

2 Kuwait student arrested for attacking a principal



24 Tensions soar as Israel hits Gaza militia bases



28 Nadal, Sharapova survive scares as Serena returns



رمضان
Ramadan Mawsoom

IMSAK	03:06
FAJR	03:17
DHUHR	11:45
ASR	15:20
MAGHRIB	18:42
ISHA	20:12

Qatar's Shura Council approves a draft law on permanent residency

Gulf state moves closer to granting permanent residency to foreigners



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received chief of Iraq's Al-Sadri Movement Seyyed Muqtada Al-Sadr at Dasman Palace yesterday. The audience was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

DOHA: Qatar has moved closer to granting permanent residency to foreigners after its senior legislative body approved a draft law, first announced in the wake of the ongoing Gulf crisis. State media reported the Shura Council agreed on Monday to back a law which would grant residency to expatriates who provide valuable services as well as to the children of Qatari women married to non-Qataris. "The Advisory (Shura) Council approved a draft law on permanent residency," the Qatar News Agency reported. Permanent residents would be allowed to have free state education, health-care and be given the right to own property. It is thought to be the first such law proposed by one of the energy-rich Gulf states.

It was first announced last August just two months after Qatar was boycotted by neighboring former allies in a bitter diplomatic dispute. Like other nations in the region, Qatar relies massively on foreign labor. Its current population of 2.71 million, a record, is made up of almost 90 per cent non-nationals, many helping the country prepare to host the 2022 World Cup. There are some 315,000 Qatari nationals. The residency proposal will now be considered by Qatar's cabinet and Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani before it becomes law.

Continued on Page 24



DOHA: People walk on the corniche of the Qatari capital Doha in this file photo. Qatar's Shura Council agreed on Monday to back a law which would grant residency to expatriates who provide valuable services as well as to the children of Qatari women married to non-Qataris. — AFP

Stories of prophets

Ramadan Kareem

By Teresa Leshner

The Quran, which was first revealed in the month of Ramadan, mentions 25 prophets by name, and relates their stories as a guidance for contemporary communities. Through these stories, we see a general pattern of how Almighty God sent various people to warn their communities of the dire consequences of worshipping false gods and committing shameful acts, and the events that transpired when those prophets confronted their people.

Although, according to the Quran, there will be no more prophets after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). We can benefit from his story as well as those of the prophets who came before him. One of the most eminent prophets was Abraham, who is mentioned 73 times in the Quran. He rejected the worship of celestial bodies, fire, and all false gods. The Quran says, "When the night covered him over, he saw a star. He said, 'This is my Lord.' But when it set, he said, 'I love not those that set.'

When he saw the moon rising in splendor, he said, 'This is my Lord.' But when the moon set, he said, 'Unless my Lord guide me, I shall surely be among those who go astray.' When he saw the sun rising in splendor, he said, 'This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all).' But when the sun set, he said, 'O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to Allah. For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah'" [6:75-79].

Abraham was a staunch believer and pure monotheist - an example for all people. The Quran says, "And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham except one who makes a fool of himself... When his Lord said to him, 'Submit,' he said, 'I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds.'" (2:130-131). Abraham and his son Ishmael build the Kaaba in Makkah, around which Muslims pray until today.

Another well-known prophet mentioned in the Quran is Noah, who spent his long life calling people to worship the one true God, but whose message was rejected except by a few. He was ordered to build the ark, which resulted in even more ridicule from his people. Finally, God saved him and those with him for their belief from the deluge that destroyed an obstinate, defiant, sinful people. Other prophets include Jacob, Joseph, David and Solomon, as well as Job, Jonah, and lot, all whose stories are interspersed throughout the Quran.

Each had extraordinary gifts or events associated with their names, but the essence of each story is the same: they exclusively worshipped the Creator of the universe, and invited others to share the blessings of the wholesome way of life ordained by God. For their sincerity and persistence, they earned status with God, who has made them examples for all believers to follow.

Continued on Page 24

UAE bans imports from Indian state

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has banned imports of fresh vegetables and fruits from the southern Indian state of Kerala where 13 people have died due to an outbreak of the rare brain-damaging Nipah virus, the Gulf state said yesterday. The UAE's Ministry of Climate Change and Environment also notified other local authorities, including the Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority and the municipalities of its emirates, to prevent the entry of any fresh produce from Kerala, it said in a statement.

The ministry suspects that fruit bats are the source of the virus. It said it was banning fresh produce, including mangoes, dates and bananas - the bats' preferred fruits. Indian health officials have not been able to trace the origin of the Nipah outbreak and have begun a fresh round of tests on fruit bats from Perambra, the suspected epicenter of the infection. Kerala has sent 116 suspected cases for testing in recent weeks, 15 have been confirmed with the deadly disease and 13 of these people have died, with two patients still undergoing treatment.

No confirmed cases of the virus have been found outside the state. There is no vaccine for the virus, which is spread through body fluids and can cause encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain, the World Health Organization (WHO) says. Last week, the UAE consulate in Kerala advised travelers to take precautions and follow safety instructions issued by the Indian authorities. The Gulf state has also banned imports of live animals from South Africa, based on a notification from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) of the registration of Rift Valley Fever disease, the ministry said. — Reuters

Terror attack leaves 4 dead in Belgian city

LIEGE: A man killed two policewomen and a bystander in the Belgian city of Liege yesterday before being shot dead in a gunbattle at a school in what prosecutors are treating as a terrorist attack. The man was named by public broadcaster RTBF as a 36-year-old petty criminal who had been let out on day-release from a local prison on Monday. It said investigators were looking into whether he converted to Islam and had been radicalized in jail.



LIEGE: In this video grab, police and emergency vehicles block a crossroad in the eastern Belgian city of Liege, after a gunman shot dead three people, two of them policemen, before being killed by elite officers. — AFP

MPs object decision on Kuwaitis in private sector

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers yesterday objected to a government decision to place a body overseeing Kuwaitis employed in the private sector to the Public Manpower Authority which supervises over two million expatriate workers. The Assembly also agreed that the Audit Bureau will conduct an investigation into the accounts of the Cabinet to see if funds were spent in violation of the law. MPs also approved budgets for eight government entities.

MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf said the deci-

sion to merge a government body that encourages Kuwaitis to seek jobs in the private sector with the Manpower Authority is ill-advised and was taken without proper studies. Hajraf said that it is unacceptable to merge some 90,000 Kuwaitis in the private sector with some two million expatriate workers, adding that the government sector is lagging and does not encourage to the contrary of the private sector. The lawmaker called for freezing the decision until the Assembly health and labor committee completed its report on the issue.

MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri said that the planned merger is a humiliation to Kuwaitis, and charged that it is an objective being sought by senior officials in the government. The opposition lawmaker called for a new assembly that can work to serve the interests of Kuwaitis. MP Abdullah Al-Roumi described the decision as incorrect and will have serious negative consequences in the future if implemented.

Continued on Page 24

News in brief

Salaries before Eid

KUWAIT: The salaries of government employees for the month of June would be paid on Wednesday, June 13, 2018 - before the Eid Al-Fitr holiday. The Ministry of Finance issued the order yesterday.

Fierce storms kill 47

NEW DELHI: Fierce storms which swept across northern India have killed at least 47, taking the death toll from freak weather over the past month to several hundred, officials said yesterday. The storms and lightning strikes toppled walls and power pylons or electrocuted victims, as temperatures in India rose as high as 48.6 Celsius. Disaster management officials in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand said 47 people had died in night-time storms that swept across the region. Bihar was the worst hit, pounded by strong winds and thunderbolts. "At least 19 people have been confirmed dead. 11 of them due to lightning," Yoginder Singh, a Bihar state disaster management official said. — AFP

32 killed in Cameroon

YAOUNDE: The death toll from a firefight in an English-speaking region of Cameroon shaken by an armed separatist campaign stands at 32, including five "hostages," the government said. The clash erupted at a motel last Friday in Menka, in the Northwest Region - one of two regions gripped by fighting over the last eight months. "Twenty-seven terrorists (were) neutralized" by a 30-member special unit of police and troops, government spokesman Tchiroma Bakary, who is also communications minister, said late Monday. — AFP

Local

Student arrested after attacking school principal in Dhaher

Anger mounts over new anti-cheating control measures

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and agencies

KUWAIT: A high school student was arrested yesterday after attacking a school principal in protest after he was barred from taking his finals for cheating, in yet the latest incident of angry reactions to unprecedented tough control measures taken at examination halls around Kuwait this year.

The Ministry of Education had taken extra measures to prevent cheating in this year's finals in public schools, including tougher penalties against students caught cheating. In that case, a student is barred from taking all of his finals even if they were caught cheating in one test. In the past, a cheating student would only fail the subject of the test they were caught cheating on.

The new measures were widely met with anger among students, whose protests - including sit-ins outside the ministry's building - have failed to convince officials to reconsider what they believe are 'harsh punishments', while some incidents turned violent as several cases were reported of control personnel being physically and verbally assaulted by students caught cheating.

Legal measures have been taken against the student who assaulted the head of the final exams' committee at Haroun Al-Rasheed School in Dhaher on Monday, the

Interior Ministry's relation and security media department announced yesterday. The department said misdemeanor case number 83/2018 was filed against the student, who was immediately arrested and handed to the police. Moreover, the Interior Ministry announced that police patrols were stationed outside all schools to fight any negative phenomenon and enforce the law.

Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamid Al-Azmi reassured on the school principal's health following the attack. Azmi assured the ministry's keenness on preserving the dignity of teachers and that it will continue further investigating the case of Hashim Al-Hashemi, head of the high school, who was attacked by a student while supervising the final exams. In a statement to KUNA yesterday, Azmi condemned the recent incident that occurred involving the Ministry of Education's employees.

He stressed persistence by the Ministry in dealing with this type of case by protecting the rights of its employees, making sure that any verbal or physical attacks upon any of the educational body or students will face legal consequences. The Minister revealed that surveillance cameras have been setup to help in the exam monitoring process to eliminate any doubt when it comes to dealing with these types of cases, while also monitoring any acts of cheating. This procedure is to create a calm and comfortable envi-

ronment for the educational body and students during final exam sessions, said Azmi. He praised efforts exerted by all staffers in this regard.

Municipality inspection

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department announced that Hawally inspection teams inspected various stores, restaurants, groceries and kindergartens to make sure their commercial signage are legal, said the head of the demolitions department Ayedh Al-Qahtani, noting that 136 citations were filed during the tour.

Body found

The Hawally prosecutor sent the body of a 30-year-old citizen to the coroner to find the cause of his sudden death. A security source said an elderly man called police and told them his son was in the bathroom for a long time, then when he broke the door open, he found him unconscious. The man died en route to the hospital, Al-Anbaba reported.

Thieves caught

The interior ministry started an investigation to identify four thieves who mugged a driver and stole his car and wallet that contained KD 70 and official documents. The

driver said he went to Qairawan to take a person to Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, where he was mugged.

Lawyers jailed

The public prosecution ordered five lawyers and six of their mandoubs (representatives) detained, while a sixth lawyer was released on a KD 5,000 bail, as they are accused of bribing two court session secretaries. The prosecution had earlier ordered travel bans on the lawyers as they will face questioning on bribery charges. A source said the action followed the arrest of the two secretaries on charges of negligence after a file was lost, but after reviewing their WhatsApp accounts, exchanges with several lawyers indicated illegal activities. Investigations revealed bank transfers from the lawyers' accounts to one secretary of KD 70,000 and KD 10,000 to the other.

Mugging suspect arrested

Farwaniya detectives arrested a bedoon who used to abduct Asians, Taser and stab them, then asked their families for KD 1,000 in ransom to release them. A security source said there are six cases against him. The source said the suspect was arrested red-handed, and several expats were found in his car with their hands tied with plastic cuffs.

Ports authority, logistics company officials face charges

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A number of officials at Kuwait Ports Authority and a logistic services company were referred to the public prosecution on public funds' embezzlement charges upon a report made by the acting chief of the State Audit Bureau, official spokesperson of the Public Anti-Corruption Authority Dr Mohammad Bu Zobar said yesterday. Bu Zobar explained that the State Audit Bureau found that the officials were involved in directly contracting the logistics services company, allowing it to utilize storage spaces without following proper legal procedures, which wasted over KD 1.072 million that should have been paid to the state treasury. The officials are also facing charges of facilitating usurping of public funds.

Hospital roads

Chairman of the public authority for roads and land transport Ahmad Al-Hessan announced 10 percent of a project to build roads, bridges and services surrounding Sheikh Jaber Hospital in South Surra is completed. He added that the project is proceeding steadily according to schedule, noting that the project aims at improving the current road capacity and reducing traffic congestions during rush hours.

Electronic links

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-

Sabah said electronic links between hospitals, polyclinics and medical warehouses will be launched soon. Speaking on the sidelines of attending a ghabqa held by Kuwait Pharmaceutical Association (KPA) and attended by undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha and assistant undersecretary for international control and inspection Dr Abdullah Al-Bader, Sheikh Basel stressed the ministry's keenness on resolving pharmacists' problems and meeting their demands. He also promised to contact the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to adjust Master's and PhD degree allowances for pharmacists. KPA Chairman Dr Waleed Al-Shemmari hailed the efforts exerted by the minister and thanked him for attending the ghabqa.

Employees' demands

The head of the Kuwait Public Transport Company (KPTC) employees' syndicate Khaled Al-Awadhi said employees' rights are a 'red line' and pointed out that neglecting employees' demands for many years was the main reason behind citizens' reluctance to work for the company. "Over 400 Kuwaiti employees quit, leaving only 70 who are making the demands," he underlined, noting that the demands include pay hikes, incentives and promotions. "Some KPTC employees have been in service for over 20 years and earn less than KD 1,000 including child allowances," Awadhi said.

Defense Minister decorates officers with new rank

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday decorated a number of officers with the Major General rank, in implementation of an order by His Highness the Amir and the Armed Forces Supreme Commander Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The minister conveyed greetings from HH the Amir and HH the Crown Prince to the promoted officers. —KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah decorates an officer with the Major General rank.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and military officials pose with the promoted officers. — Defense Ministry photos

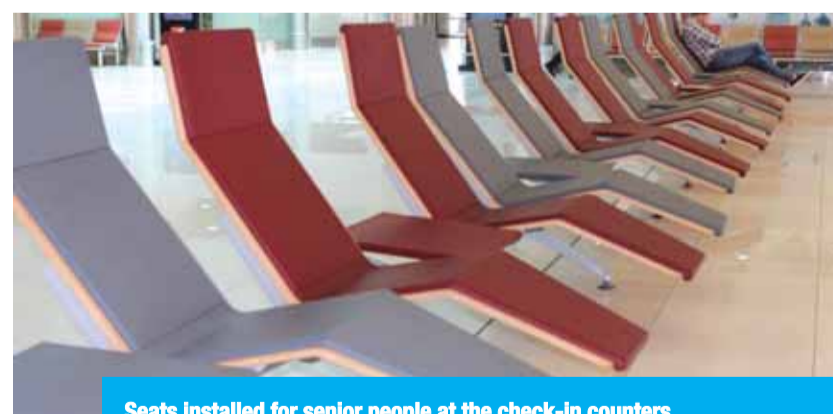
Kuwait Airport ready for summer season

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said yesterday it was carrying out refurbishments in Terminal I of Kuwait International Airport for the 2018 summer season. DGCA temporarily stopped additional flights of carriers and will allow airlines to send bigger planes in exceptional circumstances, Director General Yusuf Al-Fozan said.

He noted that DGCA also transferred

15 percent of traffic to Sheikh Saad Terminal (T3) and Al-Jazeera terminal (T5). "We seek to transfer Kuwait Airways flights to the new Terminal Four (T4) by the end of this summer season," added Fozan.

This distribution, he said, would create a relative balance among the four terminals until the opening of Terminal Two (T2) in 2022. Fozan said new self check-in machines were installed, and conveyor belts were modernized. New seats were installed for the senior people at the check-in counters, security check points were increased from five to nine, while immigration counters increased from 10 to 22. DGCA, said Fozan, would issue messages for the travelers through social media. — KUNA



Seats installed for senior people at the check-in counters.



New self check-in machines.

Interior fights 'negative phenomena' in Salwa

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah said responding to residents' complaints, special security teams were formed to fight 'negative phenomena' in Salwa. Speaking at MP Mubarak Al-Harees' diwaniya with the attendance of his assistant undersecretary for criminal security affairs Maj Gen Khalid Al-Deyyeen, assistant undersecretary for public security Maj Gen Ibrahim Al-Tarrah, a number of lawmakers and Salwa residents, Jarrah expressed his keenness on meeting public demands and maintaining security.

Domestic labor department

An official source at the Public Authority for Manpower said the teams formed last week to transfer the domestic labor department's liabilities from the Interior Ministry to the authority have already started holding meetings to legally, administratively and technically discuss the transfer. The sources added that procedures to merge the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) and the manpower authority are going according to schedule.

Mini-hospital

The Ministry of Health (MoH) is getting ready to launch a mini-hospital in Sabah Al-Ahmed City, said informed sources, noting that preparations are in progress to provide the hospital with all medical equipment and needs so that it could be opened in 2-5 months. The sources added that the hospital will be administratively subjected to Al-Adan Hospital.

Political developments

Former MP and minister Ali Al-Omar announced the Islamic Salafist Alliance is ready for any political developments including running in new parliamentary elections. Speaking to reporters during a ghabqa held at his diwaniya in Qurtuba, Omar stressed his respect of the results of all parliamentary elections. Responding to a question about how he saw relations between the legislatives and executives, Omar said political stability is present and expressed hope that such relations continue. Separately, Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) member and MP Osama Al-Shaheen said Ramadan had affected political and parliamentary practices the way it does with family relations. Commenting on the withdrawn citizenships issue, Shaheen expressed optimism and hoped the problem will be resolved soon. Shaheen added that interpellations are part of the constitutional rights of lawmakers. He also excluded the likelihood that the current parliament would be dissolved, noting that this decision is in the hand of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Assembly approves NATO agreement

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly on Monday overwhelmingly approved a transit agreement with NATO signed more than two years ago which allows the North Atlantic Treaty Organization open an office in the country. The agreement, the first with a Gulf state, facilitates the transfer of personnel, supplies and equipment to Afghanistan. It will also make any future NATO activity in Kuwait much more effective. MP Adnan Abdulsamad said the agreement should not violate Kuwait's sovereignty. The assembly also approved a security cooperation agreement with Iraq besides a number of procedural agreements on avoiding double taxation with a number of countries.

In the first of a series of Ramadan sessions, the National Assembly approved budgets for eight establishments and independent authorities and is scheduled to continue approving budgets for other bodies before closing the current term.

Following discussions, MPs voted to approve the 2018/2019 budgets and the 2016/2017 closing financial statements for Public Authority of Industry, the Zakat House, the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, the Kuwait Ports Authority, the communications authority, the telecom and information tech-

nology commission, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Kuwait Municipality and the public authority for people with special needs.

Head of the budgets committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said the budget of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) has not been sent so far and this threatens to delay closing the term. MP Ali Al-Deqbasai said that any budget should essentially serve to create more jobs for Kuwaitis. He strongly criticized the communications authority because of massive alleged violations in the newly established body.

Opposition MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf called on the assembly to reject all the budgets because of the large number of violations committed. He also criticized the communications authority saying that it was established to be used for the elite only.

MP Khaled Al-Oteibi said ministers and senior officials are unable to deal with more than 200 violations and comments made from last year on the budgets which is a very serious matter, adding that the assembly should strongly counter politically-motivated appointments in key posts in the government and its agencies.

MP Mohammad Al-Dallal charged that several state bodies suffer from mismanagement in running their administration and investments and we need to know if there is a real supervision over Kuwait's investments overseas.

Head of the budgets committee acknowledged that multi-billion investments with several state agencies like KPC need to be reevaluated, adding that the State Audit Bureau said it was increasing the number of its personnel to be dispatched to review such investments.

Local

Amir receives outgoing ambassador, CAN members



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the Ambassador of Hungary to Kuwait Mihaly Bayer. — KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of the Board of Directors of CAN Campaign Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Awadhi, Vice Chairman Dr Khaled Al-Sahei, and members Dr Rashid Al-Hamad and Dr Ali Al-Self.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received the Ambassador of Hungary to Kuwait Mihaly Bayer at the Seif Palace yesterday on the occasion of the end of his tenure. His Highness the Amir also received Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Cancer Awareness National Campaign (CAN) Dr Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al-Awadhi, Vice Chairman Dr Khaled Ahmed Al-Sahei, and members Dr Rashid Hamad Al-Hamad and Dr Ali Yousif Al-Seif. Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah attended the meeting. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Ambassador Bayer and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the Hungarian Ambassador to Kuwait Mihaly Bayer.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Woman journalist hails 'greater press freedom' in Kuwait

MADRID: Kuwaiti women journalists were among the first in the Arab region to enjoy freedom of the press, said a Kuwaiti journalist on Monday. Back when press freedom had eluded many countries around the region, freedom of the media was thriving in Kuwait, Rabaa Al-Jumaa, a member of the Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA), said after a conference over women and journalism held in the northern Spanish port city of Santander.



MADRID: Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) member Rabaa Al-Jumaa speaks during a conference over women and journalism in Spain. — KUNA

She pointed out that gender disparity continues to be a "growing concern at a time where information and smart technologies have grown exponentially." The Kuwaiti journalist went on to encourage women to continue to break barriers and lead by example to ensure a brighter future, citing KJA chief Fatma Hussein as the epitome of an influential journalist whose contributions stand the test of time. "Arab societies need to re-evaluate the increasingly significant role of women," she said, adding that she plans to foray into humanitarian endeavors through her journalistic prowess. The International

Federation of Journalists (IFJ)-hosted conference brought together a bevy of prolific journalists to examine gender parity in the field of journalism. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) member Rabaa Al-Jumaa poses with participants in the conference.

Ambassador, Vershinin discuss cooperation at UNSC

MOSCOW: Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Russia Abdulaziz Al-Adwani discussed yesterday with Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Vershinin ways of cooperation at the United Nations Security Council, with an emphasis on the developments in Syria. Russian Foreign Ministry said in a

statement that the two men also discussed bilateral cooperation in the United Security Council, in which the State of Kuwait is a non-permanent member. Kuwait won in June 2017 membership of the UNSC for 2018-2019 after obtaining 188 out of 192 votes at the UN General Assembly. — KUNA

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International Advertising Association (IAA), Crowne Plaza Hotel host their annual ghabka

IAA 80 Years of Creativity Worldwide and 20 Years of Achievements in Kuwait



KUWAIT: The International Advertising Association (IAA) and Crowne Plaza hotel hosted a joint venture annual ghabka on 20th May 2018 in Al Baraka Grand Ballroom under the patronage of the Governor of Farwaniya Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah. The event was attended by Adnan Al Rashed Honorary IAA President, Walid Kanafani President of IAA Kuwait Chapter, Antoine Flouty Area General Manger Kuwait, General Manager Crown Plaza and Holiday Inn Kuwait Al-Thuraya City, along with top VIP officials from media, advertising agencies, public relations companies, consultancy firms and market researchers.

Walid Kanafani, the IAA President of Kuwait Chapter, extended his Ramadan wishes to everybody. Kanafani detailed in a full presentation the major IAA achievements and activities during last two years. Kanafani mentioned that 2018 is a very special year for the IAA, we are celebrating our 80th Anniversary worldwide and 20th Anniversary in Kuwait. On this occasion a new Logo, Identity and updated objectives and strategies have been released.

Kanafani highlighted the participation of IAA Kuwait Chapter in the IAA Global Marketing Summit in New York April 2018 as well as the participation in IAA Board meeting and IAA 80th Anniversary Celebration in New York April 2018 and Dubai Lynx held in March 18

as a major achievement. He announced the future participation of the chapter in Cannes lions June 2018, IAA Global Conference in Bucharest October 2018 and IAA World Congress in India February 2019.

Kanafani discussed the success of the major Apprentice conference 2 that IAA Kuwait held in April 2018. The IAA Apprentice Conference was conceived to contribute to the much talked about challenges for the marketing and communications industry in attracting the best and brightest young men and women. The inaugural event brought together junior and senior undergraduate students as well as young industry professional delegates. The program includes presentations, discussions and workshops with regional and international industry professionals, recruiters and clients where students had the chance to listen, practice, network and impress! The central idea is to enhance and empower graduating students with first-hand knowledge of real world industry practice and opportunities in the new communications landscape and to help them get hired. The event witnessed 12 professional speakers with the participation of 120 Students from different local and private specialized universities.

Kanafani shared with the audience that the IAA created a campaign to promote advertising. The new IAA "Case for Advertising" campaign focuses on many of

the core benefits that are deeply rooted in marketing communications - that advertising promotes choice; educates; informs; encourages innovation; creates jobs; supports the arts, entertainment and sports; and contributes to the costs of providing news and information. The campaign focus is for consumers and governments to understand the value of advertising in its many forms, including sponsored content. Advertising - your right to choose this campaign released in September 2017. Finally, Kanafani encouraged the audience to join the IAA Kuwait Chapter and reap the benefits of the organization.

Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud thanked IAA and Crowne Plaza by wishing all a Happy Ramadan and appreciated the effort of the IAA to improve the quality of the people working within the Advertising Industry by providing them with insightful seminars, workshops and related trainings.

Over 780 guests attended the event and were welcomed by Regional Manager of Intercontinental Hotels Group Antoine Flouty, Area General Manger Kuwait, General Manager Crown Plaza and Holiday Inn Kuwait Al-Thuraya City who wished them all a blessed "Ramadan Kareem" and pointed out some of the major achievements of Crowne Plaza. Flouty highlighted that the Al Baraka Grand Ballroom which has been created to satisfy the desires of those who are looking to have

their lavish boutique weddings, corporate affairs and social soirees is created by the Crowne Plaza professionals.

Omar Krestides, the Founder and Managing Director of Arab Net, presented the 3rd edition of Arab Net Conference Kuwait scheduled for 8th and 9th October 2018. The conference will highlight the state of digital economy and business in Kuwait, as well as delve into the latest trend in digital media and marketing. The 2017 conference in Kuwait drew in 80+ speakers and over 800+ exclusive attendees, eager to network and discuss the latest trends in mobile and web. The IAA Kuwait Chapter is considered as a strategic partner for the conference.

Walid Kanafani president of IAA Kuwait Chapter honored Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud, Adnan Al-Rashed, Omar Krestides, Antoine Flouty for their support to IAA. In addition, Kanafani honored Adnan Saad for his life time achievement in advertising in Kuwait market for more than 25 years.

All esteemed honored extended their happiness for their participation in the event by welcoming everyone and encouraged all to work as one hand and as a team to improve the productivity in Kuwait. A generous raffle draw was also amongst the highlights of the event as well as the Oriental Music Band and a very prestigious laser show.



Local



International Flavors

Tom Yum Kung and Pad Thai: An aromatic, flavorful addition to your Ramadan table

By Faten Omar

Thai cooking places emphasis on lightly-prepared dishes with strong aromatic components and a spicy edge. Counselor at the Royal Thai Embassy Pittara Navarat prepared traditional Thai food for the Ramadan table.

Introducing Kuwait Times to Thai cuisine, Pittara said: "Tom Yum Kung is a simple and popular Thai hot and sour soup familiar to many from Thai restaurant menus. It is also a staple meal in most Thai homes. Packed with herbs, spices and vegetables, Tom Yum is not only a delicious dish but refreshing and nutritious at the same time. This version contains shrimp (kung), but you can substitute other kinds of meats and vegetables such as chicken, fish or mushroom."

"Pad Thai is a stir-fried rice noodle dish commonly found as street food and at casual local restaurants in Thailand. With a great combination of different kinds of flavors, the dish is famous among Thais and non-Thais and can be cooked with meat, chicken, seafood or vegetables. To try Thai food, I recommend visiting traditional Thai restaurants in Kuwait like Oriental Thai Cuisine, Phuket Thai Restaurant, Pattaya Beach Restaurant, Sabaidee Thai Restaurant, Thai Chow King Restaurant, Satay Thai Cuisine, Sala Thai Restaurant, Marina Thai and Bangkok Kitchen," Pittara said.



Pittara Navarat prepares one of the dishes.



Tom Yum Kung and Pad Thai.



KUWAIT: Counselor at the Royal Thai Embassy Pittara Navarat. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



The ingredients.

Tom Yum Kung or Thai hot and sour shrimp soup

Ingredients (for 4-6 people):

- 6 cups of water or stock
- 1 or 2 tbsp of fish sauce
- 4 kaffir leaves
- 1 stalk of crushed lemongrass, white part of stalk only
- 2 pieces of galangal (optional), cut into thin rounds
- 1 1/2 lbs of fresh shrimp, peeled and deveined
- Crushed shallots (small red onions)
- 1 cup of straw mushrooms (optional)
- Lime juice
- 1/2 bunch of minced coriander
- Crushed Thai chili
- Salt

Method:

1. Bring the water or stock, kaffir leaves, lemongrass, galangal, shallots and salt to a boil in a pot over medium flame.
2. Add the fresh shrimps and mushrooms and continue to simmer over medium heat until shrimp is cooked.
3. Stir in the fish sauce, lime juice and chili, adjust seasoning and serve garnished with minced coriander.

Pad Thai or Thai stir-fried noodles

Ingredients (for 3 people):

- 4 tbsp of tamarind juice

- 3 tbsp of fish sauce
- 2 tablespoons of coconut palm sugar
- 1/4 cup of vegetable oil
- 1 tbsp of minced red onions
- 1 tbsp of minced garlic
- 2 cups of diced extra firm tofu
- 4 teaspoons of minced preserved turnips
- 3 tbsp of dried shrimp (optional)
- 1 lb rice noodles
- 3 fresh eggs
- 100 grams of fresh peeled shrimp
- 2 tablespoons of crushed roasted peanuts
- 1 cup fresh bean sprouts
- 1 cup of garlic chives
- dried roasted ground chili
- Raw bean sprouts, cut lime wedges for garnish

Method:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and then remove from the heat. Add the noodles to the pot and let soak for 12 to 15 minutes until the noodles are soft. Drain the noodles.
2. Make Pad Thai sauce by thoroughly mixing together the tamarind juice, palm sugar and fish sauce over medium-low heat.
3. Place a large wok over medium-high heat. When the wok is hot, add the oil and stir the minced garlic

constantly for a few seconds. Add the shrimp and stir-fry for one minute.

4. Stir in the sauce and bring to a boil. Place the noodles in the wok and toss to coat well.

5. Cook until most of the sauce has been absorbed by the noodles. Add the eggs and stir-fry until the eggs are cooked and well distributed throughout the noodles. Add the rest of the ingredients and stir-fry for another 2 minutes.

6. Serve garnished with lime wedges, dried ground chili and raw bean sprouts.

• All of the ingredients can be found in local supermarkets and Asian groceries.



Ramadan commercials remain popular for years

By Nawara Fattahova

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

As working hours during the holy month of Ramadan are shorter, people watch TV more than the rest of the year. This month is considered the high season for soap operas, and commercials too due to the high viewership. Every year, big companies and brands compete to come up with the best commercials that remain popular for years.

These commercials have innovative ideas that attract viewers. Some of them use characters of the past,

including celebrities, cartoon characters and even old commercials that were broadcast 30 or 40 years ago. Some commercials are presented by popular singers or actors. As a commercial is shown several times a day, people may get bored of it. So some companies came up with the idea of having two commercials - one for the first two weeks of the month, and the other for the other two weeks.

Sociopolitical events also affect commercials. This year, a telecommunication company made a commercial about Jerusalem, showing some popular world presidents. Another communication company made a commercial commemorating popular Kuwaiti actor Abdulhussain Abdulredha, who passed away last year.

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



Diplomats, corporate clients attend ghabka at Palms Beach Hotel

KUWAIT: Responding to an initiative extended by the Managing Director Engineer Ghosson Al-Khaled and the General Manager of the Palms Beach Hotel and Spa Rabie Al-Atrash, foreign ambassadors to Kuwait gathered with their families along with hotel corporate clients on May 23rd 2018, to celebrate the Palms Ramadan Nights at the Palms Beach Hotel and Spa.

The respective guests were warmly welcomed by the General Manager and his management team to the new typical Andalusia tent with its magnificent atmosphere and setup at Palms Ramadan Tent and Palms Bazar Tent.

Invitees were treated to a lavish ghabka buffet abounded with Ramadan traditional sweets and beverages and got indulged into distinctive live cooking stations while enjoying the live oriental music and the selective flavors of shisha. The elite invitees commended the merits of the events and expressed warm appreciation for the warm hospitality and well planned and organized night with its impressive theme and the lavish food and its wide variety and diversity. Atrash raised this opportunity to wish the ambassadors and corporate clients best success in their mission and praised the distinguished relations between the diplomatic corps, corporate clients and the Palms Beach Hotel and Spa.





Tense Germany, Turkey mark deadly 1993 neo-Nazi attack

Top North Korean general on way to US ahead of summit

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GAZA: A picture taken yesterday shows fishing boats carrying a group of Palestinian activists who are protesting and perhaps trying to breach Israel's naval blockade on Gaza, setting to sail from Gaza City harbor. — AFP

Israel seizes Gaza protest boat

Vessel was 12 nautical miles off the coast when contact was lost

GAZA: Israeli forces stopped and seized control of a Palestinian protest boat, organizers said, as those aboard sought to demonstrate against the Jewish state's blockade of Gaza. The incident occurred amid high tensions in the Gaza Strip after militants fired dozens of mortars in the direction of Israel, whose military retaliated by hitting dozens of targets. The boat, carrying sick Gazans and those unable to find work, was stopped by Israeli forces several kilometers out at sea, Salah Abdul Atti, one of the organizers, told AFP.

"Israeli forces surrounded it and intercepted it," he said, adding communications had been lost with the boat. He said they had been informed the boat and its passengers would be taken to the Israeli port of Ashdod.

There was no immediate confirmation from the Israeli army and the circumstances of the incident were unclear. Army spokesman Jonathan Conrucus said the boat was making an "illegal attempt to break a legal naval blockade that we have imposed on Gaza ever since the terrorist

organization called Hamas seized power."

Organizers said they were seeking to highlight the impact of the blockade on Gaza's two million residents. One main boat carrying around 20 people accompanied by a group of smaller ones had set off from the fishermen's port in Gaza City yesterday morning. There were conflicting statements about whether the boats would seek to break Israel's blockade, which currently allows them to travel nine nautical miles 16 km off the coast. Organizers said the boat was 12 nautical miles off the coast when contact was lost. Under the Oslo Agreements of the 1990s, fishermen are supposed to be allowed to fish up to 20 nautical miles off the

coast. In 2010, Israeli commandos killed nine Turkish activists when they raided a six-ship flotilla trying to reach the Gaza Strip in defiance of the blockade. Another activist died years later.

The botched raid angered Turkey and saw it cut off ties with Israel until 2016. Separately yesterday, Israel's army said some dozens of mortar shells were launched toward Israel from the Gaza Strip, with most intercepted by the country's air defense system.

It appeared to be the largest such barrage from Gaza targeting Israel since a 2014 war. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged to respond "powerfully" to the mortar fire and the army struck more than

30 "military targets" in the Gaza Strip yesterday afternoon. The Gaza Strip has been under Israeli blockade for more than a decade, with Israel saying it is necessary to prevent the Palestinian enclave's militant Hamas rulers from obtaining means to attack.

The boat protest comes after weeks of deadly demonstrations and clashes along the Gaza-Israel border, beginning on March 30.

The protests have called for Palestinians who fled or were expelled in the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation to be allowed to return to their former homes now inside Israel.

They peaked on May 14, when at least 61 Palestinians were killed as tens of thousands of Gazans protested and clashes erupted on the same day of the US transfer of its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Demonstrations and clashes have continued at a low level since then. At least 121 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the unrest. — AFP



Incident occurs amid tensions in the Gaza Strip

Ghouta displaced seek refuge in emptied Afrin

AFRIN, Syria: Displaced from her home in Syria's Eastern Ghouta, Umayma Al-Sheikh and her family sought refuge in an abandoned house across the country in Afrin. The traditionally Kurdish town had been emptied of its residents just weeks earlier, after a brutal Turkish-led offensive forced tens of thousands to flee. "No one wants to live in a house that isn't theirs, or use other people's belongings," said Sheikh. After staying briefly in rebel territory elsewhere in northern Syria, the 25-year-old moved to Afrin around a month ago with her husband Firas and two young children.

"We all want to be in our own homes, our own towns, but the situation forced us to settle in a house that isn't ours," Sheikh told AFP in a leafy park in the town. "The homes we left behind are now being lived in by other people, too. This is the case for everyone in Syria, not just us," she said. Since war broke out in 2011, half of Syria's population has been displaced, including more than five million outside the country and another six million internally.

Among them are rebels and civilians transferred en masse from one bombed opposition area to another under "reconciliation" agreements. Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad has used such deals to retake territory, prompting charges he is reshuffling the country's demographics. His April capture of Ghouta was sealed with the transfer of thousands of people to the rebel-held north, with many going on to Afrin. The offensive by Turkish-backed rebels sparked a wave of accusations that Ankara was guilty of ethnic engineering, by resettling Syrian Arabs into Afrin after pushing out Syrian Kurds.

Seeking safety

As many as 35,000 people have taken refuge in the Afrin region, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Some live in a pair of refugee camps in a rural area, but many

have moved into the town's empty and ruined homes. Mehdi Haymur and his young son picked through the rubble and debris at the entrance of one bombed-out apartment for anything salvageable. They lifted a mismatched pair of torn, dust-covered cushions from the smashed cinderblocks and headed inside.

"We left Ghouta and lost our homes, land, and work. We were forced to leave Ghouta, and we also came here in a forced way," said Haymur. With help from rebel military police, he and his family have squatted in several Afrin homes but their owners have arrived and asked them to leave. The owner of the abandoned block where he lives now has allowed them to stay temporarily, Haymur told AFP.

Ahmad Al-Buri, 19, was displaced to Afrin from the outskirts of Ghouta's largest town of Douma. "This is a Turkish zone, protected from Syrian regime bombardment. That's why I came here," said Buri. Rebels also helped his family find an empty home in Afrin's Mahmudiyah district, and Buri has enlisted in the Turkish-backed police. "If the owner of this house comes back and we have to leave, I don't know what we'll do. We'll have to find another home or go to a camp," he shrugged. Those camps house an estimated 10,000 people, according to the United Nations' humanitarian coordination office (OCHA), which also confirmed the house-squatting. "While some are paying rent, reports of internally displaced people residing in empty houses without obtaining the permission of their owners continue to emerge," it said.

Around 135,000 of Afrin's original residents stayed in the region as fighting continued, more than a third in the town itself, according to OCHA. Othman Khalil, a 57-year-old metal worker, refused to leave his home on Villa Street during the fight. "There are families from Ghouta that came to our neighborhood. We talk to each other," he told AFP. "They can come into Afrin but people originally from here cannot enter," said Khalil, whose friends escaped the town during clashes but have been unable to return.

A pair of Turkish-backed rebels guard one access route, checking the vehicles coming in and out. OCHA has expressed increasing concern over "protracted displacement" from Afrin as security operations continue. — AFP

'Spiderman' joins fire brigade as citizenship awaits

PARIS: Mamoudou Gassama, the 22-year-old Malian "Spiderman" feted for saving a child hanging from a balcony, took his first step toward French citizenship yesterday and joined the fire brigade as accolades continued to pour in over his daring rescue. Video footage of Gassama scaling four storeys of the building with his bare hands has catapulted the young man to global fame, and earned him the promise of citizenship from President Emmanuel Macron.

Wearing white sweatpants and a black cap, the hero of a rescue video viewed by millions of people appeared slightly overwhelmed by the media furore as he filed his application for legal residency in the Paris suburb of Bobigny. Hailing the bravery of the youth who had been living in France illegally, the head of the local authority, Pierre-Andre Durand said: "How can anyone fail to be impressed by what he did, not admire it? He helped someone in danger, which is not such a common thing in our society."

Gassama became an overnight sensation after the video of him plucking a four-year-old boy to safety Saturday went viral. On Monday he was honored by President Emmanuel Macron with a medal for bravery, the promise of citizenship and the offer of a job with the fire service. Gassama arrived in France via Italy and the perilous Mediterranean migrant route. His official permit allowing him to work will arrive within a month, and his citizenship papers in about three months, officials said yesterday. The athletic Malian also visited a fire station to sign up for a 10-month internship with the Paris fire and rescue services, expected to pay close to A600 (\$690) a month.

'Could have been worse'

The family of the young boy he saved thanked him yesterday for his quick thinking. The boy's paternal grandmother, who like his



BOBIGNY, France: Malian migrant Mamoudou Gassama (center) flanked by his older brother (right) holds his temporary residence permit after received it in this prefecture northeast of Paris yesterday. — AFP

mother lives in Reunion, told RMC radio yesterday that she was "very moved" by the images of the rescue and sent "huge thanks" to Gassama. "He's really a hero," she said. "He did not stand by and watch, he saved my little sweetpea." The boy's father, who had been living alone with him in Paris, had left him alone to go out to the shops and then remained on the street to play Pokemon Go, according to French investigators. He was arrested on charges of neglecting his parental duties but released again on Monday.

The Paris prosecutor's office said he had admitted his guilt and expressed "profound regret". The boy's mother learned the news of the rescue on Reunion Island - the French Indian Ocean territory where she and the father were born and where she still lives. Reacting to Gassama's intervention on Antenne Reunion radio she said: "We can only

thank him and thank heaven he was so reactive." "Things could have turned out much worse so I am relieved," she said, adding that she was impatient to be reunited with her son and husband.

'Hypocrisy'

Gassama told Macron during a visit on Monday that he "did not think twice" before springing into action. Lawmakers are debating a controversial bill that would speed up the deportation of economic migrants and failed asylum-seekers, thousands of whom live in squalid camps in the capital. "There's a bit of hypocrisy or cynicism," added Claire Rodier of the GISTI association which supports immigrants. She saw a contrast between the treatment of Gassama and "the repressive policy of this government against migrants and those without documents". — AFP

International

Libya leaders commit to Dec 10 elections

France suspected by some rivals of favoring Haftar

PARIS: Four Libyan leaders yesterday committed to holding elections in the fractured country on Dec 10 in a joint statement issued at a peace conference in Paris. The four men, who represent most but not all of Libya's rival factions, also agreed to "accept the results of elections, and ensure appropriate funds and strong security arrangements are in place". The commitment to holding parliamentary and presidential polls this year came after four hours of talks in Paris where they faced pressure to agree on a political roadmap that could end seven years of conflict. European leaders see stabilizing Libya as key to tackling militant threats and migration from the country, which has become a departure point for hundreds of thousands of Africans trying to reach Europe. "I'm optimistic," UN envoy Ghassan Salame told AFP at the end of the talks. The Libyan invitees were Prime Minister Fayez Al-Sarraj, head of the UN-backed unity government in Tripoli, and 75-year-old military strongman Khalifa Haftar, whose rival Libyan National Army dominates the country's east.

Also present were Aguila Saleh Issa, the parliament speaker based in the eastern city of Tobruk who opposes the UN-backed administration, and Khalid Al-Mishri, the newly-elected head of the High Council of State, who both agreed to the statement. "There is no solution other than via you," Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi told the Libyan leaders at the opening of the talks. "If things go badly, it's your responsibility." Macron called the final agreement "an essential step toward reconciliation", adding that the conference was "historic" because it had brought the rivals together around the same table for the first time.

Despite the French-led efforts to seek a political settlement, many analysts and diplomats were skeptical about real change on the ground. Some have voiced

doubt whether the country, which is swamped by weapons and controlled by a patchwork of political groups and armed militias, will be able to hold elections. "I believe that elections are a big risk in a country armed like Libya," Federica Saini Fasanotti, an analyst with the Washington-based Brookings Institution, told AFP. Some countries, such as former colonial power Italy, had also argued that the country needed to agree on a new constitution before holding elections.

Years of mediation by the United Nations, as well as Italy, have failed to bring stability to the north African nation which descended into chaos after the ousting of dictator Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. Previous peace agreements have come to nothing. "It went well. Afterwards, it depends on the implementation," one diplomat told AFP on condition of anonymity. The four leaders did not sign the agreement, instead giving their approval for the statement to be issued. Posing for a group photo, Macron asked his guests to verbally commit to the deal - which they did. "So we are all working on this common basis, bravo!" he said.

Regional competition

Representatives from 20 countries including Egypt, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Turkey attended the talks, as well as neighbors Algeria and Tunisia. Stabilizing Libya has been complicated by diverging interests among Middle Eastern countries, which have sometimes backed opposing sides in the fighting, as well as the competition between Europeans. Macron referred to foreign countries "pulling strings behind a curtain" but claimed that yesterday's agreement had put all regional actors on the same page.

The French leader threw himself into finding a solu-



PARIS: The participants of the International Conference on Libya listen to a verbal agreement between the various parties regarding the organization of a democratic election this year at the Elysee Palace yesterday. — AFP

tion shortly after his election in May 2017, inviting Sarraj and Haftar to Paris in July - a move that irked Italy. Some in Rome suspect Macron of organizing the conference at a time when Italy, which has major oil interests in Libya, is embroiled in a deep political crisis. "It's as if Macron wanted to make the most of this moment of absence by

Italy on the Libyan dossier," Italian newspaper La Repubblica wrote last week, citing diplomatic sources.

France is also suspected by some rivals within Libya of favoring Haftar, a military strongman who has fought Islamist militias and who was recently treated in a Parisian hospital for an undisclosed ailment. —AFP

Syria charring disarmament body 'a travesty': US

GENEVA: The United States led a protest yesterday against Syria taking over the Conference on Disarmament, calling it "a travesty" at a time when Damascus is widely accused of using chemical weapons. The US ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), Robert Wood, briefly walked out of the room in protest when the Syrian representative took the floor. "Syria's presence here is a travesty," he told AFP just before the session began. "This regime has committed countless crimes against its own people through the use of chemical weapons, and it is just unacceptable for them to be leading this body," he insisted.

Syria's ambassador Hussam Edin Aala meanwhile slammed the protest as "sensational propaganda" and "characterized by double-standards". Syria on Monday took over the rotating presidency of the CD, according to a decades-old practice among the body's 65 members following the alphabetical order of country names in English. But despite the mechanical nature of Syria's arrival at the helm of the CD, following Switzerland and Sweden, a number of country representatives voiced their outrage that a representative of Damascus was presiding over the body that negotiated the chemical weapons ban.

More than 350,000 people have been killed and millions displaced since Syria's civil war began in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests. After hundreds of people died in chemical attacks near Damascus in 2013, a deal with Russia was struck to rid Syria of chemical weapons, staving off US air strikes. But the United Nations and Western countries have accused Damascus of carrying out a number of chemical attacks since then. A suspected chlorine and sarin attack in the Syrian town of Douma on April 7 this year triggered punitive missile strikes against alleged chemical weapons sites in Syria by the US, Britain and France.


During the first open CD session of Syria's presidency yesterday, the United States led a number of diplomats in protest. Wood briefly left the room when Syria's ambassador Aala opened the session, before returning to voice Washington's displeasure from the floor. "Today marks a sad and shameful day in the history of this body," he told the assembly. "Simply put, it is a travesty that the Syrian regime, which continues to indiscriminately slaughter its own people with weapons banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention, should presume to preside over this body," he said. —AFP

First rights trial since 2011 revolt opens in Tunisia

GABES, Tunisia: The first court case brought by a Tunisian commission probing human rights violations stretching back six decades opened yesterday, with 14 former officials, including the ousted dictator, on trial. The Truth and Dignity Commission (IVD) was set up in 2014 following the 2011 revolt that toppled dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and sparked the Arab Spring uprisings. It has a mandate to investigate human rights violations between 1957, when Habib Bourguiba became president, and the date of its creation, with the aim of holding perpetrators to account and rehabilitating their victims.

Yesterday's first court case concerns the forced disappearance of Kamel Matmati, a member of the Islamist movement Ennahdha, who was arrested in October 1991 during Ben Ali's rule, and tortured to death. The courtroom in the southern coastal town of Gabes, where Matmati was taken, was packed with family members and activists who called for justice, an end to impunity and closure. "We want those who killed him, tortured him, to be tried" and convicted, Matmati's widow Latifa told AFP. "We have spent terrible years. The hardest of all is that his body has not been returned to the family, she said. "But today we are happy because the truth will be finally unveiled," she added.


On trial are Ben Ali, who lives in exile in Saudi Arabia, his interior minister Abdallah Kallel and 12 other former officials, including former security chief Mohamed Ali Ganzoui - but all are being tried in their absence. They face charges of voluntary homicide, torture and forced disappearance. —AFP



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International

Tense Germany, Turkey mark deadly 1993 neo-Nazi attack

Turkish FM warns racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia on the rise

SOLINGEN, Germany: Germany yesterday remembered the five ethnic Turkish victims of a murderous neo-Nazi arson attack 25 years ago, amid warnings of resurgent German xenophobia and simmering bilateral tensions ahead of Turkish elections. In the 1993 attack, one of post-war Germany's most notorious racist hate crimes, four far-right skinheads set fire to a Turkish family's home in the city of Solingen. They killed five women and girls, the youngest just four years old, and injured 14 others.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu attended memorial ceremonies along with Mevlude Genc, 75, who lost two daughters, two granddaughters and a niece, yet strongly urged reconciliation after the attack. Foreign Minister Heiko Maas made a plea for "tolerance, diversity and humanity within our country and in the world", speaking to German newspapers. He said it was "shameful" that even today many Turkish immigrants and their descendants "experience discrimination in everyday life".

"I want to tell you: You are not only welcome here, you are part of our country," Maas said, addressing Germany's three-million strong ethnic Turkish community, the largest group of Turks abroad. The anniversary comes as Germany struggles with a new upsurge of racist attacks and far-right activism, including last year's entry into parliament of the anti-Islam party Alternative for Germany (AfD), following an influx of more than one million asylum seekers since 2015.

'Racism, Islamophobia'

AfD co-leader Alice Weidel this month described immigrants as "headscarf girls, welfare-claiming, knife-wielding men and other good-for-nothings" - incendiary comments that earned her a formal rebuke from the parliamentary

speaker. Turkey's foreign ministry Monday voiced concern that "racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia are on the rise" again in the biggest EU country and called on politicians and media there to "use prudent language".

The head of the Turkish Community in Germany, Gokay Sofuoglu, also warned that "rightwing populist arguments are once more setting the tone in the refugee and migration debate". Referring to the bereaved mother Mevlude Genc, holder of Germany's highest civilian honor for her calls for tolerance and healing, he said she "was never really listened to". The deadly Solingen blaze was set by four males aged 16 to 23 from the German far-right skinhead subculture that flared in the early 1990s amid an influx of eastern European asylum seekers.

The four juvenile and adult offenders received maximum jail terms of 10 to 15 years, which all ended years ago. The space where the charred remains of the Genc family house once stood is now a vacant lot where five chestnut trees have been planted to honor the victims.

'Terrible attack'

While both Germany and Turkey have stressed their shared sorrow over the tragic deaths, high tensions linger after a deep crisis between the governments of Merkel and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Germany has repeatedly voiced concerns about deteriorating civil rights and media freedoms in Turkey, especially after a crackdown and mass arrests following a failed 2016 coup against Erdogan. Ankara has been angry over Berlin's decision to bar Turkish politicians from campaigning in Germany, where some 1.4 million ethnic Turks are eligible to vote in their ancestral homeland - a move Erdogan has slammed as a "Nazi-style" ban.

Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP)



DUSSELDORF: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (center) reacts as she signs the guestbook beside Mevlude Genc (right), mother, grandmother and aunt of the victims, North Rhine-Westphalia's State Premier Armin Laschet (center left) and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu (left) during a ceremony marking the 25th anniversary of an arson attack that killed five people of Turkish origin yesterday. — AFP

are seeking another mandate in snap parliamentary and presidential polls on June 24. Conservative German politicians have cautioned that Cavusoglu must not misuse the memorial events to campaign for Erdogan's AKP party or deepen divisions in the Turkish-German community. Maas has stressed the campaign ban applies to all non-EU politicians facing elections within three months, and said he was sure Cavusoglu's speech would "not constitute election campaigning but commemorate the victims of this terrible

attack". Other EU countries, including Austria and the Netherlands, have also sparred with Turkey in recent years. In France, the popular news magazine Le Point said this week it had suffered harassment and intimidation by Erdogan supporters after it labelled him "The Dictator" on its front cover. French President Emmanuel Macron rallied behind the magazine, calling the abuse "totally unacceptable" and warning in a tweet that "you cannot put a price on freedom of the press, without it, it's dictatorship". — AFP

Brexit tangle raises prospect of Irish reunification

LONDON: The wrangle over what will happen to the Irish border after Brexit has put the previously unthinkable possibility of reunification of the island of Ireland firmly on the political agenda. Support for staying in the European Union is increasing in Northern Ireland as the Brexit negotiations falter, according to a study released this month by Queen's University Belfast. The poll of more than 1,000 residents of Northern Ireland also found 47 percent supported holding a referendum, although only 21 percent said they would currently favor a united Ireland.

The study said the results showed a hard Brexit in which Britain left the EU single market and customs union, combined with an economic downturn could make the prospect of Irish unity "particularly attractive" for the province's Catholic community. In the 2016 referendum, Northern Ireland voted 56 percent to remain in the EU but, like Scotland, was outvoted by England and Wales and the overall result was 52 percent for Brexit. The study found support for EU membership has now risen to 69 percent.

"What's becoming increasingly clear is the rise and rise of the Remain vote in Northern Ireland," Colin Harvey from Queen's told a conference organized by the UK in a Changing Europe think tank. "And I think there is extreme peril and danger in rendering that Remain vote politically and legally meaningless," he said.

Reunification 'risk'

Unlike pro-EU Scotland, Northern Ireland could technically stay in the European Union by voting to join the Republic of Ireland. The 1998 Good Friday peace agreements allow for the possibility of a referendum on Irish unity if the British government judges that the public mood has shifted significantly in favor of the idea. So far only the nationalist Sinn Fein party, once the political voice of the Irish Republican Army, has called for a vote.

Opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, a supporter of Irish unity, played down the prospect on a visit to Belfast this month, but it is weighing on the British prime minister's mind. Theresa May reprimanded a leading eurosceptic in her Conservative party earlier this month for being naive about the possibility, according to a report in The Times newspaper. After pro-Brexit hardliner MP Jacob Rees-Mogg said Northern Ireland would vote to stay a part of the United Kingdom in the case of a referendum, she reportedly told him: "That's not a risk I'm prepared to take. We cannot be confident on the politics of the situation, on how it plays out".

Brexit brings 'new dynamic'

May has vowed to avoid any new border checks after Britain leaves the EU next year amid fears of upsetting the fragile arrangements in a region once blighted by violence. But her government has yet to find a practical way to do this, while also fulfilling a promise to leave the EU's customs union and single market after Britain's withdrawal. Under a preliminary deal struck with Brussels in December, Britain as a whole would maintain "full alignment" with EU trade rules if no other arrangement has been found.—AFP

Italy in turmoil as caretaker PM assembles team

ROME: Italy's caretaker prime minister worked to assemble a cabinet yesterday to save the country from political turmoil in the face of resistance from far-right and anti-establishment parties. Financial markets plunged into a frenzy as Carlo Cottarelli was left in charge after efforts to end months of political deadlock hit their latest setback. President Sergio Mattarella on Monday blocked a cabinet proposed by the anti-immigrant League and their allies in the Five Star Movement (M5S).

That left Cottarelli, a former IMF economist known as "Mr Scissors", tasked with naming a technocrat government. He was expected to present his cabinet to Mattarella within hours. Five Star and the League, who hold a majority in both houses of parliament, have vowed to reject Cottarelli's proposed technocrat government. New elections could be held as early as September as the most likely outcome of the political saga sparked by an inconclusive poll in March.

On Sunday evening, the president vetoed the League-Five Star pick for economy minister, eurosceptic Paolo Savona. The populists cried foul and abandoned their joint bid for power. The fresh uncertainty in the eurozone's third largest economy caused alarm on financial markets. Italy's 10-year bond yields surged to over 300 basis points higher than Germany's yesterday morning - a sign of surging

investor doubts over Italy's financial stability. The Milan stock exchange plunged more than three percent yesterday morning. The euro also fell in Asian trade yesterday and was in danger of falling below the \$1.16 level last breached in early November.

'Italian democracy's darkest night'

Mattarella's veto and subsequent nomination of Cottarelli as caretaker prime minister sparked angry calls for the president's impeachment, since most lawmakers backed Savona. Mattarella said that an openly eurosceptic economy minister was counter to the parties' joint promise to simply "change Europe for the better from an Italian point of view". Savona has called the euro a "German cage" and said that Italy needs a plan to leave the single currency "if necessary".

League leader Matteo Salvini, a fellow eurosceptic who was Savona's biggest advocate, said his side's joint plan for a government failed because of pressure from the "powers-that-be, the markets, Berlin and Paris". "This isn't democracy, this isn't respect for the popular vote. It's the latest slap in the face," Salvini said, from those that say "Italy should be a slave, scared and precarious".

Five Star chief Luigi Di Maio called on party supporters to attend a rally in Rome on Saturday, the anniversary of Italy's transformation into a republic in 1946, after what he called "Italian democracy's darkest night". Cottarelli, 64, was director of the International Monetary Fund's fiscal affairs department from 2008 to 2013 and became known as "Mr Scissors" for his public spending cuts in Italy. He said that should his technocrat government win parliamentary approval, it would stay in place until elections at the "start of 2019". But if parliament fails to approve his government, a new election would be held "after August" - the



ROME: Carlo Cottarelli addresses a press conference at the Quirinale presidential palace on Monday in Rome after the Italian president gave him the mandate to form the government. — AFP

most likely outcome given the populists' strength in parliament. Only the center-left Democratic Party has announced that it would vote in favor.

'Beyond his prerogatives'

Salvini and Di Maio furiously denounced the presidential veto, blasting what they called meddling by Germany, debt ratings agencies, financial lobbies and even lies from Mattarella's staff. "Paolo Savona would not have taken us out of the euro. It's a lie invented by Mattarella's advisors," Di Maio said in a live video on Facebook. "The truth is that they don't want us in government." Elections could benefit Salvini, however, as recent polling by IndexResearch put the League at 22 percent, five points up from its vote share in the March 4 ballot.—AFP

10 people beheaded in Mozambique

MAPUTO: Ten people, some of them children, were beheaded in a village in northern Mozambique, in a weekend attack blamed on suspected Islamists, local sources said yesterday. The predawn attack on Sunday occurred in Monjane, a village close to the border with Tanzania and not far from Palma, a small town gearing up to be the country's new natural gas hub in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. "We were informed about this tragedy," Palma's administrator David Machimbuko told AFP, whose account was also confirmed by a local resident, who blamed Islamists.

Mozambique's state broadcaster also reported on "10 persons decapitated" in the Palma area. Police were expected to give a news conference later yesterday. Cabo Delgado has seen a number of attacks by suspected radical Islamists since October. One of the victims of the latest attack was the leader of Monjane village, a local resident said, without giving his name for fear of reprisals.

"They targeted the chief as he had been providing information to the police about the location of al-Shabaab in the forests," he told AFP, referring to an armed group believed responsible for a deadly October attack on a police station and military post in the town of Mocimboa da Praia. Two officers died and 14 attackers were killed then in what was

believed to be the first jihadist attack on the country. The group has no known link to the Somali group of the same name. In the following weeks, at least 300 Muslims, including Tanzanians, were arrested and several mosques forced to close.

'Serious situation'

Alex Vines, a specialist analyst on Mozambique for the London-based Chatham House told AFP that the "new attacks are unsurprising and a reminder of the seriousness of the situation". "A number of independent assessments of the situation in Cabo Delgado conducted over the last three months have concluded that the security situation (there) remains fragile and continued attacks probable," he said.

The attackers on Monjane approached the village from a nearby forest. Police were called but "arrived very late and the attackers were already gone. Nothing was stolen," a local source said. "They are becoming more much radical now as they are facing attacks from government," said another villager. A study published last week by a Mozambican academic Joao Pereira said up to 40 members of the radical group "have been trained by movements" that operate in the Great Lakes region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Kenya.

The increase in attacks in the north of the country presents a huge problem for Mozambique, which holds general elections next year and has its eyes set on recently-discovered gas reserves. Vast gas deposits discovered off the shores of Palma could transform the impoverished country's economy. Experts predict that Mozambique could become the world's third-largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG).—AFP

EU handouts not always the answer for Africa migrants

DAKAR: When Fatou Kine failed attempt to reach Europe left her jobless and penniless in Algeria, she turned to an agency she had heard helped migrants return home. The United Nations' International Organization for Migration, or IOM, did that and more. It flew her back to Senegal in January last year and gave her more than \$1,000 to start a tailoring business in the seaside capital Dakar. But one year on, Kine is struggling. After paying the rent for a 25-square metre storefront, she takes home about 16,000 CFA (\$29) in a good month - not much more than she did as a hospital cleaner before she left for Algeria.

The IOM and the European Union are ramping up efforts to return African migrants home, after thousands have died making the perilous sea crossing to Europe and governments in some countries push for tougher rules to stem the numbers arriving. The migrants are often returning from places like Algeria and Libya, where many get stuck en route to Europe, as well as from Europe itself. Efforts have accelerated over the past six months following revelations of migrant slave markets in Libya.

But interviews with migrants like

Kine reveal the shortfalls of repatriation even for those lucky enough to receive a grant to start a business. In countries like Senegal, where local economic activity can be slow, many struggle to survive. At her shop in a busy Dakar suburb last month, surrounded by three sewing machines and two mannequins sporting the colorful bouabous (robes) she makes there, Kine said she wants to try again to get to Europe because of the difficulty in making ends meet. "With my two children, I can't make it," the 26-year-old said.

The IOM acknowledges that migrants face similar challenges on their return to those that prompted them to leave their home country in the first place, and that often they try to leave again. In such cases, the migration agency "seeks to ensure migrants receive accurate information about the migration journey and potential risks," said IOM spokeswoman Florence Kim. The organization produces pamphlets translated into several languages informing would-be migrants of what they might be getting themselves into.

In late 2016, the EU and the IOM launched their biggest repatriation project yet: A 174 million (\$203 million) fund to help bring back migrants and jumpstart their lives in a way that would remove the need to head for Europe. It was launched amid pressure from European member states worried about immigration levels and a growing death toll of Africans trying to cross the Mediterranean in overcrowded boats. The IOM recorded 171,635 arrivals by boat from Africa in 2017, which does not include the likely thousands of others that tried and failed.—Reuters

International

Top North Korean general on way to US ahead of summit

Preparations for historic meeting gather pace

SEOUL: US President Donald Trump confirmed yesterday that a senior North Korean official is headed to New York for talks as preparations for his historic summit with Kim Jong Un gather pace. "Meetings are currently taking place concerning Summit, and more. Kim Young Chol, the Vice Chairman of North Korea, heading now to New York. Solid response to my letter, thank you!" Trump wrote in a tweet, hailing the formation of a "great team" for the talks.

General Kim Yong Chol landed at Beijing airport yesterday and will journey on to New York the following day after talks with Chinese officials, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency. The trip is part of a flurry of diplomacy before the on-again, off-again summit originally scheduled for June 12 in Singapore. Trump cancelled the talks last week, citing "open hostility" from the North, but since then both sides have dialled down the rhetoric and the process appears to be back on track.

US negotiators, headed by Washington's current ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim, met North Korean counterparts in the truce village of Panmunjom that divides the two Koreas on Sunday. The State Department said a separate team of White House officials has headed to Singapore to sort out logistics. Chung Sung-yeon, an analyst at the Korea Institute for National Unification, said Kim Yong Chol would be the most senior North Korean official to step onto US soil since Vice Marshal Jo Myong

Rok met President Bill Clinton in 2000.

The general has long been a right-hand man to North Korea's leader, playing a front-seat role during recent rounds of diplomacy aimed at ending the nuclear stalemate on the Korean peninsula. He sat next to Trump's daughter Ivanka, who is also a White House aide, during February's closing ceremony for the Winter Olympics in the South Korean resort of Pyeongchang which was a turning point in the nuclear crisis. He also accompa-

ny in South Korea, where he is blamed for masterminding the 2010 sinking of the navy corvette the Cheonan, which killed 46 sailors, an attack for which North Korea denies responsibility. From 2009 to 2016 he was also director of North Korea's General Reconnaissance Bureau, the unit tasked with cyber warfare and intelligence gathering. During that period North Korea ramped up its hacking programs, including a hugely costly penetration of Sony Pictures.

His journey to the US caps a frenetic few days of meetings between North Korean and American officials. Japanese broadcaster NHK reported that Kim Chang Son, Kim Jong Un's de facto chief of staff, arrived in Singapore on Monday, showing footage of him at the airport escorted by three bodyguards. China's state Xinhua news agency also said one of its photographers saw Kim Chang Son leave a hotel in the city-state.

Also on Monday, a US government aircraft carrying a delegation including Joe Hagin, the White House deputy chief of staff for operations, departed from Yokota air base in Japan en route for Singapore, NHK added. The Washington Post reported that talks inside the Demilitarized Zone would continue this week between US and North Korean officials. South Korean media broadcast footage of US embassy vehicles, including one carrying Sung Kim, leaving a Seoul hotel on Tuesday but there were no details on whether the convoy was heading



PYEONGCHANG: In this photo taken on Feb 25, 2018, Kim Yong Chol, vice chairman of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party Central Committee, attends the closing ceremony of the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games. —AFP

General a right-hand man to Kim

nied Kim Jong Un on both of his recent trips to China to meet President Xi Jinping, and held talks with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo when he travelled to Pyongyang. "Kim's official counterpart is Pompeo but he may also push for meetings with (National Security Advisor John) Bolton and even Trump if possible," Chung told AFP.

Controversial figure

General Kim is a deeply controversial fig-

back to the DMZ.

If the original date stands, officials have only a fortnight to finalize thorny protocol details such as where in Singapore the talks will take place and how internationally sanctioned North Korean officials will travel there. The key task is to settle the agenda. The main stumbling block is likely to be the concept of "denuclearization" - both sides

say they want it, but there is a yawning gap between their definitions. Washington wants North Korea to quickly give up all its nuclear weapons in a verifiable way in return for sanctions and economic relief. But analysts believe North Korea will be unwilling to cede its nuclear deterrent unless it is given security guarantees that the US will not try to topple the regime. —AFP

War hero doubtful of Trump-Kim peace prospects

SEOUL: As a decorated war hero who once took out three machine gun nests with nothing but grenades, Choi Deuk-soo knows firsthand what is at stake should US-North Korean peace talks fail - and he is doubtful of an imminent breakthrough. The wizened 91-year-old is one of just five people still alive to have been awarded South Korea's top military medal, the Taeguk, given for a suicidally brave charge he made up an enemy-held hill in the end stages of the 1950-53 Korean War. "I hate any war," he told AFP from his apartment in Incheon, west of Seoul, apologizing for his poor hearing, the result of firing a heavy machine gun for hours during a battle to repel Chinese troops that had come to the aid of North Korea's communist forces.

That war led to an armistice and the two Koreas divided by the demilitarized zone. It is a festering Cold War sore that lives on today, and US President Donald Trump has vowed to combat the threat posed by the authoritarian, nuclear-armed regime in Pyongyang either by talks with his North Korean opposite Kim Jong Un or "fire and fury". Choi - who was speaking to AFP before Trump cancelled an upcoming summit with Kim only to suggest it might be back on - is not convinced by the recent flurry of diplomatic detente.

"Another war might have to break out sometime in the future, maybe hundreds of years from now, for the two sides to be reunified," he said. "I doubt whether any deal with

Kim Jong Un would hold long because all the North is interested in is material rewards," he added, questioning whether Pyongyang was really committed to giving up its nuclear weapons or genuinely seeking peace.

'No retreat'

The nonagenarian's cynicism was forged in the crucible of the Korean War and nurtured by decades of failed peace attempts that have seen North Korea's regime remain steadfastly in power and oversee its metamorphosis into a nuclear armed state. Breathing repeatedly through an inhaler to ease his asthma, Choi recalled his own horrifying experience the last time full-scale war broke out on the Korean Peninsula.

The memory that sticks with him the most was the night that won him the Taeguk. On 30 June 1953 his unit was ordered to take back Hill 938 from a brigade of Chinese volunteers who had seized the strategic position earlier that month. Choi's battalion was so depleted its ranks had dropped from 500 to just 30 men. "The top commander gathered us together and handed out cigarettes. He then said: 'You only move on. No retreat'. The company installed a machine gun, threatening to shoot us if we tried to retreat," he recalled.

To improve their agility, the soldiers were told to ditch their helmets and take only grenades - the commanders noted that if they needed a rifle they could always grab one from the hundreds of bodies littering the hill side. Under cover of darkness and a smoke screen Choi and his comrades inched towards the enemy. "I crawled up to a machine gun post and hurled the first grenade. I finished a second one with another grenade and silenced a third machine gun nest with the remaining two grenades," he said.

With the enemy machine guns silenced, reinforcements successfully stormed uphill, bringing an end to the hour-long battle.



INCHEON: This picture taken on May 17, 2018 shows Choi Deuk-soo, a South Korean war hero, during an interview in his apartment. —AFP

Somehow Choi emerged unscathed. But only five men from the original 30 survived the night, he recalled. The war ended a month later with the armistice, though the two Koreas remain technically still at war.

'How long will it last?'

Choi said he welcomes the fact that Trump was willing to talk to Kim. But he worries about the more bellicose members of the US administration, particularly National Security Advisor John Bolton, a known North Korea hawk. Earlier this month Bolton - and later Vice President Mike Pence - raised the specter of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, who gave up atomic weapons only to die years later at the hands of US-backed rebels. That comparison drew angry responses from North Korea. "That guy with the thick moustache almost blew it up with reckless, unnecessary statements," Choi fumed, referring to Bolton. —AFP

US search firm says to end MH370 hunt in 'coming days'

KUALA LUMPUR: A private search for Flight MH370 will end in the coming days, an exploration firm said yesterday, some four years after the plane disappeared in one of the world's greatest aviation mysteries. The Malaysia Airlines jet vanished in March 2014 with 239 people - mostly from China - on board, en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. No sign of it was found in a 120,000-sq-km. Indian Ocean search zone and the Australian-led hunt, the largest in aviation history, was suspended in January last year.

After pressure from families, the Malaysian government struck a deal with US exploration firm Ocean Infinity to restart the search in January on condition it would only be paid if the Boeing 777 or its black boxes were found. The firm stood to make up to \$70 million if successful but found no sign of the airliner despite scouring the seabed with some of the world's most high-tech search equipment. The hunt was officially meant to end in late April but was extended. However, the new Malaysian government of Mahathir Mohamad, which came to power after a shock elec-

tion win this month, announced last week the search was set to end.

Texas-based Ocean Infinity said in a statement yesterday that "its current search for the wreckage of... Flight MH370 is shortly coming to an end". A spokesman added the hunt would end in the coming days, without giving a precise date.

'Nothing hidden'

Ocean Infinity chief executive Oliver Plunkett said the failure to find the wreckage was "extremely disappointing" but he hoped that his company would be able to "again offer our services in the search for MH370 in future". Malaysia's new government has not indicated that it wants to revive the search but has pledged to be more open about the mystery. Transport Minister Anthony Loke said Monday that a full report into MH370's disappearance would be published soon. "There will not be any edits, nothing will be hidden," he told reporters.

Ocean Infinity said it had scoured over 112,000 sq km of seabed, including 25,000 sq km north of the original search zone which scientists later identified as the most likely crash site. The ship conducting the hunt, Seabed Constructor, was a Norwegian research vessel carrying 65 crew, including two members of the Malaysian navy as the government's representatives. It used eight autonomous drones equipped with sonars and cameras, able to operate at depths up to 6,000 m. —AFP

US pays tribute to war fallen on Memorial Day

WASHINGTON: From President Donald Trump visiting the main US military cemetery to parades and solemn remembrances, Americans honored their fallen war heroes for the Memorial Day holiday on Monday. Across the country, relatives, friends and members of the general public placed American flags and flowers on the tombs of soldiers who gave their lives for the country. During his second Memorial Day as commander-in-chief, Trump placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

He was joined by US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford for the ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, whose rolling hills of greenery just outside the US capital are the final resting place for more than 400,000 veterans. "Our fallen heroes have not only written our history - they've shaped our destiny," Trump said. "They fought and bled and died so that America would forever remain safe and strong and free."

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti was among the speakers during an observance at his city's National Cemetery. Besides



ARLINGTON, Virginia: US President Donald Trump marks Memorial Day by laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery on Monday. —AFP

Washington, some of the largest parades took place in Chicago and New York, with veterans' groups and bands among the participants. Chicago's celebrations have taken place since 1870. In contrast to Veterans Day, which honors all who have served in the armed forces, Memorial Day pays tribute to fallen military staff.

On Sunday, tens of thousands of bikers in bandanas, cowboy hats or gleaming helmets

descended on Washington to parade from the Pentagon past the military cemetery and ending at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in honor of US soldiers missing in action in foreign wars, a now 30-year-old tradition by motorcyclists who dub themselves Rolling Thunder. Among them are many Vietnam War veterans. Some of the bikers stopped by the National Cathedral for a "blessing of the bikes" service before they set about their humming business. —AFP

US students square off in spelling bee

WASHINGTON: At the annual Scripps National Spelling Bee this week, hundreds of youngsters will compete in a uniquely American contest that has been likened to an intellectual extreme sport, involving one of the world's most tricky languages. The competitors, some as young as 8 years old, face a three-day obstacle course through the English language, a mash-up of Germanic and French words laced with borrowings from tongues around the world. Any of 470,000 entries in the "Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary" is fair game.

Their challenge is to outlast the field by coming up with the correct spelling of obscure words that often feature any one of a number of letter combinations that form identical sounds in English. For the grade-school students who have trained year-round for the event, the pressure is enormous. They will compete for a \$40,000 top prize, under the bright lights of ESPN, the cable channel that covers the competition as if it were tennis or skate-boarding.

"When I was competing it was an

absolute pressure cooker, but not to the extent it is today," said Nupur Lala, 33, who became the star of the documentary "Spellbound" when she nailed "logorrhoea" to win the 1999 Bee. "Now it has brinkmanship, and things you wouldn't see before - an 8-year-old spelling a German or polysyllabic word that I've never heard of," said Lala, who will shortly start a medical residency at Brown University.

Beginning yesterday, more than 500 contestants from the United States and eight foreign countries took part in the 91st Scripps National Spelling Bee, to be held in Oxon Hill, Maryland, outside Washington. The championship finals are tomorrow night. Winnowed from 11 million hopefuls in schools around the world, contestants range in age from 8 to 15 and include the Bee's first-ever twins - two sets of brothers from Utah and Mississippi.

Geoffrey Nunberg, a linguist at the University of California Berkeley, said the Bee was more of an intellectual exercise than a practical gauge of language skill since almost no one would ever use such recent Bee-winning words as "marocain," "nunatak" and "guetapens". "It bears the same relationship to regular spelling as riding a BMX bike does to riding a bike in the street," Nunberg said, referring to another extreme sport covered by ESPN. — Reuters

Analysis

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Germany's 'miserly' Scholz irks comrades at home and abroad

Germany's new Social Democrat finance minister, Olaf Scholz, is frustrating both key ally France and his own struggling centre-left party by adopting the same fiscal rigor as his conservative predecessor, Wolfgang Schäuble. During his first two months as treasury chief of Europe's largest economy, Scholz has committed to a continued goal of no new debt and limited public spending. It is a strategy the 59-year-old hopes will help revive his Social Democratic Party (SPD), which suffered its worst post-war result at last year's elections, by proving he can manage the public finances of the world's fourth largest economy.

But the strategy risks alienating his party's core supporters at home, who would like to see more spending on education, infrastructure and social housing, and complicating the search for a Franco-German compromise on euro zone reforms. Scholz's strategy is already proving a source of frustration among some fellow euro zone members, who had hoped the inclusion of the centre-left SPD in Germany's governing coalition would steer the EU's economic powerhouse to invest more domestically and boost growth in other countries through higher imports.

That includes Germany's most important ally, French President Emmanuel Macron earlier this month urged Germany to wean itself off the "fetish" of fiscal conservatism, warning that such policies were always made at the expense of other countries. In a speech to German lawmakers days after Macron's comments, Scholz hit back: "We act pragmatically and properly - and do not worship a fetish."

Scholz, who publicly embraces comparisons to his conservative predecessor's fiscal approach, is defending the idea of maintaining a balanced budget while dismissing the assertion that Germany is too strict on spending. Asked why Scholz is ignoring Macron's plea, a finance ministry spokesman pointed to constitutionally enshrined borrowing limits and the coalition deal to finance any additional spending without new debt. "Thanks to the favorable, prolonged upswing, it's also a quite academic debate because we can now massively hike public investments without taking on new debt," the spokesman added.

Healthy growth

The German economy grew by a calendar-adjusted 2.5 percent last year, the strongest rate since 2011, propelled by strong domestic and foreign demand. Despite slowing in the first quarter, it is expected to keep growing at a healthy pace. Europe will also be watching to see if Scholz takes the same approach to the EU as his predecessor, who was reviled in countries such as Greece for imposing unpopular public spending cuts in return for bailout aid.

That includes his approach to Italy, which for many European leaders has become the euro zone's greatest concern given its hefty public-sector debt and lavish spending plans by leading parties. Further political instability looks inevitable after Italy's president set the country on the path to fresh elections, likely to be fought over its role in the European Union and euro zone. Scholz wants to avoid the impression that Europe is split at a time when the continent is challenged by new trade and sanctions policies of US President Donald Trump.

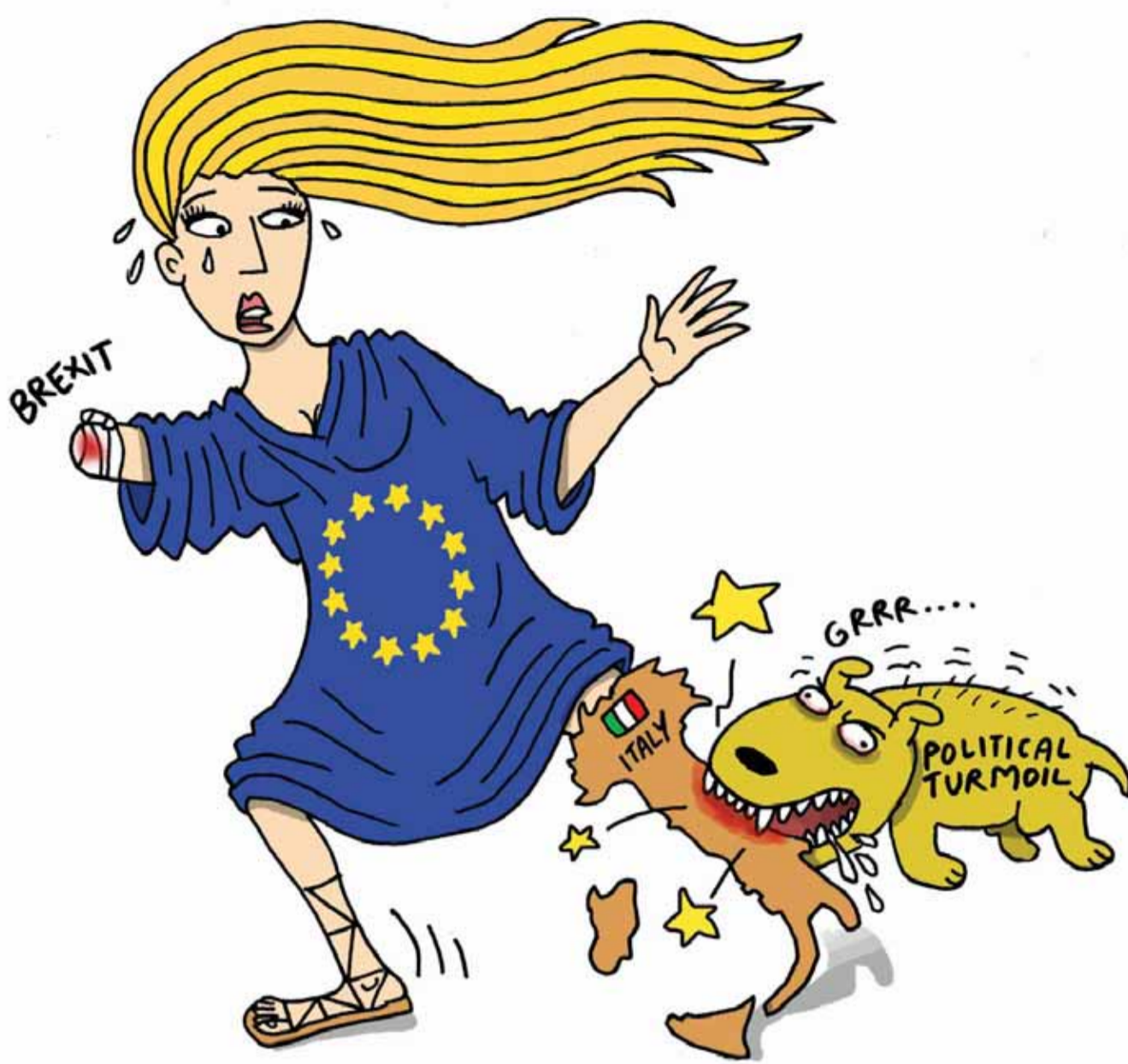
"That Europe acts here as one is a good message - both internally for our citizens and to the outside," Scholz said after talks with European counterparts in Brussels on Friday. This message of unity, however, masks lingering differences on how to balance France's call for more solidarity and Germany's insistence that tax payers in richer countries should not end up paying for governments' failures in poorer ones. Scholz has poured cold water on some of Macron's proposals for euro zone reform, including the need for a common finance minister with his own budget.

Together with his French counterpart Bruno Le Maire, Scholz is working to define a common roadmap on euro zone and banking reforms to be presented at the meeting of EU leaders in June. "The talks are tough, but there will be a compromise," a person close to Scholz said. One way the new finance minister wants to differentiate himself from Schäuble on the European stage is by taking a less confrontational approach and striking a less instructive tone towards other governments, the person said. Earlier this year, Scholz said that Germany shouldn't "dictate" economic policies to other European countries.

'Miserly face'

At home, Scholz's has frustrated some in his own party with his first budget earlier this month. Scholz, who German media have dubbed "Olaf Schäuble", outlined a continued policy of taking on no new debt. He said he plans to use higher-than-expected tax revenues to reduce taxes for workers on low and medium incomes and increase investment in digitalization, but said room for further spending hikes was limited. While Scholz has the backing of Chancellor Angela Merkel, some SPD members doubt whether lowering taxes is the right strategy when the party's main election promise was to hike investment in education, housing and infrastructure.

Further fuelling frustration in the SPD, one of Scholz's first decisions as finance minister was to name a former Goldman Sachs banker, Joerg Kukies, as his deputy with responsibility for financial market policy and European issues. —Reuters



Libya in chaos since overthrow of Gaddafi

Libya, where rival authorities in Tripoli and the east are vying for power, fell into chaos after the ouster of strongman Muammar Gaddafi in October 2011. Here is an overview.

Gaddafi killed

A NATO-backed uprising that begins in February 2011 snowballs into bloody armed conflict. Gaddafi, on the run since the rebels captured the capital in August, is killed in October while trying to flee his hometown Sirte as rebels close in. Days later the rebel National Transitional Council declares Libya's "total liberation". In August 2012, the Council hands over power to a transitional General National Congress (GNC).

Rise of radical groups

US ambassador Chris Stevens and three other American staff are killed in an attack on their consulate in Libya's second city Benghazi on September 11, 2012. An Al-Qaeda-linked group is accused. A car bomb attack in April 2013 targets France's embassy in Tripoli, wounding two French guards. Foreign delegations pull out of the country as it falls into chaos.

Two governments set up

Military strongman Khalifa Haftar, backed by Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, launches an offensive in May 2014 against Islamist groups in Benghazi. Several military officers join his paramilitary Libyan National Army. In June, following legislative elections, the GNC is replaced by a parliament dominated by anti-Islamists. In August, after weeks of deadly clashes, Islamist-led militias storm Tripoli and reinstall the GNC. They set up another government. The country finds itself with two governments and two parliaments. The June-elected government and parliament, the only ones recognized internationally, take refuge in eastern Libya.

IS profits from chaos

The Islamic State group claims its first attack in Libya in December 2014. The following June it seizes Sirte to the east of Tripoli, but is driven out of the coastal town in December 2016.

Rival authorities

In December 2015, months of negotiations result in accords signed under UN supervision in Skhirat, Morocco,



PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron (center), flanked by Libyan leaders, African heads of States and European representatives attend an International Congress on Libya at the Elysee Palace in Paris yesterday. — AFP

that designate a UN-backed Government of National Accord (GNA). The two rival parliaments have reservations but the UN Security Council endorses the accord. The unity government in March 2016 takes up office in Tripoli, headed by prime minister Fayed Al-Sarraj. But the rival administration in the east remains in place and opposed, backed by Haftar and the parliament elected in 2014. In July 2017, Sarraj and Haftar, meeting in Paris, commit to a ceasefire and elections but there is no change on the ground. In December 2017, the UN says the two-year-old Skhirat accord is the only viable framework for a solution. But Haftar says it has expired and the GNA's mandate has run out. He backs the holding of elections in 2018 while implicitly threatening to take power if the political process fails.

Fresh violence

In January 2018, fighting at Tripoli's only working international airport kills at least 20 people after militiamen attack in a bid to free jihadist comrades held at a jail there. The same month, nearly 40 people are killed after two car bombings outside a mosque frequented by jihadist opponents in Benghazi.

On May 2, two IS suicide attackers kill 14 people at Libya's electoral commission in Tripoli. Haftar reasserts strongman status - On May 7, Haftar, after spending at least two weeks in hospital in Paris for undisclosed treatment, announces a military offensive to take from jihadists the city of Derna, the only part of the country's east outside the control of his forces.—AFP

In China's booming tech scene, women battle conservative values and sexism

Ms Li has a day job in the marketing department of one of China's biggest tech firms. At night, she has a second career, livestreaming herself eating noodles or telling jokes in return for small donations from thousands of online viewers. Li, 28, says she is one of at least five women in her office who moonlight to bolster their incomes. She says this is because she and her female peers are paid less than male colleagues and are often overlooked for promotion.

The late nights livestreaming on the YY.com social media platform are worth it, Li says, even though she has been reprimanded twice by her firm for moonlighting. "The first time I was punished I was scared for my job, but I don't worry too much now," Li said. She asked that her first name and the name of her employer not be used. "It's not such a risk to work on the side if you know you're not going anywhere." In recent years, China's tech industry has boomed, with champions like the e-commerce titan Alibaba and Tencent, the social media-to-gaming leader, making waves on the global stage.

But Li's account of unequal pay at her company, which Reuters was unable to verify independently, underscores how women are often sidelined in that boom. Reuters spoke to more than a dozen women - and some men - in the sector, from entry-level employees to executives, who described an industry where female engineers and coders battle against ingrained biases favoring men. "The tradi-

tional view is simply to think that women aren't suitable to be programmers," said Chen Bin, a former Microsoft engineer and the Beijing-based founder of Teach Girls Coding, a campaign to get more women into the sector.

"Things are better now than ten years ago, but overall the number of women getting into tech is really small," he said. China is not the only country where the tech industry has faced heat over a lack of diversity in the workplace. But unlike US peers that have faced legal action over discrimination, including Uber, Alphabet Inc's Google and Microsoft Corp, Chinese technology companies are relatively opaque about gender issues. Most give little data on hiring and none of the industry leaders share the diversity reports that are now customary in the United States, shedding doubt on whether women in Chinese firms hold a comparable number of technical or leadership roles.

Social events

Penny Chen, a 29-year-old software engineer, has worked with the Chinese e-commerce firm JD.com Inc and Jinri Toutiao, a popular news app. For her, the gender divide has long been knitted into the culture. At university, teachers would pair boys with good grades with attractive girls for class activities as a reward, she said. The same didn't happen for high-achieving girls. In the workplace, she says female colleagues are often left out of social events dominated by men. She described one incident in which employees were scheduled to go out for drinks together.

"Our boss told the women to meet outside," she said. "But it was a practical joke; the men had already left before with the bus to the restaurant." Examples of sexism at major Chinese companies often wind up on social media, sometimes sparking online outcries. Last year, video surfaced of a Tencent staff event that included a game in which female employees on their hands and knees had to unscrew bottle caps held between the legs of male counterparts. Tencent apologized for the incident.

The Chinese ride-hailing firm Didi Chuxing was criticized this month for allowing users on its carpooling app to rate female passengers' physical traits after a 21-year-old air hostess was killed by her driver. The company has since apologized and made substantial changes to the service. Many other incidents slip under the radar. The owner of the news aggregator Jinri Toutiao, a tech darling valued at over \$20 billion, this month co-hosted a beauty pageant for female business reporters that attracted little attention. The company did not respond to a request for comment.

Secret contracts

China's gender gap is not confined to tech. The country's gender parity ranking fell in 2017 for the ninth straight year, leaving China placed 100 out of 144 countries surveyed in a report by the World Economic Forum. The country ranked 60th in terms of female labor force participation and 70th in terms of wage equality for similar work. Men on average had an estimated income of around \$19,000, over \$7,000 more than women.

Many top tech firms say they are taking steps to change their male-oriented cultures by doing things like changing hiring practices to promote gender diversity. However, many female employees and women in the industry say that many of the most sexist practices have simply been hidden from view. Samantha Kwok, the Australian-Chinese founder of the Beijing-based recruitment firm JingJobs, said clients often gave her two job descriptions: one to be published publicly and a second internal one that detailed requirements based on age or gender. "They already have in mind a very set candidate profile," she said.

Human Rights Watch released a report last month showing that "men only" ads were pervasive in China. It also called out large technology firms for objectifying women in order to attract new male personnel, sharing a video produced by Alibaba in 2014 that featured pole-dancing female employees. —Reuters

Business

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 2018

13 Brazil, nine days into grinding strike, still a transport agony



14 KIB's Al-Suwaidan receives two awards at 2018 MESA



15 Citi and Kuwait Investment Authority celebrate 20 Years of Partnership



ROME: A journalist watches a TV screen showing the first exit polls at the Five Star Movement (M5S) press room early on March 5, 2018 after the closure of the polling stations. — AFP

Italian crisis batters EU markets

Euro at 11-month low on political turmoil in Italy

LONDON: A worsening political crisis in Italy provoked a second day of selling on European markets, with the euro cut to an 11-month low, stocks punished and short-term borrowing costs surging for the government in Rome. Investors fear that repeat elections - which now seem inevitable in the euro zone's third-largest economy - may become a de facto referendum on Italian membership of the currency bloc and the country's role in the European Union.

Short-dated Italian bond yields—a sensitive gauge of political risk—soared as much as 150 basis points to their highest since late 2013 in their biggest move in 26 years. The euro dropped towards \$1.15 for the first time in close to a year, down 0.8 percent on the day. Against the Swiss franc, it fell to 1.15 francs. Stocks in Milan slid 2.6 percent on the main index after a 2.1 percent fall on Monday. Bank shares slumped another 5 percent after losing 4 percent in the previous session, bruised by the sell-off in government bonds, a core part of bank portfolios.

'Whatever it takes'

"It is just a slide, and as the slide continues, you ask where is the end," said Saxo Bank's head of FX strategy, John Hardy. Global contagion is a risk, he said, with the benchmark US S&P 500 stocks index also close to

breaching some key support levels. Hardy recalled a promise made in 2012 by European Central Bank President Mario Draghi to keep the euro intact.

"If this continues for another couple of sessions, I think you will have to see some official (European) response. A 'whatever it takes' kind of moment," he said. Adding to the uncertainty, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy will face a vote of confidence in his leadership on Friday. Spain's bond-yield spread with Germany also went to its widest in 11 months at 144 bps. Madrid's IBEX bourse was down almost 2.5 percent. Asia flinched, too. Japan's Nikkei slipped 0.6 percent and Chinese and Hong Kong shares ended 0.6 to 0.7 percent in the red. US markets pointed to losses later, with the S&P500 E-Mini futures for the down 0.7 percent. The dollar was up against almost all major currencies except the safe-haven Japanese yen. The US currency is heading for its best month in a year and a half - a move that is hurting many emerging market countries that borrow in dollars. EM stocks hit a five-month low while South Africa's



US 10-year Treasury yields fell to six-week lows

led the currency retreat as it dropped 1.5 percent. "The biggest contributor is fear of a euro zone crisis, and the spillover from that into demand for safe-haven currencies," said Koon Chow, an FX strategist at UBP.

Play it safe

Away from Europe, the focus was on the on-again, off-again US-North Korean summit and the US-China trade relationship. An aide to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrived in Singapore on Monday night, Japanese public broadcaster NHK reported, and the White House said a "pre-advance" team was travelling to the city to meet the North Koreans.

The reports indicate that planning for the summit, initially scheduled for June 12, is moving ahead even though President Donald Trump called it off last week. A day later, Trump said he had reconsidered, and officials from both countries were meeting to work out details. In another sign that investors were flocking to safer bets, though, the euro hit a 11-month low ver-

sus the yen with a 1.5 percent drop to 125.10 yen, its biggest slide in four months.

Elsewhere in bonds, US 10-year Treasury yields fell to six-week lows of 2.883 percent after a US holiday on Monday. The climb in Italy's yields - yields move inversely to price - meant they were above the US equivalent for the first time in over a year. Analysts are awaiting US inflation data later in the week, which could provide clues to future interest rate moves before the Federal Reserve policy meets next month.

President Mattarella effectively vetoed a coalition government of the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and League party at the weekend. He has asked Cottarelli to form a stop-gap government to lead the country to early elections instead. Cottarelli is expected to announce his cabinet after the meeting. Oil prices remained under pressure from expectations that Saudi Arabia and Russia would pump more crude, even as US oil output rises. US crude futures tumbled to six-week lows and looked set for a fifth straight day of declines. The July contract was last down 1.3 percent at \$67.02 a barrel.

Brent crude futures edged up 0.5 percent after dropping to \$74.49 per barrel on Monday, their lowest in about three weeks. They were last at \$75.82. Spot gold was barely changed at \$1,298.01 an ounce. — Reuters

NBK leads the way in Kuwait in partnership with RippleNet

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues to introduce innovative and the newest technology solutions to meet the needs of customers, having partnered with RippleNet to offer customers a fast, safe and convenient cross border payments service, and making NBK the first bank in Kuwait to join the growing network of RippleNet globally. NBK's RippleNet solution brings innovation to the fundamentals of international remittances since the bank is in the process of applying this service in Kuwait as well as in its branches abroad after obtaining the necessary approvals from the regulatory bodies, led by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

NBK Deputy Group CEO Mrs. Shaikha Al Bahar said: "We are delighted to join RippleNet and access the fast-growing network that connects the network members and other financial institutions. This solution will improve our

customers experience dramatically where we will be able to provide instant fund transfers with end-to-end tracing and tracking solutions which is available currently in global and some GCC markets including UAE and Saudi Arabia. This is also in-line with National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) strategy to adopt the latest technologies which mutually benefits both the bank and our esteemed clients."

"This announcement represents NBK commitment to adopt the latest practical solutions and reflects our ability to transform NBK to digital bank with world class services and solutions, and yet we are still maintaining our corporate identity and without affecting our regulatory compliance", Al Bahar added.

Managing Director of Southeast Asia and MENA, Ripple, Navin Gupta said: "We are glad to have NBK join our network as the first banking partner in Kuwait. It holds a reputation of providing innovative services that comply with international standards all while ensure safe transactions to their customers. This agreement will enable NBK to use innovative blockchain technology to support speed and secured remittances both for domestic & International destinations."

"By joining Ripple's growing, global network, financial institutions like NBK can process their customers' payments into and out of Kuwait instantly, reliably and cost-effectively, as well as expand their payments solutions into new markets - including those that are otherwise too difficult or expensive to reach", he added.



"With offices in San Francisco, New York, London, Sydney, India, Singapore and Luxembourg, Ripple already has more than 140 customers around the world. Joining RippleNet enables banks to process cross-border payments in real time with end-to-end tracking and certainty of settlement", Gupta said.

National Bank of Kuwait continues to collectively enjoy the highest credit ratings from the three international rating agencies: Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and its disciplined

approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. NBK also maintains its position among the 50 safest banks in the world for the twelfth consecutive year.

NBK Group has the widest banking presence in four continents worldwide. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including London, Paris, Geneva, New York and Singapore, as well as China (Shanghai). Meanwhile, regional coverage extends to Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey.

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Kuwait

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Customs Clearance Officer Human Capital Group Qatar Qatar

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Business

Brazil, nine days into grinding strike, still a transport agony

Calling for the government to step down

RIO DE JANEIRO: South America's economic giant, Brazil, remained almost in a transport stranglehold yesterday despite a pledge from the president that a nine-day strike will end soon. Late Sunday, the deeply unpopular President Michel Temer caved in to intense pressure from strikers, and cut the price of diesel fuel. The truck strike has been crippling fuel, food and other freight across the continent-sized industrial and agricultural powerhouse.

Temer said he had "absolute conviction that between today and tomorrow" the crisis, would finally end. In a tweet, Temer gave a slightly longer horizon of "one to two days." Despite the president's confidence, significant numbers of truck drivers stood firm and some appeared to be radicalized, calling for the government to step down.

A key Temer minister, Eliseu Padilha, spoke of unidentified groups "infiltrating the movement with different, essentially political goals." Late Sunday, Temer gave in to their main demand for lower diesel costs, but Monday saw renewed disruption. Brazil is already suffering from the aftermath of a deep recession and political instability ahead of October general elections.

More than 550 road blockages by truckers were mounted across 24 of the country's 27 states, the federal highway police said. Shortages of aviation fuel shuttered eight airports. Traffic to the huge Santos seaport near Sao Paulo, which usually receives 10,000 trucks a day, shrank to a trickle. Though there has been some improvement since the army was ordered to intervene Friday, with armed soldiers escorting fuel trucks on priority routes, enormous lines of cars were still forming at gas stations.

Many supermarkets around the country struggled to

source fresh food. Producers reported having to slaughter stocks of chickens because they had no access to the feed, while others threw out thousands of liters of spoiled milk. Hospitals in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo had to cancel non-urgent surgeries and at least 13 states reported scrapping university classes. Adding to the disruption in Rio, the key BRT commuter system operated at only 22 percent capacity, while in Sao Paulo the bus system ran at 70 percent capacity.

The truckers are angry over the rise in diesel costs from 3.36 reais (92 US cents) a liter in January to 3.6 reais before the strike. On May 26, it hit 3.8 reais per liter. After urgent negotiations with representatives of the truckers, Temer agreed to cut the diesel price by 0.46 reais a liter for 60 days.

Some appeared to be radicalized



That concession hammered the value in state-controlled oil major Petrobras, one of Brazil's most dominant companies, which is due to face a strike by its own workers today. Shares dropped 14 percent Monday and another 14 percent last Thursday, while the Ibovespa index in Sao Paulo closed 4.5 percent lower.

Bringing down government?

There were some signs that the worst of the strike might be easing. City hall in Rio announced that yesterday there would be enough diesel for the 100 percent return of the municipal bus fleet and the BRT system. But a complete resolution of the crisis appeared some way off, with unions split on whether to stand down and some activists taking a more militant line.

At a road block set up by truckers outside Rio de Janeiro, an AFP reporter saw numerous signs calling for a military coup, while others spoke of bringing down



RIO DE JANEIRO: A protestor waves the Brazilian national flag outside the Duque de Caxias refinery in metropolitan Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on May 28, 2018, where soldiers have been deployed to guarantee the safe transport of fuel for essential services. — AFP

Temer. "We've had enough of all this corruption. If more people come out into the streets, the government will fall, it's sure," said Tango Roxa, an electrical appliances salesman who joined the truckers to express his support.

The president of the Brazilian Association of Truck Drivers, Jose da Fonseca Lopes, alluded to this hardening of opinions, saying that "it's no longer truckers who are on strike... It's people who want to bring down the government. I've got nothing to do with these people." The crisis has exposed the surprising fragility of the giant economy and put Temer's lame duck administration on the defensive ahead of the October presidential

and legislative elections.

A poll by Ideia BigData found that 95 percent of Brazilians disapproved of his handling of the situation, even if 55 percent opposed the strike itself. Temer took power in controversial circumstances in 2016, following the impeachment and removal from office of his leftist predecessor Dilma Rousseff for breaking budget rules. The president's market-friendly, center-right government launched into sweeping austerity reforms that have been widely praised by investors as a bid to return Brazil to fiscal health, but proved hugely unpopular with ordinary Brazilians. — AFP

Businesses turn up heat on Mexican govt over crime surge

MEXICO CITY: Mexican business leaders called out the government on Monday over a recent wave of criminal activity that has terrorized large swaths of Latin America's second-largest economy and led some prominent firms to cut back operations. Two of Mexico's top business groups urged the administration of President Enrique Pena Nieto and the candidates hoping to succeed him in a July 1 election to stem the violence and robberies, which they say are putting workers' lives at risk and hurting investment.

"The high levels of violence have become the greatest obstacle to (economic) activity," Mexico's powerful CCE business lobby said in a statement. Tens of thousands of people have been killed in turf wars between drug cartels and their clashes with security forces since former President Felipe Calderon sent in the military to crush the gangs soon after taking office at the end of 2006.

In recent weeks, dairy producer Grupo Lala shuttered a distribution center in the northern state of Tamaulipas and the world's biggest Coke bottler, Coca-Cola Femsa, indefinitely shut down a 160-employee distribution center in southwestern Guerrero state. Canada's Pan American Silver Corp was the latest to act, saying on Monday it would reduce operations and suspend staff movements at its Dolores silver mine in the border state of Chihuahua because of recent security incidents.

Companies risk extortion, theft, attacks on their logistics chain and physical assault on their employees, according to the American Chamber of Commerce of Mexico (AmCham). "The impact of corruption, public insecurity, an inadequate justice (system) definitely impacts



GUADALAJARA: Carlos Alexis Gonzalez, the father of Mateo, an 8-month-old baby killed when a bus was set on fire after an attack by gunmen, mourns over the coffin during the funeral. — AFP

the cost of investment," while fear of crime even keeps some executives from coming to Mexico, said Luis Gerardo del Valle, AmCham Mexico's head of tax affairs.

Train and truck freight thefts have jumped as criminals employ more sophisticated methods. Last week, miner and infrastructure firm Grupo Mexico said seven freight train derailments between the port of Veracruz and central Mexico were due to "sabotage" and would cost the company 312 million pesos (\$16 million). Mexican industry association Canacintra estimates that small and medium-sized companies spend the equivalent of 6 percent of their income on security, double what they did a decade ago. — Reuters

In Portugal, trust in China is the art of the deal

LISBON: Utility company EDP may balk at the meager 5 percent premium offered for its shares by China Three Gorges (CTG) but the battle for Portugal's biggest business has largely played out already. To some it looks like a lowball bid, but Portugal has welcomed the offer because it considers the Chinese firm's pledge to keep EDP-Energias de Portugal intact more important than the price and it wants closer ties with a country that has ploughed billions into its economy.

That openness to investment from China, including in strategic sectors like energy, stands out amid suspicions elsewhere in Europe about Chinese acquisitions. The Chinese state-owned hydropower giant became EDP's biggest shareholder in 2011. So when reports of merger talks between EDP and Spanish rival Gas Natural emerged in July 2017, it beat a path to the Lisbon government's door.

A Gas Natural takeover would have threatened CTG's ambition to use EDP to

diversify beyond China, while Portugal's Socialist government feared a European rival could break up the business, an industry source familiar with the talks and a political source with knowledge of the government's position said. "Nearly a year ago, Gas Natural approached EDP and that was the time when CTG started to think about this move," said one industry source with knowledge of CTG's takeover bid. "If CTG has been a partner for more than six years, has invested in the company, in a strategic sector for Portugal, and has good relations with the government, it is natural that they talk," the source said.

EDP and Gas Natural denied being in talks last year. But just over a month after the reports, Portugal added a clause to its takeover laws allowing shareholders with the same ultimate owner to combine all their voting rights. Previously, the votes would have been capped at 25 percent, whatever the size of their combined holdings. That could be crucial as CTG's bid for EDP progresses. While it owns 23.3 percent, another Chinese state-owned company, CNIC, holds 5 percent, most recently buying 2 percent at the end of 2017. CTG in China and a spokesman for the Portuguese government did not respond to requests for comment. — Reuters

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Business

Samsung Gulf introduces the Galaxy A6 and A6+ to Kuwait

A stylish, practical smartphone with an advanced camera

KUWAIT CITY: Samsung Gulf Electronics announced the launch of the Galaxy A6 and A6+ in Kuwait. The devices combine everyday convenience and stylish design with an advanced camera for more personalized way to express yourself. Featuring a powerful front and rear camera, a sleek premium design, super AMOLED screens and Samsung's signature Infinity Display, the new Galaxy A series is available in three stylish colors: Black, Gold and Blue.

"Here in Kuwait, consumers are always looking for more from their smartphones. They are quick to adopt the best technology on the market, and we take pride in being able to consistently bring them the advanced devices they've come to expect," said Tarek Sabbagh, Head of IT and Mobile (IM) Division at Samsung Electronics Gulf. "With the Galaxy A6 and A6+, we aim to provide a premium smartphone experience while still delivering on consumers' needs for practicality and convenience at affordable prices. What's more, we have added an impressive camera to the Galaxy A6 and A6+ that lets users capture, personalize, and share their most memorable moments."

With the Galaxy A6 and A6+'s powerful front and rear camera, taking beautiful shots or selfies anytime, anywhere has never been easier. Featuring an adjustable front LED flash,

Galaxy A6 and A6+ users can snap stylish and glamorous selfies, from day to night, even in low light conditions. The rear camera's low-aperture lenses ensure that users can also capture sharp, clear photos in low light conditions, without sacrificing image quality no matter what time of the day.

The Galaxy A6+'s Dual Camera can even further enhance the pictures and moments that matter with Live Focus mode, meaning that users can control the depth of field and bokeh effect before or even after the shot is taken. Users can enrich their pictures with unique background blur patterns in a range of shapes including hearts, stars and more.

True-to-life detail

Users can experience a richer surround sound experience to enjoy movies, music and more with Dolby Atmos optimized audio. The Galaxy A6 and A6+ provide a full range of sound from highs to lows, with outstanding clarity and true-to-life detail for a more powerful and immersive audio experience. Users can choose to turn on the Dolby Atmos effect to transform their audio with breathtaking moving sound that flows around them.

The Galaxy A6 and A6+ continue to set the standard for the ultimate uninterrupted viewing experience on the 5.6" HD+ super AMOLED screen of the A6 and the 6.0"



FHD+ super AMOLED screen of the A6+. Samsung's signature Infinity Display goes beyond the bezel, featuring an impressive 18.5:9 screen ratio. Its sleek smooth curves and metal design have been engineered to offer improved durability and comfortable grip for maximum ability, without compromising on style.

Designed with practicality and everyday convenience in mind, the Galaxy A6 and A6+ integrates several popular features from



Samsung's flagship, including hassle-free security with Face Recognition and Fingerprint scanning for a quick and effortless way to unlock the device. Both devices make multitasking fast and easy with App Pair, fully utilizing the Galaxy A6 and A6+'s larger screens by allowing users to pair two apps, halving time and doubling enjoyment. With the Always on Display users can get information at a glance without unlocking their phone, saving on time and battery life.

The Galaxy A6 and A6+ also support Bixby Vision, Home and Reminder. Samsung's Bixby can assist users in completing a range of everyday tasks, making the Galaxy A6 and A6+ smarter and more helpful. The Galaxy A6 and A6+ are available across major retailers and Samsung brand shops in Kuwait, as well as online at Shop.Samsung.com starting at KWD 102 for the Galaxy A6 and KWD 122 for the Galaxy A6+. The Galaxy A6 and A6+ will be available in Black, Gold and Blue.

KIB's Al-Suwaidan receives two awards at 2018 MESA

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that Basil Adeb Al-Suwaidan, Head of Information Security at the Bank, received two awards at the 2018 Middle East Security Awards (MESA) Conference & Awards Ceremony for the third consecutive year. Al-Suwaidan was named Information Security Executive of the Year in the banking and financial services sector and also won the Most Recognized 100 Chief Information Security Officer Award (CISO 100) - an award recognizing the top 100 heads of information security across the Middle East.

Al-Suwaidan recently received his awards at a ceremony held in Dubai, which was attended by a number of international and local information security specialists. KIB was selected based on the outstanding work of its information security department in implementing strong and innovative security practices and policies. Accordingly, the Bank ensures that it remains effective and up-to-date with a comprehensive set of controls comprising the best practices in information security and confidentiality.

On this occasion, Al-Suwaidan expressed his delight at receiving these two prestigious awards. He also noted that KIB maintains and continuously develops its information security management system and policies to ensure the



utmost privacy and confidentiality in all its banking processes, as well as to ensure safety and security of the Bank's alternate banking channels.

Al-Suwaidan added: "These awards are a reflection of KIB's unwavering commitment to implementing the best banking solutions in line with the highest international standards, particularly with regards to reducing information security threats. As always, we aim at safeguarding customer data to provide secure banking services at all times, going above and

beyond our stakeholders' expectations."

The annual MESA Conference & Awards Ceremony, organized by Emirsec Ventures, addresses the most challenging emerging cyber security issues through innovative strategies and approaches. Winners go through stringent rounds of selection based on a set of comprehensive assessment criteria, including technical expertise and type of achievements, size of the institution and sector, successful initiatives and projects, and significant contribution and outstanding service to the industry as a whole.

VIVA launches Jawwy TV's Ramadan offer

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched partnership with JawwyTV, the all new mobile application that provides a wide range of the latest Arabic, Turkish and Western movies, TV series including top documentaries and kids' channels. VIVA customers can enjoy this new entertainment service offer this Ramadan for KD 5 by sending 11 to 700, and benefit unlimited streaming and 5 GB internet.

The app-based TV service allows them to access live TV channels, watch the latest Hollywood movies, Arabic movies, HBO series, kids' channels like Disney and Nickelodeon, live sports channels, with



Arabic subtitles and an option to access across multiple devices - perfect for the Ramadan season. To find out more about JawwyTV's offer, customers can visit one of VIVA's 89 branches, or VIVA's official website at www.viva.com.kw, or access round the clock assistance from team of specialists available on the VIVA's customer care line.

Win instant cash prizes from Bumper-to-Bumper this Ramadan

KUWAIT: Bumper-to-Bumper (BTB), part of Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons Automotive Group, is extending its warmest wishes for the Holy month of Ramadan to its customers with valuable cash prizes when using its quick lube services at any of the 11 Bumper-to-Bumper service centers located across Kuwait.

Starting May 27 and until June 14th, everyone is a winner at Bumper-to-Bumper service centers where with every quick lube service customers will receive a scratch & win cash prize vouchers instantly. Known for its diversified services, Bumper-to-Bumper provides the highest level of service thanks to a well-trained team and the best in the market product range which includes oils, filters and much more. Throughout the years, Bumper-to-Bumper has been the leading car maintenance and servicing center trusted by customers in Kuwait and continues to expand to serve more segments of the population.

Founded in 1980, BTB started as quick-service shops that specialized in replacing and repairing exhaust systems. Five years later in 1985, the brand BTB was created as a unique concept in the Kuwaiti market. Today, BTB's clear mission is to exceed expectations by offering the best in car maintenance and spare-parts services, for both individual customers and corporate owners. But what makes BTB truly stand out is the highly-trained team of technicians and professionals, who collectively provide an unprecedented level of support through state-of-the-art equipment and auto maintenance knowledge.

As one of the strongest local brands in the country, with more than 160,000 vehicles serviced each year, in one of 150 service platforms in 11 service centers throughout the country, BTB provides customers with total convenience and peace of mind, dealing with all car makes and models. At



BTB, the customer comes first and each center is designed with the customer's comfort in mind, including free wireless access, a spacious lounge area, cafe, playroom and much more.

Indeed, choosing BTB service centers means turning over your car to a crew of specialized technicians who operate the most advanced equipment and analyzing tools to produce a highly-detailed report and an accurate estimate of total cost of repair. To top it off, BTB service centers offer genuine spare parts for all car models, as well as warranties for parts and labor. BTB service centers are strategically located throughout Kuwait including Sharq, Fahaeel, Shuwaikh and Jahra, and are also integrated in Alfa Petrol Stations in Shaab, Egaila, Shuwaikh and South Surra, and in KNPC Petrol Stations in Ishbiliya, Jahra (Al Waha) and Ardiya (Jaber Stadium area).

Bayer could get US approval for Monsanto deal

FRANKFURT: Bayer could be granted conditional US antitrust approval for its planned takeover of Monsanto, clearing a major hurdle for the \$62.5 billion deal, a person familiar with the situation told

Reuters. Bayer has already come to an agreement in principle on what it would take to win approval from the US Department of Justice (DoJ), after adjusting the planned divestment of assets to include digital farming to assuage antitrust concerns.

Both Bayer and the DoJ declined to comment. The German pharmaceuticals and life sciences company had said it was on track to wrap up the deal soon. If the deal is not closed by June 14, Monsanto could withdraw from the takeover agreement and seek a higher price. —Reuters

Lufthansa Amenity Kit features new design, sustainable materials

DUBAI: Lufthansa has introduced its new premium amenity kits. The new First Class Amenity Kit, which will be on board starting the end of May, recently won first place at the Onboard Hospitality Award 2018. One thousand readers of the renowned British trade magazine took part in the survey that helped Lufthansa win the coveted award in the category "Best for First". The following criteria were assessed: First impression, quality, durability, weight, usefulness, design, functionality, taste, content and enrichment of customer experience.



The ladies' model of the Windsor Amenity Kit (designed and produced by Skysupply) is modern and elegant, with an elaborate finish. Not only is it a travel bag that offers space for cosmetics and accessories, but also has a detachable carrying strap so that the bag can be used as a handbag or clutch. The men's model is classic and functional. It includes a modern, straightforward design that can be used in everyday life, both as a travel bag and as a practical

organizer. The contents of the First Class Kits include exclusive products from La Prairie.

Lufthansa's Business Class Reisetel Amenity Kit was among the finalists at the Onboard Hospitality Award. These amenity kits (designed and produced by Spirit, a subsidiary of LSG group) will be offered beginning in July. The bags come in three different variations that feature the new Lufthansa design and are equipped with high-quality cosmetics from L'Occitane. The idea of sustainability was at the forefront of product development. The bags can be reused after the trip, for example as a shopping bag, pencil case or cosmetic bag.

The same environmental awareness is at the forefront of the Lufthansa Premium Economy offering. As of mid-July, new "Around the World" Amenity Kits will be available, which are ideal for reuse as shopping or beach bags and thus contributing to a reduction in plastic waste. With five different designs (Eiffel Tower, Brandenburg Gate, Frankfurt Skyline, Statue of Liberty and Golden Gate Bridge) they are also suitable as collectors' items.



Health

Folkloric and a national symbol: Saving the Balkan Lynx

TIRANA: In Albania, legend has it that staring into the almond-shaped eyes of the Balkan Lynx renders you blind. But today, sightings of the rare wildcat have become so unlikely that conservationists have raised a red flag about its future. Only about 40 individuals of the animal still roam the mountains of Albania and neighboring Macedonia, according to estimates by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which in 2015 classed the "Lynx lynx balcanicus" as critically endangered. Since 2006 a regional initiative has been under way aimed at preventing the lynx from becoming extinct. Now, Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro are all part of the program to expand protection zones for the Balkan Lynx, raise awareness, especially among youngsters, and combat deforestation and poaching. It is a challenge, but there are signs of hope.

Sightings

"This lynx was spotted on April 16 at 3:50 am", says Aleksander Trajce, head of Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania. Examining the photograph of what looks like a big spotted cat with very pointed ears walking in the snow through the night, his excitement is obvious. The image was captured, he explains, by dedicated cameras, set up on the mountain of Munella, in northeastern Albania. The possible sighting of the Balkan Lynx—an adult female—is encouraging for those fighting to save it. "All proof documenting the presence and the reproduction of lynx, little or adult, is a hope for the survival" of the species, said Dime Melovski, of the Macedonian Ecological Society. The Balkan Lynx "is the most jeopardized lynx in the world", he added.

Patchy regional presence

The population is currently concentrated in Albania and Macedonia. "Two, or even possibly three, individuals have equally been spotted in the mountains of Kosovo," Trajce said. But he added that it was not possible to say if they originated from among those already known about in Albania and had wandered across, or were a separate line of reproduction. And Melovski said it was "currently considered unlikely" for there to be any Balkan Lynx in Montenegro and Greece.

'Critical'

The number of Balkan Lynx has been falling

strongly "for years", said Elvana Ramaj, the Albanian environment ministry's official in charge of biodiversity. She said it had now reached a "critical" point for the animal's existence. In the 1970s, the region had had about 280 individual Balkan Lynxes, according to biodiversity experts. But the impact of civil unrest, an unstable socio-economic transition, poaching and habitat destruction have all taken a toll. Albania suffered rampant deforestation in the 1990s, destroying the habitat and hunting ground of the lynx.

Poaching has been another factor in its demise, although in Albania it is becoming increasingly rare and much less socially accepted. In March 2015, a baby lynx was killed by a hunter in the Munella mountain forest, sparking a strong reaction throughout the country. As well as the IUCN, the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats has also reinforced the level of protection for the Balkans Lynx since March.

National symbol

In a zoo on northern Albania's Shkodra Lake, a yowling male Balkan Lynx is testimony to the injury that humans can inflict on animals. Trailing its left leg, whose tendons were cut in a trap nine years ago, it limps around its cage. In the wild, "he would be dead, he would not feed himself, nor withstand the cold," said Sokol Kota, the 37-year old zookeeper. Apart from behind the bars of a cage, or on the face of Macedonia's five denar coin—the animal is the Macedonian national symbol — it is difficult to see a lynx.

As well as their rarity, the felines usually only venture out in the evening or at night to feed on squirrels and rabbits. During the day, they sleep, safely hidden away in western Macedonia's mountainous national park of Mavrovo and Albania's Munella peak.

Tracking

But to protect the species, it is also necessary to observe it in order to understand its movements. For that reason, Albanian researchers in March set up a trap to capture a lynx in the Munella region so they could put a transmitter collar on to track it.

They hope to be able to intervene and rescue it, if necessary. In February last year, a female lynx named Maya was tagged—as a result, Macedonian scientists have been able to confirm that she gave birth the following spring.—AFP



ALBANIA: A picture shows a Balkan lynx, classified as critically endangered, in a cage in a restaurant of the city of Shkodra, north of Albania.—AFP



ALBANIA: This undated handout camera trap picture provided by Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) shows a Balkan lynx, classified as critically endangered, walking in Munella mountain near the city of Puka.—AFP

AI better at finding skin cancer than doctors

PARIS: A computer was better than human dermatologists at detecting skin cancer in a study that pitted human against machine in the quest for better, faster diagnostics, researchers said yesterday. A team from Germany, the United States and France taught an artificial intelligence system to distinguish dangerous skin lesions from benign ones, showing it more than 100,000 images. The machine—a deep learning convolutional neural network or CNN—was then tested against 58 dermatologists from 17 countries, shown photos of malignant melanomas and benign moles.

Just over half the dermatologists were at "expert" level with more than five years of experience, 19 percent had between two and five years' experience, and 29 percent were beginners with less than two years under their belt. "Most dermatologists were outperformed by the CNN," the research team wrote in a paper published in the journal *Annals of Oncology*. On aver-

age, flesh and blood dermatologists accurately detected 86.6 percent of skin cancers from the images, compared to 95 percent for the CNN.

"The CNN missed fewer melanomas, meaning it had a higher sensitivity than the dermatologists," the study's first author Holger Haensle of the University of Heidelberg said in a statement. It also "misdiagnosed fewer benign moles as malignant melanoma... this would result in less unnecessary surgery." The dermatologists' performance improved when they were given more information of the patients and their skin lesions. The team said AI may be a useful tool for faster, easier diagnosis of skin cancer, allowing surgical removal before it spreads.

There are about 232,000 new cases of melanoma, and 55,500 deaths, in the world each year, they added. But it is unlikely that a machine will take over from human doctors entirely, rather functioning as an aid. Melanoma in some parts of the body, such as the fingers, toes and scalp, are difficult to image, and AI may have difficulty recognizing "atypical" lesions or ones that patients themselves are unaware of. "Currently, there is no substitute for a thorough clinical examination," experts Victoria Mar from Monash University in Melbourne and Peter Soyer of the University of Queensland wrote in an editorial published with the study.—AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

248 33 199

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

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What's On

AOU participates in GCES 2018



Dr Abdullah Alajmi, Assistant Rector of Administrative and Financial Affairs, Arab Open University (AOU) - Kuwait, chaired the Eighth Biannual Gulf Comparative Education Society (GCES) Symposium 2018 entitled Public, Private, and Philanthropy: Exploring the Impact of New Actors on Education in the GCC. It was lately hosted by the Al-Qasimi Foundation in Ras Al-Khaimah, UAE.

Dr Alajmi, President of GCES, said that the symposium addressed several themes including, firstly, the new mechanisms of society partnership between the public and private sectors and their impact on outcomes of the education quality, secondly, the role of global not-for-profit

organizations in educational outcomes, scientific culture, and promotion of developmental concepts such as practicing social equity, and, thirdly the legal, organizational, administrative, and financial means of partnership between private educational institutions, and governments of Gulf States, as well as their educational ministries.

Dr Alajmi added that during the symposium several papers were presented on Educational Anthropology, Development, Knowledge Economies, and international frameworks for educational partnerships. It witnessed a participation of many academicians and policymakers such as Bob Lingard, School of Education, The University of Queensland, Australia, Antoni Verger, Universitat

Autonoma de Barcelona, Frode Mauring (UN Development Program), Faryal Khan, UNESCO, and Dr Ahoud Al-Asfour, PAAET, Kuwait.

He also expressed his pleasure for the participation of Mr. Jibrin Al-Jibrin, Director of Projects - The Arab Gulf Program for Development (AGFUND), who talked about the role of AGFUND in supporting and promoting the open learning through providing developmental initiatives in the Arab world in integrated fields such as universities, health, women, children, combating poverty, or any barriers that face underprivileged students.

Dr Alajmi pointed out that one of the main recommendations, which will be published later on the website of the

Foundation www.gces.ae, was the adoption of a suggestion submitted by Dr Ahoud Al-Asfour, PAAET, Kuwait. The suggestion discusses the main problems that hinder the partnership between the private and public sectors in the field of education as well as it addresses the promotion of charitable work and supporting bodies in the local universities. It also tries to find an organizational and functional framework taking into consideration the social and cultural context of any educational partnership. Dr Alajmi concluded that at the closing remarks, it suggested that the next GCES 2020 will be jointly organized in Kuwait by the Arab Open University and the Faculty of Education-PAAET.



(From left) Abdulmohsen Al-Fahad, Nazem Al-Ghabra and Fatima Dashti; Ooredoo senior media staff, attended the Ooredoo ghabka night which took place recently.

Kids World Bilingual Nursery and Kindergarten celebrates end of academic year



Kids World Bilingual Nursery and Kindergarten culminated the academic year with a celebration of the graduation of its students to primary school. The event was attended by the Ambassador of Guyana to Kuwait, who was

the guest of honor for this event, as well as the families of all the students who were graduating. The event included a live musical show performed by the students entitled 'Story Land' which showcased various elements of Kids World's curriculum and

the skills which the children have learned about in the past year. A great time was had by all as the families celebrated their children and their achievement with the Ambassador of Guyana and Kids World's Director Narjes Al-Shatti.



Q by Al-Yaqout celebrates Jordan Independence Day

Q by Al-Yaqout, Kuwait's mega lifestyle store, celebrated Jordan's Independence day at its store with a cake cutting ceremony attended by customers, key dignitaries from the Jordanian community in Kuwait and its staff members. The Q-Store has launched a national celebration program that welcomes customers from all nationalities to its outlet.

As part of the Jordan Independence Day promotion, Q-Store offers all Jordanian nationals special promotions. This is in addition to the 'Just Visit and Win' promotion where anybody can get a chance to win a free ticket to their home country by just visiting the Q-Store and participating in the 'Just Visit and Win Raffle' promo.

It is worth mentioning that Q-Store offers a vast collection and latest models of Electronics, Gaming, Toys, Furniture, Carpets, Home Decor, Gourmet Food and Gifting, all under one roof, in addition to carpets, tables, flooring, wallpapers, free interior design service and more. Additionally, Sedar Curtains, the market leader in the Middle East, is available exclusively only at the Q-Store. The Sedar megastore has an amazing range of new curtains, wallpapers, blinds and accessories from leading international brands like Versace, Armani, Swarovski, Fujikawa and more, many of which are introduced for the first time in Kuwait. The Q-Store is becoming a hot destination for lifestyle shoppers in Kuwait.



Basics of Islam course tomorrow

You are cordially invited to the third session of our Basics of Islam course tomorrow at 9:30 pm. In this session, we will discuss the pillars of Islam, why they are called so, and the fate of someone who disbelieves in one of them.

We will also examine the reasons why Allah (SWT) commanded us to worship Him, yet He doesn't benefit from our worship. Finally, we will examine the relationship between the articles of faith in Islam and the pillars of Islam (acts that characterize a Muslim).

If you are curious about Islam or want to hone your skills in explaining its main concepts, this course will equip you with clear and concise information about Islam as well as techniques for effective dialogue.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1922



ACROSS

- 1. An erratic deflection from an intended course.
4. Type genus of the Psoppiidae.
11. Any thick messy substance.
15. To make a mistake or be incorrect.
16. Providing enjoyment.
17. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary...
20. In a manner differing from the usual or expected.
21. A small railroad car propelled by hand or by a small motor.
23. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
25. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
26. Worn or shabby from overuse or (of pages) from having corners turned down.
28. A metallic tapping sound.
30. A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
33. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
35. Show a response or a reaction to something.
39. Any orchid of the genus Disa.
42. Primitive predaceous North American fish covered with hard scales and having long jaws with needle-like teeth.
43. A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
46. Cooking utensil consisting of a wide metal vessel.
48. Of or relating to the Iberian peninsula or its inhabitants.
50. The academic world.
52. A verse line with a dactyl followed by a spondee or trochee.
53. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
55. Jewelry worn around the wrist for decoration.
56. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
61. A unit of weight equivalent to 1000 kilograms.
62. A British peer of the highest rank.
65. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
69. A flat wing-shaped process or wing-like part of an organism.
73. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
74. Tag the base runner to get him out.
75. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
76. A run that is the result of the batter's performance.
77. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
78. A long slender cigar.
79. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.

- 4. The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
5. Slanderous defamation.
6. Conspicuously or grossly unconventional or unusual.
7. A unit of pressure.
8. Engage or hire for work.
9. A disposition to remain inactive or inert.
10. A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
11. Large bamboo having thick-walled culms.
12. Relating to the Urdu language.
13. A member of a European people who occupied Britain and Spain and Gaul in pre-Roman times.
14. Knock unconscious or senseless.
22. Remove gas from.
24. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
27. A Chadic language spoken in Chad.
29. A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
31. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
32. (Hindu) A manner of sitting (as in the practice of Yoga).
34. Towards the side away from the wind.
36. Growing old.
37. A medieval hood of mail suspended from a basinet to protect the head and neck.
38. A psychological state induced by (or as if induced by) a magical incantation.
40. Formerly a term of respect for important white Europeans in colonial India.
41. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
44. A state of deep and often prolonged unconsciousness.
45. English novelist.
47. A Chadic language spoken in Chad.
49. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
51. Informal terms for a (young) woman.
54. A fleshy wrinkled and often brightly colored fold of skin hanging from the neck or throat of certain birds (chickens and turkeys) or lizards.
57. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
58. Jordan's port.
59. English actor and comedian who appeared on television and in films (born in 1935).
60. (in Indian English) The number that is represented as a one followed by 7 zeros.
63. A capacity unit used for measuring fresh herring.
64. Fleshy and usually brightly colored cover of some seeds that develops from the ovule stalk and partially or entirely envelops the seed.
66. An Iranian language spoken in Afghanistan.
67. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
68. An elaborate song for solo voice.
70. Of southern Europe.
71. An accountant certified by the state.
72. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- 1. Not only so, but.
2. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
3. English architect who designed more than fifty London churches (1632-1723).

Yesterday's Solution

Grid for Yesterday's Solution crossword puzzle with filled-in letters.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

New investment opportunities arise and you're glad but you may have more than one to choose from. Real estate, stock market or other such investments are strong options now and the energies support this activity.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You long to share your life on a romantic level, but the partner you're with isn't there, or you're still in search of a match: either way, you may find yourself romanticizing things that shouldn't be!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your way of thinking is intense and focused like a laser on your future. You've come a long way, but you can't seem to be satisfied with your hard work or other efforts: take a moment, look around and take in all that you've accomplished.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Legacy, long-lasting relationships and foundations are a priority for you during this phase. You could find that looking back on your life, you've been planning for the future for a long time without thinking about it!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You think of what you leave behind when you pack for a trip; this could be business or pleasure. Learning a new route or way to do something is a fun detour along the way.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Relationships old and new undergo transformations; some may end, others strengthen. Something you see mesmerizes you and you can't seem to forget it: this could be a person or some type of art.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Self-respect is important to you, as is the respect of others; a need to be appreciated could be strong now. Wanting things in their places is natural for you, but especially during this cycle where balance and organization is highlighted.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Certain things turn you on and you know them when you see them: a sense of familiarity seems to come with these things. The motivations of others interest you, especially where someone in particular is concerned: this could be related to business.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Learning about an emerging industry is the focus of your attention now and this is something that could pay off very well. Neighbors join together to make a difference in the neighborhood and there could be some feelings hurt, but overall the outcome is positive.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Busy, busy times on tap for you now. A move you made a while back pays off big time and positive vibrations abound. Breaking free of toxic people and situations is the answer and once you make this change, a brighter world immediately opens up to you.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Becoming involved in a new business catches and holds your attention; this could have something to do with a controversial product that shows great promise. People admire you for your level-headedness and loyalty; they take your opinion very seriously, so be mindful of what you say!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

If you think it, it is so; remember this now and for the next few weeks of this phase because your thoughts are powerfully magnified now. You long for a mate if you don't already have one. If you do, you either want more out of the relationship or some type of big change.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Old TV Shows 1

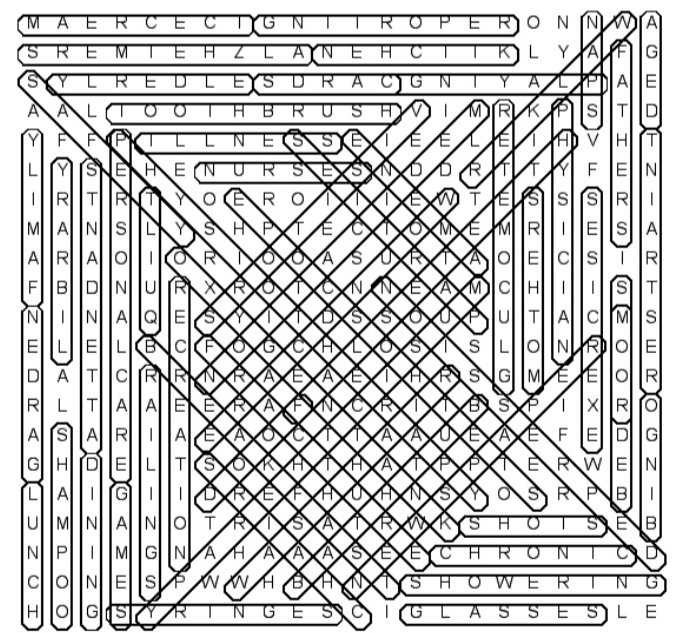
Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.

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

- ALICE, BEN CASEY, BEVERLY HILLBILLIES, CHIPS, CANNON, CAPTAIN KANGAROO, DOBIE GILLIS, DONNA REED, DR. KILDARE, EMERGENCY, FLIPPER, FLYING NUN, FUGITIVE, GOMER PYLE, GOOD TIMES, GREEN ACRES, GREEN HORNET, HOWDY DOODY, I SPY, IRONSIDE, JETSONS, KOJAK, L.A. LAW, LASSIE, LOVE BOAT, MAD ABOUT YOU, MAUDE, MEDICAL CENTER, MIAMI VICE, MOD SQUAD, MOONLIGHTING, MURPHY BROWN, ODD COUPLE, PEYTON PLACE, RAWHIDE, RIFLEMAN, RIN TIN TIN, SOAP, ST. ELSEWHERE, TAXI, THREE'S COMPANY, WALTONS

Yesterday's Solution

Nursing Home 3



The hidden message is: ONLY A LIFE LIVED FOR OTHERS IS A LIFE WORTHWHILE

Daily SuDoku

4x4 grid for Daily SuDoku with some numbers filled in.

Yesterday's Solution

4x4 grid for Yesterday's Solution SuDoku with numbers filled in.

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 2018

A picture shows a large replica of the Quran, Islam's holy book, displayed on Beirut's seafront promenade, during the holy month of Ramadan. —AFP



Bizarre news

'ALIEN' SIGNALS BEAMED TO EARTH?

Strange signals from a galaxy far, far away have left scientists wondering if they were sent by extra terrestrial life. The baffling radio bursts were received by the Breakthrough Listen (BL) project as teams scanned the skies during a routine hunt for signs of alien life. Danny Price, a researcher at BL, revealed the group's excitement, and said they were investigating the possible origins of the signal. He



said: "There are lots of theories out there... there are some theories that they are from extra terrestrials. "These theories you have to go on as a last resort." The rare bursts lasted for around a millisecond, and it's said the sound was like an ambulance driving past. It's not the first time signals have been detected either - there have been around two dozen since the project started three years ago. The late Stephen Hawking once signed a letter enthusiastically lending his support to BL, and before his death earlier this year he said he was sure there was intelligent life elsewhere in the universe. He said: "The idea that we are alone in the universe seems to me completely implausible and arrogant."



Loch Ness monster mystery could be solved with DNA tests

The Loch Ness monster has enchanted people for decades, and now scientists could be close to confirming whether or not it exists. The legend has it that a huge creature lives in the

Scottish body of water, and while the idea has captured the imagination there has been no proof that it's a reality. However, scientists are looking to take DNA samples from the lake at more than 300 spots to see what really lurks beneath. Amongst those researching the loch is Professor Neil Gemmill from the University of Otago in New Zealand. As reported by Sky News, he said: "I'm going into this thinking it's unlikely there is a monster, but I want to test that hypothesis. "What we'll get is a really nice survey of the biodiversity of the Loch Ness." The samples will come from tiny fragments of DNA left behind by skin, feathers, scales and urine - and it will then be compared with that of known species

American High School uses caged tiger as prom decoration

A high school in Miami is in trouble after hiring a live tiger as a feature for its jungle themed prom. Christopher Columbus High School hired the animal - which was kept in a small cage and videoed frantically pacing the perimeter by students - for the event and has been slammed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) for putting the wild animal in a stressful situation.



And teens at the event held by the private Catholic school for boys were able to pose with lemurs, a parrot and a fox which were also hired for the event. Principal David Pugh later apologized for the use of the animal in the prom celebration. He said: "We recognize this decision has offended some and for that we apologize. "Although it was in a controlled environment and handled by professionals approved by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation, we understand how some individuals may be concerned."

Biggest 'Star Wars' memorabilia collection to go on display in London

Star Wars enthusiast Keith Guppy is putting his Star Wars collection on display for the first time to celebrate the release of 'Solo: A Star



Wars Story'. The collector boasts the largest collection of memorabilia in the UK - with his most expensive item, a Palitoy Darth Vader AFA 85 valued at £2,500 - which includes over 3,000 items such as spaceships, figurines and playsets. As a whole, it is worth an eye-watering £81,510, as valued by Vectis Auctions Ltd this month, and the public will be able to view it in all its glory. He has personally curated an exhibition at Vue Cinema in London's West End from May 24 to include every character from the new movie - including icons of the franchise like Darth Vader, Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia - and will provide keen fans with a rare insight to the collector memorabilia including vintage items such as Han Solo in Carbonite and a Jabba the Hut playset.

Woman with giant hairball in stomach rushed to hospital

A woman was rushed to hospital after a compulsion to eat her own hair led to a giant hairball accumulating in her stomach. According to a medical journal, the 38-year-old woman suffered from Trichotillomania - a condition where sufferers feel compelled to pull her hair out - and she lost 15 pounds over eight months. She lost her appetite as a result of the hairball - measuring 15 x 10 centimeters - clogging her stomach, with a second four centimeter hairball in her bowel. She was released from hospital after six days and was recommended by doctors to seek physiological therapy for her condition.

Swear word mowed in field

A disgruntled farmer appears to have been pushed to breaking point after mowing "p*** off" into his field in giant letters. The very clear message can only be seen from the sky, but it's been picked up on Google Earth in the village of Nettleton. As reported by the Metro, it's thought that the rude words were carved there by an angry local farmer wanting to warn hot air balloon pilots high above the field - which is on a flight path for rides out of nearby Bristol.

Local retired nurse Janet Freeman, 77, said: "I suspect they could be warning off hot air balloons from landing there. "Bristol isn't far and they do have all the balloons up throughout the year... It wouldn't be very nice for anyone passing over - they might be upset by it." However, an ex-local lorry driver has admitted it's the kind of stunt he'd have loved in his youth. Eric Jeffrey, 83, added: "It's a great bit



of fun - the kind of tomfoolery I'd enjoy back in the day. "It beats this spray paint business - I hope that anybody flying over on a plane or hot air balloon has a chuckle and doesn't get scared away. They've tailored a message for pilots - get off my land."

Woman finds scorpion in shopping bag

A pensioner got more than she bargained for after discovering a scorpion in her shopping bag. Linda Pollard, 67, had returned home from



a shopping trip to Aldi when she discovered the venomous creepy-crawly fall out of her plastic bag of bananas. She said: "I thought it was big spider as it scuttled across the work top and behind the kettle. "I grabbed a glass then realized it was a scorpion not a spider because I have seen pictures of them in magazines and on TV. I slammed the glass down and trapped it. I was absolutely terrified." Linda went on to contact the RSPCA who identified it as a Slenderbrown scorpion, which in rare cases is known to cause heart attacks, hypertension or even death. The retired health worker - who was left shaken by the encounter - has vowed to be more cautious when buying fruit. She said: "Before I go to sleep I still look under the pillow and the bed and give the quilt a good shake. "I won't buy bananas in sealed bags again. I will stick to loose ones from the city market." A spokesman for Aldi said: "Incidents like this are extremely rare, but can naturally occur with fresh produce. We have apologized to Ms Pollard for any distress this may have caused." — Bang Showbiz



A Yemeni cook fries "sambusa", or samosa, during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan in the capital Sanaa. — AFP



Actress Lea Seydoux (second left), actress Emma Stone (third left), Director and executive Vice President of Louis Vuitton Delphine Arnault (fourth left), liad Group founder and vice-president Xavier Niel (fourth right) and French actress Isabelle Huppert (third right) attend the Louis Vuitton Cruise 2019 collection fashion show at Maeght foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, southeastern France. —AFP photos

VUITTON IN STARRY HOMAGE TO FASHION'S 'AMAZING GRACE'

Fashion giant Louis Vuitton bent the knee to legendary Vogue stylist Grace Coddington in a show in rural Provence paying tribute to her daring through the decades. The Welsh-born creative director at large for American Vogue magazine is credited with creating some of fashion's "most memorable imagery" and is known as "Amazing Grace" to her many fans. Vuitton designer Nicolas Ghesquiere even sent several red-haired models weaving down a catwalk between Miro sculptures at the Maeght Foundation art gallery and gardens on Monday in a nod to Coddington's own trademark mane.

as model in the London of the swinging sixties right up the present. With Coddington looking on, "Beautiful Mind" star Jennifer Connelly read from her memoir, "Grace", as the models traipsed around the artworks in the foundation's gardens at Saint Paul de Vence, in the hills behind the French Riviera. Connelly's fellow film stars Emma Stone, Isabelle Huppert and Lea Seydoux were also on the front row to see a collection that was strong on a typically Coddington mix of short skirts, Prince of Wales check jackets and lots of spots, stripes and flower motifs. Coddington also designed some of the accessories to go with the cruise collection, with her illustrations of dogs and cats intertwined with Louis Vuitton's famous monogram.

Ghesquiere said he also drew inspiration from works in the Maeght gallery, which includes work by Balthus, Bonnard, Braque, Calder, Chagall, Giacometti and Leger. "I also wanted to pay homage to this place, which for me is the genesis of (all the other) art foundations. It is a love story between a family, artists and architecture," he said. The Louis Vuitton Foundation opened its own art gallery designed by Frank Gehry in the Bois de Boulogne on the edge of Paris in 2014. — AFP



The 77-year-old was the longtime right hand woman of Vogue editor Anna Wintour, and the star of an acclaimed 2009 documentary about the iconic magazine, "The September Issue". Ghesquiere, who has just renewed his contract with fashion's richest luxury brand, said he wanted to celebrate Coddington's unique eye, and the way she juxtaposes clothes and designs no one else would dare to. "Eccentricity is to define your own personality and to mix things in a unique way," he told AFP. "For me, Grace with her very strong style represents a kind of eccentricity."

Hollywood stars

The designer tried to recreate that glorious individuality in 59 looks which covered her time



Models present creations during the Louis Vuitton Cruise 2019 collection fashion show in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, southeastern France.

Lifestyle | Fashion



Models present creations during the Louis Vuitton Cruise 2019 collection fashion show in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, southeastern France.

THE DUCHESS OF SUSSEX ASSURED HER MAKEUP ARTIST SHE'LL 'ALWAYS BE MEG'

Meghan Markle's makeup artist wasn't sure what to call her after her marriage to Prince Harry. Daniel Martin has been behind the former 'Suits' actress's minimal makeup looks for years and was chosen

quickly put his concerns to rest by assuring him she'll "always be Meg".

He said: "I asked her that, 'Do I bow to you? I don't want to disrespect you, but I've known you for almost 10 years. What's up?' She started laughing and she said, 'I'm always going to be Meg.'" He added: "But next time I see them I will be respectful and know my protocol. But Meg is always going to be Meg, that's how it is!" The beauty expert said Meghan, 36, was "in good spirits" the morning of the wedding and he wanted to create a relaxed atmosphere whilst she was getting her makeup done by putting on "1950s, chilled music" on Spotify.

He told People: "She didn't seem nervous. She was very cool, she was regular Meghan, I think we were nervous, but we didn't want to make her nervous so it was very chilled. Of course, brides have nerves, but if we didn't put so much expectation on it, it wouldn't have made her nervous. It was very even, very easy."

And Daniel shared how thankful he was to Meghan for letting him "be a part of history" by posting a picture of his newly married friend on Instagram. He wrote: "My dearest Meghan, Thank you from the bottom of my heart for allowing me to be a part of such a memorable day, not only in your life, but in history. It was just like old times playing dress up and I'm looking forward to our next play dates together. Cheers to love my friend!!! [sic]" — Bang Showbiz



Meghan Markle

by his good friend to create her wedding look for their ceremony in St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. But the expert says he wasn't sure what to refer to Meghan - who was anointed the Duchess of Sussex after joining the British Royal Family - because he didn't want to be "disrespectful", but Meghan

Ralph Lauren awarded first ever CFDA salute

Ralph Lauren to be honored with a Members Salute at the 2018 CFDA Awards. The 78-year-old designer's eponymous brand is celebrating 50 years since its founding and the Council of Fashion Designers of America will commemorate the designer's impact on the fashion industry and his global

success with a special tribute at the ceremony held on June 4 - on behalf of the 500-plus members - and chairwoman Diane von Furstenberg says the tribute to Ralph will be a "perfect moment". Furstenberg told Vogue US: "From starting with a tie at Bloomingdale's to building a global brand, I respect and admire everything that Ralph Lauren stands for, including his philanthropy and kindness, this is the perfect moment for CFDA members to salute this icon of American fashion."

This will be the first CFDA council members salute, but Ralph has been honored by the organization in the past with the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1992, and the CFDA American Fashion Legend Award in 2007 after first starting his business by selling ties under the same name in 1967. He went on to establish Ralph Lauren Polo in 1978 with an exclusive collection in Bloomingdale's - the same department store which sold his first ever tie - and created one of America's most thriving fashion empires with a collection of womenswear, childrenswear, home good, fragrance and eyewear and his iconic polo T-shirts with the embroidered logo even inspired other brands to adopt the same design idea. Speaking previously about his achievements as a designer, he insists his success has come from always improving on his ideas and designs. He said: "I've always said that if it looks better next year than it does this year, then I've done the job right." — Bang Showbiz



Ralph Lauren

Valentino and L'Oreal launching beauty range



L'Oreal have teamed up with Valentino for a new beauty range. The global cosmetics brand and luxury designer have joined forces for an upcoming collection under the Valentino name to help bring their creative vision through makeup and fragrance to a wider audience by using L'Oreal's expertise in the makeup market. In a joint statement announcing the collaboration, they wrote: "Valentino and L'Oreal have signed a worldwide long-term license agreement for the creation, development and distribution of fine fragrances and luxury beauty under the Valentino brand. Valentino today embodies the image of beauty, of the extraordinary and of modernity, and as such, provides a strong inspiration for fragrance and beauty creation."

Stefano Sassi, the CEO of Valentino is "excited for the potential" of the collaboration, which will come into force in January 2019. He said: "We are very excited to start this new venture together with L'Oreal to further develop our beauty business. We believe Valentino has great potential within the category and that with L'Oreal's unparalleled expertise in the sector, we will be able to realize that potential." And L'Oreal's deputy CEO Nicolas Hieronimus is equally as excited about the partnership, saying Valentino's "unique modernity" will be effectively communicated to the millennial market through the partnership. He revealed: "We are thrilled to have been granted the license of Maison Valentino. With its unique combination of prestige and modernity, Valentino definitely will appeal to millennial consumers around the globe and ideally complements our brand portfolio." — Bang Showbiz

MIRANDA KERR'S BUDGET BEAUTY BUYS

Miranda Kerr bought her favorite beauty product on Amazon. The 35-year-old model struggles to find time between work and spending time with her sons - Flynn, seven, who she has with former spouse Orlando Bloom, and newborn Hart with husband Evan Spiegel - but likes to unwind with a 'spa day' in the comfort of her own home, where she uses a microdermabrasion tool and face masks to give her skin an extra glow. When asked about her ultimate beauty indulgence, the Kora Beauty founder said: "An

at-home spa day. Between Flynn and [having a beauty line], it's easier to do treatments at home. Plus, I find I can get the same results. If I have someone come over to give me a body massage, I'll ask them to massage my face too.

Then I'll use this little microdermabrasion machine I got really inexpensively on Amazon. After that I'll rub a few drops of my Noni Glow Face Oil between my palms and pat it all over. The nutrients sink in even deeper after you've had a good exfoliation. Then I might follow that with a mask. It's like

my own mini facial." And the brunet beauty - who became the first Australian Victoria's Secret model after joining the lingerie brand in 2007 - said her most valuable beauty advice came from her mother Therese Kerr, who told her that beauty came from the inside. She explained to InStyle Online: "(My best advice came) from my mum. Since I was a young girl, she's always told me, 'Let your little light shine. When people can really embrace that and shine from the inside and let their heart come through, that's what's so attractive and beautiful.'" — Bang Showbiz



Death row art: A rare glimpse inside Vietnam's secret jails

Nguyen Truong Chinh proudly holds up intricately crafted animals, flowers and hearts—secret gifts made from plastic bags by a son on Vietnam's death row. The palm-sized creations that his son and other inmates have furtively made and smuggled out of their solitary cells offer a rare glimpse of prison life in Vietnam, believed to be one of the world's leading executioners. They're also an emotional lifeline for desperate parents fighting to free the children they say have been wrongly convicted. "Any time we receive the gifts from my son I feel like he's here with me, like he's come back home," Chinh told AFP, clenching his jaw to hold back tears.



This picture shows Nguyen Truong Chinh displaying intricately crafted gifts made from plastic bags by his son and death row inmate Nguyen Van Chuong, during an interview with AFP at his home in Hai Duong. — AFP photos



Nguyen Truong Chinh displaying intricately crafted animals made from plastic bags by his son.

His 35-year-old son Nguyen Van Chuong, convicted of murdering a police officer a decade ago, is one of a handful of prisoners known to have made the artwork that is officially banned on death row. The families suspect they made the pieces with discarded plastic bags passed on by fellow prisoners, shredded

and woven into figurines. They were once smuggled out by prisoners released after serving their terms but relatives stopped receiving them a few years ago, leading Chinh and other parents to fear guards have cracked down on the forbidden prison pastime.

They're too scared to ask about the practice during brief monthly visits closely monitored by prison staff. But Chinh says the art still drives his decade-long fight to free his son, who he insists was nowhere near the scene of the crime he was convicted of. "When I see the animals, I know somehow that my son is stable enough to create these things, that he is mentally strong," said Chinh, sitting with a bag full of documents on his son's case. "They motivate our fight for justice."

Leading executioner

Little is known about Vietnam's prison system, but in a rare report last year the Ministry of Public Security said 429 people were executed between August 2013 and June 2016. That is an average of 147 per year—putting Vietnam among



Nguyen Truong Chinh displaying portraits of his son and death row inmate Nguyen Van Chuong during an interview with AFP at his home in Hai Duong.

the world's top executioners along with China and Iran. Details about prison conditions are scarce and media access heavily restricted. But the law requires death row inmates to be held in solitary confinement and monitored around the clock. Prisoners deemed "dangerous" have one foot shackled for most of the day, released only for 15 minutes to bathe inside their cell, where they also eat and use the toilet.

"In many cases, acts of torture, coupled with the denial of medical care, have resulted in deaths in custody that are almost never investigated by the authorities," Andrea Giorgetta from International Federation for Human Rights (IFHR) told AFP. The MPS report said 36 death row inmates died behind bars between 2011 and 2016, without saying how.

In letters to his family, Chuong said he was tortured in custody: hung upside down and naked with a dirty sock in his mouth and beaten during interrogation. Police electrocuted his



A collection of intricately crafted animals and flowers made by Nguyen Van Chuong, an inmate on Vietnam's death row, in Hanoi.

genitals and prodded him with needles until he confessed under duress, he wrote. Vietnam's foreign ministry rejected allegations of torture as "false information" in a statement to AFP and said it does not do anything to harm the "honor and dignity" of inmates.

Determined to fight

Relatives of the death row artists say their work offers a necessary diversion from constant fear of execution. Prisoners are given little notice before their execution, which since 2010 has been carried out by lethal injection. Before then, inmates were awakened before dawn, given a final meal and a cigarette, tied to a post and shot by five officers, with one final "humane shot" to the head, according to a 2016 report by the Vietnam Committee on Human Rights. Today locally manufactured drugs are used to kill prisoners, though advocates complained of inhumane deaths after a man reportedly took two hours to die in 2011.

It's an unimaginable end for the families who refuse to give up hope their sons will one day be freed. Nguyen Thi Loan has sent more than 1,500 letters to the government proclaiming the innocence of her son Ho Duy Hai, 32, and gave up her land, home and job as a vendor to fight for his release. "I'm determined to seek justice and fairness for Ho Duy Hai until my last breath," she said of her son who was jailed over the murder of two women in 2008.

His scheduled execution was called off at the

11th hour in 2014 by the president, raising hopes his case could be reopened. In his earlier years in prison, Hai sent shrimp, fish and miniature horses as gifts to his lawyers, former teachers and relatives. But she hasn't received one in years and fears jailers have banned the practice. "Making those gifts didn't harm anyone. Why won't they let my son do it?" she told AFP in tears. Supporters hope to raise awareness about

Hai's case through his artwork, which was put on display alongside Chuong's pieces earlier this year at an underground show by activist artist Thinh Nguyen. He started collecting the pieces from families years ago after he met them outside government offices calling for their sons' release. "When I put these animals on show, their stories are known," Thinh said. "I look at these and I see a lot of hope." — AFP



Vietnamese artist Thinh Nguyen displaying intricately crafted animals and flowers made by inmates on Vietnam's death row at his studio in Hanoi.

Botanical Garden show highlights O'Keeffe's Hawaii paintings

Georgia O'Keeffe, famous for her desert paintings, created equally stunning — though lesser known — pieces inspired by a 1939 trip to Hawaii. The works, and a display of the plants she would have encountered there, are now on view at the New York Botanical Garden. The multi-faceted blockbuster of a show explores a little-known side of O'Keeffe — her 1939 immersion in the flora and landscapes of the Hawaiian Islands. "Georgia O'Keeffe: Visions of Hawaii," on view through Oct 28, is the first presentation of the artist's depictions of Hawaii in New York since 1940.

Adding dimension to the collection of 20 paintings, the garden has evoked in its Conservatory the gardens and landscapes that inspired O'Keeffe, as well as galleries devoted to the complex history of Hawaii's plants and ecology. The show also features a short film about O'Keeffe's journey to Hawaii; performances and presentations devoted to Hawaiian culture; a poke truck (serving Hawaiian food); and Hawaiian background music. After New York, the painting portion of the exhibit will be on view at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, in Tennessee, from Dec. 1 through Feb. 24, 2019.

"We always associate O'Keeffe with

New Mexico and being very independent, but here she is traveling to Hawaii, which was a pretty major journey from New York in those days, hired by an advertising firm at a time when she was 51, at the height of her career. She was one of the most famous artists in America at that time and she really didn't need the assignment," says the show's curator, Theresa Papanikolas of the Honolulu Museum of Art. "I think she was really mesmerized by the images in the brochures they kept sending her," she says.

O'Keeffe spent nine weeks in Hawaii, on commission to produce images for a Hawaiian Pineapple Company promotional campaign. She visited some of Hawaii's most elegant private gardens and dramatic landscapes. She produced depictions of mountains and waterfalls, as well as her signature close-cropped views of the flowers and plants she encountered. By all accounts, she "was blown away by what she saw there, especially in Maui," said Karen Daubmann, associate vice president for exhibitions and public engagement at the garden.

The paintings on display include "Heliconia: Crab's Claw Ginger" and "Pineapple Bud," both of which were used in the Hawaiian Pineapple Company's ad campaign. They are

on loan from private collections. For all her enthusiasm, O'Keeffe got some of the plant names wrong, Papanikolas points out. For example, the plant depicted in the "Heliconia: Crab's Claw Ginger" painting was actually a Lobster Claw Heliconia, she says.

White Lotus

The artist's visit to what was then a remote US territory coincided with increasing awareness of Hawaii as tourism grew and statehood neared.

Her first impression on arrival was of being showered with leis and other "queer scraps of flowers." She started out painting the flowers that would have seemed most familiar to her, as in a "Bella Donna" painting — of a flower with a vivid green center — that is reminiscent of jimsonweed, which O'Keeffe painted a lot, Papanikolas says. She quickly moved on to slightly more exotic flowers, as in "White Lotus," a flower that she may have seen in water gardens on the mainland. "But soon after that she moved on to much more outlandish tropical flowers," Papanikolas says. "Pink Ornamental Banana," while not native to Hawaii, was popular in the upscale home gardens O'Keeffe explored in Hawaii. An example of

the plant — and other exotic tropical flowers — are on view in the New York Botanical Garden's Conservatory. "When she gets to Maui, she really hits her stride," says Papanikolas. O'Keeffe was the guest of a plantation manager there and borrowed his car — with his 12-year-old daughter as a guide — to explore dramatic landscapes like those she depicts in "Black Lava Bridge," with its rugged rocks and choppy waves.

In the Iao Valley, "she's catching the mistiness of these velvety green mountains. She's come a long way since her first Hawaii paintings and is now really immersed in the sense of space," the curator says. "As her paintings go along, you can feel her personal transformation from tourist to ensconced visiting artist." The plants that O'Keeffe encountered, which tended toward vivid colors and broad leaves, included native species, like Hawaiian red hibiscus and white hibiscus; "canoe plants" like sugarcane and taro that were introduced to Hawaii by the Polynesians; and exotic ornamentals like pineapple, papaya, coffee, oleander and heliconia, which were introduced later. All can be enjoyed up close and personal in the show, in addition to O'Keeffe's paintings. — AP



Karen Daubmann of the New York Botanical Garden holding the exhibition catalog with a pink ornamental banana on the page, for the "Georgia O'Keeffe: Visions of Hawaii" exhibition. — AP photos



An installation view of the exhibit "Georgia O'Keeffe: Visions of Hawaii".



Photo provided by the New York Botanical Garden shows a light by Mark Chai and is part of the exhibit "Georgia O'Keeffe: Visions of Hawaii".



An installation view of the exhibit "Georgia O'Keeffe: Visions of Hawaii".

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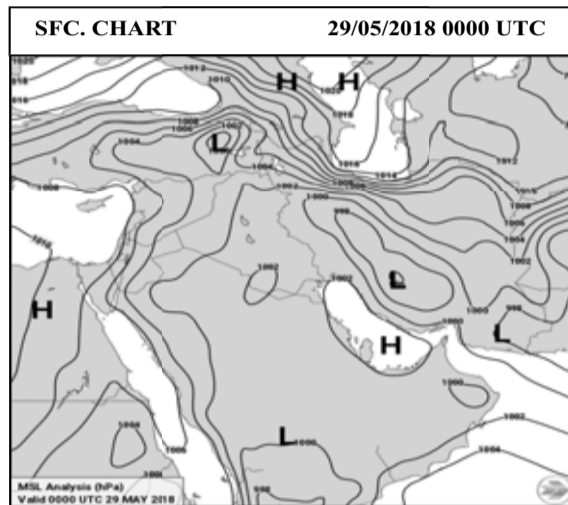
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h causing rising dust over some areas.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h.

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

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	35 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	45 °C	29 °C
ABDALY	45 °C	28 °C
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C
JAHRA	46 °C	33 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	42 °C	29 °C
SALMIYAH	41 °C	36 °C
AHMADI	40 °C	34 °C
NUWASIB	42 °C	31 °C
WAFRA	44 °C	31 °C
SALMY	44 °C	31 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	05/30	Hot	44 °C	27 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	05/31	Hot and some scattered clouds will appear	45 °C	27 °C	NW-SE	12 - 38 km/h
Friday	06/01	Hot and Partly cloudy	44 °C	28 °C	SE	12 - 38 km/h
Saturday	06/02	Hot and Partly cloudy	42 °C	30 °C	SE	12 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:17
Sunrise	04:50
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:41
Isha	20:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	27 °C
MAX. RH	29 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	NW 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

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Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
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Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306

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

Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 30/5/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 30/5/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:10
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	JZR	144	Doha	13:55
KAC	102	London	00:50	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	CLX	792	Hanoi	14:30
JZR	267	Beirut	01:25	FEG	442	Asyut	14:50
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KNE	538	Jeddah	15:25
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:25	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	KAC	619	Doha	16:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
JZR	1539	Cairo	03:40	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
KAC	796	Madinah	03:45	SVA	505	Madinah	16:55
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	SAW	706	Damascus	17:00
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
PAL	668	Manila	05:00	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25	KNE	536	Jeddah	17:45
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:40	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45	JZR	240	Amman	18:30
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	JZR	266	Beirut	18:30
JZR	143	Doha	07:00	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
WAN	342	Sohag	07:30	WAN	135	Doha	18:40
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50	KAC	1781	Jeddah	18:40
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
JZR	529	Asyut	08:10	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
IRC	6552	ABD	08:50	JZR	552D	Alexandria	20:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00
IRM	1188	Mashhad	09:55	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
JZR	703	Taif	11:00	KAC	543	Cairo	21:20
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
KIS	6032	Mashhad	12:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	1771	Jeddah	12:05	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
WAN	134	Doha	12:20	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	ALX	230	Colombo	22:20
CLX	792	Luxembourg	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:25
WAN	522	KTM	12:50	KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
KAC	542	Al Najaf	13:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	JZR	604	Ahmedabad	22:40
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
				KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40

News



ASHKELON: Israeli military launch a missile from the Iron Dome air defense system, designed to intercept and destroy incoming short-range rockets and artillery shells, from a position in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon. Israel's military struck more than 30 'military targets' in the Gaza Strip yesterday in response to a barrage of rocket and mortar fire from the Gaza strip. — AFP

Tensions soar as Israel hits Gaza militant bases

GAZA: Israel carried out strikes against militant bases in the Gaza Strip yesterday after a barrage of mortar fire from the Palestinian enclave further boosted tensions following weeks of deadly unrest. Separately yesterday morning, Palestinians launched boats from Gaza to protest Israel's blockade of the strip in what they said would be a peaceful demonstration. There were conflicting statements about whether the boats would seek to break Israel's blockade, which currently allows them to travel nine nautical miles off the coast. The earlier firing of some 28 mortar shells toward Israel caused no injuries, with most intercepted by air defense systems, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed a forceful response.

One mortar shell exploded near a kindergarten building, a military spokesman said, causing damage to the structure. It was the largest projectile barrage from Gaza targeting Israel since a 2014 war, according to Israel's Shin Bet internal security service. "Israel takes a grave view of the attacks on it and its communities by Hamas and Islamic Jihad from the Gaza Strip," Netanyahu said. "The IDF will respond to these attacks powerfully," he added during a conference in northern Israel, referring to the Israel Defense Forces.

Shortly after Netanyahu spoke, Israel's military began carrying out strikes in Gaza. At least one base belonging to Hamas and four for Islamic Jihad, an allied group, were struck, Gazan security sources said. There were no immediate reports of injuries. Israel's military said it was "currently operating in the Gaza Strip. The explosions heard are related to this activity. Details to follow." It did not confirm whether the response was air strikes, other means such as tank or missile fire or a combination. Gazan sources spoke of air strikes.

A Hamas spokesman confirmed only that "resistance" bases were being hit. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the mortars, but there was speculation they were fired by Islamic Jihad in revenge for a recent incident that left three of its members dead. Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip, said in a statement

"what the resistance carried out this morning comes within the framework of the natural right to defend our people". "The Israeli occupation bears full responsibility for any upcoming escalation."

Yesterday's incidents came after weeks of deadly demonstrations and clashes along the Gaza-Israel border, beginning on March 30. The protests have called for Palestinians who fled or were expelled in the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation to be allowed to return to their former homes now inside Israel. They peaked on May 14, when at least 61 Palestinians were killed as tens of thousands of Gazans protested and clashes erupted on the same day of the US transfer of its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Demonstrations and clashes have continued at a low level since then.

At least 121 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the unrest.

Israel says its actions are necessary to defend its borders and accuses Hamas of encouraging thousands of Palestinians to break through the border and attack Israelis. It has fought three wars with Hamas since 2008. But Israel has faced international criticism and calls for an independent investigation over its use of live fire during the protests and clashes along the border. No Israelis have been killed and only one soldier has been reported lightly wounded. It was not clear how Israel planned to respond to the boat protest from Gaza. It had not responded to a request for comment.

One main boat carrying around 20 people accompanied by a group of smaller ones departed from the fishermen's port in Gaza City. "We are sending a clear message to Israel and the rest of the world that the siege must be lifted," one of the organizers, Issam Hamad, said before the boats launched. "Gazans are fed up with the lives they live. This is an absolutely peaceful action. It is not against Israel." The Gaza Strip has been under Israeli blockade for more than a decade, with Israel saying it is necessary to prevent Hamas from obtaining means to attack—AFP

Saudi Arabia's social reforms helping its struggling economy

RIYADH: Nouf Al-Anzy's new life shows how Saudi Arabia's social reforms are helping its struggling economy. Six months ago she got her first job, one of tens of thousands of women to do so as the government tackles prejudice against female employment. The 22-year-old high school graduate earns 4,000 riyals (\$1,067) a month as a supermarket cashier in central Riyadh. Her family initially objected but now approves, and the income from the job has been transformative.

"I have good money every month and I am not married and have no obligations. I can go to the cinemas, go shopping, dine out, and take computer and English courses to improve myself," she said. "I also plan to buy a car to drive." Consumer spending by newly employed women like Al-Anzy is helping to offset a huge drag on growth from measures to bolster state finances and an exodus of foreign workers. The extent to which the economy can pick up over the next two years after shrinking last year for the first time since 2009 may depend largely on how much female empowerment and other social reforms can contribute.

Two years after it launched an economic reform program to cut reliance on oil exports, Saudi Arabia has little to show for it. Plans to spur private investment in new non-oil industries, from shipbuilding to robotics, have barely got off the ground, partly because of red tape and legal uncertainties. Bank loans to private firms have shrunk from a year earlier for 13 straight months, dampened by taxes and fees levied to cut the state budget deficit.

Growth in private business activity is the slowest since August 2009, a corporate survey shows. But social reforms introduced by Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman alongside the economic steps are underway, and for the next few years at least, they may have more of a positive impact on business than Riyadh's ambitious investment plans.

Mixed picture

Many of the measures have business implications. Plans for tourist visas will boost the leisure sector, curbs on the power of the religious police may help restaurants by enabling the sexes to mingle over meals out and the economy could also benefit from education and court reform. Muhammad Alagil, chairman of Jarir Marketing, a top retailing chain, told Reuters rising female employment was one reason for a 13.4 percent increase in his company's sales last year despite the tough economic times.

"Women entering the workforce is really a strong tailwind for the economy," he said, noting that a typical Saudi family could more than double its income if the wife and some of her unmarried daughters chose to work. Measuring the impact on the wider economy is not easy: plans to lift a ban on women driving, which the govern-

ment says will happen in late June, are a case in point. In the long run, allowing women to drive will spur industries such as auto parts, auto insurance and by improving the mobility of families, even housing, Alagil predicted. Over the shorter term, the lifting of the ban on women driving may put tens of thousands of foreign chauffeurs out of work, accelerating a drop in immigrant workers which has hurt the economy.

Changing demographics

Last month, a ban on cinemas was lifted, part of a campaign to alter conservative social customs and encourage Saudis who sought entertainment abroad to spend on it at home. Multi-billion dollar, state-invested projects, such as a theme park area near Riyadh and a vast complex of resorts on the Red Sea, will take years to develop and have uncertain commercial prospects. But a state-backed firm is also creating the infrastructure for entertainment districts in over a dozen Saudi cities, to house smaller private businesses that could be established quickly.

These may include scores of cinema screens, venues for public performances, restaurants and retail space, becoming new centers for economic activity in metropolitan areas. Mazen Al-Sudairi, head of research at Al Rajhi Capital, estimated spending on entertainment—recreation, culture, restaurants and hotels—at 8 percent of household spending. That equates to \$20 billion a year, a sign of its potential. Weighing against any increased revenue from entertainment is the departure of many foreign workers due to the economic slump, rising fees for work permits and government orders to businesses not to employ them.

The number of foreigners employed in Saudi Arabia shrank by over 466,000 from a year earlier to 10.42 million in 2017; more than half of that decline occurred in the fourth quarter. Meanwhile, the number of Saudis at work grew by about 102,000 to 3.16 million last year; about two-thirds of the rise occurred among women, who added 64,000 jobs to 1.08 million. Employers complain it is often hard, and more expensive, to find trained Saudis who can substitute for departing foreign workers, even in areas such as the restaurant trade.

Customary gender segregation in most workplaces still limits the ways in which women can be employed, and the government has not committed itself to ending the practice, though it promises "relaxed social norms" in some of its new economic zones. Nevertheless, state resources are being ploughed into getting women to work, including a 9,000 riyal per year child care grant and an 800 riyal per month transport allowance.

Khalid Alkhudair, managing director of Glowork, a women's recruitment agency in Riyadh, said the formal listing of female employment as an objective of the government's social reforms meant companies could no longer ignore it. "Now every major company is being incentivized to consider the issue and make a plan. Organizations have a path laid out for them." Demographics are in favor of the trend, he added. The female participation rate in the economy is now about 19 percent; doubling that ratio would put a million more women to work, while still leaving Saudi Arabia well below rates of about 55 percent seen in many Western nations. — Reuters

with 10-year residence permits for them and their families, according to a cabinet statement cited by WAM news agency. The measures will come into force by the end of 2018, the statement said. The UAE leads all Arab countries in terms of foreign direct investment, attracting \$11 billion last year—a jump of 22 percent on 2016—according to the International Institute of Finance.

Although it is the most diversified and open economy in the Middle East, foreigners can only own up to 49 percent of companies unless they are established in special free trade zones. The new measures also grant 10-year long residence permits to professionals in the medicine, science, research and technical fields. Like other energy-rich Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, foreigners working in the UAE must have their residence permits made by a national sponsor known as kafeel. The International Monetary Fund earlier projected that UAE economic growth would fall from 3.0 percent in 2016 to 1.3 percent in 2017. — Agencies

MPs object decision on Kuwaitis in...

Continued from Page 1

The decision was taken by the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh but has not yet been implemented. The Assembly also approved after a brief debate a request by several MPs to ask the Audit Bureau to investigate the Cabinet accounts to ensure that funds given to needy citizens were offered in line with the law. The request was submitted last week after a video posted on social media showed MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli saying the government was going to pay MPs before the summer.

Later, the lawmaker explained that this was in connection

with some MPs helping needy citizens to obtain cash assistance from the government, insisting the payments were not made through MPs but directly to beneficiaries. State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said the government has no objection and is ready to cooperate with the Audit Bureau. MP Fadhli said he has been the target of a propaganda campaign on social media because of the issue and criticized some lawmakers for taking part in the attack.

He said he has asked the Anti-Corruption Authority to investigate his financial status in connection with the issue. The Assembly then approved the 2018/2019 budgets for eight state agencies following a brief debate. The agencies are: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, the Agricultural Authority, Kuwait Municipality, the Minors Authority, Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, Kuwait University, Capital Markets Authority and Public Manpower Authority.



LIEGE: Police stand outside the Athenee Leonie de Waha school, where a gunman took a woman hostage during a deadly shooting in the eastern Belgian city of Liege, yesterday. — AFP

Terror attack leaves 4 dead...

Continued from Page 1

"The event is classed as a terrorist incident," Dulleu said. The national crisis centre, on high alert since past attacks by Islamic State in Paris and Brussels in the past three years, said it was monitoring events but had not raised its alert level.

La Libre Belgique newspaper quoted a police source as saying the gunman shouted "Allahu Akbar"—God is greatest in Arabic. Prime Minister Charles Michel, expressing his condolences to the families of

the victims, said it was too early to say what had caused the incident. King Philippe visited Liege, the biggest city in Belgium's French-speaking Wallonia region. An industrial powerhouse on the Meuse river, it was the scene of a mass shooting in 2011, when a man killed four people and wounded over 100 others before turning his gun on himself.

A Brussels-based Islamic State cell was involved in attacks on Paris in 2015 that killed 130 people and on Brussels in 2016 in which 32 died. The Brussels IS cell had links to militants in Verviers, another industrial town close to Liege, where in early 2015 police raided a safe house and killed two men who had returned from fighting with radical Islamists in Syria. European authorities are deeply concerned about the risks of petty criminals, including those not from Muslim backgrounds, being inspired to Islamist violence while incarcerated. — Reuters

Qatar's Shura Council approves...

Continued from Page 1

Few days ago, the United Arab Emirates announced plans to allow 100 percent ownership and visa incentives to foreigners, in a bid to attract investors to boost its slowing national economy. The decision, taken by the UAE cabinet, aims to lure "international investments and exceptional talent", according to Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. The new measures come amid signs of an economic slowdown in the oil-rich

Gulf state is on the back of lower oil prices, with reports showing the vital real estate and tourism sectors of Dubai struggling. The decision will allow foreign investors 100 percent ownership of companies, coupled

Stories of prophets...

Continued from Page 1

Jesus the son of the virgin Mary is mentioned 183 times in the Quran in verses that present his story from conception to Resurrection, when he will be asked by God, "Did you say unto men, 'Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?' He will reply, 'Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right.... I said not to them except what You commanded me - to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.'" (5:116-117). Details of his birth, message to the Children of Israel, and ascension to God correct misconceptions that have been passed on for generations. Other prophets mentioned in association with Jesus are his uncle Zachariah and his cousin John.

Finally, Muhammad (PBUH) is described in the Quran as "the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the

prophets" (33:40). Although he is mentioned only four times by name, his story is understood by the many verses that are addressed to him, directing him in the many situations that unfolded in his lifetime. From these verses, we follow events that have shaped the Muslim community ever since. But his message was not only for his community in Mecca and Medina. The Quran says, "And We have sent thee not but as a mercy for all peoples" (21:108). If you would like to meet the elite of mankind - the prophets of God mentioned by Him - just pick up a translation of the Quran. You will be in the best of company.

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

Sports

Pete Samu signs with Brumbies, tipped for Wallabies selection

Hooker Uelese says Samu would be warmly welcomed

MELBOURNE: The Wallabies would welcome Pete Samu with open arms for the June test series against Ireland, hooker Jordan Uelese has said, after it was confirmed the loose forward will join Australian Super Rugby side ACT Brumbies from the Canterbury Crusaders.

Melbourne-born Samu has been playing for New Zealand's Crusaders since 2016 but will cross to the Brumbies for 2019, the Canberra-based side confirmed yesterday. Australian media have reported that the 26-year-old was set to be a surprise inclusion in Michael Cheika's Wallabies squad today, despite the player remaining contracted to New Zealand Rugby (NZR).

NZR were unavailable for comment on Samu but the governing body recently released Wellington Hurricanes loose forward Brad Shields, albeit grudgingly, from his national contract to allow him to be selected by England for June tests against South Africa.

Uelese said Samu, who is also eligible to play for New Zealand, was "obviously" an Australian player. "He only just moved over to New Zealand not long ago," the 21-year-old Melbourne Rebel told reporters yesterday. "I think it'd be great for him to come. Obviously he's

gone elsewhere for an opportunity to play top level footy and that's good for him. "I know he's a Melbourne boy, some of my cousins played with him out at the (Greater Sydney) Rams, so I think it's great he wants to come back and wants to represent his country."

Samu played for famed Sydney club Randwick, Cheika's former team, and was part of the New South Wales Waratahs' 2013 squad before crossing the Tasman Sea to play in New Zealand.

He made his debut for the Crusaders in 2016 and has proved himself a valuable squad member, able to play at blindside flanker or number eight. If named in Cheika's squad he would give the Wallabies the strong ball-carrying presence in the loose forwards they have been lacking in recent years, particularly if teamed with Michael Hooper and David Pocock in the back row.

"Regardless of where he's playing at the moment, he was born here and he played all his junior footy here and his senior footy here, so ... I think he deserves the opportunity to represent his country," added Uelese, who was born in Wellington but has been capped twice by Australia.

Samu said he was "thrilled" by the challenge of



PRETORIA: File photo shows ACT Brumbies' New Zealand-born Australian centre Christian Lealiifano (R) passes the ball to ACT Brumbies' Australian flanker David Pocock (L) past Vodacom Bulls' South African flanker Marco van Staden (C) during the Super Rugby match between the Vodacom Bulls and ACT Brumbies on May 26, 2018. — AFP

joining the Brumbies. "The Brumbies are well-renowned throughout Super Rugby for being a successful club and for having a fantastic playing culture," he said in a statement. The Wallabies face Ireland next month in a three-match test series, starting in Brisbane on June 9. — Reuters

— Reuters

“ I think it'd be great for him to come ”

KSSC holds honoring ceremony for juniors



By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting Sports Club (KSSC) held an honoring ceremony for junior shooters who won in the Ramadan tournaments held at its branches in Jahra and Sabahiya. The ceremony was held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic shooting complex on Monday night in the presence of President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi, the Federations Sec Gen Obaid Al-Osaimi, KSSC Assistant Secretary Eng Mohammad Al-Ghurba and Assistant Treasurer Adnan Al-Ibrahim.

Eng Al-Otaibi welcomed officials and directors of national teams as well as the juniors and their families. He said KSSC cares for the juniors and provide them with all facilities they need to polish their skills through competent trainers and coaches.

Eng Al-Otaibi said "we consider winning juniors are part of the shooting future in Kuwait, and hope they become champions who represent Kuwait in the future at all levels, and they are the true investment for shooting." He said Kuwait shooting is continuing its achievements due to the cooperation between the administrative and technical departments.

Meanwhile, Arab and Kuwait Shooting



Federations Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi appreciated the unlimited support HHI the Amir affords for shooting and shooters, HHI the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber A-Sabah, government and people for supporting shooting at all levels.

Both Eng Al-Otaibi and Obaid Al-Osaimi thanked KSSC honorary president Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah for his continued backing and follow up of shooters and encouraging them to continue

their achievements in the name of their beloved country Kuwait.

Results of the tournament were as follows:

- In Jahra branch:**
10m air rifle: Abdelaziz Abdallah Al-Juaib
10m air pistol: Faraj Fahad Al-Shimmari
Olympic archery: Fayez Al-Enezi
- In Sabahiya youth center branch:**
10m air rifle: Faisal Mubarak
10m air pistol: Musab Ali Abdallah
Olympic archery: Adel Khalaif.

AUB announces winners to attend 2018 FIFA WCup

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced the winners of its FIFA World Cup campaign, in cooperation with Visa, the global leader in digital payments. Two of its Visa cardholders had the opportunity to win one of two fully paid trips to either attend the quarter finals or the semifinal matches of the 2018 FIFA World Cup to be held in Russia from the 14 June to 15 July 2018. Jasem Mutlaq Al-Shalabi has won a trip to the quarter-finals and Khaled Mahmoud Sorour Al-Rajhi has won a trip to the semi-final match. Each prize will cover all trip expenses to include the winner as well as one accompanying person. Customers were automatically eligible to enter the draw upon using their Visa credit cards issued by AUB in Kuwait locally or abroad during the campaign period, which began on 1 March and ended on 12 April 2018.

AUB's Head of Branches Amer Najem said, "We are delighted to be able to provide this special opportunity for the winners who will travel to Russia and attend the matches. We are proud to collaborate with our strategic partner Visa, the exclusive payments provider for the 2018 FIFA World Cup(tm), and provide the chance for AUB's customers to attend the 2018 FIFA World Cup matches in Russia, and become part of such an exciting experience."

For more information on AUB's products and services, customers



are invited to visit any of the Bank's branches, or call the telebanking service 'Hayakom' on 1812000. Alternatively, customers can also log on to the Bank's bilingual website www.ahliunited.com.kw

Canada could be key for Red Bull's engine decision

LONDON: The Canadian Grand Prix could determine whether Red Bull decide to stick with Renault, who powered them to all their Formula One championships, or switch to Honda engines from next season.

Team boss Christian Horner said after Sunday's Monaco Grand Prix, won by his Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo, that a decision would have to be made by "end of June, beginning of July". "We're waiting with great interest to see the relative performance of engines in Montreal in two weeks' time," he added. Canada, on June 10, is the seventh round of the 21-race season and both manufacturers are planning to bring major upgrades to the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve.

Red Bull, whose Renault engines are branded Tag Heuer, have won twice this season but have had a rocky relationship with the French company since the start of the V6 turbo hybrid era in 2014.

Honda are working with Red Bull-owned Toro Rosso and have improved the performance of their engine notably since the termination of a three year partnership with McLaren.

While Ricciardo is third overall in the



Christian Horner

championship, he has suffered reliability problems-as well as a costly crash with team mate Max Verstappen-and is 38 points off Mercedes' leader Lewis Hamilton. The Australian is out of contract at the end of the season and is also waiting to see what engine Red Bull go for. "First thing is get the engine sorted and then very much follow on from there with driver," said Horner.

"I think we've had a great chassis from the first race, to be honest," he added. "Our problem has always been on Saturdays... if we can improve our Saturdays, then our races will be competitive. "If we could just get a little bit more at the end of Q3 (the final phase of qualifying) on peak power, there's no reason why we shouldn't be able to give Ferrari and Mercedes regularly a hard time." — Reuters

Wallabies Uelese ready to step into 'old man pants'

MELBOURNE: With long-serving Wallabies hookers Stephen Moore and Tafa Tuqalo-Nau out of the selection frame for the first time in years, rookie Jordan Uelese believes it is his time to wear the "old man pants" and front up to Ireland in the June test series.

The 21-year-old Melbourne Rebels front-rower has made only two Wallabies appearances off the bench, but has been thrust into a potential starting role against the Six Nations champions, with Moore having retired and Polota-Nau rested.

Uelese could be packing down against 111 caps of experience in Rory Best, who led the Irish to their grand slam triumph. Best's Ulster deputy Rob Herring and Leinster's experienced Sean Cronin are also in Joe Schmidt's squad.

"Obviously last year I was with Taf and Moorey, some of the most capped hookers in the country so it's going to be a bit daunting at first," Uelese told reporters on Tuesday, a day before Wallabies coach Michael Cheika was due to name his squad.

"It's going to be a bit different not having that older head. But I think it's

definitely time to grow up and time to (wear) the old man's pants and take care of myself, so (I'm) very excited." Former Wallabies skipper Moore, who played the last of his 129 caps away to Scotland in November, tipped Uelese to push for the number two jersey at next year's World Cup in Japan after his strong 2017 Super Rugby season.

However, the Wellington-born talent has had a tough campaign this term and spent the last four weeks sidelined with a shoulder injury. In his place, the late-blooming Anaru Rangi has proved a revelation at hooker after crossing to the Rebels from the defunct Western Force, and losing a stack of weight in the process.

Uelese said he was delighted for the beer-loving Rangi and hoped the pair of them could make Cheika's squad. "He's just a nutcase. He's definitely someone you want in the team," Uelese said of Rangi. "Especially if you want to push physicality and brutality, he's definitely the guy you want in your side."

Schmidt declined to spare any of his ageing stalwarts the trip Down Under, naming a strong side as the Irish look to continue a 12-match winning streak and clinch their first win in Australia since 1979.

Australia were whitewashed 3-0 by the then Six Nations champions England in 2016, the last time they hosted a three-match series, and they look vulnerable to another successful raid from a northern hemisphere power. — Reuters

Sports

Justin Verlander gets the best of the New York Yankees again

Culberson hit two-run walk-off homer to give Atlanta a win

NEW YORK: Justin Verlander pitched effectively into the seventh inning, and Jose Altuve homered as the Houston Astros beat the New York Yankees 5-1 on Monday afternoon at Yankee Stadium. Verlander (7-2) gave up a seventh-inning homer to Greg Bird among five hits in 6 2/3 innings. It was the first home run he surrendered since the Los Angeles Angels' Albert Pujols took him deep on April 25. Verlander improved to 12-2 in 17 regular-season starts since being acquired from the Detroit Tigers on Aug. 31. Including Games 2 and 6 of the ALCS last season, he is 3-0 in four starts against the Yankees with Houston. After being taken out, Verlander tipped his cap to the boozing Bronx crowd as he crossed the third base line.

BRAVES 4, METS 3 (GAME 1)

Pinch hitter Charlie Culberson, the team's last available position player, hit a two-run, walk-off homer to give Atlanta a win over visiting New York in the first game of a doubleheader. Culberson blasted a slider from New York's Seth Lugo (1-1) into the left-center-field bleachers for his first homer. Lugo allowed three runs on three hits in 1 1/3 innings in relief. He had a 17-inning scoreless streak end in the eighth and took his first career loss against Atlanta. Devin Mesoraco put the Mets ahead in the top of the ninth with a solo homer, his sixth, but Lugo couldn't hold the lead. He walked Johan Camargo to start the inning, retired Dansby Swanson on a fly to right and gave up the homer to Culberson.

METS 8, BRAVES 5 (GAME 2)

Luis Guillorme's two-run single in the seventh inning sparked a three-run rally and helped New York split the doubleheader at Atlanta. The second game was delayed 2 hours, 57 minutes because of rain and did not start until 10:10 p.m. ET. The nightcap result snapped New York's four-game losing streak and gave the Mets their second win against the Braves in eight meetings. Kevin Plawecki and Michael Conforto each had three hits for the Mets, and Adrian Gonzalez, Amed Rosario (three RBIs) and Guillermo had two hits apiece. Kurt Suzuki and Freddie Freeman both drove in two runs for the Braves.

RAYS 1, ATHLETICS 0 (13 INNINGS)

Mallex Smith drove in the only run of the game with a two-out single in the top of the 13th inning, giving Tampa Bay a victory at Oakland. In a game that began as a scoreless pitching duel between Tampa Bay's Chris Archer and Oakland's Trevor Cahill, the Rays managed to push across the difference-making run after Chris Hatcher (3-2) retired the first two batters he faced in the 13th. Johnny Field started the game-winning rally with an infield single, after which Jesus Sucre lined a single to center field, setting the stage for Smith's heroics.

Warner, Bancroft sign up for Northern Territory event

MELBOURNE: Australia batsmen David Warner and Cameron Bancroft have signed up for a limited-overs tournament in Northern Territory in July as they look to return to cricket in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal which saw them banned from the national team.

Former Australia vice-captain Warner was confirmed for two one-day matches on July 21-22, while Bancroft would be available for the whole tournament, NT Cricket said. The pair will be covering their own costs to play, NT Cricket CEO Joel Morrison told local media.

"There's no payment to any players in our competition. These two players are coming up here, looking after their own flights and accommodation," NT Cricket chief executive Joel Morrison told Australian Associated Press.

"We don't lose sight of the fact that they're up here because of the events in Cape Town. They made a big error in judgment and ultimately paid the price. They've also demonstrated a willingness to learn from their mistakes and move forward.

"We're more than happy to support them on that journey. It's great they can start it now, as opposed to waiting for summer." Along with former Australia captain Steve Smith, Warner is serving a year-long ban, while his former test opening partner Bancroft is serving nine months for his part in the Cape Town scandal in March, which sullied the national team's reputation and caused a major sponsor to withdraw support.

The bans issued by Cricket Australia preclude the trio from playing at international and state levels, along with the domestic 'Big Bash' Twenty20 tournament, but they are allowed to play in local third-tier club competitions and T20 tournaments overseas.

Khan leads Afghan attack in historic India Test

KABUL: Teen sensation Rashid Khan will lead a heavyweight spin attack for Afghanistan in the country's first-ever Test against India next month, the Afghan cricket board announced yesterday. Khan and fellow spinners Mujeeb ur Rahman, Zahir Khan and Hamza Hotak were named in a 16-strong

squad for the historic one-off Test in Bangalore starting June 14.

The 19-year-old Khan was a star performer in the Indian Premier League with 21 wickets for Sunrisers Hyderabad, who lost in Sunday's final to Chennai Super Kings. Rahman, 17, also impressed in the cash-rich league with 14 scalps for Kings XI Punjab.

Asghar Stanikzai will captain the Test debutants in the five-day game which will be preceded by three Twenty20 internationals against Bangladesh. The T20 games will be played in the northern Indian city of Dehradun on June 3, 5 and 7.

Afghanistan have had their training base in India since 2015, and were given Test status last year with Ireland, who lost their first five-day match to Pakistan earlier this month. Afghanistan will be underdogs in the Test

against India, but they will start as favourites against Bangladesh in the T20 clashes.

Test squad: Asghar Stanikzai (capt), Mohammad Shahzad, Javed Ahmadi, Ihsanullah Jannat, Rahmat Shah, Nasir Jamal, Hashmatullah Shahidi, Afsar Zazai, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Zahir Khan, Hamza Hotak, Syed Ahmad Sherzad, Yamin Ahmadzai, Wafadar Momand, Mujeeb ur Rahman Squad for Bangladesh T20s:

Asghar Stanikzai (capt), Mohammad Shahzad, Najeebullah Tarakai, Usman Ghani, Najibullah Zadran, Samiullah Shinwari, Shafiqullah Shafaq, Darwish Rasooli, Mohammad Nabi, Gulbadin Naib, Karim Jannat, Rashid Khan, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Mujeeb ur Rahman, Shapoor Zadran, Aftab Alam. — AFP

INDIANS 9, WHITE SOX 6

Edwin Encarnacion went 2-for-4 with a homer, a double and four RBIs, and Cleveland rallied for a win over visiting Chicago. Yonder Alonso added two doubles and an RBI as the Indians scored eight unanswered runs to erase a 5-1 deficit. Francisco Lindor finished 3-for-4 with an RBI as Cleveland won its third game in a row. White Sox first baseman Matt Skole shined in his big league debut. He ripped a single to right field on the first pitch he saw, and he homered to right field in his second at-bat. Earlier in the day, Chicago promoted the 28-year-old from Triple-A Charlotte to replace Matt Davidson, who was placed on the 10-day disabled list with back spasms.

MARINERS 2, RANGERS 1

Marco Gonzales didn't allow an earned run for his third straight start as host Seattle defeated Texas. The Mariners won their fourth straight game and for the ninth time in their past 10. Gonzales (5-3) allowed one unearned run on four hits in 6 2/3 innings. He walked four and struck out four. Edwin Diaz got his major-league-leading 19th save of the season as the Mariners' bullpen—which has allowed just one run over the past nine games—kept the Rangers off the board in the final 2 1/3 innings.

BREWERS 8, CARDINALS 3

Brent Suter allowed three runs over five innings and helped himself with a two-run double as Milwaukee broke open a close game late and rolled to a win over visiting St. Louis. The Brewers won for the fourth straight game while St. Louis had a two-game win streak snapped. Jonathan Villar ripped a three-run, two-out home run in the seventh to help secure the win for Suter (5-3), who surrendered five hits (two of them home runs) and no walks while striking out six.

RED SOX 8, BLUE JAYS 3

Andrew Benintendi hit a three-run homer and finished with four RBIs. J.D. Martinez added a solo blast and two RBIs, and Boston routed visiting Toronto. Two days after finishing a double shy of the cycle, Benintendi (3-for-5) did so again after his third-inning single, fourth-inning homer and sixth-inning RBI triple. Benintendi has four homers and 13 RBIs in his past eight games. Martinez matched teammate Mookie Betts for second place in the majors with 17 homers—one behind Mike Trout of the Angels—while tying Baltimore's Manny Machado for the majors' lead in RBIs (44).

CUBS 7, PIRATES 0

Anthony Rizzo and Addison Russell hit homers, and spot starter Mike Montgomery pitched 5 2/3 shutout innings as visiting Chicago trounced Pittsburgh. Montgomery (1-1) combined with four relievers, who



NEW YORK: Carlos Correa #1 and George Springer #4 of the Houston Astros celebrate the win over the New York Yankees at Yankee Stadium on Monday in the Bronx borough of New York City. MLB players across the league are wearing special uniforms to commemorate Memorial Day. The Houston Astros defeated the New York Yankees 5-1. — AFP

were perfect, for the shutout. Rizzo had three hits and three RBIs for Chicago, which has won two in a row and three of its last four. The Pirates, who had just two baserunners and none in scoring position, have lost three straight and eight of 10.

DIAMONDBACKS 12, REDS 5

Nick Ahmed, Chris Owings and John Ryan Murphy homered, and Arizona broke out of an offensive funk with a victory over Cincinnati in Phoenix. Ahmed and Owings helped the D-backs to their season high in runs by each hitting three-run homers, and Owings' shot with two outs in the fifth inning gave the team a 9-5 lead. Owings broke a 4-for-51 skid with his third homer of the season. Ahmed had two hits and four RBIs and Owings had three RBIs and scored three times as Arizona won for just the third time in 18 games while returning home after an 1-8 road trip.

NATIONALS 6, ORIOLES 0

Anthony Rendon hit an early three-run homer and Gio Gonzalez threw 7 2/3 shutout innings as Washington won at Baltimore. The Nationals have won four straight games and six of their past seven. Washington swept the Marlins in a three-game series over the weekend in Miami. The Orioles have dropped their last three games

as the team's offense just can't seem to get going on a consistent basis. They could not do much against Gonzalez (6-2). The left-hander beat Baltimore for the first time since 2009 when pitching with Oakland—he'd lost his last six decisions against the Orioles.

TIGERS 9, ANGELS 3

James McCann crushed his third career grand slam, and Detroit romped past visiting Los Angeles. McCann, who hit his fourth homer this season, scored two runs. Leonys Martin also homered for the Tigers, who have won four of the last five games after a five-game losing streak. Everyone in the Detroit lineup got at least one hit. Matthew Boyd (3-4) gave up just two hits while tossing five-plus scoreless innings for Detroit. He walked three and struck out four.

MARLINS 7, PADRES 2

Caleb Smith allowed one run on four hits over seven-plus innings while his teammates jumped San Diego starter Eric Lauer for five runs in the first 14 hitters in a victory for visiting Miami. Smith (4-5) issued one walk and struck out four. Lauer (1-3) was done after 2 1/3 innings, giving up five runs on seven hits and two walks with three strikeouts. Nine of the 15 batters Lauer faced reached base. — Reuters



David Warner

"I'm really looking forward to playing in the Strike League in July," Warner said in the statement. "I heard so much about the competition while I was in Darwin earlier this month that I'm keen to be part of it."

Smith confirmed last week that he would return to cricket at a Twenty20 competition in Canada, which starts in late June. Warner, who has already committed to playing for Sydney club side Randwick Petersham at the start of their season, is also expected to sign as a marquee player in the Canada tournament. Bancroft is confirmed to play with his Western Australian club side Willetton later in the year.

Tim Paine will lead Australia during their limited overs tour in England starting next month, their first international cricket since the ill-fated South Africa tour. — Reuters

S Africa must prepare for tricky transition: Smith

MUMBAI: The untimely retirement of "irreplaceable" AB de Villiers is a big loss for South Africa and the team must prepare for the challenging transition they face in the next couple of years, former captain Graeme Smith has told Reuters.

The South African batting talisman announced his retirement from all forms of international cricket last week after a glittering career spanning close to 14 years. The 34-year-old's audacious batting style and breathtaking fielding has made him one of the sport's leading lights and there is barely a dull moment for the spectators when De Villiers is on the cricket field.

"I think AB's thought about it a lot," Smith, who himself made a shocking retirement at the age of 33 four years back, said in an interview. "I thought definitely he would retire after the 2019 World Cup. But when he made his comeback and did so well in the home summer in South Africa, had a really good IPL (Indian Premier League), I didn't even think about it."

De Villiers retired with a test average of 50.66 and as the fourth-highest scorer for South Africa with 8,765 runs. In ODI cricket, he holds the records for the fastest 50 (16 balls), 100 (31 balls) and 150 (64 balls) with those innings exhibiting his 360-degree batting ability, much to the amusement of the fans.

"Ultimately people will be very disappointed because they are going to miss him, just because he was that brilliant. They wanted to see him play more," Smith said at the sidelines of the Ceat Cricket Rating awards.

"But the guy has played international cricket for around 15 years...

More than anything he has the right to decide when he's had enough. He will have his own reasons for that, you got to respect that." Left-handed opener Smith was a veteran of 117 tests, 109 of those as captain, and is the world record holder for the most test wins as skipper of a five-day team with 53. He remains the most capped test captain in the history of the game and was handed the reins of the South African side at the age of 22.

CRICKET'S CHALLENGE

Smith does not expect De Villiers to make himself available to play in different Twenty20 leagues across the globe but hoped the batsman will continue entertaining fans for at least a couple of years more.

"It's a challenge international cricket really does face," Smith said. "The way world cricket is at the moment, the International Cricket Council and administrators have to be really at the top of their game in terms of player workloads, creating context in our cricket."

"There are not many players who have played for 14-15 years that can travel nine, 10, 11 months a year, deal with the pressures, plus the family pressures, it's very, very difficult." Smith said De Villiers' retirement robbed South Africa of more than just a batting mainstay.

"To lose a player like AB, he's irreplaceable," Smith said. "There are also quality players there but it's like taking Virat Kohli (India captain) out of the Indian team. "Everyone will say it's a big loss. More than anything the South African team loses a X-factor player, who can single-handedly win you a game." — Reuters

Sports

Curry, Durant spark Warriors over Rockets to reach NBA finals

Rockets ace James Harden finished with 32 points

LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry inspired a second-half fightback as the reigning champion Golden State Warriors booked their fourth consecutive NBA finals appearance with a 101-92 victory over the Houston Rockets on Monday.

Curry scored 27 points with Kevin Durant adding 34 as the Warriors advanced to an unprecedented fourth NBA finals meeting in a row against LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers. The Warriors' Western Conference finals game seven victory in Houston handed them a 4-3 series win, and came after the Rockets had led by as many as 15 points in the first half.

The Warriors had looked vulnerable after a sluggish first-half performance that saw them trail 54-43 at half-time. But just as they have done throughout the playoffs, the Warriors found an extra gear in the third period, with Curry and Durant suddenly finding their range from three-point distance to come roaring back into the contest.

"Basketball is a 48-minute game and no matter how badly we played, how many shots we missed, there's always time to turn it around," Curry said. "The second half was unbelievable. Happy to be back in the finals."

The Warriors outscored the Rockets by 33-15 in the third quarter, surging into a double-digit lead that they never looked like surrendering. Rockets coach Mike D'Antoni meanwhile attempted to put a brave face on a loss which came after his team had battled into a 3-2 lead earlier in the series.

"I couldn't be prouder of our team," D'Antoni said.

"There's no quit in them. We saw where the bar was this year, but we just couldn't quite get there. "We'll take our summer off and then we'll try it again next season."

'EXTREMELY FRUSTRATING'

Rockets ace James Harden, who finished with 32 points, said his team's second-half performances in games six and seven had decided the fate of the series. "One half of basketball. Two games, six and seven. We just didn't have the same energy that we had in the first half, the pace," Harden said. "It's extremely frustrating."

Earlier it looked as if Houston were ready to snap the Golden State-Cleveland monopoly, shrugging off the injury absence of Chris Paul to make a fast start. The Rockets swarmed over the vaunted Warriors offense to keep the visitors firmly on the back foot.

The Warriors looked nervous from the outset, with a string of early turnovers. Durant missed three free throws in a row early on as Houston gradually pulled into a 24-19 first quarter lead.

A disgusted Kerr told a courtside television interviewer it was the "one of the worst quarters of basketball we've ever played." The pressure continued in the second, with Clint Capela outstanding on defence for Houston with a string of rebounds.

The Rockets pulled away in the second, with Harden to the fore as the hosts moved 15 points clear with both Durant and Curry struggling from three-



HOUSTON: Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors drives against Clint Capela #15 and James Harden #13 of the Houston Rockets in the third quarter of Game Seven of the Western Conference Finals of the 2018 NBA Playoffs at Toyota Center on Monday in Houston, Texas. — AFP

point range. A miserable first half for Golden State saw Eric Gordon make it 54-43 on the stroke of half-time with an aggressive driving layup.

Yet Golden State flicked the switch after the break, and Curry and Durant soon began raining down buckets from distance. A Durant three-pointer tied it at 61-61 and Curry then struck with a three of his own to give Warriors a 64-61 lead, the first time they had led since a fleeting 9-7 advantage early in the first.

Two more quick threes from Curry gave the Warriors a nine-point advantage at 72-63, and from there the NBA champions were too strong as an increasingly desperate Houston chased the game.

Kerr later said there had been no hint of panic at halftime as the Warriors trailed. "I just tried to remind them that at halftime it was an 11-point game, and that's two minutes. If we get a couple of stops and a few threes we're back in it," Kerr said. — AFP

Balotelli scores as Mancini starts Italy reign with a victory

ST GALLEN: Mario Balotelli got new Italy coach Roberto Mancini off to a winning start by scoring the opener in a 2-1 win over Saudi Arabia in a pre-World Cup friendly in Saint Gallen on Monday. Saudi Arabia face hosts Russia in the opening match of the tournament on June 14 while four-time champions Italy stay home following their failure to qualify for the first time in 60 years.

Made the scapegoat for Italy's first-round exit from the 2014 World Cup, Balotelli's four-year Azzurri hiatus ended when he was recalled by Mancini, appointed six months after Italy's shock failure to qualify for Russia following a playoff defeat to Sweden.

It took the 27-year-old Nice striker just 21 minutes to get on the scoreboard with his first goal for Italy since netting the winner against England at the 2014 World Cup. Substitute Andrea Belotti added a second midway through the second half before Yahya Al-Shehri pulled one back for the Saudis following Italian defensive blunders.

"I'm satisfied with the first half-performance. The difficulties of the second half were down to tiredness due to the extra fitness training we've been doing over the last few days," said Mancini. "Saudi Arabia are approaching peak form because they are going to the World Cup. I wasn't angry about the goal we conceded. I thought it was down to fatigue."

Mancini said Balotelli's performance was "pretty good". "Balotelli can do better, much better, but I thought he did pretty good in the first half. He scored a goal, which is important for a striker, but of course he can do more."

Italy have dropped to their lowest ever world ranking of 20th, but were in control



ST GALLEN: Italy's forward Mario Balotelli (R) controls the ball during the international friendly football match between Italy and Saudi Arabia at Kybunpark stadium in St Gallen on Monday. — AFP

against the 67th-ranked Saudis. Mancini opted for a 4-3-3 formation with Gianluigi Donnarumma in goal and Sassuolo winger Matteo Politano handed his full debut. Balotelli came out firing early with the Nice striker heading just wide off a Leonardo Bonucci cross.

He finally found a way through with a low drive under the outstretched arms of Saudi goalkeeper Mohammed Al Owais for his 14th goal in 34 appearances. Napoli winger Lorenzo Insigne nearly added a second minutes later after picking up a pin perfect cross but defender Yasir Al Shahrani blocked. An Alessio Romagnoli bicycle kick flew just wide with Domenico Criscito rattling the the crossbar.

'OPEN WOUND'

Both Mancini and Saudi coach Juan Antonio Pizzi made substitutions in the second half with Balotelli making way for Belotti after 58 minutes. And the 24-year-old Torino

opening World Cup fixture against Australia in Kazan on June 16.

"The game maybe didn't meet all my expectations, but we controlled it well, got the breakthrough before half-time and our movement was good, so there were plenty of good things to take from it," said Deschamps.

France's strength in depth, showcased here on a night of torrential rain, thunder and lightning, means they are among the contenders to win the World Cup, 20 years after becoming world champions on home soil.

However, bigger tests lie in wait than that provided by Martin O'Neill's Ireland side. The visitors started with seven players who turned out in the English Premier League this season, but they hardly got near the ball all evening.

France were not at full strength, with goalkeeper Hugo Lloris, Paul Pogba, N'Golo Kante and Antoine Griezmann starting on the bench. Raphael Varane has not yet joined up with the squad after winning the Champions League with Real Madrid at the weekend.

However, Deschamps handed a fifth cap to Benjamin Mendy, the Manchester City left-back who has hardly played since suffering a serious knee injury at the beginning of the

campaign. Fekir won his 11th cap, starting for his country for the first time since he also suffered a bad knee injury in a friendly in Portugal in September 2015.

The 24-year-old is coming off a fantastic season at Lyon and was given his chance by Deschamps in a role supporting Giroud. Fekir curled an early free-kick just wide and Corentin Tolisso struck the post for the French in a first half held up at one point by a pitch invader who gave chasing security staff the runaround on the sodden surface.

The opening goal came in the 40th minute, Giroud bundling the ball in at the third attempt following a Fekir corner. Fekir made it two a minute from the break, collecting a pass from the ever-dangerous Kylian Mbappe just inside the area, turning and hitting a shot on his weaker right foot that was parried by Doyle.

However, the unfortunate goalkeeper could only send the ball up into the air before it spun over the line. Despite the best efforts of Mbappe—who had a goal disallowed for offside France failed to add to their lead in a second half regularly interrupted by substitutions before the rain made conditions increasingly farcical towards the end. — AFP

Fekir helps France to comfortable win over Ireland

PARIS: Olivier Giroud and Nabil Fekir were on target as France stepped up their World Cup preparations by beating the Republic of Ireland 2-0 in Paris on Monday evening. Chelsea striker Giroud bundled in the opener at the Stade de France, and Lyon captain Fekir—who has been linked with a move to Liverpool—got the second just before the break, with a helping hand from Ireland goalkeeper Colin Doyle.

It was a very comfortable victory for Didier Deschamps' side in the first of three friendly matches before they head to Russia. Les Bleus will also host Italy in Nice on Friday and the United States in Lyon on June 9, with their

Reaching FIFA WCup has special taste among Arab fans

KUWAIT: Arab football has realized many of its local and regional achievements since inception but qualifying for the World Cup has a special taste among football fans, as only eight Arab teams made it to the globe's most watched football championship since 1930.

Qualifying for the World Cup is a key challenge for Arab national football teams. Egypt was the first Arab and African team to play in the second World Cup in 1934, but no Arab teams made it to the championship since until Morocco brought back Arab participation in the 1970 cup in Mexico.

No Arab team played in the 1974 World Cup in Germany, but Tunisia managed to qualify for the next championship in Argentina in 1978. Saudi Arabia and Tunisia are the two Arab countries with most appearances in the World Cup, five times each. Algeria made it to the World Cup four times, Egypt three, and one time for each of Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iraq. Egypt meanwhile played a single match in the 1934 World Cup.

It was defeated by Hungary 4-2 to leave the tournament, which was won by Italy for the first time in its history. Egypt, also known as Pharaohs, disappeared from World Cup competitions for 56 years until playing in the 1990 edition. The Pharaohs played three games in the group stages, two draws and one loss and thus left the championship. Egypt qualified for this year World Cup in Russia, due between June 14 and July 15, and was in the same group of Russia, Saudi Arabia and Uruguay. Morocco was the second Arab team to qualify for the World Cup, in 1970 in Mexico. During that tournament, Morocco played three matches in group stages but lost two of them and could not qualify for the next round.

However, the Moroccans did a better job in the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, qualifying for the round of 16th to the first Arab and African team reaching this stage. Morocco, in that tournament, drew against England and Poland but beat Portugal 3-1.

However, they lost to Germany 1-0 and were eliminated. Morocco, also known as Lions of Atlas, qualified for the 1994 World Cup in the US, but left the championship from the first round where the team suffered three straight defeats.

The 1998 World Cup in France also saw Morocco's participation.

Again, the team left the championship from the group stages, suffering two defeats. The Moroccans are facing a tough challenge in next month's World Cup because their group include Portugal, Spain and Iran.

Tunisia's first participation in the World Cup was in 1978 in Argentina, where it achieved the first victory for an Arab and African team by beating Mexico 3-1. However, the Tunisians left the World Cup from the group stages after being beaten by Poland by one goal and ended their clash against then West Germany goalless. The Tunisians, better known as Eagles of Carthage, moved to the round of 16th in the 1998 World Cup in France, but left the 2002 World Cup that was jointly hosted by South Korea and Japan from the group stages.

The Eagles of Carthage also qualified for the 2002 World Cup in Germany, 2010 in South Africa and 2014 in Brazil. They were knocked out from group stages in the three championships. Tunisia's group in this year's World Cup includes Belgium, Panama and England. Kuwait was the first Arab and Asian team to qualify for the World Cup in Spain in 1982.

The Blue equalized with then Czechoslovakia but lost to France and Algeria to be eliminated from group stages. Algeria also played in the 1982 World Cup but was knocked out from the first round. The Algerians, the Desert Warriors, played in the 1986 World Cup in Mexico but was unlucky to also leave the tournament from the first round.

The 2014 World Cup in Brazil saw a different Algerian team. The Desert Warriors beat South Korea 4-2 and equalized with Russia to move to the round of 16th. However, the Algerians lost to Germany by thrilling one goal to leave the championship. The 1986 World Cup saw Iraq competing for the first time, but the Lions of Mesopotamia lost all three matches and was eliminated.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) made it to the 1990 World Cup in Italy. The Emiratis lost all three games. Saudi Arabia made an achievement by moving to the round of 16 in the 1994 World Cup in the US but lost 3-1 to Sweden in the second round. The Green Falcons also reached the World Cups in 1998, 2002 and 2006. They were eliminated from group stages in the three championships. — KUNA

25 KSSC holds honoring ceremony for juniors



26 Justin Verlander gets the best of the Yankees again



27 Balotelli scores as Mancini starts Italy reign with a win



LAS VEGAS: William Karlsson #71 of the Vegas Golden Knights scores a first-period goal past Braden Holtby #70 of the Washington Capitals in Game One of the 2018 NHL Stanley Cup Final at T-Mobile Arena on Monday in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

Knights down Caps in Stanley Cup thriller

Capitals coach says his team would recover from setback for game two today

LAS VEGAS: Tomas Nosek struck twice as the Vegas Golden Knights staged a late fightback to defeat the Washington Capitals 6-4 in a thrilling opening game one of the Stanley Cup finals on Monday. A wild encounter at the T-Mobile Arena saw the lead change hands five times as the Knights launched their hopes of becoming the first expansion side in history to win the National Hockey League showpiece at the first attempt.

The Knights started the NHL season as 500-1 outsiders according to bookmakers odds, but have confounded conventional wisdom by powering into the Stanley Cup finals at the first go. The hastily assembled team of outsiders were made to dig deep on Monday after Washington looked to have taken a decisive 4-3

lead through Tom Wilson in the third period.

But a Ryan Reaves goal levelled the score at 4-4 before Nosek's double sealed the win. Reaves said the Knights' comeback had been inspired by the team's support. "We feed off the energy, we have been feeding off the energy all year," said Reaves.

"The fans have been great, and they brought it tonight." Capitals coach Barry Trotz said his team would recover from the setback in time for game two today. "I expect us to have a response, we have more to our game," Trotz said. "I think we have another level to our game, that's the exciting thing. (It was the) first experience for some guys, in this building, against this team, so I'm confident we have another level."

Earlier, a frenetic first period saw the Knights take the lead through Colin Miller with a slapshot on the power play with 12 min 45sec left. It marked a dominant start by the Knights, who piled on relentless pressure in the opening exchanges of the game. But the Caps came roaring back with a two-goal blast to take the lead in the space of just a minute.

Brett Connolly levelled it at 1-1 after cleverly tipping Michal Kempny's point shot through his legs and into the net. Nicklas Backstrom then shot the Caps ahead just 42 seconds later, backhanding past Marc-Andre Fleury to make it 2-1.

The momentum then swung back to the Knights however when William Karlsson's shot bounced in off

Capitals goaltender Braden Holtby's shoulder for 2-2. The Knights then swept into the lead at the start of the second period, Reilly Smith quickest to pounce on a loose puck before lashing home from close range for 3-2.

Again though, the Capitals' response was emphatic. John Carlson sweeping home to make it 3-3 after deft interplay split the Knights defence wide open. The Capitals then regained the lead early in the third through Wilson for 4-3.

There was controversy however when officials missed a clear cross-check by Reaves on Carlson just in front of the Capitals net. The reprimanded Reaves then scored the goal that tied it 4-4, setting the stage for Nosek's game-winning double. — AFP

Nadal, Sharapova survive scares as Serena returns

PARIS: Rafael Nadal racked up his 80th French Open win, while Maria Sharapova battled back from a final set deficit to reach the second round as Serena Williams made her eagerly-awaited Roland Garros return to Grand Slam tennis yesterday.

Nadal, the 10-time champion, defeated Italian lucky loser Simone Bolelli 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (11/9). World number one Nadal had been two sets up but 0-3 down in the third when rain caused the tie to be suspended late Monday. He quickly levelled at 3-3 on Tuesday, saved four break points in the eighth game before saving four set points in the breaker. The top seed eventually claimed victory on a third match point when Bolelli dumped a forehand into the net.

Nadal, bidding for an 11th title in Paris and his 17th major, next faces Argentina's Guido Pella for a place in the last 32. "I really suffered today but it was a good test," said Nadal who had been in danger of dropping his first set at Roland Garros since his 2015 quarter-final loss to Novak Djokovic.

"Simone is a very good player and he

had lots of chances and was very aggressive." Two-time champion Sharapova survived a serious scare to claim a 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 victory over Dutch qualifier Richel Hogenkamp, ranked 130, in her first French Open match since 2015.

The Russian was not given a wildcard by organisers for the tournament last year, which took place shortly after her return from a 15-month doping suspension. Sharapova, the 28th seed, will face Croatia's Donna Vekic in the second round.

The 31-year-old, five-time major champion, took just 24 minutes to win the first set of a match which was delayed from Monday due to thunderstorms, but threw away a 3-1 lead in the second. Sharapova was staring down the barrel of falling at first hurdle in a Grand Slam tournament for the first time since the 2010 Australian Open when trailing 3-0 in the third, but the former world number one dug deep and reeled off six straight games to edge into round two.

The Russian, who was Paris champion in 2012 and 2014, fired 35 winners in her victory on Court Suzanne Lenglen.

SERENA RETURNS

Williams returns to Grand Slam tennis for the first time since the 2017 Australian Open where she won a 23rd major while also being two months pregnant. The 36-year-old's return comes with the great

American ranked at a lowly 451, a consequence of her lengthy absence from the tour after giving birth to her daughter in September.

Williams has played just four matches in 2018, the last of which was a first-round exit to Naomi Osaka in Miami. Three of her Slam titles have come in Paris in 2002, 2013 and 2015 — and longtime coach Patrick Mouratoglou has no doubt that Williams is capable of adding a fourth.

"Can she do it? Serena can achieve anything—after being her coach for six years, I'm even more sure of that statement," said the Frenchman. Williams starts her 16th Roland Garros against Czech world number 70 Kristyna Pliskova who has never won a match at the tournament in three visits. Third seed Marin Cilic reached the second round with a 6-3, 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) win over Australia's James Duckworth.

Wimbledon and Australian Open runner-up Cilic, 29, fired 47 winners and 13 aces past the 1,072nd-ranked Duckworth who was playing his first match since the 2017 Australian Open.

Canadian teenager Denis Shapovalov eased to a 7-5, 6-4, 6-2 victory over Australian John Millman in his first ever main-draw French Open match. The 19-year-old, who lost in Roland Garros qualifying last year but is now the 24th seed, will next take on German world number



PARIS: Russia's Maria Sharapova celebrates after victory against Netherland's Richel Hogenkamp at the end of their women's singles first round match on day three of The Roland Garros 2018 French Open tennis tournament in Paris yesterday. — AFP

70 Maximilian Marterer for a place in the last 32.

"The last couple of weeks I've been playing unbelievable on this surface," said Shapovalov, the youngest player to break into the world's top 30 since 2005. Third seed and 2016 champion Garbine Muguruza defeated 2009 winner Svetlana Kuznetsova 7-6 (7/0), 6-2.

Spain's Muguruza next faces French

wildcard Fiona Ferro, ranked 257, for a place in the last 32. With the headlines dominated by the returns of Williams and Sharapova, world number one Simona Halep will begin her latest bid to win a maiden Slam very much under the radar.

The Romanian, who blew a set and 3-0 lead to lose the 2017 final to Jelena Ostapenko, faces Alison Riske, the 83rd-ranked American. — AFP