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Dozens of pro-regime fighters killed in eastern Syria strike

US denies Syrian, Iraqi claims it bombed positions • Turkey begins patrols around Manbij

Last-gasp England beat Tunisia



VOLGOGRAD, Russia: England forward Harry Kane (left) grabs the goal's net near Tunisian goalkeeper Mouez Hassen during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group G football match between Tunisia and England at the Volgograd Arena yesterday. — AFP (See Page 20)

BEIRUT: An Iraqi paramilitary force key to the battle against the Islamic State group yesterday accused the US-led coalition of killing more than 20 of its fighters in an air raid in eastern Syria. The bombing raid hit Al-Hari, a town controlled by regional militias fighting in Syria's complex seven-year war alongside President Bashar Al-Assad's forces. Both Syrian authorities and Iraqi forces pointed the finger at the US-led coalition, which denied it was involved in Sunday night's attack.

The raid slammed into a regime-controlled position in the border town and left at least 52 fighters dead, according to a Britain-based monitor. Among them were fighters from Iraq's powerful Hashed al-Shaabi military alliance, some of whom have crossed into Syria to fight against IS. "US planes fired two guided missiles at a fixed position of Hashed al-Shaabi units on the border with Syria, killing 22 fighters and wounding 12," the Iran-backed Hashed said.

The bodies of three Iraqi fighters killed in the raid were returned yesterday to their hometowns for burial, said AFP's correspondent in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said a total of 30 Iraqi forces were among the dead in Al-Hari, as well as 16 Syrian forces and six unidentified fighters.

The attack was first reported overnight by Syrian state media, which cited a military source accusing the coalition of bombing one of its positions in Al-Hari. It said several people were killed and wounded but did not give a specific number or their nationalities. Later yesterday, a military source in Syria's Deir Ezzor province where the targeted area lies told AFP that coalition warplanes hit "joint Iraqi-Syrian positions in Al-Hari".

The coalition's press office said it had received reports of a strike in the area that had killed and wounded Iraqi fighters, but denied it was involved. "There have been no strikes by US or coalition forces in that area," it told AFP by email. Syria's army has been gutted by the country's seven-year conflict and has relied heavily on reinforcements from local militias and from regional allies. Those groups have played a key role in the fight against IS, helping Syrian government forces recapture swathes of the country that the group had overrun in 2014.

Hashed was vital to the fight against IS in Iraq, but has also battled the militants across the border in their eastern Syria bastions. Separate offensives have since whittled down IS territory in Syria to just a handful of pockets in the eastern desert, including in Deir Ezzor province. A US-backed alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters and Russia-supported regime forces are carrying out separate operations against those IS-held pockets. The two forces have mostly avoided each other thanks to a de-confliction line that runs across the province along the winding Euphrates River.

Syrian troops are battling IS on the western river bank, while the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces fight on the east. Iraqi warplanes also have occasionally bombed IS positions in eastern Syria. Hari lies on the western side, close to the river and the de-confliction line. The buffer has largely been successful in keeping the two offensives apart, but there have been exceptions. The deadliest incident was in February, when US-led coalition air strikes killed at least 100 pro-regime fighters in Deir Ezzor province, including Russians.

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News in brief

MERS outbreaks kill 23

GENEVA: Outbreaks of the deadly Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) killed 23 people in Saudi Arabia between Jan 21 and May 31 this year, the World Health Organization said yesterday. The deaths were among 75 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS coronavirus (MERS-CoV) during the period, the WHO said, and take the total number of deaths from the disease to 790 since it was first diagnosed in humans in 2012. One outbreak in February hit a private hospital in Hafer Albatin region, where the patient passed the disease to three health workers. There was another cluster of six cases in a hospital in Riyadh in the same month, although no healthcare workers were infected. Two other clusters affected households in Jeddah and Najran. — Reuters

UN slams US separations

NEW YORK: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned yesterday that refugee and migrant "children must not be traumatized by being separated from their parents" as US President Donald Trump faces heavy pressure to stop such a policy at the US-Mexico border. "Family unity must be preserved," UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters. "The Secretary-General believes that refugees and migrants should always be treated with respect and dignity, and in accordance with existing international law." The UN rights chief yesterday also condemned the separations. "The thought that any state would seek to deter parents by inflicting such abuse on children is unconscionable," Zeid Ra'ad Al-Husseini said as he opened a session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. — AFP (See Page 8)

Video gaming like crack

PARIS: Video gaming can be addictive in the same way as cocaine or gambling, the World Health Organization said yesterday in a much anticipated update of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). "After consulting with experts across the world, and reviewing evidence in an exhaustive manner, we decided that this condition should be added," Shekhar Saxena, director of the WHO's department of mental health and substance abuse, told AFP. Online and offline "gaming disorder" is grouped with "disorders due to substance use or addictive behaviors" in the ICD's 11th edition, the first major revision in nearly three decades. — AFP (See Page 24)

UAE demands 'unconditional' Houthi pullout from Hodeida

DUBAI: The UAE, a key player in the coalition battling Houthi rebels in Yemen, yesterday warned the insurgents to withdraw unconditionally from the flash-point port city of Hodeida, after UN peace efforts fizzled. "There can be no conditions in any offers to withdraw," the United Arab Emirates' minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, told a press conference in Dubai. "If the rebels wanted to set conditions, they should

have thought of that a year ago... Now is not the time to negotiate."

Houthi rebels have controlled Hodeida, a key entry point for desperately needed aid, since 2014, when they drove the government out of the capital Sanaa and seized large swathes of the country. Neighboring Saudi Arabia and its allies - chief among them US-trained UAE troops - intervened in the conflict on the government's side in March 2015. The alliance last week launched a major operation to drive the rebels out of Hodeida.

Gargash's statement came hours before the UN's top Yemen envoy, Martin Griffiths, was due to brief the Security Council on his efforts to end the crisis over Hodeida, whose port handles over 70 percent of Yemen's imports.

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Young Iraqis use innovation to earn living

BASRA: From a roving cafe to scrap metal sculptures, young Iraqis unable to tap into the country's oil wealth are having to find creative ways to make a living. While their parents generally went straight into public sector jobs after graduation, the job market for Iraqi youths has become starkly different in the post-Saddam Hussein era. In the decade which followed the US invasion and the dictator's ouster in 2003, authorities continued to increase state hirings -

with a heavy dose of nepotism.

But now, as 26-year-old Karrar Alaa discovered, there are no more guarantees. Three years ago, he was counting on his business degree leading to a public sector job in the southern port city of Basra. But tired of waiting, he has turned entrepreneur. After gathering up all of his savings and borrowing money from relatives, Alaa invested in a car and transformed it into a coffee shop on wheels. "It's the first of its kind in Basra. I got the idea from a video shot in Europe and posted on Facebook," he told AFP.

The "Coffee 2 Go" car has a giant plastic cup mounted on the roof, while an image of a cup of cappuccino and coffee beans is emblazoned on the body. An initial investment of \$20,000 has led

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DUBAI: Emirati Foreign Minister Anwar Gargash speaks during a press conference yesterday. — AFP



HONG KONG: A migrant domestic worker uses the HelperChoice online recruitment service that seeks to fight modern slavery on March 18, 2018. — Reuters

Websites help Asian maids avoid debt trap

HONG KONG/BEIRUT: Worn out and empty, it was past midnight when Filipino maid Genelie Millan dragged herself back to her room, took out her phone to search for a way to escape her abusive employer - and came across a website that changed her life. HelperChoice is one

of several online services cutting out the middleman - recruiters who charge would-be maids exorbitant fees - and helping them to avoid getting trapped in debt bondage to exploitative employers.

Since leaving her 11-year-old son in the Philippines to work in Hong Kong in 2010, Millan had been forced to sleep on a sofa and hit with a pair of chopsticks before finding the site which let her choose her own, more sympathetic boss. "They treat me like their family, they trust me a lot," the 39-year-old told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

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BASRA: Iraqi Karrar Alaa, 26, sells coffee from his travelling cafe in a street on Sunday. — AFP

Local

Amir performs Eid Al-Fitr prayers at Grand Mosque

Crown Prince thanks Eid well-wishers



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and other senior state officials. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah performed Eid Al-Fitr prayers at the Grand Mosque early on Friday. His Highness the Amir was accompanied by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber

Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as well as other senior state officials.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince yesterday expressed gratitude to the nationals and residents who expressed good wishes on advent of Eid Al-Fitr. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf prayed to God Almighty to mark the occasion with abundant blessings and wished the citizens and residents sustainable welfare.

He also prayed for heavenly blessing for all steps for the promotion of the dear homeland, under the shadow of the leader "of our march and renaissance His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah." — KUNA

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His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrives for Eid Al-Fitr prayers at the Grand Mosque.



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem greets His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah greets His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Kuwait marks 57th anniversary of independence

KUWAIT: Kuwait marks today the 57th anniversary of ending the British protection and declaring its independence on June 19, 1961. The independence document was signed by then Amir the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the 11th ruler of Kuwait, who was also named the 'Father of Independence', and the British commissioner for the Arabian Gulf Sir George Middleton, on behalf of his government. The document abolished the agreement signed by late Amir Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, the 7th ruler of Kuwait, with Britain on January 23, 1899, to protect Kuwait against external ambitions.

Upon declaring the independence, the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem, whose rule extended from 1950 to 1965, delivered a speech on the occasion in which he said: "On this memorable day of our beloved nation, on which we transfer from one phase to another phase of history and fold another page of the past with all its components and contents, to open a new page represented in this treaty which you read now, whereby Kuwait gained its full independence and sovereignty."

After the independence, an Amiri Decree was issued identifying the form of Kuwait's post-independence flag. On the constitutional level, the first step was crystallized on August 26, 1961 with the enactment of the Amiri Decree calling for general elections to choose members of the constituent council to draft the country's constitution. Within nine months, the council finalized the draft constitution, consisting of 183 articles, which was submitted to Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, who ratified and passed it on the same day, November 11, 1962.

On the political level, an Amiri decree was issued on August 19, 1961 to establish a foreign department that shall be in charge of the state's foreign affairs and merge Kuwait government secretariat in the foreign department, which turned with the first ministerial formation into the ministry of foreign affairs. In 1962, Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem was appointed as a foreign minister in the first cabinet lineup, to be followed up by His Highness the current Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah who was appointed the minister of foreign affairs in the second cabinet, issued on January 28, 1963.

On foreign relations, Kuwait submitted an application for membership in the Arab League, whereby the League board held a meeting on July 16, 1961 and passed a decree for accepting it as a member besides its sister Arab countries. On November 30, 1961, the United Nations Security Council started dis-



KUWAIT: This archive photo shows the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah signing the Independence document on June 19, 1961. — KUNA photos



The late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah delivers a speech on the occasion of Kuwait's independence on June 19, 1961.

cussions over Kuwait's demand to join the United Nations. On May 14, 1963, Kuwait got the approval and became the 111th member.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the then-Foreign Minister, delivered Kuwait's speech at the UN in a historic moment of Kuwait's march. Later on, Kuwait joined various UN and international organizations such as, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank (WB), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The road to independence had started with Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem's assumption to power in 1950 as he embarked on a series of measures to prepare the country for inde-

pendence. In 1959, Kuwait took steps to enact laws and establish systems such as the Naturalization Law in 1959, the Kuwaiti Currency Law in 1960, the Passports Law and the Organization of Government Departments. He worked on issuing laws that are required to pave the way for the establishment of an independent state like judiciary organization law in 1959, monetary law in 1960 and others.

Moreover, Fatwa and Legislation Department was established in the same year and government departments were organized. As an appreciation of the great role played by the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem in Kuwait independence and laying down the foundation of modern state, a decree was issued in 1963 to merge the National Day with Accession to the Throne Day corresponding to February 25, which is the date when he ascended the throne in Kuwait in 1950. — KUNA



Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem meets with Speaker of Egypt's House of Representatives Ali Abdel Aal.

Speaker Ghanem meets IPU president

GENEVA: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem met Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) President Gabriela Cuevas Barron and IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong. Talks during the two meetings dealt with IPU's issues, namely amendments of the union constituent law. Meanwhile, Ghanem also met in Geneva with Speaker of Egypt's House

of Representatives Ali Abdel Aal, on the sidelines of the meetings of the IPU Executive Committee. The chief parliamentarians discussed a host of issues of common concern, as well as the mechanism of coordinating stances on proposed amendments of the IPU Statute. Kuwaiti MPs Ouda Al-Ruwaie and Ali Al-Deqbasis attended the meetings. —KUNA



GENEVA: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem meets with Inter-Parliamentary Union President Gabriela Cuevas Barron. — KUNA



Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem meets with IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong.

Local

Interior Ministry official visits Abdali border post

Lt Gen visits traffic, public security sectors, coast guard



KUWAIT: Ministry of Interior's Acting Undersecretary Lieutenant General Essam Al-Nahham is seen during his visit to Al-Abdali border post. — KUNA



Ministry of Interior's Acting Undersecretary Lieutenant General Essam Al-Nahham is seen during his visit to the traffic department.

KUWAIT: Ministry of Interior's Acting Undersecretary Lieutenant General Essam Al-Nahham visited Al-Abdali border post on Sunday. The visit came in implementation of directives of Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, according to a press statement by the Ministry's Public Relations and Security Media Department. Nahham conveyed Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah's greetings to all personnel and employees at the ministry, as part of spreading the spirit of one family and increasing interaction and strengthen bonds among the Ministry's staff and employees, the statement said. Nahham toured the port and inspected action mechanisms through the newly installed state-of-the-art technology cameras. He also examined the restoration of military men's housing units as well as the expansion made at the post.

Nahham, afterwards, listened to a presentation on how surveillance cameras work, and development made at the post over the last period, the statement noted. He

called for developing performance at the post in line with scientific and practical methods, and was briefed on readiness and efficiency of security people at these facilities. He expressed his appreciation to efforts exerted by security personnel at border posts in carrying out duties, as they are considered the first defensive line to deal with emergencies.

Nahham called on them to remove all obstacles and facilitate measures as well as maintain the safety of passengers. He was received by head of general department for land ports Colonel Iyad Al-Hadad and his deputy Abdulaziz Al-Hoseini as well as some other officials. He was accompanied by Assistant Undersecretary of the Operations Affairs Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh and director general of public directorate for undersecretary's office Maj Gen Wael Al-Roumi.

On Saturday, Nahham made an inspection tour to traffic, public security sectors as well as coast guard directorate. The tour aims to spread the spirit of one family and

increase interaction and strengthen bonds among the ministry leaders and staff members, the ministry's Public Relations and Security Media Department said in a statement. The tour also comes in implementation of the directives of Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah.

Nahham visited first the traffic sector, where he was received by Acting Assistant Undersecretary for traffic affairs Major General Fahad Al-Shuwaie and some senior officials, the statement added. He visited some departments of the sector that included the e-driving license and the central control room, conveying greetings of the minister to the staffers. He voiced his gratitude to efforts, capabilities and efficiency by personnel to carry out duties and missions, it noted. He called on traffic sector's staff to face outlaws and ensure motorists, lauding at the same time cooperation and coordination among the ministry's sectors.

Afterwards, Nahham visited the public security sector and was briefed on action plans and efforts exerted to

maintain security and follow up all security issues as well as research mechanisms to attain information which leads to arrest criminals and outlaws, the statement pointed out.

He thanked all officials and staffers of the sector for their strenuous efforts aiming to protect the dear homeland, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Finally, he paid a visit to the Coast Guard directorate, and listened to a brief presentation about the control room and action plans. He was briefed on readiness and efficiency of security personnel to deal with different conditions, as well as action mechanisms to secure territorial waters. He stressed that the Coast Guard men are watchful eyes that have been offering precious sacrifices and sparing no efforts to safeguard the country. Nahham was accompanied by some senior officials of the ministry. — KUNA

Chief of staff inspects troops in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH: Kuwait Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodhr has expressed pride of the Kuwaiti forces serving alongside Saudi troops. The Ministry of Defense in a statement on

Friday quoted the chief of staff, during an inspection of the Kuwaiti troops in the kingdom, as lauding their high level of capacities.

He conveyed to the troops greetings by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and his keenness on meeting their needs during the service alongside the Saudi forces. The chief of staff, who arrived in Saudi Arabia earlier on Friday, also relayed Eid Al-Fitr greetings by the top leaders to the national forces. — KUNA



RIYADH: Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodhr visits Kuwaiti troops in Saudi Arabia. — KUNA



Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodhr poses with Kuwaiti troops in Saudi Arabia.



KUWAIT: Kuwait National Guard Undersecretary Lieutenant General Hashem Al-Rifaae honored Sergeant Major Terki Batel with a special promotion for finishing in first place in a military tournament held recently in Jordan.

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Silhouette of Kuwait City during sunset. — KUNA

256,000 passengers used airport in Eid holiday

Dust storm affects air traffic for a few hours

KUWAIT: Up to 256,000 passengers have used the Kuwait International Airport during Eid Al-Fitr holiday, through 1,700 flights, said Director General of Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Eng Yusuf Al-Fawzan. Fawzan made the statement on the sidelines of an inspection tour by DGCA Chairman Sheikh Salman Sabah Salim Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, to the airport's Terminal 1 and the new Terminal 4.

In spite of the rising numbers of passengers, movement at the airport is proceeding normally and smoothly, in line with a set plan, Fawzan noted. During the visit, Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud highly appreciated the efforts by the bodies operating at the airport, with the Interior Ministry and the General Administration of Customs and the DGCA on top. Earlier, the DGCA said that they had made improvements at Terminal 1 for the summer season.

A dust storm had affected traffic at Kuwait International Airport on Sunday, as it brought visibility levels to less than 1,000 meters, before aviation returned back to normal after a few hours, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said. The weather conditions had forced the DGCA to delay the taking off and landing of some flights, head of the Air Aviation Department at the DGCA Emad Al-Senosi said. He, however, stated the majority of the flights at the airport proceeded as scheduled. The speed of wind hit 60 km/h, bringing down visibility to less than 1,000 meters, and stirring waves and dust storms, he noted.



Chairman of Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation Sheikh Salman Sabah Salim Al-Humoud Al-Sabah greets an officer during the tour.



KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation Sheikh Salman Sabah Salim Al-Humoud Al-Sabah tours the airport's new Terminal 4. —KUNA



Vehicles drive through a dust storm which hit Kuwait on Sunday.



People walk at a local park during a dust storm which hit Kuwait on Sunday.

Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan down 1st time in two months

TOKYO: Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan fell 12.2 percent from a year earlier to JPY 42.3 billion (\$383 million) in May, down for the first time in two months on weak exports, the Japanese Finance Ministry said yesterday. But Kuwait stayed in black ink with Japan for 10 years and four months, the ministry said in a preliminary report.

Overall Kuwait's exports to Japan plunged 10.1 percent year-on-year to JPY 54.9 billion (\$497 million) for the first drop in three months, while imports from Japan slid 2.0 percent to JPY 12.6 billion (\$114 million), down for the first time in seven months.

Middle East's trade surplus with Japan surged 39.3 percent to JPY 653.6 billion (\$5.9 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region jumping 33.5 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and

other natural resources, which accounted for 94.7 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, inflated 33.7 percent.

The region's overall imports from Japan expanded 15.0 percent, buoyed by strong shipments of cars and machinery. Japan's global trade balance returned to deficit in May, as higher energy cost pushed up import bills despite a pickup in exports, posting the first trade red ink in three months at JPY 578.3 billion (\$5.2 billion).

Exports of the world's third-biggest economy rose 8.1 percent, thanks to increased shipment of automobiles, semiconductor-related equipment and car parts. Imports grew 14.0 percent due to higher crude oil import bill. China remained Japan's biggest trade partner, followed by the US. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. — KUNA

Kuwait marks world day on desertification

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait took part in celebrations of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, which takes place every year on June 17. Kuwait has mobilized its efforts to raise awareness of the public on international endeavors to combat desertification and protect environment as well as manage natural resources and take immediate measures on climate change to support needs of present and the future's generations.

Kuwait renews its commitment to international conventions through organizing different environmental events and activities and partaking in international conferences over the year. The country joined the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification on June 23, 1997, as part of its interest in preserving environment in general and combating desertification in particular.

The state surveys and follows up reports of the Environment Public Authority in coordination with the concerned bodies on the phenomenon of desertification. An action plan has been set for ten years from 2008 to 2018 so that the reports are



Raafat Maisak

sent every two years so as to achieve the aspired goal of the convention. Kuwait also joined the Convention on Wetlands of

International Importance 'Ramsar' in September 2015, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Marine Reserve was registered at that time as a key wetland in the world, as part of the country's contribution to achieving sustainable development. The Ramsar is one of the oldest conventions signed in 1971, with the aim of sustainable use of wetlands and realization of their main missions, and scientific, economic and cultural roles.

In a statement on Saturday, Raafat Maisak, a member of wildlife protection committee at the Kuwait Environment Protection Society (KEPS), stressed that the society has a varied and big dossier of events and activities in combating

desertification. He said that the society also organizes symposiums and workshops on desertification as well as drought management and others. He noted that the best scenario of managing natural pastures in the State of Kuwait now is to postpone graze for five years from 2018 to 2023 in order to allow the self-rehabilitation of plants with pastoral value that has been almost completely eliminated over the last three decades. During the postponement period, experts of competent authorities in the state will select the best grazing sites and prepare a map according to Article 107 of the Environmental Protection Law, he elaborated.

He noted that the society took part in some international events on desertification and drought in a number of countries like China and other states. He has pointed out that the society adopts a comprehensive awareness approach on urbanization, its effects and risks. He pointed to the preparation of the society's center for media and environmental documentation of many activities and visual film materials. —KUNA

Local

String of fires reported around Kuwait; no injuries

Bootlegger caught in Mishref 'brewery'



KUWAIT: Smoke is seen coming out from an apartment in a Khaitan building.



A firefighter battles a blaze in Rehaya during a heavy dust storm that hit Kuwait.



A fireman battles a blaze in a warehouse in Hawally.

Bu Hanan Al-Sadoun

KUWAIT: A fire broke out on the second floor of a nine-storey building in Khaitan, said security sources, noting that Farwaniya firefighters rushed to the scene, where they evacuated all tenants and controlled the fire without reporting any casualties.

Meanwhile, a huge fire broke out in the fodder market in Rehaya. The fire spread over an area of over 1,000 sq m. Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement. Four fire brigades were dispatched to the scene to control the fire.

In the meantime, a limited fire broke out in the air-conditioning of a patient's room at Badriya Al-Ahmed Center for chemotherapy and stem cell treatment, said security sources, noting that firemen immediately rushed to the scene where they found that the nursing staff had already controlled the fire. No casualties were reported.

Another fire broke out in a warehouse in a building in Hawally, said security sources, noting that Hawally and Salmiya firefighters rushed to the scene and found the

warehouse was located over an area of 800 sq m in a building of 10 floors and a basement. Firemen also found that the warehouse had large quantities of utensils and clothes that had been wrongly and unsafely stored. The building was evacuated and firemen managed to prevent the fire from spreading to the basement or adjacent buildings. Three fire teams from Ardiya, Mangaf and backup squad had to be dispatched to help. No casualties were reported. An investigation is in progress to determine the cause of the fire because the warehouse lacked all safety precautions.

Bootlegger arrested

An Asian man was arrested in Mishref for running a homebrewed liquor factory, said security sources. Case papers indicate that detectives were tipped off concerning the suspect's activity and on raiding his house, they found 120 plastic barrels filled with alcohol, in addition to six large metal barrels and 1,200 bottles and 300 plastic bags filled with liquor. The suspect admitted he is trading in local liquor. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.



Barrels containing homebrewed liquor found recently in Mishref.

Trade Union rejects calling for strikes

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) Mohammed Jamaan Al-Hudhainah denied plans to stage any strikes, sit-ins or any rioting which he said were called for by 'fake websites', and stressed that none of these sites are related to Kuwait's trade union movement. Hudhainah added that the federation will not idly stand by and

will take all legal measures needed to deter those responsible for calling to spread chaos within the movement.

Security guards

Health Ministry's general services manager Mohsen Al-Rasheedi announced signing a contract with a company to provide 783 security guards for various medical facilities within Ahmadi and Sabah medical zones. Rasheedi added that the security guards include 587 expats and 159 citizens contracted to work as security supervisors. Rasheedi added hiring female Kuwaitis was a first-of-its-kind measure taken to provide security at special sites allocated for women only, such as maternity, psychological diseases and Adan hospitals.

Road tenders suspended to protect public fund

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Minister of Public Works Hosam Al-Roumi said the decision to suspend new road tenders was made to protect public funds as well as to achieve transparency, equality and freedom of competition amongst bidders. Responding to an inquiry by MP Mohammed Al-Hadiya about the reasons behind the suspension, Roumi explained that the measure was taken to ensure neutrality and getting the best and least expensive bids. He added that the measure will also prevent any possible violation of public funds in case an unqualified company executes the tender according to the conditions published in the official gazette.

Furthermore, Roumi explained he ordered suspending tenders number 260 and 261 because some of the qualified bidders took part in the bidding according to 2010 qualification conditions that were amended in 2012. He also noted that some companies were qualified according to the 2015 conditions, of which the Central Tenders Committee (CTC) was not notified and they were not published in the official gazette.

Charity violations

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's (MSAL) assistant undersecretary for social development Hana Al-Hajri announced that ministry inspection teams had detected 13 violations committed by six charities during Ramadan. Hajri explained that the violations included unauthorized fundraising and collecting clothes and food. She added that two mosques were collecting cash donations and that a female staff member in one of the mosques prevented an inspector from entering the mosque.

Price control

Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalid Al-Roudhan said that the ministry is working on a system to monitor prices electronically and to provide consumers weekly with prices of around 500 items in various outlets, adding that the measure

will be taken to prevent unjustified prices and to create competitiveness. Roudhan added that 30 inspection teams are inspecting various outlets in co-ops and supermarkets all over Kuwait, and said the teams had closed 63 stores for violating ministry laws.

Allowances

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is awaiting the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) approval to pay 1,750 employees working in the traffic control tower and the operation department 'noise allowance', said informed sources, noting that the approval is expected within two weeks. The sources added that once approved, the KD 100-250 allowances will be deposited in the employees' bank accounts.

In other news, CSC recently approved the employment of 215 non-Kuwaitis in nursing, pharmaceutical and other assisting medical positions at the Ministry of Health at a total cost of KD 1.82 million. The decision includes the appointment of 40 nurses, 98 lab technicians, 28 paramedics, 24 catering staff, eight pharmacists, seven physiotherapists, four radiologists, four hygiene inspectors and one in both the speech and hearing and dental departments.

Environmental violations

Environment Public Authority (EPA) Chairman Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah issued a decision concerning conciliation in environmental violations committed by individuals or institutes. The decision included the following conditions:

- Conciliation will be made upon an official request by stakeholders.
- The EPA general manager is entitled to accept or reject conciliation according to regulations or refer the request to the concerned committee.
- Conciliation requests will not be accepted until a violator has removed the violations and paid all the indemnifications specified in article 174 of the environment law.
- Relevant technical committees will make sure the violations have been removed and accordingly report to relevant authorities to order issuing the conciliation.
- Once the above conditions and procedures are met, a conciliation report will be made including an affidavit not to commit any further environmental violations and to respect the environment law.

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Erdogan, Ince square up for election battle

US lawmakers seek end to 'evil' migrant separations



TAKATSUKI: Police check a collapsed road following an earthquake in Takatsuki, north of Osaka prefecture yesterday. — AFP

Strong earthquake jolts Japan's Osaka

Three killed, 300 injured; no tsunami warning

TOKYO: A powerful earthquake rocked Japan's second city of Osaka yesterday, killing three people including a nine-year-old girl and injuring more than 300, according to an official tally. Television images showed buildings swaying and burst pipes spewing water after the quake, which struck at the height of rush hour in the city of around two million.

However, there was no large-scale destruction and no tsunami warning issued after the earthquake, although commuters were stranded and tens of thousands were left without power. Among the casualties was a nine-year-old girl who died in the city of Takatsuki north of Osaka, reportedly trapped by a collapsed wall following the 5.3-magnitude quake. Local officials said that the other two dead were an 80-year-old man-killed by a collapsing wall-and a 84-year-old man trapped under a bookcase in his home.

The Fire and Disaster Management Agency said more than 300 people were injured in total, but many of them suffered minor injuries. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters the government was "working united, with its first priority on saving people's lives." "Gas supply has still been stopped at more than 100,000 houses while water outage continued in large areas," Abe told his ministers and govern-

ment officials later in the day. "I want you to make your utmost effort to restore public transport as well as gas and water supplies," he added.

And government spokesman Yoshihide Suga cautioned there was a possibility of strong aftershocks. "Large-scale quakes are likely to happen in the next two to three days," he told reporters. Japan sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire" where many of the world's earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are recorded. On March 11, 2011, a devastating magnitude 9.0 quake struck under the Pacific Ocean, and the resulting tsunami caused widespread damage and claimed thousands of lives. It also sent three reactors into meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear plant, causing Japan's worst postwar disaster and the most serious nuclear accident since Chernobyl in 1986.

Local residents described the moment the quake jolted the highly urbanized area at 8:00 am, when platforms would have been heaving with passengers waiting to board their commuter trains. "The floor moved violently. It was a strong vertical jolt. Nearly all of the dishes fell and shattered on the floor," said Kaori Iwakiri, a 50-year-old nurse in Moriguchi just north of Osaka city.

"My parents suffered a blackout and they have no water. I plan to take water to them now." Despite its relatively low magnitude, the quake caused quite a shake, registering a lower six on the Japanese experiential scale of up to seven-meaning it is hard to stay standing. Eiji Shibuya, 52, said the tremor reminded him of the devastating 1995 Kobe earthquake, which killed nearly 6,500 people. "I was stunned. I couldn't do anything," he told AFP from Itami, a city near Osaka. "I was worried about my son as he had just left for his high school. I was relieved when I confirmed he was safe." NHK showed footage of firefighters tackling a blaze that ripped through a home north of Osaka.

A number of train services were suspended, including the "shinkansen" bullet train, as multiple smaller aftershocks followed the quake. Some 80 flights were cancelled, according to NHK, and TV footage showed huge queues of travelers, including many foreign tourists, waiting for taxis as local train services remained suspended in large parts of the region. The Nuclear Regulation Authority said it had detected no problems at its local atomic power plants, but some companies including Honda said they had suspended operations at local plants.

Kansai Electric said on its website that around 170,000 homes in the Osaka region were briefly left without power. Shunsuke Kosaka, an Osaka government official, told AFP an evacuation advisory had been issued to 12 households as it was forecast to rain in the region, possibly triggering landslides. Around 850 people were evacuated to shelters, a local



OSAKA: People pause to look at a collapsed house following an earthquake in Ibaraki City, north of Osaka prefecture yesterday. — AFP

government spokesman said. Some 40 soldiers were deployed to areas where the water supply was damaged. Local officials also issued a warning against spreading fake news online after a tweet claiming a zebra was on the loose after the quake went viral. — AFP



Nine-year-old girl trapped by a collapsed wall

disaster and the most serious nuclear accident since Chernobyl in 1986.

Paris suburb defies efforts to loosen Salafist grip

TRAPPES: Just a short drive from the opulence of Versailles Palace, a closed-off community of strictly conservative Muslims is posing the most visible challenge to French authorities hoping to stem the rise of homegrown extremists. At first glance the town of Trappes, where urban renovation projects have replaced dozens of grim tower blocks, doesn't match the stereotype of poverty-stricken enclaves offering fertile ground to jihadist recruiters.

While never quite shaking off its rough reputation for drugs and violence, the town south-west of Paris has produced international football star Nicolas Anelka and popular French-Moroccan comedian Jamel Debbouze. These days every butcher shop in the town-centre is halal and most women at the market wear headscarves, and increasing numbers of local Muslims adhere to Salafism, a Sunni branch which promotes a strictly conservative lifestyle. While most French Salafists disdain violence in following the traditions of "pious ancestors", many of the jihadists who have struck France in the past three years have been associated with the movement.

And a security source told AFP that around 50 people from Trappes—which has a population of 30,000 — have gone to fight in Iraq or Syria. "It's a tragedy," said Ibrahim Ayres, owner of an Islamic bookstore who says he himself managed to dissuade five young people from joining the Islamic State group. Authorities and locals also

see the Salafist influence as behind the sharp drop in the town's crime levels. "In the 1970s and 80s, the delinquency rates were much higher. Mothers were relieved when they saw their children start practicing their religion again," said Ayres, who has a white beard and a long traditional robe. "Muslims didn't see what was behind it."

Clash with French secularism

The radicalization of what has been called the "French Molenbeek"—a reference to the Brussels district which was home to several of the jihadists involved in the 2015 Paris attacks—has mirrored the rise of Salafism across France. While still a minority among the country's estimated six million Muslims, security forces say their numbers have soared from 5,000 in 2004 to between 30,000 and 50,000 today. Back in the 1990s, Trappes had been a source of militants for the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria (GIA), which staged a series of attacks in France throughout the decade.

The town developed quickly in the 1960s with the arrival of North African migrants seeking work in nearby auto factories, but today unemployment is around 20 percent—double the national average. Tensions burst into the open in 2013 after a man was arrested for allegedly attacking a police officer who stopped his wife for wearing a full-face veil in public. "There is a clear intention to mark religious adherence in social life," says Trappes' Socialist Mayor Guy Malandain. A group of 200 women recently came to his office asking for women-only hours at a local swimming pool, which he refused in the name of France's strict secular principles.

He also stopped calls to prayer blaring from a loudspeaker at one of the town's five mosques, run by a group thought to be linked to the Muslim Brotherhood—which refused to speak to AFP. In 2016, a confidential report by justice officials found nearly 80 families in Trappes were home-schooling their children instead of putting

them in local schools. All of which has caused unease in a country where politicians tend to emphasise shared values and often express concern over communities "shutting themselves off" from mainstream French society.

'Wind in its sails'

Allal, who runs a cafe near the market, says he doesn't know any Muslim fundamentalists. "They don't come here, they don't speak to me," he says. Yet since he stopped serving alcohol in 2015, his business "has quadrupled" and during a recent sweep by police "they didn't find a gram" of drugs, he says. But such claims do little to ease fears in France which has been on high alert since early 2015 when the wave of jihadist attacks began that have so far killed more than 240 people. "What worries me are the growing calls for an isolated cultural identity," said Othman Nasrou, a local lawmaker. Some officials want an outright ban on Salafism, a move dismissed as unrealistic by legal experts but which echoes a widespread view that recent laws aimed at curbing extremism haven't done enough. "How can you outlaw an idea?" said Rachid Benzine, an Islamic expert who was born in Trappes. Yet he acknowledged that Salafism "encourages a split with one's environment which can at times open the door towards jihad".

"It has the wind in its sails, and will continue to develop so long as there is nothing to counter it," he said. France doesn't produce official statistics on religion but Trappes' mayor estimates 25 to 30 percent of its residents are Muslim—though a local legal source suggested the number was more than double, at between 60 and 70 percent. Malandain hopes President Emmanuel Macron will clarify the state's response in a coming plan for bolstering ties with France's Muslims. "If we don't emphasize the role of advocates of a moderate Islam, a European version, we're going to have serious problems," he said. — AFP

Far-right terror threat on the rise in Britain

LONDON: Stung by an attack on Muslims in London a year ago, Britain is facing a growing threat from far-right extremists fuelled by online hate speech, forcing the authorities to react. In a country hit by five attacks in the space of six months in 2017 that killed 36 people, "the biggest threat is from Islamist terrorism", Home Secretary Sajid Javid said earlier this month. But "extreme right-wing terrorism is also an increasing threat", the interior minister added as he unveiled a new counter-terror strategy.

A government report found that four attacks have been carried out in Britain over the past five years "by lone actors motivated to varying degrees by extreme right-wing ideologies". Among them was Darren Osborne, a 48-year-old from Cardiff, who a year ago on Tuesday drove his rented van into a group of Muslim worshippers near Finsbury Park Mosque in north London, killing one man and injuring 12 others. The father-of-four's radicalization ramped up in a matter of weeks, fed by compulsive reading of hate material online.

In February, Mark Rowley, the then head of counter-terrorism policing, said that four extreme right-wing plots were foiled last year and described the trend as "worrying". Matthew Henman, from the Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre database said: "There is a clear increase in both the tempo of attacks

conducted by right-wing extremists and in the seriousness, lethality, of such violence."

Neo-Nazi groups

In recent decades, extreme right-wing activity in Britain had been confined to small, established groups with an older membership, which promoted anti-immigration and white supremacist views but presented a low risk to national security. But the emergence of the neo-Nazi group National Action in 2014, and similar fringe outfits like Generation Identity, has helped forge a new, younger pool of extremists, according to the "2018 State of Hope" report by the anti-racism organization Hope Not Hate.

The report's "online hate" section cited prominent British figures among those with the biggest reach on social media. They included Stephen Lennon—known as Tommy Robinson—founder of the English Defense League, which he left in 2013. They also included Paul Joseph Watson, whose videos have been viewed hundreds of thousands of times, and commentator Katie Hopkins, who in 2015 compared migrants to "cockroaches". "The authorities are failing to appreciate or deal with this growing far-right online threat and anti-Muslim hatred in general," Hope Not Hate's report concluded. The Muslim Council of Britain, a national representative umbrella body, has also denounced an Islamophobic climate, blaming elements of the governing Conservative Party. However, Henman said he had seen "encouraging signals" from the government and security services, such as disrupting plots and banning National Action in December 2016 after the assassination of opposition Labour MP Jo Cox by a neo-Nazi sympathizer. — AFP

International

Britain condemns Israel bias at UN Human Rights Council

Palestinian killed in Gaza border fence blast

GENEVA: Britain yesterday urged the UN Human Rights Council to reform its treatment of Israel, joining the United States in demanding an end to the body's alleged bias against the Jewish State. Addressing the opening of the 38th council session, British foreign secretary Boris Johnson criticized the council's controversial Agenda Item 7, a permanent fixture on the schedule exclusively devoted to discussing rights abuses in the Palestinian Territories.

"We share the view that the dedicated Agenda Item 7 focused solely on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is disproportionate and damaging to the cause of peace, and unless things change we shall vote next year against all resolutions introduced under Item 7," Johnson said. Israel is the only country with a dedicated council item. Washington, some European countries and Australia have sided with Israel in condemning Item 7 as prejudiced, noting that countries with arguably worse rights records in recent years, like Syria are spared such intense scrutiny.

While previous US administrations have criticized Item 7, President Donald Trump's government has raised the prospect of withdrawing from the council unless it is scrapped. Johnson noted however that the council had an important role to play in "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict under the right agenda item." Each council session includes an agenda item on so-called country specific situations, known as Agenda Item 4, where debates on the crises in Syria, Burundi and others typically take place.



Strikes ordered in response to fire-starting kites

sions along the frontier, where Israeli troops have killed at least 125 Palestinians during sometimes violent mass demonstrations. Residents said the man killed in the blast was among a group of Palestinians who approached the border fence, drawing fire from soldiers on the other side. An Israeli military statement described them as "five terrorists who tried to sabotage the (border) security infrastructure".

"The security infrastructure exploded, and as a result of that, there were casualties among the terrorists," it said. Military spokesmen declined to elaborate on the blast or say whether Israel had employed a new counter-measure against incursions. Since its last war with Gaza's dominant Hamas Islamists in 2014, Israel has stepped up efforts to prevent cross-border attacks, improving rocket interceptors and investing in technologies for detecting and destroying guerrilla tunnels.

Faced with international censure over its use of live fire in the fence protests, Israel says troops have been holding off border breaches and responding to gunmen who tried to use civilians as cover for attacks on them. There have been no serious Israeli casualties in the confrontations since the so-called "Great March of Return" was launched on March 30 to press for what Palestinians see as their right to lands lost to Israel during the 1948 war of its founding.

Fire-starting kites

But incendiary materials flown in from Gaza by kites or helium balloons have destroyed swathes of farmland and forests, and killed wildlife. In what the military described as a response to the blazes, Israeli jets struck nine Hamas targets in northern Gaza on Monday.

Sirens sounded in outlying Israeli areas and the



GAZA: The brothers of Sabri Ahmed Abu Khader, mourn during his funeral in Gaza City yesterday. Sabri was killed by Israeli fire near the Gaza Strip's border with Israel, the health ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory said. —AFP

military said three rockets had been launched towards Israeli territory but one fell short in Gaza. "These are terrorist acts that endanger Israeli residents living in southern Israel and damage extensive areas in Israeli territory," a military statement said of the kites and balloons.

There were no casualties in the air strikes or rocket launches. Israel has drafted in civilian drone enthusiasts as army reservists, instructing them to fly their remote-controlled aircraft into the kites, an Israeli general said, but an effective

means to stop the kites has yet to be found. Around two million people live in Gaza, most of them the descendants of refugees from what is now Israel.

The territory has been controlled by Hamas for more than a decade, during which it has fought three wars against Israel. Israel and Egypt maintain a blockade of the strip, citing security reasons, which has caused an economic crisis and collapse in living standards there over the past decade. —Agencies

Toy guns banished as Iraqis celebrate peaceful Eid Al-Fitr

MOSUL: It has long been a tradition in Iraq's second city Mosul for young boys to celebrate the Eid Al-Fitr holiday by running riot with firecrackers or toy guns—scaring their sisters and grandparents. But nearly a year after security forces reclaimed a devastated city at the end of a brutal battle to dislodge the Islamic State group, there is little tolerance even for pretend warfare. During the three-year rule by the jihadists, primary school mathematics often consisted of counting bullets and grenades, while youngsters were trained for frontline combat.

So for the first time, 50-year-old widow Umm Berqis refused to buy plastic guns for her four boys, as she geared up to celebrate the end of the month-long dawn to dusk Ramadan fast. "Weapons have destroyed our city and wounded our children," she told AFP. "This year, there's no question of buying toy guns. We hate everything that reminds us of the violence". Her desire to reclaim innocence on behalf of her children is shared by many others, including 35-year-old father Ali Moayed. "It's not a good idea (to buy toy guns) and anyway I haven't found one in my neighborhood this year", he said.

'Send a message'

Toy weapons and firecrackers are still for sale in the historic Nabi Younes market. But one concerned local is determined to remove all traces—by buying up entire stocks of the offending items, ahead of par-



MOSUL: Iraqi children play in the old city of Mosul near damaged buildings during the second day of Eid Al-Fitr. —AFP

ents and children. "I try to send a message to the vendors, so they stop putting them on their stalls", he told AFP, preferring to remain anonymous. "I even hope to obtain an official ban due to the enormous harm guns inflict on children and society in general", he said.

It is a moral stand that has struck a chord with Mosul's imams. During the Eid prayer early on Friday morning, sermons across the city urged traders to spread "joy" and "optimism" by selling

alternative gifts. Their message could not be clearer—the violence is over for a population weary of warfare and free of the merciless IS yoke. This year, not even celebratory firecrackers were heard in some of Mosul's districts, so keen were people to avoid triggering memories of incessant shelling and machine gun fire. On one bank of the River Tigris, the predominant noise was that of children laughing and crying—the cacophony of family picnics in parks across the world. —AFP

Erdogan, Ince square up for election fight

YALOVA: With a week to go to crucial Turkish elections, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his main rival Muharrem Ince are trading blows in an unexpectedly bruising fight to win control of the country. Erdogan prides himself on his formidable campaigning skills but Ince, a fiery orator from the left of the secular Republican People's Party (CHP), has shown he can match the president's famed charisma and rhetoric. As the clock ticks down to the June 24 polls, the pair are holding several rallies daily, often visiting the same key battleground town within days of each other in what now appears to be the biggest ballot box challenge of Erdogan's career.

This week they held competing rallies on consecutive days in the town of Yalova on the Sea of Marmara south of Istanbul, the port where Ince was born and which he has represented as an MP in successive parliaments. "Mr Muharrem is on his fourth parliamentary mandate as a deputy for Yalova. But what did he bring to this town?" barked Erdogan on Thursday, noting that his government had built a university in Yalova. Holding a rally in the same spot a day later, Ince hit back: "Erdogan, you listen for two minutes! What did I bring to

Yalova? A candidate for the presidential election, a candidate who is going to win!"

'He hits back'

A former physics teacher, Ince is by no means a complete contrast to Erdogan. Like the president, he comes from a relatively modest background and likes to present himself as the champion of people taking on the elite. In the campaign, Ince surprised observers by being unafraid to take the battle direct to Erdogan, forcing the president onto the back foot to the delight of the CHP faithful which had grown used to successive electoral defeats.

While Erdogan is near certain to reap the most votes in the first round of polls, many analysts believe he will win less than 50 percent, forcing a run-off against Ince on July 8 where the opposition candidate may be a formidable rival. Ece, a student who came with her friends to Ince's Yalova meeting, said she was won over by him, pointing to his affable sense of humor. "He hits back and he is funny—we like him for that." "He is facing someone (Erdogan) who criticizes his opponents with the toughest words," said Kadir Yolcu, a worker aged 30. "Muharrem Ince has the right response."

Ince does not mince his words in criticizing what he says are the defects of Erdogan's 15 year rule, pointing to a lack of freedom of expression, weak judicial independence, high inflation and his policy on Syrian refugees. He also shows no fear in tackling Erdogan on issues that have become near taboo, notably



ISTANBUL: Supporters of Turkey's main opposition party presidential candidate Muharrem Ince rally during a pre-election speech in Istanbul. —AFP

the past cooperation between his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the US based preacher Fethullah Gulen who Ankara blames for the 2016 failed coup and is now public enemy number one.

'Only an apprentice'

In the face of these attacks, Erdogan presents himself as a leader of experience and a presence

on the international stage who has transformed Turkey with his infrastructure projects, blasting his rival as an "apprentice". "I am the commander in chief," he declared. According to Emre Erdogan, professor of political science at Bilgi University in Istanbul, the president's mastery of the cut-and-thrust of political rhetoric has kept him in power and propelled him to successive election victories. —AFP

Mozambicans fleeing jihadists seek refuge on the resort islands

MACOMIA: Fatima Uaide stood in the shallow, warm water of the Indian Ocean off the shore of northern Mozambique, waiting for a ferry to a tropical holiday island a few miles away. But Fatima and her five children were not travelling out of choice. They abandoned their rice fields, livestock and simple existence in Nathuco village after it was targeted by jihadists who have left a trail of destruction through the region in recent weeks. "I'm going to Matemo. I left everything in the fields," she said as the water lapped her bare feet and her children plucked small crabs from the soft sand. "It's the rice harvesting season but I'm going to lose everything. We are going to starve-but it is best to escape to save the lives of these children."

Thousands of villagers like her have fled their homes in northern Mozambique for the safety of a chain of nearby tourist islands after coming under attack from a shadowy group that officials say is made up of radical jihadists. More than 30 people have been killed in similar attacks since last month and many more injured—but no one knows how many have been displaced by the violence. Many of those who have fled are forced to sleep rough. The more fortunate among them have sought refuge with family or been taken in by strangers elsewhere in the majority-Muslim Cabo Delgado region. —AFP

Bemba's release adds to Congo's political mix

KINSHASA: One of the world's most unstable countries was already struggling with a political crisis and nail-biting uncertainty. A decision by a war crimes tribunal has now added to the Democratic Republic of Congo's explosive mix. By acquitting ex-rebel and former vice president Jean-Pierre Bemba, the International Criminal Court (ICC) may have opened the way for one of DRC's most controversial figures to weigh in on high-risk presidential elections, now just months away.

Bemba, 55, has been provisionally released after the ICC ruled he had had only limited control of his militia, blamed for atrocities in the Central African Republic (CAR) more than 15 years ago. The ruling—on appeal—came some six weeks before a deadline for entering candidates for the December 23 elections. President Joseph Kabila, who has ruled since 2001, should have stepped down at the end of 2016 at the end of his two-term constitutional limit. But his final mandate was extended by a year at the cost of mass protests and bloody repression—and elections to replace him were then postponed until the end of 2018.

He has kept everyone guessing whether he intends to run again, although Prime Minister Bruno Tshibala, drawn from the ranks of the opposition, recently said in Montreal that he would not stand again. Bemba—once a bitter rival of Kabila and whose militia clashed with government forces—now has the possibility of leaping back onto the political stage, say analysts. After his provisional release, Bemba arrived in Belgium, the court said Friday, where his wife and children are believed to be living. —AFP

International

US lawmakers seek end to
'evil' migrant separations

'Zero-tolerance' border security policy sparks outrage

WASHINGTON: Democratic lawmakers vowed Sunday to end the "evil" separation of migrant children from their parents at the US border, as First Lady Melania Trump made a rare political plea to end the deeply controversial practice. The "zero-tolerance" border security policy implemented by President Donald Trump's administration has sparked tears among migrant families and outrage on both sides of the political aisle.

It took on particular resonance as America celebrated Father's Day. "They call it 'zero tolerance,' but a better name for it is zero humanity, and there's zero logic to this policy," said Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon, after leading a group of Democratic lawmakers to the Mexican border. They toured a converted Walmart supermarket that is now housing about 1,500 immigrant children, after which Merkley said "hurting kids to get legislative leverage is unacceptable. It is evil." The UN human rights chief yesterday also denounced the practice. "The thought that any state would seek to deter parents by inflicting such abuse on children is unconscionable," Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said as he opened a session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

He called for Washington to immediately end the practice of "forcible separation of these children." Bracing for more child arrivals, the government plans to build camps at military bases in Texas. Authorities said that during one recent six-week period nearly 2,000 minors were separated from their parents or adult guardians—a figure that only stoked the firestorm. Trump has said he wants the separations to end, but continues to blame opposition Democrats for the crisis, which critics say is of his own making. Amid deep divisions, congressional Republicans have struggled to craft a viable immigration plan.



US First Lady makes a rare political plea

'Massive child abuse'

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee accused Trump of lying by claiming he was simply following to the letter a previously existing law. "The president is not telling the truth. There is no law, there is no policy that has allowed him to snatch children away from their families," she said. "I can assure you we'll be fighting to the end to stop this ugly, vile program that is harming children and creating massive child abuse." Representative David Cicilline said the policy was "undermining the founding values of this country." "We saw the fear in the eyes of these children who are wondering when they will see their parent ever again. It's a disgrace, it's shameful and it's un-American," he added.

Melania weighs in

Trump's wife, who seldom wades into the political arena, opted to call for bipartisan immigration reform to fix the issue, rather than denounce the policy. "Mrs Trump hates to see children separated from their families and hopes both sides of the aisle can finally come together to achieve successful immigration reform," her spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham said. "She believes we need to be a country that follows all laws, but also a country that governs with heart." The president himself later tweeted: "The Democrats should get together with their Republican counterparts and work something out on Border Security & Safety. Don't wait until after the election because you are going to lose!" he tweeted.

Immigration is one of the most divisive issues plaguing the Trump administration. The number of separations has jumped since early May, when Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that all migrants illegally crossing the US border with Mexico would be



TEXAS: Mothers and children wait to be assisted by volunteers in a humanitarian center in the border town of McAllen, Texas. The UN rights chief yesterday condemned the 'unconscionable' separation of migrant children from their parents at the US border, as First Lady Melania Trump made a rare political plea to end the deeply controversial practice. —AFP

arrested, regardless of whether the adults were seeking asylum. Since children cannot be sent to the facilities where their parents are held, they are separated, which the American Academy of Pediatrics has warned causes "irreparable harm" to the children.

One Honduran asylum seeker killed himself in detention after US authorities separated him from his wife and three-year-old son last month, The Washington

Post reported. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen insisted that "we do not have a policy of separating families at the border. Period." "For those seeking asylum at ports of entry, we have continued the policy from previous Administrations and will only separate if the child is in danger, there is no custodial relationship between 'family' members, or if the adult has broken a law," she wrote on Twitter. —AFP

News in brief

Five immigrants dead

WASHINGTON: Five immigrants died and several others were injured Sunday after a high-speed chase with Border Patrol agents in Texas ended in a crash, local media reported. The crash took place in the city of Big Wells outside San Antonio after Border Patrol agents tried to stop the driver of an SUV, ABC television affiliate KSAT reported. A total of 14 people were in the vehicle, including the driver, who was not seriously hurt. It quoted Dimmit County Sheriff Marion Boyd as saying the driver was traveling at speeds of 100 miles per hour while trying to flee from deputies. While traveling at top speed, the driver lost control of the SUV, which rolled, causing the deaths and injuries, the Texas Department of Public Safety was quoted as saying. —AFP

Three killed in London

LONDON: Three people died in south London after being hit by a train, police said yesterday, calling the incident "unexplained". Reports said spray paint cans were found near the bodies close to Brixton. "My team are now working hard to understand what happened and how these three people came to lose their life on the railway," said detective Gary Richardson. "At this time, we are treating their deaths as unexplained as we make a number of immediate inquiries. "I would ask anyone who was near to Loughborough Junction this morning, and saw something which they think might be relevant, please contact us as soon as possible." Police were trying to ascertain when the incident occurred, with the possibility they were struck by a freight train overnight. —AFP

A baby 'on board'

PARIS: A woman gave birth on a Paris train yesterday, prompting the French capital's transport network to offer her newborn boy free rail travel until he turns 25. The train stopped at the Auber station in central Paris as the woman went into advanced labor and the baby was born at 11.40 am, helped by around 15 people including emergency workers, police and rail staff. Trains were halted in both directions on a particularly busy section of the RER A commuter line for 45 minutes due to the "unexpected" incident, Paris transport operator RATP said. The train was evacuated during the birth, a spokesman said. "To our knowledge, everyone is doing well," he said of the mother and baby. "The RATP congratulates the mum and intends to offer the child free travel on its network until he is 25 years old." —AFP

IS-backing sword attacker

LONDON: A man who attacked police with a Samurai sword outside Buckingham Palace hated Queen Elizabeth II, considering her among the "enemies of Allah", a London court heard yesterday. Mohiussunnath Chowdhury, 27, who supported terrorism by the Islamic State jihadist group, fought with officers who tried to disarm him after confronting him on August 25 last year, jurors were told. After his arrest following the incident outside the monarch's official residence in London, an alleged suicide note to his sister was found. "Tell everyone that I love them and that they should struggle against the enemies of Allah with their lives and their property," it read. "The Queen and her soldiers will all be in the hellfire they go to war with Muslims around the world and kill them without any mercy." —AFP

FARC peace deal at risk as Duque wins presidency

BOGOTA: Conservative Ivan Duque won Colombia's presidential election Sunday after a campaign that turned into a referendum on a landmark 2016 peace deal with FARC rebels that he pledged to overhaul. Duque, 41, polled 54 percent to his leftist rival Gustavo Petro's 42 percent with almost all the votes counted, electoral authority figures showed. Petro, a leftist former mayor and ex-guerrilla, supports the deal.

Tensions over the deal became apparent in the immediate aftermath of Duque's victory, after the president-elect lost no time in pledging "corrections" to the peace deal. "That peace we long for—that demands corrections—will have corrections, so that the victims are the center of the process, to guarantee truth, justice and reparation," Duque told supporters in his victory speech at his campaign headquarters. "The time has come to build real change," Duque said, promising a future for Colombians "of lawfulness, freedom of enterprise and equity," after decades of conflict.

His vanquished opponent Petro promised to resist any fundamental changes to the deal. "Our role is not to be impotent and watch it being destroyed," he said. FARC, which disarmed and transformed into a political party after the peace deal but did not contest the election, immediately called on Duque to show "good

sense" in dealing with the agreement. "What the country demands is an integral peace, which will lead us to the hoped-for reconciliation," the FARC said in a statement after Duque's presidential win.

The former rebels also called for an early meeting with Duque. "One of the big questions here is what's going to happen with the peace process," analyst Yann Basset of the University of Rosario told AFP. "He has said he will not end the agreement, but that he will make modifications, and it's not very clear what these changes will be."

Momentous elections

"These are momentous elections," President Juan Manuel Santos, who will step down in August, said as he cast his ballot early in the day. "Let us continue to build a country at peace, a country of democracy, a country which we all hold dear and to which we all contribute." His efforts to end the war with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) brought him the Nobel Peace Prize, though he is leaving office with record unpopularity in a country of 49 million people.

The world's leading producer of cocaine, the Latin American country continues to battle armed groups vying for control of lucrative narco-trafficking routes in areas FARC once dominated. Duque's victory means he will be Colombia's youngest president since 1872. He comfortably won the first round last month, having campaigned on a pledge to rewrite the agreement signed by Santos. As he voted surrounded by his children, Duque said he wanted to make sure that those who commit crimes "pay for them."

The former economist and first-term

Urdangarin's jail term began as King Felipe VI was poised to kick off an official visit to the United States where he will meet US President Donald Trump today.

A very public fall

The case fuelled angry protests by Spaniards suffering hardship in an economic crisis. Urdangarin was seen as a symbol of the elite's perceived corruption. It also soured the end of Juan Carlos's reign. He gave up the throne in June 2014, hoping his son Felipe VI could freshen up the image of the monarchy. Urdangarin and Cristina eventually moved with their children to Switzerland. In 2015, King Felipe VI stripped them of their titles of duke and duchess of Palma.

At the start of 2016, the pair went on trial in Majorca along with more than a dozen others. Urdangarin faced charges of embezzlement, influence peddling, forgery and money laundering. In February 2017, he was found guilty of creaming off millions to fund a lavish lifestyle. The court handed him a sentence of six years and three months. Cristina was tried on charges of helping her husband evade taxes while he headed of the Noos Institute. She was acquitted, but was fined 265,000 euros on separate charges on the grounds that she had benefited from her husband's wrongdoing.

Lavish lifestyle

Despite Urdangarin's sentence, he was allowed to remain free while pursuing an appeal to the Supreme Court. He lost that



BOGOTA: Newly elected Colombian president Ivan Duque celebrates with supporters in Bogota, after winning the presidential runoff election on June 17, 2018. —AFP

senator says he wants to keep ex-FARC rebels from serving in Congress. The agreement allowed the group to transform itself into a political party. Duque is buoyed by the backing of his popular mentor, former president and now senator Alvaro Uribe, whose two-term presidency from 2002-2010 was marked by all-out war on the FARC. Petro, 58, was the first leftist to reach a presidential runoff in Colombia, and believed his presence showed the South American country had shed its suspicions of the left, tainted by 50 years of conflict. "The need to change things is fundamental," he said after voting. "We are going to build a humane Colombia that is at peace,

that is reconciled with itself."

A former member of the disbanded M-19 guerrilla group, Petro had promised to implement the agreement with the FARC, whose 7,000 ex-combatants have struggled to return to civilian life. FARC leader Rodrigo Londoño, known as Timochenko during the conflict, said: "With either one of the two (candidates), we cannot let down our guard." Highlighting Colombia's glaring inequalities during his campaign, Petro also said he would buy out land owned by the big agro-industrial companies and redistribute it to poor farmers. Polls closed at 4:00 pm after a day of peaceful voting. —AFP



PALMA: Former Olympic handball player and husband of Spain's Princess Cristina, Inaki Urdangarin arrives at the courthouse in Palma de Mallorca, on the Spanish Balearic Island of Mallorca. —AFP

case last week, although the court reduced his sentence by five months. The court also reduced Cristina's fine to 136,950 (\$161,400) euros. Cristina was the first member of Spain's royal family to face criminal charges since the restoration of the monarchy in 1975.

After marrying Urdangarin in 1997, she was constantly in the celebrity spotlight, winning praise for having a salaried job. But eventually, eyebrows were raised at the couple's lavish lifestyle, including the purchase in 2004 of a six-million-euro home in Barcelona. The royal family has made no comment on Urdangarin's conviction. He will serve his term as an inmate of Brieveja jail, which houses up to 162 prisoners and is mainly used for women. —AFP

Germany leader faces ultimatum from hardliners

MUNICH: Hardliners in Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative bloc yesterday gave her a two-week ultimatum to tighten asylum rules or risk pitching Germany into a political crisis that would also rattle Europe. Interior Minister Horst Seehofer's CSU party at a meeting unanimously backed his call to give Merkel a fortnight to find a European deal on the burning issue by a June 28-29 EU summit, failing which he would order border police to turn back migrants.

Three years after her decision to open Germany's borders to migrants fleeing war in Syria and Iraq and misery elsewhere, Merkel is still struggling to find a sustainable response to complaints from the CSU, her Bavarian allies, over her refugee policy. Merkel's woes come as European Union countries are once again at loggerheads over immigration, triggered by Italy's refusal this month to allow a rescue ship carrying 630 migrants to dock. Malta also turned the vessel away, sparking a major EU row until Spain agreed to take in the new arrivals. —AFP

International

Afghan peace marchers arrive in Kabul as Taliban resumes attacks

Militants end an unprecedented ceasefire

KABUL: Dozens of peace protesters arrived in Kabul yesterday after walking hundreds of kilometers across war-battered Afghanistan, as the Taliban ended an unprecedented ceasefire and resumed attacks in several parts of the country. Exhausted after their 700-kilometre 38-day trek, most of it during the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan, the marchers walked double file through the Afghan capital shouting "We want peace!" and "Stop fighting!" "We want our people to stay united for peace and get rid of this misery for the next generation," Mohammad Naikzad, one of the marchers, told Tolo News. "I am calling on both sides—the government and the Taliban—for God's sake... find a way for peace and reconciliation."

Fellow peace marcher Karwan also urged both the parties to work together to "bring lasting security in this country". "Enough blood has been shed. So many people have been martyred in this ongoing conflict," he told Tolo News. The Taliban refused to extend their three-day ceasefire beyond Sunday night despite pressure from ordinary people, the government and the international community. Their fighters attacked security forces in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman, and in the southern provinces of Helmand and Kandahar, officials said. There were few details on casualties.

The governor of Ghani Khel district in Nangarhar was shot dead and his bodyguard wounded yesterday, provincial governor spokesman Attaullah Khogyani said, blaming the Taliban. Defense ministry spokesman Mohammad Radmanesh said there had been fighting in nine provinces since the end of the Taliban's ceasefire, with 12 soldiers killed or wounded. Around 2,500 Taliban fighters entered Kabul during the three-day ceasefire and most had refused to return to the battlefield, Radmanesh said. "They are tired of war and have given up fighting, but our securi-

ty and defense forces are ready to prevent and respond to any threat," he added.

War-weary

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

Initially ridiculed for their plan to walk from Helmand to Kabul, the marchers now enjoy strong public support. They are calling for an extended ceasefire, peace talks and a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan—which is also a key demand of the Taliban. The Taliban announced Sunday they would not extend their ceasefire with Afghan police and troops despite describing the truce as "successful" and a demonstration that the militants were united. "The mujahedeen across the country are ordered to continue their operations against the foreign invaders and their domestic stooges as usual," the group said in a statement. The group also repeated its demand for direct talks with the United States and the withdrawal of foreign forces.

The first formal nationwide ceasefire since the 2001 US-led invasion had sparked extraordinary scenes of Taliban fighters, security forces and civilians happily celebrating the Eid Al-Fitr holiday together. But the jubilation appeared to alarm Taliban leaders, who on Sunday ordered their fighters to stay at their posts or in areas under their control. Some people took to social media to



KABUL: Afghan peace activists march in demand to an end to the war from Helmand as they arrive in Kabul yesterday. Dozens of peace protesters arrived in Kabul yesterday after walking hundreds of kilometers across war-battered Afghanistan, as the Taliban ended an unprecedented ceasefire and resumed attacks in parts of the country. —AFP

express disappointment and anger at the Taliban's refusal to extend the truce. "Once again, they have shown that they love shedding the blood of innocent Afghans,"

Madena Momad wrote on Facebook. Another user wrote: "The Taliban have no respect for the norms and lives of Afghan people." —AFP

When it comes to North Korea, no one puts Beijing in a corner

BEIJING: China may not have been at the table for Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un's historic summit, but it still scored a strategic victory and sent out a clear message: no one puts Beijing in the corner. Just months earlier, it seemed as though the US might cut China out of its negotiations with the North altogether, as direct contact was established between Pyongyang and Washington. But Beijing was not about to allow itself to be left out of the action on the Korean peninsula, where it has long claimed security and economic interests, and Chinese officials moved quickly to remind both the US and North Korea that Beijing was indispensable.

And after the summit, when Trump made the shock announcement that the US would stop its massive war games with South Korea—a longtime Chinese goal—it was clear that Beijing had made its mark on the proceedings. The dramatic turnaround was further cemented when US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo rushed to the Chinese capital to brief President Xi Jinping and other top leaders on the Trump-Kim meeting.

"The results of the Singapore Summit are basically in line with China's expectations," said Wu Xinbo, an expert on international relations at Shanghai's Fudan University. "The complete denuclearization of the peninsula and the establishment of a peace mechanism for the peninsula are consistent with China's constant claims."

That outcome made China "the strategic winner of the summit," according to one western diplomat, who asked for anonymity to discuss the sensitive subject. Previously, "they would never have dreamed of Trump halting the joint maneuvers with South Korea and mentioning possibly withdrawing troops from the South in the future."

Back in the game

Beijing's influence on the summit's outcome was far from a foregone conclusion. For years, China has propped up the North Korean economy in the face of international pressure, worried about a possible collapse of the Kim regime, which it sees as a strategic buffer against the US military presence in South Korea. But Beijing could not ignore Pyongyang's repeated nuclear and missile tests last year, and chose to support UN sanctions—cutting off the flow of coal, textiles, and other goods from North Korea. With those concessions in hand, the US seemed intent on moving ahead without Beijing. And when Trump announced in March his plan to meet Kim, it looked like Washington was planning to cut out the middleman and make a deal directly with Kim. But China scrambled to put itself back in the game.

After years of being persona non grata, Kim suddenly made his first state visit to Beijing, closely followed by a second meeting with Xi in the Chinese port city of Dalian. Up to that point, the North "really did not prioritize the ending of exercises by the US and South Korea," said Bonnie Glaser, senior Asia advisor at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies. "And then Xi Jinping met with Kim in Dalian and all of a sudden, we had an about face by the North Koreans."

The Dalian meeting last month was the second time the two leaders met in six



PANMUNJOM: South Korea's chief delegate Jeon Choong-ryul (right) shakes hands with his North Korean counterpart Won Kil U during their athletic talks at the south side of the truce village of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized zone (DMZ) dividing the two Koreas. —AFP

weeks, following Kim's trip to Beijing. "The whole thing looks to be not just a win for Kim, but also very much a win for Xi Jinping," she added. "The Chinese have long believed that if they could actually dislodge US troops from the region that would be the key to eliminating or severely diminishing US influence in the region and accelerating the creation of a more China-centric region."

'Enormous power'

Following the Singapore summit, China has made it clear it intends to play a leading role in the negotiations, couching that insistence in diplomatic offers to lend its assistance. The US likely has no choice but to play along. "Ultimately, if there is to be a successful settlement between the US and (North) Korea, China has to be involved,"

said Charlie Parton, a former British diplomat in China now working at the UK-based think tank Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). "You can't ignore an enormous power with a land border and a determination to make North Korea its business."

Wu agreed: "Without China's support, North Korea cannot safely promote denuclearization and can't smoothly transfer the country's focus to economic development." Now that China has successfully brought itself back into the negotiations, it could use its position for leverage in other areas of its relationship with the US, he said. "We hope to treat political issues and economic issues separately, but if China and the US really open up a trade war, it will have an impact on the entire Sino-US relationship, including future Sino-US relations on the North Korea issue," Parton warned. —AFP

US farmers stressed, angry at trade wars

NEW YORK: US farmers find themselves in the crosshairs of a trade war with China and others launched by President Donald Trump, who was elected with the support of many in rural America. On Friday, Trump announced long-threatened trade tariffs on tens of billions of dollars worth of Chinese goods, sparking an immediate retaliation from Beijing on an equivalent of US products including agricultural goods, notably soy. "For American farmers, this isn't theoretical anymore, it's downright scary," the Farmers for Free Trade lobbying group said of the prospects for escalating tariffs.

"It's no longer a negotiating tactic, it's a tax on their livelihoods." China is the largest buyer of soy beans, buying \$12 billion in 2017, about 30 percent of the US harvest. "We were already in a depressed market. These trade uncertainties add a lot of stress to this situation," said Jamie Beyer, a farmer in Wheaton, Minnesota who grows soybean, corn, sugar beets, wheat and alfalfa. "We feel these tariffs are very damaging to our agricultural economy." Farmers are the most at risk in this trade battle, as their incomes already were falling, declining by around 50 percent since 2013, and this year expected to reach the lowest level since 2006.

Easy target

The sector already was shaken up by the difficult negotiations on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Canada and Mexico, two major importers of agricultural products. On her family farm in Oklahoma, Hope Pjesky raises cattle and grows winter wheat, and says she is "very nervous" about recent developments.

"Unfortunately, agriculture seems to be the industry that they hit back on when there is retaliation. I just wish there were a better way to go about addressing that issue," she said. That is according to plan, since US trading partners have singled out American products from states strongly supportive of Trump, in hopes of increasing the pressure on him to reconsider. But Pjesky noted that "there are a lot of people who voted for him that still have faith that it is just going to end up well."



ILLINOIS: Farmer John Duffy loads soybeans from his grain bin onto a truck before taking them to a grain elevator in Dwight, Illinois. US soybean futures have plunged with renewed fears that China could hit US soybeans with retaliatory tariffs. —AFP

It is difficult to quantify the precise cost of Chinese sanctions, but Missouri corn and soybean farmer Blake Hurst said he already is seeing an impact on prices. The weather remains the main factor influencing the price of corn, wheat, soybeans and cotton, but the threat of renewed tensions between Beijing and Washington hit the market hard this week and the soybean price fell by more than six percent. "It will affect our profitability" and cut the number of acres cultivated, he said.

Trump support

Roger Johnson, who leads the country's second

largest agricultural union, the National Farmers Union, said the group supports the White House goal of reducing the US trade deficit.

"But our organization grows increasingly concerned that this administration does not have a plan to ensure family farmers and ranchers aren't thrown under the bus for the sake of these goals," he said. Even so, few blame Trump directly. Hurst said many in Missouri are still willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. But, he cautioned, "if we don't see any success, then patience will wear thin." —AFP

News in brief

Nun wins stay

MANILA: An Australian nun ordered to leave the Philippines after angering President Rodrigo Duterte won a reprieve yesterday from imminent deportation but is still subject to proceedings to expel her. Sister Patricia Fox, 71, was briefly detained in April after Duterte ordered her arrest, accusing her of political activism that violated the rules of her visa. The move came as the government cracked down on foreign critics of his human rights record. The immigration service had cancelled her visa and directed Fox to leave the Philippines yesterday, but the justice department nullified the order as having no legal basis. "What the (immigration service) did in this case is beyond what the law provides, that is why it has to be struck down," said a statement from Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra, who oversees immigration matters. —AFP

Bikers' gang banned

THE HAGUE: Dutch judges yesterday banned a national motorcycle club and seized all its assets, ruling gang members had spread a culture of violence and criminal activities in the Netherlands. "The court in The Hague has decided today that the motorcycle club Satudarah is banned with immediate effect," the judges said in their ruling. The ban includes not just Satudarah, but also its fan club, and affiliate Supportcrew 999. The judges found "the combination of numerous offences along with its culture of violence means Satudarah's activities are contrary to public order". Its members "have been involved for many years in criminal activities including violence against other motorcycle clubs, manufacturing and trafficking in narcotics, the illegal possession of weapons and extortion". —AFP

'Forcibly kissing' case

HELSINKI: A Helsinki court yesterday found a lawmaker guilty of sexually assaulting and harassing a female member of parliament by "forcibly kissing" her after a Christmas party, media reported. Teuvo Hakkarainen, a member of the anti-immigration Finns Party, was fined 3,060 euros (\$3,555). He kissed Veera Ruoho, a member of the Conservatives, at a cafe in the parliament building after attending parliament's Christmas party in December 2017. The court also ordered Hakkarainen to pay Ruoho 1,400 euros in damages. Ruoho hailed the conviction and called the trial "necessary". "Things like this should not be silenced and should not be tolerated," she told Finnish news agency STT. Hakkarainen, who told the court he had only vague memories of the evening because he was inebriated, admitted having kissed Ruoho against her will. —AFP

Van kills 1 at festival

AMSTERDAM: A van struck four people at the Netherlands' largest music festival in the early hours of yesterday, killing one of them and injuring the others before driving off, police said. Officers said it was not clear whether the van driver, who later turned himself in to the police, had hit the group at the Pinkpop event intentionally or by accident. Prosecutor Daniele Weymar said at a press conference the suspect, a 34-year-old Dutchman from the city of Heerlen, not far from the concert, had called police himself and was taken into custody in Amsterdam, 220 km to the north. The victims, three men and a woman, were all from either Heerlen or neighboring Landgraaf, where the concert took place. The fatal victim was a 35-year-old man from Heerlen. —AFP

Analysis

Kuwait Times
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Washington Watch

Liberal's lament

By Dr James J Zogby

I find it exceptionally irritating when I hear liberals worry about whether Israel will be able to remain a "Jewish and Democratic State" if it retains control of occupied Palestinian lands. It's irritating because Israel is not now a democratic state nor has it ever tried to be one.

A state which prioritizes rights for one group of citizens (in this case Jews, who comprise 80 percent of the population) over the rights of another group (Arabs, who are 20 percent of Israel's citizenry), cannot be democratic. Israel discriminates against its Arab citizens in law, social services, funding for education, and in everyday life. So while the concerns of liberals in the West are about the future of Israeli democracy, what they ignore is the reality of Israel, in practice.

As I document in my book, "Palestinians: the Invisible Victims", from its inception in 1948, Israel has guaranteed rights and opportunities for Jews at the expense of the indigenous Palestinians who remained after the Nakba. Instead of experiencing democracy, these Arabs were subjected to harsh military law, as a result of which they were denied fundamental human and civil rights. Their lands and businesses were confiscated. And they were even denied the opportunity to join the labor movement, or form independent political parties.

During the past 70 years, these Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel have made significant advances as they organized and fought to expand their rights. But as two stories that have appeared recently in the Israeli media make clear, the contradiction inherent in being a democracy and a Jewish state continues to plague Israel.

In the first story we read that the leadership of the Knesset disqualified a proposed piece of legislation offered by a group of Arab legislators. The bill "Basic Law: Israel, a State of All Its Citizens" sought to guarantee equal rights for all Israelis - Jews and Arabs alike. Apparently the Knesset leaders were so threatened by this bill that they were unwilling to even allow it to be introduced and debated. At the same time, however, Jewish members of the body are advancing another piece of legislation which defines Israel as the "national state of the Jewish People", making it clear that Arabs are at best, second class citizens.

In another story, we learn that Jewish residents of Afula, a town in Northern Israel, demonstrated against the proposed sale of a home in their community to an Arab family. The flyer, mobilizing Afula residents to come to the demonstration criticized "the sale of homes to those who are undesirable in the neighborhood". The former mayor of the community is quoted in the story saying "the residents of Afula don't want a mixed city, but rather a Jewish city, and it's their right."

Apartheid

This is the impact of the apartheid system that Israel established to govern the lives of its Arab citizens. Since 1948, Israel not only confiscated lands surrounding Arab towns and villages to make way for Jewish agriculture and development, it denied Arabs the right to purchase land and homes in Jewish communities. Reflecting how this history has led to the demonstration in Afula, the leader of the Arab bloc in the Knesset said, "It is not a surprise that in a country that has founded 700 towns for Jews and not even one for Arabs, the idea that Arabs should be pushed aside does not shock citizens... our hope of living together is crumbling due to hatred and racism fueled by the government."

Meanwhile, in the West Bank, Israel appears to be preparing a similar fate for the Palestinians living under occupation. Continuing the practice the Israelis instituted in the Galilee region, they have been slowly and steadily concentrating captive West Bank Palestinians into enclaves, denying them access to their land and in some cases, evicting them from their communities. One recent case reported in the Israeli press involves a Supreme Court decision allowing the state to demolish the West Bank community of Khan al Ahmar and to forcibly relocate "its citizens to a site near a dumpster in Abu Dis" - a Palestinian community near occupied East Jerusalem. At risk are Khan al Ahmar's 173 residents and the community's school that serves 150 youngsters from there, and neighboring villages. This is one of four recent forced evictions to clear areas of Palestinians in order to consolidate Israeli control.

These three stories combined, have two things in common. On the one hand, they establish that it is a contradiction in terms to consider that Israel can be both Jewish and democratic at the same time. Liberals therefore, can stop fretting about the danger facing Israeli democracy in the future. It already is, in practice, an apartheid state.

Next to consider is the fact that none of these stories made it into the US press and so I suppose I can almost understand the Western liberal's lament. Since they just don't know how Israel behaves, they have no idea that the future they fear, is already here.

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

THE GESTURE THAT SHOCKED AMERICA ...



US property crisis looms as sea level rises

Along sun-splashed shorelines in the US state of Florida, home prices are on the rise, developers are busy building new complexes, and listings just blocks from the beach describe homes that are "not in a flood zone," meaning no flood insurance is required. But experts warn that ignoring sea level rise won't prevent a looming economic crisis caused by water-logged homes that will someday become unsafe, uninhabitable and too costly to insure.

A reality check may come sooner than many may think, according to a report out yesterday by the Union of Concerned Scientists, which finds as many as 64,000 coastal residences worth \$26 billion in Florida are at risk of chronic flooding in the next 30 years, the life of a typical mortgage. Across the United States, 311,000 coastal homes with a collective market value of about \$120 billion in today's dollars are at risk of chronic flooding by 2045, it said. By century's end, if current trends continue, more than \$1 trillion in commercial and private US property may be at risk, "with Florida's coastal real estate among the most exposed," said the report. And it's not because of the increased risk of hurricanes or storm surge. Rather, the danger comes from flooding due to high tides - sometimes called sunny day floods, or nuisance flooding - when water pools into streets, sidewalks, storefronts and homes.

"This risk is relatively near-term, well before places go underwater completely, and even in the absence of storms," said Rachel Cleetus, lead economist and policy director with the Climate and Energy program at the UCS. Coastal real estate markets are not currently factoring in these risks, she told AFP. "But market perceptions can shift and they can shift quickly in some places," she added, describing a market correction as "inevitable."

'Slow-moving disaster'

To make the risks clearer to people, UCS released a searchable online map that shows where the risks are highest, available at www.ucsusa.org/underwater. The online realty site Zillow provided data for the analysis but did not take part in the scientific research. The projections use a high-end scenario for sea level rise because that is an "appropriately conservative projection to use" when estimating risk to homes, often people's largest asset, Cleetus said. Chronic inundation is defined in the report as flooding that happens at least 26 times a year. By 2045, rising seas are expected to bring an extra 1.8 feet (55 cm) of water along Florida's coast, according to the UCS report. By 2100, Florida can expect an average of 6.4 extra feet of water - an awful lot given that the state's average elevation above sea level is only about six feet, with many places three feet or below. "This is a slow-moving disaster," said Cleetus.

The low-lying Tampa Bay area, Miami and The Keys island chain face the most peril from sea level rise. One worry is that insurance premiums will increase so much that coastal homes



This photo taken on June 16, 2018 shows a low-lying home near sea level in the Indian Beach neighborhood of Sarasota, Florida, next to an empty lot advertised at \$1.49 million. — AFP

become unaffordable for those with fixed or lower incomes. Local governments may decide to cut power and water to flooded neighborhoods. Many will risk losing their largest financial asset - their homes - and municipalities will forfeit huge amounts of revenue from property taxes. In Florida alone, the "homes at risk by 2100 currently contribute roughly \$5 billion collectively in annual property tax revenue," said the report.

'If it rains...'

The problem of outdated flood maps long predates US President Donald Trump, who has called global warming a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese, quit the Paris climate accords and rolled back environmental protections since taking office. According to Desiree Companion, a certified floodplain manager employed by Sarasota County, the US government-issued flood maps that people consult when building or buying a home are decades old in many places. During a free seminar at a local library this month, she said residents often tell her they don't need flood insurance because they aren't in a high-risk zone. "If it rains where you are, you'd best be getting it," she told the seven people gathered in a library meeting room, where most of the 50 seats were empty. Federal flood maps are based on

risk of a "100-year-event," defined as 10 inches (25 cm) of rain falling in 24 hours, she explained. Last year's Hurricane Harvey dropped 51 inches over Texas in that amount of time. "Everybody is in a flood zone," she said.

Who is to blame?

Inaccurate flood risk information is just one of many factors fueling the crisis, said Jeffrey Huber, an assistant professor in the school of architecture at Florida Atlantic University. "Nowhere is a realtor required to actually tell someone that the property they are purchasing is vulnerable to sea level rise," he told AFP. "Who is telling them that their property is vulnerable if not a realtor? If not an architect?" Most developers know, and so do most municipalities, he added. "The general audience isn't necessarily educated enough to know." Solutions may be complex, but making significant cuts to greenhouse gas emissions would help, said report co-author Astrid Caldas, a senior scientist at UCS. As much as 85 percent of the property at risk might be saved if the Paris Agreement goals are met, limiting warming to a maximum of 2 C this century, she said. "The longer we wait to drastically reduce emissions, the less likely it is that we will achieve this outcome." — AFP

'Yugonostalgia' drives iconic Yugo car tours

Join us comrade! tourists are warmly greeted, as they climb into a vintage car that is no longer produced for a visit back in time to a country that no longer exists. As a symbol of the former Yugoslavia, the Yugo car is back in vogue on Belgrade's streets. Like in other places once stranded behind the detested Iron Curtain, the Serbian capital has found a unique way to cater for a surge in interest and even nostalgia for life under communism.

On a three-hour tour, visitors see some of Yugoslavia's most significant sites, seated in one of the once ubiquitous Yugos, ending up at the Museum of History of Yugoslavia which holds dictator Josip Broz Tito's mausoleum. "People come to experience rides in an iconic car and it is something they cannot experience anywhere else in the world actually," Jovana Stojiljkovic, who manages the Yugotour travel agency, told AFP. The last Yugo cars were produced a decade ago, but, says Stojiljkovic, they are still a hit among tourists for the "Rise and Fall of a Nation" tour, on which most clients are foreigners. "It's something similar to a Trabant (East German car) tour in Berlin," she says.

Made in Yugoslavia

For vintage car aficionados, Belgrade has a lot to offer, with sightings of American Chryslers or Ford limousines not uncommon. And for the handful of "Made in Yugoslavia" makes of car, thousands still rumble around on Balkans roads more than 25 years after Yugoslavia's collapse. As well as the Yugo, the

small Fica and Zastava 101, all produced at the Zastava plant in the central town of Kragujevac, were the pride of communist Yugoslavia. They were highly popular due to their low price. But the Yugo car was also often the butt of jokes over its design and unreliability. It even appeared in the 1995 Hollywood blockbuster "Die Hard With a Vengeance" with Bruce Willis and Samuel L. Jackson. Now it is tourists from all over the world climbing into the Yugos, which in their heyday were exported from Yugoslavia to 74 countries, including Egypt, India and even the United States. Described by the communist authorities as the "deal of the century" for the US market, the Yugo had only limited success there, however.

When Stojiljkovic was born in 1992, Yugoslavia had already fallen apart in a series of bloody wars and most of its republics were already independent states. But by the age of 25, she had launched a career in preserving the memory of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) and telling its story, coinciding with a wave of "Yugonostalgia" among some for a period viewed as having enjoyed peace and relative prosperity before the onset of the conflicts.

Dennis Bertelsen, a 38-year-old Dane on a weekend visit to the city, was among the hundreds of thousands of tourists descending on Belgrade - it hosted one million last year, 835,000 of whom were from abroad, according to official figures. With his three friends, he said he took the tour "to get a view of the history and what actually had been the development and downfall of Yugoslavia".

The itinerary includes passing by the famous Hotel Jugoslavija on the Danube river bank, one of the country's most luxurious at the time. Guests included US presidents Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter as well as Britain's Queen Elizabeth II.



Jovana Stojiljkovic, manager of the Yugotour agency, poses for a picture on May 25, 2016 by a Yugoslav-era popular car "Zastava 101" in front of the Hotel Jugoslavija (Yugoslavia) in Belgrade. — AFP

from Kosovo but the building still has a mythical status.

'Commercialization'

Polish student Dominik Wojciechowski came across the tour while researching the Fica car for his photo-art project on so-called Yugonostalgia, a feeling still present in all the countries that emerged after Yugoslavia's collapse, although much less in Croatia where a national sense of being Croat is ultra dominant. "I am interested in this process of commercialization of Yugonostalgia and how people today are trying to preserve knowledge of Yugoslavia, while the older generation even (attempts) to return to these times," the 25-year-old said.

For him, the most impressive part of the tour was a 30-floor twin tower called Genex, or Western Gates of Belgrade, still among the tallest in the city. "You stand below it and look

up how big it is and feel this grandiosity of Yugoslavia and how powerful it was," he said. Most tourists know very little about Yugoslavia, its 22 million people and dictator Tito who led it from the end of World War II until his death in 1980. A decade later, the federation comprising six republics - Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia - collapsed in a series of wars that claimed more than 130,000 lives.

Although Stojiljkovic never lived in Yugoslavia she said she nevertheless knows a lot about it. "I have heard all the stories from my parents, their friends and the rest of my family, so based on their experience it was a really nice time, they had a good time," she said. And she herself is now the proud owner of two Fica cars, which, she said, was "to show to the rest of the world what they meant to us." — AFP

Business

TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2018

13 Stocks suffer as US-China trade spat heats up further

14 Chevrolet cheers for Brazil during the FIFA World Cup

15 Bitcoin could bring Internet to a halt: BIS



CHENNAI: An Indian man walks past trucks parked at a terminal during a nationwide indefinite strike called on by truck owners against the increasing of the fuel price. —AFP

Oil-addicted Nigeria hopes for revival

Seeks to diversify revenues following crash in global crude prices

Ilesa: Locals have always known that a vast deposit of gold sits underneath the cocoa trees and towering thickets of bamboo in the tropical jungle of Osun state in southwest Nigeria. The country's focus on oil has meant the gold has been ignored for decades. But the government is now looking to revive the moribund mining sector as it seeks to diversify revenues following the 2014 crash in global crude prices.

A few companies are already venturing into the sector, hoping to repeat the success of mining in nearby West African countries Ghana, Senegal and Sierra Leone. On a humid morning, Segun Lawson, chief executive of gold mining firm Thor Explorations, leads a site visit of his proposed mine. "No one has a clue about mining in Nigeria," said Lawson, dressed in a white shirt, chinos and construction boots as he walked down a red dirt road swatting away tiny insects.

The Nigerian government mined the vein in the 1980s "but oil was so prolific they just left it", he added, stopping at an abandoned 20-metre (65-foot) deep trench. "The gold runs 210 meters deep," the geologist said, rattling off statistics about the deposit to the group of investors. One British broker sounded impressed by the numbers. Lawson hopes to start production at Nigeria's first large-scale gold mine in early 2020. "This is the low-hanging fruit. This is a small gold province that no-one has explored with modern technology," he said.

The danger of digging

Gold-mining has a long history in West Africa. The region was home to the powerful Asante and Mali empires, who were a major source of bullion to the Mediterranean and Islamic worlds in medieval times. The trade took a back seat to slavery before being ramped up again in the late 1800s, when Europeans introduced industrial mining techniques.

In the 2000s, a commodity "super-cycle" drove another boom, with technical advances helping to discover new sites and make mining more efficient. But this new technology has been slow to come to Nigeria. Down the road from Lawson's mine is a small gold market in the city of Ilesa, where artisanal miners sell alluvial gold extracted from the earth with backbreaking labor. People can only dig so deep.

"We've always had the gold but we haven't had the people to mine it," said traditional ruler Adeyeye Bamidele Adeniji at his house in Ilesa. My mind is very clear, I want to start the work." "My expectation for you people is to let us benefit," he told Lawson and his team. Across Nigeria and West Africa, tens of thousands of people work in dangerous open pit mines, digging everything from gold and tin to sapphires. "Their sheer numbers combined with the weak regulatory framework surrounding their work has alarmed many environmentalists in the region," said Cassandra Mark-Thiesen, Africa researcher at the University of Basel. "The use of child labour, accidental deaths among miners and the smuggling of winnings are other troubling aspects."

But this is what most mining looks like in Nigeria, which has a sophisticated oil and gas industry at the expense of everything else. Africa's largest economy depends on oil for 70 per cent of its government revenue and almost all its foreign currency, despite being rich in iron, bitumen and gold. Since coming into power in 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari's government has tried to wean the economy off crude. Last year, the World Bank approved a \$150 million credit to support growth in Nigeria's mineral sector, which currently represents less than one per cent of gross domestic product.

'Long-term greedy'

Nigeria's mining sector faces big problems, including lack of basic infrastructure to transport minerals and a dearth of geological data. "You have to be long-term greedy to make it in Nigeria," said Gabriel Olumide Odediran, head of investment at the Lagos-based Asset and Resource Management Company. "Trying to make money quickly won't work here." Lawson, who had been eyeing the mine for years before buying it, hopes to lead the gold pack.

But he has to publish the definitive feasibility study before starting construction of the mine. Then there's an issue about equipment: Nigeria currently doesn't even have the proper machinery in the country so Lawson will have to import crushers and mills from China. Yet the end is in sight. "Developing the mine is quite surreal," said Lawson. "We had no idea it would get this far." —AFP

“ This is the low-hanging fruit ”

Bayt Exclusive

Is your job really secure?

Job security is the assumption or assurance of an individual of keeping their current job. There are levels of job security; high job security means that an individual will retain their job in the foreseeable future. Job security is practically an intangible feeling that many individuals have while moving in their career path.

Job security changes with different positions and across industries but it tend to affect an individual's performance and quality of work across the entire market. Usually, individuals with low job security have a constant feeling of threat to their job and that tends to play a role in their performance and behavior at work.

How to Secure Your Job

Job markets and industries are growing and changing rapidly; we no longer have the same job for years just like the old days. Economic changes play an important role in keeping your job and the same position at your company.

However, the secret to securing your job is simply: you. Who you are and what you continuously offer to the company says a lot about you and makes you more valuable for the company. Strive to be valuable and reliable, show excitement and eagerness to learn and be energized in whatever you do. This will make you stand out from others. You can build your own job security through some of the following pointers from Bayt.com's career experts:

• Encourage and motivate

As you gain more experience and put your foot more firmly in the industry or job market, create your reputation as being the source of motivation, encouragement, and information. Always give a hand to your colleagues and others who are seeking advice. How do you see the person that you frequently go to for solutions, advice and mentoring? Chances are you don't imagine them gone every time the wind blows. Try to be that person. Increase your work ethics such as being strict with setting your own deadlines and setting standards.

• Obtain a unique skill or specialization

Take a look at everyone around you; think about your role model or the person who is currently holding the position you aim to reach one day. What is the key thing they have that you are missing? What makes them so valuable to you that you look up to them in the first place?

Get out of your comfort zone and work on what is missing, fill in those gaps and questions to keep your career path ongoing, find a certification that makes you exceptional to your organization, and learn new skills that will make your work more treasured.

• Take the challenge, be a leader

Challenge yourself at your workplace, and when the company is faced with any barriers or problems, step up and take the lead. Managers value an employee who takes initiative to face challenges and breaks them down into easy manageable tasks. At the same time, know when to be a follower and when to lead the team. You wouldn't want to get involved in a project that's completely out of your expertise and set yourself up for failure.

• Define company and manager's goals

Be an indispensable team member and define the goals that everyone is working towards and try to address all challenges that come up along the way. Stay ahead and work with your manager towards goal achievement. When you understand the goals and objectives of the company as a whole, you will get better hands on experience and merge smoothly with the team and the manager as you all become aligned and in need of each other.

• Networking

Create positive meaningful relationships with managers, colleagues and clients. Show that you are a team builder or let them perceive you as the individual who puts the team's success above his own. Always contribute more than what is expected from you.

• Go the extra mile

Working hard and taking the extra steps will always be on your side. It requires hard work and dedication but it pays off. Take the step that no one is willing to take. Hard workers are appreciated by everyone at the organization for giving in their time and effort towards the company's goals and success. If you are being frequently worried about your job, know that you are not alone in this. However, the recipe to success and job security is to be the outstanding, indispensable individual who gives in all the effort and dedication to work towards organizational goals and team's success.

Developing skills and gaining certifications isn't for the employer's pleasure only, it's yours to keep forever and will be reflected in your career life and personal life. Keep on track with the market trends and needs of skills and qualifications. If you try all of the above but still feel that your career is in jeopardy, then certainly look into new opportunities. Bayt.com has thousands of jobs everyday so you can start there.

Fleet Sales Consultant
Kuwait Automotive Imports Co.
W.L.L. - Kuwait

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Kuwait Automotive Imports Co.
W.L.L. - Kuwait

You will be responsible to answer incoming telephone calls: determine purpose of callers and forward calls to appropriate staff or department, take and deliver messages when appropriate staff is unavailable, answer questions related to the Company and provide callers with address, directions and other basic information.

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Abyat
Kuwait

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Maersk Line
Kuwait

You will be responsible to build sustainable relationships with our customers to develop our portfolio of activities and increase our profit. Whilst having a reasonable size of a portfolio of clients, a challenge to grow your clientele further as you add new acquisitions, in line with our targeted segments.

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Executive Secretary
Line Production
Kuwait

You will be responsible to assist in planning, directing & coordinating administrative functions of the company, perform general office duties such as office administration & office supplies management, handling and drafting letters and general day to day correspondence for Management. Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. W.L.L.

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Senior information Security Engineer
Burgan Bank - Kuwait

You will be responsible to respond promptly and in a friendly manner to user requests related to access control as per the set time frame. Periodically reviews such access and associates privileges on various systems, monitors the IT Infrastructure, policy violations, and security applications for security events.

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IT Assistant
Al Sayer Franchising
Kuwait

You will be responsible to provide first hand IT technical support for network, hardware and software problems reported, documents problems and solutions as required for all outlets and the administrative Head Office under Al Sayer Franchising Company.

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Supply Planner
Abyat
Kuwait

You will be responsible to implement and maintain Inventory and Material Management Strategies for all SKUs by regular review and optimization of inventory parameters and levels, maintain strong working relationships and communications with key suppliers to confirm production/shipping schedules and monitor open purchase orders for all orders to ensure on-time deliveries.

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Finishing Engineer/Civil
Intelligent Engineering Solutions
KSA

You will be responsible for materials submission and approval from consultant or the owner, keep good communication skills with owner, follow up for the progress and the intern payment certificate, subcontractors invoices, have good skills in finishing work and have good data base of vendors and supplier in western area.

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Senior Account Manager - Telecom
Giza Arabia
KSA

You will be responsible to identify leads or opportunities for all LoBs across his assigned accounts to achieve his sales target and engages in an assessment of the opportunity with input from the LoB Managers concerned, prepare and maintain a complete information to be ready for reporting all the time, with the status of each opportunity / lead details

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Shop Manager
Alyasra Fashion
KSA

You will be responsible to guide the success of a store by leading and motivating the selling team, developing and managing the service environment and presenting a clean, neat and organized shopping environment for our customers.

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Quality Control
Geidea
KSA

You will be responsible for mentoring and inspecting the quality of providing the services from the Technical support technician, Account Managers, Customer Care Representative to their clients, SLA, and company policy, and enhance to increase the quality of level of company services by encourage the high quality achievement.

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Legal Advisor
Life Pharmacy
UAE

You will be responsible for managing all legal affairs of the Group. The individual will be required to provide legal consultation, advice, and support, alongside identifying, containing, and managing legal exposure, liabilities and risk.

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Manager Administration
Gulf Marketing Group
UAE

You will be responsible for managing day to day administration functions of GMG to ensure that the functions are performing in an efficient manner and as per GMG's policies and procedures. The role holder is also accountable for supplying requested goods and services to the concerned departments of GMG.

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Business Development Officer
Guardian Insurance Brokers
UAE

You will be responsible to develop growth opportunities and focuses on increasing brand awareness, bringing in new customers, and coordinating public relations efforts, initiate contact with prospective clients, prepare and deliver presentations, follow-up with prospects, coordinate administrative and investment conversion team, and close sale.

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Investment Associate
Webcor Group
UAE

You will be responsible to work closely with the Investment division to build financial models for projections and reporting, conduct analysis of assumption inputs and outputs to drive key investment decisions and reassert projections in current projects.

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Power Switching Engineer
Alstom
Qatar

You will be responsible to implement LOTO in order to meet T&C objectives, issue Isolation certificates testifying the procedure has been complied with, and liaise with the Isolation Manager and Partners' group leaders in setting up a safe environment for works/tests to unfold.

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Sales Executive
Al Maha Ceramics Saog
Qatar

You will be responsible to represent brand Al Maha, achieving Sales & Collection Targets, coordinate with local distributor and help in achieving and maximizing the targets, tap all potential projects and institutional buyers and get our products specified and to close such orders.

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Analytics Manager
Vodafone
Qatar

You will be responsible to improve analytical capability and actively identify new business opportunities through analytics. Build the appropriate analytical environment for the company, play key role in developing and documenting new methodologies for analytics and knowledge transfer.

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Associate Registrar
College of the North Atlantic
Qatar

You will be responsible for delivery of a wide range of services to provide for the admission, registration, and record keeping of all full-time and part-time students, the on-going maintenance and enhancements of the College's information system for student records.

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Business

Boursa Weekly Market Report

Three market indices ends week with good gains

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the green zone. The Premier Market Index closed at 4,822.65 points, up by 0.74%, the Main Market Index increased by 0.84% after closing at 4,877.88 points, and the All-Share Index closed at 4,842.68 points up by 0.77%. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover increased by 0.77%, compared to the preceding week, reaching K.D 10.63 million, whereas trading volume average was 42.74 million shares, recording an increase of 9.72%.

The three market indices ended the trading of last week prior to the Eid Al-Fitr holiday with relatively good gains, supported by the active trading and purchasing operations that included

wide ray of listed stocks headed by the leading ones, the biggest support to the Boursa during the current period, especially in the Premier Market where it acquires the largest portion of the cash liquidity pumped into the Market. In addition, and despite the negative start that the Market initiated last week's trading activity with due to the profit collection operations, especially during the first two sessions of the week; the strong purchasing trend that followed in the latter sessions enabled the Market from compensating all of its losses and pushed its three indices to end the week in the green zone for the third consecutive week.

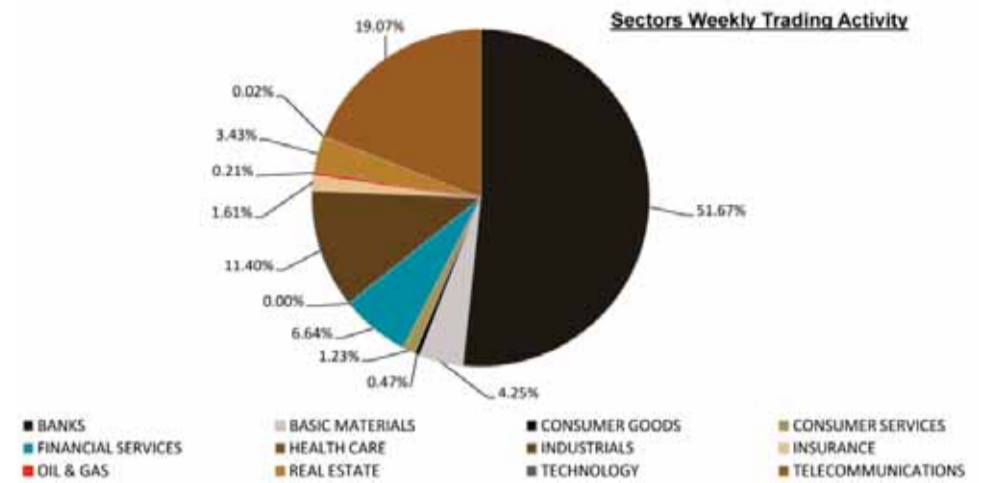
The good performance witnessed by the

Boursa during the last week was positively reflected on the total market cap, as it realized gains over KD 199 million, after it reached by the end of last week KD 26.68 billion against KD 26.48 billion in the previous week, with a growth of 0.75%. Therefore the market cap losses of the Boursa since the application of the new market segmentation contracted to reach KD 1.18 billion, down by 4.22%. (Note: The market cap for the listed companies in the Market is calculated based on the weighted average number of outstanding shares as per the latest official financial statements available).

Moreover, the Market witnessed such performance amid partial increase in the trading activity of the volume or the value, whereas the active trading witnessed by the Boursa during last Wednesday's session contributed into it, as it witnessed a noticeable purchasing activity on the leading stocks, especially in the Telecommunications and Banks sectors, which positively reflected on all the Market indices, especially the trading value that reached by the end of the same session its highest level in the month, and recorded KD 15.9 million, up by approximately 44% compared to the previous session. Moreover, last week witnessed trading activity on 135 stocks out of 175 listed stock in the Market, where prices of 73 stock increased against prices of 41 stock decreased, and prices of 61 stocks remained with no change.

Sectors' Indices

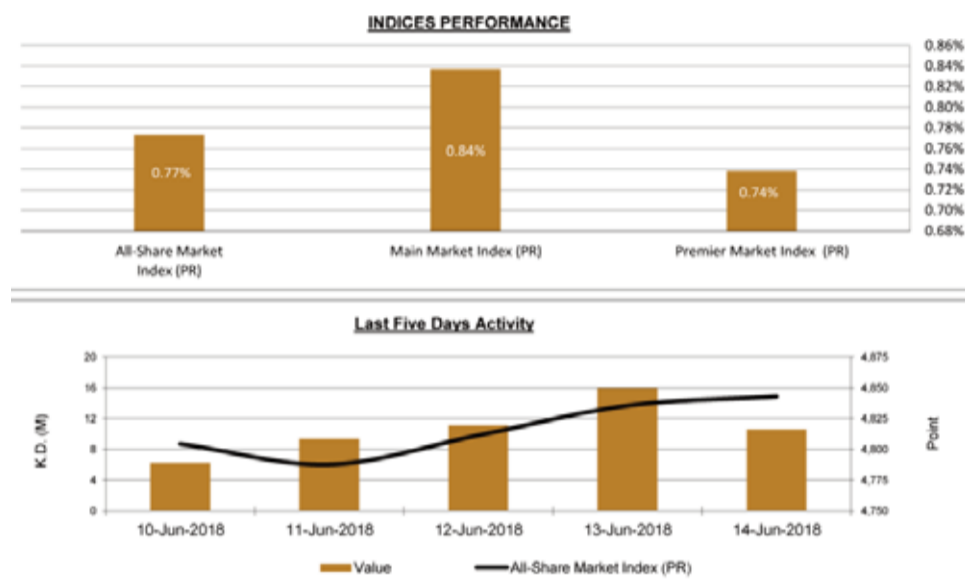
Nine of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone, two recorded



declines, while the Health Care sector's index closed with no change from the week before. Last week's highest gainer was the Technology sector, achieving 8.33% growth rate as its index closed at 945.75 points. The Telecommunications sector came in the second place, as its index closed at 836.46 points recording 2.22% increase.

The Insurance sector came in third as its index achieved 1.82% growth, ending the week at 937.48 points. On the other hand, the Oil & Gas sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 0.84% to end the week's activity at 1,037.81 points, followed by the Basic Materials sector, which index declined by 0.71%, closing at 1,021.21 points.

The Banks sector dominated a total trade volume of around 68.41 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 32.08% of the total market trading volume. The Financial Services sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 20.78% of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 44.32 million shares. On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around K.D 27.44 million or 51.67% of last week's total market trading value. The Telecommunications sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 10.13 million representing 19.07% of the total market trading value.



Global stocks suffer as US-China trade spat heats up

LONDON: Global stocks slid yesterday and US oil prices slumped after US President Donald Trump announced tariffs on Chinese goods and Beijing responded with similar measures in an escalating trade dispute. Fears the spat between the world's two largest economies could intensify added to pressure on oil prices, which extended Friday's big fall into the start of week, while the dollar retreated from a seven-month high against a basket of currencies.

The MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, fell 0.3 percent, nearing a seven-day low. Trump announced tariffs on Friday on \$50 billion of Chinese imports, including cars, starting on July 6. China said it would retaliate immediately by slapping duties on American export products, including crude oil, and suspend all previous trade agreements with Trump's administration. The exchange of blows between Washington and Beijing has heightened fears of a protracted dispute that could hurt global growth and particularly Europe, given that Trump has signaled he wants to impose tariffs on automotive exports.

Those concerns saw European bourses start the week in the red, after Asian shares fell early on Monday to a 2-1/2 week low. Futures on main euro zone benchmarks were trading down 0.2-0.5 percent as investor angst about

the outlook for economic growth filtered through to European stocks. The pan-regional STOXX 600 was on track to relinquish gains recorded on Thursday when a dovish European Central Bank pushed back expectations for an interest rate hike. Germany's DAX was down 1.36 percent while France's CAC 40 declined 1.23 percent. "This all shows how quickly trade tensions could escalate between the US and China," said Derek Halpenny, European head of global markets research at MUFG Bank. "It may not be the end of the matter as US officials are looking at another \$100 billion of Chinese imports on which they could impose tariffs if desired," he said.

A potentially destabilizing vote in German Chancellor Angela Merkel's governing coalition partner over a migration plan weighed on European shares. In commodity markets, Brent crude futures fell to a six-week low of \$72.45 a barrel on Monday after reports that top suppliers Saudi Arabia and Russia would likely agree to increase production at the June 22 OPEC meeting in Vienna.

US light crude oil hit a two-month low of \$63.59 a barrel before recovering somewhat to trade at \$64.72, down 30 cents, by 1100 GMT. The producer cartel of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), which is de facto led by Saudi Arabia, and

some allies including Russia have been restricting output since the start of 2017. They will meet in Vienna on June 22 to decide future production policy.

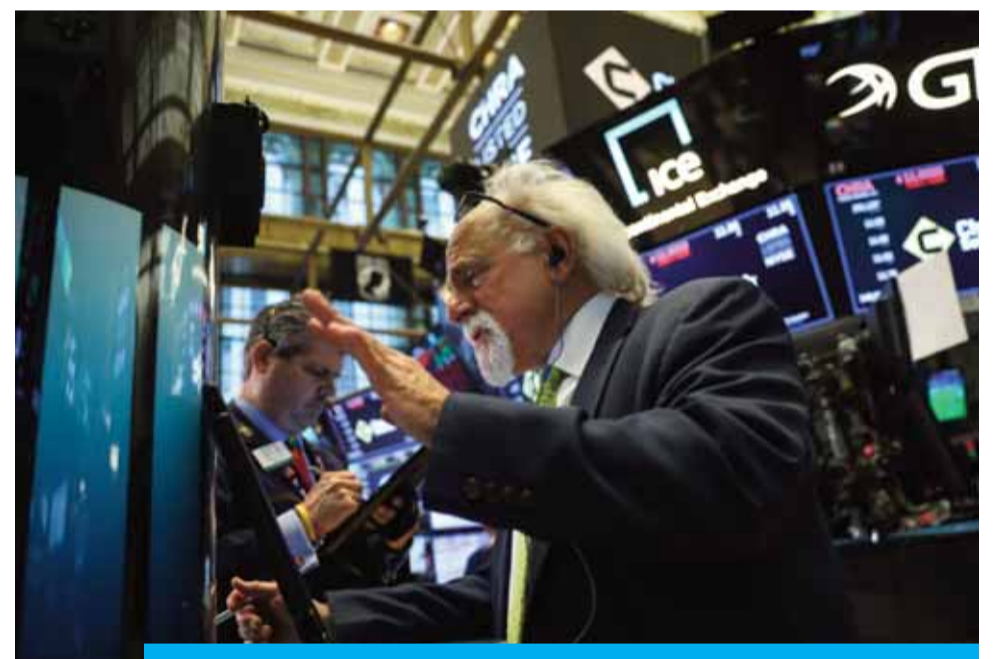
Room for compromise

China has hiked its list of US goods on which it said it would slap tariffs six-fold from a version released in April, but the value was kept at \$50 billion, as some high-value items such as commercial aircraft were deleted. Some analysts, however, believe there is still room for compromise, suspecting Trump's announcement was a negotiating tactic to wring faster concessions from Beijing.

Analysts also say the direct impact of the tariffs may be limited, especially for the US economy, which is in decent shape. The immediate fallout from the dispute was limited in currency markets although the escalation appeared to encourage some risk aversion as the safe haven Japanese yen recovered from three week lows against the dollar.

A mild reaction in the dollar suggested that the exchange of blows was anticipated in some markets. The dollar index versus a basket of six major currencies crept down 0.1 percent to 94.729. The index remained close to 95.131, though, a peak scaled on Friday, thanks to the dollar soaring more than 1 percent last week after the US Federal Reserve gave a hawkish signal on interest rates while the European Central Bank struck a dovish tone.

The euro traded at \$1.6165, not far from a recent two-week low of \$1.1543 after the European Central Bank suggested it would



NEW YORK: Traders and financial professionals work ahead of the closing bell on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. — AFP

hold off raising interest rates through the summer of next year. The Australian dollar, a liquid hedge for risk, slipped to a six-week trough while its New Zealand cousin fell to the lowest since end-May. Asian trade-reliant economies and companies plugged into China's supply chains are worried that they will suffer collateral damage if world trade slows down, hurting global growth and dampening business confidence.

"There are trade frictions not only between the U.S. and China but also between the US and its allies. Trump could put more pressure on other countries like Japan and NATO countries," said Yoshinori Shigemitsu, global market strategist at JPMorgan Asset Management in Tokyo. "So far investors have been escaping to high-tech shares and small cap shares. After all, money is still abundant. But investors should be cautious." — Reuters

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Business

Chevrolet Cheers for Brazil during the FIFA World Cup

New sponsorship deal with Brazilian Football Confederation

KUWAIT: Following the contracted deal between Chevrolet and the Brazilian Football Confederation back in 2014 to sponsor Brazilian soccer teams during their participation in world championships, today is the day when the giant carmaker sponsors the Brazilian National Team throughout its competing journey to win the 2018 FIFA World Cup, in Russia.

The partnership between General Motors-owned Chevrolet and the Brazilian Football Confederation reflects the company's passion for the world of sports being both fun and exciting. Chevrolet has long been known as a leading sports car manufacturer offering exciting and expansive performance lineups with 100-year racing history.

Today, Chevrolet is considered as a youthful brand and one of the first choices that comes to the mind of young people looking for a sports car coupled with modernity, style, and superior performance.

As part of its sponsorship to the Brazilian



National Football Team during the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Chevrolet will engage in many marketing activities reflecting on this remarkable partnership. On this occasion, Chevrolet



Alghanim invites you to experience a first-class Brazilian atmosphere at its showrooms where the first thing you will notice is a Brazilian flag-bedecked Camaro and giant screens streaming

the team's exciting matches. Additionally, Chevrolet Alghanim will offer its customers valuable prizes throughout the 2018 FIFA World Cup when participating in its social media competitions.

Chevrolet Care Program "I Care"

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons benefit of the Chevrolet Care Program, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance for 4 years. To stay tuned of the latest offers, events and announcements, customers are encouraged to follow Chevrolet Alghanim on its social media channels.

KFH has launched a centralized group SWIFT network system

KUWAIT: In continuation of its excellence in launching strategic initiatives and innovative financial solutions that cope with the latest banking industry technologies, KFH has launched a centralized SWIFT network system for global payments at the group level. This system would improve business excellence, achieve cost optimization, focus on technical expertise and invest the same in strategic initiatives to provide the best customer service.

Group Chief Operations Abdullah Abu Al-Hous said that "KFH has managed to add most of its worldwide spread branches under one umbrella in cooperation with SWIFT without changing any transfer channels or banking correspondence related to the network. He indicated that his strategic change shall minimize repeated expenses charged to the group and cause a remarkable saving in financial resources and technical expertise and provide more opportunities to focus such efforts on better projects and initiatives that would achieve the best interest of customer and improve performance in accordance with the highest global standard in regard to speed, quality and safety.

Abu Al Hous added in a press release that adopting this idea has come following a thorough research on how to benefit from similarity of systems and services at the group level. These systems include the correspondence network "SWIFT" that connects all world banks in a safe manner. KFH has succeeded in implementing a Centralized SWIFT System. These systems



Abdullah Abu Al-Hous

and subscriptions were connected to each group banks separately including Bahrain, Malaysia, Germany and Turkey, thus resulting into system update expenses or annual subscription renewal expenses or operational expenses. He emphasized that the centralized SWIFT network has contributed to cutting down expenses by more than KD 0.5 Million over 5 years.

He indicated that KFH is continuing its cost optimization policy, thus benefiting from the competitive advantages which it enjoys including geographical existence in 7 global locations with more than 485 branches, more than 1000 ATM and 15000 employees. This step would unify efforts and achieve benefit from expertise and projects applied by the group banks e.g. the XTM system which has spread widely in Kuwait. He added that KFH Group has applied this service 5 years back in KFH Turkey and received a patent recognition in this respect.

Abu Al-Hous reiterated KFH keenness to enhance and develop technological systems and banking services in accordance with the latest digital products strategy, thus providing a new customer service channel and achieving an added value for its banking transactions. KFH shall continue to cope with the latest infrastructure developments to provide financial solutions and services according to the highest global standards. He emphasized that most of KFH products and systems in various sectors have achieved leading and pioneering positions in the market.

26 winners named in Al Hassad Islamic account this week

Al-Hassad
Opens Doors to
New Opportunities
Yearly Cash Prizes
KD 3.4 million



KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading Shariah compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 13th of June 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300. The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Nadia Naser Al Tamimi.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Ahmad Mostafa Dashti, Dalal Mosa Al Ghareeb, Saeed Ateyah Abdulmoniem, Fatima Mohammad Jabr, Nareman Mahmud Elaiwah, Abdulrazzaq Abdulwahab Abdulrazzaq, Naser Bader

Alabduljader, Murshed Falah Al-Azami, Habib Jabbar Alanzi, Fahad Hadi Al Khalidi, Ali Habeb Arab, Mohammad Hussain Al Azmi, Naser DH Alotaibi, Saleem Mohd Khalid, Malallah Mohammad Al Kandari, Khalid Fahad Al Ajmi, Ahmed Redha Murtadha, Samer Mounir Zaky, Zahra Sayed Baqer, Abdulla Rashed Khalifa, Habib Makki Hashim, Ali Hussain Khalaf, A Qader Rashid A Qader, Fatima Jassim Salman and Isa Mohamed Ebrahim.

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

Unlimited roaming internet with new Ooredoo Passport

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced the launch of two revamped versions of its roaming packages which include Ooredoo Passport Unlimited and Ooredoo Passport Limited, in over 60 countries including Russia, the host country of the 2018 World Cup. The roaming plans are available for both prepaid and post-paid customers, at the same price and benefits.

The launch of revamped Ooredoo Passport Unlimited package gives customers exclusive unlimited roaming internet for KD 12 per week to keep up with the customers' mode of usage for mobile internet, as it is the main tool for sharing videos, pictures and audio clips with

loved ones on various social media channels such as Instagram and Snapchat.

Ooredoo Passport Limited package offers customers limited 1 GB per week internet roaming and voice for KD 10 per week and allows them to use a bit of everything depending on their needs. The packages can be activated conveniently through the free My Ooredoo smartphone app, available on the Android and iOS stores. Commenting on the launch of the revamped service, Ooredoo Kuwait issued a statement saying that the new service is aimed to enrich the experience of the telecom service provider's customers and meet their expectations, taking in mind the lifestyle of the



company's global-oriented customer base. The packages also reiterate Ooredoo's commitment to helping customers enjoy the internet, especially since mobile internet is an essential part of

everyday use to many customers. Ooredoo noted that the new my Ooredoo passport service can be conveniently activated and auto-renewed through the company's My Ooredoo smartphone app.

Burgan Bank names winner of Al Thuraya salary account monthly draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, announced yesterday Salem Badri Esbea Abdullah as the lucky winner of the Al Thuraya Salary Account monthly draw. The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank by offering them a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month. With every KD 10 available in the account, the customer receives one chance to enter the draw.

The Al Thuraya account holders have the

option to hold money in Kuwaiti Dinar and other major currencies and can access account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards, and benefit from the discounts and offers throughout the year. Customers wishing to open the Al Thuraya account can do so by simply visiting the nearest Burgan Bank branch and obtain all the necessary details, or simply call the bank's call center.



Jazeera Airways to commence three weekly flights to Lahore

KUWAIT CITY: Extending its reach further for the upcoming Summer season, Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, has announced the launch of its three weekly flights into Lahore starting June 26, 2018.

"We are pleased to be offering a new service to connect the Pakistani communities here in Kuwait and other GCC countries to Lahore. This is our first destination into Pakistan and the service will facilitate direct connections

for the 150,000 Pakistanis living in Kuwait with their friends and relatives," said Rohit Ramchandran, CEO Jazeera Airways.

Flights will run three weekly flights with departures from Kuwait scheduled on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays at 18.35pm from Kuwait, arriving at 00.10am in Lahore with return flights on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays at 01.00am arriving 02.55am back in Kuwait. One way fares start from KD45 and return from KD84. Hailed as the commercial capital of



Pakistan, Lahore is the country's second largest economic hub with the largest IT Park and historic cultural center backed by a vibrant lifestyle. Lahore is home to several landmarks of architectural importance such as Grand Jamia, Wazir Khan and Badshahi mosques, Gurudwara Dera Sahib

Fort and Shalamar gardens to name a few. To book the flights to Lahore or learn more about Jazeera Airways services, offers, promotions and destinations, customers can visit the airline's website at jazeeraairways.com, use the Jazeera app, or contact their travel agent.

Panasonic's hair dryer promises professional results at home

KUWAIT: Panasonic has announced the launch in Kuwait of the latest addition to its beauty range, the EH-NE83 Ionity Hair Dryer. Equipped with high-power 2500W motor, EH-NE83 delivers strong airflow packed with ions that dries hair faster without heat damage, thus allowing the user to get professional salon like results at home! The EH-NE83, with an intelligently designed narrow concentrator nozzle, guarantees professional salon finish. Narrow nozzles work wonders when drying fringes and curly hair, at the same time, it produces rapid airflow resulting in a more polished finish.

Using Panasonic's smart hair drying technologies, EH-NE83 features ion conditioning properties that ensure the health of the hair,

while keeping it smooth and shiny. Ions are discharged from the hair dryer's specially-designed External Ion Outlet. Since the outlet is outside the hot air nozzle, the ions do not dry out - instead they retain more moisture and deliver it to your hair, keeping your tresses frizz-free. Moreover, EH-NE83's Heat Protection Mode ensures airflow is kept at a gentle temperature to protect hair and scalp from heat damage. Ken Kawamoto - General Manager, PMMAF, "Panasonic hair dryers have always been a favorite around the world. As a brand that continuously evolve to deliver the best-in-class products and solutions, Panasonic introduces the EH-NE83 Ionity Hair Dryer to help our Kuwaiti customers dry and style their hair to perfection without



wasting precious time. Thanks to its high-wattage motor, this hair dryer delivers more air pressure, so it's a must-have beauty gadget especially for those with a busy lifestyle."

The EH-NE83 also features a well-balanced, ergonomic design with smooth sliding switch that reduces stress on fingers and fingernails as it lets you adjust air volume with just a light touch. The angle of the hair dryer's handles is designed for ease of use as well, especially when users point the dryers towards them.

Featuring three temperature and

two speed settings, the EH-NE83 allows you to choose the right temperature to match the condition of your hair and your styling needs. To keep style intact, the hair dryer also has a Cool-Shot button, while the narrow concentrator nozzle also makes it easy to blow out your hair with a brush. Finally, keeping your beauty gadget clean is a breeze with a double-filter out of which one is removable and that prevents dust build-up. The EH-NE83 Ionity Hair Dryer is now available in Kuwait at all Best Al-Yousifi Electronics Showrooms as well as all authorized distributors.

Technology

Webcam slavery: Filipino families are turned into child traffickers with tech

A rising number of ever-younger victims

MANILA: It was the half-naked girls running from room to room upon her arrival that made Filipina teenager Ruby fear the cyber cafe job she had been offered online might in fact be a sinister scam. Ruby's doubts turned to despair when her new employers - a husband and wife - dragged her in front of a computer and webcam and explained that her work would entail stripping and performing sex acts for paying customers across the globe.

"It was like a bomb exploded," Ruby, now 21, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an empty church in Tagaytay city in the Philippines. "I had seen cybersex dens in TV shows and movies, but I didn't know that they existed in real life." "I had been totally fooled," Ruby added. "I was forced to do things you could not imagine a 16-year-old having to endure."

Ruby is not a rare case but one of a rising number of ever-younger victims of cybersex trafficking - a form of modern-day slavery where children are abused and raped over livestreams. The Philippines is seen by rights groups as the epi-centre of the growing trade, which they say has been fuelled by access to cheap internet and technology, the high level of English, well-established money wiring services and rampant poverty.

The Southeast Asian nation receives at least 3,000 reports per month from other countries of possible cases of its children being sexually exploited online - a number which has tripled in the last three years - according to its justice department. Yet the crime is difficult to police as most victims are exploited by their own relatives in a country with very high levels of sex abuse within families and a culture of silence in communities that stops people speaking out, campaigners say.

And Filipino abusers and paying clients, from Australia to Canada to Germany, are outfoxing law enforcement by mixing up payment methods, turning to cryptocurrencies, and broadcasting over encrypted livestreams which cannot be traced by police.

The crime is not only growing in the Philippines, but across the region, from Cambodia to Vietnam, as the standard of English and access to technology and internet improves, activists said. "This is a global trend - but very evident in Southeast Asia," said Damian Kean, a spokesman for End Child Prostitution and Trafficking

(ECPAT) International, a network of charities. "We are seeing online sexual exploitation of children expand across the region."

Touching to torture

Victims in the Philippines are getting younger as poverty drives families to abuse their children in exchange for money from clients around the world, said Lotta Sylwander, country director for the United Nations children's agency (UNICEF). Abusers can earn up to \$100 per show in a country where about a fifth of its 100 million people live in poverty - earning less than \$2,000 a year - government figures show.

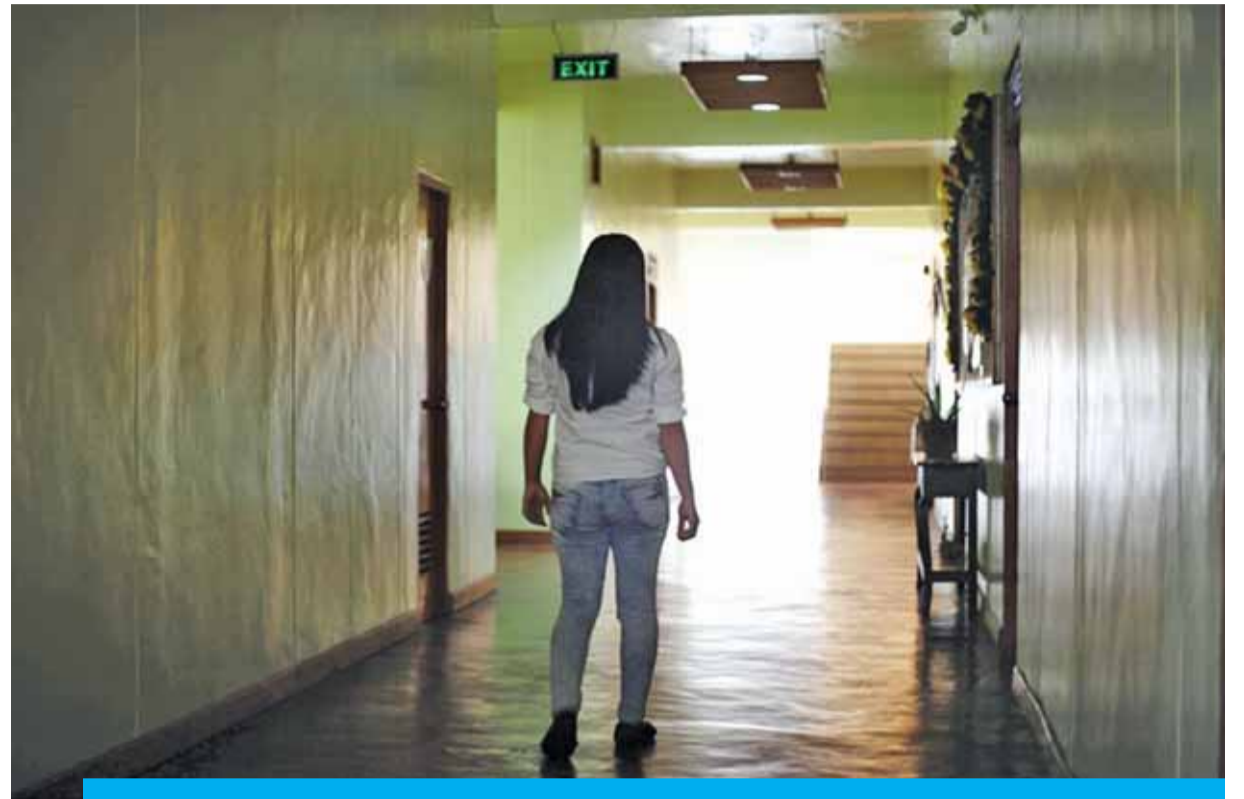
"Exploitation begins online ... but often leads into offline physical sex exploitation (and) trafficking," Sylwander said. The biggest obstacle to tackling the crime at its source is a widespread belief within communities that making children appear naked on webcam is a

victimless act, rights groups say. "Some families say: 'We don't touch, we just show,'" said Sam Inocencio, national director for the International Justice Mission (IJM), an anti-slavery charity. "But we have seen some awful cases where children have been tortured over webcam."

Driving through the narrow, winding streets of a crowded slum in Manila, local police investigators pointed to rows of ramshackle homes crowned with gleaming white satellite dishes. At least 40 percent of the Filipino population had access to the internet as of 2015, up from a quarter in 2010, and about 5 percent in 2005, according to World Bank data.

Activists are trying to challenge community-wide complicity in the crime by encouraging local council and church leaders, neighbourhood watch groups and social workers to report abuses. Yet contradictions between various laws, few convictions for cybersex trafficking, and the fact the age of sexual consent is 12 have all fuelled long-entrenched impunity, campaigners warn.

"People are not aware of the severity of the crime ... they need to know the laws and their punishments," said Genesis Jeff Lamigo, a spokesman for global children's charity World Vision. No data exists on the number of child victims of cybersex trafficking, but at least 400,000 people in the Philippines - or one in 250 - are estimated to be trapped in modern slavery, found the



TAGATAY: Ruby, a survivor of slavery who did not want to be identified, walks down a corridor in a church. — Reuters

2016 Global Slavery Index by the Walk Free Foundation.

Tracking tech trends

The plethora of social media sites, messaging and video call apps and online payment services make it easy for Filipinos to connect with global buyers and stream sex abuse undetected. "The facilitators are following trends in technology," said William Macavinta, a police chief superintendent in Manila. "This makes tracking them more difficult - it is a challenge to gather digital evidence," he added, explaining how anti-money laundering and cyber-crime officials help police to chase leads.

Web and online money companies must do more to spot abusers, yet criminals can easily jump between platforms, said a US investigator who tackles cybersex trafficking in the country. Joint operations with nations such as Britain, the United States and Norway could swing the tide

as clients realize they can be punished at home, added the investigator, who did not disclose his name as he was not authorized to discuss his work.

Senator Loren Legarda urged tougher global action from such countries to lower the demand by raising their penalties. "Developed countries, from which the demand for online sex exploitation usually originates, must do their part," she said. But with cybersex abusers and customers playing a game of cat-and-mouse with law enforcement, Ruby fears that countless other girls will have to endure the same abuse as she did.

While Ruby has been able to rebuild her life with the help of the IJM - she is studying English with hopes of becoming a lawyer - as she escaped slavery after two months, she wept as she recalled the suffering of other girls trapped in the trade. "They didn't feel any shame ... they didn't value themselves," she said. "Those girls were in a place where they really had no hope." — Reuters

Snapchat aims to spread its reach to other apps

SAN FRANCISCO: Snapchat messaging service set out to spread its reach, and panache, to other smartphone apps with a software kit that promised to share little data about users. Parent company Snap said people will be able to use Snapchat credentials to sign into apps the way they might do using Facebook or Google credentials, while strictly limiting access to personal data or activity tracking.

The software kit will also allow free Snapchat features such as filters, stories or "Bitmojis" to appear in other applications, according to the California-based firm. The kit, aimed at making Snapchat more ubiquitous in the world of smartphone apps, was built with privacy as a priority, Snap vice president of product Jacob Andreou told AFP. "We did not want to lower privacy expectations," Andreou said.

The move comes as Facebook deals with after-shocks of a data privacy scandal that rocked the leading online social network. Facebook admitted that up to 87 million users may have had their data hijacked by British consultancy firm Cambridge Analytica. The firm, which was working for US President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign, has since declared bankruptcy.

Snap committed to making the kit well before the scandal involving Cambridge Analytica getting data

about users from a psychological research app. Facebook has since been hammered with criticism for not guarding more carefully user data collected by apps synched to the social network.

'Snapping' lessons

Snapchat sign-ins to other apps will use nicknames and "Bitmoji" avatars instead of personal data from profiles, according to the company. Snap also vowed to carefully scrutinize what applications do with the new software tools. Snap deputy general counsel Katherine Tassi said that the service learned from an incident nearly four years ago when a huge trove of evidently intercepted Snapchat images and videos were exposed online.

In what was referred to in late 2014 as "The Snapping," people who used a third-party program instead of the official Snapchat application had copies of supposedly transient missives squirreled away by hackers who then posted them online. Snap wanted to "make sure that we build security and privacy into the design" when creating the kit for outside developers, according to Tassi.

Snap has been modifying the app, sometimes to the chagrin of users, in the name of broadening the appeal of the youth-oriented service. "We are now focused on optimizing the redesign based on our ongoing experimentation and learning," Snap co-founder and chief executive Evan Spiegel said last month during an earnings call with analysts. Users had complained about an abrupt overhaul of the service late last year. Snapchat rocketed to popularity, especially among teens, after the initial app was released in September 2011. Created by then Stanford University students, the app allows the sending of messages that disappear shortly after being viewed. — AFP



NEW YORK: A guest takes a photo with the Pandora exclusive Snapchat filter during Pandora Up Close With Dierks Bentley Sponsored By Southwest. — AFP

Bitcoin could bring internet to a halt: BIS

ZURICH: The Bank for International Settlements in a report warned digital currencies like bitcoin could overwhelm and break the internet if they continue to grow.

The BIS, often described as the central bank for central banks, also warned, in a 24-page report published on its website on Sunday, that cryptocurrencies cannot be trusted the way sovereign currencies can. Unlike central bank-issued denominations, virtual currencies are produced, or "mined," by banks of computers solving complex algorithms, and then freely traded online.

The other key difference with typical currencies is that the number of bitcoin in existence can never exceed 21 million. There are currently some 17 million bitcoins in circulation. Bitcoin's surge in value from a few cents to a peak in December 2017 of \$19,500 turned some of its first investors into billionaires.

In a theoretical scenario where a country's entire population turned to a digital currency like bitcoin, "the size of the ledger would swell well beyond the storage capacity of a typical smartphone in a matter of days, beyond that of a typical personal computer in a matter of weeks and beyond

that of servers in a matter of months," the BIS said.

'Fragile foundation of trust'

"But the issue goes well beyond storage capacity, and extends to processing capacity: only supercomputers could keep up with verification of the incoming transactions," it said. "The associated communication volumes could bring the internet to a halt."

The BIS, which has previously warned of the fraud risk in cryptocurrencies, noted that there was "a fragile foundation of trust" in such systems. "In mainstream payment systems, once an individual payment makes its way through the national payment system and ultimately through the central bank books, it cannot be revoked.

In contrast, permissionless cryptocurrencies cannot guarantee the finality of individual payment," the report said. Furthermore, the BIS pointed to the "unstable value" of currencies such as bitcoin.

"This arises from the absence of a central issuer with a mandate to guarantee the currency's stability," it said. More broadly, the BIS raised long-standing regulatory concerns over the use of cryptocurrencies, particularly with regards to money-laundering and financing of terrorism.

The report pointed to the case of the Silk Road underground marketplace for drugs and other contraband, which was shut down by the FBI in 2013, and which had used virtual currencies like bitcoin to shield customers from detection. — AFP

Twitter lights up for rival '#WordCup'

YEKATERINBURG: While millions of people are tuning in to watch the World Cup and commenting about it online, thousands more on Twitter are talking about what appears to be a similar but equally riveting event, the #WordCup. "In #Paris, where cafe seating famously faces the street for optimal people-watching, chairs are turned inward today to catch a glimpse of France in the #WordCup!" exclaimed one Twitter user.

Another, possibly a little the worse for wear, wrote: "The only #WordCup I care to see is when my cup is running over with whiskey." Even one prominent American news organisation got in on the act: "Panama made the #WordCup for the first time then drew Belgium for its opening match." There were more than 2,000 tweets about "#WordCup2018" yesterday, before the day's three matches had even begun, with dozens more coming in by the hour.

Twitter users were of course talking about the football World Cup in Russia, but had misspelt the word. It has echoes of the Winter Olympics in South Korea earlier this year. They took place in Pyeongchang, but thousands of people on Twitter wrote about Pyongyang-capital of North Korea. Following the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, Twitter said there were 672 million tweets sent related to the 2014 #WorldCup, making it what the social media network called at the time "the highest number we've announced related to an event". — AFP

Hawking's voice beamed into space during burial

LONDON: A message from late British astrophysics giant Stephen Hawking was beamed towards the nearest black hole on Friday as his remains were laid to rest in London's Westminster Abbey. With celebrities and science enthusiasts from around the world in attendance, the ashes of the theoretical physicist were interred by the graves of fellow science greats Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin.

A specially-written musical piece by Greek composer Vangelis featuring Hawking's famous synthesized voice was beamed into space by radio waves from a European Space Agency satellite dish in Spain. The ESA said the six-minute message, drawn from a speech Hawking gave about preserving the planet, was being transmitted towards the black hole 1A 0620-00, which was discovered in 1975 and is located 3,500 light years from Earth.

"This is a beautiful and symbolic gesture that creates a link between our father's presence on this planet, his wish to go into space and his explorations of the universe in his mind," said his daughter Lucy Hawking. "It is a message of peace and hope, about unity and the need for us to live together in harmony on this planet," she said.

Most famous equation

Hawking, who was wheelchair bound due to motor neurone disease, dedicated his life's work to unravelling the mysteries of the universe and fought to overcome his disability. Although Hawking was an avowed atheist, Friday's service was nonetheless held at London's giant Westminster Abbey to accommodate large numbers of family, friends and colleagues.

The memorial stone on top of Hawking's grave included his most famous equation describing the entropy of a black hole. "Here Lies What Was Mortal Of Stephen Hawking," read the inscription on the stone, which included an image of a black hole. Hawking, who captured the imagination of millions around the world, died on March 14 at the age of 76.

Propelled to stardom by his 1988 book "A Brief History of Time", an unlikely worldwide bestseller, Hawking's genius and wit won over fans from far beyond the rarefied world of astrophysics. His death triggered a flood of tributes from Queen Elizabeth II to NASA, reflecting his impact as a scientist but also a beacon of hope for people affected by motor neurone disease. It celebrated not only his achievements as a scientist, but also his character and endurance living with a devastating illness. "We are so grateful to Westminster Abbey for offering us the privilege of a service of thanksgiving for the extraordinary life of our father and for giving him such a distinguished final resting place," said his children Lucy, Robert and Tim.

Around 1,000 members of the public drawn from more than 100 countries attended the service, following an online ballot in which 25,000 applied for tickets. Applicants needed to give their birth date-but eagle-eyed fans spotted that it could be any day up to December 31, 2038, opening the door to time-travelling guests from the future. — AFP



LONDON: Flowers are placed alongside the ashes of British scientist Stephen Hawking at the site of interment in the nave of the Abbey church, during a memorial service at Westminster Abbey. — AFP

Health

New York puts its rats on ice

'You always hear that rats are winning the battle. But this turns it around'

NEW YORK: A snout and two little black eyes pop out from the hole, too late: A foot already covers them and the hole will be quickly filled with dry ice. This new weapon in the hands of New York's sanitation service spells certain death for the rat. Rick Simeone's team is at work in Sara D Roosevelt Park on the Lower East Side, one of Manhattan's oldest districts. The day before, they spent more than three hours locating all the entrances to the burrows, 67 in all. That means there could be more than 250 "rattus norvegicus," the scientific name for common brown rats, living there.

Burrow by burrow, the team drops into each hole several small pellets resembling ice cubes but which are actually dry ice, carbon dioxide in solid form. The surrounding air temperature ensures that the carbon dioxide reverts to gaseous form and asphyxiates the rats, which are usually asleep at this time of the day. Normally, 90 to 100 percent of the rodents are exterminated. "It's a method that's very effective in mostly green spaces, parks," says Simeone, director of pest control for the New York City Health Department. "You always hear that rats are winning the battle. But this turns it around."

Rats have made their home in New York since the middle of the 18th Century and are responsible for the transmission of numerous diseases. A 2014 study published by a PhD candidate at Columbia University estimated about two million rats in the US financial capital, which has a human population of more than 8.5 million. The rats are most often seen scurrying in the street or in the subway. A celebrated video posted on YouTube in 2015 showed a rat dragging a slice of pizza on the subway stairs. They live an average of only six or seven months in the port city, but a female can give birth to as many as 100 baby rats each year.

Shutting the pantry door

In 2012, John Stellberger became the first to use dry ice against rats in the United States, based on an idea from one of his employees. The head of EHS Pest Control company, Stellberger recalls that he spoke of the idea with sanitation officials in Boston, who conducted a brief trial in 2016. That pilot was suspended after several months pending

an approval by the US Environmental Protection Agency, which came in June 2017.

At the beginning of this year after several months of tests, New York officially adopted the dry ice technique, joining Boston, Chicago and Washington. Dry ice is only used in open spaces including parks and green areas. Simeone explained, because it would be too complicated to identify rat tunnels in the streets or residential areas where concrete is everywhere. Aside from its effectiveness, dry ice presents no risk to wildlife in parks and public gardens, unlike rodenticide which had previously been the only weapon deployed against rats. The newer method, which costs about the same as poison, corresponds to the times, Stellberger explains. Many of his customers ask him to get rid of rats without cruelty.

Simeone says the rodents "sort of go to sleep" as they asphyxiate. But dry ice alone will not resolve New York's rat problem, warns Simeone, as well as Robert Corrigan, the president of RMC Pest Management Consulting who is sometimes called the "Rat Czar" for his expertise in ridding the world of rodents. In July, New York Mayor Bill de Blasio presented a major \$32 million plan targeting rats and focused on the three most infested districts of the city. The plan did not put dry ice in the forefront but rather the rats' access to food, which is the heart of the problem. Each pest needs about 80 grams (2.5 ounces) of food a day to survive.

Intelligent garbage cans, closed containers, greater frequency of garbage collection, and collaboration among different city services—the program aims to put an end to the permanent pantry which New York streets have become for rats. Corrigan, who worked with the Department of Health for 12 years, is pleased that authorities have finally chosen to tackle the question from a scientific rather than an empirical way. "When I see a lot of rats on a block, instead of asking where should I put my poison, I ask: 'Who's feeding these rats?'," Corrigan said to illustrate this change in philosophy. As Simeone says, "eliminate the garbage" and you no longer need poison. —AFP



NEW YORK: Rick Simeone, director of pest control for New York City's health department, poses for photos in Sara D. Roosevelt Park, in China Town in New York. —AFP

Scientist launches hunt for Loch Ness 'monster DNA'

INVERNESS, United Kingdom: Tales of a giant creature lurking beneath the murky waves of Loch Ness have been around for more than 1,500 years—and one academic hopes the marvels of modern science can finally unravel the mystery. Neil Gemmill has travelled from the University of Otago in New Zealand to collect water samples in the Scottish lake, in the hope of finding out more about the creatures that inhabit its depths. "Over 1,000 people claim that they have seen a monster. Maybe there is something extraordinary out there," he told AFP, as he dropped a five-litre probe into the loch.

Gemmill said he would be keeping an eye out for "monster DNA" but the project was more aimed at testing envi-

ronmental DNA techniques to understand the natural world. Local resident Adrian Shine said Gemmill's findings could contribute to his own long running research program—The Loch Ness Project. The venture was itself inspired by the efforts of earlier international explorers like American Dan Scott Taylor who patrolled the loch in his Beatles-inspired Yellow Submarine in the late 1960s. "I'm sure that some species will be found which have probably not been described. They're more likely than anything else to be bacteria," Shine told AFP. "If you did find something else—and I do emphasize the if—then you would actually get quite a good handle on what sort of creature, what class of animal, it is."

Theories about about the true nature of the Loch Ness Monster, from a malevolent, shape-shifting "water horse", to an aquatic survivor of the dinosaur age, right down to logs, fish, wading birds or simply waves which have been blown out of all proportion. "Anything that you see on the loch that you don't understand can be your Loch Ness Monster on that day," Shine said. The earliest chronicles of a creature in Loch Ness are attributed to Saint Columba, who brought Christianity to Scotland in the sixth century. —AFP

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What's On

KFH participated in Girgian event for Down syndrome society

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the confectionary (girgian) celebration for Down syndrome. 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 patients and their parents, who believe that such activities organized by a prestigious institution, play a role in strengthening the society ties, while allowing the disabled to intermingle with the society around them.

KFH team distributed confectionary (girgian) to the disabled which contributed to put a smile on their faces. 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.



Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in a girgian event held for diabetic children at the Dasman Diabetes Institute, as part of its Ramadan program.

KIB distributes Eid clothing amongst needy families

As part of its diverse social responsibility efforts, the Public Relations team at Kuwait International Bank (KIB), as well as a number of staff volunteers, visited a group of families at their homes and presented them with Eid clothing. The initiative aimed at spreading the joy and happiness of Eid Al-Fitr, as the bank recognizes the importance of these events for both children and adults.

On this occasion, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "This initiative was part of our comprehensive Ramadan program, aiming at promoting a sense of social unity through organizing charitable initiatives and supporting those who are in need. This year's initiatives were launched in line with KIB's new



strategic direction under the slogan 'Bank for Life', as well as its role towards the community as a partner in every aspect of their lives."

Najia pointed out that the initiative had a good impact on families and especially children, whose appreciation of the initiative can be seen through their smiles: their happiness and joy of Eid were just like any other child.

As a leading financial institution, KIB is fully aware that its duty towards the community is not limited to only providing excellent banking products and services that cater to the various needs of customers, but also its participation in a diverse number of social causes, as well as joyous occasions that impact all segments of society.



The Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity hosted its first camp during this past holy month of Ramadan, which featured several scientific and technological courses for students.

AUB wins prestigious HSE excellence award

Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced that it has won the coveted Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) 2018 award from the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) - Kuwait Chapter. The latest accolade recognizes the bank's overall efforts and commitment to employee safety, as well as its dedication towards health and the environment.

In 2016, AUB became the first bank in Kuwait to receive this international recognition and has become the first bank in Kuwait to receive this internationally recognized award, an achievement which reaffirms its leading role, as well as its strategic approach towards social responsibility Anil Lobo, Security Manager at

Ahli United Bank received the award on behalf of the bank, during a recent ceremony that was held to recognize the winners of the award in different industry sectors. Representatives of the ASSE, as well as other companies, were present during the awards ceremony.

Jehad Al-Humaidhi, Senior General Manager IT and Operations said, "The award comes at an important time for AUB as we have launched several initiatives that aim at minimizing dangers in the workplace whilst raising more awareness amongst staff on health and safety measures."

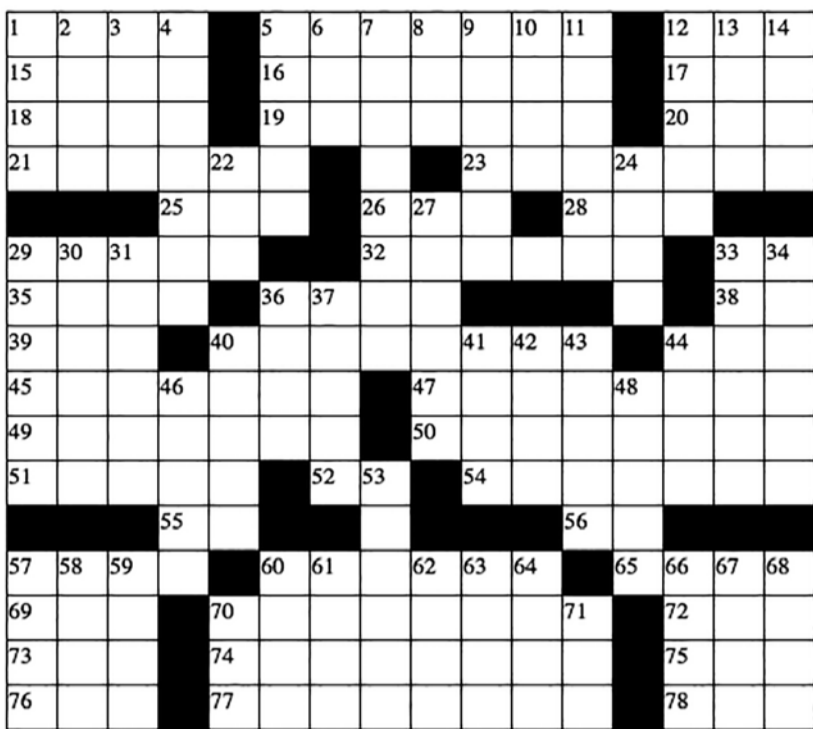
"Our latest recognition will help transform the bank to international HSE standards and is endorsed by one of the most prominent American firms operating in that industry. We will continue implementing the bank's strategy and adhere to the highest standards in employee safety and overall health, as they are the cornerstone and most important asset of the bank," added Humaidhi.



The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) distributed gifts to outdoor cleaning and construction workers during Eid Al-Fitr, as part of its social responsibility activities.

Stars

CROSSWORD 1937



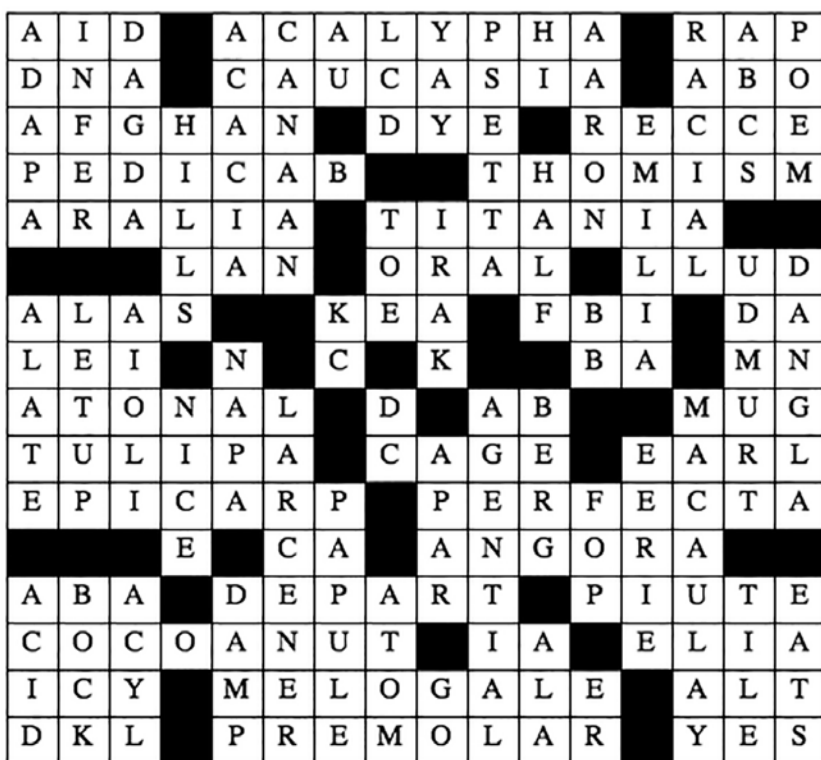
ACROSS

1. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
5. A volcanic island republic in Melanesia.
12. Imperial dynasty that ruled China (most of the time) from 206 BC to 221 and expanded its boundaries and developed its bureaucracy.
15. (Old Testament) The eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac.
16. Act in a way that attracts attention.
17. A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
18. A book of the New Testament.
19. A person who owns or operates a ranch.
20. Noisy talk.
21. An unproved statement put forward as a premise in an argument.
23. Beautiful daughter of Minos and Pasiphae.
25. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.
26. Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.
28. Estrangement from god.
29. Tent that is an Eskimo summer dwelling.
32. Having open interstices or resembling a web.
35. Relatively small fast-moving sloth.
38. A Mid-Atlantic state.
39. (of roads) Made of logs laid down crosswise.
45. Morning glory.
47. A member of the people inhabiting the Aleutian Islands and western Alaska.
49. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
50. A skullcap worn by religious Jews (especially at prayer).
51. Squash bugs.
52. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
54. I species.
55. A metric unit of volume equal to one tenth of a liter.
56. A Loloish language.
57. A city in east central Texas.
65. Type genus of the Alciidae comprising solely the razorbill.
69. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
72. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
73. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
74. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
75. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
76. Concerning those not members of the clergy.
77. A small tessera.
78. A young woman making her debut into society.

DOWN

1. A form of energy that is transferred by a difference in temperature.
2. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
3. The specified day of the month.
4. French botanist who categorized plants into families and developed a system of plant classification (1748-1836).
5. Left-hand page.
6. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
7. Having no intelligible meaning.
8. Greenwich Mean Time updated with leap seconds.
9. A Buddhist who has attained nirvana.
10. A relative position or degree of value in a graded group.
11. Come into existence.
12. Austrian composer who influenced the classical form of the symphony (1732-1809).
13. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
14. The warhead of a missile designed to deliver an atom bomb.
22. A kind of person.
24. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
27. Something (especially a game) that is played again.
30. Not open.
31. An Asian temple.
33. Marked by deception.
34. A genus of fungi belonging to the family Sarcoscyphaceae.
36. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
37. Jordan's port.
40. Relating to or applicable to or concerned with the administration of a city or town or district rather than a larger area.
41. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
42. Roman Emperor notorious for his monstrous vice and fantastic luxury (was said to have started a fire that destroyed much of Rome in 64) but the Empire remained prosperous during his rule (37-68).
43. Having the appearance of being real but lacking capacity to function.
44. A digestive juice secreted by the liver and stored in the gallbladder.
46. Do wrongly or improperly.
48. A narrow headband or strip of ribbon worn as a headband.
53. A flag that shows its nationality.
58. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
59. Showing self-interest and shrewdness in dealing with others.
60. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
61. A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
62. On or toward the lee.
63. Cause a floating log to rotate by treading.
64. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
66. Set down according to a plan.
67. (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.
68. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
70. Standard time in the 6th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 90th meridian.
71. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today is a great day to just go with the flow. Go ahead and take advantage of opportunities that present themselves to you. Don't be surprised if taking a chance brings great reward. You may feel extra close to a loved one today. Aries, this may be the day you learn to truly learn to love and appreciate yourself for who you have become and where you are in life. You have been feeling a that need to be needed and appreciated and today may just be the day you receive that reward you have been longing for.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today is a day that things would be much easier if you could just see the future. You yearn to know what tomorrow will bring and the uncertainty has you on edge. You may feel you are facing opposition from one of your elders. It may be time to regroup and reorganize not only your emotions but also your surroundings. The answers you seek may be found from merely taking a step back and taking a different approach. Surround yourself with friends and let your hair down. This may be just the distraction you need to wake up to a new day and see things in a much clearer light. Taurus, take some time for yourself and go have some fun.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are very passionate concerning your business at this time. You may find the need to get down to the nitty gritty when it comes to business. Reduce the clutter and organize all that is around you. You have no room for distraction. You have a goal and you will let nothing stand in the way of you accomplishing this. You may find yourself in a situation today where your ability to sympathize and your willingness to help others may play a strong role in the life of someone who looks up to you. You are admired by this person and happen to be in the right place at the right time to make a difference in their life. Gemini, others will always be drawn to you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You are focused and forceful today. You may feel as if you hit the door running. You may feel the need to have everyone and everything around you organized, and you are ready to conquer all life forms today. You have a "hit me with your best shot" attitude. You are determined to get to the root of who you are today and what makes you tick. Answers to the why's and what ifs are running through your mind and catching your attention. A better understanding of these questions will help you with future decisions and help you achieve your goals. You are determined you will beat the odds. You are a winner and you may well be on your way to having all in your world just the way you want it. Cancer, you are a force to be reckoned with today.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may find your analytical side rearing its head today. You are driven and determined to take care of business. You feel there is a place for everything and everything has a place. The least amount of clutter seems to lead to frustration and blocks your progress. You are determining to organize all in your life and surroundings. This may include your thoughts as well as your belongings. You are extremely focused on your work and your health at this time. This may be a good time to start planning your workouts, begin meal planning, or invest in that gym membership.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A new start with an old situation brings the opportunity to win. Your unique way of looking produces an answer to a sensitive situation. You're able to speak to several people in such a way that makes a positive difference. You are publicly acknowledged for your success. Sticking to your plan gets you where you need to be. You are comfortable with your surroundings. Being independent puts you in a better position to cause change among others who admire you. Virgo, enjoy the sense of accomplishment you are feeling. You have done well!



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You have a goal and you are well on your way to accomplish this. You will nothing stand in your way nor dull your shine when it comes to being exactly where you want to be in life. You are beginning to put more emphasis on fitness. A gym membership, meal planning, or simply making a time for a daily walk seem to be among plans you are making. Take the stairs, skip dessert, or take the long way home. Remember the least of these can result in visible results. Baby steps are what it is all about at this time in your life. This includes, health, wealth and relationships. You are on your way towards a new you.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may very well have tunnel vision and a great sense of determination as you are extremely focused on your goals right now. You may feel you have no place for clutter or trivial matters today. You feel very driven and determined to let nothing or no one stand in your way. You may feel very analytical today and others may look to you for your advice. You may be admired for drive and focus. Scorpio. This will be a very productive and satisfying day for you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You are focused and determined. This may find you have developed a very serious attitude about work. You find the need to be organized and detailed. Everything has a place and there is place for everything. You feel this way about the people in your life also. You will not settle for anything less than perfection. There is no place in your world for anyone or anything that does not conform to your way of doing things. You have a strong desire for control and will not stop until you have it over all aspects of your life.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may feel a desire to organize your world today. Sometimes decluttering doesn't always refer to material things or just your belongings. You believe everything has a place and there is a place for everything. This includes the people in your life also. You may find someone, or something is working your last nerve. Today is a great day to leave it behind. You are at your best when the trivial and meaningless clutter is eliminated from your world. The need to de-clutter your world may find you not as social as normal.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You feel a strong need to draw near to loved ones during the cycle you've entered. You desire to be recognized and thanked for all that you bring to relationships. Today's a good time to take a reasonable risk with something involving finances. You welcome a new challenge with open arms and willing spirit. You rediscover something lovely you'd long forgotten. Go inward for a close look at your actions and deeds; have you done those things you committed to take stock of the growth you've had and where it's taken you; you could realize that this also affects those around you. The vibrations of love and unity are present now when you need them. Your sensitivity to the universe helps you spread the positive outcomes you so crave.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

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

Wordsearch Puzzle

Radiohead Songs

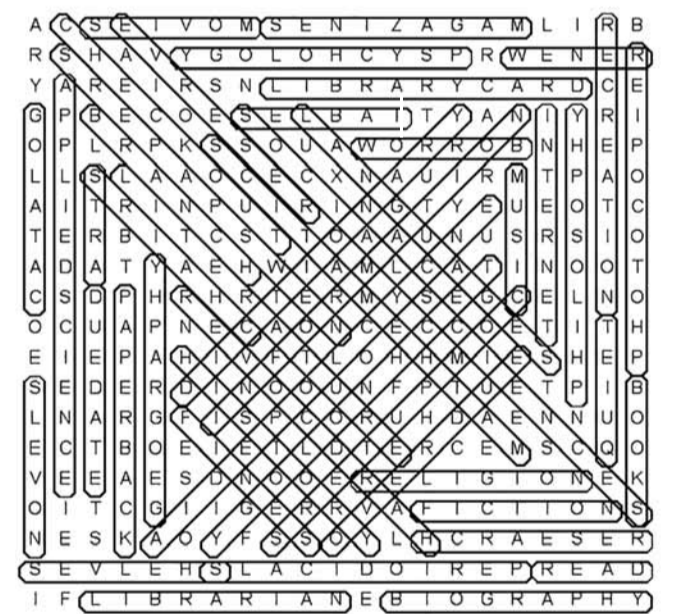
Find and circle all of the Radiohead songs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional song by Radiohead.



- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| AIRBAG | HIGH AND DRY | MORNING BELL | PYRAMID SONG |
| ALL I NEED | HUNTING BEARS | MY IRON LUNG | RECKONER |
| BLACK STAR | IN LIMBO | NICE DREAM | RIPCORD |
| BLOW OUT | JUST | NO SURPRISES | SULK |
| BODYSNATCHERS | KARMA POLICE | NUDE | THE BENDS |
| BONES | KID A | OPTIMISTIC | THE TOURIST |
| CREEP | KNIVES OUT | PARANOID ANDROID | TREEFINGERS |
| ELECTIONEERING | LET DOWN | PLANET TEXEL | VEGETABLE |
| FAUST ARP | LUCKY | PROVE YOURSELF | VIDEOTAPE |
| FITTER HAPPIER | LURGEE | | |

Friday's Solution

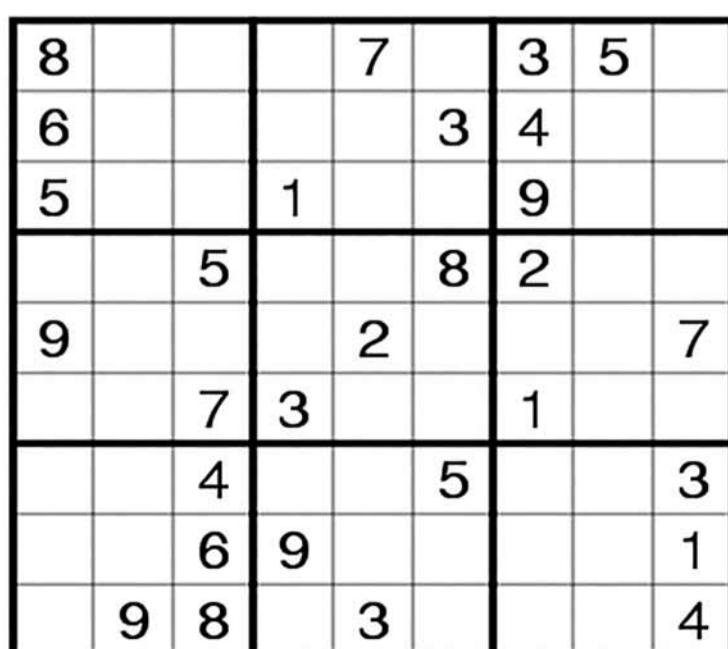
Public Library



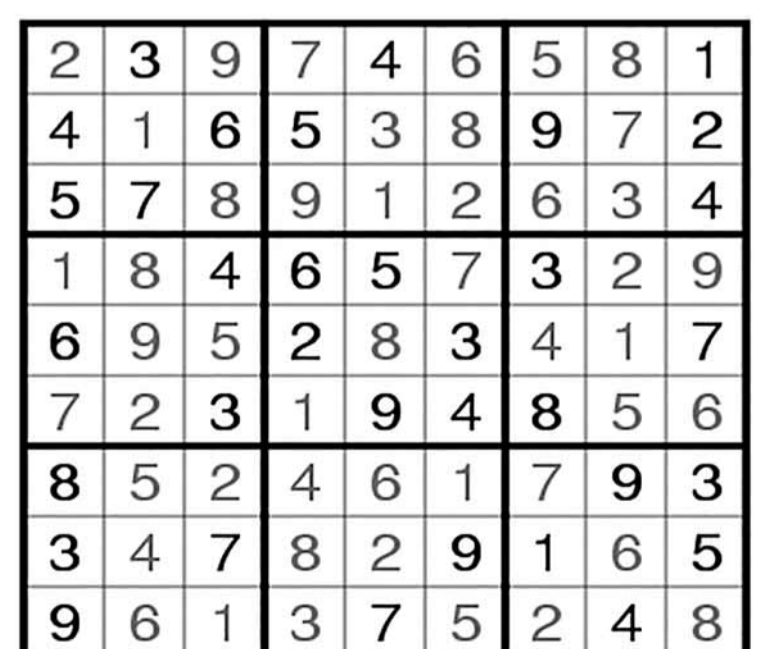
- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| APPLIED SCIENCE | ENCYCLOPEDIA | MAGAZINES | QUIET |
| ARTS | FICTION | MATHEMATICS | READ |
| BIOGRAPHY | FINES | MOVIES | RECREATION |
| BOOKS | GEOGRAPHY | MUSIC | RELIGION |
| BORROW | HARDCOVER | NEWSPAPERS | RENEW |
| BRANCH | HISTORY | NOVELS | RESEARCH |
| CATALOG | INFORMATION | OVERDUE | RESERVE |
| CHAIRS | INTERNET | PAPERBACK | SHELVES |
| CHECKOUT | LANGUAGES | PERIODICALS | SOCIAL SCIENCES |
| COMPUTERS | LIBRARIAN | PHILOSOPHY | TABLES |
| COMPUTERS | LIBRARY CARD | PHOTOCOPIER | TECHNOLOGY |
| DICTIONARY | LITERATURE | PSYCHOLOGY | |
| DUE DATE | | | |

The hidden message is: A LIBRARY IS NOT A LUXURY BUT ONE OF THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JUNE 19, 2018



This photo shows divers taking part in an underwater soccer demonstration at the Haichang Whale Shark Ocean Park in Yantai, to mark the Football World Cup, in China's eastern Shandong province. — AFP

Saudi TV drama extolling 'modern past' draws awe and ire

A Saudi television drama that glorifies a period before the rise of religious fundamentalism has evoked nostalgia about the kingdom's "modern past"—and fury from arch-conservatives sidelined in a much-publicized liberalization drive.

"Al-Assouf", set in the 1970s and aired on satellite broadcaster MBC during the holy fasting month of Ramadan, has emerged as a cultural flashpoint that has pitted hardliners against more moderate proponents of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's reforms. It portrays a different Saudi Arabia—a traditional but tolerant society where the sexes mingle unfettered,

wedlock... is a disaster," prominent cleric Abdulbaset Qari said in a YouTube video. "They (the show) want to spread immorality, to normalize this culture."

One Al-Assouf scene showing a young Saudi boy leaning over a neighborhood boundary wall to talk to a girl was widely criticized on social media. "Young children flirting!" tweeted Abdulrahman Al-Nassar, a Kuwaiti cleric popular in the kingdom. "The ugly distortion of childhood in Saudi Arabia." But moderates, including Al-Assouf's lead actor Nasser Al-Kasabi, have fiercely defended the show. "Extremists are against it because they believe it is an attempt to

decades-long bans on women driving and cinemas and allowed mixed-gender concerts, sidelining hardliners who were once the traditional backers of the royal family. Prominent Salafist cleric with millions of followers on social media have been jailed.

Others who made regular appearances on television have disappeared from the public eye, and some long known for virulently opposing women's rights have mysteriously come out in support of the prince's pro-women reforms. Columnists in Saudi newspapers have openly called for abolishing the kingdom's once-feared religious police, whose powers have been clipped. The modernization drive has been lauded by the prince's supporters as a "second awakening", an idea that Al-Assouf appears to promote. "Our communities are in need of an Al-Assouf that is capable of sending us back to our first life, or in the correct sense, our simple life before we changed for the worse," Ali Al-Zuabi, a professor at Kuwait University, told AFP.



some women blithely pursue lovers and appear unveiled in musical soirees, and the men appear disinterested in controlling what they wear.

That image of Saudi society, dismissed as a distortion by hardliners, chimes with Prince Mohammed's repeated assertion that the kingdom was a cradle of moderate Islam until 1979, a turning point that marked the birth of radicalism. That year saw an Islamic revolution in arch-rival Iran and a militant siege of Mecca's Grand Mosque, which the crown prince has said gave conservatives free rein to enforce an austere vision of Islam. Al-Assouf, which portrays the pre-1979 era—widely hailed as Saudi Arabia's "modern past"—has left conservatives bristling. "To picture a community that accepts the mixing of genders, adultery and children born out of

destroy what they built over the next two decades (since 1979), which they refer to as the 'awakening,'" columnist Abdulrahman Al-Rashed wrote in the pan-Arab daily Asharq Al-Awsat. "They are attacking Al-Assouf because it has cast light on an era that was deliberately made dark. The raison d'être of the extremists is to extinguish this light."

'Second awakening'

The backlash has laid bare what observers call an undercurrent of resentment over the waning influence of arch-conservatives, once a swaggering force with unbridled powers, as Prince Mohammed pursues reforms that mark the biggest cultural shake-up in Saudi Arabia's modern history. The reforms have ended

Mozart manuscript expected to sell for 500,000 euros

The first draft of music Mozart wrote for the last act of his opera "The Marriage of Figaro" is expected to sell for half a million euros (\$578,000) when it goes under the hammer in Paris. The "exceptional" manuscript from 1786 which will be auctioned tomorrow in the French capital comes from the peak of the composer's career in Vienna, the auction house Ader Nordmann said. Called "Scena con Rondo", Mozart wrote the music initially as a recitative to be sung by Figaro's bride, Susanna, before rejecting it for the now legendary aria, "Deh vieni non tardar". These four pages are particularly important because they reveal Mozart at work, struggling to rethink a scene in the final act of the opera," expert Thierry Bodin told AFP.

It will be sold along with another Mozart manuscript, a fragment of a serenade to youth written by young Wolfgang Amadeus when he was

only 17. Probably commissioned by the "chancellor of Salzburg, who was a friend of the Mozart family, to mark the end of his son's studies," according to Bodin, it is expected to make between 120,000 and 150,000 euros. The manuscripts are part of a vast sell-off by the French state of the collection amassed by the collapsed investment firm Aristophil.

It was shut down in scandal three years ago, taking 850 million euros (\$1 billion) of its investors' money with it. The 130,000 manuscripts and historical documents that Aristophil had its investors sink their savings into are now being dispersed in auctions over the next six years run by Ader Nordmann and three other French auction houses, Artcurial, Drouot Estimations and Aguttes. —AFP

'Careful dance'

The flagship MBC show, aired daily during Ramadan, was filmed two years ago in Abu Dhabi. The broadcaster said the delay in airing was caused by production reasons, adding that the top-rated show will have two more seasons. The delay had prompted speculation about trouble with censors in the kingdom, which remains wary of antagonizing religious sensitivities despite the liberalization drive. "Modernizing Saudi Arabia may not be a march so much as a careful dance," Simon Henderson, a Gulf expert, recently wrote for the Washington Institute.

In tandem with reforms, Prince Mohammed has pursued a sweeping crackdown on dissent, most recently arresting several women driving activists, some of whom have been labeled "traitors" by state-backed media. Analysts said the arrests seemed calculated to placate clerics incensed by the modernization drive, allowing the prince to better position himself against a conservative backlash in advance of the end of the women driving ban on June 24. "How can you achieve moderate Islam when you harshly oppress those who spearhead a moderate discourse in the kingdom?" Abdullah Alaoudh, a Saudi scholar at Yale Law School, told AFP. "Moderate Islam without moderate Muslims?" —AFP



Dancers with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater perform a scene from the World Premiere of iENi during a dress rehearsal before opening night at the David H. Koch Theater at Lincoln Center. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features

Spending the summer holiday in Georgia

Batumi, Georgia have the best beaches and nature

From its misty hills to beautiful pebble beaches, Georgia's summer holiday capital is full of hotels and attractions while maintaining its historical charm. The city has it all for those looking for a seaside getaway in an elegant and relaxed atmosphere.

Once you take a stroll on the famous Batumi Boulevard you will see what Batumi is all about: trees, paths, beautiful fountains and cafes and it remains the life and soul of the city. At the tip of the boulevard is a large Ferris wheel and the 145m tall Alphabet Tower, a monument to the Georgian script. For something to eat make sure you visit the Piazza Square, which has a host of boutique hotels, cafes and beautiful architecture which combines the old and new perfectly.

Top Tip
Make sure you take the Cable Car up to Anuria Hill that overlooks Batumi. There are plenty of restaurants and cafes to enjoy while you're taking in the view.
flydubai flights between Dubai and Batumi
Daily flights from 16 June to 30 September.
Flight time
Three hours and forty minutes
Return fares in Economy Class
From 130 KD
Return fares in Business Class
From 436 KD



From Missoni to Dolce & Gabbana, Milan men bask in street wear

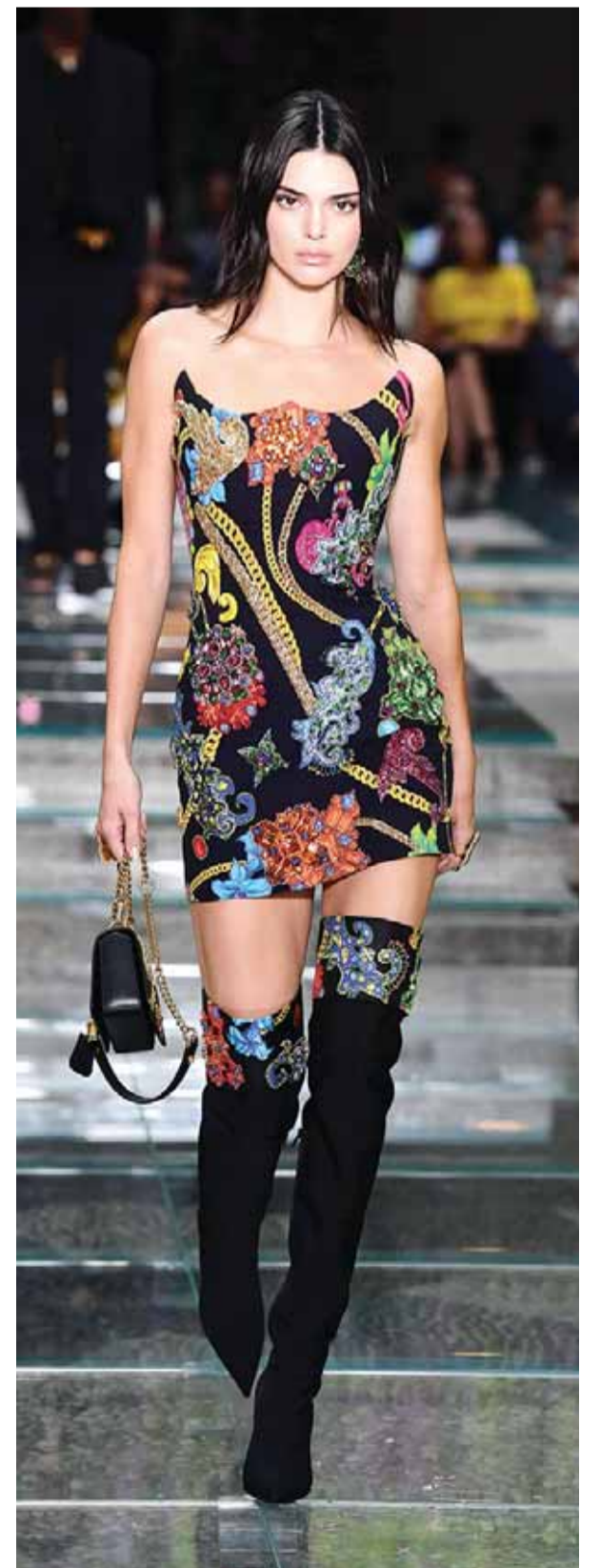
Milan designers continue to cast their eyes toward Millennials with a focus on street wear - but without giving up tailored luxury and technical innovations. Menswear collections for next spring and summer were being shown Saturday during the second day of Milan Fashion Week. The focus is increasingly on elements that can play up into office looks or down into casual street wear, using the same basic building blocks. The approach allows the designers to reach across generations, geographies and income levels. "Street wear is a way of dressing," said Angela Missoni, creative director of the eponymous fashion house founded by her parents.

That is to say: it is not delivered as a finished outfit, but a look that can be created from elements on the runways. In Milan, that includes sporty oversized polos and T-shirts, thick-heeled sneakers and trekking sandals. Here are some highlights from Saturday's previews, including Missoni, Dolce & Gabbana, Versace and Plein Sport.

Versace embraces wide vision of masculinity
Donatella Versace is looking to dress a man whose

masculinity is challenged by neither lace, nor neon florals. The Versace man is ready to work in a double-breasted pinstriped suit but leaves the shirt unbuttoned to show off a Versace T-shirt that reads like Tabloid newsprint. The headline: "Versace finally speaks out." The flash soon followed, with shiny red snakeskin coats over mid-thigh shorts and Versace newsprint tops. Boxy jackets with flat pockets were worn with matching shorts, dressed up with a woman's cross-body bag. Men wore sheer tops over legible T-shirts, lace detailing on military-style knitwear and floral print suits with buttons left open to show off necklaces and belly-button jewelry. Flashes of neon green and orange closed the show, in knit sleeveless tops that show off a man's hours at the gym.

The bright footwear included the Versace Chain Reaction sneaker. "The Versace man is the center of all the attention," Donatella Versace said in notes. The menswear runway was punctuated by corresponding looks for women, including model Bella Hadid in a snug leather mini with form-accentuating ruffle accents and Kendall Jenner in a body-hugging floral mini with thigh-high boots.



Models present creations by Versace during the men & women's spring/summer 2019 collection fashion show in Milan. — AFP photos

Lifestyle | Features



(From left) Italian fashion designer Stefano Gabbana, British model Naomi Campbell, Italian model and actress Monica Bellucci, Italian fashion designer Domenico Dolce and Dutch Marpessa Hennink acknowledge the audience at the end of the Dolce & Gabbana men & women's spring/summer 2019 collection fashion show in Milan.



Dolce&Gabbana contrasts

It was bring on the bling at Dolce&Gabbana, where the designing duo explored the brand's DNA with turns by some of the brand's historic models - Naomi Campbell, Monica Bellucci and Marpessa Hennink - decked out in sleek men's suits. Designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana created menswear looks that ran the brand's gamut from suits for daytime that were still tightfitting and sexy to glammed-up versions in bright sequins. There was loud beach and resort wear that featured colorful bursts of prints or black-and-white logo plays, and geek looks in sandals with socks and a beanie.



Elegant all-white suits and outfits had golden brocade touches, recalling Baroque churches in the duo's beloved Sicily. And the northern Italy Milan DNA came through in a sleek muscle knit and black trousers or high-waist camouflaged trousers with bold printed shirts. Accessories included bejeweled surgical masks, presumably for smoggy cities, and the new Dolce & Gabbana Super King sneaker featuring logos on the heel and a geometric sole. To underscore the brand's broad reach, the designers filled the runway with Millennial influencers, real-world royals and aristocrats, singers and performers but also ordinary people: elderly women out for a stroll in bold primary prints, homosexual couples and a family with children.

DOLCE&GABBANA UNDER THE HOOD

The designing duo kept up a recent tradition of nominally "secret" runway shows, this round showing off a range of branded briefs on well-toned models.

There was something for everyone, from classic white briefs to stretchy boxers to undergarments printed with Sicilian ceramic designs of blue and lemon yellow, for anyone who cares to match their underwear with dinner-ware. Models carried an array of bags from leather weekenders to fanny packs to adventure bags to brief cases. — AP

Models present creations by Dolce & Gabbana during the men & women's spring/summer 2019 collection fashion show in Milan.



BATTLE OF THE HATS AT ELITE FRENCH HORSE RACE

Drink corks pop over the pounding of hooves and the "best hat" prize is as fiercely contested as the race itself: welcome to the Prix de Diane, a highlight of the year for France's horsey set. Some 40,000 well-dressed spectators flocked to Sunday's races in the shadow of a chateau north of Paris, clutching picnic baskets, ice-cold wine bottles, and—in many cases—hats ranging from the stylish to the outlandish.

Held each June in Chantilly, a picturesque forest town built around horseracing, the Prix de Diane or French Oaks has long been considered a pinnacle of "elegance à la française" since its founding in 1843.

"It's an event unique in the world," said Andre Berteau, a former jockey who has attended the race for 20 years. "To start with, there's only one racecourse like this with a view over a chateau surrounded by forests. We're really lucky here," added Berteau, his top hat perched at a rakish angle. While many come for an event that draws some of Europe's best three-year-old fillies, plenty of others come simply to see and be seen. In particular, the 300 fashionistas vying in the Concours d'Elegance or Elegance Contest, and the hundreds of others swarming around the catwalk, displayed minimal interest in the flat race won this year by feisty English 7-1 shot Laurens. Some of the also-rans for the best-dressed award included a huge black-and-red confection resembling a tropical flower, a gold cloche and a riff on a Spanish matador's hat.

Mad Hatters

A fair number of those jockeying for the only prize that mattered were professional milliners spying an opportunity to show off their most inventive work. Some took inspiration from the race itself, topping their hats with model horses or champagne flutes. But other strayed from the equine theme. A group of young millinery graduates came in Alice In Wonderland garb, including one dressed as the Queen of Hearts and another as the Mad Hatter's tea table.

"I wanted something very large and something very feminine," explained 23-year-old Nadege Monett, leaning over to display the teapot and saucers perched upon her head, a flamingo-shaped umbrella under her arm. "I wanted something very stylish, very 19th century-personally when I think of the Prix de Diane, I think of an Englishwoman with those big hats and lace and umbrellas."

From haute couture to Primark

Comfort and convenience were set aside for the day. One woman, a hand clamped to the large pink-and-gold contraption attached to her head, could be heard saying: "It's alright so long as I don't turn to the right."



Johanna Contremoulins, a 27-year-old human resources manager from Normandy, clinched the coveted "Most Elegant" title, winning rave reviews for a spiraling pink hat topped with spiky plant fronds. But the top 10 also included Sara Rose from Carlow in Ireland, who delighted in the fact that she had come close to winning, despite having assembled her chic monochrome outfit mostly from high street brands Primark and New Look. "It's no fun when somebody wins who spent 3,000 euros (\$3,500) on their outfit," she said. Rose works at the Newmarket racecourse in England and acknowledged that the French race appeared decidedly better behaved than Ladies Day at Ascot, where even the most elegantly dressed, after a bottle or two of champagne, are frequently a little worse for wear by home time. "But we're not at the end of the day yet, so we'll see," she laughed. — AFP

Women wearing hats attend the 169th Prix de Diane horse racing on June 17, 2018 in Chantilly, northern Paris. — AFP photos



Lifestyle | Features



Japanese monk Akinobu Tatsumi hits the gong at his family's Buddhist temple in Kagamimachi, Kumamoto prefecture. — AFP photos



Japanese monk Akinobu Tatsumi holds his praying beads after hitting the gong at his family's Buddhist temple.



Japanese tatami maker Hatsuko Inazumi (left) listens in her house to monk Akinobu Tatsumi performing a prayer with reading sutra before a Buddhist altar.

Holy rap! 'Funky' Japan monk gets grannies in a spin

At a remote temple in Japan cradled by a cross-shaped mountain range, Akinobu Tatsumi leads a rare double life—as a Buddhist monk who preaches about DJing. The amateur enthusiast has been dabbling in hip hop since he was a teenager and makes clandestine recordings of his own ambient music while his temple, located in deepest Kyushu, western Japan, sleeps. After keeping his nocturnal hobby a secret from fellow priests for years, the 38-year-old Tatsumi now gives record-spinning tips to his ageing temple-goers. "It's true a monk does usually deliver a regular sermon," Tatsumi told AFP at Syousanji temple. "When I first began playing the grannies music and showing them how to scratch, they

did look a little bemused. "Around here people call me the funky monk," the wannabe DJ added in an interview after chanting a sutra.

Tatsumi isn't your typical Buddhist monk. He has long hair, tied in a ponytail, and fancies himself as a human beat box—a genre also steeped in hip hop culture. "I was influenced by hip hop—I started listening to Run-DMC and Public Enemy," said Tatsumi, nimbly sidestepping the issue of rap music's explicit lyrics. "I got into beat boxing in that way. I used to practice on the edge of a cliff, where there was a lovely echo." Tatsumi's digression from Buddhist writings to scratch sermons was fraught with risk—he also says he kept his monastic life hidden from night-time venues he played at. "I didn't tell other priests

about my music but also hid the fact I was a priest from bars and clubs," he said.

Disco tummy

While the likes of Calvin Harris or the Chemical Brothers have little to fear from his recreational activities, Tatsumi's love affair with music began very early—before he was even born, he claims. "My mother used to hold a speaker to her tummy and play me classical music or 70s disco," he said. "Later when I discovered those records and played them, I felt I had heard them before, which was weird." Tatsumi takes care not to anger his fellow priests, using headphones when he mixes his music—which combines electro and dub step with Buddhist

chanting—to avoid getting into trouble. Even when he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis four years ago, Tatsumi persisted with his hobby, making music from his hospital bed. "I used to use the beep-beep of the heart monitors to make club music," said Tatsumi, who now walks with a cane. The one-time skateboarding monk believes his illness has brought him closer to his fellow devotees. "I suddenly felt a connection with the aged and temple-goers who were suffering from illness or injury," he said. "These days I get on famously with the old folks!" —AFP

Film tracks first Afghan woman to seek justice over incest

Beaten up, raped and repeatedly impregnated by her father for more than a decade — a young woman's fight for justice in the face of threats, oppression and sexism in war-torn Afghanistan was a story filmmaker Sahra Mani had to tell. Her documentary, "A Thousand Girls Like Me", tells the story of Khatera and her mission to put her father on trial for raping and assaulting her for 13 years, during which she aborted a series of pregnancies. Khatera finally gave birth to two of her father's children — to use as proof

that there were many, many women in Afghanistan like her, victims of rape and incest, which are taboo subjects. There was a silence and I wanted to break it," Mani, 35, said ahead of the film's screening in New York City today. The 76-minute film, shown at the Sheffield Doc Fest last week, shines a light on Afghanistan's broken judicial system that often incriminates women instead of helping them. Afghanistan is one of the most dangerous countries to be a woman or girl.

Research indicates more than eight in 10 women have been sexually, physically or psychologically abused, but only a few thousand cases are reported each year. Campaigners say women's complaints are rarely handled properly, and in some cases police assault or even rape women who come for help. When women do report abuse or are arrested themselves, they find themselves at the mercy of a male-dominated judicial system shaped by sharia, or Islamic, law. Khatera's case was no different. "The judge accused me of lying, but I have the proof in my belly," says Khatera in a section of the film shot in 2014, when she was pregnant with her father's second child. Mani first came across Khatera earlier that year when she appeared on national television to tell her story — a turning point that resulted in support pouring in from activists and fellow victims.

The filmmaker, who grew up in Iran as an Afghan refugee before leaving to study cinema in Britain, then tracked the young woman's battle for justice through the courts. She now hopes to screen the film in Afghanistan next month. "I'm not optimistic but I have to do it," she said. "I want to tell rape victims, you are not dirty, do not be ashamed of yourself. Go speak up and take back your honor." — Reuters

"I want to tell rape victims, you are not dirty. Go speak up and take back your honor"

in court. "She stood against all odds. Everybody blamed her, everybody called her names, everybody told her she was bringing shame to the family, to the country," Mani said of Khatera, now 26, who goes by one name in the film. "I had to do this, to give an example to women ... it does not matter who breaks the rules — father, brother, neighbor, husband, loved one — they have to speak up."

Khatera, who now lives in France with her fiancé and two children, became the first Afghan woman to bring a case of incest to court despite threats from her uncles and brothers and judges who labeled her a liar. Her campaign resulted in a rare conviction in 2015 that used DNA evidence — unheard of in a country where women can rarely pursue justice for themselves. "I found out



UNHCR special envoy Angelina Jolie speaks during a news conference in the Domiz refugee camp in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region.



This handout picture released by the UNHCR, shows Special Envoy Angelina Jolie meeting Falak, 8, during a visit to West Mosul. — AFP photos

In Iraq, Angelina Jolie calls for focus on conflict prevention

Hollywood star Angelina Jolie called Sunday for a larger focus on conflict prevention rather than responding to its repercussions, during a visit to Iraq with the UN refugee agency. "I hope that we can find the strength to find a better way forward together: so that we move into a new era of preventing conflict and reducing instability, rather than simply struggling to deal with its consequences," Jolie told a news conference at the Domiz refugee camp in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region. It was Jolie's third visit to the camp as UNHCR special envoy, after previous visits in 2012 and 2016. The Domiz camp opened in 2011 and is home to 40,000 Syrian refugees who fled the seven-year civil war across the border. "When UNHCR's Syria response was only 50 percent funded last year,

and this year it is only 17 percent funded, there are terrible human consequences," Jolie said.

"We should be under no illusion about this," she added. Late last month, the UN made an "urgent and critical" appeal for donations to its main budget for Syrian refugees after contributions pledged in April failed to trickle in. "When there is not even the bare minimum of aid, refugee families cannot receive adequate medical treatment, women and girls are left vulnerable to sexual violence, many children cannot go to school, and we squander the opportunity of being able to invest in refugees so that they can acquire new skills and support their families," she said.

Her visit coincided with the third day of Eid Al-Fitr celebrations marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. On

Saturday, Jolie visited western Mosul, held by Islamic State jihadists for nearly three years until they were pushed out by Iraqi forces last summer. During her visit, she walked through Mosul's destroyed Old City, met with displaced families and spoke about reconstruction. "This is the worst devastation I have seen in all my years with UNHCR," Jolie said. "It is deeply upsetting that people who have endured unparalleled brutality have so little as they try, somehow, to rebuild the lives they once had." The visit marked Jolie's 61st mission—and fifth to Iraq—with the UN refugee agency since 2001. — AFP

Like 'Star Trek': Voice shopping seen as new frontier

Hey, Google, order a large pizza! Alexa, I need vitamins! Voice shopping using smart speakers and smartphone apps is starting to gain traction among consumers, opening up a new "conversational commerce" channel and potentially disrupting the retail sector.

Devices such as Amazon's Alexa-powered speakers and Google Home, which use artificial intelligence to respond to voice commands, are offering new choices to consumers who are looking for more convenient ways to order goods and services. Voice shopping is expected to jump to \$40 billion annually in 2022 in the United States, from \$2 billion today, according to a survey this year by OC&C Strategy Consultants. "People are liking the convenience

and natural interaction of using voice," said Victoria Petrock of the research firm eMarketer. "Computing in general is moving more toward voice interface because the technology is more affordable, and people are responding well because they don't have to type."

A recent eMarketer survey found 36 percent of US consumers liked the idea of using a home-based assistant like Amazon Echo for making a purchase. Amazon's devices, which hit the market in 2015, were designed in large part to help boost sales, and Google Home was launched a year later. The use of smart speakers has expanded the possibilities available through smartphone chatbots or text-based systems including those from Facebook and Apple.

Exponential growth

"This is growing exponentially," said Mark Taylor, an executive vice president at consultancy Capgemini and co-author of a study on conversational commerce. "We're getting very used to asking Alexa or Google to do something on our behalf, which makes it simple to switch and say, 'Hey Alexa, buy me dog food.'" Capgemini research shows many consumers are satisfied with voice interactions and that this is growing for search and information as well as for purchases and that this is likely to become a "dominant" mode of consumer action within a few years. "It's becoming part of the fabric of our lives," Taylor said.

The most commonly shopped categories through voice are groceries, entertainment, electronics and clothing, according to OC&C. For now, Taylor said, most voice-based purchases have been "low consideration goods" such as items consumers have purchased before. But as people grow comfortable with voice assistants Taylor sees a potential for growth in "higher consideration" items including insurance or financial services. An important element will be the tonality and personality established by intelligent assistants that will help companies establish an image or brand. "People like to talk to human beings because humans give insight and guidance, and AI can do the same thing," he said. — AFP

Google Home and Amazon's Alexa-powered speakers are battling in the emerging market for voice-based shopping.



One dead, 3 hurt in Dutch music fest hit-and-run

A van slammed into pedestrians near a Dutch campsite at a huge music festival yesterday, killing one person and seriously injuring three others just hours after headline act Bruno Mars wowed tens of thousands of fans. The four people were hit around 4:00 am yesterday by the van which then fled the scene, only hours after the end of the three-day Pinkpop Festival in the southern town of Landgraaf, near the German border. A 34-year-old man from Heerlen later gave himself up, phoning the police to say he was the driver and was arrested in Amsterdam, police told reporters, adding the white van had also been found.

"We are looking at all possible motives," said public prosecutor, Daniele Weymar, adding that they were also investigating whether the incident was an attack, but stressing it was only "one of the scenarios" being looked at. The dead man was identified as a 35-year-old from the southeastern town of Heerlen, close to the festival site. Two men, one aged 30 and another 26, and a 23-year-old woman, remain "very critically ill" in hospital, police said. Police cordoned off the section of the road while an investigation is under way, and a police helicopter was deployed to take aerial shots of the crash site. — AFP



File photo shows festival goers gather during the first day of the music festival Pinkpop, at Landgraaf. — AFP

News

Video gaming
addictive like
crack: WHO

PARIS: Video gaming can be addictive in the same way as cocaine or gambling, the World Health Organization said yesterday in a much anticipated update of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). "After consulting with experts across the world, and reviewing evidence in an exhaustive manner, we decided that this condition should be added," Shekhar Saxena, director of the WHO's department of mental health and substance abuse, told AFP. Online and offline "gaming disorder" is grouped with "disorders due to substance use or addictive behaviors" in the ICD's 11th edition, the first major revision in nearly three decades.

The wording of the new entries has been known since January, when the WHO announced problem gaming would be recognized as a pathological condition. Key symptoms include "impaired control" - notably the inability to stop playing - and focusing on the game to the exclusion of everything else. "The person does so much gaming that other interests and activities are ignored, including sleeping and eating," Saxena said by phone.

In extreme cases, gamers unable to pry themselves away from a screen drop out of school, lose jobs, and become cut off from family and non-gaming friends. The overwhelming majority of video game adepts are young, many in their teens. Symptomatic behavior must continue for at least a year before it is considered dangerously unhealthy, according to the new classification. Some 2.5 billion people - one-in-three worldwide - play some form of free-to-play screen game, especially on cell phones, but the disorder only affects a "small minority", said Saxena. "We are

not saying that all gaming is pathological."

The games industry raked in \$108 billion dollars worldwide in 2017, more than double movie box-office receipts, according to Superdata, which tracks the games and interactive media sector. Nearly 40 percent of those sales are in east Asia, especially China and South Korea. Other important markets include the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Brazil. In South Korea and the United States, clinics have sprung up to treat video game addiction, along with community and online support groups.

So-called "shooter games" such as "Fortnite" - described on the support website Game Quitters as the "hottest game in the world" - are either played online or on offline consoles. The inclusion of "gaming disorder" in WHO's revised catalogue of diseases met with resistance, both from industry and some experts. "The WHO process lacks transparency, is deeply flawed, and lacks scientific support," Michael Gallagher, president and CEO of the Entertainment Software Association, said in a statement in March.

In a study to be published in the Journal of Behavioral Addictions, a group of 36 researchers said there was insufficient evidence to warrant the new category. "Given the gravity of diagnostic classification and its wider social impact, we urge our colleagues at the WHO to err on the side of caution for now and postpone the formalization," they wrote in a study reviewing academic literature.

The ICD identifies about 55,000 separate injuries, diseases, conditions and causes of death, and is widely used as a benchmark for diagnoses and health insurance. "It enables us to understand so much about what makes people get sick and die, and to take action to prevent suffering and save lives," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement. The new ICD also includes for the first time a chapter on traditional medicines, used by millions of people around the world. — AFP



IRBID, Jordan: Syrian refugee Sahira Zoubi works on a new handbag, made from recycled newspapers, at an upcycling workshop in this city in northern Jordan on May 9, 2018. — Reuters

Jordan women
recycle rubbish
into revenue

IRBID, Jordan: Sameera Al-Salam folds a discarded piece of newspaper into a long strip then loops it round her finger to form a tight circle, the first stage of making the upcycled handbags, trays and bowls the Syrian refugee hopes will help her earn a living. Salam, 55, was a hairdresser with a passion for "art and making things" before she fled her war-torn homeland for Irbid in northern Jordan with her family in 2012. Now she has two teenagers and a husband left paralyzed by a stroke to support in a country where she has no automatic legal right to work, and they are three months behind on their rent.

"We were living a really happy life. I had a garden where I grew everything," Salam told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "We had to leave because of the airstrikes. We were always trying to put things in front of the door to protect the children. Whenever I remember, it breaks my heart." Like most of the more than 655,000 Syrian refugees living in Jordan - and many Jordanians - poverty, debt and unemployment dominate the family's existence.

Salam hopes her involvement in a new rubbish collection and recycling scheme that aims to alleviate the poverty of both refugees and locals and bring the two communities closer will help turn things around. The scheme, managed by charity Action Against Hunger, employs 1,200 people to collect and sort waste from the streets and provides temporary work permits to refugees who take part. Nearly half the participants are female in a country where women can face cultural and family obstacles to employment, including a culture of shame around going out to work.

One in three Syrian refugee households in Jordan is headed by women and more and more are now seeking jobs in an already crowded market. More than 80 percent of the Syrian refugees in Jordan live below the poverty line, according to Care International. Awsaf Qaddah, a 39-year-old Syrian widow, said working as a rubbish collector initially felt like "a kind of shame", but she now feels only pride. "The job took me out of this atmosphere I was living in at home. Women can and should go out and work, especially with the circum-

stances we're facing," she said. "I have no husband or father or brother to help - I'm proud to do it."

Fellow worker Berwen Misterihi, who is Jordanian, was forced to earn after her husband left her and their four children. "Women and men would make comments about me picking up waste," she said. "I said to one man, 'I'd rather work than come to you for the money' and he apologized."

'Like siblings'

The project workers were given 50-day contracts paying 12 Jordanian dinar (\$16.90) a day, plus training and social security provisions. Some of the waste was sold to scrap dealers for extra cash. Salam was among a group of women who started an upcycling project, turning the waste paper and plastic they collected into objects to sell. Action Against Hunger, which has managed the waste project since 2017 with German government funding, is now setting up a second phase focusing on equipping cooperatives and workers to continue waste processing and upcycling unaided.

"First there was a focus on breaking the culture of shame for women. Then we wanted ideas of how they could benefit from waste," said Sajeda Saqallah, program manager with Action Against Hunger. "Upcycling is a new concept here, so we took them to Amman to learn about it." Salam said her husband did not object to her taking part in the scheme. She now hopes she will get training on marketing and trademarking and win one of a number of new contracts Action Against Hunger is providing to carry on upcycling for wages.

The women in her upcycling group meet regularly and share ideas and news in a WhatsApp group. At a workshop filled with their creations - from handbags to light shades to side tables, all made from recycled newspaper and cardboard - Sahira Zoubi, a Syrian refugee and mother of five excitedly points to the gold handbag she made. Zoubi, who has not seen her husband since the Syrian Army captured him in 2012, has made close friends through the project from both Syria and Jordan who she says are "like siblings". "Doing this project is so joyful because you come here and forget about your problems," she said.

Salam breaks down as she tells how the project has allowed her to overcome her fears of being a refugee in a strange country. "I never really mixed with people before this. I was afraid to go outside, I wasn't involved in the community," she said. "I was from a different country. I didn't know what people were going to do to me or what they would say. Now I like to mingle." — Reuters

Young Iraqis
use innovation...

Continued from Page 1

to daily earnings of around 150,000 dinars, or \$120, from cups of coffee made in a machine installed in the car boot. Mashreq Jabbar earns similar sums from his little bookshop squeezed into a corridor of a Basra fashion mall. "Renting a shop costs \$6,000 a month; I only pay \$2,500 for my hallway," said the slim 26-year-old, as he tidied shelves of school books, romantic novels and poetry collections. The geology graduate had also hoped to get a job as a public official, confident that his degree would make him employable in the local oil industry.

But even though the sector accounts for 89 percent of the state budget and 99 percent of Iraq's export revenues, it provides only one percent of jobs as the majority of posts are filled by foreigners.

The lack of opportunities is nationwide: from the capital Baghdad to second city Mosul in the north, and from the agricultural east to the western desert. It is not uncommon to find engineers working as taxi drivers, or sandwich stalls manned by literature graduates in a country of avid readers. Officially, 10.8 percent of Iraqis are jobless, while youth unemployment is twice as high in a country where 60 percent of the population is aged under 24.

A mushrooming number of private universities - with

Baghdad boasting around 30 - has made the situation even worse among graduates. The private sector which emerged after Saddam's rule has failed to fill the employment gap, with many young Iraqis holding out for the coveted public sector posts. "The common view is that there's no choice but to work in the public sector," said Ahmed Abdel Hassan, an economics professor at the University of Basra. "Young people who go to work in the private sector say it's a temporary move before getting a post in the public sector," he said.

Even Basra's entrepreneurs see the benefits, with Alaa noting the social security and pension perks, while Jabbar pointed to civil servants' guaranteed salaries. Many of those holding out for a state job, however, are left unable to move out of their parents' house. Omar Abdallah, 28, had pinned his hopes on getting a teaching job at the end of his studies in fine art. Iraq once had a high-quality and free education system, but that was left in tatters following the international embargo of the 1990s after Saddam's invasion of Kuwait.

Having failed to land a job and with no capital to start a business of his own, Abdallah began collecting scrap metal. "I could only count on myself and my talent," he said at his family home, where one room serves as both his workshop and exhibition space. Abdallah has transformed old bicycle chains into scorpions, cutlery into dragonflies and used nuts and bolts to make motorbike models. In a good month he can sell half a dozen sculptures, charging between \$200 and \$250 apiece. "People love my sculptures," he said proudly. "They tell me: 'How did you manage to make something so beautiful out of rubbish?'" — AFP

evision, reported at least 10 air strikes yesterday in different areas of Yemen, including the west coast, although there was no independent confirmation.

The Saudi alliance imposed a near-total blockade on Hodeida port earlier this year, alleging Iran was using it as a major conduit for illicit arms deliveries to the Houthis. Gargash said yesterday that his country and its allies aimed to "avoid civilian casualties", adding that the operation was "going very well". Civilians deaths have not yet been confirmed in Hodeida. Four UAE troops have died in the operation, according to state media, while medical and military sources say at least 164 mostly rebel fighters have died. Gargash said the Arab coalition had kept the Hodeida-Sanaa road "open for the Houthi militias to withdraw". The UAE minister denied reports that French troops had been helping the coalition to take Hodeida, but said France had offered to remove mines when it becomes necessary. — AFP

Manbij frontline". It said US forces were also patrolling the area but "independently".

Manbij, formerly held by IS, is controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an umbrella group dominated by a Kurdish militia Turkey considers to be a terror group but that is supported by the US. The issue of Manbij had become a major flashpoint between the two NATO allies. But Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo agreed a roadmap on the future of the city to ease tensions earlier this month.

The move comes as Turkey prepares for tight presidential and parliamentary elections on Sunday. Many analysts say President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wants a major foreign policy success to give him a final boost. Erdogan hailed the move by the army around Manbij in two campaign rallies in comments loudly cheered by supporters.

Cavusoglu said that Turkish soldiers would "bit by bit" move inside Manbij and the People's Protection Units (YPG) would move out. "We can say we have started to implement the roadmap" agreed with the United States, he added. A commander with Syrian rebels fighting with the Turkish forces told AFP that the area where the troops had been positioned "is a front line between the opposition and the SDF, according to the road map that was agreed".

Sherfan Darwish, spokesman of the Manbij Military Council which rules the town, confirmed that "Turkish forces did not enter our areas in Manbij and have not crossed the frontlines". He added that "American forces are carrying out patrols on our forces' side". — Agencies

Websites help
Asian maids...

Continued from Page 1

From Asia to the Middle East, thousands of migrant domestic workers are trapped in debt and cannot escape, even if they are abused, as they have to work to repay the recruiters that found them work and often make deductions from their monthly wages. Affluent financial hub Hong Kong is one of the biggest destinations for maids in Asia, with some 370,000 women from the Philippines and Indonesia heading in large numbers.

Millan borrowed 100,000 Philippine pesos (\$1,915) to pay recruiters when she moved to the southern Chinese city - a huge sum for someone from a poor Filipino family. The Hong Kong-based HelperChoice website provides a platform for employers and helpers to connect directly and promises to help them find the "perfect match in an ethical way".

For a fee starting at HK\$350 (\$45), potential employers can log on to the portal and access a database of job-seeking helpers to set up interviews. Helpers do not pay to register. Employers can choose to pay more for additional services such as having the paperwork done on their behalf. "It's a win-win situation," HelperChoice's chief executive Alexandra Golovanow said, adding that both employers and helpers can keep looking until they find the right candidate.

The website, set up in 2012, has found jobs for about 8,000 maids, Golovanow said, adding that its popularity was due in part to heightened awareness about their mistreatment. In Hong Kong, laws stipulate recruiters cannot charge more than 10 percent of a helper's first month salary but a study by campaign group Rights Exposure showed in reality maids are often overcharged, sometimes 25 times the legally permitted amount. "In some cases, employment agencies also take away their passport. Helpers just can't leave because they have no paper, no documentations," Golovanow said. "This is modern slavery - people have no alternatives."

A similar initiative, Hong Kong-based Fair Employment Agency (FEA) also allows employers and helpers to register online and only charges the bosses for the hiring. Unlike HelperChoice, a team of staff at FEA help match maids to bosses based on criteria they have entered on their profile. The FEA has placed 2,000 helpers with employers since it was set up in

2015 and estimates it has saved these workers altogether some \$3 million - money which would otherwise have gone to recruiters.

"Right now the reason why recruitment is so mired in these unethical things is because there are too many players and no accountability," said Victoria Ahn from the Fair Employment Foundation, which runs the FEA project. "Technology will play a huge role in clearing that up and reducing the number of players."

Despite such efforts to clean up the industry, activists say the multimillion-dollar recruitment trade will continue and the government must step up its actions against unscrupulous firms. Of about 3,000 recruitment agencies in Hong Kong, the government told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that 42 were convicted between 2012 and 2017 for violating laws, but it did not specify if the convictions were related to overcharging. "Vigorous enforcement action will be taken out against any employment agencies' contravention to the law," a spokesman from the labor department said in emailed comments.

Hong Kong this year introduced laws with heavier fines and three-year prison terms for recruiters overcharging helpers. Such initiatives are also slowly making inroads in the Middle East, which is known for its notorious "kafala" sponsorship system that binds migrant workers to one employer. The controversial system has long been criticized by activists for exploiting workers and denying them the ability to travel or change jobs without their employer's consent.

Filipina helper Sheryl Cruz, who is based in Qatar, found out about HelperChoice through Facebook when she was searching for a job after her employer died from cancer in 2016. Reluctant to go a recruitment agency that would give her no say in who she could work for, she used the portal to connect with a Pakistani family in the Gulf kingdom looking for a maid. "You can see all the (employers) and what they are looking for and contact them directly," the 31-year-old said.

Cruz, who has 12 years' experience as a domestic worker, felt empowered as, for the first time, she was able to set her own terms when negotiating for the new job - she asked for a day off and a higher salary. "I felt good setting my salary," she said.

For Millan in Hong Kong, HelperChoice was a god-send. Living with a boss she likes is a big change, having begged a previous employer to treat her "as a person, not an animal". Despite all the hardship, she does not think about quitting. "I always think about my son - my son's future," she said, smiling at other domestic workers who, like her, were enjoying a Sunday break in a Hong Kong park. — Reuters

UAE demands
'unconditional'...

Continued from Page 1

Gargash said the Saudi and UAE-led offensive aimed "to help the UN envoy in his last chance to convince the Houthis to withdraw unconditionally from the city and avoid any confrontation".

Griffiths held two days of talks with the Houthis over the weekend in Sanaa, but the rebels rejected a ceasefire under current conditions. The head of their unofficial government, Abdulaziz Saleh bin Habtoor, accused Saudi-led forces of "escalating their attacks on the western coast when they felt there were serious moves towards a solution". The rebels, on their Al-Masirah tel-

Dozens of pro-regime
fighters killed...

Continued from Page 1

"The strike on Al-Hari produced the highest death toll for regime forces since the February incident," Observatory head Abdel Rahman told AFP.

Syria's conflict began in 2011 with protests against Assad, but then spiralled into a full-blown war that has drawn in world powers and given rise of militants like IS. The strike on Al-Hari came a day after the US-backed SDF announced it had ousted IS from Dashisha, a village to the north in Syria's Hasakeh province. The village had been one of the last IS-controlled areas in a corridor linking Syria with Iraq. "For the first time in four years, Dashisha, a notorious transit town for weapons, fighters and suicide bombers between Iraq and Syria, is no longer controlled by ISIS (IS) terrorists," Brett McGurk, the US president's special envoy for the war against IS, said yesterday.

Separately, Turkey yesterday said it had started military patrols in an area around the Kurdish-held city of Manbij in northern Syria, in line with an agreement with the US to scale down tensions in the region. The Turkish army said in a statement that "patrol activities had begun" between Manbij and an area it controls after a 2016-2017 military incursion. The state-run Anadolu news agency said that Turkish armored vehicles were patrolling "on the

Sports



OUR LOUNGE IN ISTANBUL IS BIGGER THAN SOME AIRPORTS.

Coach Joachim Loew defiant as Germany face World Cup crisis

First defeat in their opening game of a World Cup since 1982

VATUTINKI: Joachim Loew is facing the biggest crisis of his 12-year reign as Germany coach after the holders slipped to a shock defeat against Mexico in their World Cup opener in Russia. Germany are licking their wounds after slumping 1-0 to a blistering Lozano strike in Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium—their first defeat in their opening game of a World Cup since 1982.

"We won't fall apart," insisted Loew, but that is exactly what his defence did in the first-half. Loew is under contract with the German Football Association (DFB) until 2022, but Sunday's result tarnishes the glittering reputation of the 2014 World Cup-winning coach.

"I have not seen the German team so weak at a big tournament for a long time," said West Germany's 1990 World Cup-winning captain Lothar Matthäus. "Almost everything was missing. There were concentration errors, unnecessary bad passes and also the attitude was not there." Loew has been heavily criticised in Germany for his tactics and keeping faith in under-performing players, especially Sami Khedira and Mesut Ozil. The decision to leave Manchester City starlet Leroy Sané out of the squad after a dazzling season for the Premier League champions has led to searching questions.

Loew's faith in Ozil, who came to Russia after a series of frustrating performances for Arsenal, and Khedira, who is no longer the midfield dynamo he was, leaves Loew open to accusations of misplaced loyalty. He got his tactics wrong in Moscow, telling his players they would be pressed high up, only for Mexico to counter-attack from deep at speed. When their gameplan was shredded, none of Loew's senior players could stem the Mexico attacks or fix the disarray in defence.

Now the Germans must beat Sweden in Sochi on Saturday to get their Russia 2018 campaign back on track.

The fear in Germany is that the national team will not qualify for the knockout stages of a major tournament for the first time since the Euro 2004 finals in Portugal.

The last time they failed to progress beyond the first round of the World Cup was in 1938. Worryingly for the remaining group matches, the Germans lacked leadership when they needed it most—despite the return of captain Manuel Neuer in goal.

"What bothered me most is that no player is capable of solving a problem when it gets difficult," Paul Breitner, a 1974 World Cup winner with West Germany, told Munich-based paper TZ. "It was depressing to see how helpless our team was."

Loew is under pressure to make changes and only his former captain Philipp Lahm, who lifted the World Cup trophy in 2014, offered hope amid the deluge of criticism. "They have the experience to turn things around. Sometimes a small setback doesn't hurt to pull the team together," Lahm said at an event in Moscow.

However, the performance suggests there are deeper problems and the first-half disarray was glaring. Matthäus said Marco Reus, Germany's most dangerous player, who only played the last 30 minutes, must start against Sweden.

German daily Bild demanded Ozil, Khedira, Julian Draxler and Thomas Müller step up in training this week or be dropped. "For me, Mesut Ozil was missing speed and body language," said Matthäus.

"He has so much freedom from Loew, but nothing comes back from him. Thomas Müller was also disappointing." Centre-backs Jerome Boateng and Mats Hummels complained about being isolated at the back.

However, the fleet-footed Mexicans exposed Boateng's lack of pace, while Hummels was on the halfway line when

had barely played any senior football for A-League club City until January, but he believes he is ready to start in the Soccerroos' final two Group C matches, against Denmark in Samara on Thursday and Peru next week.

Raised in Khorramabad in western Iran but having represented Australia at junior levels, Arzani's football journey could have been quite different. He watched Iran beat Morocco 1-0 to claim their first World Cup win in 20 years, and was thrilled for them.

"I didn't watch all the game because we had a meeting in the middle of it but I saw the own goal by Morocco," he said. "I follow a couple of players on Instagram and I was looking at them after the game and they were ecstatic and I'm really happy for them as well. It would have been a big moment for them and the country as well."

Arzani first honed his talent in rough-and-tumble match-ups with other neighbourhood kids. He has become renowned for his dribbling and credits street football for giving him swagger on Australian pitches.

"Growing up playing in the streets, you have to have that (cockiness), or else you get eaten alive by the other boys," he said. "You have to believe in yourself and even when you make a mistake you have to stand by it."

He made his international debut against Czech Republic earlier this month and scored his first goal against Hungary a week later. He has already attracted the attention of

sky. "I got goosebumps," Iran midfielder Alireza Jahanbakhsh said after the victory, after seeing the reaction back home.

"We are not in Iran but I have spoken with my family and friends and they say people are going crazy in the streets and that's all that matters. "With the things happening all around the world right now, football is one of the biggest things that can make people happy."

BEHIND WALLS

All the leading contenders in Russia are billeted in carefully chosen locations, screened by trees, walls or bolted gates. Germany are staying behind a thick concrete wall in the midst of forest in Vatuinki, 45 minutes away from Moscow. Brazil are in a luxury hotel complex in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, 20 minutes out of the city, and England are based in Repino, an hour's drive from Saint Petersburg. The Germans' choice of base has raised eyebrows because in last year's Confederations Cup—the World Cup dry run—they had seemed delighted at being based in Sochi. Midfielder Toni Kroos batted away such concerns. "A sports complex fits very well because we are here to play sport," Kroos said laconically.

"Our base is totally okay. Perhaps it just heightens the anticipation of going on holiday afterwards." Open training sessions were well-received by local children but meticulously choreographed, with those attending needing to present tickets, empty their bags and pass through scanners.

When Neymar, Brazil's star striker, took a moment to



MOSCOW: Germany's coach Joachim Loew (L) speaks to his players during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group F football match between Germany and Mexico at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow on Sunday. — AFP

the attack started that led to Lozano's winning goal. "Against Mexico, the motto was 'it will be OK. At some point, the ball will go in the net,'" former international Manfred Schwabl told the Muenchner Merkur newspaper. "Of course, that doesn't work in football, not in the third division and especially not at a World Cup." Matthäus

offered a chilling warning. "Just because Germany are world champions, doesn't mean they will automatically reach the last 16. "Just a reminder: three of the last four champions all went out in the group stages," he added after France, Italy and Spain all bowed out early, four years after lifting the World Cup. — AFP

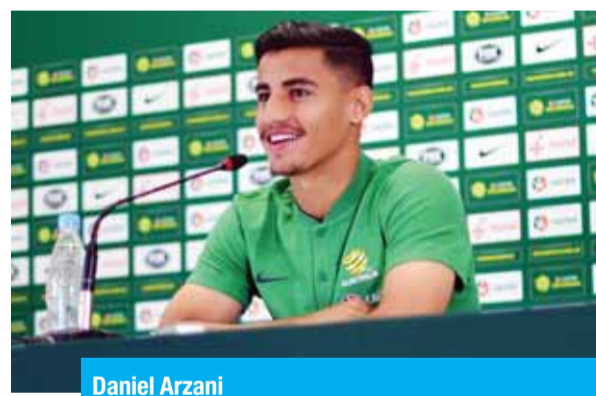
WCup's youngest Arzani has great expectations

KAZAN: The youngest player at the World Cup, Daniel Arzani, grew up playing street football in Iran but lined up in the gold shirt of Australia to belt out the national anthem before the Soccerroos' opener against France.

The 19-year-old's dream of appearing in Russia was fulfilled late on at Kazan Arena but his hopes of a winning debut were thwarted as Australia were beaten 2-1.

"I think the biggest moment for me was actually at the beginning of the game when I'm looking around, seeing all these Aussie fans in the yellow shirts everywhere and we were kind of singing the national anthem and your heart's just absolutely pumping," the Melbourne City youngster told a media conference at the Soccerroos' Kazan base yesterday.

"You realise the gravity of the situation. You're here representing a whole nation on the biggest stage," Arzani



Daniel Arzani

European clubs and hinted that a move to the Netherlands, where his former Melbourne City coach John van't Schip manages Eredivisie side PEC Zwolle, could be in the offing. Great expectations have been heaped on his shoulders, but Arzani is unfazed by them.

"Obviously, a lot of people have a lot of expectations of me but I think no-one's expectations of me will ever be as high as my own or my parents'," he said. "I think that kind of helps deal with the pressure because the most pressure that I'm getting is the one I put on myself." — Reuters

sign autographs and pose for photos, he was quickly hurried away by an anxious press officer. Keeping players and fans apart in football is nothing new.

LACK OF SPONTANEITY

Security in Russia is tighter than at any previous tournament and spontaneity so squeezed that any hint of it is greeted with a combination of surprise and celebration.

England's Kieran Trippier and Jesse Lingard tossed a few balls down the bowling lanes at the hotel where journalists covering the team are based, and within seconds the pictures and videos had been posted online. It is perhaps why the ecstasy that spilled out in Tehran and Montevideo is so cherished, with World Cups owning a unique power to bring people together and make them feel a more tangible part of the story. Before their hard-earned draw with Argentina on Saturday, Iceland supporters gathered in Moscow's Zaryadye Park to perform the Viking Clap, a ritual now so established it has its own emoji. Iceland coach Heimir Hallgrímsson still maintains the habit of meeting supporters in a bar before games, a throwback to an era before fans, miles away, were left connecting only with each other. "There's this unusual closeness and trust between Iceland's players and coaches and the fans that makes it possible to go to the pub and visit them," Hallgrímsson said.

"It just shows the unity with the fans and the respect that we get from them. It's more than a football match with the Iceland fans, you can see it in their eyes, it means a little bit more for them." — AFP

World Cup stars more protected than ever

SAINT PETERSBURG: Almost 10,000 miles separate Yekaterinburg and their school in Montevideo but for a group of Uruguayan children, Jose Gimenez's 89th-minute winner felt within touching distance. As they bolted out of the classroom door and sprawled around the playground outside, some leapt, others soared with their arms outstretched, and the rest just ran.

In physical terms, teams and players at this World Cup have never been further away or more hidden from their fans. And yet, the fans still have a huge influence on football's global showpiece. In the streets of the Iranian capital Tehran on Friday, a traffic warden was being scooped up by cheering supporters, hoisted onto a pair of shoulders after his country had just beaten Morocco for their first World Cup win in 20 years.

Before kick-off, one fan held a banner outside the Saint Petersburg Stadium demanding Iran's women be allowed to support inside, while just over 2,000 miles away in the country's capital, they were blowing into vuvuzelas, perched on the edge of their cars, as fireworks filled the

Black Sea bliss and curious locals greet Nordic teams

GELENDZHNIK: Warmer and sunnier than distant Moscow, Russia's Black Sea coast has been a perfect match for Scandinavian teams as World Cup training bases. The teams, from countries where summer starts late and finishes earlier, are finding the "Russian Riviera" very much to their taste—and its vibe seems to suit their laid-back approach.

"We couldn't wait to get here as even in May we were still scraping snow off cars and pitches at home," Iceland assistant coach Helgi Kolvidsson told AFP. Denmark and Sweden also booked locations along the coast which earned its "Riviera" nickname thanks to its blue water and string of resorts hugging the western foothills of the Caucasian mountain range. "After our game against Argentina in chilly Moscow, we were glad to get back 'home' again," smiled Kolvidsson, who commutes to training sessions in the small resort of Kabardinka by bicycle.

Home for the Nordic minnows is a secluded hotel a five-minute bike ride from the training pitches alongside pine-forested hills and Soviet-era "sanatorium" health and spa complexes. Along the seafloor, Russian tourists in flip-flops swelter on the stony beach, and snack on Caucasian specialties like shashlik (skewered cubes of grilled meat) and chebureki (deep-fried stuffed pastries). But apart from a sighting posted on the town's Instagram page of bearded Iceland captain Aron Gunnarsson having a go at a funfair shooting range, locals have not seen much of the World Cup players.

"We live entirely in the hotel, far from reality," Sweden's Gustav Svensson told AFP at their base in Gelendzhik, ten kilometres along the coast from Kabardinka. Open training sessions after the Nordic teams arrived attracted full houses of cheering locals, with those unable to get in standing on boxes or nearby balconies to catch a glimpse of the action.—AFP



Russia coach 'know how to stop' Egypt's Salah in Saint Petersburg

'Salah will get better and bring happiness to fans of Egypt'

SAINT PETERSBURG: Russia coach Stanislav Cherchesov says the World Cup hosts have figured out a way to rein in Egypt's striker Mohamed Salah today in Saint Petersburg. The 26-year-old has scored 44 goals in a sensational first season for Liverpool and is keen to make his debut after missing the Pharaohs' 1-0 opening game loss to Uruguay with a shoulder injury.

Salah's name has been creeping into conversations often since Russia's 5-0 thumping of Saudi Arabia in the tournament curtainraiser. But Cherchesov said he was not particularly concerned. "We know how to play against him," the Russia coach said. "We are ready to stop Salah and we will."

"The level he will be playing at only he and his coach knows but we have a mission and we will accomplish the mission," Cherchesov said. "I trust in my team, I believe in my players and I will give you a simple answer: we are ready to do this and we will do this."

The bold promise highlights a new swagger that had been missing from the host nation's team for much of the past year. Russia's convincing win over the Saudis was preceded by a seven-match winless streak and a spate of injuries that wiped out almost the entire defensive line.

But the men in red are now on the cusp of making their first knockout stage of a World Cup in post-Soviet

history. The achievement would be a huge relief for both players and Russians who worried about being humiliated on the world's biggest sporting stage.

Standing in their way could be Salah, but his availability has been a headache for Egypt ever since he injured his shoulder during a tussle with Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos during the Champions League final last month. Ramos was accused of deliberately hurting Salah and it has been suggested opponents could target him again, particularly if his shoulder is not fully healed.

"I saw only that Ramos was holding the cup," Cherchesov said. "He did not do this on purpose, this is a contact sport, and as I understand it nobody injures people from other teams on purpose. "Salah will get better and bring happiness to fans of Egypt. Players like him only make tournaments better."

Meanwhile, Russia's early success has seen the number of Russians who say they will follow football rise from 52 percent to 64 percent, according to one poll. Russia's veteran goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev said he would rather focus on winning than any particular opposing player.

"Would I prefer to see Salah play or not? I do not even know how to respond," said Akinfeev. "I would prefer to see my team win." — AFP



MOSCOW: This combination of pictures created on June 17, 2018 shows Russia's coach Stanislav Cherchesov at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow (L) and Egypt's coach Raul Cuper at the Ekaterinburg Arena in Ekaterinburg. Russia will play Egypt in their Russia 2018 World Cup Group A football match at the Saint Petersburg Stadium in Saint Petersburg today. — AFP

Former cleaner and ex-electrician face off at WCup

MOSCOW: A former cleaner and a ex-hotel electrician will occupy the two technical areas when Morocco face Portugal in a World Cup Group B match tomorrow. Morocco coach Herve Renard and his Portugal counterpart Fernando Santos have taken something of a back route into coaching before enjoying huge success, albeit away from the bright lights of the big European leagues.

Renard, whose side lost their opening match 1-0 to Iran, experienced the bitter side of football before landing his first senior role as coach of Zambia 10 years ago. At the age of 15, he had a trial at Cannes, giving him hope of becoming a top-level professional before reality set in.

"As soon as I was confronted by top players, I realised that I was not that good," he said. After ending up as what he described as an "average third tier player", Renard set up a cleaning business which involved collecting rubbish in the middle of the night.

"I often remember those years when I got up at three in the morning to go and clean buildings," he said. "It helps keep all this in perspective." Refusing to give up entirely on football, he began coaching amateur sides and got a breakthrough when globe-trotting compatriot Claude Le Roy spotted Renard and invited him to become his assistant. He has not looked back since.

Always sporting a "lucky" white shirt, Renard led Zambia to their first-ever African Nations Cup title in 2012 and repeated the feat with Ivory Coast three years later before taking Morocco to their first World Cup for 20 years.

Santos, meanwhile, told Reuters in an interview last year that he owed his career to a chance acquaintance at a seaside hotel. In the latter years of his solid but unremarkable playing career, Santos, a qualified electrical engineer, began working in a hotel as chief technician and eventually took on the role full-time.

He had no intention of continuing in football until his employer, who was also president of second-tier Estoril, invited Santos to coach the team on an interim basis. "Instead of six months, I stayed for six years and we went up to the first division," he said.

By the time he was sacked, he had his foot in the door and went on to coach all three of Portugal's major clubs-Benfica, Sporting and Porto - before taking Greece to the last World Cup. The highlight, however, came when he led Portugal to their first-ever major title at Euro 2016.

Like Renard, he said that his humble beginnings has enabled him to keep things in perspective. That mindset is unlikely to change as Portugal seek their first win in Russia after they were held to a 3-3 draw by Spain in their opening match, hailed as one of the best in the competition's 88-year history. —Reuters

Sex, drugs and... don't forget the football, Mexico

MEXICO CITY: Between the orgy accusations and the drug-trafficking charges facing their veteran star, Mexico have had their share of distractions heading into their World Cup opener against Germany on Sunday.

The headaches started last year when the US Treasury Department accused El Tri's longtime captain, Rafael Marquez, of being a "front person" for an international drug-trafficking organization. And they got worse on June 5, when gossip magazine TVNotas reported that nine members of Mexico's World Cup squad had an all-night party with a group of 30 prostitutes after their farewell home match that weekend.

The Mexican Football Federation decided against punishing the players, because "they have not missed training" and "a free day is a free day," in the words of general secretary Guillermo Cantu. But the public condemnation and online mockery have been blistering.

"The federation doesn't have to punish the party-boy players. The public and private ridicule will be more than enough," sports journalist David Faitelson of ESPN

wrote on Twitter. As the scandal swirled, midfielder Hector Herrera asked for a leave of absence from training in Denmark to travel to Portugal, where he is based, and tend to "personal matters," according to media reports.

Trying to calm the storm, star striker Javier "Chicharito" Hernandez posted a video online that he said proved the team "didn't do anything bad"-though he admitted, "I don't think we'd do it again."

The controversy echoes similar scandals around the team in recent years. In September 2010, Mexico players had an all-night party in their hotel with unidentified women after a friendly. On that occasion, the federation fined 11 players and slapped six-month suspensions on defender Efraim Juarez and forward Carlos Vela.

In June 2011, before a trip to Argentina for the Copa America, Mexican players hired sex workers in a hotel in Quito, Ecuador. They were fined and suspended from the team for half a year. The latest chapter has particularly outraged some die-hard fans, who worry the scandal will distract the team going into their high-stakes opening match against the world champions.

"The scandal will affect the family life of those involved, their relationships with their teammates and their performance at the World Cup," said Mexican writer Juan Villoro in a scathing newspaper column entitled "Locker-room anthropology."

Other fans take the view that in football, as in love, it is best to forgive and forget. "I'm with my Mexico, just like during every World Cup," said Alfonso Avila, a 37-

year-old fan. "I hope when the team starts delivering results that all those people who criticized them aren't going to try to jump on the bandwagon."

So will El Tri be distracted by the noise? AFP asked veterans of the Mexican national team to weigh in. "I think it will distract them, and I think a lot of the players will have family problems," said Manuel Negrete, a member of Mexico's 1986 World Cup squad.

"They need to be extremely concentrated on the one-on-one against Germany." But there is nothing new in footballers behaving badly, said 89-year-old Antonio "Tota" Carbajal, a five-time World Cup veteran.

"This isn't the first team to go through this. I went through it myself," he said, recalling an incident from the 1966 World Cup in England, when two players snuck out of training camp to go to a bar and coach Ignacio Trelles followed them to drag them back. This year's squad "did a stupid thing, you can't deny it," he said. "But these things unite the team."

The bigger problem may be longtime leader Marquez's legal woes. Marquez, who was the team captain for years, is playing in his fifth World Cup, and coach Juan Carlos Osorio says he is counting on his leadership. But the 39-year-old arrives in Russia under the cloud of an ongoing drug trafficking investigation that cost him sponsors and forced him to take a nearly three-month break from football last year to focus on his legal defense. "He's a guy whose leadership will be very necessary at the World Cup," said former national team member Joaquin Beltran. —AFP

Messi and Bader Al-Mutawa kick off new 'Enjoy the Internet' campaign with Ooredoo

KUWAIT: Ooredoo and Leo Messi have teamed up once again in a lively new campaign which shows how much fun can be had off the pitch when you dive into a digital world. In a series of immersive videos, viewers are shown a playful side to Leo Messi, Bader Al-Mutawa and local social media influencers as they share a series of unexpected moments.

The integrated "Enjoy the Internet" campaign features Ooredoo's global brand ambassador and one of the world's top football stars, Leo Messi, alongside social media influencers from key markets across Ooredoo's global footprint. In a series of unexpected and highly shareable moments they bring alive a few of the many ways in which people have fun, socialise, shop and express themselves online. The global campaign is made up of localised TVCs, digital content and out-of-home placements. The campaign is set to run across Ooredoo's markets in the Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia. It will run on international TV and digital channels and will be live from June until August.

The Ooredoo family has come together with Messi to create this unique campaign, representative of each of Ooredoo's markets and showing just a few of the ways that the company's

world-class networks help people to experience the digital world and have fun online. In this playful and lively campaign, Messi and the featured influencers have helped bring alive the power of the Ooredoo network and the variety of share-worthy, digital content available.

In the campaign, Messi and social media influencers from key Ooredoo markets become the internet content that they are enjoying on Ooredoo's network. This unique content is tailored in individual TVCs to include local references for each of Ooredoo's markets to ensure maximum relevance for the audience in those specific markets.

Representing the MENA and Southeast Asian countries in which Ooredoo operates, social media celebrities include Bader Al-Mutawa from Kuwait, Madjid Bougherra from Algeria, Ahmed Khalil Al Khaldi from Qatar, Mohammed Al-Araimi from Oman, Ahmed Athif from Maldives and Zenn Kyifrom Myanmar.

The campaign reinforces Ooredoo's brand promise to enrich people's digital lives and highlights the key role that it plays in enabling people to better enjoy the Internet through its world-class networks and incredible, share-worthy content. Messi has been global brand ambas-



sador for Ooredoo since 2013, supporting the company's vision of enriching people's lives around the world. Messi is the star forward for FC Barcelona and Argentina's National Team. He is widely recognised as the world's greatest football player. He holds five FIFA BallonsD'or and is the only player in football history to have won four of these consecutively.

Ooredoo launched its first-ever global campaign with Messi, Simply Do Wonders, during the 2014 World Cup,

which showcased the skills and aspirations of young people around the world. In a follow up to this award-winning campaign, a second campaign, Together We Do Wonders, was launched in 2016 highlighting the possibilities that technology can bring about. As the company's global brand ambassador Messi has also hosted special football training sessions for young people in Doha, and made dreams come true by meeting inspiring youth from countries across Ooredoo's global footprint.

Sports



SNIPPETS



VAR penalty gives Sweden a narrow win over South Korea

Toothless S Korea did not manage one shot on target

NIZHNIY NOVGOROD: A VAR-awarded penalty gave Sweden a narrow but deserved victory in their opening Group F match against a poor South Korea side in Nizhny Novgorod yesterday. Veteran Swedish skipper Andreas Granqvist scored the only goal of the game from the spot after Viktor Claesson was upended by South Korean substitute Kim Min-woo Kim in the 62nd minute. Despite furious appeals, El Salvadoran referee Joel Aguilar, who had ironically been whistle-happy up until that point, initially waved away Swedish penalty claims. But after consulting the video, he pointed to the spot.

It was the third VAR penalty awarded at these championships after France and Peru also benefitted from video referrals. The win was reward for Sweden's more attacking approach, but it was unsurprising the winner came from the penalty spot in a game between two sides who had only managed two goals between them in seven games heading into Russia.

Sweden never really convinced that they would score prior to the penalty despite their domination and a toothless South Korea did not manage one shot on target. However they should have equalised in the 90th minute but Hwang Hee-chan put a free header wide, spurning the Koreans' best chance of the game by far.

The victory leaves Sweden joint top of the group after Mexico's surprise victory against world champions Germany on Sunday. Next up for the Swedes is an intriguing encounter against Germany in Sochi on June 23.

South Korea started the game brightly, forcing the first corner in the fourth minute, but were gradually forced back by an attritional Swedish side. It was the Europeans who came closest to breaking the deadlock when forward Marcus Berg was denied by a fine point-blank save Jo Hyeon-woo in the 20th minute. Berg was denied again nine minutes later by a desperate



NIZHNIY NOVGOROD: South Korea's forward Son Heung-min (C) dribbles past Sweden's midfielder Viktor Claesson (L) during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group F football match between Sweden and South Korea at the Nizhny Novgorod Stadium in Nizhny Novgorod yesterday.—AFP

last-ditch block from Kim Young-gwon.

Despite their increasing dominance, Sweden also demonstrated why they have struggled to score goals. Berg, again, and Claesson went close before the end of the half, but it was clear for everyone to see why they had only scored once in their four matches prior to Russia.

Korea threatened only on the break where Son Heung-min's pace troubled 33-year-old Granqvist, who was without defending partner Victor Lindelof, who was ill. The somewhat rancorous build-up to the game—where Sweden

were accused of spying on their opponents—was increasingly reflected in the niggly nature of the match. Resilient Sweden held firm after the goal and the Hwang late scare aside, and a half-hearted South Korea appeal for a penalty, their defence rarely looked troubled. The huge celebrations, the first match played in the \$290 million stadium, at the end showed the importance the Swedes attached to this match. Before the game, South Korea's coach Tae Yong-shin called it a "must win" game but the defeat leaves his side contemplating only an early exit. —AFP

Neymar hobbled by Swiss in slow start for Brazil

SAINT PETERSBURG: Battered and bruised by a barrage of Swiss fouls, Neymar hobbled out the Rostov Arena having failed to inspire the expected start to Brazil's World Cup, after the pre-tournament favourites were held to a 1-1 draw by Switzerland.

The world's most expensive player told journalists there was "nothing to worry about" regarding his latest knock, but there is concern whether Neymar can perform to the levels needed to lead his country to a sixth World Cup title, having not played any competitive football for four months ahead of the tournament.

Neymar's season at club level with Paris Saint-Germain ended when breaking a bone in his foot in February. To the frustration of many in the French capital, he spent much of his recovery time back in Brazil with the intention of getting in the best shape possible for a potentially career-defining tournament.

A stunning individual run and finish on his return in a pre-tournament friendly against Croatia and his 55th international goal against Austria a week later appeared to quash fears over his fitness. But as many of the World Cup favourites have found so far in Russia, friendly performances mean little when the competition kicks off for real and Brazil were found wanting against an aggressive and well-organised Swiss side. Neymar was fouled 10 times, more than any player in a single World Cup match since Alan Shearer 20 years ago, and provoked Switzerland's three yellow cards for Stephan Lichtsteiner, Fabian Schaer and Valon Behrami.

Mexican referee Cesar Ramos's handling of the Swiss tactics divided opinion among fans and commentators as some called for greater protection for one of the world's best players, while many believed Neymar was too quick to go to ground.

"I was a little bit worried about the referee," said Arsenal full-back Lichtsteiner. "Every time they fell down it was a whistle, a foul. This was a bit of a challenge. You think 'don't be too aggressive' because every time they go down it's a foul."

Given the success of Switzerland's rugged approach, Neymar can expect more of the same against Costa Rica and Serbia with the pressure upped on Brazil to rediscover the form they

showed in qualifying.

Brazil's transformation in two years under coach Tite has been characterised by the speed of their transitions from defence to attack as Neymar combined to great effect with Gabriel Jesus and Philippe Coutinho.

However, after a bright start capped by Coutinho's wonder strike to open the scoring, the game too often slowed down when it reached Neymar as he tried to humiliate Lichtsteiner rather than keep the ball moving.

For all the attacking talent available to Tite, Neymar remains the man Brazil turn to in times of need as the ball was shuffled out left to him time and again as the clock ran down. However, with one of Brazil's other major threats in Marcelo also operating down that flank, there is a risk that without the injured Dani Alves at right-back, Tite's men become unbalanced and easier to defend against.

"It was very good teamwork on the right side: Behrami, Schaer and me. It was almost a perfect game. It's important to have this teamwork," added Lichtsteiner. History shows there is still time for Brazil to recover, Switzerland beat eventual winners Spain in their opening game in 2010 and held finalists France at the group stage in 2006. But Brazil need Neymar to get back up to speed as quickly as possible. —AFP

Enjoy WCup fever with instant prizes Nissan Al Babbain genuine parts offer

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Co., the sole authorized dealer of Nissan in the State of Kuwait, announces the special summer genuine parts campaign that is valid until July 15. In lieu of the year's biggest excitement for all football fans in Kuwait, the seasonal offer comes to reward its loyal customers. Al Babbain is committed and ensures all Nissan vehicle owners, best aftersales care, reliability and safety of the vehicles on Kuwait roads at affordable prices throughout ownership period.

Nissan vehicle owners will now be entitled to win valuable instant gifts on purchase of Nissan Genuine parts worth KD 50 net value from any of Al Babbain parts & service centers (excluding paint and body repair shop). To truly live the spirit of the game, buyers can expect gifts ranging from a sports channel package, footballs, gaming consoles and more.

Nissan recommends that regular servicing and general vehicle maintenance is integral to reliability, roadworthiness and safety of the vehicle, driver and their family.

So what's keeping you? Nissan Al Babbain urges everyone to earn their well-deserved football season mementos and purchase Nissan

genuine parts at our authorized outlets located in Al Rai, Shuwaikh, Canada Dry St., Ardhiya, Sulaibiya, Jahra, Ahmadi and Fahaheel.



| Live | | Matches on TV |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------------|
| | | (Local Timings) |
| WORLD CUP 2018 | | |
| Colombia v Japan | 15:00 | |
| beIN SPORTS HD 1 FR | | |
| beIN SPORTS MAX 2 HD AR | | |
| beIN SPORTS MAX 1 HD AR | | |
| Poland v Senegal | 18:00 | |
| beIN SPORTS HD 1 FR | | |
| beIN SPORTS MAX 2 HD AR | | |
| beIN SPORTS MAX 1 HD AR | | |
| Russia v Egypt | 21:00 | |
| beIN SPORTS HD 1 FR | | |
| beIN SPORTS MAX 2 HD AR | | |
| beIN SPORTS MAX 1 HD AR | | |

25 Coach Joachim Loew defiant as Germany face World Cup crisis



26 Russia coach 'know how to stop' Egypt's Salah in Saint Petersburg



27 VAR penalty gives Sweden a narrow win over South Korea



VOLGOGRAD: Tunisia's defender Dylan Bronn (2R) jumps for the ball during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group G football match between Tunisia and England at the Volgograd Arena in Volgograd yesterday.—AFP

England beat Tunisia in opening match

Captain fantastic Kane to the rescue with two goals

VOLGOGRAD: Captain Harry Kane came to the rescue with two goals, the second a dramatic injury-time winner, as England began their World Cup Group G campaign with a stuttering 2-1 win over Tunisia yesterday.

Gareth Southgate's men almost paid a heavy price for missing a slew of first-half chances when Tunisia's Ferjani Sassi slotted home a softly-awarded penalty 20 minutes before half-time. And the north Africans were still level as the game went past the 90-minute mark.

But Harry Maguire won a header from a corner and Kane was on hand at the far post to nod in the winner before being mobbed by his ecstatic teammates. England had started brightly in a blur of passing and

movement and could have been two goals up inside the first four minutes.

First Jordan Henderson's lofted first-time pass released Dele Alli and when the ball eventually broke to Jesse Lingard he saw his shot from six yards saved by the outstretched left boot of Mouez Hassen in the Tunisia goal.

Kane had been kept quiet in the opening salvos but he exploded into action in the 11th minute when he cut inside from the left and saw his shot from the edge of the box deflected wide for a corner.

Ashley Young delivered the set piece for John Stones to rise highest and meet with a powerful header. Hassen saved acrobatically but Kane was on hand

to tap home the rebound with his right foot and open his World Cup account. Hassen, who had injured his left shoulder making an earlier save, could not continue and left the field in tears as he was replaced in goal by Farouk Ben Mustapha. England continued to press and were made to pay for not converting a succession of chances when they conceded a soft penalty.

Kyle Walker swung a lazy arm across Fakhreddine Ben Youssef who fell as if poleaxed and Colombian referee Wilmar Roldan pointed to the spot, with his decision being upheld by the VAR.

Ferjani Sassi took one step and fired home confidently past the hitherto unemployed Jordan Pickford and Tunisia who had been outplayed for the first half-

hour were somehow level 10 minutes before half-time. Still there was time for Lingard to come close again twice, first from a goalbound shot and then a dink over the keeper which agonisingly struck the post.

Alli too hit the woodwork with a header and England went into half-time wondering how they had not sealed victory already. England still enjoyed the lion's share of possession but could not find the same zip and penetration they had enjoyed at the start of the first half.

The ineffective Sterling gave way to Marcus Rashford with just over 20 minutes to go and the Manchester United man almost fashioned a chance straight away with a jinking run into the box. — AFP

Lukaku double as Belgium outclass brave Panama

SOCHI: A stunning volley from Dries Mertens and a Romelu Lukaku double broke the resistance of a brave Panama side on their World Cup debut as Belgium cruised to a 3-0 win in their opening Group G game yesterday.

Mertens hammered home a superb volley two minutes into the second half, sending the ball arcing over Jaime Penedo after Panama struggled to clear a cross. Lukaku's hard work up front was rewarded when he headed home Kevin De Bruyne's brilliant pass off the outside of his foot to make it 2-0 in the 69th minute and the big striker latched on to an Eden Hazard pass to complete the scoring with a neat finish. The announcement of the first team to represent the Central American nation at the World Cup finals was greeted by an ear-splitting roar from the thousands of flag-waving

Panamanian fans dotted in clusters around the Fisht Stadium.

The debutants endured a shaky start as Lukaku went close for Belgium in the opening minute after an incisive pass from De Bruyne set Yannick Carrasco free down the left, but the striker fired wide. Despite being forced to spend much of the game defending, the Panamanians showed strength, speed and trickery when they did break forward, and they created chances of their own in a scoreless first half. Belgium wasted no time in the second period as Mertens quickly opened the scoring and as the underdogs started to chase an equaliser the space opened up. The Belgians showcased an array of clever set-pieces and will be happy with their performance against a physical Panama side ahead of games against Tunisia and England, who meet in Volgograd later on Monday.

"That first win in the World Cup is always a special moment. Panama, as we expected, played very organised, very well-drilled (but) we were patient," Belgium coach Roberto Martinez told reporters.

"The second half, that little bit of quality of Dries Mertens and then Eden Hazard and

Romelu Lukaku with Kevin De Bruyne being instrumental in those attacks."

OPENING GOAL

The opening goal came as a relief to the Belgians, who have seen other favourites struggle against well-organised opponents in the opening round of World Cup games. "It was tough. A long run-up to the World Cup and finally you have the first match and everybody expects so much," Martinez said.

"You have such an urge to run and do your thing and then you notice your legs don't cooperate. You see it with every team in their first match. I hope the second match goes better," the Spaniard added.

The Belgians put their slow start behind them in the second half as their passing game started to click, but Panama still managed to find opportunities for counter-attacks and were unlucky not to score.

"It is a result that can't be positive because we lost 3-0 but they could have won by a landslide," Panama coach Hernan Dario Gomez told a news conference. "I think we did a good job - some people thought we would lose by seven goals but it was only 3-0," he said. — Reuters



SOCHI: Belgium's forward Romelu Lukaku (R) is fouled by Panama's defender Erick Davis (C) and Panama's defender Fidel Escobar during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group G football match between Belgium and Panama at the Fisht Stadium in Sochi yesterday.—AFP