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Amir and Trump discuss ties, regional, international issues

US-Kuwait relations 'very very powerful': Trump

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah visited US President Donald Trump at the White House yesterday. He was accompanied by Chief of the National Guard Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and other senior officials. President Trump welcomed the Kuwaiti delegation and then accompanied His Highness the Amir to the Oval Office where they held official talks.

Members of the delegation and senior officials from the US Administration joined the talks later on. The discussions dealt with the deep-rooted ties between Kuwait and the United States and ways to enhance cooperation in such areas as defense, security, trade and investment as well as the strategic partnership in all fields. Both sides reviewed regional and international issues of common concern, with emphasis on the situations in the Arabian Gulf region and the Middle East. They highlighted the need to promote peace, security and stability in the region and beyond, and support the international effort to combat terrorism.

US President described his country's relations with Kuwait as 'very very powerful' and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a great friend. "Our relationship and our bilateral relationship is very very powerful, very strong," President Trump said in a reply to a question by KUNA during a joint news conference at the Oval Office with His Highness the Amir yesterday. He described His Highness the Amir as "a very special friend of mine" and expressed admiration of Kuwait and its people.

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WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump greets HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah outside the West Wing of the White House before a meeting yesterday. (Right) His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hugs a child during a banquet held in his honor by Kuwait's Ambassador in Washington Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — AFP

Europe's female mosque cater for Muslim women

COPENHAGEN: Relegated to the basement, silenced by the imam and barred from the front door, some Muslim women have had enough of male domination at the mosque and are setting up their own. From Copenhagen to Los Angeles, a handful of female mosques now cater for Muslim women who want their own place of worship, just as men have had through the ages.

"It is possible to change a narrative that has been patriarchal for centuries," Sherin Khankan, founder of Europe's first women's mosque said. Her first-floor mosque - adjacent to a clothes shop - is invisible from the busy Danish shopping street below. But behind its anonymous, grey door, a quiet revolution is brewing.

For the past two years, women have been leading prayers, delivering sermons and running Copenhagen's

Mariam Mosque - though Khankan says she is not challenging the Quran, just rewriting a male-dominated way of worship. "We can do that by promoting and disseminating new narratives, with a focus on gender equality. It's not a reform. We're going back to the essence of Islam," she said, draping a red floral shawl across her shoulder.

Although men and women are allowed to meet and pray during the week at Mariam Mosque, the mosque's monthly, collective Friday prayers are for women only, said 43-year-old Khankan. With a tiny prayer room and simple decor of candles, cushions and rugs, the mosque has about 150 worshippers. It was set up by Khankan with the support of Femimam, a group of female Muslim spiritual leaders in Denmark.

Overlooked

Muslim women's groups and researchers say there is a lack of female Islamic leaders and dearth of worship spaces for women, since most mosques are gender-segregated and men dominate the main prayer rooms. So, after 15 years in the making, Mariam Mosque joined a handful of female-friendly mosques, including two in Los Angeles, another in the German city of Berlin - which welcomes



COPENHAGEN: Islamic books are seen inside the main prayer room at women's mosque Mariam Mosque in Copenhagen. — Reuters

men and women to Friday prayers - and a new build slated for the northern English city of Bradford, where there are plans to build Britain's first women-led mosque by 2020.

Continued on Page 24

Saudi wealth fund bets big to remake oil-based economy

RIYADH: With the stock market listing of its national oil company stalled, Saudi Arabia is scrambling to boost the coffers of the sovereign wealth fund spearheading a risky plan to diversify its economy. The Public Investment Fund had sought to raise billions of dollars through the initial public offering of Saudi Aramco-dubbed as potentially the world's biggest stock sale-to finance the kingdom's transformation from a petro-state to a tech-focused economy.

But with the flotation indefinitely postponed, the PIF is taking radical steps to boost its treasure chest with much-needed cash to finance a slew of non-oil investments-from risky hi-tech startups to a new mega city. — AFP (See Page 11)

1.4 billion 'risk disease' due to lack of exercise

PARIS: More than 1.4 billion adults are putting themselves at heightened risk of deadly diseases by not getting enough exercise, doctors are warning, with global activity levels virtually unchanged in nearly two decades. With richer nations enjoying an increasingly comfortable, sedentary lifestyle, a study by the World Health Organization said a third of women and a quarter of men worldwide are in the firing line for killer conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer unless they up their physical activity.

"Insufficient physical activity is a leading risk factor for non-communicable diseases, and has a negative effect on mental health and quality of life," said the study of world exercise levels published yesterday by The Lancet Global Health Journal. The WHO recommends each adult do at least 150 minutes "moderate-intensity" exercise-such as brisk walking, swimming or gentle cycling-each week, or 75 minutes "vigorous-intensity" activity-such as running or team sports.

The study tracked activity levels of 1.9 million people in 168 countries across the world during 2016. Researchers found there had been no improvement in physical activity levels since 2001, despite numerous public health initiatives extolling the benefits of exercise. More than a quarter of the world's adults (1.4 billion people) were insufficiently active, according to the data. "We definitely haven't done enough" to encourage people to exercise, the WHO's Regina Guthold, lead study author said. "We have seen basically no progress."

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US, Pakistan try to reset troubled relationship

ISLAMABAD: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he was "hopeful" yesterday of resetting the troubled relationship with Pakistan, a key player in the Afghan conflict, after cordial meetings in Islamabad including with new premier Imran Khan. The shift in tone comes days after Washington confirmed plans to cancel \$300 million in military aid, and was echoed by Khan, who voiced his optimism at a fresh start in the long-rocky ties between the wayward allies.

The former CIA director, making his first visit as top US diplomat to Pakistan, told pool reporters shortly before leaving Islamabad that the "broad spectrum" of topics discussed included efforts "to develop a peaceful resolution in Afghanistan". "I'm hopeful that the foundation that we laid today will set the conditions for continued success," he said — though he added there was a "long way to go" before Washington would resume military assistance.

US officials accuse Islamabad of ignoring or even collaborating with groups such as the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network, which attack Afghanistan from safe havens along the border between the two countries. The White House believes that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency and other military bodies have long helped fund and arm the Taliban both for ideological reasons and to counter rising Indian influence in Afghanistan.

It believes that a Pakistani crackdown on the militants could be pivotal in deciding the outcome of the long-running war in Afghanistan. Islamabad has long denied the claims. The cancelled military aid is part of a broader freeze announced by the Trump administration in January designed to pressure Pakistan - particularly the military, widely seen as controlling foreign and defense policy - into action. But Pompeo said ahead of the trip



ISLAMABAD: Visiting US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (2nd right) and Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi (center left) listen as Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan (left) speaks during a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office in Islamabad. — AFP

that it was time to "turn the page" and suggested that the election of Khan, who has vowed to seek better relations with the US, could provide a fresh impetus.

Khan and his foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi were also positive, according to pool reports. "A sportsman always is an optimist," the former cricketer, who captained Pakistan to World Cup victory in 1992, was quoted as saying when asked about finding a new way forward with Washington. "He steps on the field and he thinks he's going to win." Qureshi, meanwhile, described his meeting with Pompeo as "excellent".

'Shared goal'

Pompeo, who was later joined by General Joe Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had also been scheduled to meet Pakistan's powerful army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. In comments made before the trip, Pompeo said that in his conversations with Khan they had agreed that peace in Afghanistan was a "shared goal". In his earlier comments Pompeo also held out the possibility that military aid could be restored under the right circumstances.

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Wataniya Airways' permit suspended

KUWAIT: Wataniya Airways' permit has been suspended for three months, a senior official announced yesterday. Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Services' Affairs Dr Jenan Boushehri announced that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation decided to suspend the permit for the airlines for three months. Minister Boushehri said that the Aviation Authority's decision to suspend Wataniya operations would be effective for three months as from today after the ultimatum that had been addressed to the company on August 25 had expired.

Wataniya Airways has neither made tangible overhaul of its services nor introduced immediate reforms to operations, thus negatively affecting the national aviation sector and Kuwait's image abroad; as well as undermining passengers' interests, the minister said. She affirmed the Aviation Authority's keenness on adhering to sound legal procedures toward the airlines company - issuing successive notices" and giving it more than one opportunity with the hope it will cooperate - in serving the interest of aerial transportation in the State and preserving passengers' rights."

Boushehri added that the Aviation Department would discuss with Kuwait Airways Corporation the KAC desire to take over Wataniya operations' network - affirming the department's keenness on preserving the network. She expressed deep gratitude for extraordinary efforts exerted by the Foreign Ministry, the embassies and consulates for aiding Wataniya's passengers for re-scheduling their booking and arranging their residency. She also praised the KAC for scheduling special flights for them. The Aviation Authority announced on Tuesday that it had to help more than 1,500 passengers whose flights on Wataniya aircraft had been cancelled since August 26. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had urged the stranded passengers to call the diplomatic missions abroad - namely in Beirut, Istanbul, Tbilisi, Baku, Sarajevo, Malaga and Athens - to help them resolve their flights' problems. — KUNA

Local

Amir invites more US firms to participate in development plan

American firms can work on Iraq's reconstruction from Kuwait: US Chamber

WASHINGTON: His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah invited on Tuesday more US companies to participate in execution of development and infrastructure projects, which were part of his country's development plan. His Highness the Amir, accompanied by deputy head of the National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, said American companies have been contributing to boosting economic and trade relations with Kuwait. His Highness the Amir was addressing a meeting with the executives of big US companies at his residence in Washington, DC. He said Kuwait was keen on developing the strategic relationship with the American companies to a permanent partnership. This partnership, he added, would provide more expertise and state-of-art technology to the oil sector, as well as expanding relevant investment. His Highness the Amir noted that Kuwait adopted a series of economic legislations aimed at developing the business environment and attract foreign direct investment. He said the Foreign Direct Promotion Law allowed foreign investors to have full ownership of their businesses in Kuwait. Leading American companies working through Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) contributed to success of sectors of information technology, communications, renewable energy and industries. "We hope this will pave way for more direct investment and long-term partnerships," he said.

Iraq's reconstruction

US companies have ambitious plans to enhance bilateral relationship with Kuwait, through which the firms could also work on reconstruction of Iraq, the US Chamber of Commerce said. The Chamber is working in close conjunction with Kuwait Embassy in Washington and Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and "we have an ambitious plan for enhancing the US-Kuwait bilateral relationship," Khush Choksy, US Chamber's Senior Vice President for Middle East and Turkey Affairs, said.

He said they were looking forward to send a delegation to Kuwait in November for the US-Kuwait Strategic Dialogue so businesses could learn more about the many steps that have been taken to open Kuwait's economy. "We understand and appreciate that Kuwait is open for business, and this is the message we have been communicating to all our members," said Choksy, noting that Kuwait made investments in the US even before 1961, when the Gulf State gained independence. He appreciated Kuwait for facilitating role of American business in the region. He said a business delegation from the US was in Kuwait earlier this year to participate in an international conference for the reconstruction of Iraq. Donors pledged up to \$30 billion.

Kuwait, said Choksy, was also a place through which American companies could work on Iraq reconstruction and "in the future, hopefully with Syria and Iran. We are also aware the Silk Road from China to Europe can be accessed from Kuwait." He recognized His Highness the Amir's "very important" role in facilitating reconciliation within the GCC. The US Chamber, which represented three million US companies, look forward to normalization of commercial activity within the region.

Choksy thanked His Highness the Amir for placing huge importance on bilateral commercial relationship, and said they have productive discussions with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf, Director General of Kuwait Investment Authority and Director General Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion

Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr Mishal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. He said the US Chamber was looking forward to become home to US-Kuwait Business Council. Commercial history between the two countries goes back to 1933, when the Gulf Oil Company formed a joint venture with the Kuwait Oil Company. The American hospital in Kuwait was established in 1911.

Business community honored

The American business community voiced their honor to be meeting with His Highness the Amir, praising Kuwait's 2035 vision and Kuwait's openness for business. "We are very pleased to be able to put together a very



US business community honored to meet Amir

high level of CEOs to meet His Highness the Amir," Choksy said. He affirmed that American businesses "truly trust doing business with Kuwait," a point that was resonated throughout the meeting. He added that the CEOs were also "very impressed by the high level of engagement," and the forthrightness and openness that was demonstrated during the meeting. He shed light on the upcoming strategic dialogue in November in Kuwait, saying "we look forward to taking a very strong group of American business leaders to Kuwait because we believe that the commercial relationship is as equally important as the political and security relationship."

Steve Lutes, Vice President of Middle East Affairs at the US Chamber of Commerce said that the US Chamber "is very honored to be participating in this meeting with His Highness the Amir," and that this is "a key stone meeting that would highlight not only the importance of the economic relationship but also highlight the new sectors that we can be active in." "We know there are long standing and important ties in strategic sectors but we look forward to establishing new partnerships in areas such as e-commerce, health and cyber-security," he added. He affirmed that there is "a very active and robust trade and investment relationship between the two countries but we think that the relationship has incredible potential and that the future between the two countries is very promising when it comes to the economic relationship."

"We know that Kuwait is positioned very well not only as a market itself but as a hub for the greater region and as you look at opportunities like in Iraq and the reconstruction and rebuilding that is needed there, Kuwait is an important gateway to all of that," he remarked.

Dr Thomas Kennedy, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Raytheon Company, praised the meeting, describing it as "excellent." He affirmed that His Highness the Amir "was very clear" on making Kuwait an even better country to make business through further boosting the relationship with the American companies. "Kuwait is already a great country to do business with but some programs were outlined to make it even more attractive for investments by American companies," he added.

Co-Founder and Managing Director of Carlyle Group, David Rubenstein said "we had a very good meeting with



WASHINGTON: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah speaks while meeting with executives of big US companies in Washington, DC. — KUNA

His Highness the Amir," noting that "everybody was very enthusiastic about the progress being made in Kuwait and the opportunities to do business there." David Seaton, Chairman and CEO of the Fluor Corporation noted that His Highness the Amir "is such a gracious leader and his vision for Kuwait is very clear and we are glad to be a participant in that." Furthermore, Dr Rajeev Guatam, President and CEO of Honeywell Performance Materials and Technologies (PMT) affirmed that it was a "very important" meeting and that His Highness the Amir "has made Kuwait a really great place to do business in."

"We have been in Kuwait for the past 50 years and it continues to be a great place to do business for us and is very important for us," he remarked. Group Chief Executive of BP, Bob Dudley said that during the meeting, the Kuwait 2035 vision was described "very well." He indicated that Kuwait is the second largest shareholder of BP which reflects the trust shown and described the relationship as "great." He added that the meeting was also an opportunity to hearing all about the other companies doing their activities in Kuwait, which was "an opportunity for me to learn a lot." Also, Keith Alexander, Founder and CEO IronNet Cybersecurity affirmed that "it is an incredible opportunity to work with Kuwait."

"Hearing His Highness the Amir talk about Kuwait and welcoming us to Kuwait was the highlight of the meeting from my perspective," he remarked. The US Chamber of Commerce said, addressing the meeting hosted by His Highness the Amir, that US companies have ambitious plans to enhance bilateral relationship with Kuwait, and the "ambitious plan" the Chamber has for "enhancing" the bilateral relationship.

Economic ties

Minister Hajraf meanwhile stressed the importance of the meeting during which the heads of major American companies working in Kuwait met with His Highness the Amir. Hajraf said that Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion

Authority and Kuwait Investment Authority have invited 16 major US companies working in various fields, adding that His Highness the Amir's speech, during the meeting, stressed Kuwait's keenness on developing ties with these companies. He pointed out that the most prominent legislative developments and economic laws issued in Kuwait were explained during the meeting. Hajraf praised Kuwait Direct Promotion Authority for its efforts in organizing such a meetings, stressing the importance of this opportunity "to assure the American side that Kuwait always welcomes constructive investment and economic relations." He encouraged the Kuwaiti private sector to participate in these investments to achieve the desired transformation through the development projects.

In the meantime, Sheikh Dr Mishal Jaber Al-Ahmad praised the meeting that brought together His Highness the Amir with heads of US giant companies working in various sectors in Kuwait, noting that the meeting was aimed at briefing heads of the US firms about the latest economic developments in Kuwait. He added that the companies' directors reviewed during the meeting their expertise in trading in Kuwait and their deep-rooted ties with governmental bodies and private companies in the country. The meeting also conveyed to them the country's strategy in decreasing the reliance on oil sector by finding alternative sources for the national income, he added.

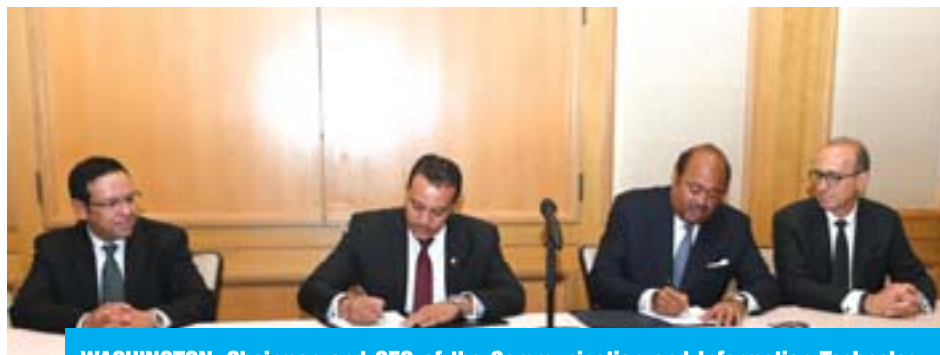
The strategy also works on attracting unique investments of added economic value as well as promoting creativity and innovation as well as offering new job opportunities to Kuwaiti nationals through such companies, he affirmed. "The meeting with His Highness the Amir was fruitful, and we will follow up with the developments and results of this meeting," he said. "His Highness the Amir invited the US companies' heads to visit Kuwait in the near future in order to take a closer look at the economic environment to cope with the latest regulations and laws issued by the government in Kuwait," he concluded. — KUNA

CITRA signs deals with Microsoft, Amazon

WASHINGTON: On the sidelines of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to Washington, Chairman and CEO of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Salem Muthib Al-Athainah and Corporate Vice President at Microsoft Fred Humphries signed a memorandum of understanding. The document aims to strengthen cooperation between the two sides in the area of information and communication technology, said Engineer Athainah said on Tuesday. "It falls in the framework of Kuwait's quest to diversify the sources of the national income, build information-based economy and leverage the use of ICT in government services," he pointed out. "Kuwait seeks to boost the e-government system, digital information, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, and encourage innovation in these areas," he said.

"The MoU focuses on backing up the smart government services, the smart city initiative and entrepreneurship in building ICT system and building the capacity of the national cadres in Kuwait," Athainah went on. He highlighted the importance of applications of artificial intelligence in the areas of energy and water and the improvement of government services as well as protecting the national information systems through cybersecurity. "CITRA will organize, jointly with Microsoft, workshops and surveys on how to share the world's best practices of ICT applications," Athainah noted, adding that the Authority would continue protecting the data of the government services and civil servants against hacking. He expressed joy for working with Microsoft at a time when the Kuwaiti government strives to make better use of ICT.

Fred Humphries said meanwhile that the signing of the document "means to much to



WASHINGTON: Chairman and CEO of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Salem Muthib Al-Athainah and Corporate Vice President at Microsoft Fred Humphries sign a memorandum of understanding. — KUNA photos

be able to build upon the partnership and relationship we have forged with the (Kuwait) government to focus on smart cities and artificial intelligence and be a part of the digital transformation that is already taking place in Kuwait."

"This is quiet exciting. It is another step and a great framework to work together to provide more digital technology and transformation. The relationship with Kuwait is excellent and there's so many exciting things when comes to the focus on technology that is taking place in Kuwait and we want to be part of it and continue to be part of it," Humphries stated. He added that with this framework, "we will be able to do more and better things."

Amazon Web Services

Meanwhile, Athainah inked a memorandum of understanding on cooperation with Teresa Carlson, Vice President, Worldwide Public Sector at Amazon Web Services (AWS). The MoU is in keeping with Kuwait vision 2035 for digital transformation of the country, Athainah explained. "The document will help promote the development of cloud service governance that would enhance the performance of the government bodies," he said. "It falls in the framework of Kuwait's quest to diversify the sources of the national income, build information-based economy and leverage the use of ICT in government services," he pointed out. Under the deal, CITRA and AWS will cooperate in the areas of building the capacity of the national cadres and promoting the cloud service gov-

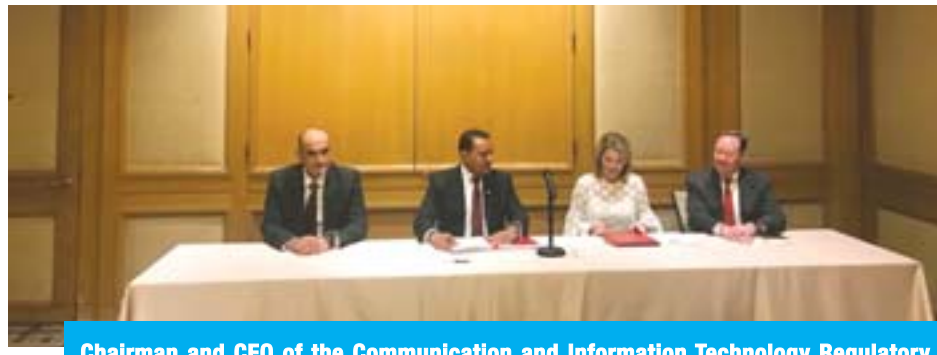
ernance skills, Athainah added.

In the meantime, Carlson said, "We are very excited about this MOU with Kuwait and we believe it really brings an amazing opportunity into Kuwait for digital innovation. We will be focusing on areas such as the Ministry of Education, the ministry of health and we will be working with the telecommunications industry and one of our big goals is to work with also the educational and job skills because we believe in the ability to up skill and re-skill the citizens and students is going to be really exciting."

"This is also going to be an amazing opportunity from a security and cyber security perspective to be able to work with the country on data classification to help them with what should their cloud first policy look like, to be able to really enable a model that helps the country be more secure — to really have a model that helps them move forward. We are very excited with what we are doing with Kuwait and we have been working across the Gulf and the Middle East for about four years now and we believe that this brings an opportunity to expand what we are doing in that region in general," Carlson added.

Cybersecurity cooperation

Moreover, Athainah also signed a letter of intent on cooperation in cybersecurity with Robert Strayer, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Cyber and International Communications and Information Policy. The document aims to meet the objectives of the Kuwait's national



Chairman and CEO of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Salem Muthib Al-Athainah and Teresa Carlson, Vice President, Worldwide Public Sector at Amazon Web Services sign a memorandum of understanding.



Chairman and CEO of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) Salem Muthib Al-Athainah and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Cyber and International Communications and Information Policy Robert Strayer shake hands after signing a letter of intent on cooperation in cybersecurity.

strategy for cybersecurity, Athainah said. "It will promote sharing the best practices in cybersecurity and build the capacity of national cadres in this regard," he said. "It covers all areas of vital information infrastructure, electronic defense systems, response to electronic emergencies and e-crimes, launching cybersecurity centers, joint exercises and visit exchanges," he disclosed. Athainah lauded the close cooperation between both countries in all areas.

US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman stressed the importance of the future cooperation in the cybersecurity field. He shed light on the first strategic dialogue held in 2016. "We said we were going to increase our cooperation on cybersecurity that is exactly what we have done today with the signing," he said in a similar statement. "This is a very practical cooperation that will make both our information systems more secure," Silverman added. — KUNA

Amir receives families of Kuwaiti diplomats in US

Ambassador in Washington holds banquet in Amir's honor



WASHINGTON: Kuwait's Ambassador in Washington Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to a banquet held in his honor. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Commander of Kuwait's National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meet with a Kuwaiti diplomat's family in the United States.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received, in the presence of Deputy Commander of Kuwait's National Guard Sheikh

Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, families of staff of the Kuwaiti embassy and members of the Kuwaiti official bureaus in the United States at his residence in

Washington Tuesday. Meanwhile, Kuwait's Ambassador in Washington Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah held a banquet in the US capital in honor of His

Highness the Amir and his accompanying delegation who are currently on an official visit to the United States. — KUNA



(From left) Deputy Commander of Kuwait's National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attend a banquet held in the Amir's honor.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Commander of Kuwait's National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meet with a Kuwaiti diplomat's family in the United States.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah poses with children during the reception.



Children present flowers to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Commander of Kuwait's National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meet with a Kuwaiti diplomat's family in the United States.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Deputy Commander of Kuwait's National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meet with a Kuwaiti diplomat's family in the United States.

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Local

Union appreciates efforts in canceling Philippines helpers' \$10,000 escrow

Lawyer sues education minister over faulty air conditioners

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Head of Kuwait Domestic Help Offices' Union Khalid Al-Dakhnan expressed appreciation for the foreign ministry's role in canceling a decision the Philippines made in June, and by which Kuwaiti recruitment offices were asked to place \$10,000 in escrow to allow them bring in helpers from the Philippines. The efforts exerted by the union and foreign ministry had an effective role in canceling the decision, he said, and hoped coordination will continue to open new sources for labor recruitment and reduce pressure on the Philippines.

On another subject, Dakhnan said that the union ful-

ly supports the administrative measures to develop work at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM). Speaking to the press following a meeting with PAM's Acting Deputy Director Abdullah Al-Mutoutah, he said that the meeting discussed issuing visas and submitting applications online in order to make it easier for those who want to bring in domestic helpers from abroad, adding that online transactions are faster, safer and more accurate.

Air conditioners

The Prosecutor General received a complaint against the Minister of Education and the ministry's

undersecretary over the broken down air conditioners in schools, which had suspended studying at a number of schools in Kuwait. "I submitted a complaint against the education ministry because of negligence in air conditioners' maintenance in some schools," lawyer Mohammad Al-Humaidi said yesterday. "This is a violation of the child's law, and also constitutes waste of public funds."

KD 11 million

The ministries of housing and services lost 179 cases worth KD 11 million in past 10 years, of which Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) lost over KD 8 mil-

lion while the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) was sentenced to pay KD 2 million, Minister of Housing and Minister of Services Affairs Jenan Bushehri said.

The number of cases in courts involving the services affairs ministry (formerly known as the ministry of communications) is 4,233, the minister said, adding cases involving the PAHW are 960, the Kuwait Credit Bank are 3,582, KPA are 627 and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation are 190 cases. All departments won a total of 1,018 cases during the above mentioned period, the minister said.

Crimes

Interior, banks coordinate to boost security

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry made an agreement with local banks to install and link their cameras in their main premises with the ministry. This step, which is a first stage to be followed by other steps, comes to expand the surveillance over all bank branches, informed sources said. "The current period is witnessing coordination between the central operations department and banks' representatives regarding the work mechanism and how to install cameras in agreed upon areas at each stage," the sources said, adding that "cameras' installation, surveillance systems and their operations is the responsibility of banks." A central control room will be set up, through which the interior ministry can monitor the movement inside main bank branches, interfere whenever necessary and review surveillance tapes, the sources said. The room will allow the Interior Ministry to determine the suitable reaction regarding any case through surveillance, they added.

Woman assaulted

A disabled woman told police that a harasser attacked her while she was walking with her friend in Eghailah. In her statement to police, the Kuwaiti woman said that a man started harassing her friend, so she tried to stop him, but he would not stop and went even further with his action. A dispute escalated, then he assaulted her physically and verbally while claiming to be a detective, according to her statements. The victim went to hospital after suffering a seizure and bruises, then took a medical report to Riqqa police station and lodged a complaint, as detectives began investigating.

KD 5,000 missing

An adolescent forgot KD 5,000 in cash on top of water cooler in Sabah Al-Salem, then when he returned to get the money, he did not find it, according to his statement. The boy's uncle went to Sabah Al-Salem police and explained that he went to his brother's house after midnight, and gave his 14-year-old nephew KD 5,000 to give to his father, then 15 minutes later, his brother told him the money went missing, so he went back to his brother's house and asked his nephew about what happened. The boy said that he was talking over the phone and forgot the money on top of the cooler, then when the call ended, he went into the house and forgot the money, only to remember it minutes later. Then when he went back to collect the money, it was not there, he said, adding that he did not see anyone around.

Driver beaten

A driver beat another following a traffic accident in Riqqa. When both drivers got out of their cars to check the damage following the accident, the Egyptian man was assaulted physically and verbally by the other driver who left the scene afterwards, the victim told local police. Police used the license plate number of the attacker's car, provided to them by the victim, to identify and summon him for questioning.

Compressor stolen

A thief removed the central air conditioning compressor from the building where he lives, leaving his family and neighbors suffering from the heat. Residents were surprised when the air conditioning system stopped working in several apartments, so maintenance men were called in and they discovered that the compressor was missing. A resident in a neighboring building said that he saw the suspect leaving the building. A complaint was made, and investigations later led to the suspect who was later arrested.

Unlicensed firearm

A European man of Arab origins was sent to criminal investigations department over possession of an unlicensed firearm upon his arrival at Abdali border outlet.

—Translated by Kuwait Times
from Al-Rai and Al-Anba

Fire department gets significant govt support

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) is receiving substantial attention and support from the government, and this backing will continue to facilitate the firemen tasks, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said yesterday. The KFSD achievements are monitored through the archiving of all documents, Saleh said in a speech during the opening of the new prevention sector building for the governorates of Hawalli and Al-Asimah (the capital). The new building will provide facilities for citizens, as it is the first government building licensed electronically, to license all government buildings and to ensure the safety of all buildings to comply with the requirements of KFSD, he added.

KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mekrad called on all government and private entities, both in new or future projects, to have fire licenses renewed every two years to ensure that the buildings are subject to safety requirements. He affirmed keenness to facilitate procedures for issuing fire licenses electronically. The KFSD has archived all transactions electronically in addition to linking it with state institutions online, Mekrad said. —KUNA



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh listens to a presentation during the opening of the new prevention sector building.

Heart implantation program to start soon in Kuwait

ANKARA: Director of Kuwait's Hamed Al-Essa Organ Transplant Center Dr Mustafa Al-Mosawi announced yesterday that heart implants in Kuwait will start soon. Dr Mosawi said that Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah and the Ministry Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha issued directives to start the program as soon as possible.

On sidelines of his participation in the 16th Congress of Middle East Society for Organ Transplantation (MESOT 2018) in Ankara, Dr Mosawi, who is also Chairman of Kuwait Transplant Society, noted that a meeting discussing heart failure cases was held several months ago, where a special program of heart implantation was approved. The program is due to start before the end of 2018. He stated that Hamed Al-Essa Center will be in charge of affording organs from dead persons, while a surgical team consisting of doctors, surgeons and cardiologists will be formed to prepare patients, conduct operations and follow-up with the cases in the long term.

Dr Mosawi noted it is now hard to get organs from most of world countries especially the United States that used to receive Kuwaiti patients of Hepatic and heart failure diseases after imposing new laws there. "Waiting period to get new organs could last for

Heavy oil project 86% complete: KOC

KUWAIT: Heavy oil production project in South Ritqa oil-field is 86 percent complete, announced Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) yesterday. Some 930 wells are completed and equipped to begin operation, said KOC Deputy CEO Emad



KUWAIT: The new prevention sector building for the Hawalli and Al-Asimah governorates. —KUNA photos



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh and KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khaled Al-Mekrad inaugurate the building.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh tours the building.



Director of Kuwait's Hamed Al-Essa Organ Transplant Center Dr Mustafa Al-Mosawi.

years, it's about time for countries to adopt the provision of organs from deaths to achieve self-sufficiency in this sector," Mosawi stated. In a lecture he delivered at the conference, Dr Mosawi explained how Middle Eastern countries could be self-sufficient in providing organs, and the ways that must be followed to get them instead of requesting organs from other countries such as Europe and the United States.

In this regard, he referred to cooperation between

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in heart and lungs implantation operations in the kingdom, hoping this cooperation will expand to other GCC countries. A liver implantation program started last January, where four successful operations to implant liver to Kuwaiti patients were done, after eradication of organs from dead people in Kuwait. Despite starting such programs very late in Kuwait, Dr Mosawi considered them as a big achievement for the country. —KUNA

Sultan, adding that the Company started exporting premium light oil for the first time in the country's history last July. With an overall production capacity of 160,000 barrels of light oil per day; 120,000 barrels are designated for export purposes, Sultan told a press conference. On offshore drilling, he said the Company is currently in the final stages of setting the contracts as part of its exploration operations in order to boost the Company's future production capacity.

Regarding safety and health guidelines, Sultan noted that KOC is keen on lending this domain its utmost attention so as to prevent and/or limit harm to human resources and damage to facilities. In this vein, he highlighted the Company's efforts

in reducing gas emissions on an operational level at all its facilities, as well as lowering the rate of occupational hazards to 0.016 for every 200,000 work hours at the end of the fiscal year 2017-2018.

On Kuwaitization, Sultan said out of 840 employed in the fiscal year 2017-2018; 633 were Kuwaitis. The overall workforce in KOC stands at 10,984 workers, with Kuwaitis taking up 88 percent, he noted. As for job contracts, he said Kuwaitis signed were 3,156, or 26 percent of all contracts. Headquartered in Ahmadi, Kuwait, KOC is a subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation: a Government-owned holding company. —KUNA

Local

Crown Prince receives Audit Bureau chief, INTOSAI meeting participants

Prime Minister receives senior education officials



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting President of the State Audit Bureau Adel Abdul Aziz Al-Saraawi and participants in the INTOSAI meeting. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Acting President of the State Audit Bureau Adel Abdul Aziz Al-Saraawi accompanied by participants in the meeting of the Capacity Building Committee (CBC) and the Steering Committee on INTOSAI Cooperation with the Donor Group (IDSC) currently being held from the 3rd to 7th of September. His Highness praised the efforts exerted by the supervisory bodies and the progress achieved in the framework of maintaining public funds.

His Highness stressed the importance of these meetings and coordination and exchange of knowledge and experience in order to raise the efficiency of the supervisory, financial, administrative and professional performance. His Highness wished the meeting success hoping it would come up with constructive recommendations in order to promote transparency, economic reform and overall development. The meeting was attended by Head of Protocol at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received Saraawi and the delegation of participants in the INTOSAI meetings yesterday. Undersecretary at His Highness the Prime Minister's Diwan Sheikhha Etamad Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the meeting.

Studies' suspension

Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister received Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Mohammad Al-Azmi and Education Ministry



Premier urges education officials to act fast

Undersecretary as well as undersecretaries' assistants. During the meeting, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak was briefed about studies' suspension at some schools. His Highness listened to explanations about the problem, which occurred at beginning of the academic year. He stressed that ministry officials must act fast, solve any shortcomings faced by schools as soon as possible and hold accountable officials accused of negligence. His Highness also stressed, during the meeting, which was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Interior Minister Anas Khalid Al-Saleh, on the importance of accommodating the students. He has



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Mohammad Al-Azmi and Education Ministry undersecretaries.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Acting President of the State Audit Bureau Adel Abdul Aziz Al-Saraawi and participants in the INTOSAI meeting.

also emphasized that he will not accept any procrastination with respect to maintaining the schools and providing students with books and other necessities.

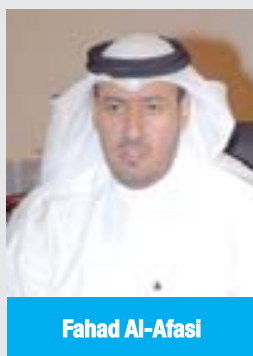
Earlier yesterday, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak at Bayan Palace. In the meantime, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak

received Dr Hussain Al-Hammadi who dedicated to His Highness a copy of his PhD dissertation. Dr Hammadi's thesis is entitled "Impact of Total Quality on Improving Effectiveness of Kuwaiti Administrative Institution .." (A Comparative Study between the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Zakat House of Kuwait). — KUNA

Kuwait to launch committee on int'l humanitarian law

KUWAIT: Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fahad Al-Afasi issued a ministerial order to establish a permanent national committee for international humanitarian law. The committee, chaired by Afasi, will specialize in studying national legislations on the humanitarian law in accordance with Kuwait's commitment to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the Ministry of Justice said in a press release yesterday.

The committee is also tasked with providing con-



Fahad Al-Afasi

sultation and advice to different bodies related to executing the law in the country, the ministry added. Moreover, it will organize training courses and seminars regarding the international humanitarian law to bring awareness to the matter.

The statement noted that the committee will take part in regional and international conferences and events related to its tasks. It will also work on cooperating with other international bodies in the field. The committee will include representatives from different state bodies including ministries, Kuwait Faculty of Law and Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). — KUNA

Gulf Bank launches Direct Sales Academy

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank launches its Direct Sales Academy, a program tailored for new Kuwaiti recruits in the Direct Sales function. The Academy is a two-year program consisting of different modules to equip recruits with on-the-job skills to excel in their careers as well as attract Kuwaitis into this specialized field.

In the opening session, Salma Al-Hajjaj, General

Manager Human Resources at Gulf Bank addressed the new Direct Sales Kuwaiti recruits saying, "This is your opportunity to leverage this program to develop your knowledge and technical skills and provide a higher contribution to the banking sector."

Gulf Bank is keen to increase its overall Kuwaitization capacity by opening new avenues for Kuwaiti recruits at all levels and within all functions at the bank. The organization is committed to creating an environment through which it further fosters Kuwaiti talent and encourages them to unlock their potential. The initiative enables participants to learn about the fundamental challenges of the local and regional banking industry from a range of industry experts. Each recruit participates in a tailor-made coaching and development program to give them the tools to build and grow in their profession.



KUWAIT: The new recruits in Gulf Bank's Direct Sales Academy.



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Japan evacuates major airport after typhoon wreaks havoc

Two Russians charged for attempted murder of Skripals

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SURMAN: Syrian children stand outside a tent next to a metal crib at a camp for displaced civilians fleeing from advancing Syrian government forces, close to a Turkish military observation point near the village of Surman in the rebel-held northwestern Idlib province. — AFP

Calls mount to avert ‘massacre’ in Idlib

Last probably major battle of the Syrian territorial conflict

BEIRUT: International calls mounted yesterday to avoid a “massacre” by regime forces in Syria’s last rebel-held province of Idlib, two days before a summit between key powers backing the government and opposition. Troops have been massing on the edges of the northwestern province on the border with Turkey for weeks, raising fears of a humanitarian disaster on a scale not yet seen in Syria’s seven-year conflict.

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on yesterday was the latest to warn Damascus against an all-out offensive against a region the United Nations says is home to nearly three million people. “God forbid, a serious massacre could take place if there is a rain of missiles there,” said Erdogan, whose country has supported Syrian rebels.

He spoke two days before he is set to meet the presidents of regime backers Iran and Russia in Tehran to discuss the future of the province. Global concern has risen in recent days over a threatened regime assault to oust rebels and jihadists from Idlib province and surrounding areas, the last major chunk of Syria still in opposition hands. On Tuesday, the UN peace envoy for Syria urged Erdogan and Russia’s President Vladimir Putin to speak on the phone before Friday’s summit. Staffan de Mistura called for efforts “to avoid that the last probably major battle of the Syrian territorial conflict... ends in a bloodbath”.

‘Human tragedy’

More than half of Idlib is controlled by jihadists from Syria’s former Al-Qaeda affiliate, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), while much of the rest is held by rebels backed by Turkey. The regime holds a small southeastern sliver. The United Nations and aid groups have warned a military campaign could spark one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes in a war that has already killed more than 350,000 people and displaced millions.

Some 2.9 million people live in Idlib and surrounding areas, among them one million children. Many are rebels and civilians who were bussed out of their hometowns in other parts of the country that have come back under regime control. Late Monday, US President Donald Trump also warned against a full scale assault on Idlib, which he said could trigger a “human tragedy”. Turkey, Russia and Iran last year designated Idlib a so-called “de-escalation zone”, but that deal did not cover former Al-Qaeda affiliate HTS.

On Tuesday, Russian warplanes resumed air strikes on Idlib after a 22-day pause. Air raids across the province killed at least 13 civilians, including six children, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Moscow said four of its jets “inflicted strikes by high-precision weapons” on targets belonging to HTS. Yesterday, regime artillery and rocket fire targeted several areas of the province including the HTS-held town of Jisr Al-Shughur, the Britain-based war monitor said. President Bashar al-Assad’s regime has retaken large swathes of the country from rebels and jihadists since Russia intervened militarily on its side in 2015.

‘Pocket of terrorism’

Russian planes are based at the Hmeimim airbase in Latakia province, a coastal regime stronghold adjacent to Idlib. Moscow has accused armed groups in Idlib of sending weaponised drones to attack Hmeimim. Yesterday, Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Idlib was the “subject of increased concern and worry” and was the focus of a flurry of diplomacy.

Just a day earlier, Peskov had slammed Idlib as a “pocket of terrorism”, and said “Syrian armed forces are getting ready to solve this problem”. Friday’s summit in Tehran between key power brokers Erdogan, Putin and Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani is expected to determine the scope and timing of any assault on Idlib.

A UN Security Council meeting is also set to be held the same day to discuss Idlib, US ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley has said. She warned on Tuesday against the use of any chemical weapons in Idlib, after the White House pledged to “respond swiftly and appropriately” to any such attack. Since the start of the conflict in 2011, Assad’s regime has repeatedly been accused of using chemical weapons, including in its battle this year to retake the former rebel bastion of Eastern Ghouta near Damascus. Rescue workers accused regime forces of using “poisonous chlorine gas” in the town of Douma in April that killed more than 40 people. In response, the United States, France and Britain unleashed missiles on three regime chemical weapons facilities.

India’s top court expected to rule on LGBT rights

NEW DELHI: India’s Supreme Court is likely to deliver today an eagerly awaited judgment on colonial-era legislation criminalizing homosexuality, lawyers said. Section 377 of the Indian penal code, a relic from 1860s British legislation, bans gay acts as “carnal intercourse against the order of nature” punishable by jail terms of up to life.

The top court began hearing petitions against the ban in July, beginning an emotional debate in the world’s largest democracy over the right to freedom and privacy. Tripti Tandon, a lawyer for one of the petitioners in the case, confirmed to AFP the judgement was listed for today. Her client Aris Jafer was arrested and sent to prison for 50 days in 2001. “We have high hopes from the Supreme Court,” said Rituparna Borah, a co-director of Nazaria, which describes itself as a queer feminist advocacy group.

“This law should not have been there in the first place. This should have gone long back. We are asking for our basic human rights, nothing more,” she told AFP. Utsav Maheshwari, a 20-year-old gay college student, said he was “super excited” and hoping the “court will legitimize the community by acknowledging their existence”.

The Delhi High Court effectively decriminalized gay sex in 2009, but the Supreme Court reinstated legal sanctions in 2014 after a successful appeal by religious groups. Gay sex has long been taboo in conservative India



CHENNAI: In this file photo taken on June 24, 2018 an Indian supporter of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community takes part in a pride parade. — AFP

— particularly in rural areas where nearly 70 percent of people live — and homophobia is widespread. Some still regard homosexuality as a mental illness.

According to official data, 2,187 cases under Section 377 were registered in 2016 under the category of “unnatural offences”. Seven people were convicted and 16 acquitted. Section 377 “is a law that propagates homophobia”, said Keshav Suri, one of the petitioners, who has used his family’s luxury hotel chain to promote gay rights by improving conditions for staff. “In rural areas it is a harassment tool, used by cops, used by authorities for extortion for glorifying rape

and molestation,” said Suri. A transgender man was killed in Hyderabad in June by a mob who accused him of being a child kidnapper.

A lesbian couple committed suicide in Gujarat the same month, leaving a note stating: “We are leaving this world to live with each other. The world did not allow us to stay together.” About a third of lesbian women have reported physical abuse including rape by their own relatives, according to a recent survey. “Because of this law, there are a lot of people in the LGBT community outside of India who are afraid to travel to India because of this sense of paranoia that they might get arrested,” said Suri. —AFP

Yemen rebels ‘stranded’ on eve of Geneva talks

SANAA: Yemen’s Houthi rebels said yesterday they were stranded in the capital Sanaa on the eve of United Nations-sponsored peace talks in Geneva with their government rivals. The Houthis said the UN had been unable to “secure authorization” from a Saudi-led coalition backing the government for a plane to transport the rebel delegation, along with wounded insurgents, out of the country, according to the Houthis’ Al-Masirah TV.

While the Houthis control Sanaa and much of northern Yemen, the coalition controls the country’s airspace. Both the government and the rebels, who are linked to Saudi Arabia’s arch-nemesis Iran, have said they expect no breakthrough at the Geneva talks starting today. The meetings, overseen by United Nations envoy Martin Griffiths, are aimed at charting a path towards reviving formal UN-backed negotiations. But

government and rebel representatives will not hold face-to-face meetings in Geneva, according to Yemen’s foreign minister Khaled Al-Yamani.

‘Broken promises’

The UN Security Council yesterday urged both sides in Geneva to “take a first step towards ending a conflict that has brought severe pain and humanitarian suffering to the Yemeni people”. The Houthis have hinted that their delegation demanded the evacuation of wounded rebels to Oman for medical treatment as a condition for attending the talks, and accused the UN of stalling.

Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam tweeted on Tuesday that the UN had “made promises on facilitating the transport of the wounded... abroad”—pledges the world body had thus far failed to keep. In 2014, the Houthis seized Sanaa, driving the government of Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi into exile and marking a major turning point in Yemen’s long-running conflict. The following year, Saudi Arabia and its allies formed a powerful regional military coalition to back Hadi’s government in its fight against the Houthis. The conflict has since left nearly 10,000 people dead and pushed the Arab world’s most impoverished country to the brink of famine. — AFP

International

New influx of Afghans seeks refuge in Turkey

Prospects have become even more precarious

ANKARA: Turkey already hosts the world's largest refugee population, including three million Syrians, but over the last year there has been an influx of Afghans seeking a safe haven-and not just from Afghanistan itself, but from Iran. For decades Iran, to Turkey's east, has been home to some three million Afghans who have fled the endless war pitting the Taliban and other rebels against the western-backed government in Kabul.

Many live in miserable conditions and their prospects have become even more precarious due to the Islamic Republic's increasingly troubled economy. Turkey is home to 145,000 Afghans, according to Amnesty International figures in April, but the influx has really taken off this year. Up to mid-August, 61,819 Afghan migrants had arrived in Turkey in 2018 compared to 45,259 in 2017, according to Turkish interior ministry figures.

Javad Saadatnejad was a refugee in Iran for 34 years before arriving in Turkey last month. "Iran didn't do anything for me," he said. Those who seek asylum in Turkey are called "conditional refugees." Izza Leghtas, senior advocate for Europe at Refugees International, said this gives "the idea that really they're only in Turkey temporarily until they go and resettle" elsewhere. But resettlement figures to the US have gone down "drastically" in the last 18 months, Leghtas said. In 2017, US President Donald Trump cut the number of refugees that Washington would accept to 45,000 from 110,000 in the last year under Barack Obama.

'Uncomfortable conditions'

Iran didn't do anything for me

The new arrivals find they have to make the best of limited or even no facilities. Mohammad Hussein, from northern Kunduz province, said his six children aged between two and 15 slept in an Ankara park for a week in "uncomfortable" circumstances in front of the Association for Solidarity with Asylum-Seekers and Migrants (ASAM) building.

ASAM works together with the UN and the Turkish Provincial Directorate of Migration Management to register refugees. Hussein, 35, said he fled the Taliban because he had helped NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) find the group's weapons. Fearing reprisals since "the Taliban knew" about his work, Hussein fled, walking across the Turkish border with his wife and children aged two, four, six, nine, 13 and 15. But Hussein said he could not stay in Turkey where he is "in danger", saying he wanted to go somewhere like Switzerland or Canada.

'Economic situation'

Afghanistan ranked second globally as the largest source of refugees in 2017, with 2.6 million compared to 6.3 million Syrians concentrated in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. According to UN refugee agency the UNHCR, three million Afghans are in Iran but only a third of them are officially registered as refugees.

Levent Ulusoy, deputy general coordinator at ASAM, said Afghans were coming from Iran "because of the economic situation (there), the difficulties persisting in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, they leave to find work or to flee the war". The Iranian economy has been hit hard by



ANKARA: In this file photo taken on August 27, 2018 Afghan refugees who arrived ten days ago, cook at a makeshift camp in a park at Cankaya. — AFP

renewed US sanctions following President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

'No support for Afghans'

For Afghans who stay in Turkey, Metin Corabatir, president of the Ankara-based Research Centre on Asylum and Migration (IGAM), described the "difficult process" of getting work permits, which often leads many to work

illegally. If a Syrian or Afghan seeks to work legally in Turkey, the company who wishes to hire them must apply for the permit. The magnitude of the influx first became apparent when nearly 30,000 Afghans arrived in Turkey in the first few months of 2018. Turkish authorities reacted by deporting thousands back to Afghanistan, in coordination with the Afghan government. Amnesty in April said 7,100 had been deported and the figure is believed to be higher today. — AFP

Iraqi resort an emblem of war and state decay

HABBANIYAH: In the 1980s, Iraq's Lake Habbaniyah was a tourist hotspot, popular with wealthy newlyweds and so luxurious it was even a haunt of dictator Saddam Hussein and his fearsome entourage. Top-notch restaurants, flower gardens and pristine lake-side bungalows saw Habbaniyah Tourism City pull in clients from across the Middle East and beyond. But like much of Iraq, this oasis-located between Fallujah and Ramadi-has fallen into disrepair since the US-led military coalition toppled Saddam 15 years ago.

"The tourist complex is terribly degraded," admits 60-year-old Karim Turki, who has spent nearly half his life running communications for the state-run complex. Standing in front of a bungalow festooned with torn electric wires, he laments a "paradise lost". Piles of garbage, drained swimming pools and a merry-go-round featuring limbless horses create the impression of a ghost town.

Aborted renaissance

Under the American occupation, armed extremist groups in 2006 and 2007 installed operations rooms in the sprawling complex's deserted hotel and bungalows. Iraq's police retook control in 2008 and the resort staged a brief revival-amateur jet skiers returned to the still-sparkling lake and families enjoyed picnics on the shore.

In a bid to attract a rush of new foreign visitors, a Turkish firm was contracted to revive the facilities around the vast artificial lake, which was created in 1956. But it was



HABBANIYAH: In this file photo taken on June 17, 2012, Iraqis swim and ride jetskis in Lake Habbaniyah, in Anbar province, about 85 kilometers west of the capital Baghdad. — AFP

all in vain. After a few months, the firm threw in the towel. The zone became a new theatre of sectarian violence, culminating in the Islamic State group taking control. During the Iraqi army's long offensive to dislodge IS, the state requisitioned the resort's 500 bungalows and 265-room hotel to accommodate some of those displaced by the latest round of conflict.

'The good old times'

While the government declared victory over the jihadists in December and Iraqi tourism has begun to revive, the days of access roads to Habbaniyah being clogged with traffic jams are long gone. But there has been a trickle of visitors-some keen to cool off briefly in the summer heat, others seeking a longer trip down memory lane. "People come to Habbaniyah today to remember the good old times," Turki says.

Saad Alani honeymooned on the lake in the early 1990s, during its golden age. He ven-

tured back last year-a mistake, he says. "The place has become a dump. There is no water or electricity, and no service," he tells AFP. And Alani is not the only one to be disappointed. "This is the last time I come," says Hussein Jabbar, a civil servant from Baghdad, visiting with a dozen friends.

"Before, it was great-but everything has deteriorated," he adds, pointing to the lifeless lake banks where amateur sailors and flunkies once roamed. A few small unpretentious canteens and lakeside stalls endure, but returnees are dismayed to find that the famed restaurants are derelict and the once immaculate gardens overgrown. For Alani, the way to revive tourism in Habbaniyah is simple, given that Iraq is the 12th most corrupt country in the world, according to NGO Transparency International. "We must engage with specialist private tourism companies and retire Lake Habbaniyah from state hands," he says. Iraq's ministries of tourism and culture did not respond to AFP's requests for comment. — AFP

Nauru slams China envoy at Pacific summit

YAREN: Nauru's president has labeled China's top diplomat at the Pacific Islands Forum "insolent" and accused him of trying to use Beijing's might to bully the tiny island nation. President Baron Waqa's outburst followed a tense exchange at the summit he is hosting on Tuesday when China's Du Qiwen attempted to address a meeting about climate change but Waqa refused to let him speak.

Du and the Chinese delegation then stormed out, with Du reportedly striding around the room to emphasize his displeasure before leaving. Waqa, whose country backs Taiwan over arch-rival China in the battle for diplomatic recognition, had already angered Beijing before the summit began in a row over visas. Nauru refused to stamp entry visas into Chinese diplomatic passports, instead saying it would only process their personal passports.

While seemingly a minor detail, it provoked threats of a boycott from

other PIF members, many of whom receive development aid and concessional loans from Beijing. Waqa, whose country has a population of just 11,000 and covers an area of 21 square kilometers was unfazed about finding himself at loggerheads with the world powerhouse.

He accused Du of trying to throw his weight around and not respecting the fact that national leaders at the meeting outranked him and deserved to be heard first. "He insisted and was very insolent, and created a big fuss, and held up the meeting of leaders for a good number of minutes, when he was only an official," Waqa told a press conference late Tuesday. "Maybe because he was from a big country he wanted to bully us."

The exchange highlighted sensitivities over Beijing's rising influence in the Pacific, where China provided an estimated US\$1.78 billion in aid to island nations between 2006-16. Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Nauru disregarded the normal conduct of international conferences and "obstructed" Chinese representatives from speaking. "Nauru, as the host country of the forum, violated international conventions and forum regulations and staged a bad farce," Hua told a regular press briefing in Beijing. — AFP

Venezuela urged to accept migration crisis

QUITO: A group of Latin American countries signed a resolution on Tuesday urging Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro to accept humanitarian aid to "alleviate" the country's migration crisis. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled an economic collapse in Venezuela that has resulted in food and medicine shortages as well as failing public services.

Following two days of meetings hosted by Ecuador, the signatories called for "the creation of a humanitarian assistance mechanism that will allow the critical situation to be alleviated" and would target "the source" of "affected citizens." The group also called on Venezuela to "accept the cooperation of governments in the region and international organizations" to care for the communities of their nations living there.

Maduro's right-hand man, Diosdado Cabello hit back, calling the group "disgusting" and "shameful" and accused it of "asking for money." Of the 13 countries meeting in Quito, only Venezuela's left-wing ally Bolivia refused to sign the document, while the Dominican Republic was unable to do so immediately for administrative reasons. The group called on Maduro to guarantee migrants wish-

ing to leave access to travel documents, something that has become increasingly difficult in a country suffering paper shortages.

"I think we're sending an important message to the millions of Venezuelans travelling around our region," said Chile's director of consular affairs and immigration, Raul Sanhueza. "We're telling them that we're going to accept their expired documents for migratory purposes."

According to the United Nations, some 1.6 million people have left Venezuela since 2015, although Maduro claimed on Monday that just 600,000 have emigrated over the last two years. The country is suffering a fourth year of recession, while the International Monetary Fund says inflation will reach one million percent this year. Migrants have faced arduous journeys, often on foot, to try to find shelter in nearby countries.

'Magical realism'

"Those who have left didn't go to save Venezuela, they went for a matter of individualism," said Cabello during a session of the leftist regime-dominated assembly, which he heads. "They sold homes given to them by the Bolivarian revolution, (also) cars and computers." Cabello described images of Venezuelans fleeing on foot as a "Hollywood-style campaign" and "magical realism" like a book by the late and renown Colombian author Gabriel Garcia Marquez. — AFP

Black woman ousts established Democrat

NEW YORK: An African American woman on Tuesday pulled off an upset victory in a Democratic primary contest against a 10-term entrenched male incumbent in Boston, the latest sign that insurgent US candidates from the left are gaining ground. Ayanna Pressley, 44, won the Democratic nomination for the US House of Representatives in Massachusetts's seventh district, one of the most left-leaning in America and which includes Harvard University.

"It seems like change is on the way," she told her cheering supporters. "Ours was truly a people-power, grass-roots campaign." Pressley has long been identified as a rising star in the Democratic Party. In 2009, she was the first woman of color ever elected to the Boston City Council. She also worked for former senator John Kerry.

Michael Capuano, who has represented the district for 20 years, conceded defeat in a primary that few predicted he would lose, armed with an impressive party machinery and top-flight support. "This is life and this is OK. America's going to be OK. Ayanna Pressley is going to be a good congresswoman, and I will tell you that Massachusetts



BOSTON: Ayanna Pressley, Boston City Councilwoman and House Democratic candidate, gives a victory speech at her primary night gathering after her opponent Mike Capuano conceded. — AFP

will be well served," the 66-year-old said.

Winning Tuesday's primary in the safe Democratic seat puts Pressley on course to become the first African American in Massachusetts to be elected to the US House of Representatives. Teeming opposition on the left to US President Donald Trump has fueled primary wins for insurgent, women and minority candidates in Democratic primaries ahead of November's crucial mid-

term elections.

Some similarities have been drawn between Pressley and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the political novice who defeated Democratic Party grandee Joe Crowley in a New York primary in June. But as Capuano and Pressley are both progressives, she campaigned for change and argued that her life experience — she is a survivor of sexual assault — would make her the better representative. —AFP

International

Two Russians charged for attempted murder of Skripals, blames Moscow

Russia says the names mean nothing to Moscow

LONDON: Britain charged two Russians yesterday with the attempted murder of a former Russian spy and his daughter, describing the suspects as military intelligence officers almost certainly acting on behalf of the Russian state. British police revealed images of the two men they said had flown to Britain for a weekend in March to kill former spy Sergei Skripal with Novichok, a military-grade nerve agent.

Skripal's daughter Yulia and a police officer who attended the scene also fell ill in the case, which has caused the biggest East-West diplomatic expulsions since the Cold War. A woman later died from Novichok poisoning after her partner brought home a contaminated bottle of counterfeit perfume. Prime Minister Theresa May lay the blame clearly with the Russian state, describing the suspects as officers in Russia's GRU military intelligence.

"The GRU is a highly disciplined organization with a well-established chain of command, so this was not a rogue operation. It was almost certainly also approved outside the GRU at a senior level of the Russian state," May told parliament. Skripal, a former GRU officer who betrayed dozens of agents to Britain's MI6 foreign spy service, was found unconscious with Yulia on a public bench in the English city of Salisbury on March 4.

British authorities identified the suspects as Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov. Police released CCTV images of them, describing a three-day mission that took them from Moscow to London to Salisbury, where they sprayed poison on Skripal's door before flying straight back to Moscow hours later.

Russia's foreign ministry said the names given by Britain did not mean anything to Moscow, which has repeatedly denied any involvement in the attack. Britain and dozens of other countries have kicked out scores of Russian diplomats over the incident, and Moscow has responded tit-for-tat with an identical number of expulsions. The affair has worsened Russian relations with the West, which were already under strain over Ukraine, Syria and other issues.

A clear assassination attempt

Remarkably sophisticated attack

The "remarkably sophisticated attack" appeared to be a clear assassination attempt, said Neil Basu, head of UK Counter Terrorism policing. The two men arrived in Britain from Moscow on March 2 at London's Gatwick airport on an Aeroflot flight, and left on March 4. They spent two nights in a London hotel, making two day trips by train to Salisbury, the first for reconnaissance, the second to kill Skripal.

Basu said they were around 40 years old. They travelled under genuine Russian passports although their names are believed to be aliases. It was not their first trip to Britain. "We would like to hear from anyone who knows them," Basu said. Basu said the two men had been filmed by CCTV cameras near Skripal's house, where Novichok, a nerve agent developed by the Soviet military in the 1970s and 1980s, was sprayed on the front door. Traces of Novichok contamination were found in the London hotel room where the two men had stayed.

The Russians are charged with conspiracy to murder Sergei Skripal and the attempted murder of Skripal, his daughter and police officer Nick Bailey who fell ill while



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament's Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May as she makes a statement to MPs in the House of Commons in London in September, 2018, on the progress of the police investigation into the March 4 nerve agent attack in Salisbury, on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia. — AFP

attending to the Skripals. They are also charged with use and possession of Novichok, contrary to the Chemical Weapons Act. A European arrest warrant has been issued for the two Russians, British prosecutors said, but Britain will not ask Moscow to send them to face trial, because Russia's constitution does not allow its citizens to be

extradited. Basu said the Skripals were making a good recovery. A woman from a town near Salisbury, Dawn Sturgess, died in July and her partner Charlie Rowley fell ill after Rowley brought home a counterfeit bottle of Nina Ricci perfume he found in a charity collection box. Police say it contained Novichok. — Reuters

Jimmie Akesson: The architect of the rising far-right in Sweden

OREBRO: Jimmie Akesson, the head of the far-right Sweden Democrats, is a charismatic speaker who has succeeded in attracting mainstream voters with his efforts to cleanse the party of its neo-Nazi roots. With his Sweden Democrats tipped to get around 20 percent of the vote in the September 9 election, a record high for the party, Akesson has become a key adversary of Prime Minister Stefan Lofven.

The anti-immigration populist has seen his political star rise after the arrival of more than 160,000 asylum seekers in 2015. Despite his relative youth, the 39-year-old will be standing in his fourth legislative elections in 12 years at the helm of SD, which has steadily climbed in popularity to become one of Sweden's biggest parties. When Akesson was elected party leader in 2005, few observers anticipated he would be able to transform the small party's fortunes, sweeping away the traces of SD's origins in the fascist movement "Bevara Sverige Svenskt" ("Keep Sweden Swedish") and distancing it from violent racist groups active in the 1990s.

Formed in 1988, SD entered parliament for the first time in 2010, garnering 5.7 percent of votes. "He started with very little... people didn't know what the (Sweden Democrats) were," party supporter Christer Bostrom, who used to vote for the left wing, told AFP at one of Akesson's election rallies in the central town of Orebro.

By the time the September 2014 election rolled around, the Sweden Democrats had soared to become the third largest party, grabbing 13 percent of votes. But the endless days of campaigning had taken their toll on Akesson. He suffered a burnout and went on sick leave for six months.

'Always been a nationalist'

Born in 1979 in the southern town of Solvesborg, Akesson's mother was a care provider and his father a businessman. He studied political science, law and philosophy at Lund University, dropping out before earning a degree. His political activism began in his teens when he joined the youth wing of the conservative Moderates. But he was rapidly disillusioned by their economic liberalism and support for Swedish EU membership in 1995. It's unclear whether he joined SD in 1994 or 1995.

Akesson claims he joined after March 1995, when the party's then-leader Anders Klarstrom, a former member of the neo-Nazi group Nordiska Rikspartiet, was forced out along with several other officials with neo-Nazi pasts. But old documents written by Akesson and uncovered by the media suggest he joined before that. "I've always been a nationalist... When I was little, I refused to play table hockey if I couldn't have the blue and yellow players," Akesson wrote in a 1999 publication by the Sweden Democrats' youth wing.

Cleaning up

A former web designer, Akesson has worked hard to change Swedes' perception of the far-right. "At the beginning, it was a racist party, but (Akesson) managed to change that," said 50-year-old Bostrom, wearing a T-shirt with the party's symbol of a blue and yellow flower, Sweden's national colors. In October 2012, Akesson introduced "zero tolerance", vowing to purge the party of racism and extremism.

Others would however argue that Akesson has merely changed the party's official rhetoric. A number of SD officials have in recent years made headlines for racist remarks and hate speech. And in the final week of campaigning, more than a dozen SD candidates were kicked out of the party after media revealed their back-ground in neo-Nazi movements — though they said they had informed the party of their pasts.

Akesson insists that "those who are not democrats cannot be Sweden Democrats". Nazism is "an anti-democratic ideology, socialist, racist, imperialist, internationalist and violent". — AFP

Submarine killer seeks reduced sentence in appeals trial

COPENHAGEN: Sentenced to life in prison for the murder of journalist Kim Wall aboard his homemade submarine in August 2017, Danish inventor Peter Madsen is hoping to get his jail term reduced as his appeals case opened yesterday. The Copenhagen High Court has set aside two other days for the hearings, September 12 and 14.

"We're not here to determine whether Peter Madsen is guilty, because he is," recalled prosecutor Kristian Kirk, facing Madsen, seated next to his lawyer and clad in a black blazer. Madsen only appealed his sentence, and not the guilty verdict handed down by a Copenhagen district court on April 25 for murdering 30-year-old Wall, chopping up her corpse and throwing her body parts into the sea last year.

The grisly case made headlines worldwide, all the more shocking as it took place in one of the safest countries in the world, according to a report from the independent

organization Institute for Economics and Peace. On August 10, 2017, Wall boarded the submarine with the eccentric and self-taught engineer — a minor celebrity in Denmark — to interview him for an article she was writing.

Wall's boyfriend reported her missing when she failed to return home that night. Her dismembered body parts were later found on the seabed, weighted down in plastic bags. Wall's parents were present in the courtroom yesterday. Madsen maintained throughout his first trial that her death was accidental.

His lawyer has insisted that his decision not to appeal the guilty verdict should "certainly not" be interpreted as an admission of guilt. "He realizes that he was found guilty and he has to live with that. He decided not to continue fighting it. He doesn't have the energy needed for that," Betina Hald Engmark told Danish radio DR in May. Hald Engmark said the sentence was "disproportionate compared to legal precedent." That will therefore be the main issue for the three appeals court judges to consider.

In Denmark, only one other person apart from Madsen has been sentenced to life in prison for having committed a single murder. "It's unusual to be sentenced to life in prison. What was decisive (for the court) was that it was a crime that was prepared and planned," prosecutor Jakob Buch-



COPENHAGEN: This file photo taken on April 25, 2018 shows the homemade submarine UC3 Nautilus as it is covered with green tarpaulin in Nordhavn, a harbour area. — AFP

Jepsen said when the sentence was handed down in April. Yesterday, the prosecution presented evidence from the previous trial, including images of Wall's mutilated body, to justify the life sentence. It was uncertain whether Madsen would take the stand during the appeals trial. Madsen changed his version of events several times, but ultimately testified that Wall died when the air

pressure suddenly dropped and toxic fumes filled his vessel while he was up on deck. Despite the testimony of many experts, the lack of tangible evidence in the case and the decomposed state of Wall's remains made it impossible to determine an exact cause of death. An autopsy report concluded she probably died as a result of suffocation or having her throat slit. — AFP

Burundi prez hate speech fuels 'crimes against humanity'

GENEVA: UN investigators yesterday warned that crimes against humanity and other serious rights violations were continuing unabated in Burundi, blaming in part President Pierre Nkurunziza's repeated calls to hatred and violence. In its first report last year, the UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi said it had "reasonable grounds to believe" the government was committing crimes against humanity.

It said such crimes were ongoing, citing summary executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture and sexual violence. "Serious human rights violations, including some which constitute crimes against humanity, have continued to be committed in Burundi, in 2017 and 2018," the commission said as it released a fresh report on the situation in the tiny east African nation. The investigators acknowledged that fewer bodies were being found in the streets than previously, but stressed that this simply indicated a shift in tactics. "Some practices, such as the disposal of bodies or operating at night, tend to make these violations less visible. Nevertheless, they are still real," commission chief Doudou Diene said in a statement.

'Hiding bodies'

Commission member Francoise Hampson agreed. "They are hiding the bodies," she told journalists in



GENEVA: UK member of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, Francoise Hampson (L), and Senegalese chairman Doudou Diene (C), give a press conference to present a report on rights violations in the country. — AFP

Geneva. "More people are disappearing than were disappearing before... (and) there is every reason to believe that in a large number of cases they are ending up dead." Burundi plunged into crisis in 2015 after Nkurunziza sought a fiercely contested third term in office that his opponents said was unconstitutional.

Turmoil since then has killed at least 1,200 people, and has forced 400,000 to flee their homes, triggering an investigation by the International Criminal Court. "Human rights violations documented by the Commission of Inquiry were aided by recurring calls for hatred and violence, including by the President of the Republic," the commission said, saying such calls "took place in a general context of impunity."

The UN investigators said they had "established a list of alleged perpetrators of crimes against humanity." They said the list was confidential, but that it could be shared with "any organ or jurisdiction tasked with car-

rying out independent and credible investigations... and which will guarantee the safety of the witnesses."

'Instrument of repression'

Diene stressed that the Burundian judicial system itself "has neither the will nor the capacity to establish who is responsible and to prosecute perpetrators of violations. The judiciary has become an instrument of repression used by the executive against any form of protest or opposition." While refusing to name the suspected perpetrators, the commission has said members of the country's National Intelligence Service, the police, military officials and members of the ruling party's youth league, the Imbonerakure, were behind many of the worst violations. Hampson said that over the past year investigators uncovered fewer violations attributed to the military, but many more attributed to the strengthening Imbonerakure, who she said were controlled and enabled by the state. — AFP

DR Congo empties their village schools as Ebola fears rise

MANGINA: In the village of Mangina, where dozens have died of Ebola at the epicentre of Democratic Republic of Congo's latest outbreak, children are to be seen everywhere — except in school, because their parents fear they will be infected in class. "The children are not here today. It's the parents who are keeping them at home," primary school teacher Christian Muhindo said as he paced between empty desks. "They think that the children will be easily contaminated at school."

"They don't know that teachers have been taught to cope," Muhindo said. "UNICEF has trained us to protect the children and to take the right steps in the event of a sick child." Teaching staff and aid workers fear that children who walk around freely in the village pose a risk far worse than they would pose in a monitored classroom.

Ebola has already claimed more than 60 lives in Mangina, a village of just a few thousand inhabitants. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has encouraged teachers to see that basins of chlorinated water are placed in schools. The viral hemorrhagic fever broke out in the Beni region of the eastern North Kivu province on August 1 in the middle of the school holidays. Of the 81 deaths registered by authorities, 62 were in Mangina, according to an updated toll on Monday, the first day of the new school year.

Mangina's secondary school is usually bustling at this time of year with between 560 and 600 children, according to headmistress Aldegonde Batsyoto. "Today, we only enrolled two pupils," she said. "On the radio, in church, they announce that the new academic year has already arrived and that all necessary precautions have been taken. But in the villages, they're afraid that children will be contaminated at school."

In its early stages, Ebola has symptoms similar to those of other fevers, but it can end in massive organ damage and unstoppable bleeding. A recent decline in the death rate, alongside a slight rise in the number of patients who recover, has failed to reassure residents. On the streets of the village, children were left to their own devices, even playing close to the schools banned by their parents. But Batsyoto said they would be safer in their classrooms. — AFP

International

Japan evacuates major airport after typhoon wreaks havoc

Western Japan battered by ferocious winds and lashing rain

TOKYO: Japan scrambled yesterday to evacuate passengers trapped at a major airport when a tanker slammed into its only access bridge during the most powerful typhoon to hit the country for 25 years. Typhoon Jebi left a trail of destruction across the country, killing 11 people and injuring hundreds more as it battered western Japan with ferocious winds and lashing rain.

Winds up to 216 kilometers per hour ripped off roofs, overturned trucks and swept a 2,500-ton tanker into a bridge leading to Kansai International Airport, the region's main international gateway and a national transport hub. The damage to the bridge left the artificial island housing the airport temporarily cut off, stranding 3,000 travelers and staff overnight as high waves flooded the runways and some buildings, knocking out the power.

Yesterday boats began ferrying people out of the airport, and buses began to run on one side of the damaged bridge after safety inspections. "There were about 3,000 people stranded at the airport, but we think about 2,000 to 2,500 of them already got out. We think there are not many people left," a transport ministry official told AFP.

Airport spokeswoman Yurino Sanada told AFP: "We don't know how many hours we need to bring everyone out but we're doing our best to finish it by the end of today." There was no indication when the airport, which operates over 400 flights a day, might reopen but local agency Kyodo News said it could take up to a week.

Rescued passengers spoke of their discomfort in sweltering post-typhoon temperatures of around 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) yesterday. "We had a blackout so there was no air conditioning. It was hot," a

woman told public broadcaster NHK after being ferried to Kobe. "I'd never expected this amount of damage from a typhoon. I couldn't sleep, but I'm relieved because I thought I might not be able to get out," another woman told the station.

'Industrial heartland'

Typhoon Jebi made landfall at midday on Tuesday and moved quickly over the mainland, smashing through the major manufacturing area around Osaka — Japan's second city — wrecking infrastructure and destroying homes. Government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said 11 people had been killed and 470 injured. According to Kansai Electric, more than 400,000 households were still without power.

In the tourist magnet of Kyoto — home to ancient temples and shrines — it brought down part of the ceiling of the main railway station. In nearby Osaka, the high winds peeled scaffolding from a multi-storey building. Businesses, factories and schools in the affected area shut down while the storm barreled across the country, forcing

the cancellation of hundreds of flights, ferry services and some bullet trains.

Pictures showed containers piled up like dominos and vehicles thrown together by the wind, with others overturned. More than 1.2 million people had been advised to leave their homes as Jebi approached the Kansai area — Japan's industrial heartland — although it was unclear how many had heeded the warning. Around 16,000 people spent the night in shelters, local media said.

Economists said it was too early to gauge the storm's impact on local industry, with much depending



OSAKA: A man walks past a wooden house destroyed by strong winds from typhoon Jebi. —AFP

on how long the airport remained closed. Around 10 percent of Japan's exports leave from Kansai airport, said Yusuke Ichikawa, senior economist at Mizuho Research Institute. "Logistics could be affected as it may take time for Kansai airport to restart operations," he told AFP. But with other airports and ports nearby, companies might be able to reroute shipments to minimise disruption, he added.

'Utmost efforts'

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, tweeting on his official account, said the government was battling to get the airport back online. "We continue to make utmost efforts to respond to disaster damage and restore infrastructure," he said. Japan is regularly hit by powerful typhoons in the summer and autumn, many of which cause flooding and landslides in rural areas. —AFP

Khalilzad: The vet leading US peace efforts in Kabul

KABUL: Zalmay Khalilzad, the veteran US diplomat tasked with leading efforts to end the war in Afghanistan, is a blunt negotiator with a history of hawkish foreign policy views. Known by many in Washington as "King Zal", the 67-year-old Khalilzad has decades of experience in the region. Now he has what Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described Tuesday as a "singular" mission to get the Taliban and the Afghan government to reconcile.

This mission marks Khalilzad's return to focus on the country of his birth and childhood, and the place where he served as US ambassador from 2003-2005 under President George W. Bush, helping to guide regime change in the messy aftermath of the fall of the Taleban. He was instrumental in setting up the government structure in Afghanistan and guiding President Hamid Karzai through the first elections in 2005.

Fluent in Pashto and Dari, Khalilzad's experience as a foreign policy operative in the country dates back to the 1980s, when he served as an adviser to the Reagan administration. He spent most of the 1990s in the private sector, but returned to public service when Bush appointed him to the National Security Council with an Afghanistan brief. After the Kabul posting the Bush administration appointed Khalilzad — who is also an accomplished arabophone — as ambassador to Baghdad in 2005, despite Karzai reportedly pleading with the US president not to transfer him.

Unlike his smooth stint in Afghanistan, where he cut deals with tribal chiefs and warlords, Khalilzad's Iraq mission was rocky. He knew the Iraqi political terrain well, having served as Bush's envoy to the "free Iraqis" before the 2003 US invasion, and helped draw up the country's new constitution after the toppling of Saddam Hussein. But he failed to accomplish a task similar to the one he now faces in Afghanistan: getting Iraq's warring factions to reconcile, and defusing the terrorist core of Sunni Muslim resistance.

Khalilzad was allied with Bush administration hawks like Vice President Dick Cheney and John Bolton, whom he replaced as Washington's UN envoy in 2007. He held the position until 2009. He later criticized President Barack Obama's handling of the war in Afghanistan, especially the decision to draw down US troops.

Key player

Khalilzad has also been a fierce critic of Pakistan and like many American officials has accused it of playing a "double game" by supporting militant groups in Afghanistan despite being a US ally. That has won him few friends over the years in Islamabad, which has denied the allegations, and whose support Pompeo said Tuesday was needed for the reconciliation effort in Afghanistan.

Khalilzad was the introductory speaker for then-candidate Donald Trump's first major foreign policy speech in April 2016. He later told India's The Hindu newspaper that Trump's "America First" policy was not about isolationism, but "the universality of American values". Now Khalilzad is a key player in the Republican president's efforts to extricate the US from the 17-year conflict in Afghanistan. —AFP

Farmers' protest disrupt Delhi as oppn targets Modi

NEW DELHI: Thousands of farmers and laborers paralysed the Indian capital yesterday in a protest against what they called the anti-people policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, as opposition parties step up pressure ahead of key elections. A sharp drop in commodity prices and stagnant wages have dented Modi's popularity in rural areas home to about two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion people, and key to his hopes of winning a second term in next year's general elections.

Traffic in many parts of central Delhi came to a halt as the protesters, many in red hats and waving red flags, marched towards Parliament Street in the heart of the capital. Some sat on pavements as honking vehicles moved slowly past. "This country's farmers are very angry with the Modi government," said Karan Singh, a 58-year-old rice grower from India's northern breadbasket state of Haryana, dressed in traditional white clothes. "We're suffering

losses and the government is not doing anything about it."

Modi's rural woes have been worsened by a failure to deliver on a promise of tens of millions of jobs for young people that helped him secure the largest mandate in three decades in 2014. That vow has provided opposition parties their biggest stick to try and beat him with, in three big state elections this year ahead of next year's general election.

"This historic rally ... demanding better wages, more jobs, better prices for farm produce, end to privatization, stopping changes in labor laws, marks a new stage in the struggle of working people," the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which is leading the protest near parliament, said on Twitter. Congress, the party that ruled India for most of its history and lost power to Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), said it supported the "fight back" by farmers. It is banding with other opposition parties to take on the prime minister.

On social network Twitter, federal farm minister Radha Mohan Singh said the government was putting farmers first and working on initiatives such as easy credit to help meet Modi's target of doubling their income by 2022. In July, the government sharply hiked state-mandated



NEW DELHI: Protestors take part in a protest rally called by the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), affiliated with the Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPI-M). —AFP

ed prices for summer crops, including rice, that had been raised only by low single-digit figures during Modi's first four years in office.

In June, vegetable prices jumped 10 percent in major cities after a strike by millions of farmers to press demands

such as loan waivers and higher prices for produce. Some of yesterday's protesters were sceptical of the government effort. Asked about Modi's plans to double farmers' income, Singh, the Haryana rice cultivator, responded, "He can't, and won't, do it." —Reuters

Indian sex traffic survivors take stories online

CHENNAI: Sex trafficking survivors in India are making audio recordings about their experiences to be used in a social media campaign, which organizers hope will reduce discrimination that follows them even after they escape the trade. Of an estimated 20 million commercial sex workers in India, 16 million women and girls are victims of trafficking, according to campaigners.

Survivors are widely discriminated against after being rescued, and choose not to tell their stories in public, said Arun Pandey of the anti-trafficking charity Anyay Rahit Zindagi (Injustice-free Life). "The narrative is built either by an activist or an official," Pandey said. "Here we want their stories to be told in their own voices, in their own words and with no filters. We wanted the victim to speak for herself."

The campaign builds on a four-part video uploaded to YouTube in July. The film included voice recordings from women in four brothels in cities across India, and was intended to give viewers an insight into the real lives of sex workers. Sex trafficking survivors are now being encouraged to submit their recorded stories, which are disseminated on social media platforms including Facebook and YouTube, according to Pandey.

They will also be played during



SRINAGAR: Indian paramilitary troopers stand guard as a Kashmiri woman walks past during the first day of a strike called by Kashmiri separatists against attempts to revoke articles 35A and 370 of the state constitution. —AFP

training sessions with police to "shatter myths and misconceptions" about women who have been trafficked into the sex industry said Pandey. "There is this general impression in society that we are in these brothels out of choice and make a lot of money," said a 34-year-old survivor who was trafficked as a child.

The woman, who now works at a laundry service in the western state of Goa, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that she agreed to record her story, because she could hide her identity and talk fearlessly about her ordeal. In recordings, women talk about drunk customers, violence, and why they find it difficult to leave the sex industry,

Pandey said. In one of the videos uploaded in July, a woman recounts police officers negotiating with brothel owners for a free night of sex in exchange for not charging them.

"I spoke out in the hope that people will understand my journey from the safety of my home to the brothels," the survivor in Goa said. "Even if they just think about it for a few moments, they will begin to understand our suffering." The campaign is being launched against a backdrop of debate in India about whether consenting adults in the sex industry will be at risk of forced rescue under proposed legislation, which is aimed at stopping sex trafficking. —Reuters

Infamous Dhaka jail used for trial of ex-PM Zia

DHAKA: The Bangladesh government yesterday turned a notorious jail into a courtroom to try ailing opposition leader Khaleda Zia on corruption charges. The 73-year-old former prime minister, already serving a five-year term in Dhaka Central Jail, was brought into the temporary courtroom in a wheelchair insisting she would not get a fair hearing, reports said.

"I know I won't get justice. You can rule whatever you like. I am extremely ill. My hand and a leg are becoming paralysed," she told the court, according to the ntvbd.com news portal. "You can punish me however you want," the head of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party added. Zia's lawyers have condemned the decision to use the jail, where she is the only inmate, into a court. They have said they will seek a ruling from a higher court to get the move overturned.

Zia was granted bail in a corruption case in May but remains in jail while she fights dozens of other violence and graft charges. The prison in the old Mughal district of Dhaka was built under British colonial rule in the 19th century and was Bangladesh's largest prison until it was declared abandoned in 2016. Four of Bangladesh's founding leaders were killed in the prison on the eve of a military coup in November 1975 while hundreds of death row inmates including politicians, coup plotters and Islamists were hanged there in the intervening decades. Law and Justice Minister Anisul Huq told AFP the decision to use the Central Prison as the venue for Zia's trial "has been done lawfully". —AFP

Analysis

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E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.netAfghan mujahideen:
From holy warriors
to political chiefs

Decades after forging reputations as anti-Soviet fighters during the Cold War, many of Afghanistan's former mujahideen commanders still wield influence in the war-torn country, despite claims of gross human rights violations on their march to power. Among them was former CIA asset turned brutal militant leader Jalaluddin Haqqani, who founded the eponymous Haqqani network that is now a top US target. His death was announced Tuesday by the Taliban. Jalaluddin was among several mujahideen commanders who rose to prominence during the Soviet occupation of 1979-89. The survivors still have significant clout in Afghanistan's ethnic and tribal-driven politics.

Their bravery and battlefield skills won them fame and assistance from the United States and Pakistan. Some, such as the resistance leader Ahmad Shah Massoud who was assassinated in 2001, attained folk hero status. But after the Russians left, Afghanistan slipped into civil war as the mujahideen commanders sought to topple the pro-communist government and then turned on each other. Figures little known in the West but etched into the memory of ordinary Afghans are accused of killing thousands of people during the bloody chaos of the early 1990s that fuelled the flow of millions of Afghans across the border into Pakistan.

After the Taliban was overthrown by a US-led invasion in 2001, several controversial figures from the previous two decades were brought into mainstream politics in hopes of ensuring a smooth transition to democracy. The power and wealth garnered over decades of constant conflict helped the battle-hardened commanders in their new political careers — but also made them difficult to control. Some kept private militias even as they ascended the political ranks, enabling them to enrich themselves and operate with impunity. Here are four key figures:

Hekmatyar

The former prime minister is one of the most notorious warlords in Afghanistan's history. A prominent anti-Soviet commander in the 1980s, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is accused of killing thousands in Kabul during the 1992-1996 civil war. Following the 2001 US-led invasion and the fall of the Taliban government, the US State Department designated him a terrorist, accusing him of taking part in and supporting attacks by Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. He returned to Kabul and mainstream political life in May 2017 following a peace deal between his dormant Hezb-i-Islami militant group and President Ashraf Ghani. The deal sparked revulsion from human rights groups and Kabul residents.

Sayyaf

The former anti-Soviet resistance leader and ally of Osama Bin Laden was a strident opponent of the Taliban and after 2001 went on to become a high-profile politician. Abdul Rab Rasoul Sayyaf contested the 2014 presidential election before endorsing front-runner Abdullah Abdullah, who lost to Ashraf Ghani in a controversial vote. Sayyaf, a religious scholar who remains influential despite retiring from politics, is said to have been the "mentor" of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the main plotter of the 2001 attacks on New York and Washington. Sayyaf also ran militant training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan throughout the 1980s and 1990s, which Mohammed attended.

Mohaqqiq

Mohammad Mohaqqiq fought the Soviet occupation before becoming embroiled in Afghanistan's brutal civil war in the 1990s. The most senior politician from the minority Hazara ethnic group, Mohaqqiq contested the 2004 presidential election before becoming the second deputy to Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah in 2014. Mohaqqiq has been an outspoken critic of President Ashraf Ghani's government, accusing it, among other things, of trying to sideline mujahideen leaders.

Dostum

Abdul Rashid Dostum, a powerful ethnic Uzbek leader, is notorious for extreme barbarities and for repeatedly switching loyalties over 40 years of conflict. While he fought on the side of the Soviets against the US-backed mujahideen in the 1980s, he played a key role in helping US Special Forces topple the Taliban in 2001. Despite a catalogue of war crimes attached to his name and accusations of organizing the rape and torture of a political rival, Dostum became Afghanistan's first vice president in 2014. He received a hero's welcome when he returned to Kabul in July after more than a year in exile. — AFP

China lures chip talent from
Taiwan with fat salaries, perks

Counter-offer

A senior executive at a newly-established chipmaker in northeastern China, SiEn (QingDao) Integrated Circuits Company Ltd, said about one-third of its recently recruited 120 engineers were from Taiwan. "There is not a lack of money. What we need is talent," said the person, who declined to be named as he was

A huge pay
rise, eight
free trips
home a year

not authorized to speak to the media. He said the company, led by Richard Chang, the founder of SMIC, China's leading chipmaker, offers new hires discounted property and attractive subsidies for bilingual schools in the port city of Qingdao.

"Taiwanese engineers are most experienced and could help us cultivate local talents," the executive said. "The movement will continue to escalate." Industry watchers said Taiwan's widely respected chip design houses and foundries have been among the hardest hit by the outflow of engineers, and have been forced to ramp up spending to lure workers. The island's leading integrated circuit designers and chipmakers have seen a 35 percent jump in labor costs, including salary and benefits from two years ago, compared with a 21 percent hike in revenue, according to Reuters calculations based on corporate filings from Taiwan's 10 largest listed companies by market value.

Trade secret

Taiwan has been watching the Chinese recruitment efforts with growing anxiety. It has long barred chipmakers like Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co Ltd, a key supplier to Apple Inc, from moving their most advanced technology to

manufacturing operations in China to keep it from falling into the hands of Chinese rivals.

Many in Taiwan are also concerned that the rapid development of China's chip industry could lead to the sort of oversupply and plunging prices that came with Chinese efforts to develop other key industries like solar panels and liquid crystal displays. China's integrated circuit design firms have already surpassed their Taiwan rivals in terms of revenue, with \$31 billion in 2017, compared with Taiwan's \$22 billion, according to Mark Li, an analyst at Bernstein. The fears are that the battle for talent will widen that gap further.

In a move to retain top talent, Taiwan's cabinet in July pledged to relax tax regulations on employee stock ownership. "The Chinese Communist Party has been poaching our talent," said Chen Mei-ling, minister of Taiwan's policy-planning National Development Council. "The government has amended regulations to help companies keep talent." Ho Chan-cheng, legal affairs director at Taiwan's Intellectual Property Office, said "inappropriate poaching" could lead to the leaking of trade secrets and that the government was working to protect the island's core technology - namely the capacity to increase chip yield per wafer.

Taiwan companies are also trying to offer their own incentives. Antonio Yu, spokesman for the Taiwan-based chip design house Phison Electronics Corp, said that while the company "does not have the capital to play such a money game," it has tried to create a "reassuring environment" for its employees. He cited long-standing cash bonuses and programs such as free legal counseling, as well as a monthly town hall meeting with Phison's chairman, Khein-Seng Pua. "We treat our employees like family," he said. Despite such efforts, Taiwanese engineers are finding incentives from China hard to resist.

Tommy Huang, a 37-year-old Taiwanese chip engineer who in 2016 joined United Semiconductor in southern China - a joint venture between Taiwan's UMC and Chinese state-backed partners - said Taiwanese efforts to retain talent did not work for him. "You don't have any chance if you stay in Taiwan," said Huang, whose Chinese employer offered him an annual school subsidy of up to 60,000 yuan (\$8,689) for his five-year-old child and a salary more than double what he earned in Taiwan. "We are buying hope by coming to China." — Reuters



A man looks back as he rides a bicycle past a New Balance store in Beijing. — AFP

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RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's PIF is taking radical steps to boost its treasure chest with much-needed cash to finance a slew of non-oil investments. —Reuters

Saudi fund bets big to remake oil economy

PIF seeks to transform kingdom from a petro-state to a tech-focused economy

RIYADH: With the stock market listing of its national oil company stalled, Saudi Arabia is scrambling to boost the coffers of the sovereign wealth fund spearheading a risky plan to diversify its economy. The Public Investment Fund had sought to raise billions of dollars through the initial public offering of Saudi Aramco-dubbed as potentially the world's biggest stock sale to finance the kingdom's transformation from a petro-state to a tech-focused economy.

But with the flotation indefinitely postponed, the PIF is taking radical steps to boost its treasure chest with much-needed cash to finance a slew of non-oil investments-from risky hi-tech startups to a new mega city. "Much of the ambitious economic and social plan to diversify the Saudi economy, jump-start its private sector and create jobs for young people relies on the PIF as an orchestrator of economic growth," said Karen Young of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

"In fact, the PIF is so central to the government's growth strategy that finding resources to feed the PIF has become a national economic priority," she wrote in a report for the institute.

Pivoting the desert kingdom's economy away from oil, akin to what observers describe as turning around a large,

lumbering ship, is a key priority for Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

When the Aramco IPO was proposed in 2016, Saudi officials had expected it would raise up to \$100 billion to fund his reform agenda, based on a \$2 trillion valuation of the state-owned giant that many experts said was unrealistic. With IPO efforts floundering, the once-torpid PIF, which aims to raise its assets from roughly \$230 billion to more than \$2 trillion by 2030, is aggressively pushing a host of big-ticket investments-from Uber to the planned \$500 billion NEOM mega city on the Red Sea coast.

The fund has also invested in British tycoon Richard Branson's space tourism company Virgin Galactic and pledged tens of billions of dollars to funds run by SoftBank and Blackstone.

'Spend to grow'

Some analysts have voiced concern over the PIF's "spend to grow" strategy as it pursues what are seen as flashy deals rather than long-term investments that deliver secure returns and generate jobs as unemployment soars. "The PIF's pattern of investment very much resembles that

of a venture capital fund and that is concerning for a fund that will, by necessity, have to generate steady returns in the long run," Ellen Wald, author of the book "Saudi Inc", told AFP.

Since 2016, the PIF has made external investment commitments worth 360 billion riyals (\$95 billion), according to the International Monetary Fund, including stakes in high-risk tech firms such as electric car company Tesla. "Investments in technology companies will not transform Saudi Arabia's economy nor will they diversify the economy's sources of revenue away from oil," said Wald. The PIF did not respond to requests for comment.

Meanwhile, the postponement of the Aramco IPO is seen as a reflection of the kingdom's stronger fiscal position following a recent rise in oil prices but also dimming optimism over reforms. "The postponement of the IPO implies that the economic diversification envisaged by the government will either need to be scaled back or financed by higher direct or indirect public-sector debt issuance," ratings agency Moody's said on Monday. Moody's noted that significant reliance on debt would increase liability risks and exert negative pressure on Saudi Arabia's credit profile.

Raising cash

The PIF last month raised an \$11-billion loan from international banks, its first commercial advance, in order to finance the kingdom's transformation plans, the Riyadh-based Al Rajhi Capital said this week. "If the PIF is to fulfil its ambitious plans in the coming years, it will need additional financing," the IMF said in a recent report. It added that for some investments, the government may need to draw from its reserves at the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority, which stand at just over \$500 billion. To raise money, the PIF is mulling the sale of a "strategic stake" in Saudi petrochemicals giant SABIC to Aramco, a potential deal that Young described as "accounting gymnastics".

SABIC, the world's fourth largest petrochemicals company with a market value of over \$100 billion, is 70 percent-owned by the PIF. Further complicating PIF's ambitions is nervousness from foreign investors after a diplomatic row over Canada's criticism of the jailing of Saudi rights activists and the arrest of high-profile businessmen at Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton last year. The moves, experts say, have heightened concerns over Prince Mohammed's increasingly assertive policy and the impact it would have on foreign direct investment, which a UN body said plunged last year to a 14-year low. —AFP

S&P cuts credit ratings on two Dubai firms

DUBAI: S&P Global Ratings cut its credit ratings for two Dubai state-owned companies, saying a weakening economy in the emirate was hurting the government's ability to extend emergency support to the firms if needed.

The downgrades were a fresh sign of pressure on Dubai's economy, where the real estate and equity markets are slumping. The emirate does not have a sovereign credit rating, so analysts often look at state firms as indicators of its financial health.

"In our view, credit conditions in Dubai have deteriorated, which we believe affects the government's likely ability to provide extraordinary financial support to its government-related entities (GREs) if needed," S&P said. The Dubai government's media

office could not immediately be reached for comment. S&P lowered its rating on utility Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) late on Tuesday to BBB from BBB-plus, assigning it a negative outlook, which indicates a significant chance of a further downgrade in future.

It was S&P's first outright downgrade of DEWA. The agency had previously upgraded the company in 2012 and 2016, as the emirate recovered from a credit crisis that nearly caused it to default on its debt. A default was averted with \$20 billion of aid from neighboring Abu Dhabi. "The negative outlook on DEWA reflects the possibility that our assessment of Dubai's creditworthiness could deteriorate further in the next two years, which would put further pressure on our rating on DEWA," S&P said. "This is because we assume that the government could use its power to intervene negatively, which could include burdening the company with additional dividends, taxes, or other liabilities."

S&P also lowered its rating for real estate firm DIFC Investments (DIFCI) to

BBB-minus, one step above junk status, from BBB, but with a stable outlook. DIFCI owns an office and retail complex in Dubai's international financial center.

Analysts say that the pressures on Dubai are not as serious as those it faced a decade ago, and it has strengthened its finances since then by restructuring billions of dollars of debt at state-linked firms.

Dubai government bond prices and the cost of insuring Dubai sovereign debt showed little reaction yesterday to the S&P downgrades, partly because many investors assume Dubai can count on further aid from Abu Dhabi if necessary.

S&P said that because Dubai's population growth had outpaced economic growth, its gross domestic product per person had declined to \$37,000 in 2018 from a peak of \$45,000 in 2013, a sign of deterioration in the government's potential tax and funding base. The agency predicted the drop would continue over the next couple of years, reaching \$36,000 in 2020. —Reuters

Currency storms rage on, stocks wipeout nears \$1tn

LONDON: Emerging markets storms raged fiercely yesterday, with South Africa's rand at the center of fresh currency tumult and losses since January for the world's biggest EM stock index nearing \$1 trillion again. It was another torrid session in both Asia and fragile EMEA markets. Indonesia's stock market had suffered its worst day in over five years as its currency pains worsened while Chinese equities fell almost 2 percent in Shanghai.

Share prices on the Saudi stock exchange dived yesterday after a panic selloff on concerns a downturn in emerging markets could hit the oil-rich Gulf kingdom.

The Tadawul All-Shares Index (TASI) dipped 3.1 percent to a five-month low of

7,719.10 points, partly recovering early losses when it shed as much as 4.5 percent.

The rand then slumped to a more than 2-year low in a fresh 1.5 percent drop as traders also dumped its bonds and the most globally traded EM currency, the Mexican peso, too.

Trade war and general economic health worries were raw too, with investors wary of the threat of fresh US tariffs on another \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods that could take effect after a public comment period ends today.

The day's falls across markets left MSCI's 24-country EM stocks index down for a sixth straight day and down almost 20 percent from late January, a move that has wiped over \$950 billion off its combined worth at the time. The biggest individual move saw Indonesian stocks slump almost 5 percent at one point in the biggest fall since 2013 as the rupiah currency wobbled around its lowest levels since the Asian financial crisis in 1998. —Agencies

Global equities remain positive despite lingering trade war fears

US-Mexico NAFTA deal brings relief to markets

KUWAIT: Global equities in August posted a positive return of 0.6 percent as measured by the MSCI All Country World Index. In the US, the Dow Jones and S&P 500 each closed in the green returning 2.2 percent and 3.0 percent, respectively. The S&P 500 in August recorded its longest bull run ever, since bottoming out in March 2009 during the global financial crisis.

Trade war talks continue to take center-stage although some relief came to the market as the US and Mexico came to an agreement with respect to revamping NAFTA. The US and China are still unable to find common ground with the US increasing tariffs on Chinese imports of \$16 billion bringing the total to \$50 billion. During the month, the Federal Reserve left rates as is although the Fed Chair did confirm during a month-end speech at Jackson Hole that monetary policy would maintain its course of tightening, albeit a cautious one. Gross Domestic Product, on an annualized and preliminary basis, came in at 4.2 percent while the latest data for Initial Jobless Claims stands at 213,000. The Markit Manufacturing PMI came in at 54.7, still above the 50 mark.

In Europe, markets were unable to maintain their positive run dropping 2.4 percent in August, as measured by the Stoxx Europe 600. The German DAX Index posted a loss of 3.5 percent reversing a majority of the gains from the previous month while France's CAC 40 Index dropped 2.0 percent. During the month, Greece marked a historic day by becoming self-financing, as a nation, ending its need for external financial assistance from European creditors and the IMF. The European Central Bank remains on track to tighten monetary policy. Consumer Confidence within the Eurozone remains steady at -1.9 while the Consumer Price Index dropped from 2.1 percent to 2.0 percent year on year preliminarily. The Markit Manufacturing PMI came in at 54.6, indicating continued growth.

Brexit in focus

The UK's FTSE 100 Index in August closed in the red

4.1 percent. The country remains focused on Brexit with the March 2019 deadline approaching. Discussions with the EU have somewhat stalled pushing the upcoming October deadline, to finalize the divorce terms, to a later date in November according to reports by Bloomberg. During the month, the BOE increased rates from 0.5 percent to 0.75 percent, the second time only since the financial crisis, citing both a strong labor market and credit growth. Furthermore, the Gfk Consumer Confidence has improved from -10 to -7 while the Markit Manufacturing PMI is at 52.8 dropping a full point from the previous month.

Japan's Nikkei 225 continues to post positive returns for the third month straight. In August, the index closed in the green 1.4 percent. Although Japan signed a trade deal with the EU, a trade war between itself and the US or the US and China remains a major concern. Japan avoided an official recession with economic data showing a rebound for Q2 2018. The Gross Domestic Product annualized for Q2, on a preliminary basis, was 1.9 percent while the Nikkei Manufacturing PMI was constant at 52.5. In addition, annualized Housing Starts are up slightly in July compared to June.

Emerging markets bearish

Emerging markets in August were unable to maintain a positive run for a second month posting a loss of 2.9 percent as measured by the MSCI Emerging Market Index. China's Shanghai Composite Index plunged 5.3 percent while South Korea's KOSPI 200 Index was able to climb slightly posting a gain of 0.9 percent. Tensions rising from potential trade wars, mainly between the US and China, continue to put a strain on markets overall. Further weighing down on emerging markets affecting both equity markets and currencies is the turmoil in Turkey surrounding the substantial drop in the value of the Turkish lira, the sanctions by the US on Turkish political figures, and geopolitical concerns. In terms of economic data, China's Caixin Manufacturing PMI remains just barely over 50 at



50.6 while South Korea's Nikkei Markit Manufacturing PMI increased to 49.9 from 48.3.

Oil gains

Brent Oil in August recovered some of the losses it sustained in the previous month closing up 4.3 percent. During the first half of August, Brent's price was volatile hitting a low mid-month on concerns around Turkey and implementation of sanctions on Iran. The commodities performance rebounded during the second half of the month. Supporting the rally was US crude stockpiles coming in significantly lower than what was expected. Unlike Brent, Gold continues to lose value for the fifth month straight dropping 1.9 percent in August.

GCC equities ended the month in negative territory,

closing down 2.5 percent in August, as measured by the S&P GCC Index. The GCC equity markets were negatively impacted by the global sell-off amid growing trade tensions despite higher oil prices supporting the markets. During the month, markets closed for multiple days as the region celebrated Eid Al-Adha Holiday. The best performing index was Abu Dhabi's ADX General Index up 2.6 percent, followed by Oman up 1.9 percent and Qatar up 0.6 percent. The worst performing index was Saudi Arabia's Tadawul All Share Index down 4.2 percent followed by Dubai down 3.9 percent, Bahrain down 1.5 percent and Kuwait down 0.7 percent. MENA equities closed the month down 2.3 percent, as measured by the S&P Pan Arab Composite Index, while Egypt's EGX 30 posted gains of 2.8 percent.

CBK refurbishes customer hall at Jabriya branch

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait refurbished the customers' hall at its Jabriya branch in order to provide more comfortable banking services to its clients.

CBK GM Retail Banking Division Hameed Salman said, "CBK is always keen on boosting



Hameed Salman

the flow of work at its branches and providing maximum comfort to its clients when they visit our branches to do banking. Keeping this in mind, we carried out a comprehensive overhaul of the customers' hall in order to offer the best banking services possible," he said.

Australia's economy powers ahead as consumers keep spending

SYDNEY: Australia's buoyant economy posted strong growth in the second quarter of the year on the back of increasing exports, consumer and government spending, official data showed yesterday.

The economy expanded by 0.9 percent in the March-June quarter, following 0.7 percent growth in the first three months of the year, to take the annual rate of growth to 3.4 percent-the fastest pace since September 2012. The quarterly reading was far above market expectations of 2.8 percent, and comes after the previous quarter's year-on-year reading of 3.1 percent.

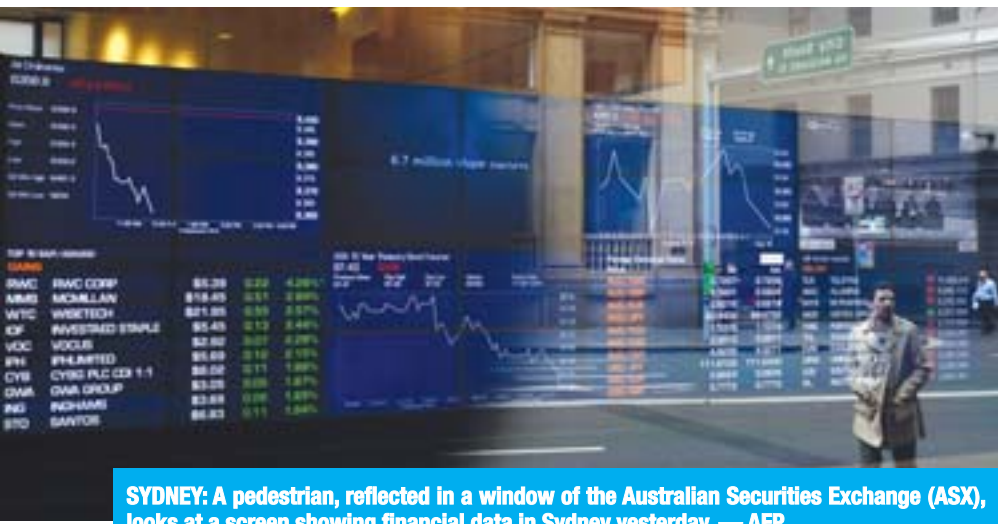
The increase sent the Australian dollar jumping almost half a cent to 72.17 US cents.

"The national accounts for the June quarter highlight the strength and the resilience of the Australian economy, which is in its 27th year of consecutive economic growth," Treasurer Josh Frydenberg told reporters. "The economy is strong, the fundamentals are good and momentum has continued and these are an encouraging set of numbers." The economy has recorded uneven expansion in recent years as an unprecedented period of mining investment reaches its end, with the Reserve Bank of Australia cutting interest rates to a record-low of 1.5 percent to support growth. Household spending jumped 0.7 percent during the quarter to contribute 0.4 percentage points to growth, while net exports added 0.1 percent.

Government expenditure rose 1.0 percent in the period to continue its stellar growth through the year. "(Household) consumption continues to hold up pretty well, facilitated by the savings ratio continuing to fall," JP Morgan economist Henry St John told AFP. The savings ratio, which measures how much households save in proportion to their disposable income, was at 1.0 percent for the quarter, the lowest since December 2007. It had soared to almost 10 percent in 2012 after the global financial crisis.

Slowdown ahead?

The stronger data reinforced expectations that the next move of the Reserve Bank would be to lift rather than cut interest rates.



SYDNEY: A pedestrian, reflected in a window of the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), looks at a screen showing financial data in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

But analysts said any hike was not likely in the near-term, with wages growth and inflation remaining soft. "Despite solid growth, the economy is not generating much in the way of wage or price pressures," Commonwealth Bank of Australia senior economist Gareth Aird said in a note. "There is still plenty of slack in the labour market to chew through."

St John cautioned that exports growth was

expected to level out in the second half of the year, while the low savings ratio meant consumers would be unable to further draw down on their reserves. House prices-particularly in the larger cities like Sydney and Melbourne-were also falling this year as tighter lending standards discourage local and international investors, while turbulence in the global economy was a downside risk. — AFP

Huge surplus draws Germany back into Trump's trade war line of fire

LONDON: German trade figures later this week will serve as a reminder to global economy watchers, especially the primary occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC, of the chasm between countries that run huge current account surpluses and deficits.

US president Donald Trump last week renewed his attack on Germany and Europe for, in his view, manipulating the euro lower to boost exports and trade in their favour at the expense of US companies.

"Almost as bad as China, just smaller," Trump told Bloomberg News.

In fact, when it comes to trade surpluses vis-a-vis the United States and more broadly, Germany is bigger than China. If that US-German chasm is allowed to go unchecked and stretch further, the snapback could trigger a surge in currency market volatility - currently near historic lows - and maybe even pose a threat to global financial stability.

Euro/dollar is the world's most liquid and important exchange rate, accounting for almost a quarter of all FX trades, or around \$1 trillion a day. It is so stable precisely because it is so deep and liquid.

But there's no guarantee it will remain an oasis of calm. Developed markets have been largely untouched by the volatility tearing through large parts of emerging markets right now, but no corner of world markets would be spared from turbulence, stress or rapid moves in the euro/dollar exchange rate. Germany had the largest trade surplus with the United States than any other country in the first half of this year, worth some 24.4 billion euros (\$28.5 billion) which contributed to a global trade surplus of 121.5 billion euros.

Germany has run a current account surplus every year since 2002, and in 2015 it reached 8.9 percent of GDP. It has narrowed slightly since, but was still 8 percent last year, well above the 6 percent average over three years that the European Commission has suggested as a general upper limit.

According to the Munich-based Ifo

institute, Germany is on track to post the world's largest current account surplus for the third year in a row this year at \$299 billion. That's 50 percent more than the next biggest surplus from Japan, which Ifo estimates at \$200 billion.

Euro targeted

It's no surprise, then, that Trump has turned his attention back to Germany, echoing comments from his trade advisor Peter Navarro in January last year that Berlin is using a "grossly undervalued" euro to "exploit" the United States.

It's questionable, to put it diplomatically, that Germany is somehow manipulating the euro's exchange rate. Indeed, out of the three biggest surplus countries in the world, it is the one which exerts the least influence on its exchange rate.

China may be allowing more flexibility and two-way trading in the yuan, but it is still a tightly managed currency in a country with significant capital controls. The yuan basically goes where Beijing wants it to go.

And Japan has, by a distance, intervened in global FX markets over the past 20 years more than any other developed nation, almost always to weaken the yen or, at the very least, to prevent it from strengthening.

The three exporting powerhouses have posted current account surpluses every year since 2002, China's first year as a World Trade Organization member and the year Germany moved out of current account deficit into surplus.

Their combined, cumulative surplus since is \$8.6 trillion at current exchange rates, according to International Monetary Fund and World Bank data. That almost perfectly mirrors the cumulative US deficit of \$8.3 trillion over the same period. Successive US administrations have long accused Japan, China or Germany of manipulating their currencies and using other mercantile practices to give themselves a competitive edge on the global market stage.

Japan was president Ronald Regan's bete noir in the 1980s, China was George W Bush's in the 2000s, while Donald Trump has turned his wrath toward Beijing and Berlin. Since Reagan took office in 1981, the United States has posted a current account deficit every single year bar one. That was 1991, and it barely counts, as the surplus was just 0.046 pct of GDP, according to World Bank/IMF data.

Perhaps Trump's ire at what he perceives to be America's losses and failings on the global trade stage should be directed closer to home. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY Europe	SELL
British Pound	0.383222	0.397122
Czech Korune	0.005676	0.014976
Danish Krone	0.043198	0.048198
Euro	0.344386	0.358086
Georgian Lari	0.134689	0.134689
Hungarian	0.001145	0.001335
Norwegian Krone	0.032198	0.037398
Romanian Leu	0.065055	0.081905
Russian ruble	0.004490	0.004490
Slovakia	0.009069	0.019069
Swedish Krona	0.029436	0.034436
Swiss Franc	0.305204	0.316204
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.209954	0.221954
New Zealand Dollar	0.192649	0.202149

America		
Canadian Dollar	0.224967	0.233967
US Dollars	0.299650	0.304950
US Dollars Mint	0.300150	0.304950
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002992	0.003793
Chinese Yuan	0.043001	0.046501
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036952	0.039702
Indian Rupee	0.003772	0.004544
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000016	0.000022
Japanese Yen	0.00281	0.00281
Korean Won	0.000261	0.000276
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070277	0.076277
Nepalese Rupee	0.002626	0.002966
Pakistan Rupee	0.001957	0.002727
Philippine Peso	0.005588	0.005888
Singapore Dollar	0.215528	0.225528
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001520	0.002100

Taiwan	0.010423	0.010603
Thai Baht	0.008949	0.009499
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.790601	0.807101
Egyptian Pound	0.014344	0.020062
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260
Jordanian Dinar	0.424119	0.433119
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022438	0.046438
Omani Riyal	0.782643	0.788323
Qatar Riyal	0.079143	0.084083
Saudi Riyal	0.079913	0.081213
Syrian Pound	0.001288	0.001508
Tunisian Dinar	0.105401	0.113401
Turkish Lira	0.040500	0.052000
UAE Dirhams	0.081275	0.082975
Yemeni Riyal	0.000987	0.001067

Business

Malaysian island city in trouble as PM targets China-linked projects

Chinese buyers have snapped up about two-thirds of units already sold

KUALA LUMPUR: An ambitious \$100 billion island city being built off Malaysia has found itself in troubled waters as the new government takes aim at the development, the latest in a series of China-linked megaprojects started under the scandal-plagued ex-premier to come under attack.

Forest City's futuristic high-rises and waterfront villas are under construction on four man-made islands in southern Malaysia, just an hour from the affluent city-state of Singapore.

The project, which is meant to house up to 700,000 people once finished in 2035, is being developed by Hong Kong-listed real estate giant Country Garden and a firm partly owned by a powerful Malaysian sultan. It has been aimed at mainland Chinese investors as an alternative to pricier property in Singapore, with reports saying Chinese buyers have snapped up about two-thirds of units already sold before construction is finished.

But the development, which boasts international schools, shopping malls, hotels and even an immigration center, was troubled from the start.

A clampdown on capital outflows from China hit demand, while it became a lightning rod for public anger at growing Chinese influence in Malaysia under the government of Najib Razak.

Environmentalists have also warned that dumping sand to reclaim land for the city could destroy marine life. Now Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has hit out at foreigners buying apartments at the vast development, which is threatening to add to a glut of new residential property in southern Malaysia.

Malaysians are unlikely to buy or stay there due to

high prices and its relatively remote location, while foreigners do not automatically get long-stay visas by buying a property.

'Built for foreigners'

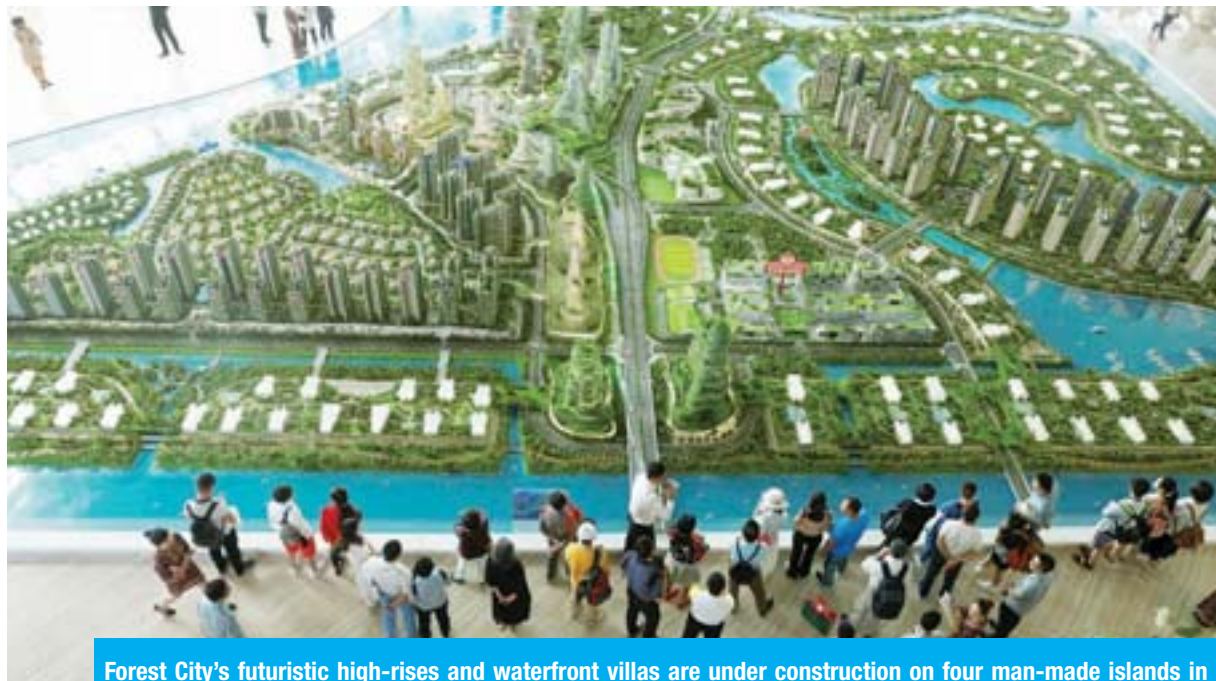
With the shock defeat of Najib's government in May and the election of Mahathir, who has long railed against the explosion of Chinese investment in Malaysia, speculation has intensified that Forest City could become a white elephant. Mahathir, 93, has already shelved \$22 billion of Chinese-financed projects struck under the former government during a visit last month to Beijing following criticism the deals were unfavorable to Malaysia, and now he has trained his sights on Forest City.

Last week, he made some of his strongest comments yet on the development, saying he objected to the project because it was "built for foreigners, not built for Malaysians. Most Malaysians are unable to buy those flats."

He added that Forest City "cannot be sold to foreigners... We are not going to give visas for people to come and live here."

His nationalist rhetoric was not in line with Malaysia's laws-it is legal for foreigners to buy houses and apartments in Malaysia-and his office later clarified that he only meant purchasing property does not automatically guarantee residency for a foreigner.

But observers said Mahathir was intending to undermine a project he has long detested. A subsequent announcement that the government was establishing a committee to review the terms agreed on to set up the development and foreign ownership there only added



Forest City's futuristic high-rises and waterfront villas are under construction on four man-made islands in southern Malaysia, just an hour from the affluent city-state of Singapore. — Reuters

to the sense authorities may be trying to put a halt to it. It is not yet clear what the committee might recommend. Analysts said the worst case scenario in the short term could be the state government in Johor, where the project is based, raising the minimum price for foreigners buying property or increasing levies.

Yeah Kim Leng, a professor of economics at Malaysia's Sunway University Business School, said investors would be deterred and predicted the developer might have to delay or scale back the project.

"Perhaps they will put it on hold, or aim for something smaller," he said. — AFP

Weak exports push US trade deficit to 5-month high

WASHINGTON: The US trade deficit rose to a five-month high in July as exports of soybeans and civilian aircraft declined and imports hit a record high, suggesting the Trump administration's protectionist policy was so far not having an impact.

The administration's "America First" policies have left the United States embroiled in tit-for-tat tariffs with the European Union, Canada and Mexico as well as an escalating trade war with China. The goods trade deficit with China surged to a record high in July.

The Commerce Department said yesterday the trade gap jumped 9.5 percent to \$50.1 billion, increasing for a second straight month, suggesting that trade could be a drag on economic growth in the third quarter. Data for June was revised to show the trade deficit rising to \$45.7 billion, instead of the previously reported \$46.3 billion. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the trade deficit swelling to \$50.3 billion in July. President Donald Trump has defended the duties on steel, aluminum imports and a range of Chinese goods as necessary to protect American industries from what he



LOS ANGELES: A truck hauls a container at the port of Los Angeles in Los Angeles, California. — Reuters

says is unfair foreign competition.

The administration says eliminating the trade deficit will put the economy on a sustainable path of faster growth, an argument that has been dismissed by economists as flawed given constraints such as low productivity and slow population growth.

The United States and China have slapped retaliatory tariffs on a combined \$100 billion of products since early July, with more in the pipeline, posing risks to both domestic and global economic growth.

The trade gap narrowed in April and May as farmers front-loaded soybean exports to China before Beijing's retaliatory tariffs came into effect in early July. US financial markets

were little moved by the data. The deterioration in the trade deficit was flagged in an advance report published last month.

When adjusted for inflation, the trade gap increased to a five-month high of \$82.5 billion in July from \$79.3 billion in June. July's so-called real trade deficit is above the second-quarter average of \$77.5 billion. If that trend continues in August and September, trade could subtract from third-quarter gross domestic growth. Trade contributed 1.17 percentage points to the economy's 4.2 percent annualized growth pace in the second quarter, which was almost double the 2.2 percent rate notched in the January-March period. — Reuters

Iran rial hits record low around 150,000 against dollar

DUBAI: Iran rial extended its slide yesterday, hitting a record low around 150,000 against the dollar, according to foreign-exchange websites, as the country's economic fortunes ebb after the United States re-imposed sanctions. The dollar was being offered for 150,000 rials, compared with about 138,000 rials on Tuesday, according to website Bonbast.com, which tracks the unofficial market. The website bazar360.com also quoted 150,000. Mesghal.online gave an exchange rate of 152,530.

The rial has lost more than two-thirds of its value this year because of a weak economy, financial difficulties at local banks and heavy demand for dollars among Iranians. Many fear the Washington's pulling out of a 2015 nuclear deal and renewed US sanctions will cut into

Iran's exports of oil and other goods. A set of US sanctions targeting Iran's oil industry is due to take effect in November.

Last week, Iran's parliament sacked the minister of economic affairs and finance, the latest in a continuing shakeup of top economic personnel. In early August, Iranian lawmakers voted out the minister of labor and in July President Hassan Rouhani replaced the head of the central bank.

Protests linked to the tough economic situation erupted last December, spreading to more than 80 cities and towns and resulting in 25 deaths. Sporadic protests, led by truck drivers, farmers and merchants in Tehran's bazaar, have continued since then and have occasionally resulted in violent confrontations with security forces. — Reuters

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Business

Flydubai focuses on long-term strategy; continues investment

Half-year 2018 financial performance impacted by rising fuel costs

KUWAIT: Dubai-based flydubai yesterday reported its Half-Year Financial Results for the reporting period to 30 June 2018.

- Total revenue increased to AED 2.8 billion (\$761 million) for the six-month period; an increase of 10.4 percent compared to the same period last year

- RPKM grew by 6.5 percent compared to the same period in the first half of last year
- Reports loss of AED 316.8 million (\$86.3 million) for the period ending 30 June 2018
- A price impact of AED 175 million due to a 35 percent increase in the Average Brent Crude Oil prices compared to the same period last year

- Passenger numbers remained steady at 5.4 million during the first six months of the reporting period
- During the first six months of 2018, flydubai contributed 12.3 percent of all traffic in Dubai
- Continues to invest for the long-term in the fleet, unique new routes across the network and airline's infrastructure aligned to strategic objectives

Statements on H1 results 2018

- Rising fuel costs have put pressure on operating costs. This is reflected in the accelerated increase in total operating costs with the impact being felt more quickly with a price impact of AED 175 million due to a 35 percent increase in the Average Brent Crude Oil prices.

- Route review: the airline has undertaken a systematic review of the performance of its network. This has resulted in the cancellation of operations to some destinations as well as investment in the development of other routes to aid their maturity.

- Market landscape: the economic and geopolitical climate remains challenging dampening demand for travel. Yield has stabilized although this has not been able to sufficiently offset the impact of higher fuel costs,



Ghaith Al-Ghaith

reflect these short-term challenges. We continue, however, to invest in our fleet, network and operations recognising opportunity as we look to the future."

Arbind Kumar, Senior Vice President, Finance at flydubai, said: "we have seen good growth in our revenue during the first six months of this year. We remain focused on the three priorities we had previously set: to improve our cost performance, broaden our distribution and optimize our network whilst keeping our cost management plan under constant review. The stronger dollar, rising oil price and higher interest rates are expected to continue to impact our performance and we will need to maintain a tight grip on the deployment of our capacity. The benefits of our investments aligned to our long-term financial goals provide a solid foundation for the next phase of development for the airline."

Key financial indicators

- Fuel costs: Average Brent Crude Oil prices during the first half of 2018 were higher by 35 percent compared to same period last year. As a result, fuel costs were 29.2 percent of total operating costs; compared to 24.8 percent for the same period as last year.
- Ancillary revenue comprising baggage, cargo and inflight sales contributed 11.0 per-

cent of revenue compared to 14.6 percent for the same reporting period.

- Closing cash and cash equivalents position, including pre-delivery payments for future aircraft deliveries, remained strong at AED 2.1 billion as for the same six-month period in 2017.

Operational developments

- Fleet: during the first half of the year the fleet size remained at 61 aircraft and includes six Boeing 737 MAX 8 and 55 Next-Generation Boeing 737-800 aircraft.

- Network: as part of its network review, flydubai launched and restarted a total of 10 routes in the first half of 2018: Batumi (BUS), Catania (CTA), Dubrovnik (DBV), Erbil (EBL), Kinshasa (FIH), Krakow (KRK), Qabalah (GBB), Sulaymaniyah (ISU), Thessaloniki (SKG) and Tivat (TIV). Additional flights were made available to Russia during the recent international football tournament including to off line stations, Sochi and Volgograd.

Operations to 10 destinations were cancelled and a further two routes were suspended: Ahwaz (AWZ), Al-Jouf (AJF), Bandar Abbas (BND), Bangkok (BKK), Chittagong (CGP), Dhaka (DAC), Hofuf (HOF), Male (MLE), Mattala (HRD), Tehran (IKA), Voronezh (VOZ) and Yanbu (YNB).

- Codeshare: under the codeshare 1.4 million passengers have been jointly carried in the first half of 2018. 83 destinations are available under the codeshare. The combined network is on track to reach 240 destinations by 2022. flydubai has invested in five new unique destinations offering connections not previously served by either airline. These routes will require a period of operation to reach maturity.

New appointment

- Francois Oberholzer, a Chartered Accountant with 20 years' experience in the



aviation sector, has been appointed as Chief Financial Officer at flydubai.

Statements on full year 2018 outlook

- In the second half of the year, flydubai will take delivery of seven new Boeing 737 aircraft including four Boeing 737 MAX 8. For the first time Boeing 737 MAX 9 aircraft will join the fleet and three aircraft are due for delivery. At the end of their lease period, four Next-Generation Boeing 737-800 aircraft will return to the lessors.

- From 11 October, flydubai will launch, for the first time for a UAE national carrier, direct daily flights to Helsinki (HEL). As part of the codeshare with Emirates, flydubai will operate flights to Zagreb in Croatia between 02 December and 30 March 2019. This will ensure that capacity is deployed to best serve customer demand by maximizing the frequency for passengers during the winter season after which flights will be operated by Emirates.

- From December, select flights to 10 destinations will relocate to Terminal 3 at Dubai International (DXB) as Emirates and flydubai continue to work closely together to increase connectivity offering customers unmatched opportunities to travel.

- flydubai has awarded a number of contracts for the construction of its new AED 700 million headquarters.

Ghaith Al-Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer of flydubai, commenting on the outlook for 2018, said: "although higher oil prices will continue to affect our operating costs and performance in the second half; pricing stability at the current level is also likely to stimulate demand for regional travel." Al Ghaith added: "since the start of the codeshare, significant time and resources have been spent on the network alignment. Coupled with the investments we have made we are well placed to contribute to an increase in connectivity of Dubai's aviation hub as we see our new route structure mature."

Warba Bank to hold Al-Sunbula monthly, weekly draws today

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, will be organizing its monthly draws which includes: Al-Sunbula Account monthly draw and the 32nd weekly draw for Al-Sunbula Account today (Thursday) at 11 am in presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Bank officials.

Al-Sunbula Account is the perfect choice for all customers who wish to save money and achieve steady returns while simultaneously have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. Due to the high traffic on this account, for its offerings of unparalleled opportunities, Warba Bank has worked on enhancing Al-Sunbula account to provide customers with more benefits. Such enhancements include increasing the number of winners and the frequency of the draws. Now, on every Thursday the bank holds draws for five weekly winners of KD 1,000 each. In addition, the Bank continues its monthly draws held on the first Thursday of every month, with cash prizes of KD 30,000 divided amongst 4 winners: two winners getting KD 10,000 each, and two winners getting KD 5,000 each.

Thus, the new development of Al-Sunbula account has increased the total number of winners to 24, and the total amount of prizes to KD 50,000 instead of KD 30,000. As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against each KD 10. It is noteworthy, that Warba Bank has recently launched the Al-Sunbula fixed deposit, which provides depositors with high returns of up to 3 percent, as well as getting monthly chances to win in Al-Sunbula Account draws.

Furthermore, Warba Bank has launched its latest Customer Onboarding solution, in line with its ambitious five-year strategy that enables non-Warba Bank customers to request opening Al-Sunbula account in an easy electronic manner through the Bank's website without having to visit any of the Bank's branches, by following 5 simple steps that might take up to five minutes. New customers will be able to request opening the account at anytime, anywhere, and the Bank will receive, process and pass the new application for approval through whole new and unique electronic system used to implement this service. Warba Staff will then contact the customer to determine the appropriate time to visit the branch to get required signatures, verify the customer's identity, deliver his/her debit card, and activate the account.

VIVA launches new prepaid internet offer for KD 7

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced a new prepaid internet offer, designed to fit customers' needs for only KD 7.

VIVA's new offer gives prepaid customers 30 GB internet capacity at all times, to enjoy 'more' browsing and sharing fun and memories on social media.

On this occasion, Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA said: "VIVA reiterates its commitment to providing unique promotions designed to create an exceptional customer experience and reward its prepaid customers for their continued trust in VIVA. VIVA will continue to seek new and innovative ways to facilitate the lives of its customers and share with them the latest in communication technology."

Ooredoo partners with Bookey Wallet for easy payments

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced its partnership with Xenon Prepaid Electronic Card Payment, the creator of mobile payment method Bookey Wallet. The partnership agreement unleashes the full potential and convenience of mobile payment to all Ooredoo's customers, with added exclusive benefits.

The partnership reflects Ooredoo's commitment to embracing digitalization and supporting local entrepreneurs. It further demonstrates Ooredoo's forward-looking vision to deliver the latest digital wallet technologies, linking their subscribers' needs with those of the local businesses from home grown small businesses to major retailers and service providers.

Ooredoo customers using Bookey Wallet will receive exclusive discounts and offers from Bookey's list of various vendors and retailers across Kuwait. Bookey Wallet has extended its reach in more than 550 locations across major retailers throughout Kuwait and is scheduled to increase the number of locations to over 2000 within the coming months.

Commenting on this, Ooredoo Kuwait reiterated its commitment to enriching the experience of customers, providing them with more than just mobile and data services. Ooredoo is happy to partner with Bookey Wallet, an aspiring new project that garnered success in such a short time, to provide customers with seamless cashless mobile payment options that complement their

lifestyle. The combination of products and services offered by Ooredoo and Bookey Wallet will extend the reach of each consumer's preferred payment method for online and offline payments. Bookey Wallet's smartphone application delivers a rich user experience with convenience and security, following international KYC (Know Your Customer) standards for creating new users, where it requires and verifies accounts with Civil IDs while ensuring security and confidentiality at all times.

Also Bookey provides users with the ability to securely load their wallets through the secure KNet gateway, and pay in point of sales by a technology known as Secure QR code.

The application also provides the user with an electronic payment gateway that allows them to pay their bills via SMS, pay their mobile bills and transfer money from a wallet to another wallet user. Through the application, users can view all transactions made, buy virtual prepaid cards and recharge international mobile lines.

Mohammed Faisali, Founder and CEO of Bookey expressed his excitement in partnering with Ooredoo. "We are certain that the combination of existing Ooredoo services in addition to Bookey Wallet's various payment methods will contribute to enriching the experience of customers. Bookey Wallet was designed focusing on the needs of the users and their modern lifestyle, utilizing the latest trends and technologies available in the mobile world. The increase in smartphone users and the increase in online businesses now meet with the payment options available exclusively with Bookey Wallet."

Bookey is available to download for free on all iOS and Android devices.

German fintech to push Commerzbank out of DAX 30

FRANKFURT: Wirecard, a Bavarian start-up specialized in online payments, is set to nudge German giant Commerzbank out of the blue-chip DAX index yesterday, in the latest sign of plucky fintechs outshining traditional lenders. Frankfurt stock exchange operator Deutsche Boerse plans to unveil the new composition of the DAX 30 index of leading German firms at 10:00 pm (2000 GMT), as part of a regular review of listed companies' market capitalization and trading volumes.

Commerzbank is Germany's second-largest lender and a founding member of the prestigious DAX club three decades ago. But the ailing bank, which had to be rescued by the German state during the financial crisis, has seen its share price plunge by a third since January to give it a market cap of just over 10 billion euros (\$11.5 billion) — the lowest of all DAX 30 players.

Investor darling Wirecard, currently listed on the TecDAX index, is widely expected to take Commerzbank's spot in the reshuffle.

The so-called "financial technology" (fintech) company that makes software for cashless and contactless payments

has seen its share price soar by 110 percent this year.

It has a market cap of over 23 billion euros, surpassing even flagship lender Deutsche Bank which is valued at some 20.5 billion euros-and was itself axed from the eurozone's benchmark Eurostoxx 50 index on Monday.

Wirecard is now the country's third-largest financial group on the German stock market behind insurance behemoths Allianz and Munich Re.

From porn to cashless king

Founded in a Munich suburb in 1999 at the height of the dot come bubble, Wirecard started out processing card payments for gambling and pornography websites. Its rise has been fuelled by the boom in e-commerce and surging demand for online transactions as well as payments made just by holding a credit card or smartphone over a reader, technologies that have shaken up the financial sector and left old-school banks struggling to keep up.

Wirecard's clients include duty free shops at airports, the Air France-KLM carrier, mobile phone operators O2 and Orange as well as travel firm TUI and supermarket chain Aldi.

In a sign of its global ambitions, Wirecard has clinched partnerships with Chinese mobile payment companies Alipay and WeChat Pay, hoping to cash in on the burgeoning market of using apps to pay for goods in real-world shops.

Wirecard CEO Markus Braun said only around two percent of transactions around the world today are fully digital,

with cash still accounting for the bulk of purchases. "We want to make payments invisible," Braun recently told the Frankfurt Allgemeine daily.

"We see this market growing 10-fold, or even 30-fold in the future."

Wirecard, which has a German banking license, this year also started offering its own lines of credit to small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Dinosaur v Wunderkind

Wunderkind Wirecard's ascent comes as Germany's two biggest banks, weighed down by increased competition, low interest rates and costly restructurings, are losing importance on the global stage.

German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz last week said the decline of Deutsche and Commerzbank was "a problem" for Germany's export-reliant companies, as local lenders can't match the scale or reach of foreign rivals. How the German banking sector develops from here will depend partly on the ability "of traditional actors to adapt to new technologies", according to Claudia Buch, vice president of Germany's Bundesbank central bank.

Commerzbank has already shrugged off its looming DAX 30 exit, stressing that nothing would change for customers and that the bank remained committed to its turnaround plan, which includes a major push to win new retail banking clients and an ambitious digitalization drive.

"Commerzbank's activities will in no way be influenced by the fact that it appears in one index or another," CEO

KFH.com/cars unique electronic platform to all KFH auto services and offers

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) uniquely offers an electronic platform that represents a destination for browsing through a wide range of vehicles, KFH auto financing services, offers and much more. This platform KFH.com/cars comes as part of the Bank's strategy of embracing technological innovation and utilizing it for the best interest of customers especially that technology is paramount to superior customer service.

The main menu of this platform encompasses new cars, used cars, lease with maintenance, lease to own, insurance, offers, subscribe, showrooms, sell your car and finance calculator. Lease with maintenance service offers wide range of benefits. It gives the opportunity to customers to ride a brand new cars of their choice from different models. Maintenance is covered throughout the leasing period with full Takaful insurance and road assistance service, in addition to providing alternative car when necessary. Customers may also travel and cross the borders as per terms and conditions.

Lease to own program offers brand new cars with suitable monthly installments up to 5 years, in addition to benefits of full Takaful insurance valid throughout the contract duration, and the guarantee of the agent. By end of leasing period, customers can own the car by paying the remnant value or simply return back the car.



Martin Zielke has said. But analysts say the future could well belong to fintechs. "Even if Commerzbank and Deutsche Bank offered the same products as fintechs, the big banks would always have to deal with frighteningly high costs" like personnel expenses, said Rainer Haselmann, a finance professor at Frankfurt's Goethe University. "Nimble fintechs will have less trouble growing than banking dinosaurs." — AFP

Technology & Science

Amazon hits trillion-dollar milestone with focus on the long game

Amazon becomes 2nd US company at eye-popping value

SAN FRANCISCO: Amazon's market value hit \$1 trillion on Tuesday, the second company after Apple to hit the milestone, following an incredible journey for the internet giant which has kept a long-term focus since launching as an online bookseller two decades ago. Early gains lifted Amazon's value to \$1 trillion only briefly, with the final close at \$2,039.51 giving it a value of \$995 billion.

Amazon's journey from an online bookseller in a garage to a global e-commerce powerhouse has centered on obsession with the long road. The company initially incorporated as "Cadabra" by Jeff Bezos in 1994 and backed with money borrowed from his parents joined Apple as the second US technology firm to be valued at \$1 trillion on Tuesday. Apple crossed the trillion-dollar value threshold a month ago and has remained above it. Amazon became the second US company at that eye-popping value.

GlobalData Retail managing director Neil Saunders called Amazon's valuation achievement "extraordinary" and considered it a sign of the company's potential. "Despite its size and scale, there is still something young about Amazon," Saunders said. "Amazon is really only just getting started." Created in a garage in a suburb of Seattle, Washington, the company renamed "Amazon" sold its first book-Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies: Computer Models of the Fundamental Mechanisms of Thought by Douglas Hofstadter-in mid-1995.

By the end of that year, Amazon was selling books online throughout the US. Amazon went public in early 1997. The company for more than a decade put growth over profit, investing heavily in warehouses, distribution networks, and data centers. "Every cent they made they put back in the company," said independent technology analyst Rob Enderle. "They kept their eye on the prize, which was initially to take over most of commerce."

Innovation sans scandal

Saunders said Amazon's success comes from the fact that it innovates unlike any other. "This heady pace of creativity is the key reason why it stays several steps ahead of the market and is able to generate so much growth," Saunders said. Bezos has kept firm control of Amazon, steering clear of hedge fund investors inclined to short-term tactics aimed at getting share prices to jump. The founder and chief executive also avoided scandals or other distractions, keeping revenue and costs close enough to manage and easing into "adjacent markets" that play into Amazon strengths or interests, according to Enderle.

“Amazon is only just getting started”

Drugs and digital ads

Prescription medicine would be a natural market for Amazon to expand into, according to Enderle. Meanwhile, Amazon is reportedly beefing up its digital advertising business to better compete in an online ad market dominated by Google and Facebook. In the past quarter, Amazon posted its best-ever profit of \$2.5 billion as Bezos, whose stake in the company has made him the richest person, highlighted the importance of digital assistant Alexa that powers Amazon electronics along with cars, appliances and other connected devices.

According to the research firm eMarketer, Amazon's e-commerce revenue will grow more than 28 percent this year to reach \$394 billion, and will account for 49 percent of US online retail sales and nearly five percent of all retail spending. One of Amazon's revenue drivers is its Prime subscription service which offers streaming video and music, free delivery and other perks and which has more than 100 million members worldwide.

Arrogance trap

Some fear Amazon is becoming too dominant a force, especially in retail, sparking antitrust discussion even as the company keeps expanding globally and searches for a second headquarters in North America. "It wasn't that long ago that people were freaking out about Walmart, and Amazon basically stepped on Walmart," analyst Enderle said. "What Amazon means is disruption and people don't like to be disrupted."

Critics of the company include US President Donald Trump, who has expressed ire at the Bezos-owned Washington Post newspaper that has published stories the president didn't like. Bezos bought the Washington Post five years ago for



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo Chief Executive Officer of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, tours the facility at the grand opening of the AmazonSpheres, in Seattle, Washington. —AFP

\$250 million from his personal funds. While his skills could be advantageous in the content-oriented business, getting into news comes with the risk of displeasing politicians.

"The Post was a mistake because it results in him going to war with people he wouldn't otherwise go to war with," Enderle said. Amazon's huge cloud computing segment powers systems for government clients, and contracts could be influenced by politics. Amazon must also guard against the kind of arrogance that can undo companies that come to dominate markets, according to the analyst. "If Amazon does have a downfall, it will be arrogance in dealing with the customer," Enderle said. —AFP

Smartphone slowdown tests new leadership at Taiwan's chip champion

HSINCHU, Taiwan: In late August, the new chairman of chip-making titan Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co, Mark Liu, got the sort of news that would make any boss smile: his biggest competitor was throwing in the towel. Just under three months into Liu's tenure, rival GlobalFoundries had announced that it would not compete in the latest generation of chip-making technology. It was a reminder of just how dominant TSMC has become in manufacturing chips for other companies, a business it all but invented.

TSMC stock quickly hit an all-time high. But Liu's job seems likely to get tougher, not easier. In an interview at the company's newly christened Morris Chang headquarters building, named after its founder, Liu said global politics were his biggest worry. "The worst you can imagine can be very bad," Liu said, referring to geopolitical developments such as the US-China trade war and tensions between Taiwan and the mainland. The thoughtful, soft-spoken engineer took over from the ebullient and outspoken Chang at a tricky time.

Emerging competition from China casts an ominous shadow, and the intricate network of relationships that have enabled TSMC and its brethren in the global technology supply chain to thrive are under threat amid the trade dispute. Worse, global smartphone sales have flattened. Purchases of smartphone chips by the likes of Apple Inc and Qualcomm have powered TSMC for a decade. But Liu remains optimistic about that business.

"Smartphone units have plateaued, but the silicon content of each smartphone on average is still increasing," he said, projecting growth in the high single digits over the next couple of years. He said smartphones would continue to account for 40 percent to 50 percent of TSMC's revenue. A slowing smartphone market was one of the reasons the company cut revenue targets this year. It also reduced capital spending for the year from \$11.5 billion-\$12 billion to \$10 billion-\$10.5 billion - a move it attributed at the time partly to more efficient equipment delivery and currency adjustments, but which Liu acknowledged was also influenced by softer demand.

Meanwhile, new markets such as autonomous vehicles and the "internet of things" - interconnected consumer and industrial devices - have been slow to arrive. Liu chuckled as he predicted self-driving cars would come "within our lifetime," but said little about when they might benefit TSMC. "The issue is that these new areas are not going to be big enough in the foreseeable horizon to offset the slowing growth of smartphones," said Mark Li, an analyst at Sanford C Bernstein.

Liu was more optimistic about the sophisticated chips that power data centers. The boost TSMC and others enjoyed from the sale of such advanced processors for mining cryptocurrencies has largely dissipated, but Liu said the sector had made a lasting impact on high-performance computing (HPC). "They have an amazing architecture innovation and it will carry onto other areas of HPC, including blockchain and artificial intelligence applications," he said. Moves by consumer tech giants such as Google to design their own chips could also be a boon for a company that vows to be "everyone's foundry." —Reuters

Could it soon be game over for the Fortnite craze?

PARIS: It is a question that millions of parents want answered: will the wildly popular online survival battle game Fortnite soon lose its grip on the attention of their school-age children? Much of the video game industry is also wondering whether the Fortnite balloon has popped, or is simply leaking air, after the first disappointing revenue data since the game's release last year, with experts saying its publisher Epic Games needs to put these doubts to rest if it is to succeed in its expansion plans.

Fortnite's popularity took off last year after the release of a free "battle royale" version that lets up to 100 players vie to be the last character standing on ever-shrinking terrain. Dropped onto the battlefield with nothing, players have to scrounge for weapons as the fight for survival begins. Although the game is free, Epic Games had been successful in getting players to pay for goodies, which is its main revenue stream. As of July the game had brought in more than a \$1 billion in revenue.

But that data also gave analysts cause for concern that the Fortnite juggernaut may have tripped: revenue edged only 2 percent higher in July from the previous month. It was a lackluster response to the recently launched paid "battle pass" that offered players new equipment and outfits for avatars, raising questions about how much longer Epic Games can keep

players shelling out money for what are essentially cosmetic changes to the game.

"Epic Games has made a lot of mistakes which could knock them from their peak, players could get tired if the game doesn't evolve and there is too much cosmetic" change, said Frederic Gau, president of Gozulting consulting firm.

Epic Games has also bet on eSports to reinforce the popularity of Fortnite, investing nearly \$100 million in such video game competitions. "One hundred million dollars of cash prizes seems a lot but prizes for each competition are not that" large, said Andrew Kitson, head of telecoms, media and technology industry research at Fitch Solutions.

China ally

Enabling the popularity of Fortnite is the fact it is available on different game consoles plus smartphones. For smartphones, it first launched for iPhone, then a few weeks later on Android, the operating system used on 85 percent of smartphones and particularly dominant in Asia. "Android can provoke two different effects," said Laurent Michaud at IDATE Digiworld, a think tank and consultancy specialising in the internet, telecommunications and media sectors. "It can boost other platforms or create its own proper segment, because often it is different players who play," he said.

China also offers enormous potential for growth, both in terms of smartphone players and as well as eSports, with the Chinese giant Tencent having already pre-registered 10 million players. "Smartphones represent now 50 percent of global video game revenue and China represents half of that market," said Michaud. "Today the Chinese play mostly



PARIS: This file photo shows people crowding the display area for the survival game Fortnite at the 24th Electronic Expo, or E3 2018, in Los Angeles. —AFP

on smartphones." Tencent, which is a big publisher of smartphone games as well as being behind the WeChat messenger, holds 40 percent of Epic Games.

Having Tencent behind it is a major advantage for penetrating the Chinese market. "A success in China will show whether Fortnite will continue growing as a game for the general public," said Gau. "It could also help enormously in its developing in eSports. It could either cause it to explode or steal its momentum elsewhere-it's a bet." But analysts say Epic Games has yet to address its major fault-that Fortnite doesn't have sufficient variety compared to its principal online rivals, in particular eSport stars Dota2 and League of Legends which regularly reinvent themselves.

Kitson at Fitch Solutions said he thinks Fortnite is a one dimensional game, as were some older games that were still able to build a player community. "Fortnite is not a commercial failure but not a long term shot," he told AFP. "But Epic Games can learn a lot from it to make a better one next time." But even if Epic Games rushes out a new version of Fortnite-the battle royale version was its second-the consultant Gau sees another problem: "for many it is their second game".

He said analysts will be looking closely if the sales of FIFA football and Call of Duty first-person shooter franchises hold up as well as in previous years, because "that wouldn't be a good sign for Fortnite as players are returning to their favorite game." —AFP

The strangest gadgets at Berlin's IFA tech show

BERLIN: Berlin's IFA tech show is the largest in Europe, and while the hype may not match its American big brother CES, there's no shortage of weird and wonderful devices to reward curious visitors.

Tame luggage

I-Porter may be the solution for those fed up with juggling phone, passport, boarding pass and hand luggage at the airport. The cabin-sized suitcase is motorized and follows its human master with the aid of a laser detection system. If you're worried about its affections straying, an optional Bluetooth bracelet can help avoid mix-ups. Around 1,500 euros.

Iron chef

German home electronics maker AEG is offering a range of frying pans and saucepans with built-in sensors. They can step in to turn down the heat quickly if it looks like your dish risks bubbling over or browning too close to black.

Babelfish

It's not quite the universal translator promised by Douglas Adams in "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy", but the Pocketalk makes a fair stab. Speak a phrase into the hand-held box and it will translate into more than 70 languages-as long as it's connected to Wi-Fi or the mobile network and doesn't mishear you.

Rolling thunder

Danish high-end audio specialists Bang and Olufsen show off a futuristic, tactile speaker, the Beosound Edge, that can be attached to the wall or placed on a



BERLIN: The Iporter suitcase is pictured at the booth of BG Berlin during the IFA in Berlin. —AFP photos



BERLIN: A booth host presents the Pocketalk translator during the IFA in Berlin.

table. To adjust the volume, just roll the almost featureless circular device to left or right. Touch controls appear on the surface when the proximity sensors detect you are close.—AFP

After scandals, many Americans step away from Facebook

WASHINGTON: A large number of Americans are stepping back from Facebook in the wake of recent scandals over the social network's handling of private user data, a study showed yesterday. The Pew Research Center report found 42 percent of US Facebook users said they had "taken a break" from the platform in the past 12 months, and 26 percent said they had deleted the Facebook app from their phone. Among those in the 18-29 age group, the break with Facebook appeared more pronounced, with 44 percent claiming to have deleted the Facebook mobile app.

Although the survey did not indicate how many users were quitting Facebook entirely, the findings suggest a clouded outlook for the company which has been roiled by news of the hijacking of private data by political firm Cambridge Analytica and concerns of foreign influence campaigns on the platform. "Significant shares of Facebook users have taken steps in the past year to reframe their relationship with the social media platform," researcher Andrew Perrin said in a blog post.

According to Pew's survey, three-fourths of US Facebook users have taken some steps to change how they interact with Facebook, including more than half who have changed their privacy settings. Perrin said the concerns about Facebook appeared to transcend political affiliation. "The poll found that nearly identical shares of Democrats and Republicans (including political independents who lean toward either party) use Facebook," he said. "Republicans are no more likely than Democrats to have taken a break from Facebook or deleted the app from their phone in the past year." —AFP

CLINIC
PAGE

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Somali Embassy in Kuwait celebrates graduation ceremony



The Somali Embassy and community in Kuwait celebrated the high school, institutions and university graduates' with outstanding grades for school year 2017-2018, under the patronage of Somali Embassy Charge-de-Affairs Abeeb Mousa Fareh, in the presence of diplomats, personalities and graduates family members. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

BPG Group celebrates 25th company off-site

The BPG Group, one of the region's leading integrated marketing communications companies, has celebrated its recently refreshed and re-imagined business structure by staging its 25th annual staff off-site in the iconic surroundings of the QE2 floating hotel in Dubai. The company recently announced its new look and stronger integrated and client-centric approach with the creation of three core businesses - BPG Orange; BPG Max and BPG Kuwait.

To celebrate the re-energized business over 150 staff from its Dubai and Kuwait offices participated in two days of innovative and creative team building exercises using the iconic cruise liner turned hotel as its inspiration for creative film making and problem solving. The BPG Group was looking for a truly special location for its 25th anniversary and the unique conference facilities offered by the world's most famous cruise liner created the perfect celebratory atmosphere and everything the company needed for a memorable gathering.

BPG Group CEO Avi Bhojani said: "This was the 25th time we have held our offsite and it has been the most successful and popular event to date. This year has helped to bring our fantastic creative, energetic and creative teams even closer together and reinforce the complementary but distinctive nature of the three marketing services brands within the BPG Group. "The talent of our multinational team is at the heart of delivering successful solutions and a client-centric focus to our clients and working together to stimulate and generate innovative ideas is integral to the shared success of the BPG Group and our clients."

"And the QE2 delivered the ideal setting to enhance the passion, hard work and collective spirit among all our teams over the two days - an approach that we are harnessing to ensure our clients stay relevant and ahead of the curve." The BPG Group is built on nearly four decades of success in Dubai since it began operating in 1980 but is constantly refreshing its approach and innovating to deliver cutting edge creative solutions in a multi-disciplinary manner geared to the digital age for the MENA Region and beyond.

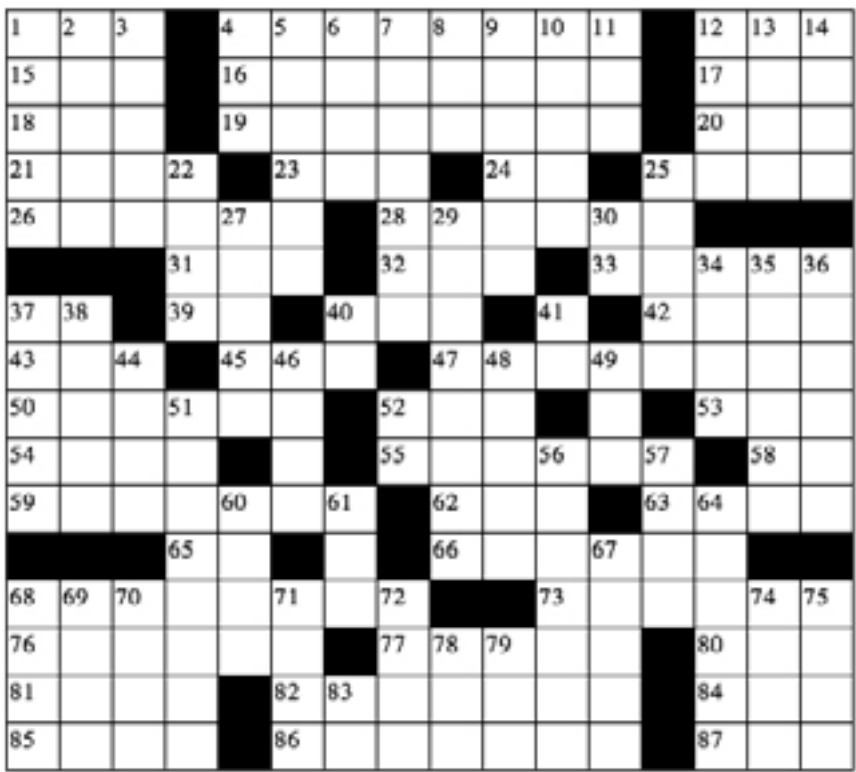


Bareeq program concludes its training season



Under the patronage and presence of Sheikha Entisar Salem Al-Ali, the Bareeq program concluded its first training season for school year 2018-2019, which continued for four days at Sheikha Salwa Hall at Marina hotel with the participation of 275 teachers from 37 government secondary schools.

CROSSWORD 2002



ACROSS

1. A flexible container with a single opening.
4. The Palestinian uprising (beginning in 1987) against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
12. The residue that remains when something is burned.
15. (Babylonian) The sky god.
16. A 10% solution of formaldehyde in water.
17. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
18. A passage with access only at one end.
19. A living organism characterized by voluntary movement.
20. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
21. Toward the mouth or oral region.
23. Rate of revolution of a motor.
24. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
26. Shrub bearing oval-fruited kumquats.
28. Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus *Acacia*.
31. An alliance made up of states that had been Soviet Socialist Republics in the Soviet Union prior to its dissolution in Dec 1991.
32. A prominent rock or pile of rocks on a hill.
33. Of or relating to the former Indo-European people.
37. Being ten more than one hundred forty.
39. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
42. Fast-growing herbaceous evergreen tree of South America having a broad trunk with high water content and dark green oval leaves.
43. (folklore) A small grotesque supernatural creature that makes trouble for human beings.
45. A master's degree in business.
47. A member of a panel.
50. A peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf.
53. (computer science) Memory whose contents can be accessed and read but cannot be changed.
54. A mark left by the healing of injured tissue.
55. Disparaging terms for small people.
58. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
59. Stem of the rattan palm used for making canes and umbrella handles.
62. An accountant certified by the state.
63. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
65. A period of time equal to 1/24th of a day.
66. A region and ancient country in the east of the Balkan Peninsula north of the Aegean Sea.
68. An Old World reptile family of Sauria.
73. Remote city of Kazakhstan that (ostensibly for security reasons) was made the capital in 1998.
76. The capital and largest city of Equatorial Guinea on the island of Bioko in the Gulf of Guinea.
77. Italian chemist noted for work on polymers (1903-1979).
80. A boy or man.
81. A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
82. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
84. Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus *Iva* with small greenish flowers.
85. A Chadic language spoken in Chad.
Any plant of the genus *Amorpha* having odd-pinnate leaves and purplish spicate flowers.
87. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.

DOWN

1. Back and sides of a hog salted and dried or smoked.
2. Frogs, toads, tree toads.
3. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
4. A United Nations agency that invest directly in companies and guarantees loans to private investors.
5. United States writer (1870-1902).
6. A tall perennial woody plant having a main trunk and branches forming a distinct elevated crown.
7. A tricyclic antidepressant (trade names Imavate and Tofranil) used to treat clinical depression.
8. Having much flesh (especially fat).
9. (zoology) Pertaining to alulae.
10. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
11. Used of a single unit or thing.
12. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
13. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
14. Stable gear consisting of either of two curved supports that are attached to the collar of a draft horse and that hold the traces.
22. Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.
25. Joyful religious song celebrating the birth of Christ.
27. A member of the extinct Algonquian people formerly living in northern Indiana and southern Michigan.
29. Be interwoven or interconnected.
30. A state in midwestern United States.
34. (Norse mythology) The primeval giant slain by Odin and his brothers and from whose body they created the world.
35. Become imbued.
36. East Indian tree widely cultivated in the tropics for its aromatic seed.
38. Spanish poet and dramatist (1898-1936).
40. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
41. Half the width of an em.
44. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
46. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
48. The 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
49. The compass point midway between north-east and east.
51. Hindu sacred text instructing the Brahmins to perform the Vedic rituals.
52. The sciences concerned with gathering and manipulating and storing and retrieving and classifying recorded information.
56. Straggling shrub with narrow leaves and conspicuous red flowers in dense globular racemes.
57. Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
60. Baby bed with high sides.
61. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
64. Ancient name for the coastal region of northwestern Asia Minor (including Lesbos).
67. Jordan's port.
69. Willing to face danger.
70. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
71. Amino acid that is formed in the liver and converted into dopamine in the brain.
72. (prefix) Within.
74. Rock that in its molten form (as magma) issues from volcanoes.
75. The sixth month of the civil year.
78. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
79. A protocol developed for the internet to get data from one network device to another.
83. The square of a body of any size of type.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Discipline and patience are two things you desperately need to practice today. Do not make any decisions without thinking things through. Account for every detail and carefully make careful measurements. This will keep your mind active. You may find yourself leaning toward a healthier lifestyle. Changes are forthcoming. This can bring great reward in the future. Aries. Decisions made today will be good ones.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

It seems as if you are a rock to many. Others turn to you for advice. You are admired and respected. You have needs and desires to be cared for as well. The combination of you feeling of you caring for others, and others caring for you should make for a perfect combination. This is a great time for you to get your point across to others. Your timing should be perfect now. Others will find you spontaneous and alive.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Make peace with your past. You can not thrive and experience true happiness if you continue to let past mistakes haunt you. Stop telling your story. Let it go. Apologize if you need to. Bury the hatchet. Live, Love, and Laugh, and move on. This is the first step in becoming all you can be and experiencing true happiness. It is your turn for happiness and you have a strong desire to make this happen.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

There will be stressful moments today. When they happen, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Exhale slowly to breathe out the stress. Just a few repetitions of this exercise will clear your mind and help you focus on what is important. Your work will not be interrupted by the short break and you will see a significant increase in your productivity. Instead of feeling exhausted at the end of the day, you will feel refreshed and ready for some fun activity.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Feelings that go beyond love and desire seem to come over you today. This is actually a desire so deep it has become a borderline obsession. You know what you want and you will not let anything stand in your way of getting it. You have to have it. In this frame of mind you may find feelings of passion and jealousy flow through you. You pride yourself on your independent nature. You are strong and determined. Write your desire on a piece of paper and hang it on the fridge. This would be a great motivation for you. Do not take your eye off of the prize, Leo. You will acquire everything your heart desires.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today may find you in deep thought about what makes people tick. You seek answers to some of the great mysteries in life. The meaning of life and death intrigue you. Who pulls the strings? Is there a puppet master, and if so who is it? You may find yourself deep in thought about these subjects. The answers to some questions may never be known. Let your faith kick in. Faith in all that is good and positive. Rest your mind and realize some answers are not meant to be found.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Baseball

Find and circle all of the Baseball words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Humphrey Bogart quotation.



- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| APPEAL | FAIR TERRITORY | INTERFERENCE | RETOUCH |
| BALK | FLY BALL | LEAGUE | RUN DOWN |
| BASE | FORCE PLAY | LINE DRIVE | RUNNER |
| BATTER | FORFEITED GAME | LIVE BALL | SCOREBOARD |
| BUNT | FOUL BALL | MOUND | SHORTSTOP |
| CATCH | FOUL TERRITORY | OBSTRUCTION | STRIKE |
| COACH | FOUL TIP | OFFENSE | TAG |
| DEAD BALL | GROUND BALL | OUTFIELDER | THROW |
| DEFENSE | IN FLIGHT | OVERSLIDE | TIE GAME |
| DOUBLE HEADER | INFIELD FLY | PENALTY | TRIPLE PLAY |
| DUGOUT | INFIELDER | PITCHER | UMPIRE |
| FAIR BALL | INNING | PIVOT FOOT | WILD PITCH |

Libra (September 23-October 22)

Out with the old. Bring on the new, exciting and wild. What a rebel you are! If it goes against tradition you are all about it today. You crave excitement and the same old, same old, just isn't going to cut it for you. Change is in the air. A new hairstyle, a new outfit, or a visit to a new place tonight may be just what you need to add a little excitement to your life, Libra. Go have some fun.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find the desires of your heart are being fulfilled. Your close relationships seem more powerful and feelings are stronger than ever before. You are at your most content when you feel cared for and needed. You find great stability when you feel this love and support. Now is a great time to make spending time with love ones a priority. You will find this may be the most peaceful situations for you, you are comfortable, loved, and valued. You may be the recipient of much praise and appreciation from your love ones.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may find yourself feeling as though you are going through the motions today. Today may seem as if you are on the outside looking in. You may feel as though it is all a dream. You find yourself unable to focus and not so responsible when it comes to your responsibilities. Those close to you may not appreciate this side of you and you may encounter a bit of conflict in the workplace or with someone close to you. However, you are able to really appreciate where you are at this point in your life and remain focused on achieving your goals.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is an exciting time for you. The breakthrough you have been working toward may finally happen today. You may find that reorganizing not only your thoughts, but also your surrounds will bring and new outlook on a problem and the answers will become crystal clear. This is huge accomplishment for you and will bring much excitement and praise into your world. Relationships have become top priority for you. You are starting to recognize and appreciate the world and all the beauty that surrounds you. This is a time that you are leaning towards seeing the good in everyone around you as well. You tend to give others the benefit of the doubt and refuse to judge them on past mistakes. Being in touch with your inner-workings has greatly motivated you to help others.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

As you enter a new cycle in your life mental discipline and patience are becoming very important to you. No decision will be made without deep thought and research. You are well aware your actions have consequences. You are extremely focused and determined to set the stage for great success. You may find yourself accounting for every detail. You seem to be taking life very seriously now. You could find your health and career to be a major focus for you. Be sure and take some time to relax as you know what they say about "all work and no play".

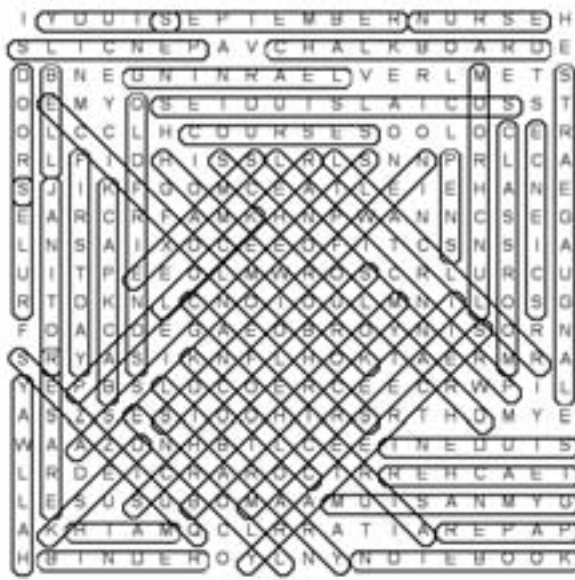


Pisces (February 19-March 20)

This is a time mental discipline and patience are two things very important to your success. Take note of every detail. Stop and take time to think things through. Keep your mind active and stay on top of things. You may find your focus turns to your health and career. You have come to realize in order to take care of business, you must first take care of you.

Yesterday's Solution

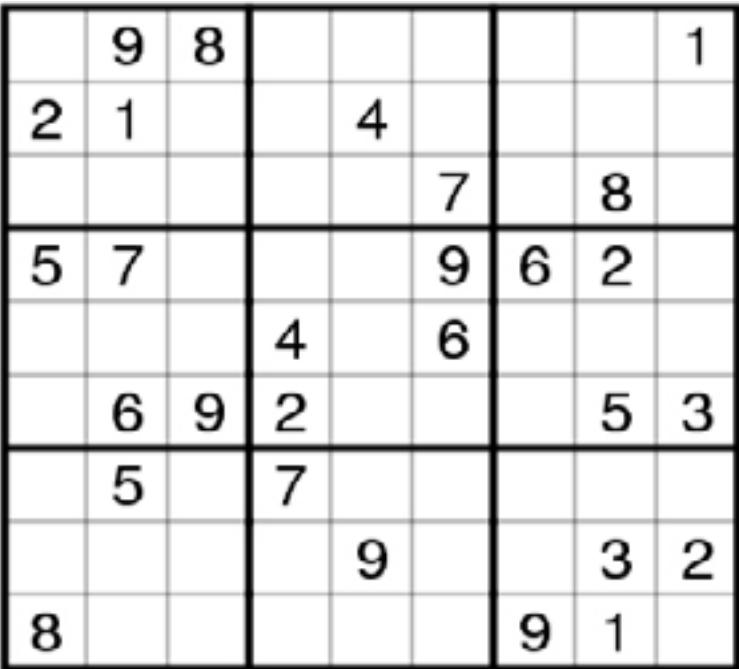
Back to School



- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| ASSIGNMENTS | ERASER | LUNCHROOM | ROLL CALL |
| BACKPACK | EXAMS | MATH | RULES |
| BATHROOM | FIRST DAY | NEW FRIENDS | SCHOOL BUS |
| BELL | GYMNASIUM | NOTESBOOK | SCHOOL OFFICE |
| BENDER | HALLWAY | NURSE | SCHOOLYARD |
| CAFETERIA | HOMEWORK | PADLOCK | OLD FRIENDS |
| CHALKBOARD | INTERCOM | PAPER | SCIENCE |
| CLOCK | JANITOR | PENCILS | SECRETARY |
| COURSES | LANGUAGE ARTS | PENS | SEPTEMBER |
| DESK | LEARNING | PRINCIPAL | SOCIAL STUDIES |
| DOORS | LIBRARY | QUIZZES | STUDENT |
| ENROLL | LOCKER | | STUDY |
| | | | TEACHER |

The hidden message is: I HAVE NEVER LET MY SCHOOLING INTERFERE WITH MY EDUCATION.

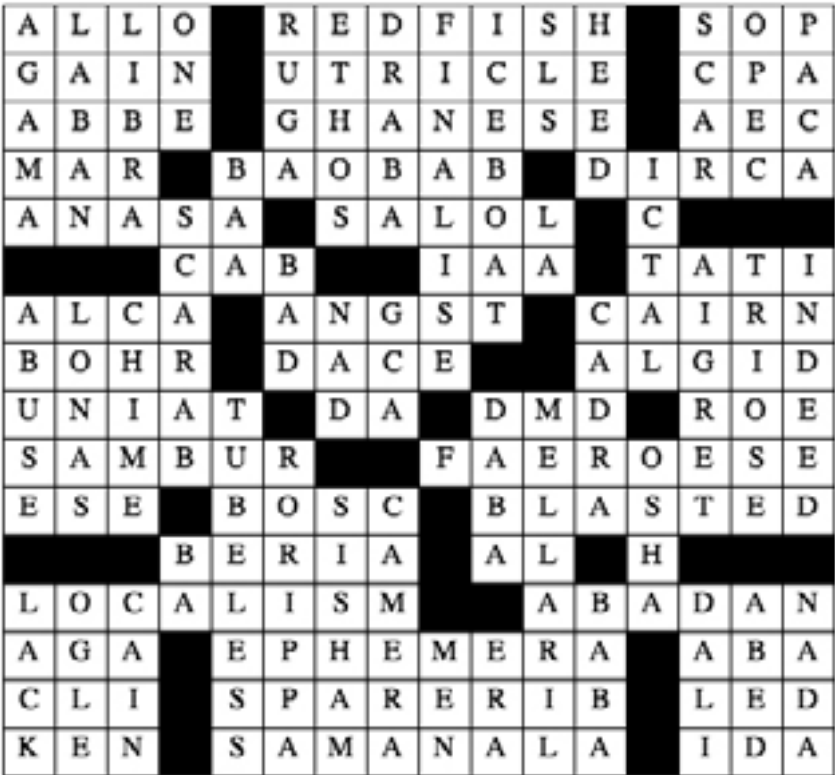
Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2018



Vietnamese model Jessica Minh Anh poses with one of her creation before her 2018 fall-winter fashion show staged on a floating catwalk aboard a Parisian "bateau mouche" cruising on the Seine river in Paris. — AFP

Frozen crystal beauty in the Dead Sea



One of Sigalit Landau artworks covered in salt crystal formations.

A ballerina's tutu, submerged in the Dead Sea and "frozen" by accumulated layers of salt into a 200 kg (440 lb) crystal-like sculpture, will soon go on international display, part of a unique artistic project at the lowest point on the planet. Artist Sigalit Landau, 49, has used the high salinity that makes aquatic life in the Dead Sea impossible to create a collection of shiny white sculptures that seem to come out of a fairy tale.

They include a ballet dancer's costume and shoes as well as musical instruments. Landau and her team secure their submerged objects with metal frames, weights and strong cords. She said she selects them based "mainly (on) memories and materials which I'm attracted to, but also that the sea really likes".

The artist, who has visited the Dead Sea regularly since childhood, said she embarked on the project after noticing the crystal formations along its shores that "happen sponta-



Sigalit Landau works next to one of her artworks, a cello covered in salt crystal formations.

neously". Landau has been creating the sculptures for the past 15 years at the Dead Sea, a site that has been popular for millennia among health seekers and tourists who come to float in its mineral-rich waters.

Wearing straw hats and long sleeve tops to protect them from the sun and temperatures that can reach 46 degrees Celsius (115 degrees F), Landau and her team examine each item. Some, she said, crystalize quickly while others take more time, depending on the heat. The Jerusalem-born artist and her team regularly document the process before and after the items are extracted, either by hand or by crane, and brought to a nearby hanger where a collection of sculptures is preserved. Her new works will go on display in the Museum Der Moderne Rupertinum in the Austrian city of Salzburg next year as part of a project entitled "Salt Years". Landau is publishing a book about her project next year. — Reuters



A ballerina's tutu covered in salt crystal formations is removed from the Dead Sea.



A ballerina's tutu covered in salt crystal formations is removed from the Dead Sea. — AFP photos



Sigalit Landau's pieces are displayed at her studio.

Sweden returns Nazi-looted Kokoschka painting to Jewish heir



This undated handout photo made available by the Swedish state museum for modern art in Stockholm shows the painting by Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka from 1910 titled Marquis Joseph de Montesquiou-Fezensac. —AFP

Sweden's modern museum on Tuesday said it had returned a Nazi-confiscated painting by Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka to the heir of a persecuted Jewish art collector. "It is with joy and relief that we see the Kokoschka painting return to its rightful owner," the state-owned Moderna Museet in Stockholm said in a statement. Known for his expressionist portraits and paintings of landscapes, Kokoschka's portrait of "Marquis Joseph de Montesquiou-Fezensac" (1910) initially belonged to Alfred Flechtheim, a well-known art collector and gallery owner who was forced to flee Nazi Germany in 1933.

"The painting was taken from him because he was Jewish," the Moderna Museet in Stockholm said in a statement, adding it had therefore "decided to return the work to (his) heir". Flechtheim's employee Alex Vomel sold the painting when the Nazis expropriated the gallery and artwork between 1933 and 1934. "Vomel, who joined the Nazi party early on, took advantage of his former employer's tragic situation," the museum said.

A self-taught painter in the German Expressionism movement, Kokoschka was in the league of artists deemed "degenerate" by the Nazis.

The painting has been sent to the United States where Flechtheim's heir Michael Hulton lives. Daniel Birnbaum, the head of the museum, said it took two years to exclude other possible owners. "And in the shadow of a genocide ... you cannot demand receipts and invoices," he told AFP, adding it's unclear how the painting was first sold to Sweden's Nationalmuseum in 1934 before it was exhibited at Moderna Museet. "It's immensely important for both Sweden's government and our museum to not have any work with problematic origins in the collection," Moderna Museet said. Birnbaum said the portrait of the Marquis, painted in black, brown, grey and violet-grey with sketchy brush strokes, raises questions about similar cases. In 2009, the Moderna Museet returned another artwork to a Jewish family. — AFP

Dolly Parton to be honored in Grammy gala

Country legend Dolly Parton will be honored at a charity concert ahead of next year's Grammy Awards, the Recording Academy, which administers the prize, announced Tuesday. Parton will be the 2019 focus of Musicares, a charitable wing of the Recording Academy that raises money to help musicians in need through the annual star-studded gala. Parton is among the most prominent women in country music and one of the Nashville-based industry's most prolific songwriters. She became such a cultural icon that she is the center of the Dollywood theme park in Tennessee.

Announcing the choice of Parton, the first country artist to be recognized at Musicares, the Recording Academy pointed to her longstanding charitable activities which include working on literacy and assisting Tennessee residents after disasters. "Dolly Parton has always been and continues to be a courageous trailblazer and indomitable inspiration for creators and artists," Recording Academy president Neil Portnow said in a statement. Announcing the schedule for next year's Grammy Week in Los Angeles, Portnow said that Parton would be honored on February 8 with the Grammys two days later.

The awards, the most prestigious handed out by the music industry, shifted this year to New York to mark the Grammys' 60th edition. The last Musicares honored Fleetwood Mac, bringing together the notoriously fractious band for a concert with performances by Lorde, Miley Cyrus and Haim attended by former president Bill Clinton. Musicares said it distributed more than \$6.4 million dollars among some 8,500 members of the music industry in the last fiscal year. — AFP



In this file photo US country music singer Dolly Parton performs on the Pyramid Stage, on the final day of the Glastonbury Festival of Music and Performing Arts on Worthy Farm in Somerset, southwest England. — AFP

Movie on N Korea defector to open Asia's top film festival

A film about the plight of a defector who abandons her family in North Korea will open Asia's biggest film festival next month, organizers said Tuesday as they look to end years of turmoil surrounding the event. The Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) will run from October 4-13 and feature 323 movies from 79 countries, including 115 which will have their world premiere. This year's festival will open with South Korean filmmaker Jero Yun's "Beautiful Days", which tells the story of a woman who abandons her husband and young son to flee North Korea for a better life but later reconnects with them.

"The unique story line of the restoration of a family through initial dissolution was appealing and the subject of a North Korean defector was also very timely," said festival director Jay Jeon. The Busan International Film Festival, launched in 1996, has grown into the largest of its kind in Asia with a focus on discovering new movies and up-and-coming directors from across the region. But the annual event was hit by a bitter row with the municipal government of the host city Busan over the 2014 screening of a controversial documentary about the Sewol ferry disaster.

The film criticized the government's handling of the sinking in April 2014 that killed more than 300 people, mostly schoolchildren. Since then the organizing committee has faced a flurry of official investigations and suffered an unprecedented cut in state funding. Organizers vowed to put aside the controversy this year. "We would be grateful if you can think of it as the year for harmony, normalization and a new leap forward," said Lee Yong-kwan, chairman of the organizing committee. Martial arts drama, "Master Z: The Ip Man Legacy", by Hong Kong's Yuen Woo-ping will close the festival. While the guest list has yet to be fully disclosed, organizers said American producer Jason Blum is among the high-profile visitors who have confirmed their attendance. — AFP

Bon Iver to present dance work at Kennedy Center festival



Rockers Bon Iver and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Du Yun will showcase new works in the latest festival of forward-looking music at the Kennedy Center, the Washington cultural institution announced Tuesday. The Kennedy Center, hoping to reach new audiences and to shake off some of its staid image, in March held its first Direct Current festival with an emphasis on contemporary and experimental fare. The second edition, to take place from March 25 to April 7, will feature a new project by Bon Iver, the Grammy-winning band from Wisconsin that first took the spotlight a decade ago with its emotionally resonant indie folk.

Bon Iver-whose last album, "22, A Million," took a sharply experimental turn with numerical riddles over synthesizer loops-will release a new work at the Kennedy Center called "Come Through" on March 25. "Come Through" is a collaboration with TU Dance, a company from St. Paul, Minnesota that brings together modern dance, ballet and African influences. The festival will also see the US premiere of "Where We Lost Our Shadows," an oratorio set to a video that explores the lives of some of the than one million refugees and migrants who have come to Germany since 2015.

The oratorio was written by Du Yun, the Chinese-born New York composer who won the Pulitzer Prize for music last year with "Angel's Bone," an opera that delves into human trafficking with its story of spirits descending on an American everytown. Palestinian director Khaled Jarrar shot the video for "Where We Lost Our Shadows," whose world premiere will take place in January at the Southbank Centre in London. Next year's festival will also feature a trilogy of works by the legendary choreographer Bill T. Jones including "Dora: Tramontane," about his French Jewish mother-in-law's experience as a nurse and social worker in World War II. The Kennedy Center, set on the Potomac River, is considered a living national monument to slain president John F. Kennedy, a lover of the arts. — AFP

Docs, horror classics and politics dominate Toronto film fest

Hot documentaries, reboots of classic horror franchises, plenty of politics, and of course Oscar-bait galas will be served up at this week's Toronto International Film Festival. More than 300 feature and short films from 74 countries — 31,300 minutes of film in total-will be screened at the 43rd TIFF, the biggest film festival in North America, which opens today and runs through September 16.

The event is crucial for Oscar-conscious studios and distributors, attracting hundreds of filmmakers and actors to Canada's largest city. Big names set to make an appearance on the festival's 1,108 feet (338 meters) of red carpet include Alec Baldwin, Steve Carell, Penelope Cruz, Drake, Matthew McConaughey, Robert Redford, Chris Pine and Hilary Swank. Several directors will also make their English-language debuts, including Xavier Dolan with his much-anticipated "The Death and Life of John F. Donovan."

Meanwhile Chilean director Sebastian Lelio, who earned an Oscar for the 2017 film "A Fantastic Woman," will premiere the English-language remake of his 2013 Spanish-language breakout feature "Gloria Bell," with Julianne Moore. "Adapting a film you've already made for a different audience and still keeping the heart of it is especially hard," said festival boss Cameron Bailey in a nod to Lelio's talent. Elsewhere, Hollywood studios are hoping to breathe new life into classic horror franchises "Predator" and "Halloween" at the festival's late night screenings.

"What you're going to see this year is filmmakers diving in and grappling with the changes that we're seeing in society, and doing it in a number of different ways," Bailey told AFP. He cited examples such as Steve McQueen's thriller "Widows," starring Viola Davis, and Claire Denis's "High Life" with Robert Pattinson and Juliette Binoche. The former, he said, is a heist movie but McQueen, whose "12 Years A Slave" went on from winning the TIFF's audience prize for best picture to taking the top honor at the Oscars in 2014, also "weaves in an exploration of how Chicago is a kind of roiling, changing place where local politics, and racial and class divisions, affect how people live their lives." Denis's film, meanwhile, uses outer space as a backdrop for "an exploration of gender issues," Bailey said.

Real life drama

There is also a huge documentary lineup with profiles of legendary music producer Quincy Jones, influential director Ingmar Bergman and soprano Maria Callas, as well as "The Elephant Queen," which follows the journey of an elephant herd, and "The Truth About Killer Robots." "There's an increased interest in documentaries," Bailey said. "Audiences are searching for truth and are turning to filmmakers they trust." Several of the documentaries are still looking for distributors, so "they're some of the hottest films in terms of acquisitions," he said.



Jason Reitman directs Hugh Jackman, Vera Farmiga and J.K. Simmons in the biopic "The Front Runner" about US Senator Gary Hart's 1988 presidential run that was derailed by a scandalous affair.

For politicians, Michael Moore is back chronicling the rise of Donald Trump in "Fahrenheit 11/9," an unofficial sequel to his 2004 hit documentary "Fahrenheit 9/11," alongside exposes of strategist Steven Bannon in "American Dharma," and Russian leaders in "Putin's Witnesses" and Werner Herzog's "Meeting Gorbachev." Jason Reitman directs Hugh Jackman, Vera Farmiga and J.K. Simmons in the biopic "The Front Runner" about US Senator Gary Hart's 1988 presidential run that was derailed by a scandalous affair.

In past years, films such as "Spotlight," "Slumdog Millionaire," and "The King's Speech" went on from winning the Toronto festival's audience prize for best picture to take the top honor at the Oscars. Many of the films positioned for accolades this year-including a remake of "A Star is Born" with Lady Gaga, Damien Chazelle's "First Man" starring Ryan Gosling as astronaut Neil Armstrong, and the western "The Sisters Brothers" starring Joaquin Phoenix-will have already premiered at the Venice or New York film festivals before they are screened in Toronto.

In 2017, Toronto helped launch Barry Jenkins's "Moonlight" toward the Oscars, after it premiered at the Telluride Film Festival in Colorado. But he's chosen this year to unveil his latest "If Beale Street Could Talk," set in 1970s Harlem, about a woman trying to free her falsely accused fiancé from prison, in Toronto. — AFP

Kirkuk bookshop uses English to promote peace in divided Iraqi city

All are welcome to attend free English language discussions and lessons in Sami Sulaiman's bookshop - on the strict condition that they steer clear of politics and religion and refrain from speaking their own languages. The bookshop, Al-Tareeq ("The Road" in Arabic), is in the multi-ethnic northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk, long riven by nationalist and sectarian tensions that have pitted Arabs against Kurds and Turkmens and Sunni Muslims against Shi'ites. Sulaiman, a Kurd, said the aim of the three-hour-long English courses on Friday evenings was to promote peace and harmony among the diverse ethnic and religious groups that live in Kirkuk, which is the hub of a major oil-producing region.

"Discussions... about political and religious issues are not allowed. The main aim of the gathering is to bring together as many people as possible from all ethnic groups in Kirkuk but to prevent them from discussing politics," Sulaiman said. The condition is vital in a city where even children in alleyways can be overheard talking politics, he added.

Many Iraqi Kurds have long seen Kirkuk as the future capital of an independent Kurdish state, but those hopes were dashed last October when Iraqi government forces took back control of the city following the defeat of Islamic State militants in northern Iraq.

Sunni Muslim Kurds comprise the largest community in Kirkuk, a city of more than one million people, followed by Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim Turkmens, Sunni Arabs and Christian Assyrians, according to data from the Iraqi Planning Ministry. Sulaiman said the use of English as a politically neutral language was vital to his project, in which he is supported by a number of young volunteers drawn from Kirkuk's various ethnic and religious communities.

"The English language is accepted by all the people... By doing this we want to send a clear message to the world that the people of Kirkuk love to be together," said Sulaiman, a graduate of the American University in Beirut. "Kirkuk does not differ from other places in the world, it chooses life and it loves life." — Reuters



Iraqi youth gather at a bookstore in city of Kirkuk, Iraq. — Reuters



Iraqi students take an English language exam at a bookstore in Kirkuk, Iraq.



A man and woman read a book at a bookstore in Kirkuk, Iraq.



A man looks at books at a bookstore in Kirkuk, Iraq.

Lifestyle | Movies

Natalie Portman: US school shootings a civil war

Hollywood star Natalie Portman called school shootings America's "civil war" Tuesday, comparing the psychological torment they cause to the threat of terror attacks in Israel. The Oscar-winning actress drew the parallel before the premiere of her new film about a traumatised pop diva, "Vox Lux", which opens with a Columbine-style massacre. "I have been interested in the questions around the psychology of what violence does to individuals and in mass psychology for some time, coming from a place where people have encountered violence for so long," said the Israeli-born star, best known for "Black Swan". "Unfortunately it is a phenomenon we now experience regularly in the United States with the school shootings."

"As (the film's director) Brady (Corbet) has put to me before, it is a kind of civil war and terror that we have in the US," she told reporters. The regular mass killings were having a "psychological impact on every kid going to school every day and every parent dropping their kids off," said added. "Small acts of violence can cause widespread torment."

Massacre survivor

Portman, 37, plays a singer who is badly wounded in a bloodbath at her school but builds a pop career after she sings at a memorial for her classmates. The movie's director Corbet, who was a schoolboy in Colorado at the time of the Columbine killings, confessed that the massacre "marked me psychologically. I was living there when it happened. It was close to home." Corbet, who is best known as an actor-starring in "Thunderbirds" and Michael Haneke's "Funny Games"—was editing his award-winning directorial debut, "The Childhood of a Leader", in Paris when the city was hit by a wave of terror attacks in 2015.

"I had a five-month-old (child) at that point, and me and my wife were shaken by it. One restaurant that got shot up was a place we went a few times a week, it was a narrow miss. We were haunted by it," he said. Corbet described his story as a "poetic rumination of what we have all been through... We live in an age of anxiety. We are having more sleepless nights than ever."



(From right) Actress Stacy Martin, actress Natalie Portman and actress Raffey Cassidy arrive for the premiere of the film "Vox Lux".

Madonna-like diva

He said the film, with its anti-heroine star-played by British actress Raffey Cassidy in her younger years and Portman when she becomes a Madonna-like diva—was meant as a salve, "something we could come together over". "When I think about what will define the early 21st century, especially as an American, it's Columbine, 9/11 and the global terror threat that has permeated every place I have lived. I wanted to look at what we've all been through in the last 20 years," he told Screen magazine earlier.

Corbet later told reporters that "the 20th century was defined by the banality of evil. I think the 21st century will be defined by the pageantry of evil." The director—one of 21 vying for the Golden Lion top prize at Venice which will be awarded Saturday—said it took him a year alone to put together the film's soundtrack before he started shooting.

Australian pop singer-songwriter Sia and avant garde darling Scott Walker came up with the tunes for Portman and Cassidy's characters, with Portman's husband, French choreographer Benjamin Millepied, putting together the dance numbers for the stadium show finale. "Vox Lux" is the second major pop music-based movie to turn on the rise of a female singer at Venice. Lady Gaga last week won glowing reviews for her debut as a big screen leading lady in a remake of "A Star is Born". —AFP



Actress Natalie Portman arrives for the premiere of the film "Vox Lux" presented in competition during the 75th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. —AFP photos



(From left) Director Brady Corbet, actress Natalie Portman and actress Stacy Martin assist actress Raffey Cassidy (center) with her dress as they arrive for the premiere of the film "Vox Lux".



(From left) Actress Natalie Portman, director Brady Corbet, actress Stacy Martin and actress Raffey Cassidy arrive for the premiere of the film "Vox Lux".



Camilla of Bourbon-Two Sicilies (right), and her daughter Maria-Chiara of Bourbon-Two Sicilies arrive for the premiere of the film "Vox Lux".



Actor Stefano Accorsi and his wife Bianca Vitali arrive for the premiere of the film "Vox Lux".



Singer Al Bano (center), his daughter Jasmine Carrisi (left) and his son Al Bano Carrisi Jr arrive for the premiere of the film "Vox Lux".



Rodrigo Alves, known as "The Human Ken", arrives for the premiere of the film "Vox Lux".

Uruguay's 'El Pepe' is film's new working class hero

He is 83 and was never exactly movie star material, but Jose "Pepe" Mujica, the former president of Uruguay, is the undisputed star of the Venice film festival. "El Pepe"—dubbed "the world's humblest head of state" for giving away 90 percent of his salary to good causes—is the hero of two films, attracting just as many autograph hunters and selfie seekers as some Hollywood stars. "Pepe! Pepe! Pepe!" shouted a group of teenagers who spotted him arrive Monday.

"I am not a star," said the rather embarrassed veteran left-winger, sporting one of two suits he owns, after the premiere of "El Pepe, a Supreme Life" by the cigar-chomping Serbian director Emir Kusturica. "I am only here because my friend Kusturica asked me," said the man who chose to stay in his tiny farmhouse outside Montevideo growing his own vegetables rather than move into Uruguay's presidential palace when he was elected in 2010.

Five years later on the day he left office Kusturica filmed tens of thousands of people lining the streets of the capital to cheer the man they credited with cutting the country's poverty rate from 40 to 12 percent. "Usually people take to the streets to get rid of politi-

cians," said the flamboyant Sarajevo-born film-maker, who previously shot a portrait of Argentina football legend Maradona.

Robbing banks

"We are not used to politicians who are an inspiration," Kusturica—one of the few directors ever to win the Palme d'Or twice—said he had to meet "this president who drives a tractor and even fixes it himself. And when I arrived at his farm, he was on it!" His documentary was screened hot on the heels of a feature film in Venice which tells how Mujica and his comrades survived 12 years of torture and solitary confinement for resisting Uruguay's two-decade military dictatorship.

The former guerrilla was shot six times during his time as a leader of the armed Tupamaros movement. "The greatest feeling in the world is walking into a bank with a 45 (Colt automatic pistol)," he joked in the documentary. "Everybody respects you." Yet the flower-grower-turned-revolutionary said the torture and deprivation depicted in "A Twelve-Year Night" helped forge him. "How do we know what we are

capable of if we're not placed in the worst circumstances? I would not be who I am if it wasn't for the time I spent being myself," he said. Today the jail he was held in by the generals who ruled Uruguay from 1973 to 1985 is a shopping mall.

Che Guevara and the Pope

The movie's director Alvaro Brechner said the most impressive thing was not just how El Pepe and his friends "survived solitary confinement, but the way in which they did it - with no thought of vengeance." The films come after yet another documentary featuring El Pepe, "Fragile Balance", has been a big hit in Spain. In it Mujica is a prophetic figure warning how the survival of the planet is inextricably linked to improving the lot of the poor.

Kusturica said El Pepe had become such a hero for millions because his austere lifestyle, sincerity and pragmatic idealism provide an antidote to the "fake left" in Europe "who have betrayed the poor and lost their way". "He is clean when so much is corrupt. He believes that if you are chosen by the majority you cannot then live like the minority. He gives all of us



Director Emir Kusturica (right) and former President of Uruguay Jose "Pepe" Mujica arrive for the premiere of the film "El Pepe, Una Vida Suprema" (El Pepe, A Supreme Life) presented out of competition during the 75th Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. —AFP

who are seekers for a just society hope," he added. Mujica, who keeps twin pictures of Che Guevara and Pope Francis on his mantelpiece, has taken to his new role as elder socialist sage with amused relish and not a little self-deprecation. "I am not a star but I was kissed by one," he admitted in Venice. "All I've done is that one day I decided to try to sort out the world. "It was my choice to be poor. I am a neo-Stoic, I suppose. I think it is better to have fewer commitments. Having lots of money and material commitments stops you living—and life disappears in the meantime. You have to dedicate time to the people you love." —AFP

New Yorkers strut street style



Robert Norman, a street vendor and musician, poses in the Bronx. —Reuters photos



Diondre Cruz, 17, poses in the Bronx.



Daniel Silverstein, 29, poses in Brooklyn.



Kat McClanahan poses in Manhattan.



Nia Indigo, a stylist based in New York, poses in Brooklyn.



Priti Serchan, an artist and part-time child care provider, poses in Queens.



Abby Felix poses in Brooklyn.



Seth Hatch poses in Brooklyn.

New York City is one of the fashion capitals of the world and when it kicks off Fashion Week stylists, buyers, fashion enthusiasts and celebrities will be keen to see what has been declared “in style” for the fall and winter seasons. Off the runway, however, a different story about what is fashionable will be told on the streets of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx where vintage pieces, unique footwear and comfort are highly favored by people living in the city’s boroughs. In Brooklyn, fashion is identity-driven and liberating, says actor Seth Hatch, who works at a Williamsburg thrift shop. “Most recently I’ve been embracing a softer, more feminine side to my fashion,” said Hatch while sorting a rack of women’s dresses.

Abby Felix, a 23-year-old who works in fashion public relations, shops at retail stores such as ASOS.com and American Apparel as well as thrift shops to create a 90’s-inspired “eclectic” look. She says one reason for taking an off-beat approach to fashion is that mainstream designers are “starting to all look the same.” “We have to find a new way to create again,” Felix said. “There’s not a lot of originality.” In Queens, Priti Serchan, a 31-year-old illustrator from Nepal who follows Nepalese-American fashion designer Prabal Gurung, says she does not pay attention to fashion trends. “It becomes a lot of waste,” Serchan said. “You get to a point where it doesn’t matter and it’s more

about being comfortable and having your own sense of personal style.”

Modish in pink

To the untrained eye, Nia Indigo might look as if she left home wearing a night gown and sneakers, but her appearance is quite intentional. The 23-year-old stylist’s affinity for mixing trendy high-end designer clothing with thrift shop finds led her onto a bustling Brooklyn street in a vibrant pink silk dress and Louis Vuitton Archlight sneakers that retail for more than \$1,000. “I love galleries ... and I get inspiration from installations mostly,” Indigo explains while waiting with friends for a table at a popular brunch spot. “I like to look like walking art.” Walking down a lower Manhattan street wearing a white collared blouse, blue jeans and pink suede heels, Kat McClanahan, 23, says she derives her fashion inspiration from film and television characters and music. “Best way to describe my style: If Lou Reed ever had a daughter, it’d be me,” said McClanahan, a merchandising manager.

Recycling in Vogue

At Zero Waste Daniel, a unisex clothing store in Williamsburg that is the brainchild of Daniel Silverstein, clothes are eco-friendly and made from 100 percent scrap material. Silverstein says he aims to reduce textile

pollution and raise awareness about the fast rate of consumption and waste of clothing that is driven by fashion trends. “I try to make stuff that is wearable and comfortable, that you can wear around and really move in, that you can style in different ways and is versatile for your life without contributing to that issue,” Silverstein says while stitching T-shirts on a sewing machine. In the Bronx, Diondre Cruz, 17, says he sets his style apart from “dressing regular” by tapping into the creativity of Japanese anime characters and rappers like Trippie Redd and ASAP Rocky. “I’m not really big on New York Fashion Week. I kind of just do my own thing. I wear whatever I like,” Cruz said.

Along the Fordham Road shopping strip in the Bronx, Robert Norman, 37, wears an all-white, gothic and western inspired outfit while selling sunglasses on the street. He says a good look starts “from the ground up.” “Your shoe game ... that’s the foundation,” says Norman while giving a nod to his Versace-inspired white boots with gold charms. “If your shoes are all scuffed up it kills the whole thing. It does the heavy lifting.” Although Fordham Road is not a runway, it is one of the streets New Yorkers strut in all their self-styled glory. —Reuters

Italian designer Cucinelli makes a mediaeval fashion statement

Italian fashion tycoon Brunello Cucinelli, best known for selling cashmere sweaters for thousands of dollars each, has unveiled his latest creative project: a fully restored mediaeval hamlet nestled in a valley in central Umbria. Cucinelli showed hundreds of invited journalists and guests around the 13th century settlement of Solomeo on Tuesday, having spent 30 years and an undisclosed sum from his personal fortune to refurbish stone buildings, build a theatre and demolish some warehouses to plant a new landscape of olive trees and vines.

Solomeo has been Cucinelli’s corporate headquarters since the 1980s, in keeping with his efforts to distinguish the firm that bears his name from rivals that are more closely associated with Italy’s fashion capital of Milan. The business moved gradually to the valley from its original premises, the Solomeo castle, because it needed room to expand. Today, Milan-listed Brunello Cucinelli Spa employs 1,700 staff worldwide, with around 1,000 living around Solomeo. Cucinelli, 65, told his guests the restoration was part of his philosophy of “humanistic capitalism”, which involves paying workers above the market average, providing a decent work environment and banning email outside office hours.

The founder said his employment practices stem from his years growing up in a poor family in Umbria, watching his father toil in a factory making pre-fabricated concrete and being appalled at the way uneducated workers from the countryside were treated. “This changed my life,” Cucinelli said, adding that he believed his business model could be exported. “I’m absolutely convinced the same can be done in other parts of Italy, Europe and the world,” he added. —Reuters

‘Effortlessly chic’ Meghan Markle named People’s best dressed woman

Meghan Markle was yesterday named the best dressed woman of 2018 by People magazine in a rare royal accolade by the celebrity publication. Markle, 37, who became the Duchess of Sussex when she married Britain’s Prince Harry in May, topped People’s annual list ahead of Hollywood actresses including Cate Blanchett and Sandra Bullock, human rights lawyer Amal Clooney and reality star Kim Kardashian. Giving top honors to a royal family member marked a departure for the magazine. “We have never had the list with royals or anyone outside of Hollywood. But when you talk about style and 2018 you cannot have that conversation without mentioning Meghan Markle,” People Style and Beauty editor Andrea Laventhal told Reuters. “Her style was the one that really had the spotlight

this year so we felt we had to not only put her on the list but make her the best dressed,” Laventhal said.

California-born Markle, the former star of the TV show “Suits,” has rarely left the front pages of magazines and newspapers since her engagement to Harry in November 2017. Their May wedding was watched by millions around the world. Yet Markle has won plaudits for mixing outfits from retail fashion stores with designer couture, while flouting traditional British royal protocol by showing her bare legs, wearing off the shoulder outfits and for wearing her hair in a messy bun for her wedding. “Whether she is wearing a classic button down shirt and ripped jeans, like any other girl, or a couture wedding gown and a tiara, unlike most of us, she always looks effortlessly chic. There is something

about her that looks polished without being too perfect,” Laventhal said.

People also praised Blanchett for consistently pulling off daring but flawless fashion designs, Clooney for a “bold and glamorous style that’s all her own,” and “Ocean’s 8” star Bullock who the magazine said “has never looked more stunning.” Kardashian, who mixes casual looks inspired by husband Kanye West’s Yeezy fashion line with figure hugging glamour, was given a social influencer award by the Council of Fashion Designers of America in June. “She looked great this year. She really sticks to her own aesthetic. She certainly does what she wants,” Laventhal said. —Reuters



Britain's Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, and his wife Meghan, Duchess of Sussex attend the annual WellChild Awards in London. —AFP

Classifieds

Thursday, September 6, 2018

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



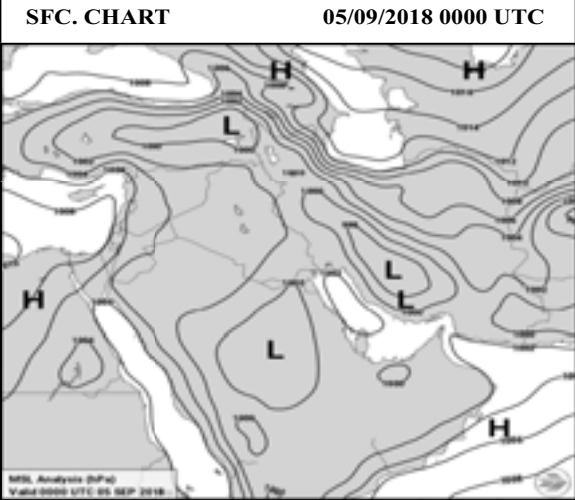
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot and and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 35 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Humid specially over coastal areas with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for mist forming.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div>SFC. CHART05/09/2018 0000 UTC</div>	
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	34 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	30 °C		
ABDALY	47 °C	30 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	48 °C	31 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	40 °C	31 °C		
SALMIYAH	36 °C	32 °C		
AHMADI	36 °C	31 °C		
NUWAISIB	45 °C	28 °C		
WAFRA	47 °C	27 °C		
SALMY	46 °C	29 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	09/06	Hot	45 °C	30 °C	NW-SE	10 - 32 km/h
Friday	09/07	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	44 °C	29 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Saturday	09/08	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	46 °C	31 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Sunday	09/09	Very hot	47 °C	32 °C	VRB-NW	06 - 26 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:06
Sunrise	05:27
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	15:20
Sunset	18:07
Isha	19:26

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	44 °C
MIN. Temp.	29 °C
MAX. RH	95 %
MIN. RH	23 %
MAX. Wind	SE 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

FOR SALE

Expat moving, household items, antiques, glassware, dishes, misc. Fri - Sat 9 to 4. Salmiya, block 2, Masoud St., #85, behind Holiday Inn & Gold's Gym. Contact: 51345662 (C 5418) 6-9-2018

LOST

Original document policy No. 633003907 - 5 to Mr. Fayyaz Ahmed Fayyazi, DV the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan, Gulf Zone is reported to have been lost. Anyone finding the same or claiming any interest in it should communicate with the Manager Kuwait State Life Office - Ph: 22452208. (C 5416)

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAJA, holder of Indian Passport No. M7063824, issued at Kuwait on 04/08/2015 resident of Rampur and presently residing at Apt #2, 1st floor, street 3, block 12, Salmiya, Kuwait, do hereby change my name from Raja to Rameez Raja Mirza with immediate effect. 3-9-2018

ACCOMMODATION

For Filipino only Farwaniya block 1, near gulfmart. Available 25 of August, Contact 94418396 or 69972330

EMERGENCY

112

For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL
HOTLINE 128

Kuwait Times



JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Embassy of Bangladesh in Kuwait would like to recruit an «Office Assistant Cum Computer Operator» in the office of the Sonali Bank Representative on an urgent basis. Minimum qualification is graduate (computer diploma holder candidates can apply) adequate computer typing skill in both Bangla and English (minimum typing speed per minute in Bangla-20 words and English-25 words) along with functional knowledge in computer hardware and software. Interested Bangladesh citizens living in Kuwait and having Kuwait valid Civil ID & residency are requested to apply in plain paper directly or email (mission.kuwait@mofa.gov.bd) with latest CV to the Head of Chancery, Bangladesh Embassy, Kuwait (House-11, St-29, Block-2, Khaldiya) on or before 10 September 2018 during office hour (Sunday to Thursday from 8:00 am to 04:00 pm) along with one copy of passport size photograph, copies of all duly attested (by Board/University/Ministry of Education/Notary Public/ Ministry of Foreign Affairs etc.) certificate, passport, Kuwait Civil ID card with contact number. Date of written exam, Viva and practical tests will be informed latter. All original documents/certificates must be shown during viva.

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Watanija Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700

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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 6/9/2018						Departure Flights on Thursday 6/9/2018						Arrival Flights on Thursday 6/9/2018						Departure Flights on Thursday 6/9/2018					
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time				
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05	JZR	1762	Dubai	12:30	BDR	1760	KRT	12:30				
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	KAC	792	Madinah	13:40	MSC	502	Alexandria	00:10	SAW	702	Asyut	13:10	JZR	1776	Dubai	13:10				
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15	JZR	779	Jeddah	13:45	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	ABY	122	Damascus	13:30	ABY	122	Sharjah	13:35				
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FEG	341	Sohag	13:50	MSR	2615	Cairo	00:30	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40	THY	767	Istanbul	13:40				
SAI	441	Lahore	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	13:55	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30	JZR	144	Doha	13:55	JZR	144	Doha	13:55				
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	JZR	560D	Sohag	00:40	JZR	124	Bahrain	14:00	JZR	124	Bahrain	14:00				
KAC	102	London	00:50	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15	FEG	344	Sohag	01:05	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00				
JZR	539	Cairo	01:00	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	MSC	406	Sohag	01:05	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05	JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05				
JZR	609D	Hyderabad	01:10	KAC	618	Doha	14:20	THY	773	Istanbul	01:45	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10				
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15	KAC	516	Tehran	14:20	SAI	442	Lahore	01:50	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15				
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50	WAN	435	Al Najaf	14:20	WAN	435	Al Najaf	14:20				
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	798	Taif	14:40	JZR	502	Luxor	01:55	FEG	242	Alexandria	14:50	FEG	242	Alexandria	14:50				
KLM	466	Bahrain	01:45	JZR	789	Riyadh	14:45	KAC	677	Dubai	02:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00				
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50	JZR	528	Asyut	02:00	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00				
KAC	1268	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	194	TXZ	14:55	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	15:00	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	15:00				
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	FDB	8065	Dubai	15:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:45	KAC	691	Muscat	15:00	KAC	691	Muscat	15:00				
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	KAC	304	Mumbai	15:05	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05				
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55	JZR	188	Dubai	15:10	JZR	188	Dubai	15:10				
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:10	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	QTR	1079	Dubai	15:15	QTR	1079	Dubai	15:15				
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	562	Amman	15:20	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45				
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55				
JZR	553D	Alexandria	02:50	KAC	502	Beirut	15:30	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00				
JZR	607	Kochi	02:55	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35	THY	769	Istanbul	03:35	FDB	8066	Dubai	16:00	FDB	8066	Dubai	16:00				
JZR	1268	Abu Dhabi	03:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	JZR	417	Doha	03:45	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05				
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	118	New York	16:00	RBG	216	Sohag	03:45	KAC	563	Amman	16:10	KAC	563	Amman	16:10				
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	MSC	404	Asyut	04:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15				
MSC	403	Asyut	03:05	KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:15	KAC	619	Doha	16:15				
RBG	215	Sohag	03:05	MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20				
KAC	418	Manila	03:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20				
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10	FDB	051	Dubai	16:20	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40				
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55				
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25	JZR	125	Bahrain	16:55	PGT	831	Istanbul	04:25	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55				
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	542	Cairo	17:00	LMU	540	Cairo	04:40	KAC	670	Damascus	17:00	KAC	670	Damascus	17:00				
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	JAI	571	Mumbai	05:00	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15				
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20	FDB	052	Dubai	17:20				
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	JZR	145	Doha	17:35	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35	WAN	135	Doha	17:25	WAN	135	Doha	17:25				
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30	JZR	177	Doha	17:40	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25				
THY	1414	TXZ	05:05	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:20	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40				
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	WAN	874	Istanbul	18:25	THY	381	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	781	Delhi	17:45	KAC	781	Delhi	17:45				
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	JZR	1542	Cairo	06:40	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50	NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50				
KAC	544	Istanbul	05:15	WAN	966	Tbilisi	18:30	RJA	643	Amman	06:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00	KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00				
AZQ	4565	Baku	05:30	RJA	640	Amman	19:00	JZR	164	Dubai	07:15	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15				
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05	JZR	356	Mashhad	07:15	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20				
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05	AZQ	4566	Baku	07:30	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20				
KAC	362	Colombo	06:00	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10	KAC	167	Paris	07:30	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25				
BAW	157	London	06:10	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20	RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30	JZR	240	Amman	18:30	JZR	240	Amman	18:30				
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	19:25	KAC	173	Munich	07:35	JZR	538	Sharm el-Sheikh	18:30	JZR	538	Sharm el-Sheikh	18:30				
BDR	7601	KRT	06:30	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:25	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:40	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35	JZR	538	Cairo	18:35				
KAC	206	Doha	06:35	NIA	161	Cairo	19:30	JZR	778	Amman	08:00	QTR	1081	Beirut	19:15	QTR	1081	Beirut	19:15				
KAC	603	Islamabad	06:40	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:35	KAC	193	Jeddah	08:00	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20				
KAC	678	Mumbai	06:40	RBG	555	Alexandria	19:40	KAC	501	TXZ	08:00	KAC	151	Istanbul	19:25	KAC	151	Istanbul	19:25				
RBG	559	Dubai	06:45	KAC	674	Dubai	19:40	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30	WAN	117	Bahrain	19:30				
JZR	559	Alexandria	06:50	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	QTR	8512	Doha	08:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30				
KAC	302	Sohag	06:50	KAC	178	Vienna	19:55	WAN	713	AGP	08:10	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50				
KAC	143	Mumbai	07:00	KAC	174	Munich	19:55	BAW	156	London	08:20	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50				
KAC	143	Doha	07:20	JZR	189	Dubai	19:55	WAN	133	Doha	08:30	RJA	641	Amman	20:00	RJA	641	Amman	20:00				
KAC	5502	Beirut	07:20	KAC	133	Bahrain	20:00	KAC	177	Vienna	08:30	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00				
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45	DLH	616	Frankfurt	20:05	KAC	177	Dubai	08:35	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:10	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:10				
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05	KAC	791	Madinah	09:00	KAC	5503	Beirut	20:20	KAC	5503	Beirut	20:20				
KAC	358	Kochi	08:00	KNE	231	Riyadh	20:10	KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20				
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05	KAC	620	Doha	20:15	KAC	117	SNN/New York	09:05	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30	JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30				
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	08:15	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05	NIA	162	Cairo	20:30	NIA	162	Cairo	20:30				
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	692	Muscat	20:25	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30				
JZR	529	Asyut	08:25	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40	KAC	561	Amman	09:40	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35				
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55	JZR	553	Alexandria	20:50	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50	DLH	624	Dammam	20:50				
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00	JZR	534	Cairo	09:45	KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00	KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00				
JZR	503	Luxor	09:00	WAN	136	Doha	21:10	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:45	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00				
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15	UAE	856	Dubai	09:50	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:00	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:00				
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15	JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05				
SAW	703	Damascus	09:30	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:15	KAC	101	London	10:00	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15				
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	168	Paris	21:20	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00	JZR	550	Alexandria	21:30	JZR	550	Alexandria	21:30				
IAW	157	Al Najaf	10:00	THY	764	Istanbul	21:30	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35				
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	KAC	676	Dubai	21:35	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50				
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:05	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50				
THY	1516	TXZ	10:05	KAC	564	Amman	21:50	KAC	797	Taif	10:05	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00				
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	WAN	884	Sarajevo	22:05	WAN	873	Dubai	10:15	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05								



KOBE, Japan: An aerial view from a Jiji Press helicopter shows vehicles piled in a heap due to strong winds in Kobe, Hyogo prefecture yesterday, after typhoon Jebi hit the west coast of Japan. The toll in the most powerful typhoon to hit Japan in a quarter century rose yesterday to nine, with thousands stranded at a major airport because of storm damage. — AFP

Indonesian province bans men and women from dining together

BANDA ACEH: A district in Indonesia’s deeply Islamic Aceh province has banned men and women from dining together unless they are married or related, an official said yesterday, saying it would help women be “more well behaved”. Aceh - the only region in the world’s most populous Muslim majority country that imposes Islamic law -

has drawn fire in the past for putting moral restrictions on women. It also attracted global condemnation for publicly whipping people found guilty of a range of offences including homosexuality, gambling and drinking alcohol.

Under the latest Islamic regulation, women in Bireuen district on Sumatra island will not be able to share a table with men at restaurants and coffee shops unless they are accompanied by their husband or a close male relative. Co-workers on their lunch break would also be forbidden from sharing a meal.

“The objective is to protect women’s dignity so they will feel more comfortable, more at ease, more well behaved and will not do anything that violates sharia (Islamic law),” local head of the local sharia agency

Jufliwan, who like many Indonesians has only one name said yesterday. Another part of the directive - signed by the district head on August 5 - said women who were alone or not with family should not be served at restaurants and cafes after 9:00 pm. Authorities say it will be up to restaurateurs to enforce the regulation, although offenders will not be punished. Three years ago provincial capital Banda Aceh banned unaccompanied women from entertainment venues like cafes and sports halls after 11:00 pm. In 2013, Lhokseumawe city in Sumatra’s north ordered women to sit “side-saddle” on motorbikes with their legs dangling off to one side. The mayor at the time said straddling male drivers on motorbikes was “improper”. — AFP

Indian girl aged nine gang-raped and murdered

SRINAGAR: Indian police have arrested a woman and four others after her nine-year-old step-daughter was allegedly gang-raped, murdered and mutilated, in the latest horrific crime to shock the country. The child’s decomposed body was found on Tuesday hidden behind bushes about a kilometer from her home in the Baramulla district of Indian-administered Kashmir, police said.

Her father had reported her missing 12 days earlier. Police said the woman, aged 36, was jealous of her stepdaughter and of her husband’s second wife, and on August 24 took the girl to a forested area. There she allegedly directed her own 14-year-old son and his two teenage friends, aged 14 and 19, to take turns in raping the child. The stepmother is accused of then strangling the girl while her son hit the child on the head with an axe.

His friend brought vehicle battery acid from home and sprinkled it on the body while another friend gouged out her eyes before dumping the corpse in the bushes. A 28-year-old man has also been arrested over the case. “Physical condition and preliminary forensic analysis of dead body substantiated all these facts,” said a police statement issued on Tuesday. Local police Superintendent Imtiyaz Hussain said the teenage offenders have confessed to the crime and separately corroborated the facts during questioning. “They will be sent to a juvenile home and dealt with according to the state’s juvenile law,” Hussain said. —AFP

Amir and Trump discuss ties, regional...

Continued from Page 1

“First of all, I have a great personal relationship with His Highness the Amir,” the US President said. “Kuwait is a place I have known for a long time. I have many friends who live in Kuwait and in Washington and New York that I know - and I’ve known for a long time. They are very fine people”.

Trump highlighted the great cooperation between the US and Kuwait in various domains. “We practice large-scale trade together, investment together, and also, very importantly, the fight against terrorism, and Kuwait has been a great partner”. He affirmed that Kuwait “has made tremendous investments in the United States, and they’re buying a lot of military equipment”. “We appreciate the big purchases you’ve been making and frankly, we’re working very hard to bring stability in the Middle East,” he remarked. — KUNA

Over 5th of meat tested showed unspecified DNA

LONDON: More than a fifth of meat tested in Britain last year contained DNA from animals not listed on the label, according to the BBC. The British Food Standards Agency (FSA) found 145 items out of 665 that it sampled in 2017 consisted partly or wholly of unspecified meat, it reported. The products came from 487 businesses, including restaurants and supermarkets.

The FSA said the results, accessed under a BBC freedom of information request, were consistent with “deliberate inclusion”, the broadcaster said. But the agency added that the tests had deliberately targeted operations suspected of “compliance issues”. They were “not representative of the wider food industry”, an FSA spokesman told the BBC. Around half of the 145 contaminated samples came from retailers, which

included three supermarkets, 50 belonged to restaurants and 22 originated from food manufacturers.

Some specimens showed DNA from as many as four different animals, while others contained no trace of the actual meat listed on the product label. Supposed lamb items were most likely to contain traces of other animals’ DNA, followed by beef and goat, while cow DNA was the most common contaminate. Pig, chicken, sheep and turkey also featured frequently when not specified on packaging. Mince meat was the product incorrectly labeled most often, followed by sausages, kebabs and restaurant curries.

The FSA was not available for immediate comment. Its spokesman told the BBC that local authorities-which had procured the samples for the agency-were responsible for leading investigations and taking “appropriate action”. The European Union, which Britain is due to leave next March, toughened oversight of the food industry across the continent last year to prevent a repeat of a horsemeat scandal in 2013. Millions of European consumers were shocked to learn then that a long list of supermarket items being passed off as beef or pork were in fact horsemeat. — AFP

Europe’s female mosque cater for...

Continued from Page 1

Women-only mosques have existed for hundreds of years in China, where women have had a long tradition of leading prayers. Director of Britain’s Muslim Women’s Council Bana Gora, who is spearheading the Bradford project, said mosques had overlooked women and girls for years.

She said some women have had to pray in basements of mosques, or use back entrances where there are safety concerns such as a lack of lighting or security. “Where do women congregate to talk about issues in society? You need a dedicated space where women can convene and talk to people who can help them, and we simply do not have those spaces anywhere,” she said in a telephone interview. “It’s about women claiming their space in a mosque - there’s nothing wrong with that. I can see this catapulting across different faiths as well over time,” said Gora.

Isolated

Khankan said the presence of fellow women in a mosque, as well as access to female spiritual leaders, meant women might feel comfortable seeking help for sensitive issues like inter-faith marriage or domestic violence. And for the 200 or so women in Denmark who wear a face veil, their world has grown smaller after a ban on niqab veils and body-length burqas in public spaces, said Khankan. Denmark’s parliament enacted the ban in May, joining France and some other European Union countries to uphold what some politi-

cians say are secular and democratic values. The justice ministry said the ban would focus on women forced by their families to wear veils.

“If a woman is isolated and forced to wear a burqa or the niqab, by criminalizing it, you will isolate her even more, because she might not be able to go out,” said Khankan, who also runs a domestic violence support group, Exit Circle. “It’s important to fight for any women’s right to wear the hijab or not, to wear the niqab or not - if it’s her own choice and her own free will,” she said.

The future

Khankan said she hopes to see a new generation of female Islamic scholars and worship leaders, or ‘imam’ - a title normally given to men, which Khankan has proudly claimed. “We are faced with patriarchal structures which we have normalized for decades. As long as they are alive and they are not challenged, we have a problem,” said Khankan. “We have to state that women are the future of Islam. We have to make it possible for women to have the same possibilities as men,” she added. The Quran does not directly address whether women can lead congregational prayer, according to many traditional Islamic scholars.

Some women the Prophet Mohammad gave permission to argue to lead any kind of prayer, while others say that he meant to restrict women to leading prayer at home. Still, many traditionalists do not believe a man should hear a woman’s voice in prayer. But Giulia Liberatore, who is researching female Islamic scholars at the University of Edinburgh, said seeing women reach positions of power in Islam will have positive effects. “If women see other women striving for the highest form of scholarship, they will start seeing themselves as someone who can do that as well,” she said. — Reuters

1.4 billion ‘risk disease’ due to...

Continued from Page 1

The study authors highlighted several worrying trends, including a stark divide in exercise rates between poor and rich nations, and between men and women.

Wealth, gender gaps

Levels of insufficient activity to guard off non-communicable killers, including dementia and cardiovascular diseases, are more than twice as high in high-income countries compared to developing nations. Guthold said the link between the lifestyle in wealthier nations-more time indoors, longer office hours, more easily accessible high-calorie foods-and lower exercise levels, was part of a “clear pattern” of poorer health coming with urbanization. “As countries urbanize, people who used to be, say, farmers, and got a lot of physical activity through their work all of a sudden live in an urban environment where they might be without work or move to a sedentary job, so societies need to com-

pensate,” she said. In four countries-Kuwait, American Samoa, Saudi Arabia and Iraq-more than half of adults were classified as insufficiently active.

In Kuwait, an oil-flush gulf state where temperatures regularly top 45 Celsius (113 Fahrenheit), a whopping two-thirds (67 percent) of adults weren’t exercising enough. Melody Ding of the University of Sydney, who worked on the paper, said there were a variety of reasons why some countries were more active than others, including “biological, psychosocial, institutional, cultural and environmental barriers”. “I consider one of the biggest barriers being our environment-physical activity has been engineered out of life, with desk-based jobs replacing labor jobs, lifts replacing stairs, cars replacing active travel,” she said. “Technological advancement has made our life more convenient but also less active.”

Women still lag behind men in nearly every region of the world, with the gender exercise gap highest in Bangladesh, Eritrea, India, Iraq and the Philippines, the study found. “In these settings, women are often expected to be at home, take care of the children, manage the household and so sometimes don’t always have time to exercise,” said Guthold. One bright spot on the global exercise map was southeast Asia, where women were equally as active as men in the only region where inactivity has decreased since 2001.— AFP

sense for the United States because the partnership was in a place where the actions of our two countries made sense to do that,” Pompeo said.

“If that arises again, I’m confident we’ll present to the president the rationale for that.” The latest remarks represent a change in tone toward the nuclear-armed Muslim country and its new prime minister, a former playboy cricketer who came to office in July amid concerns he would remain tolerant of terror groups. At the time of the vote, the US noted what it called “flaws” in Pakistan’s pre-electoral process but said it was nonetheless ready to work with the new government. — AFP

US, Pakistan try to reset troubled...

Continued from Page 1

The \$300 million was part of the Coalition Support Fund, set aside to refund Pakistani spending on counter-terrorist operations and helps pay Islamabad for allowing US and other NATO supplies into Afghanistan.

“We were providing these resources when it made

Sports

Garcia, Poulter, Stenson and Paul Casey handed Ryder Cup wildcards

All four bring loads of experience, points and know how to win

LONDON: Sergio Garcia, Ian Poulter, Paul Casey and Henrik Stenson were handed the four wildcard picks to make the European Ryder Cup team yesterday, as captain Thomas Bjorn put his faith in experience.

All four players have been part of multiple winning sides, although Spaniard Garcia has struggled this year, missing the cut at each of the last five major tournaments.

England's Poulter, a talisman for Europe in past Ryder Cups, has returned to form this year after missing the 2016 defeat by the United States at Hazeltine.

"All four bring loads of experience, points and know how to win and lose and they will bring plenty of heart," said Bjorn.

British Open champion Francesco Molinari, four-time major winner Rory McIlroy, English trio Justin Rose, Tommy Fleetwood and Tyrrell Halton, Jon Rahm, Alex Noren and Thorbjorn Olesen had already qualified automatically for the event to be held just outside Paris from September 28-30.

Bjorn opted for 2017 Masters champion Garcia ahead of Belgian Thomas Pieters, who won four points two years ago as a rookie, Rafa Cabrera Bello and the in-form Matt Wallace, having already seen five rookies make the side.

"The one thing about Sergio is that he's the heartbeat of the team. It's like a football team going without their captain, that's what it's like for us," said the Dane.

It will be the 38-year-old Garcia's ninth Ryder Cup appearance, having been the youngest man to play in the event's history as a 19-year-old in 1999.

"It probably wasn't an easy decision for Thomas Bjorn," admitted Garcia.

"He knows what I bring to the team, game-wise and in the team room. It's been a tough year, but I've been working hard and I feel like my game is coming along.

I'm now ready to try and help the team win the Ryder Cup back."

TALISMAN POULTER RETURNS

American captain Jim Furyk also called on experience when he added Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson to his team on Tuesday, but both have failed to regularly produce their best in Ryder Cups, unlike Garcia and especially Poulter.

The Englishman inspired the greatest comeback in the tournament's history at Medinah in 2012, when he dragged Europe back to a 10-6 deficit heading into the singles with an astonishing run of birdies playing alongside Rory McIlroy.

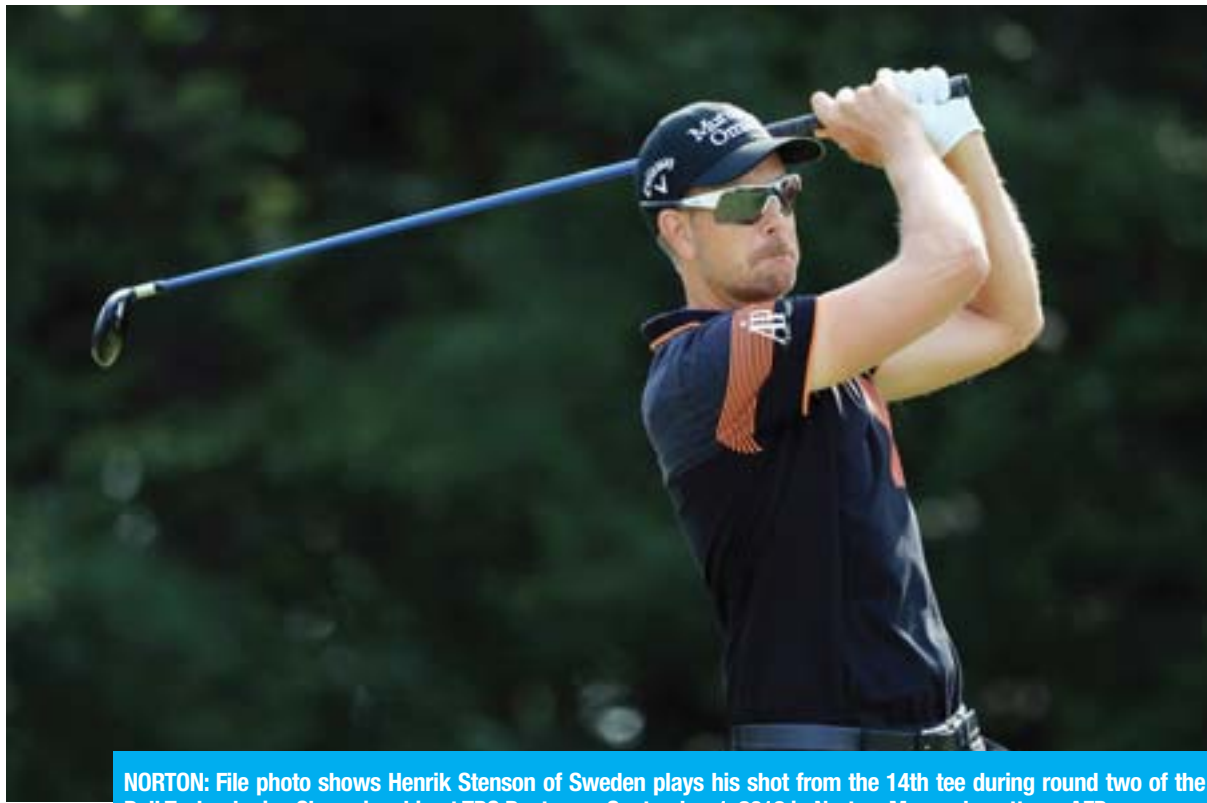
"This feels extra special to be part of and for Thomas to give me the call yesterday means absolutely everything," said Poulter. "It will be an incredible spectacle, it's an extremely strong US team but I'm getting goosebumps just thinking about it."

Poulter had slipped outside the top 200 in the world rankings at the start of 2017, but signalled a return to form with victory at the Houston Open in April.

"When he gets confident, he hits that European badge hard," said Bjorn. "He is a man for the occasion and he is a special person."

"Sometimes you think him and Sergio should have been footballers, because they like the team aspect so much." Bjorn persuaded Casey to become a member of the European Tour in order to be able to qualify for the team, and has drafted in the 41-year-old for his first Ryder Cup since 2008.

He held off a charging Woods to end a nine-year wait for a PGA Tour title at the Valspar Championship in March, and has an excellent midplay record, making a famous hole-in-one in Europe's crushing 18.5-9.5 triumph in 2006.



NORTON: File photo shows Henrik Stenson of Sweden plays his shot from the 14th tee during round two of the Dell Technologies Championship at TPC Boston on September 1, 2018 in Norton, Massachusetts. —AFP

"I rejoined the European Tour and I'm playing some of the best golf I've ever played," he said. "I only wanted to be a part of the team if I could do that."

Former British Open champion Stenson has been hampered by an elbow injury this season, but was

always likely to get a pick if fit after striking up a successful partnership with Rose in recent Ryder Cups.

"Stenson and Justin Rose love each other and you have to look at how other players react to the players coming in," said Bjorn. — AFP

English Rugby Premiership approached over £275m takeover

LONDON: Rugby Union's English Premiership has been approached over a potential £275 million (\$352 million) takeover, according to British media reports on Tuesday. Former Formula One owners CVC Capital Partners are believed to have expressed interest in buying a controlling stake in the top tier league.

The private equity company's proposal is one of several avenues being explored by Premiership Rugby chiefs as they search for investment into a competition which currently sees many clubs make a loss.

Worcester lost £8 million and Harlequins £6 million in the past accounting year, while Exeter were the only Premiership club to make a profit. Selling a minority stake or borrowing money are further options available as the league looks to expand.

CVC made £8 billion from Formula One during an ownership period spanning 10 years and media reports say the group are looking to secure 51 per cent of the Premiership. "Premiership Rugby and its clubs have grown quickly in the last five years with the help of major partnerships," a Premiership Rugby spokesperson said.

"In that time we have extended our reach in America and become the first club rugby tournament to broadcast live matches in China. "The Board is always considering options for further expansion and the best ways to support that. Inevitably this will attract interest, but a decision is not imminent.

"This interest is of course very good news for Premiership Rugby and is a reflection of its growing international appeal." For the takeover to proceed, all 13 of the Premiership's member clubs - the 12 that currently make up the top flight plus London Irish - would have to give approval.

The owners are to meet on Tuesday when the terms of the deal will be presented by Premiership Rugby's executive committee. The decision whether to sell is entirely up to the clubs, with the Rugby Football Union unable to intervene even though a buyout could have an impact on access to England players.

England boss Eddie Jones insisted he is not concerned that a takeover would have an adverse effect on the national team. "It has no bearing on what I do, so the only thing I do is read it with interest and that's about it," Jones told reporters in Newcastle.

Asked if he feared new ownership might bring further restrictions to an at times fractious club v country relationship, Jones replied: "No." — AFP

Woods, Mickelson, DeChambeau named in US Ryder Cup team

PHILADELPHIA: Tiger Woods was named to the United States' Ryder Cup team on Tuesday as captain Jim Furyk also added veteran Phil Mickelson and in-form Bryson DeChambeau to his line-up.

Former world number one Woods had already been assured of a trip to Paris for the September 28-30 showdown with Europe after being named as one of Furyk's non-playing vice-captains.

However Woods' form since his return to golf this year prompted Furyk to award him one of the four captain's picks set aside for players who did not qualify automatically for the team. "We're all excited to see him healthy again and playing well," Furyk said of Woods, who missed most of the 2016 and 2017 seasons with a long-term back injury. "It's a feather in our cap to have him playing on our side," Furyk added.

Woods, who has not played a Ryder Cup since 2012, revealed that he had set himself the target of making the US team at the start of the season.

"I haven't been part of the team playing-wise for six years," said the 42-year-old, who will be playing his eighth Ryder Cup. "I served as a vice-captain a couple of years ago, and that was incredible. This year to have the honour to be able to play again is beyond special," the 14-time major winner added. "At the beginning of the year that was one of my goals, to make this team. I got the call from Jim and he asked if I would serve as a vice-captain and I said 'Absolutely.' "But also deep down I wanted to make the team. I really wanted to play on it. It was a goal for the end of the season and as the year progressed I was somehow able to get some high finishes and lo and behold I'm on the team. It's incredible, beyond special."

Mickelson and DeChambeau filled the other two captain's picks announced by Furyk on Tuesday. The US captain will announce his final place on the defending champi-



WEST CONSHOHOCKEN: US Ryder Cup Team Captain Jim Furyk, left, welcomes Bryson DeChambeau along with Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods as the Captain's Picks for the 2018 US team during a press conference at the Philadelphia Marriott West on Tuesday in West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. — AFP

ons' team next week, with Tony Finau regarded as the front-runner for the position. There had been little suspense surrounding Furyk's announcement.

Mickelson was always regarded as a likely pick for what will be a record-breaking 12th Ryder Cup appearance. The 48-year-old reminded Furyk of his quality with a dazzling eight-under-par 63 in the final round of the Dell Technologies Championship on Monday.

"To be able to play at that elite level for as long as he has, to be that consistent for as long as he has is an impressive feat," Furyk said of Mickelson. "I'm excited to have him on the team. He's a veteran leader, knows the inner workings of our team room and provides a spark. It's great to have him be a part of it."

The United States will be chasing their first Ryder Cup victory on European soil in 25 years when they face

Europe at Le Golf National in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines outside Paris.

Mickelson said ending that long US wait for a victory in Europe was his prime motivation. "It's obvious that the one thing that has been missing over the years is for our team to go over to Europe and win," Mickelson said. "I'm very excited about the team this year. We have some incredible players, great leadership and a really special opportunity to do something that we haven't done in a long time."

"It's a wonderful chance to do something that I haven't done in my career and would very much like to." DeChambeau, 24, had virtually guaranteed himself one of the captain's picks after storming to victory in the opening two legs of the PGA Tour's FedEx Cup playoff series, winning the Northern Trust and Dell Technologies Championship. — AFP

Jones won't rule out England return for troubled Cipriani

LONDON: England boss Eddie Jones has told Danny Cipriani that the troubled Gloucester star can still rescue his international career. Cipriani made his first England start for a decade in South Africa earlier this year. But the fly-half was fined £2,000 (\$2,594) after admitting charges of common assault and resisting arrest during his club's pre-season tour of Jersey. Cipriani was also sanctioned by the Rugby Football Union.

Yet Jones insists the controversial player's latest off-field misdemeanour has not fatally damaged his chances. "We never close the door on anyone. Everyone makes mistakes. He was punished by the RFU. He's now back playing and we'll look at him in terms of how well he plays. "In South Africa, he worked well and again at the August camp, he worked well and if he gets an opportunity at the September camp, he'll have another opportunity to work well."

"I think it's been dealt with. He was punished by his club, punished by whatever happened with the RFU. He's now back playing and we'll look at him in terms of how well he plays. "In South Africa, he worked well and again at the August camp, he worked well and if he gets an opportunity at the September camp, he'll have another opportunity to work well."

Sale winger Chris Ashton could also make that training camp even though he cannot play for seven weeks



Eddie Jones

after being banned following his red card for a tip tackle in a pre-season friendly against Castres.

The latest disciplinary ban came just weeks after he was recalled to the England set-up four years since his last appearance. Asked if he was concerned by the suspension, Jones said: "I think you're always concerned when players are not playing. Getting selected is about playing and showing that you can play well for England."

"But having seen the incident, I thought it was a difficult situation. We want him to come back and we want him to play well, so I'm just looking forward to him playing well for Sale. "I've only had Ashton for three days and he was absolutely fantastic, a good, hard worker. Everything that people told me about him was true. I couldn't have been more pleased with him at the camp." — AFP

Australian cricket draws up cultural blueprint to avoid scandals

SYDNEY: Australian cricket is drawing up a cultural blueprint in which players will pledge to uphold certain standards in a move away from their win-at-all-costs mentality, according to skipper Tim Paine.

The player charter is being developed in the wake of a ball-tampering scandal in March that rocked the game and cost captain Steve Smith and his deputy David Warner their jobs. Coach Darren Lehmann also resigned amid criticism that he allowed an attitude within the team to flourish that led to the embarrassing episode.

Two reviews into the state of the game were set up in the aftermath—one focusing on the culture within Cricket Australia and the other into the team. Paine told the Sydney Morning Herald Wednesday that he and new coach Justin Langer were playing a central role in formalising a blueprint for players to follow to ensure such scandals never happen again.

He said the new team charter, linked to the reviews, could be in place ahead of their Test series against Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates next month. "It's going to be how we go about it, how we want to be seen and what we are about," he said. "That's really important. We are the lucky ones that get to represent our country and pull on that baggy green cap, which is a huge privilege." —AFP

Sports

Milwaukee Brewers score 11, gain ground on Chicago Cubs

Cards bash five homers, hold off Nationals

MILWAUKEE: Jonathan Schoop drove in three runs, Jesus Aguilar and Christian Yelich drove in two runs apiece, and the host Milwaukee Brewers pulled away for an 11-1 win over the Chicago Cubs on Tuesday. Milwaukee moved within three games of the Cubs for first place in the National League Central with one game to go in the series. The Brewers have won 40 of their past 60 home games but will travel to Chicago for a series beginning next Monday. Brewers starter Wade Miley (3-2) kept the Cubs off balance with a consistent fastball and a vexing breaking ball. He gave up one run on three hits in six innings, walking none and striking out five. Willson Contreras drove in Chicago's lone run as the Cubs lost for only the fourth time in their past 14 games. Cubs first baseman Anthony Rizzo left after fouling a ball off his foot. The team said X-rays were negative.

ORIOLES 5, MARINERS 3

Alex Cobb pitched six strong innings, and Baltimore rallied to defeat host Seattle following a pregame skirmish in the Mariners' clubhouse. Cobb (5-15) allowed one run on four hits in six innings. He walked three and struck out two as the Orioles snapped a four-game losing streak. Renato Nunez's solo homer leading off the seventh sparked a four-run inning. The Mariners, whose playoff chances are diminishing by the day, showed most of their fight before the game. Dee Gordon asked all members of the media to leave the clubhouse during a time when it is normally open. Shortly thereafter, yelling could be heard and a dogpile briefly pushed the clubhouse doors open with some players on the ground, according to multiple media reports.

ROCKIES 6, GIANTS 2

Carlos Gonzalez hit a bases-clearing triple, pinch hitter Ryan McMahon homered, and Colorado rallied to beat visiting San Francisco. David Dahl also went deep for Colorado, which scored five times in the seventh inning to record its 40th comeback win of the season to maintain its half-game lead on the Los Angeles Dodgers in the National League West. Rockies starter German Marquez had another strong outing but couldn't get the victory. He followed up his career-high 13-strikeout performance at San Diego by fanning 11 Giants in 6 2/3 innings. He allowed two runs on seven hits and two walks.

DODGERS 11, METS 4

Austin Barnes and David Freese each hit home runs as host Los Angeles overcame a four-run deficit and rolled to a victory over New York. Rich Hill was tagged for two early home runs but rebounded to pitch six innings as the Dodgers won for the ninth time in their past 11 games. Jay Bruce and Michael Conforto hit two-run home runs for the Mets, who saw their three-game win streak come to an end.

DIAMONDBACKS 6, PADRES 0

Robbie Ray threw 6 1/3 scoreless innings, and host Arizona broke out of an offensive slump by scoring more than five runs for the first time in 15 games in blanking San Diego. Ketel Marte and A.J. Pollock had two hits apiece, and pinch hitter Daniel Descalso and Paul Goldschmidt had RBI singles around two San Diego errors in a four-run seventh inning to help the Diamondbacks break a four-game losing streak. The

Diamondbacks, who remained 1 1/2 games behind Colorado in the NL West, had not scored as many as six runs since a 7-6 loss at San Diego on Aug. 18. They had 14 total runs in their past eight games.

RED SOX 5, BRAVES 1

Steve Pearce had three hits and drove in three runs to help the Red Sox beat host Atlanta. Pearce was 3-for-4 with a walk. Since coming over in a June trade with the Toronto Blue Jays, Pearce is batting .296 (29-for-98) with 19 RBIs in 36 games. Boston has won the first two games in the three-game series and improved to 13-3 in interleague games. The Red Sox reduced their magic number for making the playoffs to six. Atlanta saw its lead in the National League East reduced to three games over the Philadelphia Phillies.

PHILLIES 9, MARLINS 4

Cesar Hernandez hit a bases-loaded triple in the first inning, and Asdrubal Cabrera drove in another three runs to lead visiting Philadelphia to a victory at Miami. Cabrera, acquired from the New York Mets on July 27, hit a two-run double and a solo homer. He has 23 homers this year-seven of them against Miami and five of those at Marlins Park. In fact, Cabrera has a home run in four straight games against the Marlins. J.T. Realmuto homered twice to lead Miami's offense. He has 20 homers this season and is 6-for-16 in his career against Phillies starter Jake Arrieta (10-9) with two doubles, a triple and two homers. Arrieta struck out a season-best 11 batters in 7 1/3 innings.

YANKEES 5, A'S 1

J.A. Happ limited Oakland to one run in six-plus innings, and Luke Voit broke a 1-1 tie with a leadoff home run in the eighth, allowing visiting New York to get even in a key three-game series. Adeiny Hechavarria also homered for the Yankees, who rebounded from a 6-3 loss on Monday night to regain a 4 1/2-game advantage over the A's in the American League wild-card race. Stephen Piscotty homered for Oakland, which had a two-game winning streak come to an end.

ASTROS 5, TWINS 2

Backed by a four-run, first-inning uprising, Justin Verlander cruised through seven strong innings, and host Houston extended its winning streak to four games with a series-clinching victory over Minnesota. The Astros secured a winning, 10-game homestand that finishes Wednesday with their ambush of Minnesota right-hander Trevor May (3-1), who made his first start since Aug. 14, 2015, serving as the "opener" on the mound. May surrendered five hits and four runs in his lone inning. Verlander (14-9) retired the final 13 batters he faced, allowing three hits and two walks with eight strikeouts to bump his season total to 248 K's-the fifth-highest single-season mark in club history. Alex Bregman went 3-for-4 with three doubles for the Astros, the third three-double game of his career.

RAYS 4, BLUE JAYS 0

Visiting Tampa Bay broke open a one-run game with a three-run seventh inning en route to a shutout of Toronto. The Rays used seven pitchers to limit the Blue Jays to three hits, two walks and a hit batter while strik-



MILWAUKEE: Jesus Aguilar #24 of the Milwaukee Brewers slides into second base for a double past Addison Russell #27 of the Chicago Cubs in the first inning at Miller Park on Tuesday in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. — AFP

ing out 10. Tampa Bay, which has won four straight games, including the first two games of the three-game series, leads the season series 9-2. Hunter Wood (1-1) pitched two perfect innings, the second and third, with one strikeout to earn the win. Blue Jays starter Ryan Borucki (3-4) allowed two runs, three hits, two walks and a hit batter in six-plus innings. The left-hander struck out five.

CARDINALS 11, NATIONALS 8

Yadier Molina hit a grand slam in the ninth inning. Marcell Ozuna homered twice, and St. Louis finished with five home runs in a wild win over host Washington. Molina's grand slam locked up the victory, as the Cardinals were holding onto a 7-5 lead before he belted his shot off Sammy Solis. The Cards homered three times in the sixth, with Ozuna, Paul DeJong and Patrick Wisdom all going deep. St. Louis finished with 10 hits-five singles and the five home runs. Wilmer Difo also homered for the Nationals.

PIRATES 7, REDS 3

Starling Marte cracked a two-run homer, and Gregory Polanco had a two-run double as Pittsburgh downed visiting Cincinnati for its second straight win. The Pirates are 11-4 against Cincinnati this year. Pittsburgh starter Joe Musgrove (6-8) struck out eight in 6 1/3 innings. He gave up two runs on five hits and no walks. Scooter Gennett hit two solo homers for the Reds, who have lost two straight and five of seven.

INDIANS 9, ROYALS 3

Yandy Diaz rapped his first major league homer and also tripled among his three hits, and Mike Clevinger

gave up just one run and three hits while striking out 10 in six innings as host Cleveland routed Kansas City. Clevinger (11-7) allowed only a solo home run to Alex Gordon. Diaz scored three runs and drove in two. Francisco Lindor also homered for the Indians, who ended a three-game losing streak. Kansas City had its six-game winning streak snapped. Royals starter Danny Duffy exited in the first inning due to tightness in his pitching shoulder. The left-hander dealt with a shoulder impingement injury earlier this season.

RANGERS 4, ANGELS 2

Elvis Andrus and Adrian Beltre each slugged solo homers to help Texas defeat visiting Los Angeles. Rangers starter Mike Minor (11-7) allowed two runs and three hits over five-plus innings. He departed after allowing a homer to Shohei Ohtani to start the sixth. Minor struck out seven and walked one to help the Rangers win for the third time in four games. David Fletcher had three of the six hits by the Angels, who have dropped three of their past four contests.

TIGERS 8, WHITE SOX 3

Grayson Greiner drove in three runs, and Francisco Liriano collected his first victory since April 28 to lead Detroit past host Chicago. Mikie Mahtook hit a two-run homer and scored twice for Detroit, and Niko Goodrum supplied two hits and scored three runs. Dawel Lugo added two hits, a run and two RBIs. Liriano (4-9) snapped a personal eight-game losing streak that lasted 17 starts. He pitched the minimum five innings to be eligible for the win. Liriano allowed three runs (two earned) on seven hits while striking out five and walking one. — Reuters

NFL struggles to thread anthem needle as season looms

LOS ANGELES: Colin Kaepernick's re-emergence as the face of a new Nike advertising campaign has underscored an uncomfortable truth for the NFL as the 2018 season prepares to kick off today. Two years after the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback launched his campaign to raise awareness about racial injustice by refusing to stand for the national anthem, the NFL remains none the wiser about how to defuse the issue. A year ago, President Donald Trump triggered uproar across America's most popular sport by describing protesting players like Kaepernick as who should be kicked out of the sport. Trump's intervention gave fresh momentum to a movement which had largely fizzled out, prompting dozens of mostly African-American players to join protests in solidarity with Kaepernick, who by then was unemployed.

Although the protests gradually subsided, the NFL's club of billionaire team owners were determined to hammer out a clear policy designed to avert further criticism from Trump while simultaneously respecting the causes championed by its players.

Threading that needle, however, has proved a task too far for the NFL, which was forced into an embarrassing climb-down after a clumsy attempt in May to define a common policy over how players should react during renditions of

"The Star-Spangled Banner."

With the NFL's leadership reluctant to issue a blanket decree ordering players to stand for the anthem, owners instead forged a compromise. Players on the pitch for the anthem would be required to stand; but players who preferred not to stand would be given the option of remaining in the locker room during the pre-match ritual. Any player who took to the field and protested under the new regime would be subject to fines issued by their team. The practicality of the new anthem rules, however, was rapidly exposed when several team owners said they would not fine players for exercising their right to protest.

Stalemate

The NFL Players Association meanwhile challenged the validity of the rules, arguing they were inconsistent with the collective bargaining agreement and infringed on player rights. Trump, who had framed protestors as being unpatriotic and disrespectful of the military, claimed the new anthem rules as a victory. The league, however, announced in July that its rules would be placed on hold while talks between the NFL and NFLPA were ongoing. So far several rounds of discussions have failed to yield a breakthrough.

Trump, meanwhile, has reverted to regularly goading the NFL over its failure to take a hardline stance against protests, calling last month for players who kneeled during the anthem to be suspended without pay.

"The NFL players are at it again - taking a knee when they should be standing proudly for the National Anthem," Trump wrote on Twitter. "A football game, that fans are paying sooooo much money to watch and enjoy, is no place to protest. Most of that money goes to the players anyway.—AFP



LOS ANGELES: Canelo Alvarez works with his trainer during a media workout before his fight against Gennady "GGG" Golovkin at the Banc of California Stadium on August 26, 2018 in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Golovkin ready to 'punish' Alvarez in rematch

LOS ANGELES: Gennady Golovkin ramped up his war of words with middleweight rival Saul "Canelo" Alvarez on Tuesday, vowing to "punish" the Mexican slugger in their upcoming Las Vegas rematch. Unbeaten world middleweight king Golovkin will face off with Alvarez at the T-Mobile Arena on September 15, a year after their first encounter ended in a hotly contested draw. A rematch planned for May was later cancelled when Alvarez failed a drug test, blaming contaminated meat in his native Mexico after testing positive for the stimulant clenbuterol. Relations between the two camps have been marked by animosity ever since Alvarez's failed test, with Golovkin accusing his rival of being a drugs cheat.

Alvarez's trainer Chepo Reynoso raised the temperature for the rematch this week after describing Golovkin as a "donkey" who would be easy to beat. "Golovkin is a donkey who doesn't think," Reynoso said.

"He doesn't have a thought in his head. He's a man that comes forward throwing the same punches. There's not much that we need to change." Asked to comment on Reynoso's remarks in a conference call with reporters on Tuesday, Golovkin accused Alvarez of "lacking class." "I don't even want to go to that level. It just shows a lack of class, low class, lack of upbringing, lack of intelligence," he said. "It just shows how they behave. I've never said anything so low about anybody."

The barbs from the Alvarez camp have left Golovkin more determined than ever to retain his titles. "I want to punish him for all the bad things him and his team have done," Golovkin said. "I want to put him down to size." Golovkin's trainer Abel Sanchez meanwhile denied his fighter was "angry" or risked losing his composure. "He's not angry," Sanchez said. "He's got a purpose in the gym and he's got a purpose of what he wants to do inside the ring. —AFP

McLaren wary of comparisons between Norris and Hamilton

WOKING: British teenager Lando Norris will follow in the footsteps of Lewis Hamilton when he makes his Formula One race debut for McLaren next season, but the team are wary of too many comparisons.

Principal Zak Brown is excited by the 18-year-old's potential but he also knows under-performing McLaren are a very different team to the one Hamilton joined in 2007 at the age of 22. It is also fair to say that McLaren's track record with young prospects in the years since Hamilton left for Mercedes has been-like the team's recent race performances-unimpressive.

"I think he is a future world champion," Brown said at the factory on Tuesday, a day after the announcement that Norris would partner Spaniard Carlos Sainz next year, when asked whether he had 'the next Lewis Hamilton'.

"We don't want to draw comparisons to other drivers, that's part of what might put too much pressure on him too quickly," he added. "Lewis is a unique individual who may go down as the most successful Formula One driver ever.

"Lewis walked in to a lot of testing and an outstanding race car. He (Norris) is arriving to a winning team with a losing car." Mexican Sergio Perez, Denmark's Kevin Magnussen and now Belgian Stoffel Vandoorne-whose place Norris will take-have all been burned by McLaren with the first two reviving their careers elsewhere. Brown said he hoped to see Vandoorne, who is now a free agent, on the starting grid next season: "If I was Toro Rosso, I'd hire him in a heartbeat," he said. McLaren recently brought in former Indianapolis 500 winner Gil de Ferran as sporting director, hoping to use his experience to help improve matters.

"One of the reasons we brought Gil de Ferran in was to look at how we handle drivers and young drivers. Having been a former champion I think he understands the dynamics of what gets the most out of a driver," said Brown.—Reuters

Sports

Defence is name of the game for Germany against France

‘We want to show a different face, play a good game against champions’

MUNICH: Germany must defend with all their players when they host world champions France today if they are to get some measure of redemption for their World Cup flop and make a fresh start, coach Joachim Loew said.

Germany, 2014 world champions, crashed out of the World Cup in Russia in June at the group stage, their earliest exit in 80 years in the tournament. Their inaugural Nations League encounter against France is the first game for both teams since the World Cup.

“We want to show a different face, play a good game against the world champions,” Loew told reporters today. “Of course it is a chance for us for some redemption.” “You can feel that the team knows it needs to rectify things. We must have the confidence to defend and all players must participate in defending.”

“No matter what the system is, it is important for all players to work in defence, not only those in the back. We need to rebalance our game.” Loew in recent weeks blamed his risky attacking tactics that ended up

leaving the team exposed at the back as a major reason for their shock World Cup exit.

The Germans must now settle into the role of underdogs against France who deserved the world title after having been the world's best team in the past few years, he said. “We are not the favourites when the new world

champions play their first game since winning the title,” Loew said. “We were favourites for years and now we have to start from a different position.

“Logically we will try to contain them and independently of the result we want to show a different face and a different attitude.” Loew also ruled out the return of midfielder Mesut Ozil, who

retired from international football after the World Cup claiming he was the victim of racism following a furore over a photograph with him and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan.

“He announced his retirement, he gave his reasons so the case is closed,” Loew said of the Arsenal player. “When someone announces their retirement like that, you don't bring them back eight weeks later.” — Reuters



MUNICH: Germany's players warm up during the training session of the German national football team in Munich, southern Germany, yesterday. Germany will play in the UEFA Nations League against the France in Munich, southern Germany, today. — AFP

European coaches ask UEFA to review away goals rule

NYON: Europe's top club coaches have asked UEFA to review the use of the away goals rule in continental competitions because scoring away from home is not as difficult as it used to be. They also want the transfer window to end at the same time in all the region's major leagues.

UEFA's deputy general secretary Giorgio Marchetti confirmed that the European soccer body would “open a discussion” on the use of the away goals rule which is used to determine the winners of knockout ties when the aggregate score is level.

VAR disrupts flow of game, says Barca's Suarez

BARCELONA: Barcelona striker Luis Suarez has criticised the introduction of the video assistant referee (VAR) in Spain this season, saying it disrupted the natural flow of games and that he would prefer to see the use of goal-line technology instead.

Suarez scored a goal in Barca's 8-2 win over Huesca on Sunday which was initially ruled out for offside but later awarded after the referee consulted VAR, leaving the Uruguayan unconvinced by the system.

“VAR stifles celebrations,” Suarez said in an interview with radio station RAC1 broadcast yesterday. “Defenders are now asking for something the whole time. I would prefer to just have goal-line technology. With VAR, the game can lose naturalness,” he added.

“Perhaps a play starts with an involuntary handball, you counter-attack and score, then they review the play and rule it out.” Spain has joined top-flight leagues in Italy and Germany in implementing VAR after having no form of technology last season, when Suarez was denied a goal against Valencia despite television showing the ball had clearly crossed the line.

The English Premier League has used goal-line technology since 2013 but is yet to introduce VAR, which was widely hailed as a success when used at the 2018 World Cup. Suarez, 31, scored for the first time in five games in all competitions in Sunday's win over Huesca and admitted he needs to manage his minutes on the pitch better in order to get the best out of himself. Above all, he regrets playing in a La Liga game against Leganes last season three days before the



MADRID: Spanish referee Santiago Jaime Latre (C) checks the VAR screen during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and Club Deportivo Leganes SAD at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on September 1, 2018. — AFP

Champions League quarter-final second leg at AS Roma, where Barca slumped to a 3-0 defeat to go out on away goals after winning 4-1 at home.

“Rotating is the coach's decision but I realise that I should rest in the more straightforward games in the league,” said Suarez, who has won three La Liga titles and one Champions League since joining Barca from

cry from today where it is considered routine.

Marchetti said the coaches felt the rule was also counter-productive and that, as much as encouraging away teams to attack, it induced home teams to defend to avoid conceding a costly goal.

“This is one of the points that needs to be looked at,” he said. On the transfer window, he said the coaches wanted more countries to follow the example of England and Italy and close them before the start of the season. The transfer windows in England and Italy were changed this year in response to complaints last year that they had overshadowed the action on the pitch and made it difficult for coaches to plan. However, in Spain, Germany and France, they continued until the end of August as before.

“The coaches are of an opinion that there should be a unified window and the window should close before the competition starts,” said Marchetti. “The idea would be to try and bring them into line.” — Reuters

Liverpool in 2014.

“It happened to me last season against Leganes, just before the game against Roma. You want to play every game but I'm aware that I need to regulate my minutes to be sharp in the biggest games. “You have to get into the rhythm of the games but when you are tired you need to rest.” — Reuters

ally losing my leg. I never knew that until six months later when the doctor told me.

“At the time, they were thinking about flying me back and if I'd have flown back, I would probably have lost my leg because of the blood clots and stuff.” “I've got - I don't want to talk about it too much - two scars down the side of my leg where they had to cut it open and pull them out because of how severe it was.

“But I don't really care about that anymore. I feel really strong - and my right leg is exactly as it was before my leg break.” However, his path to recovery was tough to handle mentally. “I've seen a psychologist. My leg break was a very tough time,” he said ahead of England's first matches since they reached the World Cup semi-finals without him in the squad.

Shaw has seven caps but his last appearance was in March 2017 as a substitute in a 1-0 friendly loss to Germany. He said he was “gutted” to miss out on the World Cup and watching from the outside inspired him to have extra training in Dubai during the close season to get fit for the new campaign. “All the stick I've had in the last few years has pushed me. I wanted to prove everyone wrong and get back to what I do best. I need games to get fully fit and motivated. I'm feeling back to my old self,” he said. — Reuters

World Cup finalists Croatia face Portugal but look to the future

Zagreb: Still riding the wave of their historic World Cup run, Croatia are heading for a potential reality check as their new season starts with a friendly against Portugal in Faro today. It will be the tiny Balkan nation's first match since the side led by star midfielder Luka Modric succumbed to France in the World Cup final in July—a loss celebrated like a victory by underdogs who had never made it so far on the world stage. That fairytale glow took the spotlight off controversies plaguing football in Croatia, from the unsavoury ultra-nationalism of its hardcore supporters to a litany of legal problems. But fans will be reminded of the former when Croatia face England in its first Nations League home match on October 12.

The game will be played in an empty stadium—punishment by UEFA for the swastika drawn on a pitch in Split, on Croatia's Adriatic coast, ahead of a Euro 2016 qualifier with Italy. The perpetrators were never found, but it was not the first time Croatian fans have tainted the team's image by using fascist slogans and symbols.

That darker side of Croatia's football fairytale also reared its head during the World Cup celebrations, when the players invited a singer known for pro-Nazi sympathies to join them on the bus and stage at their welcoming party in Zagreb.

LEGAL WOES

Even during the euphoria of the World Cup one local paper warned that “after showering in the champagne of victory, not only cosmetic but deep changes should be made” in the sport. It may be only a matter of time before fans resume calls for the departure of the federation's president, Davor Suker, accused of being a puppet in the hands of Zdravko Mamic, the self-exiled strongman of Croatian football. Mamic, the former head of the Dinamo Zagreb club, fled to Bosnia after being sentenced in June to a six and a half years in prison for corruption and embezzling funds from players' transfers. “His influence on Croatian football maybe did not disappear overnight, but now he cannot influence Dinamo or even less the federation as he used to,” prominent sports journalist Davorin Olivari told AFP.

The controversy also ensnared Modric, who was charged with giving false testimony during Mamic's trial over his transfer from Dinamo. For now Modric, who won the Champions League with Real Madrid and the Golden Ball for the World Cup's best player, appears untouchable.

His reputation as a national hero was further cemented when he won the UEFA Player of the Year last month.

PLAYER SHAKE-UP

Both Modric and Barcelona midfielder Ivan Rakitic, who will skip the Portugal match, will continue to be the pillars of the “Vatreni”—Croatian for “Fiery Ones”. But they are ageing fast. Modric turns 33 on Sunday while goalkeeper Danijel Subasic, striker Mario Mandzukic and defender Vedran Corluka all ended their international careers in August.

Coach Zlatko Dalic admits it will take time to rebuild. “We are world vice-champions, we reached our peak in Russia and now everything will go down, which is normal,” he told the Sportske Novosti daily paper. Eight of his 22 World Cup players will be missing today—as will Cristiano Ronaldo for Portugal. But the coach says he is focusing on the long game. “I am not worried or restless. My goal is Euro 2020, not the match with Portugal or the Nations League... We will try to win, but our real goal is the Euro.”

Dalic sees the upcoming matches, including a Nations League match against Spain on September 11, as a good opportunity for younger players who did not get a chance in Russia.

They include promising midfielders Marko Rog (Napoli), Mateo Kovacic (Chelsea) and Mario Pasalic (Atalanta), as well as strikers Marko Pjaca (Fiorentina), Ivan Santini (Anderlecht) and Marko Livaja (AEK Athens). In goal, Lovre Kalinic of Belgian club Gent will replace Subasic.—AFP

Mourinho helped me get back in England squad, says Shaw

LONDON: England left back Luke Shaw believes his Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho was right to criticise him and said on Tuesday the Portuguese had been key to his international recall.

The 23-year-old was last week named in the England squad for the first time in 18 months for the Nations League match against Spain on Saturday and the friendly with Switzerland on Tuesday. His return to the international fold follows a strong start to the season in which he has played every minute of United's opening four games after he struggled to get into the team last term, with Mourinho critical of Shaw's attitude. “I think he got frustrated with me

because he knew I could do better,” Shaw said on how he was treated by the United manager. “When I look back, maybe he was right. “It was a tough few years but it made me stronger mentally. I wanted to prove to him I could do what he said I couldn't. I had a chat with the manager before the season and he said he wanted me to stay,” Shaw told a news conference on Tuesday.

“I've matured. You could say I've gone from a kid to a man. I know what I need to do to push myself. I want to play for Manchester United, stay there and prove my worth to the team.” Shaw was one of the most expensive teenagers in world soccer when he moved to Old Trafford from Southampton for 27 million pounds (\$34.70 million) in June 2014 aged 18, having made his England debut four months previously. He was a regular in former United manager Louis van Gaal's team until he broke his leg in two places against PSV Eindhoven in September 2015, missed two months of the 2016-17 season with a groin problem and then twice had operations on his foot.

RECOVERY COMPLICATIONS

“I had a lot of complications with my leg and that was the really hard moment for me in my career,” he added. “No-one knows but I was really close to actu-

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Kaepernick advert sparks boycott calls

Nike seen as winning in the end but sends 'terrible message'



NEW YORK: Former NFL player Colin Kaepernick (C) attends the match between Venus Williams of the US and her sister Serena Williams of the US during their 2018 US Open women's round 3 match August 31, 2018 in New York. — AFP

WASHINGTON: Protesters burned their Nike shoes, investors sold shares and some consumers demanded a boycott after the footwear and apparel maker launched an advertising campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick, the NFL quarterback who sparked a national controversy by kneeling during the national anthem.

But the brand recognition that comes with the campaign may be just what the company wanted, and marketing experts predicted it would ultimately succeed. The ad revived a raging debate in the United States that started in 2016 when Kaepernick, then with the San Francisco 49ers, began kneeling to protest multiple police shootings of unarmed black men.

"This is right on the money for Nike. They stand for this irreverent, rebellious attitude. In this case, it's reinforcing the brand," said Erich Joachimsthaler, CEO of strategy consulting firm Vivaldi. While some fans praised Kaepernick and other players who joined him in kneeling as patriotic dissenters, critics led by US President Donald Trump blasted the protesters as ungrateful and disrespectful.

Trump called Nike's campaign "a terrible decision" in an interview with the Daily Caller published on Tuesday, but he also showed some respect for Kaepernick's right to speak out. "As much as I disagree with the Colin Kaepernick endorsement, in another way - I mean, I wouldn't have done it. In another way, it is what this country is all about, that you have certain freedoms to do things that other people think you shouldn't do," Trump said.

The NFL, which gave in to pressure from Trump and ordered players not to kneel on the field during the anthem, nonetheless praised Kaepernick. "The social justice issues that Colin and other professional athletes have raised deserve our attention and action," said Jocelyn Moore, the NFL's executive vice president of communications and public affairs.

In the immediate backlash against the campaign, announced on Monday, Nike shares fell nearly 4 percent at one point on Tuesday and closed down 3.2 percent. Calls for a boycott fed social media buzz about the campaign. There were 2.7 million mentions of Nike over the

previous 24 hours, the social media analysis firm Talkwalker said at midday, an increase of 135 percent over the previous week.

After his protests, Kaepernick could not find a job for the 2017 season and sued the National Football League, accusing owners of colluding to blackball him. He is still without a team. Nike has sponsored Kaepernick since 2011 and said he will be one of several faces for a campaign marking the 30th anniversary of its "Just Do It" slogan. The ad refers to Kaepernick's loss of NFL income with the quote: "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything." Some who were offended by the choice posted social media pictures of Nike shoes they had set on fire or socks with the Nike swoosh cut out. Twitter user Sean Clancy, or @sclancy79, posted a picture of a pair of Nike trainers on fire on Tuesday that was retweeted 20,000 times. Athletes including Serena Williams, LeBron James, Kevin Durant and Chris Paul showed support. The controversy may have been a convenient excuse for some investors to sell an over-valued stock, Vivaldi's Joachimsthaler said.

Christopher Svezia, a footwear and apparel analyst at Wedbush Securities Inc., said Nike shares were trading at roughly 30 times next year's forecast earnings, compared with 24 percent for rival Adidas.

"Nike more than anyone else really knows who their customer is," Svezia said, describing them as largely 14- to 22-year-old males. Matt Powell, a senior adviser with market research firm NPD Group, predicted the boycott would fizzle. "Old angry white guys are not a core demographic for Nike," he said. Barry Lowenthal, CEO of The Media Kitchen, praised the campaign and said Nike has long proven successful in using celebrity endorsements to promote its brand, a precursor to what is known as influencer marketing in the social media age.

"These kind of endorsement deals were the first version of influencer marketing. Of course they know it works. It's classic product placement," Lowenthal said. Even former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad weighed in, tweeting: "The #NFL season will start this week, unfortunately once again @Kaepernick7 is not on a NFL roster." —Reuters

Nadal downs Thiem in US Open epic

NEW YORK: Defending champion Rafael Nadal survived an epic US Open quarter-final confrontation to defeat battling ninth seed Dominic Thiem 0-6, 6-4, 7-5, 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/5) and reach the semi-finals for the seventh time.

In a gripping 4-hour 49-minute contest which concluded at 2.04 am yesterday, world number one Nadal won through to keep his bid for a fourth title in New York and 18th Grand Slam crown on track.

However, the 32-year-old was fortunate to triumph on another hot and humid night at Flushing Meadows, 24 hours after Roger Federer had been dumped out of the tournament by John Millman.

After suffering a first set 'battel', Nadal had to battle back from breaks in the third and fourth sets before seeing off the first top 20 player he had faced at the US Open since 2013.

"I said to Dominic I am sorry. He's a great guy, a close friend who will have many more opportunities to win the big titles." Nadal had defeated Thiem in the Roland Garros final in June but this was their first meet-

ing away from a clay court.

"He has a great attitude and is a great fighter," added Nadal. In a dramatic final set, Nadal saw five break points come and go before Thiem went along with a smash on the first match point. It was his 58th unforced error on a night when he sent down 18 aces and fired 74 winners.

"It's going to be stuck in my mind forever. Forever I'm going to remember this match, for sure," said Thiem after his first ever hard court match against Nadal.

"Tennis is cruel sometimes because I think this match didn't really deserve a loser. But there has to be one." The semi-final will pit Nadal against third seed and 2009 US Open champion Juan Martin del Potro for the second successive Grand Slam.

Del Potro reached the semi-finals for the third time, defeating John Isner 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 and ending American hopes of a first men's champion at the event since 2003.

Del Potro dropped his first set of the tournament against 11th seed Isner, who was playing in his maiden quarter-final at his home Slam.

Despite that, the 29-year-old was never broken in the 3 hour 31 minute match where Isner unleashed 26 aces but was undone by 52 unforced errors compared to Del Potro's 14.

"To reach the semi-final again here in New York in

my favourite tournament is very special to me," said Del Potro after his eighth win over Isner in 12 meetings.

Wednesday's quarter-finals will see two-time champion Novak Djokovic face Millman, the world number 55. Marin Cilic will face Kei Nishikori in a repeat of the 2014 final won by the giant Croat.

Earlier, six-time champion Serena Williams shook off a sluggish start to power past eighth-seeded Karolina Pliskova 6-4, 6-3 on Tuesday and into the US Open semi-finals. The US superstar, chasing a record-equalling 24th major title, surrendered an early break to Pliskova, but she roared back with a streak of eight straight games to put away the opening set and take a 4-0 lead in the second against the woman who beat her in the semi-finals at Flushing Meadows in 2016.

"I just wanted to play better," Williams said of her mindset as she trailed 3-1 in the first. "I was thinking, you know, I can play better, so that was the good news." Williams did indeed cut down on the errors, and came up with the big serves when she needed them.

She finished the match with 13 aces and will take on Anastasija Sevastova for a place in the final after the 19th-seeded Latvian toppled defending champion Sloane Stephens 6-2, 6-3. Pliskova, who managed to convert just two of 12 break point chances in the contest, said Williams was simply too good in the important moments. —AFP



NEW YORK: Spain's Rafael Nadal embrace Austria's Dominic Thiem after defeating him during their Men's Singles Quarter-Finals match at the 2018 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York yesterday. — AFP