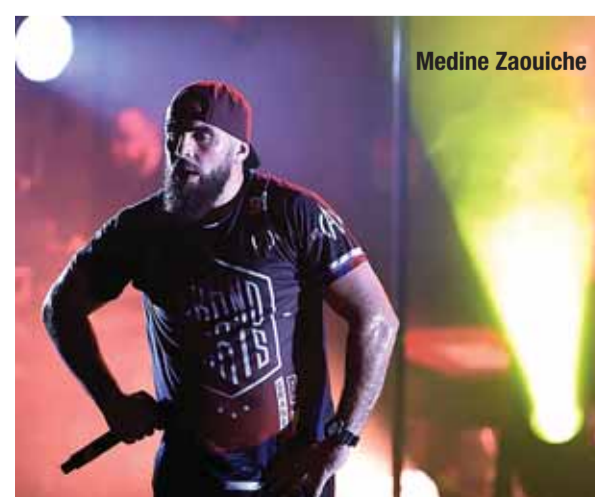
British pop star Robbie Williams will perform at the World Cup opening ceremony in Moscow on Thursday, the world football governing body FIFA and the singer's representatives said. The award-winning singer formerly in the band Take That, who is best known for his hit single "Angels", will sing alongside Russian soprano Aida Garifullina shortly before Russia and Saudi Arabia kick off the World Cup at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium. The 44-year-old said in a statement on Monday that performing at the World Cup was "a boyhood dream" and it would be "an unforgettable show".

His song "Party Like a Russian" two years ago sparked controversy in Russia for promoting stereotypes about the country. It included lyrics about a leader who "alleviates the cash from a whole entire nation, takes loose change and builds his own space station". Williams told fans on Twitter at the time that the song "is definitely not about (Russian President Vladimir) Putin".

Last year, he offered to represent Russia in the Eurovision Song Contest in a jokey interview on Russian state-controlled Channel One television. Williams told Andrei Malakhov, the host of the show "Pust Govoryat" or "Let Them Talk", in comments dubbed into Russian: "I'd like to represent Russia at Eurovision. Come on Russia, we can win!" Williams grinned as he made the offer, adding however that he could see his manager "has already got his head in his hands". Former Brazil striker Ronaldo-known as "O Fenomeno"—will also be taking part in the opening ceremony, FIFA said. — AFP



In this file photo people stand in front of the Bataclan concert venue during ceremonies across Paris marking the second anniversary of the terror attacks of November 2015 in which 130 people were killed, in the French capital. — AFP



Lifestyle | Awards



Cast and creative team of 'The Band's Visit' pose in the 72nd Annual Tony Awards Media Room at 3 West Club in New York City on June 10, 2018. — AFP photos



Ken Davenport, center, and the cast and crew of 'Once On This Island' accept the award for best musical revival at the 72nd annual Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall.

EGYPTIAN BAND IN ISRAEL MUSICAL WINS BIG ON BROADWAY



US actor Alex Wyse (left) and US producer Ken Davenport, winners of the award Best Revival of a Musical for 'Once on this island' pose in the 72nd Annual Tony Awards Media Room.

A heart-warming musical about an Egyptian band visiting an Israeli desert town triumphed on New York's Broadway late Sunday, sweeping the board with 10 Tony Awards, the highest honors in American theatre. It was an extraordinary success for a quiet, contemplative, 90-minute production aching with longing for human connection and understanding, far removed from the brash commercialization of its competitors.

"Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" was the other big winner of the biggest night in Broadway, going home with six gongs, including best play from the star-studded 72nd annual Tony Awards. Nominated eleven times, "The Band's Visit" triumphed over "Mean Girls" and "SpongeBob SquarePants: The Broadway Musical"—the two most nominated shows—for the prestigious best new musical prize.

"Our show offers a message of unity in a world that more and more seems bent on amplifying our differences. In the end, we are far more alike than different," said producer Orin Wolf in accepting the award. Its Arab-influenced score, spiced with klezmer, is the work of composer-lyricist David Yazbek, based on the book by writer Itamar Moses and directed by David Cromer. All three won Tonys. Dialogue is in heavily-accented English, with smatterings of spoken Arabic and Hebrew, evoking the atmosphere of being in the Middle East.

While the Arab-Israeli conflict is never referenced, human connections forged through music and culture prove a bridge when the Egyptian musicians wind up in the wrong town owing to a pronunciation error. "I am part of a cast of actors who never believed that they'd be able to portray their own races," said Ari'el Stachel, an Israeli-American who won a Tony for his Broadway debut as Egyptian band member Haled. "We're getting messages



US actor Ariel Stachel (left) winner of the award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical for 'The Band's Visit' and US writer David Yazbek winner of the award for Best Original Score 'The Band's Visit' pose in the 72nd Annual Tony Awards Media Room.

from kids all over the Middle East thanking us and telling us how transformative our representation is for them." Katrina Lenk, who delivers a star turn as Israeli cafe owner Dina, and Tony Shalhoub as band leader Tewfiq, also took home Tonys.



British producer Sonia Friedman, winner of the award for Best Play for 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Parts One and Two'.



Tony Shalhoub, winner of the award Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical for 'The Band's Visit'.



US writer David Yazbek winner of the award for Best Original Score for the 'The Band's Visit'.



US actor Nathan Lane, winner of the award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Play for 'Angels in America.'



US actor Andrew Garfield, winner of the award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Play for 'Angels in America.'



US actress Laurie Metcalf, winner of the award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role in a Play for 'Edward Albee's Three Tall Women.'



British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber, winner of the award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre.



US singer Bruce Springsteen winner of the Special award.



US singer Bruce Springsteen performs at the 72nd annual Tony Awards.



US actress Lindsay Mendez, winner of the award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role in a Musical for 'Rodgers and Hammerstein's Carousel.'

Lifestyle | Awards



British actress Glenda Jackson, winner of the award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Play for 'Edward Albee's Three Tall Women'.

De Niro expletive

Lenk dedicated her award to the Israeli actress who created the role in a 2007 film and to the famed late Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum. Shalhoub paid tribute to his father and relatives who migrated to the United States from Lebanon, saying his award honored their aspirations, courage, resourcefulness, creativity and selflessness. Hosted by singers Sara Bareilles and Josh Groban, the ceremony was a three-hour infomercial for Broadway largely avoiding all but discreet references to liberal America's opposition to President Donald Trump.

That was until Robert de Niro won a standing ovation for twice using an expletive to refer to the Republican head of state. Last year's Tonys were anchored by the now disgraced Oscar-winning Kevin Spacey, whose career was ruined by sexual misconduct allegations as part of the #MeToo cultural watershed sweeping the United States.

On Sunday, Bruce Springsteen was given a standing ovation and delivered a rare televised performance after being honored for his smash-hit Broadway run, one of the hottest tickets in town. Otherwise "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Parts One and Two," written by English screenwriter and playwright Jack Thorne, led the way in a strong showing for British talent. The play imagines the fictional boy wizard as a grown-up father of three, set 19 years after the events of J.K. Rowling's seventh and final book, and which first opened in London in 2016.

At 82, British actress Glenda Jackson won her first Tony as best actress in a leading role in a play for "Three Tall Women." Already a double Oscar winner, Jackson was for 18 years a member of parliament. "Angels in America," set against the 1980s AIDS crisis, won three Tonys including for leading

British-American actor Andrew Garfield and best revival of a play, for its transfer from the London stage. The ceremony also saw British composer and musical impresario Andrew Lloyd Webber given a lifetime achievement award. — AFP



Chita Rivera winner of the award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre.



Producer Sonia Friedman and the cast and crew of 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Parts One and Two' accept the award for best play.



Producers Colin Callender, Sonia Friedman, John Tiffany and Jack Thorne, winners of the award Best Play for 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Parts One and Two'.



Playwright Tony Kushner, center, and the cast and crew of 'Angels in America' accept the award for best revival of a play.



The cast and crew of "The Band's Visit" accept the award for best musical.



Co-hosts Josh Groban, left, and Sara Bareilles, perform Sia's "Chandelier" on stage.



Robert DeNiro makes a political statement as he introduces a performance by Bruce Springsteen.



Bruce Springsteen accepts the Special Tony award.



The cast of 'Once on This Island' perform on stage.



Ethan Slater, left, of "SpongeBob SquarePants: The Musical" performs on stage.



Co-hosts Sara Bareilles, left, and Josh Groban dress as each other at the 72nd annual Tony Awards.



Andrew Rannels, from left, Matt Bomer, Zachary Quinto and Jim Parsons present the award for best play on stage.

Winners

- Best play: "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Parts One and Two"
- Best musical: "The Band's Visit"
- Best revival of a play: "Angels in America"
- Best revival of a musical: "Once On This Island"
- Best actor in a play: Andrew Garfield, "Angels in America"
- Best actress in a play: Glenda Jackson, "Three Tall Women"
- Best actor in a musical: Tony Shalhoub, "The Band's Visit"
- Best actress in a musical: Katrina Lenk, "The Band's Visit"
- Best direction of a play: John Tiffany, "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, Parts One and Two"
- Best direction of a musical: David Cromer, "The Band's Visit"
- Best book of a musical: "The Band's Visit"
- Best original score (music and/or lyrics): "The Band's Visit"
- Lifetime achievement: Chita Rivera, Andrew Lloyd Webber

- Special award: Bruce Springsteen, John Leguizamo — Reuters



Cassie Levy, from the cast of "Frozen" performs on stage.



Gavin Lee, of "SpongeBob Square Pants: The Musical" performs at the 72nd annual Tony Awards.

Lifestyle | Awards



Hailey Kilgore attends the 72nd Annual Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. — AFP photos



US actress Taylor Louderman



Brooklyn Sudano (left) and Amanda Sudano (right) attend the 72nd Annual Tony Awards.

The 72nd Annual **Tony Awards** attendees



US actress Ashley Park



Wayne Coyne and Katy Weaver



(Left to Right) Evan Springsteen, US singer Bruce Springsteen, Patti Scialfa, Sam Springsteen and Jessica Springsteen.



Sara Bareilles and Josh Groban



US actress Rachel Brosnahan



Tina Fey and Jeff Richmond



Bee Shaffer and Anna Wintour



Mexican singer Thalia



Lauren Ambrose



Amy Schumer



Lilliana Vazquez



Katharine McPhee

Classifieds

Tuesday, June 12, 2018

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 50 km/h causing rising dust.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Dust will subside gradually with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 30 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 11/06/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	34 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	44 °C	29 °C		
ABDALY	45 °C	29 °C		
BUBYAN	40 °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	46 °C	31 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	44 °C	29 °C		
SALMIYAH	41 °C	34 °C		
AHMADI	43 °C	34 °C		
NUWAISIB	45 °C	31 °C		
WAFRA	45 °C	29 °C		
SALMY	44 °C	27 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	06/12	Hot	45 °C	29 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	06/13	Hot	43 °C	30 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 35 km/h
Thursday	06/14	Hot	44 °C	30 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 28 km/h
Friday	06/15	Hot	45 °C	31 °C	NW-N	12 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:13
Sunrise	04:48
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	15:21
Sunset	18:47
Isha	20:19

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	31 °C
MAX. RH	24 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	N 64 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 12/6/2018				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	KAC 618
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	GFA 221
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC 516
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	KAC 286
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	KAC 788
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	KNE 529
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	ETD 303
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC 304
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	OMA 645
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC 562
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	ABY 127
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC 502
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	UAE 857
JZR	553D	Alexandria	02:50	SAW 705
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	JZR 534
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	QTR 1072
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	QTR 8511
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	FDB 051
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC 118
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	FEG 241
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	NIA 361
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	JZR 125
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	KAC 542
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	SAW 510
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	GFA 215
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	JZR 145
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	JZR 777
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	JZR 177
MSC	403	Asyut	05:00	QTR 1080
PAL	668	Manila	05:00	JZR 483
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	MSR 620
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	RJA 640
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	GFA 217
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	UAE 875
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	ABY 123
BAW	157	London	06:10	NIA 0161
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	GEL 616
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	KAC 156
THY	6376	Istanbul	06:30	KAC 776
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30	KAC 674
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	RBG 555
JZR	1539	Cairo	06:55	FDB 057
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	KAC 616
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	07:05	DLH 624
JZR	143	Doha	07:20	OMA 647
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	WAN 966
JZR	561	Sohag	08:00	KAC 620
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	MEA 402
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC 166
WAN	352	Luxor	08:30	QTR 1088
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	KAC 172
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR 553
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KLM 445
IRA	675	Lar	09:40	UAE 859
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ALK 229
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	ETD 307
JZR	529	Asyut	10:05	KAC 168
SAW	703	Damascus	10:30	KAC 564
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	GFA 219
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	AZG 565
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	ICV 675
JZR	703	Taif	11:00	QTR 1082
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	ETD 309
WAN	542	KTM	12:50	KAC 786
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	AIC 987
ETD	0995	Abu Dhabi/Bahrain	13:00	BBC 043
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	WAN 136
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	PIA 239
WAN	134	Doha	13:20	JAI 574
WAN	312	Asyut	13:45	MSC 501
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	THY 764
FEG	341	Sohag	13:50	MSR 2614
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	FDB 071
KNE	233	Riyadh	14:10	JZR 241

Departure Flights on Tuesday 12/6/2018				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
AZQ	4566	Baku	00:05	JZR 124
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05	JZR 552
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	AXB 394
MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30	FEG 342
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30	KAC 673
JZR	1538	Cairo	00:30	ETD 9890
KAC	677	Dubai	01:30	KNE 234
KAC	417	Manila	01:30	GFA 222
THY	773	Istanbul	01:45	QTR 1079
DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50	KNE 538
KAC	285	Dhaka	01:50	SWA 501
JZR	560D	Sohag	01:50	KAC 775
PGT	859	Istanbul	02:45	KAC 785
THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	KAC 563
AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55	ABY 128
KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	KAC 619
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	ETD 304
KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	OMA 646
JZR	528	Asyut	03:40	KAC 615
JZR	142	Doha	03:45	SAW 706
MSR	607	Luxor	04:05	FDB 052
OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	QTR 1073
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	UAE 858
QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	FEG 242
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	QTR 8512
WAN	135	Doha	05:00	KAC 381
LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00	NIA 362
JAI	571	Mumbai	05:00	KAC 331
QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	KAC 283
KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35	KAC 343
MSC	404	Asyut	05:55	SWA 511
JZR	702	Taif	06:05	GFA 216
THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	JZR 608
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	JZR 266
RJA	643	Amman	07:00	JZR 240
KAC	167	Paris	07:20	JZR 538
WAN	311	Asyut	07:25	WAN 135
PAL	669	Manila	07:40	QTR 1081
KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:50	WAN 117
JZR	778	Jeddah	08:00	MSR 621
KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	GFA 218
BAW	156	London	08:20	RJA 641
KAC	165	Rome	08:25	ABY 124
THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	08:35	RBG 556
KAC	117	New York	09:05	NIA 0162
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	FDB 058
WAN	133	Doha	09:30	JZR 602
KAC	561	Amman	09:40	UAE 876
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	DLH 624
JZR	535	Cairo	09:45	KAC 357
KAC	741	Dammam	09:45	OMA 648
UAE	856	Dubai	09:50	MEA 403
JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55	JZR 1538
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00	KAC 543
KAC	515	Tehran	10:00	GEL 613
KAC	541	Cairo	10:00	KAC 301
KAC	617	Doha	10:10	QTR 1089
KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25	DHX 171
QTR	1071	Doha	10:40	KAC 205
FDB	056	Dubai	10:40	ETD 308
IRA	674	Lar	10:40	KLM 445
SYR	342	Damascus	11:00	ALK 230
SAW	704	Damascus	11:30	KAC 783
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35	KAC 383
MEA	405	Beirut	11:55	UAE 860
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05	GFA 220
QTR	1075	Doha	12:10	ETD 310
JZR	176	Dubai	13:10	KAC 795
MSC	412	Asyut	13:30	KAC 411
WAN	965	Tbilisi	13:50	QTR 1083
JZR	144	Doha	13:55	PIA 240
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00	WAN 337
				JZR 560



SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates: Camels rest under trees in the desert of Sharjah in United Arab Emirates. — AFP

'No miracle cure' for Jordan economic woes despite aid

AMMAN: Jordan's Gulf allies have pledged \$2.5 billion in aid to help Amman ease an economic crisis that sparked angry protests, but analysts warned there is no "miracle cure" for its woes. The lifeline announced Sunday at the end of a Saudi-hosted summit reflects fears in the Gulf that the protests that shook Jordan could spread to their doorsteps, experts said. The largely peaceful demonstrations, which led to a change of prime ministers, erupted over rising prices and proposed legislation to increase income tax in line with IMF-driven austerity measures.

"What happened in Jordan was unprecedented and brought to mind the Arab Spring, which is a cause of concern for Gulf countries," said analyst Oraib Al Rintawi, who runs the Al-Quds Centre for Political Studies. The 2011 uprisings saw pent-up public anger spill onto the streets of many Arab capitals, leading to

the ouster of several veteran leaders. But Jordan, a key US and Gulf ally, was largely spared. At the start of this month however thousands of Jordanians fed up with the rising cost of living and their deteriorating purchasing power took to the streets of Amman and other cities.

They demanded the resignation of then-prime minister Hani Mulki, pledging to keep up their nighttime demonstrations until the tax legislation was revoked and price hikes reviewed. "Jordan's stability is very important for the security of the Gulf region and particularly Saudi Arabia which is afraid that the protests would spread to its doorstep," Rintawi told AFP. Sunday's hastily arranged summit, hosted by Saudi Arabia and attended by Jordan, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, saw the energy-rich Gulf countries pledge an economic aid package for Amman totaling \$2.5 billion.

'Undesirable options'

Rintawi said Saudi "concerns" that Jordan could look outside the Gulf and its traditional allies for help were evident in the speed with which the summit was organized. "Saudi Arabia feared Jordan could seek undesirable options," he said. In May, Jordan's King Abdullah II was seen shaking hands with Saudi Arabia's

arch-rival, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, during a summit of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul. There have also been recent signs of a warming of ties between Jordan and Qatar, the target of a boycott by a Saudi-led bloc that broke ties a year ago over claims Doha supports terrorism and Iran.

Amman also has vocally opposed the decision by US President Donald Trump to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of the American embassy to the disputed city from Tel Aviv. Jordan, which administered east Jerusalem until Israel took control of it in the 1967 Six-Day war and later annexed it, backs the position of the Palestinians who see the area as the capital of their future state. Rintawi said Washington gave its Gulf allies a "greenlight" to help Jordan because it considers the tiny desert kingdom which shares borders with Syria and Iraq to be a "strategic partner".

'Rock and a hard place'

"As often is the case Jordan is stuck between a rock and a hard place," said Karim Bitar, director of research at the Paris-based Institute of International and Strategic Affairs. Jordan blames its economic woes on instability rocking the region and the burden of hosting

hundreds of thousands of refugees from war-torn Syria, in addition to providing haven to Iraqi and Palestinian refugees.

The Gulf funds were announced a day after the European Union said it would provide Jordan with 20 million euros (\$23.5 million) to help ease its economic woes. Rintawi said there is no "miracle cure" for Jordan and stressed that the country needs "a new social contract". "The economy cannot remain hostage to international aid... the Jordanians must learn to rely on themselves, and set up new economic measures to combat corruption and reduce public spending," he said.

Cash-strapped Jordan relies heavily on donors and is struggling to curb its debt after securing a \$723-million loan from the International Monetary Fund in 2016. The World Bank says Jordan has "weak growth prospects" this year, while 18.5 percent of the working age population is unemployed. "Jordan's economy is structurally weak," and it is not clear if new prime minister Omar Al-Razzaz, a Harvard-trained economist, will be able to tackle the challenges facing him, said Bitar. "If the situation does not deteriorate further and if regional tensions do not increase, we could speculate that the country will emerge from the crisis as it always has by performing a balancing act." — AFP

US offers North Korea 'unique'...

Continued from Page 1

what it calls a "hostile policy" towards it, but in public has only pledged to pursue the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula—a euphemism open to wide differences of interpretation. Washington is eager to see if the North's pledges were "sincere", Pompeo said, adding: "The United States has been fooled before."

Verification would be key, he went on, saying many deals had been signed before only to find "the North Koreans did not promise what they said". The North, which has been subjected to increasingly strict sanctions by the UN Security Council and others, has made promises of change in the past, such as at the lengthy Six Party Talks process, only for the agreements to collapse later.

Trump and Kim will first meet one-on-one in a closed session, before a larger meeting with key advisers, the White House said. The wider session will include National Security Advisor John Bolton, who nearly derailed the summit with hawkish comments about disarming North Korea. Pompeo also signaled there would be more discussions to come, adding that today's meeting "will set the framework for the hard work that will follow. We will see how far we get."

In Seoul, President Moon Jae-in had a 40-minute phone call with Trump, after telling key aides that it could take "one year, two years or even longer to completely resolve the issues concerned".

'Fire and fury'

Today's summit is an extraordinary turnaround from last year, when Trump threatened the North with "fire and fury" and Kim dubbed him a "mentally deranged US dotard", sending fears of conflict soaring. The sum-

mit has also raised hopes of progress towards a peace treaty to formally end the Korean War, the last festering legacy of the Cold War, after hostilities only stopped with an armistice.

But critics have warned it risks becoming more of a media circus than an occasion for substantial progress. The US leader has whipsawed on expectations for the meeting, signaling that it could be the beginning of a "process" of several meetings, only to call it a "one-time shot" for peace as he embarked for Singapore and saying he would know "within the first minute" whether an agreement would be possible. "I just think it's going to work out very nicely," said Trump at a working lunch with the prime minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien-Loong.

The previous US stance, said Bruce Klingner of the Heritage Foundation, was that "we don't deploy a president to negotiate a treaty, we deploy a president to sign a treaty where we know where every piece of punctuation is on that piece of paper". "One of my worries is that we come out of this Singapore summit with something that looks remarkably like the Six Party Talks or anything that the president has previously criticized but it is hyped as something that's historic and new and groundbreaking," he added.

Separate planes

The North's official KCNA news agency called the summit "historic", saying it would take place in a "changed era" and "under the great attention and expectation of the whole world". Kim would exchange "wide-ranging and profound views" on issues including "building a permanent and durable peace-keeping mechanism on the Korean peninsula" and "realizing the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula", it added. It formally referred to Trump by his full name in the yesterday report, including his middle initial—the first time it has done so. Kim's sister and close aide Kim Yo Jong is also in Singapore, and is believed to have travelled separately on the ageing Soviet-made Ilyushin-62 that is the leader's personal aircraft. — AFP

the public debt burden.

The Gulf aid package appears driven by the desire to avoid a repeat of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, which saw pent-up public anger spilling onto the street across the Middle East, analysts say. "The speed and the gravity with which the Gulf states are responding is a very clear testament to their concern and determination to nip this unrest in Jordan in the bud," Lori Boghardt, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy said. "They are going to do all they can to thwart another Arab spring on their doorstep."

Gulf states, except for Bahrain, largely avoided the pro-democracy protests unleashed by the Arab Spring, but they have sought to deepen economic links in the region following an oil price slump in 2014. Jordan blames its economic woes on instability rocking the region and the burden of hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees from war-torn Syria, complaining it has not received enough international support. The World Bank says Jordan has "weak growth prospects" this year, while 18.5 percent of the working age population is unemployed. — Agencies

'Shocking' die-off of...

Continued from Page 1

"practically all known very large and potentially old" African baobabs—more than 60 individuals in all. Collating data on girth, height, wood volume, and age, they noted the "unexpected and intriguing fact" that most of the very oldest and biggest trees died during the study period.

All were in southern Africa—Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia. The baobab is the biggest and longest-living flowering tree, according to the research team. It is found naturally in Africa's savannah region, and outside the continent in tropical areas to which it was introduced. It is a strange-looking plant, with branches resembling gnarled roots reaching for the sky, giving it an upside-down look. The iconic tree can live to be 3,000 years old, according to the website of the Kruger National Park in South Africa, a natural baobab habitat.

'Difficult to kill'

"One ancient hollow baobab tree in Zimbabwe is so large that up to 40 people can shelter inside its trunk," says the park. "Various baobabs have been used as a shop, a prison, a house, a storage barn, and a bus shelter." The tree serves as a massive store of water, and bears fruit that feeds animals and humans. Its leaves are boiled and eaten as an accompaniment similar to

spinach, or used to make traditional medicines, while the bark is pounded and woven into rope, baskets, cloth, and waterproof hats. The purpose of the study was to learn how the trees get so enormous. The researchers used radiocarbon dating to analyze samples taken from different parts of each tree's trunk. They found that the trunk of the baobab grows from not one but multiple core stems.

According to the Kruger Park, baobabs are "very difficult to kill". "They can be burnt, or stripped of their bark, and they will just form new bark and carry on growing," it states. "When they do die, they simply rot from the inside and suddenly collapse, leaving a heap of fibres." Of the ten trees listed by the study authors, four died completely, meaning all their multiple stems toppled and died together. The others saw the death of one or several parts. The oldest tree by far, of which all the stems collapsed in 2010/11, was the Panke tree in Zimbabwe, estimated to have existed for 2,500 years.

The biggest, dubbed Holboom, was from Namibia. It stood 30.2 meters tall and had a girth of 35.1 m. Arguably the most famous baobab, called Chapman, was a declared a national monument in central Botswana, bearing the carved initials of explorer David Livingstone. The tree named after South African hunter James Chapman, who visited it in 1852, saw all six its stems topple simultaneously on January 7, 2016 where it had stood for some 1,400 years. Other than the oldest and biggest, the research team observed that many other mature baobabs had died. The deaths were not caused by an epidemic, they wrote, with Patrut adding: "there were no signs of disease." — AFP

Fasting and materialism...

Continued from Page 1

This undermines the individualistic cultures which stress the needs of the individual over the needs of the group as a whole.

Individualism is the root of a materialistic culture. Ramadan is also a time for giving and sharing. Muslims go to mosques with dates and drinks to share with their fellow Muslims to break their fast. It is interesting to see that when food is shared, there is more available than the average individual consumption because people think about others. Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "The food of two persons suffices for three persons, and the food of three persons suffices for four persons." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

The solution to poverty suggested by Islam is to share and distribute, and the general command is to circulate wealth. There are many verses that extol the believers to donate money. Allah the Exalted says: "And they give food, in spite of their love for it, to the poor, the orphan, and the captive." (Al-Ins?n 76:8). In the Islamic view, a life of luxury and affluence is more dangerous for a community than a life of poverty and destitution.

In a hadeeth, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

"By Allah, it is not the poverty about which I fear in regard to you but I am afraid in your case that (the worldly) riches may be given to you as were given to those who had gone before you and you begin to vie with one another for them as they vied for them. And these may destroy you as these destroyed them." (Sahih Muslim, Book #042, Hadith #7065).

Fasting alters our perspective so that we realize the difference between what we want and what we really need. The hadith say, "It is enough for the son of Adam to take a few bites to straighten his back. If he cannot do it, then he should fill it with one third food, one third drink and one third for his breath." The lesson here is that fasting urges us to lead a simple life rather than on based on materialism. It is an effective way to fight our consumerist culture. True believers adopt a minimalist lifestyle, building their life around what they 'need', rather than what they 'want'. When we transcend these superficial wants and suppress materialism, we discover something much more substantial.

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.

Kuwait, Saudi and UAE offer...

Continued from Page 1

to overcoming the crisis", according to SPA. The announcement comes after European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on Sunday announced 20 million euros (\$23.5 million) in aid for Jordan.

Cash-strapped Jordan, a close US ally that relies heavily on donors, is struggling to curb its debt after securing a \$723-million loan from the International Monetary Fund in 2016. Austerity measures tied to the IMF loan have seen prices of basic necessities rise across the kingdom—culminating in a week of angry protests over tax proposals that forced prime minister Hani Mulki to resign. The authorities on Thursday announced they were withdrawing the unpopular legislation, but still face a mammoth task to balance popular demands with the need to reduce

Sports

Dustin Johnson on top of the world after Memphis victory

Victory was 18th PGA Tour win of Johnson's career

LOS ANGELES: Dustin Johnson warmed up for the US Open by reclaiming the world number one ranking on Sunday, cruising to a six-shot victory at the FedEx St. Jude Classic. Johnson, who started the day alongside Andrew Putnam at the top of the leaderboard, held his nerve to close with a four-under-par 66 at TPC Southwind in Memphis, Tennessee.

The 33-year-old sealed his win in emphatic style, holing out for a sensational eagle two on the 18th to roars from the gallery. Johnson finished the tournament with a four-round aggregate 261, 19 under par.

"What a cool way to end the day to hole that shot on 18," Johnson said afterward.

"A lot of good things happened this week. I knew coming in this week I was swinging really well and I had confidence in my game."

Putnam's challenge wilted after a disastrous double-bogey on the par-four first which left Johnson with sole possession of the lead. The win ensures Johnson will return to the top of the rankings as the golf world prepares for the second major of the season at next week's US Open at Shinnecock Hills, New York.

Johnson had ceded his number one spot to Justin Thomas last month following a 64-week reign at the top of the standings. Sunday's victory was the 18th PGA Tour win of Johnson's career, and his first since a

triumph at the Sentry Tournament of Champions in Hawaii in January.

"It was nice to be back in the hunt, to get the lead and to get the juices flowing a little bit," Johnson said. "It feels like it's been a long time (since my last win), even though it's only been six months."

Johnson admitted he couldn't be happier with his form as he aims to claim a second US Open after his victory at Oakmont in 2016. "I have high expectations going in every week," Johnson said. "But I feel like my game's in good shape.

"I'm driving really well. I'm hitting my irons well, and my wedges are really good. I'm really looking forward to it.

"I haven't seen the golf course yet but I'll go there tomorrow and get 18 holes in and we'll see."

Putnam, meanwhile, who has yet to win on the PGA Tour, said he would take positives from the way he managed to steady his round after dropping three shots in his opening five holes.

The 29-year-old played went one under for the remaining 13 holes to close on 13 under par, four shots clear of J.B. Holmes in third. "I had a lot of fun," Putnam said. "I felt like I handled myself better than my score looked. The first couple of holes were a little rough, but overall, I had a great time. "I'll definitely learn from this experience." —AFP

“What a cool way to end the day to hole that shot”



MEMPHIS: Dustin Johnson poses with the trophy after the final round of the FedEx St. Jude Classic at TPC Southwind on Sunday in Memphis, Tennessee. — AFP

All Blacks seek improvement against fired-up French

WELLINGTON: The All Blacks have been warned not to be seduced by their runaway win in the first Test as the wounded French bring in reinforcements for the second Test in Wellington on Saturday. While All Blacks coach Steve Hansen said he would "probably" stick with the same line up, his French counterpart Jacques Brunel is expected to make wholesale changes after their hiding in Auckland. "I hope we will be able to show something else, to be close till the end. I am convinced that will be achieved if we fix our communication problems in defence," Brunel said as both sides began preparations yesterday for the second Test.

"They'll be hurting," Hansen noted. "If we were in their shoes we'd certainly be turning up with a fairly staunch attitude and a willingness to really give it a crack and I'm sure that's what they will do." While Brunel put the focus on the French defence, Hansen highlighted the restart and running lines as obvious areas for the All Blacks to work on. "We could get seduced by that scoreline, or understand there's more in our game that we've got to get better at and have a real good week's preparation," he said.

Hansen described the way the All Blacks handled the restarts during the eight-tries-to-one romp in Auckland as "pretty ugly", while getting the running line "a bit squarer would be nice". Brunel said that before decid-



AUCKLAND: France's Mathieu Bastareaud (R) looks to pass the ball during the first rugby Test match between the New Zealand All Blacks and France at Eden Park in Auckland. — AFP

ing on his second Test line-up he would take a close look at the freshness "mentally and physically" of new arrivals Benjamin Fall, Mathieu Babillot and Kelian Galletier, who played in the Top 14 final between Castres and Montpellier nine days ago. Fall, an outside utility back with 10 Tests to his name, could replace either injured wing Remy Grosso or fullback Maxime Medard. Galletier and Babillot would be vying for a berth in the loose forwards where the French back three Judicael Cancoriet, Fabien Sanconnie and

Kevin Gourdon fell off the pace when the All Blacks ramped up the speed of their game in the second half.

Wesley Fofana, if he recovers from his knee injury, would likely join captain Mathieu Bastareaud in the centres. "There are a lot of problems but the first one is to fix our communication on defence," Brunel said. "It is not a lost cause. We know the quality of the All Blacks but I emphasise that we made it much too easy for them and 70 percent of their tries came from only two or three passes." — AFP

Erasmus braced for new tricks from England

BLOEMFONTEIN: South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus is expecting England counterpart Eddie Jones to have "a few plans up his sleeve" for Saturday's second test in Bloemfontein but has backed his side to adapt to whatever the tourists throw at them.

The Springboks were stunned by England's running game in the opening quarter of the first test, where they slipped to a 24-3 deficit before adapting their own plans and roared back to claim a thrilling 42-39 victory at Ellis Park.

Erasmus expects Jones to provide a fresh approach and has welcomed the opportunity for the inexperienced members of his side to have to think on their feet ahead of the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan.

"Eddie is sharp, he will have a few plans up his sleeve and that is the only way they (the Boks) are going to learn," Erasmus told reporters yesterday. "To be able to change it in the game is the most important thing. Hopefully, if they throw something else at us, the guys will handle it."

Erasmus sprung a surprise when he called hooker Schalk Brits into the squad, despite the fact that the former Saracens front-rower had retired from

rugby after winning the Aviva Premiership final on May 26.

The Bok coach says it is a plan to help younger members of the squad learn from more experienced players. "The more guys you have that have been there and done that, the young guys rub shoulders with them and learn from them," Erasmus said. "When you have guys who have played in different competitions and against different countries with different styles, they always bring something to the party."

"He (Brits) will be with us until after the test next week (in Cape Town) and then after that we will reassess." But Erasmus suggested he would not always call on his overseas-based contingent through the Rugby Championship against New Zealand, Australia and Argentina.

"Not all (overseas players) will be available for the Rugby Championship. A guy like Faf (de Klerk) will be, Duane (Vermeulen) ... we want to try a few things and see how we get along without him. "Warren Whiteley will be available as well and there are a lot of guys that are missing out (through injury) currently so maybe it (the Rugby Championship) will be a good time to build some leadership without Duane, even though obviously we can call on him."

Erasmus also allayed fears over a shoulder injury to pivotal flyhalf Handre Pollard that had provided concern after Saturday's bruising encounter. "Handre's shoulder is OK, he will train from today," Erasmus said. — Reuters

Ferrari doing a better job but will falter, says Hamilton

MONTREAL: Mercedes are playing catch-up but Ferrari will falter, Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton said after German rival Sebastian Vettel won in Canada yesterday to take over at the top of the drivers' standings. Vettel's victory, at a track where Hamilton has dominated in the past but at which he could manage only fifth place this time, left the quadruple world champions a single point apart after seven races.

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff, whose team still lead the constructors' standings, called it a wake-up call but Hamilton made clear that he was already fully aware of the threat. "We all know they (Ferrari) have generally had a slightly better package all round, they've been doing a slightly better job so we've got to do more," the Briton told reporters.

"We've got to keep working, which I know the guys are. And I think we just need to stay positive. "There's no reason to lose control or anything like that, we just need to keep doing what we're doing and keep our heads down and keep motivated and keep pushing because they will falter. We have to keep applying the pressure."

Hamilton struggled with engine temperatures during the race, the Briton already up against it with a power unit on its seventh outing against rivals who brought upgrades to the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve. Mercedes had planned to have the latest specification on track but delayed it due to quality concerns. They will need to have that resolved in time for the next race, the French Grand at the Paul Ricard Circuit at Le Castellet next week, a venue that has been off the calendar since 1990 and represents new ground for all the drivers. —Reuters

Mickelson hopes grand slam ticking clock stops at Shinnecock

SHINNECOCK: Phil Mickelson needs no reminder that his window of opportunity to complete a grand slam collection of golf's four majors is quickly closing and feels this week's US Open presents an optimal chance to finally get it done.

Mickelson, who turns 48 on Saturday, has been a US Open runner-up a record six times and this week's event at Shinnecock Hills and next year's at Pebble Beach could be his last real shots at joining the exclusive club of grand slam winners.

"The difficult thing for me is I continue to put, I put a little bit too much pressure on myself in the majors now because I know that I don't have a ton of time to win them, especially US Opens," said Mickelson.

"But these next two US Opens, Shinnecock and Pebble Beach give me two really good opportunities. "So I need to keep my game, get my game sharp, but I really need to be on those weeks and in the past I've been on at Shinnecock and I'm hopeful to do it again."

When the US Open was last held at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, New York, in 2004, Mickelson went to the penultimate hole with the lead but suffered a crushing double-bogey

and lost to Retief Goosen by two strokes. Mickelson spent time at Shinnecock Hills during each of the last two weeks and came away excited about the course setup, which was a serious source of criticism in 2004. "I think this year's US Open is the greatest setup going in that I have seen in my 25-whatever years of playing the US Open," said Mickelson.

"It will reward the best player as opposed to having luck be a big element on some of the bounces in the fairway, bounces around the green, how it comes out of the rough, so forth. Skill is going to be the primary factor this week."

The five-times major winner, who skipped last year's US Open to attend his daughter's high school graduation, has reason to be optimistic with six top-10 finishes this season, including a victory in March at the WGC-Mexico Championship. Mickelson, who called himself "such an idiot" in 2006 when he handed the U.S.

Open title to Geoff Ogilvy after a double-bogey six on the final hole, does not need a win in his national championship to go down among golf's all-time greats.

But Mickelson has made it no secret about his desire to join Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan, Gary Player and Gene Sarazen as career grand slam winners in the US Masters era. He has long considered the pursuit his biggest focus, saying he views those in the club differently than those on the outside looking in.

"It's one of those career milestones that set you apart from all players, that shows that you're a complete player," said Mickelson. "I need to get it done soon." —Reuters

Tomkins leaves Wigan for Hull KR

LONDON: Former England international Joel Tomkins has signed for Hull KR after leaving Wigan following the bar incident that led to his suspension. Tomkins was banned by Wigan earlier this month after a social media video showed him engaging in a foul-mouthed rant at bar staff.

The 31-year-old was fined £10,000 (\$13,000) and told the row would be investigated by the Super League club. But Tomkins took the matter into his own hands by offering his resignation to Wigan and the back-row forward has signed an 18-month deal with Hull KR.

"I'm sure everybody is aware of what's gone on at Wigan and I accepted the punishment from them," said Tomkins, who made more than 250 appearances in two spells for the Warriors either side of a brief spell in rugby union with Saracens.

"After sitting down with my family and thinking a bit harder about it, I decided that the best thing for all parties would be for me to leave the club and I offered my resignation to Kris Radlinski, which he accepted.

"It has been embarrassing for me, there's no doubt about that, and it's a sad situation for me to leave Wigan in this way, but it's also an opportunity for me to move to a club that's on the rise and that has some big plans moving forward. I'm genuinely excited to be a part of that."

Tomkins is set to make his debut for Rovers at Castleford on Sunday after meeting up with his new teammates for training yesterday. —AFP

Sports

Corey Kluber wins 10th game as Cleveland Indians beat Tigers

Houston complete four-game series sweep in Arlington

DETROIT: Corey Kluber won for the fifth time in his past six starts, Erik Gonzalez smashed a three-run double, and the visiting Cleveland Indians manhandled the Detroit Tigers 9-2 on Sunday. Kluber (10-2) held the Tigers to two runs on five hits and struck out eight in eight innings. He also stretched his streak without issuing a walk to 43 1/3 innings. Melky Cabrera had two hits, two runs and three RBIs, while Francisco Lindor and Lonnie Chisenhall each supplied three hits and scored twice for Cleveland. Yan Gomes added his eighth homer of the season. Leonys Martin led the Tigers with a solo homer and two RBIs. Artie Lewicki (0-2) took the loss while giving up three runs on six hits in five innings.

ASTROS 8, RANGERS 7

George Springer scored three runs, including the winning tally on a balk with two outs in the ninth inning, as Houston completed a four-game series sweep in Arlington, Texas. Springer (2-for-4 with a home run) worked a walk against Keone Kela (3-3) to open the ninth, advanced to second on a wild pitch and took third when Yuli Gurriel (4-for-5) lifted a fly ball to left. Kela balked home Springer while pitching to Evan Gattis, a miscue brought to the attention of the umpiring crew by Astros manager A.J. Hinch. Rangers manager Jeff Banister was ejected protesting the revised call. Will Harris (2-3) notched the victory for Houston despite allowing a game-tying, run-scoring single to Adrian Beltre with two outs in the eighth. Texas has dropped seven of 10.



Yankees lose for the second time in 11 games

home run and tied a club record in the process. It was his 10th straight hit that went for extra bases, equaling the mark done four other times by a Diamondbacks player. The streak ended in the sixth inning with a single.

PIRATES 7, CUBS 1

Gregory Polanco's bases-loaded triple highlighted a five-run sixth inning as Pittsburgh avoided a series sweep at Chicago. Ivan Nova (3-5), making his first start since a stint on the 10-day disabled list, picked up the win by going 5 2/3 innings. Nova allowed just four hits and a run, walking two and fanning eight as Pittsburgh won for just the second time in eight games. Kyle Hendricks (4-6) was tagged with the loss despite giving up just three hits and a run in five innings.

WHITE SOX 5, RED SOX 2

Chicago pulled away for a win at Boston, taking two of three to earn its third straight series victory. The Red Sox have lost three of four. Tim Anderson's bases-loaded walk in the third snapped a 1-all tie and gave the White Sox the lead for good. It was the first bases-loaded walk drawn in the majors by Anderson, who entered Sunday with just one hit in 18 plate appearances with the bases loaded. Jose Abreu had an RBI double in the first inning for the White Sox, and Daniel Palka added a two-run double in the eighth. Reynaldo Lopez (2-4) earned the win after allowing two runs (one earned) in 6 1/3 innings. Joakim Soria earned his eighth save with a hitless ninth.

BLUE JAYS 13, ORIOLES 3

Curtis Granderson had four hits, including a three-run homer, and knocked in a career-best six runs to lead Toronto past visiting Baltimore. Granderson also had a walk and scored two runs while going 4-for-5. Kendrys Morales, Teoscar Hernandez and Kevin Pillar also homered for the Blue Jays, who had a season-best 19 hits as they completed a sweep of the four-game series. Marco Estrada (3-6) allowed two runs while striking out nine in six-plus innings to earn his first win since April 20, a span of eight starts in which he was 0-5. Orioles starter Alex Cobb (2-8) allowed nine runs on 11 hits in 3 2/3 innings.

DODGERS 7, BRAVES 2

Max Muncy hit a home run for the third consecutive game, and Ross Stripling gave up two runs over 6 2/3 innings as Los Angeles downed visiting Atlanta. Logan Forsythe and Enrique Hernandez also homered for the Dodgers. The Braves went 2-4 on their West Coast road trip to San Diego and Los Angeles. Atlanta has a National League-leading 324 runs scored (5.0 per game), but produced just 10 during three games at Dodger Stadium.

REDS 6, CARDINALS 3

Scouter Gennett had two RBIs as Cincinnati snapped a 13-game, head-to-head losing streak against St. Louis with a home win. Gennett, who leads the National League in hitting at .340 and is among the league leaders in RBIs, had a two-run single in the Reds' four-run fourth inning. Reds starter Anthony DeSclafani (1-1) scattered 10 hits over five innings, allowing three runs, two earned, to earn his first win since 2016. He missed all of last season with a strained ulnar collateral ligament in his right



NEW YORK: Todd Frazier #21 of the New York Mets steals second base ahead of the tag by shortstop Didi Gregorius #18 of the New York Yankees during the third inning of a game at Citi Field on Sunday in the Flushing neighborhood of the Queens borough of New York City. — AFP

elbow and started this year on the disabled list due to a strained oblique.

MARINERS 5, RAYS 4

Seattle hit three home runs, accounting for all of its runs, to back James Paxton in a victory over Tampa Bay at St. Petersburg, Fla. Nelson Cruz, Mike Zunino and Kyle Seager went deep for the Mariners, who improved to 21-9 in one-run games. Seattle has won eight of its past 10 games. The Rays have dropped nine of their past 10 games. Paxton (6-1) allowed three runs on five hits in seven innings. He didn't walk a batter and struck out 10, the fifth time he has reached double digits in 14 starts this season.

PADRES 3, MARLINS 1

Clayton Richard went 6 2/3 innings before allowing a hit, and Eric Hosmer hit a two-run homer in front of his hometown fans as San Diego won at Miami to take two of three from the Marlins. Miguel Rojas broke up Richard's bid for the no-hitter with a clean, ground-ball single to center with two outs in the seventh. Richard departed after seven innings, having allowed one run on two hits and three walks with five strikeouts. Kirby Yates and Brad Hand closed out the win with Hand getting his 19th save.

PHILLIES 4, BREWERS 3

Zach Eflin allowed two runs in six innings while striking out nine, and Rhys Hoskins drove in two runs as host Philadelphia broke a four-game losing streak by holding on for a win over Milwaukee to salvage one game of their three-game series. Eflin (3-2) gave up just three hits and one walk. Tommy Hunter got the last out for his first save of the season. Brewers starter Brandon Woodruff, just

recalled from Triple-A Colorado Springs, gave up only an unearned run and one hit. Dan Jennings (3-2) yielded three runs, just one earned, in two innings.

TWINS 7, ANGELS 5

Jake Cave hit a two-run homer, drove in three runs and recorded his first career three-hit game as Minnesota held on for a victory over Los Angeles in Minneapolis. Cave helped the Twins salvage the finale of the three-game series with an RBI single in the fifth. In the sixth inning, he drove a full-count, four-seam fastball from Jim Johnson over the center field fence to the deepest part of the ballpark. Logan Morrison added a two-run homer, Ehire Adrianza contributed an RBI triple and Eduardo Escobar chipped in a run-scoring double as the Twins capped a 6-5 homestand.

A'S 3, ROYALS 2

Shortstop Marcus Semien preserved an eighth-inning tie with a defensive gem, and Matt Chapman hit the third pitch of the bottom of the inning for a home run, giving Oakland a victory over visiting Kansas City. Sean Manaea pitched effectively into the eighth inning and closer Blake Treinen got the final five outs for Oakland, which took three of four in the series after winning two of three in Kansas City a week earlier. With one out and a Royals runner at third in the eighth inning, Salvador Perez hit a one-hop shot that appeared to be headed through a drawn-in infield. However, Semien dived to his right, fielded the ball cleanly and fired home without ever regaining his feet. The one-hop throw was perfect and nailed a sliding Merrifield by a matter of inches. — Reuters

Steyn returns to test squad in search of milestone

CAPE TOWN: Fast bowler Dale Steyn has been recalled to South Africa's test squad for the two-match tour of Sri Lanka next month, providing him with another opportunity to become his country's most prolific wicket-taker in five-day cricket.

Fellow seamer Kagiso Rabada, the number one ranked bowler in tests, has also been included after overcoming a back injury that left his participation in doubt. The 34-year-old Steyn, currently on a short-term contract with Hampshire having been plagued by injury over the last two-and-a-half years, is three wickets short of a milestone that has frustratingly eluded him in recent times.

He made a comeback after 13 months out due to shoulder problems when he opened the bowling in January's first test victory over India at Newlands, only to hurt his heel. Steyn's shoulder problems began in December 2015, and about a year later he broke his right shoulder and tore three major muscles during the first test against Australia in Perth.

He has 419 wickets in 86 tests at an average of 22.32 and regarded as among the sport's greatest fast bowlers for his ability to take wickets in all conditions. South Africa are seeking to continue their fine form after home test series wins over India and Australia this year as they begin life without batting stalwart AB de Villiers, who retired from all forms of international cricket last month.

They have also included uncapped leg-spinner Shaun von Berg, as well as recalling wrist spinner Tabraiz Shamsi as back-up to incumbent slow bowler Keshav Maharaj on what are expected to be turning wickets in Sri Lanka.

"A key factor in our selection process was to cover all our bases and all possible conditions that we may encounter in Sri Lanka," Cricket South Africa national selection panel convener Linda Zondi said in a statement yesterday. "The two additional spinners to back up Keshav Maharaj have both had excellent records in recent times in our domestic cricket. Von Berg also gives us additional batting strength in the lower order."

The only other uncapped player in the squad is Heinrich Klaasen, who provides wicketkeeping cover for Quinton de Kock, but is also a contender for a specialist batting position with the retirement of De Villiers. The first Test will be played in Galle from July 12-16 and the second in Colombo starting four days later, followed by a two-match one-day international series.

Squad:

Faf du Plessis (captain), Hashim Amla, Temba Bavuma, Quinton de Kock, Theunis de Bruyn, Dean Elgar, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Lungisani Ngidi, Vernon Philander, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Dale Steyn, Shaun von Berg. — Reuters

Teenage Afghan googly wizard wows world

NEW DELHI: He's 19 and from a country at war for decades, but Rashid Khan of Afghanistan is the toast of the cricket world with his leg-spin wizardry. From Thursday, the world's top-ranked Twenty20 bowler will be in action as Afghanistan play their first ever Test match, the gruelling five-day format beloved of purists, against the mighty India in Bangalore. Khan started playing with a tennis ball in the remote and poor eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar as one of 12 children, and says he learned the tricks of the trade by himself.

"Nobody taught me... leg-spin and wrong ones," he told the Times of India recently. "I just observed Shahid Afridi and Anil Kumble," he said, greats of Pakistan and India respectively. Khan began his professional career in Afghanistan's domestic league where he caught the eye of national selectors.

At 17, he made his international debut against Zimbabwe. Since then he has gone from strength to strength, becoming the fastest to reach 100 one-day international wickets during the World Cup qualifiers in March with his darting leg-spinners and vicious googlies. This year he was the star of the Indian Premier League, the cash-rich extravaganza in short-format Twenty20 cricket, helping the Sunrisers Hyderabad reach the final and more than justifying his \$1.41-million price tag. Khan's well-disguised "doosra" ball did for stars from Virat Kohli, the India captain, to batting maestro Mahendra Singh Dhoni, helping to propel the youngster to the top of the International Cricket Council's T20 bowling rankings.

"I wouldn't hesitate in saying he is the best spinner in the world in this format... (and) he's got some batting skills as well," Indian cricket superstar Sachin Tendulkar said on Twitter. Australian spin legend Shane Warne said Khan got him "excited", while Kumble was also full of praise for the 19-year-old and his 17-year-old teammate Mujeeb ur Rahman.

"It's fantastic to see two young Afghanistan spinners bamboozle world batsmen," Kumble, the third-highest wicket-taker of all time and now a commentator, told AFP. "Both Rashid and Mujeeb are extremely talented and if they get it right they are certainly capable of testing... Indian or any batsmen," the former leg-spinner added.

The duo have become a potent weapon for Afghanistan, with Mohammad Nabi adding edge to a spin-heavy squad picked for their historic Test against India this week. Last week, they completed an impressive 3-0 ODI whitewash over Bangladesh. However, Kumble said switching from T20s to the five-day format would be a challenge for the teenagers.

"It will be interesting to see how they go, because bowling four overs and bowling to get wickets in a Test match is totally different," the former India captain said. Khan, who is also an agile fielder and a useful lower-order batsman, said that fitness has always been key since he made his ODI debut. "In the last one year, I have tried to stay fit, and improve upon my fitness, which has changed everything," he said. "I have managed to contribute in the field, with ball and bat." — AFP



BANGALORE: Afghanistan bowler Rashid Khan (C) bowls in the nets during the team's practice session at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore yesterday. — AFP

Sports

Brazil set to put dour World Cup performances behind them

Brazil have veered away from the great, attacking traditions

VIENNA: If anything summed up Brazil's new approach under coach Tite, it was his celebration of the fact that they committed only eight fouls in Sunday's 3-0 friendly win over Austria. At the last two World Cups, Brazil have veered away from the great, attacking traditions that used to make them the team that everyone wanted to watch.

The 2010 side, under Dunga, was packed with mid-field spoilers and looked to catch opponents on the counter-attack, or from set pieces. They lost in the quarter-finals. Four years later, playing as hosts under Luiz Felipe Scolari, Brazil were overly dependent on Neymar as they muddled their way through to the semi-finals before losing 7-1 to Germany, when he was injured.

Those teams had one thing in common: They used repetitive fouling in midfield to break up the opposition's attacks, believing it to be a legitimate tactical ploy rather than a violation of the rules.

The most extreme examples were the Confederations Cup final against Spain in 2013 when Brazil battered their opponents with 26 fouls and the infamous World Cup quarter-final against Colombia in 2014, where they gave away 31 free kicks. In fact, failing to commit enough fouls has been a frequent Scolari complaint about his teams over the course of his career.

For Tite, however, fouling the opponents means his team has wasted a chance to win back possession of the ball and start a new attack. "Eight fouls - that shows that we use aggressive marking to try and win the ball and then

come out playing," he said after Sunday's game, the last before their opening Group E game against Switzerland on June 17.

Under Tite, Brazil have regained the swagger that has been missing from recent World Cup squads. The individual talent is there as always but the team are better balanced than their unloved recent predecessors.

The defence is solid, the forwards are lethal when they get a sniff of goal and they have the patience to unlock the most stubborn defences. Brazil have won 17 of their 21 games since Tite took over two years ago and lost only once. They have scored 47 goals, conceded five and kept 16 clean sheets.

Yet, the 57-year-old coach remains little-known outside his own country where he has spent nearly entire career, coaching more than 10 teams, and including three stints at Corinthians where he made his name.

Sunday's match suggested that Brazil could start the World Cup in Russia with the so-called magic quartet of Philippe Coutinho, Willian, Gabriel Jesus and Neymar. The foursome, starting together for the first time, worked superbly in difficult conditions on Sunday to break down an Austria side which had beaten Germany only one week earlier. "When you are always exchanging passes and moving the ball around, it wears the other team down," said Tite. "Sixty percent of our goals are scored in the second half." Neymar played 83 minutes in only his second game since returning from a metatarsal injury in February but

“Sixty percent of our goals are scored in the second half”



SOCHI: Brazil's Paulinho (L), Renato Augusto (2-L) and Neymar (2-R) are seen upon the team's landing at Sochi airport, in Russia yesterday, ahead of the FIFA World Cup. — AFP

scored a stunning goal and looked very close to full fitness. He also seemed to revel in no longer having to carry the team on his shoulders. "I don't know what Neymar's limit

is," said Tite. "His technical and creative ability is amazing. When we spring him into action in the last third of the field, he is lethal." — Reuters

How World Cup favourites are shaping up

SOCHI: The phoney war is over and most of the big guns have arrived in Russia ahead of the start of the World Cup on Thursday. AFP Sport takes a look at how the favourites are shaping up.

BRAZIL

In 2014, Brazil were being widely tipped for success on home soil but their campaign unravelled in spectacular fashion with a 7-1 semi-final defeat to eventual winners Germany. Now the five-time champions look the real deal again. Coach Tite has transformed their fortunes and they are confident mood. The absence of the injured Dani Alves at right-back is a blow but Neymar has proven his fitness in recent friendly matches, scoring in wins against Croatia and Austria. His goal in Vienna on Sunday, after his first start following a foot operation three months ago, was stunning.

Manchester City's Gabriel Jesus has been the most prolific goalscorer during Tite's time in charge, in which the team have won 17 out of 21 matches. "We are handling the expectation. It's good. We are going to challenge ourselves," said the coach after Sunday's final warm-up game. "There is only one little detail. A new stage begins now."

GERMANY -

Germany are the holders and their reputation as a team that always delivers on the big stage tempers the doubts arising from their performances in recent friendlies. Joachim Loew's side went five games without a win before labouring to a 2-1 victory over Saudi Arabia in their final warm-up in Leverkusen on Friday.

The fact that first-choice goalkeeper Manuel Neuer has hardly played since September after injury is a concern but the Germans have made at least the semi-finals in each of the past four World Cups and are bound to feature prominently again in Russia. And their recent friendly results? "I am conscious of the fact that in friendly matches it is not necessarily about the result," coach Loew-who has left Manchester City's Leroy Sane behind-reminded Kicker.

SPAIN

Like Brazil, Spain have come to Russia with something to prove after a poor showing in 2014, when they were knocked out in the group stage. They are yet to lose in two years under Julen Lopetegui, completing their preparations with a 1-0 win over Tunisia on Saturday in



NIZHNY NOVGOROD: Uruguay's forward Luis Suarez controls the ball as he takes part in a training session ahead of the Russia 2018 World Cup at the Sport Centre Borsky, in Nizhny Novgorod yesterday. — AFP

Krasnodar. It was not the most convincing performance but Iago Aspas advanced his case for a starting role in attack in Friday's Group B opener against Portugal with a late winner. Rodrigo of Valencia and the bruising Diego Costa are the other options up front for Lopetegui. The coach has overseen changes but there are still likely to be as many as seven starters against Portugal who also started the 2-0 defeat against Italy at Euro 2016.

"Whatever we happen to do in this World Cup will depend on the answers we give on the field. We are going with a ticket to play three matches and the rest we have to earn," Lopetegui told El Pais.

FRANCE

Optimism has been growing in France about the prospects of Les Bleus, but Saturday's 1-1 draw with the United States was a timely reminder for Didier Deschamps' side that they still have work to do. They needed a late Kylian Mbappe goal to earn a draw in their final friendly, which followed wins against Ireland and Italy. Sports daily L'Equipe called it a "cold blast" before the French travelled to Russia on Sunday.

Paul Pogba's performance in that game was a boost,

though, and Deschamps appears to have found a formation that suits him. A diamond midfield accommodates Pogba and allows Antoine Griezmann to play just behind Mbappe and Olivier Giroud up front, but there is maybe a worry in goal, where Hugo Lloris no longer looks so reliable. Nevertheless, they are capable of reaching the last four.

ARGENTINA

Argentina are lucky to be in Russia at all after a chaotic qualifying campaign and their build-up to the finals has been far from smooth. The cancellation of last week's friendly against Israel in Jerusalem brought bad publicity and also denied Jorge Sampaoli's side much-needed match practice. The build-up has been further hampered by the loss to injury of Manuel Lanzini and critics say Argentina are relying solely on Lionel Messi for success. That may be unfair though. Sampaoli has talent in his squad, including the exciting Giovanni Lo Celso in midfield and an attack also featuring Gonzalo Higuain, Sergio Aguero, Paulo Dybala and Angel Di Maria.

However, even if they manage to win a challenging group, Spain could lie in wait in the quarter-finals for the 2014 runners-up. — AFP

'No chance!', says Troussier as Japan play Russian roulette

TOKYO: Crisis-hit Japan would struggle to avoid an early World Cup exit even under Jose Mourinho-that's the stinging assessment of former coach Philippe Troussier. The Blue Samurai controversially axed Vahid Halilhodzic in April and replaced him with former Japan Football Association (JFA) technical director Akira Nishino-a high-risk move that had a feel of Russian roulette about it.

But Troussier told AFP that a Japan side bereft of confidence had "no chance" of reaching the knockout stage in Russia, where they face Colombia, Senegal and Poland. "Even if they play with Mourinho or Arsene Wenger, it would be so difficult for Japan to get to the last 16," said the Frenchman, who steered the former Asian champions to the second round as co-hosts of the 2002 World Cup.

"If Poland was the first match it would be different. But the fact that Colombia is the first match and Senegal the second-for me, on paper at least they have no chance, no chance." Nishino has long coveted the Japan job but could quickly find it a poisoned chalice after 2-0 defeats by Ghana and Switzerland in his first two games in charge.

"I was so surprised about the decision (to sack Halilhodzic)," said Troussier. "But for a long time the JFA were not happy and decided maybe it was better to take the decision before the World Cup and not wait for the first game to hit the wall."

The 63-year-old flagged his intentions by turning to Japan's old guard, in particular talismanic forward Keisuke Honda and playmaker Shinji Kagawa-two of the players thought to have been at loggerheads with Halilhodzic.

But it has proved to be a baptism of fire for Nishino since Halilhodzic's dismissal plunged Japan's preparations into chaos before their sixth successive World Cup appearance. Leicester forward Shinji Okazaki has also returned from injury but Japan offered little against Ghana and Switzerland, after which Honda warned of a "sense of crisis".

Troussier warned that the JFA's decision to switch coaches could backfire as Japan look to avoid crashing out at the first hurdle again. "They face strong pressure because now they have to get to the last 16," said the former Burkina Faso and South Africa coach. If they don't, it will be a failure for the JFA."

With lethal finishers Sadio Mane, James Rodriguez and Robert Lewandowski bearing down on their goal in Russia, Japan could face death by a thousand cuts, Troussier fears. "Colombia and Senegal have three, four, five players who can make the difference at any time," said the 63-year-old.

"This situation troubles me. It will be so difficult for Japan given the individual potential of Senegal and Colombia." However, Troussier said Japan could still spring a surprise at the World Cup.

"You need luck and some refereeing decisions to go your way," he said. "In 2002 South Korea reached the last four and in France a third division side (Les Herbiers) got to the final of the cup (this year). That's the story of the cup and sometimes you can be very surprised." — AFP

Australia talk up chances against fancied France

KAZAN: Socceroos goalkeeper Mat Ryan has warned France that a new, improved Australia team are plotting an early World Cup shock when the sides meet in Kazan on Saturday. "Come the France game, we're going to be ready... and giving ourselves opportunities to win this game," the Brighton stopper warned. "We can't wait for Saturday."

Barely a day after arriving in Kazan, Aussie confidence could be mistaken for the adverse effects of jetlag. But Bert van Marwijk's side, fresh from two morale-boosting wins over the Czech Republic (4-0) and Hungary (2-1), arrived on a far shorter flight from Turkey.

France, who boast "world-class" talent in Antoine Griezmann and Paul Pogba, according to Australia midfielder Massimo Luongo, are among the tournament favourites in Russia alongside Brazil and Germany.

But the Euro 2016 finalists have been warned not to take the new, improved and more determined Socceroos too lightly at Kazan Arena. "I read a stat before the Czech game that we hadn't won against a European opponent in Europe for quite some time,"

said Ryan. "We managed to do that twice in a couple of weeks."

"I feel like we're benefiting and progressing from our time together in this mini-camp in Turkey. For myself and for the squad, the progress has been out of sight." After squeezing into the World Cup following a marathon 22-game qualifying campaign under the helm of previous coach Ange Postecoglou, Australia then had to adapt to the arrival of Van Marwijk.

Known for leading the Netherlands to the World Cup final in 2010, the no-nonsense Dutchman has been rather less glowing in his appraisal of the Socceroos' chances in Russia. "Only one thing counts, to survive the group stage," van Marwijk said previously.

But his more disciplined approach, coupled with the desire to get forward and take chances when they come, said Luongo, has spread confidence throughout the squad. "The manager doesn't want to lose or draw games, he wants us to win them," added Luongo, a versatile midfielder who plays for Queens Park Rangers in the English Championship.

Despite his admiration for France's individual talents, the 25-year-old Luongo, whose father is Italian and mother is Indonesian, believes France are "there for the taking". "At this level, everyone's even," he said. "As you've seen in the past it's all there for the taking. Individually, they've got some big players, world-class players, especially in midfield." — AFP

Egypt demands FIFA give state TV World Cup rights

CAIRO: Egyptians hoping to watch the World Cup for free have been offered a chink of light after the country's competition authority said it was obliging FIFA to let state TV show games. Egypt's national team-including star striker Mohamed Salah-is gearing up for its first World Cup in 28 years, but matches are only being broadcast in the country by Qatar-based pay television network beIN. In a statement Sunday the Egyptian Competition Authority said it had decided to "enforce its authority" and "compel FIFA to give the right for direct ground transmission to the (Egyptian) National Media Authority" for 22 World Cup matches.

The authority said it received a complaint against FIFA, accusing the international football organising body of violating Egypt's competition law. "FIFA has deprived competitors of beIN company from presenting better offers to the Egyptian viewer," the authority said. It said it wrote to football's world governing body on May 17 "calling on FIFA to obey its publicised policy, but it has not cooperated with the continuous correspondence by the authority so far". It remains unclear if FIFA will comply with the demand by the time the World Cup kicks off on Thursday.

In Egypt, subscribers have to buy a beIN decoder for 1,630 pounds (78 euros) and pay a fee of over 2,000 pounds to watch the World Cup. In a country of 97 million people where the average wage does not exceed 200 euros (\$235), that means getting the subscription is beyond the means of many football fans. — AFP

25 Dustin Johnson on top of the world after Memphis victory



26 Corey Kluber wins 10th game as Cleveland Indians beat Tigers



27 Brazil set to put their World Cup performances behind them



MOSCOW: Argentina's forward Lionel Messi (R) and team mates walk at the Zhukovsky airport, near Moscow, as Argentina's national football team arrives ahead of the Russia 2018 World Cup. — AFP

Messi casts doubt over WCup future

Neymar lands in Russia

MOSCOW: Brazil arrived in Russia yesterday hungry to make amends for their World Cup humiliation in 2014 with Neymar apparently fighting fit, as Lionel Messi cast doubt over his international future. The Brazilians landed in the early hours in Sochi, the Black Sea resort where they will be based, buoyant after beating Austria 3-0 in their final warm-up match.

Most of the favourites are now in Russia ahead of Thursday's curtainraiser between the hosts and Saudi Arabia but holders Germany are due to arrive today. The atmosphere is low-key ahead of the opening match at Moscow's imposing 80,000-capacity Luzhniki stadium.

Russia was a disputed choice when it was handed the World Cup in a closely watched 2010 vote that has since been tainted by bribery charges and the tournament takes place against a background of international tensions.

Russia and the West have engaged in a major wave of tit-for-tat diplomatic expulsions since London accused Moscow of being behind the poisoning of Sergei Skripal in Britain in March. Brazil's Neymar, who broke a bone in his foot in February, marked his first start in more than three months by scoring in Sunday's easy victory in Vienna while Gabriel Jesus and Philippe Coutinho also netted.

It was Neymar's 55th goal in a Brazil shirt, allowing him to draw level with Romario on his country's list of all-time leading scorers - only Pele and Ronaldo have more goals for their country. "I don't know Neymar's limits," Brazil coach Tite said. "His technical and creative capacity is impressive. When we get him in the last third of the field he is lethal."

Brazil, who crashed out of the last World Cup on home soil in a humiliating 7-1 semi-final defeat to Germany, start their campaign against Switzerland in Rostov-on-Don on Sunday. Argentina captain Messi, one of the biggest stars in Russia, said his international future will be determined by his country's performance at the World Cup.

"It will depend on how far we go, how we're going to finish" at the finals, Messi said in an interview with Spanish daily Sport. "We've just lost three

finals in a row, which has led to us going through some difficult moments with the press," added the Barcelona forward.

Argentina lost the 2014 World Cup final 1-0 to Germany after extra time, before suffering successive defeats by Chile on penalties at the Copa America in 2015 and 2016. Messi, who will turn 31 during the World Cup, believes Spain, Brazil, Germany, France and Belgium are the leading contenders for the title. A big question mark hangs over the participation of Egypt and Liverpool striker Mohamed Salah, who is still receiving treatment for the shoulder injury he suffered in the Champions League final.

Egypt are banking on the availability of Salah as they try to get past the first stage of a World Cup for the first time. The Egyptians arrived at their base in the Chechen capital Grozny on Sunday, after Salah sat out their final training session in Cairo.

Once they touched down, tracksuited Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov was among the first to greet Salah. Team doctor Mohamed Abou al-Ela admitted the striker, who scored 44 goals for Liverpool this season, was unlikely to play in Egypt's opening Group A match against Uruguay on Friday. "He still feels pain... this type of injury needs a recovery period of three weeks before going back to the field," he said.

While the favourites limber up, host nation Russia are under intense pressure as they prepare to open the tournament. Ranked a lowly 70 in the world, Russia have not won for seven consecutive games. President Vladimir Putin, who has spent billions to put on the biggest sports event in Russia since the 1980 Moscow Olympics, has exhorted the team to raise their level.

"I must acknowledge the fact that, unfortunately, our team have not achieved big results in recent times," Putin said last week. Before Thursday's kick-off, FIFA will focus on choosing the host of the 2026 World Cup between a joint bid featuring the United States, Canada and Mexico and underdogs Morocco. FIFA member states will vote on the issue at their congress tomorrow. — AFP

Model cleared over Montreal chequered flag bungle

MONTREAL: Formula One race director Charlie Whiting has cleared model Winnie Harlow of any blame for the bungled finish to Sunday's Canadian Grand Prix that saw the chequered flag waved prematurely.

Whiting, said the confusion was caused by miscommunication among local officials. This resulted in the flag being waved by Harlow as triumphant German Sebastian Vettel was completing only his 69th lap in his Ferrari, not the 70th and last. Whiting said: "The chequered flag was shown a lap early because of a miscommunication with the guy that they call the starter here, who starts and finishes the races."

"He thought it was the last lap. He asked race control to confirm it. They confirmed it, but they thought he was making a statement when he was asking a question," Whiting, the International Motor Racing (FIA) official in charge of all Formula One Grands Prix, added: "He just showed it a lap early, or he told the flag waver to show it a lap early, so it wasn't anything to do with the fact that it was a celebrity flag waver."

As a result of the confusion, the drivers ignored the flag and continued for another lap as more flags were waved amid fears of a crowd invasion of the circuit. The outcome was that though the race ran for 70 laps, the official result was decided by the places and times after 69 laps. This meant that Australian

Daniel Ricciardo lost his race fastest lap - clocked on lap 70 - to his Red Bull team-mate Dutchman Max Verstappen, who finished third behind Valtteri Bottas of Mercedes.

There were no positional changes in the top 10 at the finish. Whiting said that a similar mishap had occurred in the past with celebrity flag-wavers including Pele, who was too late at the 2002 Brazilian Grand Prix. He said procedures would be reviewed.

"Of course, it is just a simple miscommunication, a very regrettable one of course, but we're dealing with a lot of human beings, different countries, different languages, and it's not always absolutely perfect."

He said he had told the teams to continue to race until the end of lap 70 to complete the race, but added that the situation was made worse by the marshals believing the race had ended and waving their flags. "That added to the confusion," he said. "Sometimes marshals wave all their flags to congratulate the winner and some were doing that because they thought the race had finished."

"If they had started to go on the track, which I believe has happened in the past... That's something we have to make sure we can take care of." Vettel won Sunday's race in dominant fashion from pole position to record his 50th win and move one point clear of defending four-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes at the top of the drivers' title race. Hamilton finished fifth.

While Vettel and Ferrari rejoiced in their first Montreal win since 2004, which ended Hamilton and Mercedes' three-year supremacy at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, the Englishman, hit by engine problems, remained defiant about his title defence.

"I am still here to win and I still believe we can win," he said, shrugging off the engine-cooling problems that required an early pit-stop and ruined his race. "I have complete confidence in my guys and I am putting my energy into it. We have potential in this car and there is a long way to go." — AFP