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Iraq PM urged to quit as key ally deserts him over unrest

Basra burns; Iraq's parliament holds emergency talks

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi faced calls to resign yesterday as his alliance with a populist cleric who won May elections crumbled over deadly unrest shaking the country's south. The two leading groups in parliament called on Abadi to step down, after lawmakers held an emergency meeting on the public anger boiling over in the southern city of Basra. "We demand the government apologize to the people and resign immediately," said Hassan Al-Aqouli, spokesman for the list of Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr that won the most seats in the election.

The announcement dealt a severe blow to Abadi's hopes of holding onto his post through a bloc-described as the biggest in parliament-unveiled just days earlier with Sadr and more than a dozen other groups. Ahmed Al-Assadi, spokesman for the second-largest list in parliament, the Conquest Alliance, condemned "the government's failure to resolve the crisis in Basra", where 12 protesters were killed this week in clashes with security forces.

The Conquest Alliance of pro-Iranian former paramilitary fighters was "on the same wavelength" as Sadr's Marching Towards Reform list and they would work together to form a new government, Assadi said. Abadi, whose grouping came third in the May polls, defended his record in parliament, describing the unrest as "political sabotage" and saying the crisis over public services was being exploited for political ends. His government has announced the allocation of an unspecified amount of extra funds for Basra, although demonstrators say that billions of dollars in emergency funding pledged in July has failed to materialize.

Basra has been rocked by protests since Tuesday, with demonstrators setting ablaze government buildings, the Iranian consulate and the offices of pro-Tehran militias and political parties. The anger flared after the hospitalization of 30,000 people who had drunk polluted water, in an oil-rich region where residents have for weeks complained of water and electricity shortages, corruption among officials and unemployment.

At least a dozen demonstrators have been killed and 50 wounded in clashes with security forces, according to the interior ministry. Hours before parliament met, four rockets fired by unidentified assailants struck inside the perimeter of Basra airport, security sources said. Staff at the airport, which is located near the US consulate in Basra, said flights were not affected.

The attack came after a day of rage in the southern city where hundreds of protesters stormed the fortified Iranian consulate, causing no casualties but sparking condemnation. Abadi said he had instructed security forces to "act decisively against the acts of vandalism that accompanied the demonstrations". Iraq's Joint Operations Command, which includes the army and police, vowed a "severe" response with "exceptional security measures", including a ban on protests and group travel. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghassemi denounced the "savage attack", Iran's Fars news agency reported. A spokesman for the consulate said that all diplomats and staff had been evacuated from the building before the protesters attacked, and that nobody was hurt.

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BASRA: An Iraqi protester stands flashing the victory gesture outside the burning headquarters of the Iranian consulate in the southern city of Basra. — AFP

News in brief

ATSUMA, Japan: Rescue workers search for missing people in Astuma yesterday after a 6.6-magnitude earthquake hit the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. — AFP

Japan death toll hits 35

TOKYO: The death toll from a powerful quake that triggered landslides in northern Japan rose to 35 yesterday, as tens of thousands of rescue workers raked through the mud for survivors. The majority of the dead are from the small rural town of Atsuma, where a cluster of dwellings were wrecked when a hillside collapsed from the force of the 6.6-magnitude quake, causing deep brown scars in the landscape. Public broadcaster NHK said 35 were dead, with around five people still unaccounted for in the town. More than 600 sustained minor injuries, according to the Hokkaido island local government. "We never had landslides here," said Akira Matsushita who lost his brother in Atsuma. —AFP

Murder of octogenarian

WASHINGTON: A 14-year-old suspected of having raped and killed a woman in her eighties in the US city of Baltimore was charged as an adult with murder, authorities said. Tyrone Harvin, who turned 14 last month, is accused of attacking 83-year-old Dorothy Mae Neal at her home and leaving her for dead. She died in hospital on August 30. "We can tell you without even checking our records this is the youngest person we've charged in Baltimore this year and probably the last couple of years with murder," police spokesman TJ Smith said. "It's sad all the way around. There's some systematic failure in the 14-year-old's life to allow us to be here talking about him being accused of murder and rape. It's just a very tragic situation all the way around." — AFP

US army to invest $2 bn

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon's research wing said Friday it will invest $2 billion to develop a new generation of artificial intelligence with "human-like communication" skills. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, will use the money to fund around 20 existing projects over the next five years and launch new ones over the next 12 months seeking a higher level of machine learning, the agency's director Steven Walker told reporters near Washington. "We are making multiple research investments aimed at transforming computers from specialized tools to partners in problem-solving," said Walker, referring to the new generation of machines as "AI Next." — AFP

Lebanese arm wrestlers revive century-old tradition

JOUNIEH: On a seaside podium in Lebanon, Halim El-Achkar locks hands with an opponent, exerting pressure until he slams both contestants' forearms down with a fearsome growl, to win the bout. His rippling biceps etched with tattoos, the 25-year-old is thrilled that the country's century-old pastime of arm wrestling has been given a new lease of life.

"I always loved this game. For me, it's a symbol of strength and manliness," said Achkar, sporting a neatly trimmed black beard. "This discipline must be taken up more, so we can shine abroad the same way we do in basketball," he added. The tournament in Jounieh, a Lebanese town just north of the capital Beirut, is the second annual nationwide contest organized by the country's arm wrestling federation. Established last year, the body already boasts 750 members whom it trains to perform at international standards, founder Karim El-Andary said.

Grappling for gold

"The goal is to put Lebanon on the world map," he said. It's a goal that looks achievable, since two federation members scored gold medals at a competition in Italy last year. But Andary is driven by more than a quest for international recognition. "Arm wrestling is rooted in Lebanese tradition. We inherited it from our grandparents. It's our duty to preserve it," he said.

As far back as the 19th century, men in villages across the country would show off their strength, locking hands over a table-or even just lifting rocks. "This tradition was widespread across the country," said Maroun Khalil, who heads the Lebanese Federation of Heritage and Traditional Sports. "It was both a playful pastime and a way to resolve disputes in villages without resorting to bloodshed," he said. The old sport has drawn in new fans in Lebanon. Dozens gathered in Jounieh to watch men and women grapple for gold.

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JOUNIEH: Lebanese men compete in an arm-wrestling championship in the coastal city of Jounieh. — AFP

S Korea man infected by MERS virus

SEOUL: A South Korean man, 61, was diagnosed with the potentially deadly Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and is being treated at a hospital in Seoul, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said yesterday. The patient returned to Seoul on Friday after a business trip to Kuwait from August 16 to Sept 6, according to the KCDC.

This is the first time since July 2015 that an outbreak of MERS has been reported in South Korea. "As far as found by now, 20 people including flight attendants and medical staff have been in close contact with the patient and they are under isolation at home," KCDC director Jeong Eun-kyeong told a press briefing.

The patient, who was suffering from diarrhea, headed directly to Samsung Medical Center from the airport, Jeong said. He is now in an isolation ward at Seoul National University Hospital. The KCDC director said all flights from Middle East countries have been put into quarantine. "The KCDC and local governments will do our best to prevent spread of the MERS," Jeong noted. The infectious disease swept South Korea in 2015 leading to 38 fatalities. MERS is thought to be carried by camels and most of the known human-to-human transmission has occurred in healthcare settings. — Reuters

Global protests as UN climate talks stumble

BANGKOK: Thai fishermen and laborers whose livelihoods are threatened by rising sea levels kicked off an international day of protests in Bangkok yesterday, where key UN talks are attempting to breathe life into the Paris Agreement on climate change. As global warming races ahead of efforts to contain it, the discussions are deadlocked over a number of contentious issues, with activists demanding immediate action to prevent irreparable damage to the planet.

The "Rise for Climate" protest movement - which has organized events in dozens of countries yesterday - wants governments to end their reliance on fossil fuels and transition fully into renewable energy. Beginning in Australia, a tall ship moved through Sydney Harbour in front of the Opera House as activists on board held up protest signs. Its billowing sails featured banners that read "Rise for Climate; Action with 350" - referring to environment advocacy group 350 which spearheaded the global protest. Blair Palese, CEO of 350 Australia, said that the country - heavily reliant on coal mining for its economy - has long suffered the effects of climate change.

"We are fighting bushfires in winter, suffering a crippling drought, and scientists fear back-to-back bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef this summer," he said. In the Thai capital, some 200 protesters assembled in front of the UN regional headquarters, where delegates were discussing how to implement measures agreed by world powers under the 2015 Paris Accord on climate change. The talks aim to create a draft legal framework for limiting global temperature rises that can be presented to ministers and heads of state at a final round of discussions in Poland in December.

The delegates have been meeting since Tuesday, but have made little progress, according to multiple sources close to the negotiations. "The negotiators are not taking any action," Ruchi Tripathi, head of climate justice at charity ActionAid, told AFP. Dozens of laborers and fishermen from the Gulf of Thailand, whose livelihoods are threatened by rising sea levels and coastal erosion caused by climate change, joined yesterday's protest. Many brought examples of their produce, including crabs and shrimp, and held banners demanding that delegates take action.

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MARSEILLE: People hold banners as they take part in a march yesterday in Marseille, southern France, as part of a global day of action 'Rise For Climate.' — AFP

Kuwait marks 4th anniversary of UN honoring of Amir as 'Humanitarian Leader'

Benevolence, philanthropy inherent values in Kuwaitis' hearts: Sheikh Sabah

NEW YORK: Kuwait celebrates today the fourth anniversary of the UN honoring and proclamation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a 'Humanitarian Leader' and of Kuwait as a 'Center of Humanitarian Action'. The well-deserved UN honoring came in recognition of the outstanding contributions of Kuwait, under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to humanitarian action worldwide.

On September 9, 2014, then-secretary general of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon held a special function at the UN headquarters in New York to express the UN and the international community appreciation for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah and Kuwait's generosity and kindness. "It gives me great pleasure and honor to be here today to recognize the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of Kuwait. This is a great humanitarian day. We are sitting together with a great humanitarian leader of our world," Ban said in his speech during the ceremony. He also lauded Kuwait's exemplary humanitarian leadership, which saved thousands of lives. "Kuwait has shown exemplary humanitarian leadership in supporting these operations under the compassionate and passionate leadership of His Highness the Amir," he said. "Kuwait may be a small country in size but she has a big and broad and compassionate heart. We are here to pay our deepest tribute to the humanitarian leadership of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. We thank His Highness the Amir of Kuwait and the people of Kuwait for their outstanding generosity towards Syrians and Iraqis in need."

Ban shed light on Kuwait's numerous humanitarian initiatives to offer aid to people in need across the globe, especially the war-torn Syria. "Every year, Kuwait hosts a regional conference on partnerships for effective humanitarian action. Kuwait has also increased its support for multilateral humanitarian action exponentially since the start of the crisis in Syria. In the past two years, Kuwait has donated hundreds of millions of dollars for humanitarian operations, not only in the Middle East, but in Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan." He also noted that Kuwait's leadership and funding had saved tens of thousands of lives, and has galvanized others to participate in coordinated international action.

Steady approach

In his speech at the ceremony, His Highness the Amir emphasized that "Kuwait, since its independence and gaining the UN membership, has followed a steady approach in its foreign policy, based essentially on humanitarian assistance to all needy countries regardless of their geographic location, religious beliefs or ethnic origins." This assistance is in "pursuance of its belief and conviction of the importance of international partnership, as well as the unification and activation of international efforts, aimed at the maintenance and preservation of the foundations of life - that is the human spirit," His Highness the Amir pointed out. He noted that Kuwait had been developing and modernizing the methods of providing assistance.

His Highness the Amir hailed the great role played by Kuwait charities in offering the helping hand to all people in need worldwide. "Kuwaiti charitable associations and peoples' fundraising committees have set an example in their continued support of many humanitarian projects in Asia and Africa, by individual initiatives that have become a shining example of benevolence characterizing the Kuwaiti people," said His Highness the Amir. He recalled that in 2008 Kuwait earmarked 10 percent of its total humanitarian assistance to countries affected by natural or man-made disasters to be channeled to UN organizations and specialized agencies active in the humanitarian field. "This was followed by official decisions to double the fixed annual voluntary contributions to a number of international agencies and organizations... this has provided the humanitarian work of Kuwait with wider horizons and more comprehensive dimensions to promote direct cooperation in the various crises, with those international bodies," he said. His Highness the Amir underlined that the acts of benevolence and philanthropy were "inherent values in the hearts of the Kuwaiti people, as inherited generation after generation from their forefathers."

Pillar of foreign policy

The humanitarian activism became a pillar of Kuwait's foreign policy since His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's assumption to power in 2006 and the volume of Kuwait's humanitarian aid notably skyrocketed. The State of Kuwait and its Leader His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah have been active in organizing, hosting and partaking in regional and international humanitarian events. His Highness the Amir headed Kuwait's delegation to the World Humanitarian Summit, held in the Turkish city of Istanbul on May 23, 2016 which was held to reinvigorate commitment to humanity and to the universality of humanitarian principles. During his speech at the summit, His Highness the Amir announced that Kuwait was ranked first among world countries in terms of the percentage of its external humanitarian aid to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This month Kuwait stated that it had fulfilled all the aid pledges it made in the donors' conference for Yemen in April after paying $250 million for financing humanitarian action in the war-ravaged country. During its presidency of the UN Security Council in February, Kuwait, in collaboration with Sweden, had drafted and managed to rally support for a UN resolution on a 30-day ceasefire across Syria to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance and evacuation of those who need urgent medical treatment. In May, the UN approved a draft resolution presented by Kuwait and several other member states to condemn the using of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. Also in May, Kuwait, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Peru led a UN Security Council team on a field visit to Bangladesh and Myanmar, to meet with officials from both countries and to keep a close eye on the situation of refugees that reached 700,000. In October, 2017, Kuwait collaborated with the European Union to host an international donors conference in Geneva for supporting Rohingya people.

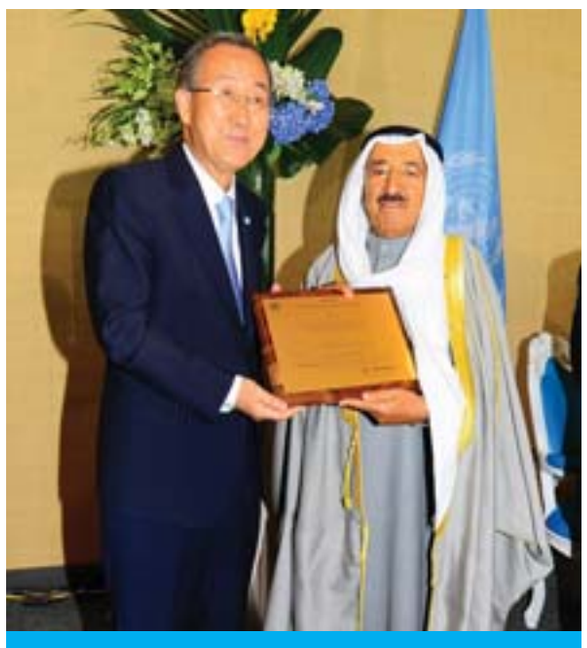
In 2014, Kuwait hosted the International Forum for Humanitarian action to give impetus to humanitarian action worldwide. Kuwait hosted two donors' conferences for the Syrian people in 2013 and 2014 when $3.6 billion was pledged, of which Kuwait contributed an amount of $800 million. Kuwait also donated $500 million and $300 million in third and fourth donors' conference for Syria held in London in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

Kuwaiti charities and civil society organizations had also generously contributed to the humanitarian and relief work to alleviate the suffering of Syrian people inside and outside Syria over the past years. In Iraq, Kuwait rushed to help the people displaced by the war between the Iraqi army and the so-called Islamic State (IS) group. In 2015, Kuwait donated $200 million to provide aid and shelters to refugees and displaced people and the Kuwait Red Crescent Society doled out 40,000 food packages to affected families. In July 2016, Kuwait donated $176 million to Iraq during the donors' conference held in Washington. Following defeat of the IS, Kuwait hosted an international conference in February 2018 to finance the reconstruction of the liberated areas to pave the way for the return of the refugees.

For Yemen, Kuwait announced in 2015 allocating $100 million to finance humanitarian work there. For supporting Palestinian people, Kuwait donated $34 million for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in 2009 and $15 million in 2013. Kuwait dispatched tens of trucks loaded with urgent relief and medical aid to Gaza following the Israeli offensive on the densely-populated strip in 2014. Kuwait has also increased aid to countries affected by natural disasters in the past years.

Prominent position

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer praised the efforts of Kuwaiti charity work under directives of His Highness the Amir, which helped Kuwait to secure a prominent global position. In recent years, His Highness the Amir showed great ability to address the humanitarian files in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Somalia, the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and other countries, Sayer said. Sayer applauded the diplomacy of His Highness in urging the international community to resolve the humanitarian crises and launching repeated humanitarian appeals in favor of victims. Kuwait has become a role model for charity and humanitarian work worldwide, Sayer said, as the role of KRCS proved that human values were an important pillar in international relations and rapprochement between peoples.



NEW YORK: In this September 9, 2014 file photo, then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon honors His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a 'Humanitarian Leader' and Kuwait as a 'Humanitarian Center'. — KUNA

The relief assistance provided by KRCS this year reached about 731,207 affected persons in various countries around the world, amounting to $10.642,618, Sayer said. KRCS had spared no effort to support the Palestinian people in many fields to alleviate their sufferings, as the society works under the guidance of His Highness the Amir to reach all the needy in all cities of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, he added.

KRCS has accompanied the Kuwaiti relief efforts in the Syrian crisis over the past years, Sayer added, praising His Highness's role in supporting all humanitarian efforts at all levels to alleviate the pain of refugees forced to leave their homes. He stressed the importance of charity work in achieving its human values, as the charitable work is a field to achieve goals in upgrading the quality of services provided to those affected by natural or man-made disasters. — KUNA

Kuwait's Deputy FM calls for de-escalating situation in Idlib

Kuwait hopes int'l efforts avert humanitarian catastrophe

NEW YORK: Kuwait urged all parties in the Syrian crisis to abide by the de-escalation agreement in Idlib in hopes to avoid any further violence and loss of human lives, a top Kuwaiti diplomat said Friday. In his speech to the United Nations Security Council briefing on the situation in the Middle East (Syria - Idlib), Deputy Foreign Minister of Kuwait Khaled Al-Jarallah said — on behalf of the Syria humanitarian penholders, Kuwait and Sweden — that the meeting of the Security Council was taking place at a very critical time for Syria.

Alarming reports are amassing of a possible military escalation in Idlib province at the same time when international aid agencies are preparing to provide further aid, said Jarallah. "The situation in Idlib is different from Aleppo, Eastern Ghouta and Daraa. Idlib is home to nearly 3 million people - half of them internally displaced - and there are thousands of terrorist elements," said Jarallah, adding that "Large-scale military operations, if they take place, will be disastrous and their humanitarian consequences will be dire for the inhabitants if no arrangements are reached between the parties concerned."

"If this escalation occurs, where will these innocent civilians go to avoid artillery and air bombardments to survive - them and their families?," he asked. "What is known to us now is that there is no safe place for them to resort to." He urged all parties to abide by the de-escalation agreement in Idlib and called for vital steps to avoid more violence. "We also share with the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, his appeal to the Government of Syria and all parties to exercise restraint and to prioritize the protection of civilians; as well as his call on the Astana guarantors to step up efforts to find a peaceful solution to the situation in Idlib." "We refer here to the summit of the Astana guarantors, and we expect them to respect relevant Security Council resolution and ensure that their own de-escalation agreement in Idlib is respected," Jarallah noted. "We stress the importance of giving diplomatic efforts more time, attention and redoubling these efforts by all to avoid more bloodshed. The images of death and destruction from Aleppo and Eastern Ghouta still remain in our mind. The Syrian people have suffered enough. The exposure to flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law over the past years without any accountability is enough." He went on saying that military attacks against terrorist groups, as designated by the UNSC Council, "did not in relieve any party to the conflict from obligations under international law, including complying with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution and protecting civilians and civilian objects."

"Even wars have rules to be observed. Let us remember that innocent civilians — children, women and the elder — make up the vast majority of the population in Idlib, not terrorists," Jarallah affirmed. The Kuwaiti diplomat commended the distribution of humanitarian supplies by OCHA and partners in preparation for a disaster in Idlib.

"We urge donors to step up their contributions to the humanitarian response and call on all parties to allow and facilitate rapid, safe and sustained humanitarian access to those in need. In this context, the cross-border assistance modality is a vital part of the humanitarian response in Syria. Millions of Syrians depend on the modality, not least close to two million people in Idlib and neighboring areas. There is no doubt that these needs will be exacerbated in the event of any military operation."

"The reports coming in are concerning and we remind all parties of their responsibilities under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure," Jarallah stressed. "The systematic attacks against civilian areas in Idlib province and beyond, including schools, hospitals and medical facilities, must cease immediately. Humanitarian and medical personnel must be protected in line with international humanitarian law. In this regard, we reaffirm the need to respect Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2401, submitted by Kuwait and Sweden in February this year, calling for a cessation of hostilities without delay and the delivery of humanitarian aid; resolution 2286 on the protection of hospitals and personnel; and resolution 2427 on children and armed conflict. Resolutions that are not implemented on the ground have no value. We also reject impunity and stress the need for accountability and renew our support for the Commission of Inquiry and the IIIM."

Jarallah affirmed that "The Security Council has a humanitarian, moral and legal responsibility towards the population of Idlib, and this Council must seek meaningful preventative action." "The series of meetings of the Council on Syria in general and Idlib specifically this week, including our meeting, are critical to this end," he said. "We appreciate and support Staffan de Mistura's efforts in Idlib and in all of Syria. We reaffirm that the best way to reach a sustainable solution to the Syrian crisis and end the humanitarian catastrophe in Idlib in particular remains an UN-facilitated political solution in accordance with resolution 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communique."

"Kuwait and Sweden will do their utmost to push the Security Council to explore all meaningful options and to ensure that the Council closely follows the developments in Idlib," said Jarallah. He added that "As penholders and significant donors to the humanitarian response to Syria, Kuwait and Sweden will continue their role to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people and to ensure that the Security Council upholds its responsibilities in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations."

Humanitarian catastrophe

Meanwhile, Jarallah hoped that international efforts would succeed in defusing escalation in Idlib, thus prevent a humanitarian disaster. Speaking after the UN Security Council session on Syria, Jarallah said Kuwait and Sweden would continue highlighting UNSC's role to saving the Syrian people from a disaster providing military confrontations took place in Idlib. "We have listened attentively to the Security Council's deliberations ... over this sensitive and humanitarian issue," he said. Jarallah said the whole world was closely following the situation in Idlib and possible military confrontations between the Syrian regime and armed men in the city. "The international community is gravely concerned over this escalation specially regarding the humanitarian conditions of the Syrian people in Idlib, which is home to more than three million Syrian citizens, most of them are children, elderly and women," he said. Kuwait and Sweden, said Jarallah, acted and pushed for discussing the humanitarian situation in Syria, and the importance of the UN humanitarian office's (UN OCHA) role in Idlib. Jarallah hoped the deliberations would contain the situation in Idlib, assisted by an outcome of a summit between Iranian, Russian and Turkish leaders in Tehran. UN Secretary General special envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura briefed the council about the situation in Syria, said Jarallah, "and the situation is gloomy in the country."

Resolving the situation

Kuwait had also urged the UN Security Council to join efforts and overcome differences and divisions amongst members to end crimes against the violence in Idlib and Syria in general. The issue was brought up in Kuwait's speech during the Security Council session on the case of chemical use in Syria, which was presented by its Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi on Thursday.

Otaibi reiterated contentment on the demolishing of the last two chemical facilities in Syria, which stacked up the number of facilities destroyed to 27, a major step in executing resolution 2118. Otaibi also welcomed the Tripartite Memorandum that allows for the Organization of Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its officials to work in Syria.

"Although there has been significant progress, in this case, there is a discrepancy in the details of the chemical program that was announced by the Syrian government and we hope the answers given by the Syrian Government in response to the Director-General of the OPCW inquiries, will help in overcoming any disparity in information on the chemical program in Syria," said Otaibi, as he urged the Syrian authorities to cooperate with the OPCW fully.

Otaibi added that the Security Council is unable to carry out its responsibilities on the case of chemical use in Syria because it lacks the mechanisms to identify the responsible parties who are using the chemical weapons in Syria through a joint investigation due to the divisions in the stand of its members. In the face of this reality, many of the nation members including Kuwait are resorting to another international forum to take its place, which is the OPCW, said Otaibi. He also mentioned the session that was held at the Hague in which the organization decided on the mandate to identify the parties responsible for crimes using chemical weapons, as he looks forward to the necessary training the Organization will need to obtain to take on this responsibility. Otaibi was very supportive of a fact-finding mission and praised the task and its professionalism while assuring the need for cooperation and the necessary security and protection to create a safe environment for them. He was hopeful of what was to come in the near future including the investigations on the incident of Douma last April, reiterating Kuwait's principled stance on the use of chemical weapons at any time and place and under any circumstances, as a grave violation of international law, with an emphasis on the accountability of those responsible for such use, whether they were individuals, entities or groups other than the states or governments. He added on the situation Idlib saying, "our meeting comes at an exact time as it coincides with the reports and increasing indications of an imminent military escalation in the province of Idlib, which is inhabited by nearly three million people, half of whom are internally displaced." "We are concerned about the possibility of chemical weapons use again in Syria and repeating the crime of Khan Sheikhan, but this time in Idlib," he said.

Otaibi stressed that any use of chemical weapons is unacceptable, as the Syrian people have suffered for eight years the worst form of human violations, including the use of chemical weapons. He expressed his hope that the summit of the guarantors, Astana will prevent a humanitarian disaster in Idlib to protect civilians and facilitate for humanitarian assistance to the needy in compliance with the resolution of the Security Council and international humanitarian law.— KUNA

NEW YORK: Deputy Foreign Minister of Kuwait Khaled Al-Jarallah addresses the United Nations Security Council on behalf of the Syria humanitarian penholders, Kuwait and Sweden. — KUNA

Kuwait reiterates support for UK's measures regarding Salisbury incident

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait reiterated its support for the United Kingdom in whatever measures taken regarding the poisoning incident in Salisbury on March 4. Speaking before a UN Security Council session on the matter, Kuwait Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said UK Delegate to the UN Karen Pierce have detailed the Council with latest developments as part of the ongoing investigation of the 'Salisbury Nerve Agent Attack', which so far resulted in identifying a number of suspects.

Ambassador Otaibi lauded the investigation's "professionalism and inclusivity." The State of Kuwait is firmly against proliferation, production and storing of chemical weapons and denounces any use or threat to use such weapons, whether directly or indirectly whatever the justifications might be, Otaibi stressed. Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military officer and double agent for the UK's intelligence services, and his daughter Yulia were poisoned in Salisbury, England, with a Novichok nerve agent, according to official UK sources and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Haiti efforts

Meanwhile, Kuwait praised the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (UNMIH) for its efforts over the past years to promote security, stability and long-term sustainable development by supporting the Government's efforts to strengthen the rule of law. "We have followed the speech of President Moise following the wave of protests and violence that hit many areas after the cancellation of all government subsidies on fuel prices. This speech brought with it many reforms and political initiatives that led to a drop in level of tension," Otaibi said in a speech delivered on Thursday evening. This comes through accepting the resignation of the national government and calling for national consultations with all political parties to form a new government to fight all forms of corruption and promote the economy, he added.

Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi

Otaibi praised the efforts of Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mamadou Diallo and his good attempts in cooperation with the diplomatic community to support strengthening the rule of law and stability in Haiti, welcoming the appointment of Prime Minister John Henry. He expressed hope that the government of Prime Minister Henry would gain the confidence of parliament and take the necessary steps to achieve the priorities and reforms required in various fields.

Otaibi welcomed the remarkable improvement in the decrease in registered crime rates, calling on the Haitian National Authorities to make the most of the expertise of the UN Mission for Justice in this field. He called for the development and upgrading of the national police force to maintain Haiti's progress in the fields of security and stability. On the humanitarian side, Otaibi noted that the overall situation in Haiti, despite the recent developments, remained fragile and required more cooperation between all people from the national government, civil society organizations and the private sector on the one hand and the UN and donor countries on the other. He stressed that this cooperation contributes to the fact that Haiti is crossing this very delicate stage in its modern history, as there is still time to work hard to achieve political stability and sustainable development. — KUNA

Truck driver deported for dumping leftovers on side of the road

Reckless driver obstructed traffic, insulted police

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: The Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry released a statement commenting on a video clip that circulated on social media and allegedly showed a concrete mixer truck driver unloading leftovers on the side of a main road. Environment police acted and arrested the driver, took him to the police station where he was charged and sentenced to administrative deportation. A citation was also issued to the company that owns the truck.

Reckless driver arrested

Meanwhile, the Relations and Security Information Department commented on a video clip that was also posted on social media and allegedly showed a reckless driver who attacked police. In its statement, the ministry noted that on Friday, a vehicle was spotted deliberately obstructing traffic, and it was carrying a dog that was seen sticking its head out of the window. When the driver was asked to pull over, she refused and drove recklessly until she was forced stopped at Abdullah Al-Salem. She refused to hand police her license and registrations, then sped off to an unknown location. Policemen did not chase her in order to protect motorists' lives and property, and instead noted down the license plate number. The woman later posted a video on social media, in which she insulted police. The woman will be charged with obstructing traffic, failure to heed to police orders, escaping from police and recklessness, the interior ministry said in its statement.

Drug dealer caught

Criminal detectives arrested an American man in Jabriya and found seven kilograms of marijuana, five grams of cocaine, a pistol with 24 rounds, along with KD 14,000 in cash inside his house. The suspect admitted that the money found in his place were collected from selling drugs in only one month. He also confessed that he sold five kilograms of drugs out of 12 he had managed to smuggle into the country. Authorities moved after receiving tips about the suspect's activity, and that he met with individuals who had criminal record related to drugs. The suspect was arrested a few days after his compatriot was caught inside his Mahboulah apartment for drug trafficking.

Smuggling foiled

A citizen was arrested upon his arrival from Europe as he had marijuana on him. customs officers found the drugs inside a pack of cigarettes the passenger was carrying, so he was arrested and taken to Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh police station for further action.

Shuwaikh crackdown

Scores of violators and fugitives were arrested during a recent crackdown in Shuwaikh. Among the detainees were people reported absconding, in addition to others who failed to produce valid IDs or held expired residency permits. The detainees were taken to the proper authorities for further action.

Scores arrested in Shuwaikh crackdown

Accidents

A Japanese-made vehicle collided with three others and mounted them in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. No injuries were reported. Meanwhile a four-car accident on Forth Ring Road left one man injured, and he was taken to hospital where his condition was described as stable.

Bootlegger caught

Ahmadi police arrested an Asian man in Mahboula for selling alcoholic drinks. Patrol officers noticed a vehicle whose driver tried to escape when he saw police, so he was pulled over and liquor bottles were found in his car. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Cops cited for smoking

Environment Public Authority and environment police noticed two policemen were smoking in the reception area of Shamiya police station. Citations were issued to the smokers, and to the officer who allowed them to smoke. They were also cited for having ashtrays inside the police station. The two policemen and officer were referred to concerned authorities for violating environment law 56/2014 and its amendments.

KUWAIT: This photo released by the Interior Ministry yesterday shows a screengrap from a video clip allegedly posted by a suspect who was arrested for reckless driving and insulting police.

False alarm

A woman called police saying that her boyfriend kidnapped her, but when officers went to her location, they discovered that she had voluntarily accompanied him and was intoxicated when she made the call. Police found cash with the Jordanian woman and her Kuwaiti boyfriend, which officers suspect they had stolen. The two were sent to concerned authorities for further action.

local spotlight

No fees on roads

By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

A short video was posted on social media in Kuwait on September 4, 2018 for the director of Public Authority for Roads and Transportation, in which he said that authority officials are thinking of imposing fees on the use of some roads in the country, and explained the reasons behind this action.

These comments had sparked heated debates between supporters and opponents of such an idea. Some people scoffed it off, believing that there are many streets in Kuwait which need comprehensive maintenance, while means of public transportation need to be overhauled; two issues that should be given priority ahead of applying the toll roads concept.

In 2014, the National Assembly approved the establishment of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation. The new state department was given wide powers to regulate transportation and all means of road transport; from private vehicles, bicycles, taxis, buses or other modern means of transport, to the intelligent transport system, which allows the use of modern technologies to improve the management and development of the transport system. The law also added the 'sustainable transport', which is a concept of transportation that is economically, socially, and environmentally safe.

The law granted the authority the right and power to consider these subjects and more. I believe that the existence of an independent roads' authority is good, but it is necessary to consider what it can offer to the drivers and the transport system, and made developments based on studies and research that benefit the society as a whole.

One of the authority's tasks is to look find solutions to the traffic congestion problems and find more guarantees for safety of roads in order to reduce the economic, social, environmental and security costs of accidents and accompanying deaths, injuries and material losses.

I believe that transportation in Kuwait, whether public or private, need a new way of organizing and full maintenance. For example, the increasing number of roundabouts makes the roads appear narrower for motorists, and I do not know the purpose of building them in such high number. Such roundabouts should be abolished and replaced with intersections and traffic signals. For example, try to enter the passports' roundabout at rush hour, such as 2:00 pm, and you will find yourself in a frightening challenge.

Before thinking of placing tolls on any streets, I wish that officials would first consider the development and maintenance of current roads. I do not mean just building more pedestrian bridges, but I mean real and safe maintenance. An example of this is the absence of specific parking spaces for taxi drivers. This constitutes a danger to the street users, who face constant risks when taxi drivers stop as they wish anywhere. Some buses do the same now, as they can sometimes be seen stopping anywhere on the road without sticking to bus stops designated for their routes.

Dubai does charge fees on some roads, but the difference between Dubai and Kuwait is huge and clear. In Dubai for example, the streets continuously undergo maintenance, and you don't have small gravels flying around and cracking vehicle windshields there!

The Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation, Engineer Saud Al-Naqi, had a previous statement a few months ago, saying that there was no study or decision taken regarding the imposition of fees on the use of certain roads in the country.

Naqi said in a press statement that before the authority puts charges on the use of roads, the roads must first be improved to justify the reasons for imposing the tolls. He pointed out that such action requires extensive studies, in addition to making sure that several alternatives exist for toll roads.

I know that the law grants the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation the right to consider all matters relating to organizing roads, but I believe that it must be done in an acceptable and appropriate manner. I do recall the time when the price of gasoline was about to be raised. It was said at the time that it will limit the number of young people aimlessly roaming the streets, and thus reduce congestions. Well, it was a wrong idea as the congestions continue.

I believe that claims for fees are offset by services for drivers, and I hope that in exchange for such ideas, the driver will know what their rights are. I hope more studies are implemented on the status of roads before putting any ideas publicly.

Retroactive payment for national labor allowance cancelled

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The cabinet amended the conditions for payment of national labor support allowances for Kuwaitis working in the private sector. As per the amendment, the payment starts from the date of a worker's application at the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), instead of retroactively starting from the trial period as currently done.

The decision, which His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah issued in August, also changed the conditions that must be available for candidates carrying intermediate school degrees and lesser qualifications, who are now required to enroll in courses over a certain period before applying for a job.

For those who have high school degrees, the decision said they must enroll in a one-year course, and two years for those with below intermediate certificates, excluding those with experience in the private sector for periods that are equal to the required courses.

8,968 candidates

The Civil Service Commission's automated employment system saw 8,968 citizens registering for a public sector job since registration for stage 64 was started in April 24, 2018, and ran through September 7, 2018. Statistics showed that 303 men and 5,665 women have registered, 2731 of whom are Kuwait University graduates and 4,547 graudated from the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

Treatment costs

Actress Amal Abbas is preparing to travel to Jaslok hospital in India, as businessman Bader Al-Otaibi said he would pay all of her travel and treatment expenses there. Abbas said that she was called by representatives of Bader Al-Otaibi, who told her that he would take care of all costs.

Bedoon students

The Education Ministry is considering the possibility of accepting bedoon students who are children of military personal in public schools that belong to Jahra education zone. Concerned authorities are studying student concentrations in schools belonging to the Jahra education zone. Meanwhile, educational sources said that Public Education Sector asked for statistics about schools and student concentration in residential areas. Sources said Jahra Education Zone began accepting bedoon students who are grandchildren of Kuwaiti women, adding that it is expected to have a decision to start accepting bedoon students according to the decision issued by former education minister Dr Bader Al-Essa.

Jleeb Co-op

The state properties department of the Finance Ministry asked Kuwait Municipality to halt all procedures in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Co-operative Society, until it receives another letter stating that they can complete their procedures. The department's director Riyadh Al-Saad said the co-op was called several times to pay the money it owes for the fiscal year 2018-2019, but it did not.

Meanwhile, the supplies department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said that holders of subsidized supplies' cards from Jleeb co-op have been transferred to branches of Sabah Al-Nasser co-op starting Saturday, until the dues are paid. Those who go to Al-Rehab co-op were referred to Ishbelia co-op because of violations of storage, safety and cleanliness conditions.

Exhibition encourages values of environment protection

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Board and Director General of the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said that the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah of the 'Clean and Green Environment' exhibition and forum reflects his interest in making the environment a national priority, and represents what the issue presents in the form of challenges at all levels.

Sheikh Abdullah underlined the importance of the forum, saying that it encourages environment protection and backs plans and projects related to greenery and protecting the environment in order to achieve the sustainable development and protection of resources.

Sheikh Abdullah further indicated that the forum comes as part of the authority's programs that aim to enhance environmental knowledge for all society's members, and encourage them to work towards protecting the environment. The exhibition will be organized by the Leaders Group on the 2nd and 3rd of October, 2018.

Kuwait looks forward to Human Rights Council session

Jamal Al-Ghunaim

GENEVA: Kuwait is looking forward to the 39th session of the UN Human Rights Council, said Kuwaiti Permanent Representative to UN headquarters in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim yesterday. This session, which will begin tomorrow and last three weeks, holds important discussions on the situations in Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Sudan and Libya.

Ghunaim stated that the 39th session was also important as it was the first session of the new human rights commissioner Michelle Bachelet. He noted that Kuwait has already expressed its support for the High Commissioner in a written letter addressed to her by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, praising the constructive cooperation between Kuwait and the Commission in all fields. The Kuwaiti Ambassador pointed out that the 39th session of the council will review 58 specialized reports on various human rights issues, including the periodic update of the Commission of Inquiry into human rights violations in Syria. —KUNA

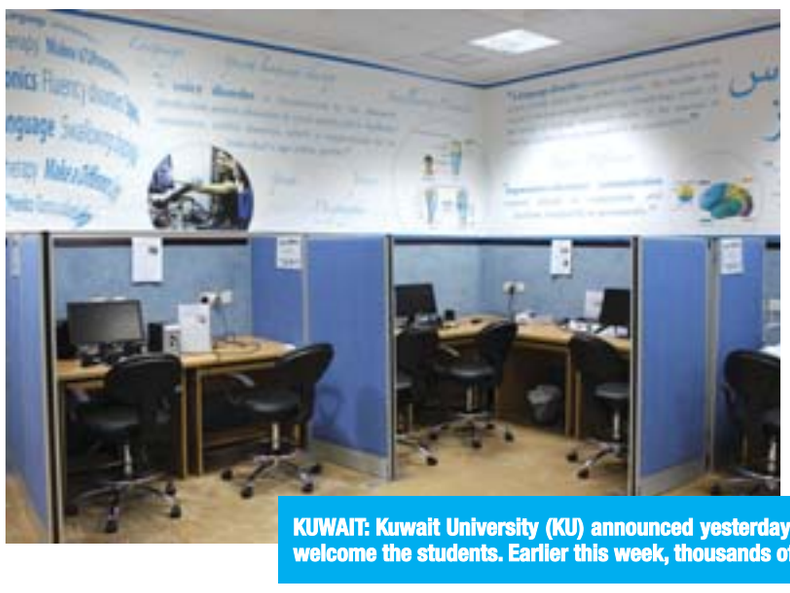
Union offers health assurance for PAM staff in three packages

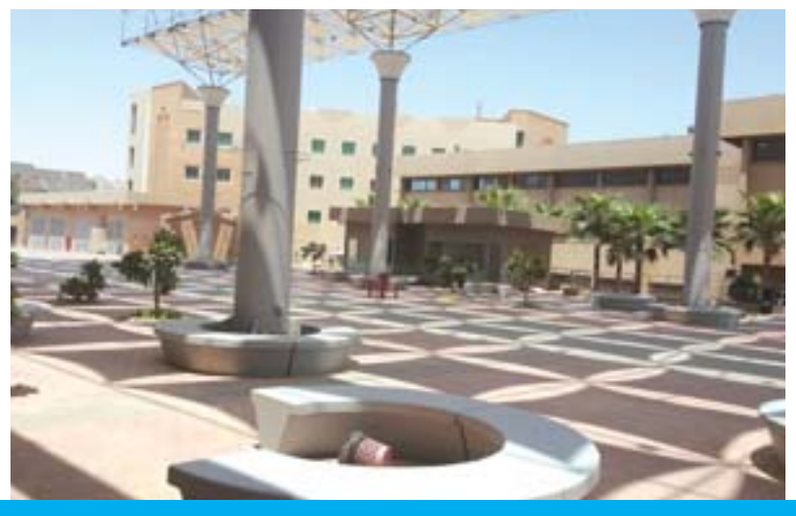
By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Manpower's Workers Union signed a memorandum of cooperation with the National Life and General Insurance Company, in order to provide health assurance for workers at all hospitals and private clinics contracted with the company in Gulf Cooperation Council and East Asian countries.

Secretary General of the labor union Khaled Al-Matroud explained that the insurance guarantee incentives for Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) workers and their families are available for monthly installments and come in three packages: The first is valued at KD 10,000 and available for KD 270 with a monthly payment of KD 23, the second valued at KD 5,000 and available for KD 204 with a monthly payment of KD 17, and the third valued at KD 3,000 and available for KD 180 with a monthly payment of KD 15. Matroud said the service is not limited to union members, but is also available for all PAM employees, adding that the optional service covers most diseases including chronic ones, vision, obstetrics, dental and all types of radiation.

Kuwait University prepares to receive 35,797 students





KUWAIT: Kuwait University (KU) announced yesterday that it was prepared to receive 35,797 students for the college year 2018/2019, starting today. KU said, in a press release, that all of its facilities and staff were ready to welcome the students. Earlier this week, thousands of kindergarteners, elementary and intermediate students began their school year. — KUNA

Zain exclusive partner of internship program at IFAD

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its exclusive partnership of the internship program at the United Nation's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Zain's support to the program, which comes for the second consecutive year, is part of the company's strategic partnership with LOYAC, a non-profit organization that aims at developing the youth's talents and skills.

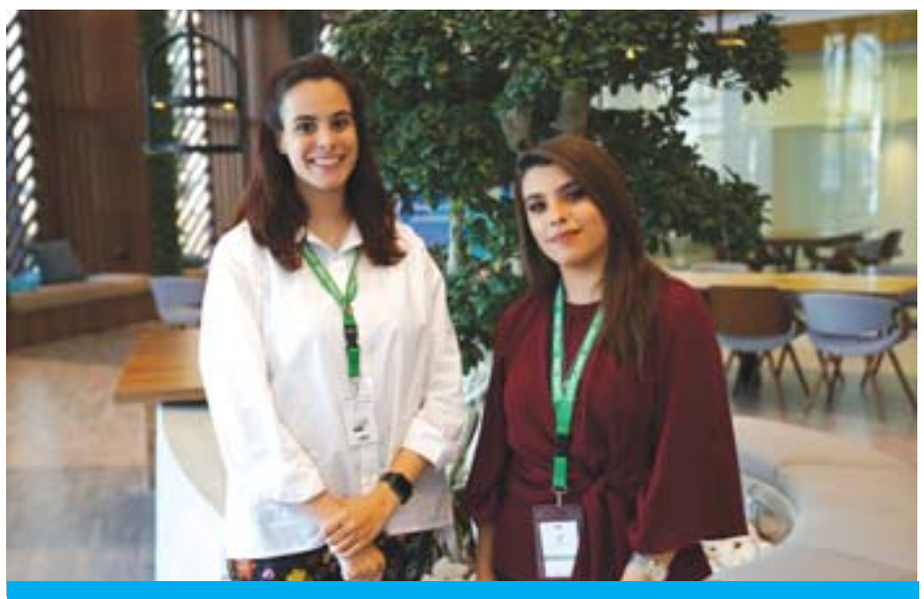
Zain's exclusive support to this program comes as part of the company's Strategic Partnership with LOYAC, which continues this year for over 14 consecutive years. The partnership comes in line with the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility Strategy, which centers around the development of the Education and Youth sectors, especially in regards to nurturing and developing entrepreneurial skills within the youth.

Zain's exclusive support to LOYAC's Internship Program at IFAD featured the participation of Kuwaiti students Wadha Al-Mussalam (last year) and Thuraya Al-Holi (this year) in the program at Rome, Italy. Both students were selected by LOYAC amongst many outstanding Kuwaiti students of Accounting, Finance, and Economics to take part in this internship program, which extends throughout six months and aims at training students on finance agricultural development projects primarily for food production in rural areas of developing countries.

This year, Zain's support to LOYAC extends to a great number of educational initiatives and programs that cater to developing the youth's skills and talents, including the KON Social Entrepreneurship Program brought to Kuwait in collaboration with Babson College in Boston, considered the most prestigious entrepreneurship college in the United States and the number one institution in the world for entrepreneurship education, as well as the LOYAC AC Milan Soccer School, and more. Through its Strategic Partnership with LOYAC, Zain also trains hundreds of students as part of the LOYAC Summer Internship Program. The students take part in completing tasks, learning new skills, and go through professional training in the real business world at various departments and divisions within the company. Zain also offers the students financial rewards in recognition of their efforts and as an encouragement to their dedication.

Zain is proud to be one of the Strategic Partners of LOYAC since its inception, especially that it is considered one of the most prominent national programs that cater to the youth and offers them a healthy and empowering environment to develop their skills and talents in an educational, fun, and social atmosphere.

Zain believes in the development of the communities in which it operates, and it is a very important part of the company's overall success. The company considers education as a core element in the community development process, and it will continue to support it to contribute to the further progress of the country's youth. Since its inception in 2002, LOYAC has grown to be the first choice of the youth in Kuwait when it comes to innovative and high quality educational programs. LOYAC runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and to help them find their sense of purpose by extending themselves to others.



KUWAIT: Students Wadha Al-Mussalam and Thuraya Al-Holi at Zain's Innovation Center (ZINC).

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ADEN: A Yemeni man drives his motorbike past burning tyres as protesters demonstrate against inflation and the rise of living costs in the country's second city of Aden, which is held by forces loyal to the Saudi-backed government. — AFP

'We just didn't make it,' UN envoy says

Yemen talks falter as clashes erupt around Hodeida

GENEVA: UN-backed talks between Yemen's warring parties ended yesterday before properly getting off the ground, with the UN envoy acknowledging it had not been possible to convince the rebels to come to Geneva. "We didn't manage to get... the delegation from Sanaa to come here... We just didn't make it," Martin Griffiths told reporters in Geneva.

He said it was "too early to say when the next round of consultations will take place." His comments came after the Houthis, powerful armed tribes locked in a war with Yemen's Saudi-backed government, have refused to take off from the rebel-held capital of Sanaa unless the United Nations meets a list of conditions, which includes securing a safe return from Geneva to Sanaa for their delegation. Fighting flared again on the ground on Friday with government forces attempting to close in on the rebel-held Red Sea port of Hodeida, which was supposed to be one of the main topics of discussion.

The talks had been scheduled to formally open Thursday but were put on hold, leaving Griffiths scrambling to save them. Griffiths hosted a number of meetings with the government delegation, which arrived in Geneva on Wednesday, and diplomats from countries with influence in Yemen's bloody conflict. Griffiths said the meetings were "fruitful consultations", insisting that "we made some good progress... (on) confidence-building measures". A day earlier, the Houthis' Supreme Revolutionary Council said they were becoming "increasingly suspicious that the coalition intended to insult" the rebels.

It accused the Saudi-led alliance of planning to strand the rebel delegation in Djibouti, where their plane was to make a stop en route to Geneva. The Houthis hinted they feared a repeat of 2016, when 108 days of talks in Kuwait broke down and a rebel delegation was stranded in Oman for three months due to an air blockade, the council said in a statement on Telegram. The Saudi-led military coalition controls the country's airspace and Sanaa international airport has been largely disused for years. The Iran-backed Houthis also demand the evacuation of their wounded fighters from Sanaa to Oman.

Saudi Arabia and its allies have meanwhile said they have already granted the Houthis clearance to fly, accusing the rebels of intransigence. Griffiths, who said earlier this week he believed the Geneva talks would offer a "flickering signal of hope" to the Yemeni people, has been up against difficult odds from the start. He is the UN's third Yemen envoy since 2014, when Houthis overran the capital and drove Hadi's government into exile. All previous attempts to resolve the conflict have failed. Nearly 10,000 people have been killed since Saudi Arabia and its allies intervened on behalf of the government in 2015, triggering what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Nearly 10,000 have been killed in Yemen war

Clashes erupt

Meanwhile, clashes between Yemen's Houthi rebels and a government alliance led by the United Arab Emirates broke out near the Red Sea city of Hodeida Friday, military sources said. The violence came as United Nations-sponsored peace talks in Geneva have failed to get off the ground, with the Houthi delegation refusing to leave Yemen over alleged fears it will be blocked from returning to the capital Sanaa.

Multiple military sources reported the government alliance attempted Friday to close in on rebel-held Hodeida, a city home to impoverished Yemen's most valuable port. The coalition, which launched an offensive on Hodeida in June, advanced some 16 kilometers along the coastal road of the Al-Durayhmi district Friday, a military source said. The road is a key supply route for the rebels, who still hold Hodeida city. The fate of embattled Hodeida was scheduled for discussion at the Geneva conference, originally due to open Thursday but now on hold until an agreement is reached with the rebels. The Iran-aligned Houthis have demanded the UN guarantee their delegation's safe return to Sanaa and allow the evacuation of wounded rebels from the capital to nearby Oman. The rebels seized control of Sanaa in 2014 along with the Red Sea Hodeida port.

Hodeida's port serves as an entry point for some 70 percent of imports in a country where eight million people face imminent famine. The government and the Saudi-led coalition that backs it accuse the Houthis of receiving smuggled weapons through Hodeida and have demanded their unconditional withdrawal from the city. Government forces backed by the coalition have paused their assault on Hodeida port in what they say is a bid to give UN-led peace efforts a chance, but clashes have erupted sporadically. Nearly 10,000 people have been killed in the Yemen conflict since 2015, when the Saudi-led alliance intervened in the civil conflict between the government and rebels. — Agencies

'There are more babies in Idlib' than 'terrorists', UK warns Syria

UNITED NATIONS: Britain's Ambassador to the United Nations Karen Pierce has named several Syrian generals and their units stationed around rebel-held Idlib province, warning in the Security Council that they would be punished for any major military offensive on civilians. An estimated 3 million people live in the last major stronghold of active opposition to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's rule. Syrian government and Russian warplanes began air strikes in Idlib this week in a possible prelude to a full-scale offensive.

The presidents of Turkey, Iran and Russia, meeting in Tehran on Friday for a summit of key foreign players in Syria's war, failed to agree on a ceasefire in Idlib. Russia has described Idlib as a "nest of terrorists," while the United Nations has warned an assault on the area could lead to a humanitarian catastrophe. "There are more babies in Idlib than there are terrorists and I think that should give those engaging in military action pause for thought," Pierce told a UN Security Council meeting on Idlib on Friday.

She named units of the Syrian armed forces and their commanders that Britain believed were stationed around Idlib, including the 4th Armored Division, the Republican Guard, Tiger Forces and 2nd and 5th Corps. "In addition to the Syrian regime, these commanders, these units, will be held accountable by the international community" if there is major offensive with mass civilian casualties, Pierce warned. A Syrian government offensive on Idlib could be the seven-year-long war's last decisive battle. Tehran and Moscow have helped Damascus turn the course of the war.

"We are firmly under the impression our Western partners are stoking hysteria around Idlib, and in any way are attempting to prevent the fall of the last major terrorist stronghold in Syria," said Russian UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia. UN Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura warned the council that there were "all the ingredients for a perfect storm" in Idlib and the United Nations was ready to work with all parties on evacuation routes if they were required.

"People should be granted safe passage to places of their own choosing if they want to leave temporarily. We must allow the opening of a sufficient number of protected voluntary evacuation routes for civilians in any direction," he said. US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said militant groups in Idlib could be targeted effectively without causing a humanitarian catastrophe. She also said the United States would not consider reconstruction aid for Syria until it sees "concrete results from a genuine political process that ends the war and offers freedom to the Syrian people." — Agencies

AL MUNTAR, Syria: Smoke billows following Syrian government forces' bombardment around the village of Al-Muntar on the southern edges of the rebel-held Idlib province. — AFP

US recalls its envoys from Latin American nations over Taiwan

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday recalled its envoys to three Latin American countries that recently switched diplomatic ties from Taiwan to China, saying it would hold consultations with the diplomats. The move comes after Washington accused Beijing last month of destabilizing cross-Strait relations and engaging in a campaign of "political interference" by poaching Taiwan's allies in the western hemisphere.

"The Department of State has called back the US Ambassador to the Dominican Republic Robin Bernstein, the US Ambassador to El Salvador Jean Manes and the US Charge d'Affaires in Panama Roxanne Cabral," a statement said Friday. "Our three chiefs of mission will meet with US government leaders to discuss ways in which the United States can support strong, independent, democratic institutions and economies throughout Central America and the Caribbean," it added.

Taiwan and China have been engaged for years in a diplomatic tug-of-war in developing countries, with economic support and other aid often used as bargaining chips for diplomatic recognition. Beijing sees self-ruling, democratic Taiwan as part of its territory to be brought back into the fold and has not ruled out using force to do so. Relations between Taipei and Beijing have worsened since Tsai Ing-wen came to power in 2016 as her government refuses to acknowledge that Taiwan is part of "one China." El Salvador, which switched its ties in August, became the fifth diplomatic loss under Tsai's presidency and the third this year.

But while most countries have established formal relations with Beijing rather than rival Taipei in recent decades, Taiwan still has unofficial relationships with powerful countries. Its most important unofficial ally is the US, which remains Taiwan's leading arms supplier, despite switching diplomatic recognition to Beijing in 1979. Ties have warmed between the US and Taiwan in recent months, incensing Beijing. Some analysts saw the poaching of El Salvador as an indirect slap in the face to President Donald Trump's administration and a warning against further friendly overtures. — AFP

Brazil poll thrown into chaos after front-runner stabbed

Far-right front-runner Bolsonaro in serious but stable condition

SAO PAULO: Brazil's presidential race was thrown into chaos yesterday with the far-right front-runner Jair Bolsonaro in serious but stable condition in an intensive care unit after being stabbed at a rally, his wound severe enough that his son said he was unlikely to be able to return to campaigning before the Oct 7 vote. Bolsonaro, a congressman, was knifed in the stomach while being carried atop supporters' shoulders in a street rally on Thursday and was being treated at a Sao Paulo hospital.

A Tweet posted on Bolsonaro's verified account said he was "doing well and recuperating." However, Flavio Bolsonaro, Jair's son, said in a video on his verified Facebook page Friday afternoon that his father was in a "delicate situation and has trouble speaking." "He is recuperating and he probably will not be able to head out into the streets in this campaign," said Flavio Bolsonaro. "He cannot go to the streets, but we can."

A spokesman for the Bolsonaro campaign did not immediately return a request for comment. The attack further clouds Brazil's most unpredictable election in three decades. Corruption investigations have jailed scores of powerful businessmen and politicians in recent years, and alienated infuriated voters. Bolsonaro, 63, has for years angered many Brazilians with extreme statements, but is also seen by his many supporters as a politically incorrect gust of fresh air in a rotten system.

He has repeatedly said the country's notoriously violent police should increase their killing of suspected drug gang members and armed criminals. That plays well with wealthier voters, but is terrifying for the 50 percent of Brazilians who said in a 2017 Datafolha poll they feared being victims of police violence. Surveys consistently give Bolsonaro around 22 percent in simulated first-round votes. However, those polls find he would badly lose to most rivals in the likely event of a runoff, which takes place if no candidate wins a majority in the first ballot.

Election boost?

Some Bolsonaro backers and analysts, especially in financial markets, forecast the attack could give Bolsonaro a huge boost. They argue it will draw in some of the 28 percent of voters who say they are undecided or will not vote for anyone. "I just want to send a message to the thugs who tried to ruin the life of a family man, a guy who is the hope for millions of Brazilians: You just elected him president. He will win in the first round," Flavio Bolsonaro, said earlier on Friday.

Carlos Melo, a political scientist with Insper, a Sao Paulo business school, said Bolsonaro may gain some votes. But he doubted there would be a big shift his way, especially given that 44 percent of those surveyed in the latest Ibope poll say they would never cast a ballot for Bolsonaro, the stiffest rejection for any candidate.

"I see no reason why voters who have previously said they reject him would now automatically support him," Melo said. The political scientist thinks that once the commotion of the attack passes, voters may soberly think about the roots of the political polarization and aggressive rhetoric that has engulfed Brazil. "Jair Bolsonaro is a symbol of that process," Melo said. "Voters may be awakened to the thought that politicians who propose loosening gun laws, for example, end up giving unbridled power to crazy people, like the man who carried out the attack yesterday."

Congressman knifed in the stomach

Little time

Bolsonaro was stabbed while being carried on someone's shoulders in a crowd of cheering supporters in the city of Juiz de Fora. TV pictures showed him screaming in pain, then falling backward into the arms of those around him. Police video taken at a precinct showed suspect Adelio Bispo de Oliveira telling police he had been ordered by God to carry out the attack. Speaking earlier in an online video from hospital in Juiz de Fora, Bolsonaro said the pain of the attack at first was like being hit by a soccer ball.

"It was intolerable and it seemed like maybe something worse was happening," he said, talking in a weak, raspy voice with a tube in his nose and monitors beeping nearby. "I was preparing for this sort of thing. You run risks." Bolsonaro was stabilized and in the intensive care unit at the Einstein hospital in Sao Paulo on Friday. Dr Luiz Henrique Borsato, who operated on the candidate, said the internal wounds were "grave" and "put the patient's life at risk" but that he was stable. Doctors were worried about an infection since Bolsonaro's intestines were perforated.

Bolsonaro likely needs to spend at least a week in the hospital. Being unable to campaign any more would seriously damage his run. Bolsonaro's tiny coalition has almost no campaign time on government-regulated candidate commercial blocs on television and radio. He must rely on social media and, until now, raucous rallies around the country to drum up support. Running as the law-and-order candidate, Bolsonaro has positioned himself as the anti-politician, though he has spent nearly three decades in Congress.

He has long espoused taking a radical stance on public security in Brazil, which has more homicides than any other country, according to UN statistics, and has openly praised Brazil's military dictatorship, which he has said should have killed more people. Bolsonaro has stirred controversy with comments denigrating women, gay, black and indigenous people. During 2016 impeachment proceedings against former leftist President Dilma Rousseff, who was jailed and tortured during Brazil's military dictatorship in the 1970s, Bolsonaro dedicated his vote to the colonel in charge of the prison where she was jailed for three years and tortured.

In 2003, Bolsonaro pushed a congresswoman and told her: "I would never rape you because you do not deserve it." He repeated the comment in 2014 in the chamber and as a result is facing trial for inciting rape. Bolsonaro has called the charges politically motivated. —Reuters

JUIZ DE FORA: Brazilian right-wing presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro gestures after being stabbed in the stomach during a campaign rally in Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais State, in southern Brazil. — AFP

Jewish restaurant attacked amid German protests

BERLIN: Masked assailants hurled rocks and bottles at a Jewish restaurant, injuring the owner, in an apparently anti-semitic attack on the sidelines of a wave of neo-Nazi protest in an east German city, authorities and reports said yesterday.

A spokesman for the regional interior ministry said "a politically-motivated act with an anti-semitic background was the most plausible" explanation for the attack in Chemnitz, late last month. The city has been convulsed by violent far-right, anti-immigration demonstrations since the killing of a German man, allegedly by asylum-seekers, on the last weekend of August. Police in Saxony confirmed to the newspaper Die Welt that they had received a complaint of the attack on the "Schalom" restaurant on the sidelines of the demonstrations. A mob of around a dozen people, wearing black with their faces covered hurled rocks, bottles and a metal pipe at the restaurant on August 27, according to reports in Die Welt and the Freie Presse newspaper.

Owner Uwe Dziuballa suffered an injury to the shoulder during the attack, the reports said. The restaurant, which was opened in 2000, has been attacked several times before. The Chemnitz knife attack is the latest in a series of violent crimes by refugees that have garnered massive media attention and stoked anger at German Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to allow in more than one million migrants and refugees since 2015.

Far-right groups and thousands of local citizens have taken to the streets since the stabbing, with some seen flashing the illegal Nazi salute. — AFP

Rouhani evokes Iran-Iraq war in call to defy US pressure

TEHRAN: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani evoked memories of the devastating Iran-Iraq war yesterday to call for unity in the face of economic hardships and US pressure.

"Today, the government is on the frontlines. This is an economic, psychological and propoganda war," Rouhani said on state television.

"We had sweet days and we had hard days during the sacred defence," he said, using the official name for the war with Iraq which claimed up to two million lives between 1980 and 1988.

"But our nation never backed down. Now, too, our nation will not bow before the pressure of a new group in the White House." Iran's economy has been battered in recent months, in part due to Washington's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, which had lifted sanctions in return for curbs to its atomic programme.

Prices are rising and shortages are widespread, while Iran's currency has lost around 70 percent of its value against the dollar compared with a year ago.

Rouhani said that the United States is pressuring Iran and at the same time calling for negotiations "every day". "Which one should we believe? Your messages, or your brutal acts? If you want the best for the Iranian people why are you pressuring them?"

Rouhani called for unity after weeks of pressure from both reformist and hardline factions over his handling of the economic crisis."We cannot fight America, the left and the right at the same time. We cannot fight on three fronts," he said. The president also acknowledged the mounting economic pressure.

"(Yet) we cannot back down from our goals because of temporary difficulties. Remember those (war) days, our heartaches brought us to eventual victories."

Rouhani made the remarks during an event named after Mohammad-Ali Rajai, Iran's second president whose assasination in August 1981 was blamed on the political-militant group Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK). —AFP

TEHRAN: A handout picture released on Friday, by the office of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (R) shows him greeting Russian President Vladimir Putin (L) in Tehran during their trilateral meeting as Iran hosted a summit on the Syrian conflict. — AFP

Study questions Iran-Qaeda ties

WASHINGTON: There is no evidence that Iran and Al-Qaeda cooperated in carrying out terrorist attacks, according to a study published on Friday that casts doubt on Trump administration statements about close ties between the two. The conclusions of the study, by the New America think tank, were based on detailed analysis of documents seized in Osama bin Laden's hideout after US forces killed the Al-Qaeda leader in 2011.

The findings clash with recent statements by US President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo suggesting Iran has collaborated with Al-Qaeda, which carried out the Sept 11, 2001 attacks in the United States. Debate has swirled over the relationship between Iran, a majority Shiite Muslim state, and radical Sunni group Al-Qaeda since late 2001, when some Al-Qaeda members fled to Iran after the United States toppled the Taleban government that had sheltered them in Afghanistan.

The bin Laden files, including a 19-page document not released until last November, show that Iran was uncomfortable with the militants' presence on its soil, said Nelly Lahoud, the study's author and an expert on Al-Qaeda. At first, Lahoud said, Iran tried to move as many as possible to third countries. Later, it detained Al-Qaeda members, including members of bin Laden's family, after they violated the terms of their stay, which included a ban on phone communications, the study says. The militant group also viewed Tehran with deep mistrust, the study shows. Iran's policies tightened even further after the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, and detained Al-Qaeda members were forbidden from leaving the country, it says.

"Iranian authorities decided to keep our brothers as a bargaining chip," the unnamed Al-Qaeda operative wrote in the document, which was dated January 2007. Lahoud, who has studied the bin Laden documents since the first batch was released in 2012, said she looked for evidence that Al-Qaeda and Iran had operational ties in plotting terror attacks. "This I did not find," she said. Both Trump and Pompeo have suggested a closer relationship, as part of an anti-Tehran communications offensive by the US government. In announcing the US withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, Trump said in May that Iran "supports terrorist proxies and militias such as...Al-Qaeda."

In a speech a week later, Pompeo said: "Today we ask the Iranian people: Is this what you want your country to be known for, for being a co-conspirator with Hezbollah, Hamas, the Taleban, and Al-Qaeda." A State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Iran has refused to bring top al Qaeda members residing in Iran to justice, or even publicly identify who they are. Iran also has allowed Al-Qaeda "to operate a core facilitation pipeline through Iran since at least 2009, enabling AQ to move funds and fighters to South Asia and Syria," the official said. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment. — Reuters

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An announcement to Invitation No (KAC/PP/2/2018) for soliciting quotations for leasing One (1) new building of KAC staff's accommodation in the State of Kuwait

Kuwait Airways Company is pleased to invite all local individuals, companies, and corporations specialized to participate in soliciting quotations regarding lease of One (1) new building, adjacent or separated, located in, Farwanyia Area or Khaitan Area is advantage, for KAC Staff's accommodation.

• Therefore, those interested in presenting their price offers in relation thereto, must accompany with them a copy of this announcement and refer to the office of the Secretary of Tenders and Auctions Committee, located on the ground floor of Kuwait Airway Company main office in Al-Dajeej area, next to Kuwait International Airport. They should attend at : (08:00 AM Till 02:00 PM) starting from the date of publishing this announcement, for purchasing the said bid invitation documents against cash payment of KD 50/- (Kuwaiti Dinar Fifty only) to be paid to the Treasurer at Kuwait Airways Company Headquarters during office hours. The said amount shall be non-refundable and shall be receipted.

• The receipt, together with a copy of this announcement and the bidder's offer must be inserted in a closed envelope and submitted to the Box of Committee Tender office at Kuwait Airways Company before the deadline which shall be at 08:00 AM Till 02:00 PM On Monday Dated 24/09/2018 - Bids submitted beyond the aforementioned deadline shall not be entertained whatsoever.

• A preliminary meeting shall be convened at exactly at, 10:00 in the morning of this day Monday, corresponding to 17/09/2018, at the Meeting room of Supplies & Housing Department, which is located on the ground floor of Kuwait Airways Company main office in Al-Dajeej area, next to Kuwait international Airport. This preliminary meeting will be devoted to replying to the queries raised by the participants responding to the bid invitation stated in this announcement. In case the bidder fails to attend the said meeting, he shall fully comply with the discussions taking place, as well as the decisions and recommendations contained in the minutes of the meeting.

If you have any further questions, please contact: Tel. 24345555 Ext. 2249. Or Fax. 24722431

Trump's former campaign aide jailed in Russia probe

Papadopoulos sentenced to 14 days in prison

WASHINGTON: A former advisor to US President Donald Trump whose contacts with Russians set off the investigation into possible collusion with Moscow was jailed Friday for lying to the FBI. US District Judge Randolph Moss sentenced foreign policy aide George Papadopoulos to 14 days in prison, acknowledging his guilty plea and his remorse, but noting that he "lied in an investigation that was important to national security."

Papadopoulos was the second person ordered to prison in the sprawling, 16-month Russia collusion investigation of Special Counsel Robert Mueller. It came just over two weeks after two former top Trump aides were convicted of felony crimes in cases that grew out of the probe.

Trump suggested the conviction was trivial for a probe that has cost millions since it launched in May 2017 — while ignoring the 35 indictments, five guilty pleas and one trial conviction Mueller has racked up so far. "14 days for $28 MILLION - $2 MILLION a day, No Collusion. A great day for America!" Trump tweeted. Senator Mark Warner, the senior Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, which has its own Russia collusion investigation, applauded Mueller's work. Despite constant attacks by the president, Mueller and his team "are conducting a serious, professional investigation" into the 2016 Trump campaign's contacts with Russians, Warner said in a statement.

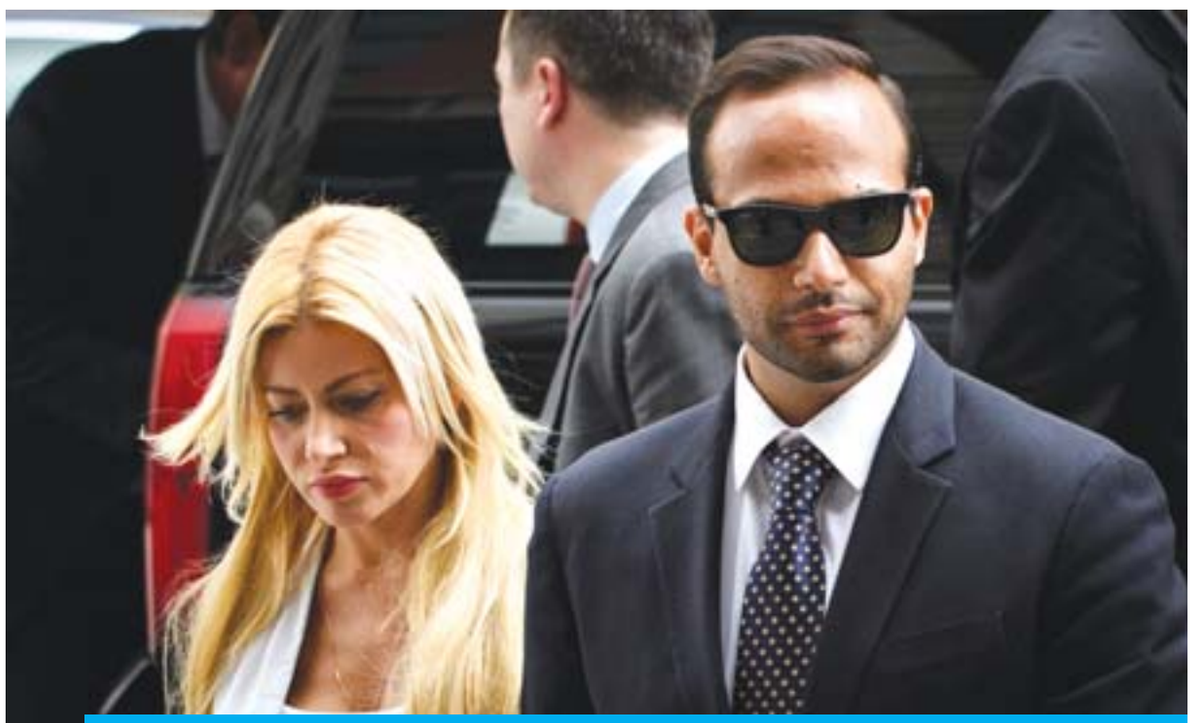
Papadopoulos, 31, was an inexperienced London-based oil analyst when he joined the Trump campaign in March 2016 on the Republican candidate's national security advisory board. Told the campaign's priority was to improve relations with Russia, within weeks Papadopoulos made contact with a mysterious professor, Joseph Mifsud, who touted links to the Kremlin.

Mifsud introduced him to others who ostensibly had connections to Russian President Vladimir Putin-including a woman who claimed to be Putin's niece. At a campaign meeting at the end of March 2016 Papadopoulos told Trump, then-senator and now Attorney General Jeff Sessions, and other campaign officials that he had connections in London that could set up a Trump-Putin meeting ahead of the November election.

"While some in the room rebuffed George's offer, Mr Trump nodded with approval and deferred to Mr Sessions, who appeared to like the idea and stated that the campaign should look into it," Papadopoulos's lawyers said in a pre-sentencing statement last week. Sessions has claimed he opposed the idea, but Papadopoulos continued to discuss it with top campaign officials over the following months. Papadopoulos told CNN in a late Friday interview that Trump "gave me a sort of a nod" and "wasn't committed either way" at that meeting-but that Sessions "was actually enthusiastic" about a Trump-Putin gathering.

He also said that Mifsud told him in April that the Russians had "thousands of emails" about Clinton-which Papadopoulos described as a "momentous statement" but not a direct offer of assistance. His reaction was that Mifsud "was simply repeating gossip and rumors," Papadopoulos said. "All I can say about this question-because I've been asked a million times-is if I told anyone it would have been discovered by now," he told CNN. "As far as I remember, I absolutely did not share this information with anyone on the campaign. "I might have, but I have no recollection of doing so." Weeks later, the stolen Clinton emails were posted online by what US intelligence chiefs now say were Russian intelligence actors. The mysterious Mifsud has since vanished, CNN said.

FBI agents quietly opened a probe into Trump campaign officials possibly colluding with Russia after they were tipped off by an Australian diplomat that Papadopoulos had spoken about Russians having dirt on Clinton. Papadopoulos admitted that he lied to FBI investigators when they interviewed him. "In January 2017, I made a terrible mistake for which I paid dearly, I am ashamed," Papadopoulos told the court in Washington. "I was young and ambitious." His lawyer Tom Breen said that at the time, Papadopoulos was naive and acted on what he told the court was a "misguided loyalty" to Trump, who had been inaugurated as president just one week before.



WASHINGTON: Foreign policy advisor to US President Donald Trump's election campaign, George Papadopoulos and his wife Simona Mangiante Papadopoulos arrive at US District Court for his sentencing in Washington, DC on Friday. — AFP

Breen noted that Trump was already calling the allegations of Russian election interference "fake news" and a "political witch hunt"-terms he continues to use for the Mueller probe. Trump "hindered this investigation more than George Papadopoulos ever did," Breen said. Judge Moss said he considered Papadopoulos's "genuine remorse" in issuing the light sentence, which included a $9,500 fine, a year on parole and community service. Papadopoulos has cooperated for more than a year with Mueller's probe, but it remains unknown whether he has provided investigators with any information supporting allegations of collusion with Russia. Mueller's office did not immediately comment on the sentence. — AFP

US police officer walks into wrong apartment, kills a man

CHICAGO: Protesters in Texas are demanding immediate jail for a Dallas police officer who entered the wrong apartment mistaking it for her own and shot dead the black man who lived there. The officer, who police have yet to identify and has been placed on leave pending official charges, will face criminal charges for the fatal shooting, officials said Friday. A racially-mixed crowd gathered near the crime scene for a candlelight vigil late Friday to honor the victim, identified as Botham Shem Jean, 26, an immigrant from the Caribbean island nation of Saint Lucia.

"We are here to express our outrage, and we are here to demand accountability," said Imam Omar Suleiman, an activist at the event organized by the Dallas-based Mothers Against Police Brutality group. "If this was not an officer that pulled the trigger, this person would be in a jail cell tonight!" Suleiman said. Mourners carried signs with slogans that read "Have a trial when police kill" and "Where is justice when police kill us?"

Authorities are seeking to charge the officer with manslaughter. Dallas Police chief U. Renee Hall told a news conference that the shooting was "a very unique situation." "We have ceased handling (the incident) under our normal officer-involved shooting protocol," the chief said, adding that the officer's blood was being tested for drugs and alcohol. The shooting took place late Thursday at the end of the officer's work shift. While still in uniform, she told authorities she mistakenly walked into Jean's apartment in an upscale complex near downtown Dallas.

Police did not yet know what interaction occurred between Jean and the officer. After the officer shot Jean, she called emergency services and told responding officers that she had thought she had entered her own apartment. "Right now there are more questions than answers," Chief Hall said. Jean had graduated from a private Christian college in Arkansas in 2016 and had since been working at the accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers in Dallas.

"It just still feels like a nightmare," Jean's mother, Allison Jean, told NBC News. "I wish I would wake up and find that it wasn't true." Allison Jean-who according to the St. Lucia Times has served for years in the island's government-said the details of her son's shooting make no sense. Her son "was in no wrong place at any wrong time. He was in his sanctuary, in the place where he called home. He didn't deserve this," she told NBC. Jean's sister, Allisa Charles-Findley, said she needs "answers for my baby brother."

"Just last week I was thinking of what to get you for your birthday," she wrote on Facebook, "now I have to go pick out your casket." Neighbor Alyssa Kinsey told The Dallas Morning News that Jean helped her move new furniture into her apartment soon after she moved into the building with her family in April. "I'll remember his smile," she said. "It just lit up a room." — AFP

Fired-up Obama attacks Trump, Republicans

CHICAGO: Barack Obama assailed US Republicans Friday for failing to keep President Donald Trump in check, in a forceful return to the political fray aimed at firing up Democratic voters ahead of key elections. Since leaving office, the 44th US president has pointedly avoided direct criticism of his successor, making a calculated effort not to utter Trump's name. But on Friday the gloves came off. "What happened to the Republican Party?" asked Obama, accusing Trump of "capitalizing" on "fear and anger." In a nod to the turbulence of the past week-which saw allegations of a secret "resistance" working inside the White House-the 57-year-old Obama poured scorn on the idea that "everything will turn out okay" because some of Trump's staff are secretly ignoring the boss's orders.

"That's not how our democracy is supposed to work," Obama thundered, in reference to the revelations by investigative journalist Bob Woodward whose new book describes Trump's aides battling to rein in an angry, uninformed president. The Democratic former president assailed Republicans as "unwilling to find the backbone" to challenge Trump head-on-accusing them instead of answering "outrageous" actions with "vague statements of disappointment." "They're not doing us a service by actively promoting 90 percent of the crazy stuff that's coming out of this White House, and then saying, 'Don't worry, we're preventing the other 10 percent,'" he said.

Obama's remarks to an auditorium of college students in Illinois-the state he represented before he won the White House-marked the opening salvo in a series of campaign stops aimed at boosting fellow Democrats in November's midterm elections, when voters will elect much of Congress and 36 state governorships. In a wide-ranging speech punctuated by frequent applause, Obama criticized the divisive politics of the era, decrying Trump's attacks on the media and the judiciary, his eagerness to work with Russia while neglecting traditional alliances. But he also sounded a hopeful note about the apparent mobilization of Democratic voters. "Out of this political darkness I am seeing a great awakening of citizenship all across the country," Obama said.

Calling out the president by name, Obama said Trump was a "symptom, not the cause" of broader ailments in the nation's politics. The president-who was traveling in North Dakota-took a swipe back at his predecessor after the speech, telling a crowd of supporters at a fundraiser: "I watched it, but I fell asleep." "I found he's very good, very good for sleeping." Taking aim at a key campaign argument by Trump's Republicans, Obama challenged them for laying claim to a roaring economic recovery that saw 200,000 jobs added last month. "When you hear how great the economy's doing right now, let's just remember when this recovery started," he said, recalling that he had inherited a dangerous economic downturn and left office amid a recovery.

Trump fired back by pointing at the country's 4.2 percent growth rate for the second quarter-accusing Obama of "trying to take credit for this incredible thing that's happening." Had Democrats won control of Congress two year ago, he jeered, "instead of having 4.2 up, I believe, honestly, we'd have 4.2 down." Having devoted most of his time since leaving office to writing his memoirs and setting up his presidential foundation in Chicago, Obama will be back in the limelight in coming weeks with campaign stops planned in California Saturday, and Ohio on Thursday. The hugely popular former first lady Michelle Obama will also be bringing star power to Democratic races in Las Vegas and Miami late this month.

ILLINOIS: Former President Barack Obama leaves the stage following a speech to students at the University of Illinois where he accepted the Paul H Douglas Award for Ethics in Government on September 7, 2018. — AFP

Democrats are hoping to ride an anti-Trump "blue wave" to take control of the House of Representatives, and are also battling for seats in the Senate. Obama's speech was a preview of the arguments he will make on the campaign trail-partly in an attempt to reach out to voters in parts of the country he won in 2012, but which voted for Trump in 2016. The former president implored the young Illinois audience to take a stand in November, warning "our democracy depends on it." "This is one of those pivotal moments when every one of us, as citizens of the United States, need to determine just who it is that we are, just what it is that we stand for." "You've got to do more than retweet a hashtag, you've got to vote," he said. — AFP

British police make arrest after 'serious incident'

LONDON: Police made an arrest yesterday following a "serious incident" in the northern English city of Barnsley that left one man with stab injuries. Traders at a local covered market said they and parts of the town centre were locked down over the incident, sparked by reports of an individual with a knife. South Yorkshire Police initially reported on Twitter that it was responding to a "serious incident".

In a later statement it said: Officers were called at around 8:20 am (0720 GMT) "following reports that a man had been stabbed in Barnsley town centre". "Police then received numerous further reports of an individual in the town centre with a knife," it said. "One person has been arrested in connection with the incident and is in police custody.

"One man suffered minor injuries. No other injuries have been reported at this time." It said several crime scenes had been established and there would be a highly-visible police presence until police had established what happened. "An investigation is now underway and in its early stages to establish whether this is an isolated incident and whether the individual acted alone," it added. Earlier the Facebook page of Barnsley Mayday Green Market reported that "this market and most of the town centre is in lockdown", before later declaring it had received the all-clear. Contacted by AFP, they said they had no more information, other than "second-hand reports" that there may have been more than one person with a knife. Britain is on high alert after a string of terror attacks, including by individuals brandishing knives. — AFP

BARNSLEY: A police forensics officer looks for evidence inside a cordon in Peel Square, following a stabbing incident in the centre of Barnsley, northern England on September 8, 2018. — AFP

Serbia, Kosovo leaders abruptly cancel EU-brokered meeting on land swap

BRUSSELS: The presidents of Serbia and Kosovo abruptly called off a face-to-face meeting in Brussels on Friday, deflating hopes of a deal involving a land swap that could allow both nations to move towards EU membership. Kosovo's President Hashim Thaci was due to discuss the swap plan with his Serbian counterpart Aleksandar Vucic for the first time in talks brokered by the EU's top diplomat Federica Mogherini.

But both men refused to speak to each other moments before their meeting was due to start at the EU's headquarters in Brussels, diplomats said, leaving Mogherini to meet them separately several times during the day to keep talks alive. "It went wrong today, they did not meet, they indulged in some drama instead," said one EU diplomat briefed on the talks, although it was not immediately clear what caused the breakdown.

"Difficulties remain," Mogherini said in a statement, although she said she would seek another meeting with the two presidents later this month. In an address to the nation on Friday evening, Serbia's Vucic said he would visit Kosovo this weekend as planned. On Sunday he is due to hold a rally in the northern Kosovan city of Mitrovica, which is mostly populated by Serbs. The failure to meet in person partly reflects a backlash in both Kosovo and Serbia to the land swap plan, as well as some resistance in Germany, the EU diplomat said. Belgrade and Pristina have both raised the idea of redrawing their border. — Reuters

At least 21 killed, scores injured in Indonesia tourist bus crash

Strong earthquake shakes southern Philippines

BANDUNG: At least 21 people died and several others were injured when a bus carrying domestic tourists crashed and plunged into a ravine on the Indonesian island of Java, police said yesterday.

The crash happened when the bus with 37 people on board was heading to a holiday spot in Sukabumi region, West Java. The vehicle was seen speeding downhill and lost control before plunging into a 10-metre-deep ravine.

"There were 37 people on the bus, 21 of them died while the rest were injured," Galih Bayu Raditya, head of the traffic unit at the local police precinct, told AFP. Victims who were injured had been taken to several local hospitals.

"We believe the accident happened because the brake failed to function," Raditya said, adding that the vehicle's road-worthy certificate had expired in 2016. The bus was part of a four-bus tour from Jakarta heading to a rafting spot in Pelabuhan Ratu, Sukabumi.

Passengers from other buses who arrived safely at the destination told the police they had seen smoke coming from the engine of the bus before it embarked on the journey. Authorities have issued repeated warnings that the route where the accident occurred was not suitable for buses due to the narrowness of the road and multiple tight corners.

On Friday, another bus carrying 21 people also crashed in the same region, killing one and injuring the rest. Transport accidents are common in Indonesia, where buses and trains are often old and badly maintained.

In February at least 27 people died when a bus with 40 domestic tourists on board hit a motorbike and crashed in Subang region, also in West Java.

Meanwhile, a strong 6.4-magnitude earthquake shook the southern Philippines yesterday, sending frightened residents fleeing from buildings, officials and eyewitnesses said. The quake struck off the coast of the southern town of Manay at about 3:16 pm (0716 GMT) at a depth of 14 kilometres (8.6 miles), the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said in a statement.

The institute said it expects the earthquake to have caused some damage but it and the local civil defence office said there were no immediate reports of serious destruction. "A lot of people ran from their homes because a lot of items were falling inside," Phivolcs science researcher John Deximo told AFP.

The Philippines lies on the so-called Ring of Fire, a vast Pacific Ocean region where many earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur. At least two people were killed and scores injured when a 6.5-magnitude quake struck the central Philippines in July, 2017.

The most recent major quake to hit the Philippines was in 2013 when a 7.1-magnitude quake left more than 220 people dead and destroyed historic churches in the central islands. —AFP

MANILA: Protesters display a banner as they march to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Manila yesterday, during a demonstration to denounce coal and fossil fuel industries and call for a transformation of dirty energy to renewable energy systems. —AFP

Chopper crashes in Nepal with 7 people aboard

KATHMANDU: A helicopter with seven people on board crashed into a hillside in central Nepal yesterday with the condition of the passengers unknown, officials said. The single-pilot Kathmandu-bound Altitude Air helicopter was carrying six passengers, including a Japanese trekker, when it lost contact with air traffic control after taking off from the central district of Gorkha.

The chopper's wreckage had been spotted on a forested hillside in neighbouring Dhadhing district, said Kathmandu airport general manager Raj Kumar Chettri. "We are trying to reach the crash site by air and on foot. But the weather is hampering our rescue operations," he told AFP.

Nepal has a booming private helicopter industry, flying tourists and goods to remote corners of the Himalayan nation where road access is limited or non-existent. But the impoverished country has a poor air safety record due to poorly trained staff and lacklustre maintenance.

In 2016, seven people were killed in a helicopter crash 22 kilometres (14 miles) north of the capital. There were multiple helicopter accidents, claiming over a dozen lives, in the wake of a powerful 2015 earthquake when choppers were used to rescue the injured and deliver aid to communities cut off by the disaster. The European Union banned all Nepalese airlines following international alarm over the country's air safety record. —AFP

'We won': A divisive activist's role in remaking Ethiopia

ADDIS ABABA: Jawar Mohammed was once so hated by the Ethiopian state that the media activist was accused of coup plotting while viewers of his anti-government broadcasts were hunted down.

Yet today he hosts politicians and diplomats in his hotel room in the Ethiopian capital, and enjoys the protection of government-supplied bodyguards.

The dramatic change in Jawar's fortunes mirrors the breakneck reforms implemented in recent months by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who has sought to open up his repressive nation.

To his supporters, Jawar is a freedom fighter who through his US-based Oromia Media Network (OMN) promoted protests that rocked Ethiopia's ruling party and led to Abiy's rise.

To his detractors, he's an ethnic hate-monger intent on destabilising Africa's second most-populous country. In Ethiopia, there is scarcely a more polarising figure, a role for which Jawar makes no apologies.

"Who cares?" he told AFP in a recent interview. "I don't regret a single day. I wanted to bring down the bloody government that was killing my people."

'We planned it'

Abiy came to power in April after the resignation of his predecessor Hailemariam Desalegn whose last years in office were defined by anti-government unrest and nationwide emergency declarations.

That the protests happened where, how and when they did was no accident, Jawar said.

"We planned it. The people who were organising the protest and the people who were in OMN are almost the same," said the 32-year-old, wearing a pink shirt and hotel slippers as two mobile phones periodically vibrated on a nearby table.

Jawar used his media network to coordinate protesters from his Oromo ethnic group against the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of four ethnically based parties that has ruled since 1991.

Their target was the powerful Tigrayan faction of the coalition which they accused of squashing dissent and marginalising the Oromo, the country's largest ethnic group.

While Ethiopian state media was busy downplaying the unrest that began in 2015, Jawar gave it heavy coverage. Based in the US he kept Ethiopian hours, staying up all night to share photos and updates from the protests with his Facebook followers, which today number over 1.4 million. Jawar calls himself a "microphone" for the Oromo youth who spearheaded the sometimes violent protests.

By 2016, protesters from the second-largest ethnicity, the Amhara, had joined the revolt.

Jawar's prominence earned him powerful enemies.

Commentators accused him of inciting violence against Tigrayans and other ethnic groups, while plainclothes police officers in Oromia prowled neighbourhoods, arresting people for watching OMN.

In the US, Jawar said Ethiopian agents rented offices adjacent to his in Minneapolis, blasting loud music to disrupt his recordings.

The protests, Jawar said, were part of a bigger plan to shift power within the EPRDF away from the Tigrayans to the Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organisation (OPDO), which represents the ethnicity in the coalition.

"We worked tirelessly and systematically, strategically, with the OPDO to empower the reformist forces, and we succeeded beyond our imagination," he said. OPDO officials did not respond to requests for comment. His coup de grace came when he promoted a strike earlier this year that shut down roads and businesses on Addis Ababa's outskirts.

Not long after, Hailemariam resigned and Abiy, a fellow Oromo from the OPDO, was appointed leader.

While discord within the EPRDF played a significant role in Abiy's rise, Befekadu Hailu, a blogger repeatedly jailed under Hailemariam, said Jawar seized the moment to take on the fundamental role of "de-facto mouthpiece" for the protesters.

Jawar Mohammed

"He's one-of-a-kind, but I don't really believe in one man's absolute power," Befekadu said. "If he was not there, other people would have dominated social media."

Jawar counts Abiy's election as a victory both for Oromos and the country at large. "We fought as an Oromo and we won as an Oromo. We will build an Ethiopia that is good to Oromos and good to everybody else," he said.

Last month, he returned to Ethiopia after charges of plotting a coup, filed in 2017, were withdrawn. Jawar now wants to turn his OMN into an independent media outlet, the BBC of Ethiopia as he puts it.

But some doubt he can shake off his reputation for ethnic nationalism and tight personal control.

"The way OMN is going [will] be decided by one person," namely Jawar, said Solomon Ungashe, a founding board member who left after a falling out. "This is not going to be an independent media."

Jawar, meanwhile, is unbowed and disdainful of his critics. "For those who are sceptical, let them be sceptical and wait until we deliver," he said. "They thought I was going to destroy this country. No, we built it." —AFP

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Two months of protests in Iraq

Protests over corruption, unemployment and poor public services have gripped Iraq for two months, leaving 27 people dead after they began in the southern oil-rich province of Basra. Here is a recap of the unrest since July:

First death

On July 8 dozens of people protest against unemployment in the port city of Basra. Security forces open fire and one person is killed. Basra is the most oil-rich province in Iraq but is one of the worst served in infrastructure. On July 12 Iraqi Oil Minister Jabbar Al-Luaibi says protesters there have tried to break into an oil installation and have set fire to a gate and security post.

Protests spread

The next day hundreds of people protest in the centre of Basra, including in front of the local provincial headquarters. Protests spread northwards to other regions with demonstrators taking to the streets in Dhi Qar, Maysan and Najaf provinces. Dozens of people force their way into the waiting room at the airport serving the holy city of Najaf and several civilians and policemen are injured in clashes around the city of Nasiriyah. Iraq's top Shiite authority Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani voices support for the protesters.

Promises fail to quell protests

On July 14 two protesters are killed in a shooting in the province of Muthanna, south of the capital Baghdad. Demonstrators set alight the Basra headquarters of the Iranian-backed Badr organization, prompting authorities to impose an overnight curfew across the province. Iraq's Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi announces investment worth $3 billion (2.6 billion euros) for Basra province, as well as pledging additional spending on housing, schools and services. But the next day two more protesters are killed in a shooting in front of the governor's headquarters in Samawah, the largest city in Muthanna province. Renewed clashes between security forces and protesters in Basra city leave 50 people injured near the governor's headquarters, the majority protesters. Abadi meets with security and intelligence chiefs in Baghdad and warns them to be on alert but orders security services not to use live fire against unarmed civilians.

Clashes in the capital

On July 20 a man is killed after being shot in the southern city of Diwaniyah a medical source says, as hundreds of people gather outside the local headquarters of Badr. Protests reach Baghdad. Hundreds of demonstrators are dispersed by water canon and tear gas as they head towards the fortified Green Zone, a high-security area where the government is headquartered. On July 27 several hundred people take to the streets in Baghdad and chant "No to corruption!" and "Iran out!", and accuse leaders of being "thieves" and "corrupt".

Electricity minister out

Two days later Abadi sacks his minister of electricity Qassem Al-Fahdawi-whose departure had been demanded by protesters-"because of the deterioration in the electricity sector". On August 9 he sacks four electricity ministry officials.

Green Zone hit

On September 2 hundreds of protesters block different strategic parts of Basra province. Two days later six demonstrators are killed in Basra city, according to a local official, the bloodiest day since the beginning of the unrest. On September 7 overnight unidentified attackers fire shells into Baghdad's Green Zone. Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani denounces "the bad behavior of senior officials". Hundreds of protesters torch the Iranian consulate in Basra. On September 8 unidentified assailants fire four rockets at Basra airport. The health ministry says 12 people have been killed over the past five days. — AFP

Photo shows the burning headquarters of the Iranian consulate in the southern Iraqi city of Basra which was torched by protesters during demonstrations over poor public services. — AFP

Anonymous anti-Trump op-ed boosts democracy

The good news was well disguised in the anonymous cry of warning against the "amorality" of Donald Trump. A senior administration official, writing as an unnamed columnist in the New York Times, described how he and like-minded colleagues "are working diligently from within to frustrate parts of (the US president's) agenda and his worst inclinations." The message is that democratic habits - and, crucially, civic decency and responsibility - can, in step with free journalism, win out over degraded administrations.

Democracy worldwide is in need of a fillip - and this column, if properly understood, delivers it. A shelf full of fluent, convincing and pessimistic books lamenting the decline, even the end, of democracy has been published in recent months. This includes Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt's "How Democracies Die," Jonah Goldberg's "Suicide of the West," and Edward Luce's "The Retreat of Western Liberalism." American liberals, writes Luce, believe that the march towards freer societies will resume "after a brief interruption. How I wish they were right. I fear they are not."

I hope they are. And the as-yet-unidentified Washington official gives me a basis for that cock-eyed optimism, for he or she illuminates the existence of a powerful countertrend. It shows that when there is a great challenge from such as Trump, there is great pushback. Democracy does not simply reside in governments, and the behavior and policies of their leaders. It has taken root, and still takes root, in the actions and aspirations of citizens.

'Civil servant'

These citizens, crucially, include civil servants. These are servants of governments, but are also civil, belonging to the civis, to the citizen, the Latin root given early democratic power by the status of a Roman citizen in its republican incarnation. Thus there is a tension in the phrase "civil servant," which expresses the tension inherent in being part of a state bureaucracy. Government bureaucrats serve presidents, or prime ministers - but not at their whim. Civil service is not servitude; it implies reciprocity. In return, there must be observation, by those in power, of the democratic limits. It is one of the many features which distinguish democracies from authoritarian states - where service is servitude.

Essential to these states which are not authoritarian - especially those with an authoritarian past - is that politicians are able to fulfil at least the minimal responsibilities of their calling. These are to protect the democratic mechanisms and civilities which brought them to and sustain them in power. They also serve: they have the huge privilege of serving the citizens.

As populist politics continues to thrive, the tensions inherent in the position of civil servants will continue to grow. Some of this will be conservatism on their part. The new politicians are deliberately crude in their pronouncements, since they want to burst open the settled policies and habits of mainstream politics, both right and left, and replace it with what they interpret as the will of the people. And that can, indeed, be what the people want.

But populists also tend to act like Trump. Populist leaders tend to see themselves as the sole embodiments of popular power, and as thus empowered to trample checks and balances - the division of competing powers, which mature democracies have erected over many decades (in some cases, over centuries).

This is evident in the world's second-most prominent case of populist government, in Italy. The two parties - the 5-Star Movement and the Lega (League) - which uneasily coalesce to form the country's administration now face the exacting and tedious duty all successful politicians must undergo in the months after an election victory: squaring their promises with the country's reality. In Italy's case, this is a public debt of just under 132 per cent of GDP, and very low growth.

Matteo Salvini, deputy prime minister and leader of the Lega, huddled with economic advisers earlier this week, and came out to announce that the annual budget, now being prepared, will not break the limit of a three percent deficit agreed with the European Union, arguing that "we can make this country grow?and make Italians feel better without irritating those who look at us from above." This reverses the trend of statements from the administration since the March election.

US President Donald Trump speaks during a fundraiser in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on September 7, 2018. —AFP

We'll see. Salvini has bought time. Whether or not the tug between rules freely agreed and pledges over-freely dispensed results in a win for the former depends on how the budget will be framed. Salvini can claim a greater democratic mandate from Italian citizens than the European Union can, and may yet break the EU's limit. For the moment, the bureaucratic economists have prevailed. So did school principals in Italy this summer, defying a measure which rendered vaccinations administered at schools voluntary rather than compulsory and forcing a reversal of the measure, in spite of its approval by parliament.

Politicians can also oppose a leader seen to be un-civil. Earlier this week, in yet another debate within the British Labor Party's ruling executive committee on anti-Semitism, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition was finally fully accepted, but not before the party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, sought approval for a statement affirming that it should not "be regarded as anti-Semitic to describe Israel, its policies or the circumstances around its foundation as racist."

Anti-human and colonial

Corbyn's politics align him with the Hamas terrorist movement, whose charter describes Israel as a "racist, anti-human and colonial" endeavor. So much does it mean to him to be able to say this, that he was prepared to be, at least temporarily, a pariah to his own people. So much did it mean to them that they at least be seen to care about not siding with anti-Semites that they, at last, squashed him. (He may, however, have a little last laugh. On Thursday, signs declaring "Israel is a racist endeavor" went up at several London bus stops.) — Reuters

Ma: An English teacher turned internet tycoon

Jack Ma was a cash-strapped Chinese entrepreneur and former English teacher when he convinced friends to give him $60,000 to start a Chinese e-commerce firm called Alibaba in 1999. Almost two decades later, Alibaba is an internet juggernaut and Ma is among the world's richest men, with a net worth of more than $40 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. But the company's chairman is now retiring, telling The New York Times that he plans to step down on Monday - his 54th birthday - to devote his time to philanthropy focused on education.

Alibaba Group includes Tmall.com for business-to-consumer transactions and Taobao, China's most popular online consumer marketplace with hundreds of millions of products and services listed. The company has now become a player in online payments and films, and it has been pouring investment into an array of ventures, including bricks-and-mortar retail, cloud computing, meal delivery and advertising. It owns a stake in China's hugely popular Twitter-like Weibo platform and in 2015 it bought the South China Morning Post newspaper.

Alibaba group founder and CEO, Jack Ma

Ma, whose Chinese name is Ma Yun, has often described himself as something on an accidental entrepreneur, giving up his university teaching for the hustle of trade after discovering the internet. Seeing an opportunity for small businesses to buy and sell their goods online, he started Alibaba, initially running the company out of his apartment in the eastern city of Hangzhou, where the company's headquarters remains. He has inspired strong devotion among his employees and users, drawing comparisons with late Apple co-founder Steve Jobs - although he practices a more open management style.

He is one of the most colorful of China's growing cop of billionaires, performing a Michael Jackson-inspired dance routine at the company's 18th anniversary celebration last year, and starring in his own kung fu short film. He likes to recount his stories of rejection, such as the time he was turned down for a job at the KFC fast-food chain and being rejected by Harvard "10 times". Ma's success was evident after Alibaba's Taobao bested eBay in China, forcing the US auction site to largely withdraw from the country in 2006.

He retired as Alibaba's chief executive in 2013, eventually handing the reins to his protege Daniel Zhang, but he remained active within the company, providing strategic direction as chairman. Ma has long shown an admiration for Microsoft founder Bill Gates who has donated vast amounts of his wealth to philanthropic causes. Like Gates he has created his own eponymous foundation - the Jack Ma Foundation - which he says will push his original calling: education. "This is something I think I can do much better than being CEO of Alibaba," he told Bloomberg TV recently. — AFP

Kuwait Times
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Business

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WASHINGTON, DC: In this file photo, President Donald Trump shows the signed document on metal tariffs on China.

Trump ups ante on China as trade war rages

US threatens to slap tariffs on nearly all Chinese imports

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE/WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump warned on Friday he was ready to slap tariffs on virtually all Chinese imports into the United States, threatening duties on another $267 billion of goods on top of $200 billion in imports primed for levies in coming days.

The moves would sharply escalate Trump's trade war with Beijing over his demands for major changes in economic, trade and technology policy. China has threatened retaliation, which could include action against US companies operating there. Hours after a public comment period closed on his $200 billion China tariff list, Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that he was "being strong on China because I have to be."

"The $200 billion we are talking about could take place very soon depending on what happens with them. To a certain extent it's going to be up to China," Trump said. "And I hate to say this, but behind that is another $267 billion ready to go on short notice if I want. That totally changes the equation."

Stock prices slipped after his comments, with the S&P 500 off 0.2 percent, while China's offshore trade yuan currency fell against the dollar. There was no immediate reaction to Trump's comments from the Chinese government, and the threat of more tariffs had not been reported by mainstream state-owned Chinese media as of yesterday evening.

Trump has already imposed 25 percent tariffs on $50 billion worth of Chinese goods, mostly industrial machinery and intermediate electronics parts, including semiconductors.

The $200 billion list, which includes some consumer products such as cameras and recording devices, luggage, handbags, tires and vacuum cleaners, would be subject to tariffs of 10 percent to 25 percent.

Cell phones, the biggest US import from China, have so far been spared, but would be engulfed if Trump activates the $267 billion tariff list. Trump's threatened tariffs, now totaling $517 billion in Chinese goods, would exceed the $505 billion in goods imported from China last year. But 2018 imports from China through July were up nearly 9 percent over the same period of 2017, according to US Census Bureau data. Earlier on Friday, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow told Bloomberg Television the administration would evaluate public comments before making decisions on the $200 billion tariff list. The US Trade Representative's office received nearly 6,000 comments and held seven days of public hearings on the proposed levies.

Most comments were from companies seeking to remove products from the tariff list, arguing there were few, if any alternative sources and the duties would cause financial hardship. Comparatively few applauded the tariffs.

Major technology company Apple Inc said a "wide range" of its products would be hit by the tariffs, but not its iPhone. It said in a late submission that its AirPods headphones, some of Apple's Beats headphones, and its new HomePod smart speaker would face levies, causing its shares to slip in late trading. "Our concern with these tariffs is that the US will be hardest hit, and that will result in lower US growth and competitiveness and higher prices for US consumers," Apple said in the letter.

Retailers had successfully kept high-profile consumer electronics such as cell phones and television sets off of previous tariff lists. But David French, top lobbyist for the National Retail Federation, whose members include Amazon.com , BJ's Wholesale Club and Macy's, said nearly every consumer good could be affected if Trump follows through on all threatened tariffs.

"The Chinese aren't paying these tariffs, American families are going to pay these tariffs. These are taxes and they're going to find their way into the pocket book of folks around the country," French said.

Still talking to China

Kudlow, who heads the National Economic Council, told CNBC the administration was still talking with China about trade issues but so far China had not met US requests.

The United States has demanded that China better protect American intellectual property, cut its US trade surplus, allow US companies greater access to its markets and roll back its high-technology industrial subsidy programs.

"We are still talking with China on a number of issues ... Those talks will continue to go on. We want lower (trade) barriers across the board," Kudlow said. Specifically, Kudlow said, the United States was seeking "zero tariffs, zero non-tariff barriers, zero subsidies, stop the IP theft, stop the technology transfer, allow Americans to own their own companies."

"Those have been our asks for many months and so far those asks have not been satisfied," he said. "However, hope springs eternal." —Reuters

Germany cautious on EU tech tax as France adds 'sunset clause'

VIENNA: A European Union tax overhaul to raise levies on large digital firms needs a thorough debate although an agreement could still be found by the end of the year, Germany's Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said yesterday.

Under a proposal from the European Commission in March, EU states would charge a 3 percent levy on digital revenues of large firms like Google and Facebook that are accused of routing their profits to the bloc's low-tax states. The plan is opposed by smaller states like Ireland, who fear losing revenues, and by Nordic governments who think the tax could stifle innovation and trigger retaliation from the United States, which is home to most of the firms who could be hit by the proposed tax. "It is necessary to take some time for debate," Scholz told reporters at a Vienna meeting of EU finance ministers, adding that he aimed at reaching a compromise by the year end.

After having pushed for the tax, Berlin took a more cautious approach after Scholz took office in March and his latest remark will be closely scrutinized by European Union governments who oppose the new tax, as it may be perceived as showing Germany's little appetite to the project.

EU officials said Germany wants to make sure the tax does not damage its carmakers, who could face retaliatory measures from international partners, or fall within the scope of the new taxation if their digital revenues increased.

French bids

French finance minister Bruno Le Maire, one of the main supporters of the new levy, tried to facilitate a compromise by offering to add "a sunset clause" to the European Union tax.

Under his proposal, the new tax would end once a deal is reached at global level on the taxation of digital companies. The clause was seen as a progress by EU partners. "There will be a sunset clause," Austrian Finance Minister Hartwig Loeger said at the end of the EU meeting.

The EU plan already foresees that the 3 percent levy would be only a temporary solution until a global deal is reached. Le Maire's proposal makes clearer that the tax has an expiry date.

France is also willing to consider ways to compensate Ireland for possible lost revenue, French officials said yesterday. However, asked about this offer and other possible compensations, Irish Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe remained cautious and insisted on a global deal as the best solution.

An overhaul of digital taxation has been for long under discussion at global level, but no compromise is in sight as large differences remain among rich nations.

EU tax reforms require the backing of all its 28 member states to be adopted. Austria, who is holding the EU's rotating presidency is working to find a compromise by the end of the year. It has proposed reducing the scope of the tax, which would no longer be applied to the sale of users' data as in the Commission proposal. Only revenue from online advertising services, in which Google and Facebook excel, and from virtual marketplaces, such as Amazon, would be subject to the new tax.

Eleven EU states are already planning national web taxes, which are likely to be adopted if no EU solution is agreed. —Reuters

Iran lets money exchange houses import foreign bills as rial sinks

TEHRAN: Iran gave permission to money exchange offices yesterday to start importing foreign currency banknotes, state media reported, in an apparent attempt to stop the rial from plunging to a new low against the dollar. Iran's currency has lost about two-thirds of its value this year, hitting a record low earlier this week of 150,000 rial to the US dollar. It recovered to trade at 130,000 per dollar yesterday in unofficial trade, according to the Bonbast.com currency market website.

The rial has been hit by a weak economy, financial difficulties at local banks and strong demand for safe-haven dollars among Iranians. Many Iranians fear Washington's pulling out of a 2015 nuclear deal and renewed US sanctions will cut into Iran's exports of oil and other goods, which would likely put further pressure on the rial.

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

"Currency exchange offices have been given permission to import currency into the country and they can import currency in the form of bills," central bank governor Abdolnaser Hemmati said, according to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA). Currency exchange offices will also be allowed to import gold, the head of the Iranian parliament's economic committee, Mohammad Reza Pourebrahimi, said yesterday, according to the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA).

Imports of both gold and foreign currency by exchange offices were previously forbidden, Pourebrahimi said. —Reuters

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

Boursa Kuwait stocks mixed as traders focus on leading stocks

Three indices fluctuate for second consecutive week

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week with mixed performance. The Premier Market Index closed at 5,305.33 points, up by 0.83 percent, the Main Market Index decreased by 0.63 percent after closing at 4,866.42 points, and the All-Share Index closed at 5,149.42 points up by 0.33 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 13.45 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching around KD 16.31 million, whereas trading volume average was about 68.92 million shares, recording a decrease of 9.49 percent.

The Boursa performance last week did not differ much from its previous week's performance, as the three indices continued its fluctuation for the second consecutive week in light of the traders' focus over the leading stocks that acquired the largest portion of the cash liquidity traded during the week, which positively reflected on the All-Share and Premier Markets indices, where it was able to close in the green zone, while the Main Market Index ended the week in the red zone affected by the liquidation operations concentrated on the small-cap stocks.

Also, the market performance during the last week came in parallel with its weak cash liquidity, which keep witnessing humble levels one week after another, as the trading value, in the first session of the week particularly, reached around KD 9.5 million only, its lowest level in about three months.

By the end of last week, the market capitalization of the Boursa recorded weekly gains of around KD 95.62 million, as it reached by the end of the week about KD 28.81 billion, up by 0.33 percent of its level in a week earlier, where it was KD 28.71 billion. The Boursa gains since the application of the new Market segmentation reached around KD 950.90 million or 3.41 percent. (Note: The market capitalization for the listed companies in the Market is calculated based on the weighted average number of outstanding shares as per the latest available official financial statements).

Last week witnessed trading over 151 stock out of 175 listed stock in the Market, where prices of 62 stock increased against prices of 76 stock decreased, and prices of 37 stock remained at no change.

Sectors' Indices

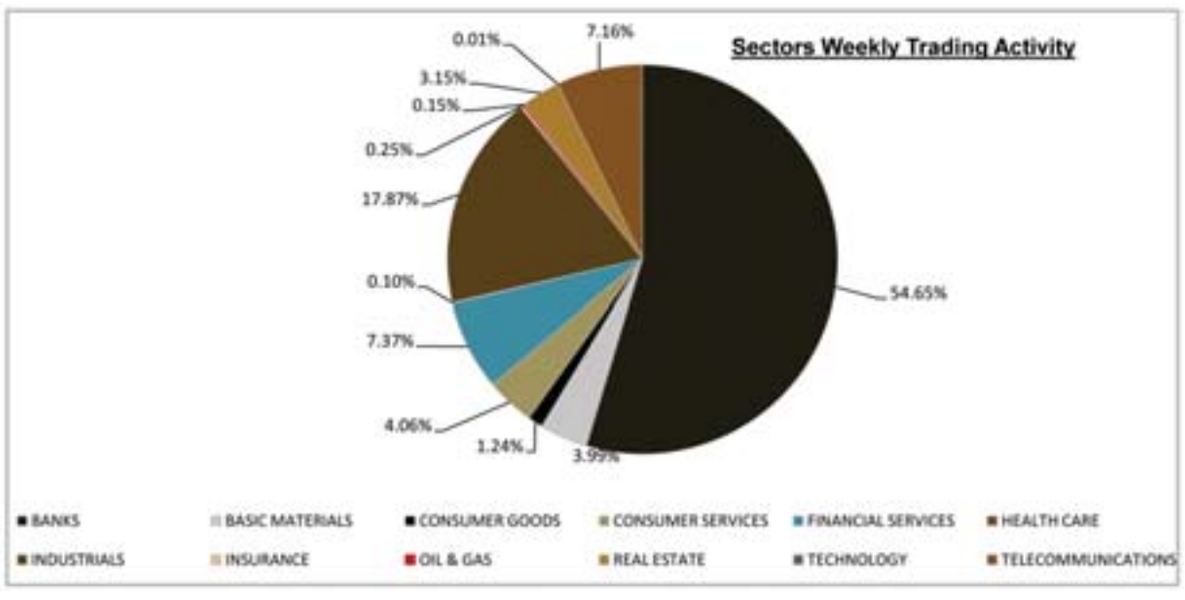
Nine of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the red zone, while the other three recorded increases. Last week's highest loser was the Consumer Services sector, as its index declined by 2.32 percent to end the week's activity at 1,032.45 points, The Telecommunications sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 1.82 percent, closing at 914.66 points, followed by the Health Care sector, which index declined by 1.53 percent, closing at 981.11 points.

On the other hand, Last week's highest gainer was the Basic Materials sector, achieving 4.43 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,167.80 points. The Insurance sector came in the second place, as its index closed at 954.94 points recording 2.36 percent increase, followed by Banks sector, achieving 1.08 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,073.62 points.

Sectors' activity

The Banks sector dominated a total trade volume of around 118.78 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 34.47 percent of the total market trading volume. The Financial Services sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 23.80 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 82 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 44.57 million or 54.65 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Industrial sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 14.57 million repre*senting 17.87 percent of the total market trading value. —Prepared by the Studies & Research Department, Bayan Investment Co.*



Italy reassures nervous eurozone on budget plans

VIENNA: A top EU official on Friday said that Italy's budget plans were going in the right direction despite calls for a major spending boost by the anti-establishment government in Rome.

Italy has become becoming a major concern for eurozone finance ministers who met in Vienna for the first time since Greece, their previous worry, ended its bailout program in August.

Rome's debt currently stands at a towering 132 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), making Italy's the second largest debt ratio in the eurozone after Greece. But the anti-EU government in Rome, which brings together the far-right League party and the anti-establishment Five-Star Movement, is under pressure to meet electoral pledges and boost spending instead of slashing its deficit, as promised by the previous government.

"Minister (Giovanni) Tria assured me that currently the budget which is under preparation foresees improvement on the structural balance of Italy's budget," Latvian Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice President of the European Commission told a news conference. "This clearly is a commitment which goes into right direction," he added after meeting Tria on the sidelines of the talks in Austria. The fragile state of Italy's economy has reawakened memories of the debt crisis amid dangers that Italy could face punitive measures by its EU partners if it insisted on breaking bloc rules on running excessive deficits and high debt.

"I expect and hope that Italy will, in the next few days too, present an appropriate and sensible proposal for the 2019 budget," said Hartwig Loger, the finance minister from Austria, which holds the EU's rotating presidency.

"If Italy should ... come up with another proposal, I assume that the European Union will provide a suitable response," he said. Pressed on Italy, German Finance Minister Olaf Scholz warned: "I always assume that everyone adheres to European rules." The tensions over Italy's spending plans will grow until October 15 when Rome must deliver its budget proposal to the Commission, the EU's executive arm.

"Austerity is one thing, lack of seriousness is another," said the EU's Economic Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici, who will lead the budget talks with Rome. "I want to believe that seriousness, realism, pragmatism will prevail," he added. In Vienna, Moscovici and Dombrovskis sat down with Tria, who wants to reassure financial markets about the stability of Italy. —AFP

Many Nicaraguan businesses closed as 24-hour strike begins

MANAGUA: Many shops, banks and gas stations were closed Friday in a 24-hour strike in Nicaragua called by the opposition in protest at "political prisoners" and the rule of President Daniel Ortega's government. In Mercado Oriental, one of the capital Managua's main trade districts, most of the 20,000 shops and businesses were shut, while few people were out on the streets.

"It's an excellent strike, this is how we are supporting those who were taken, who are being tortured, who have no business being in jail just for protesting," shopkeeper Geidy Areas, 38, told AFP.

The normally busy road south from Managua to Masaya, where many shops operate, appeared more desolate than normal.

Friday's strike, the first since July, was called by the opposition Civil Alliance for Justice and Democracy. More than 300 Nicaraguans have been charged with crimes for taking part in protests, including 85 who are accused of terrorism. The Alliance is demanding dialogue with Ortega's government after months of turmoil that left more than 300 people dead, according to rights groups.

In Managua, most banks, gas stations, shopping malls and book shops were closed but there were more buses and public transport vehicles running than during previous strikes in June and July.

In an important economic zone north of Managua, many hardware stores, shops and cafes remained open. "People have to keep struggling because they've got bank debts and need to feed their children," food vendor Johana Blandon, who works in a busy free trade zone to the east of Managua, told AFP.

Government offices were operating as normal. Nicaragua's descent into chaos was triggered on April 18 when relatively small protests against now-scrapped social security reforms were met with a government crackdown, backed by armed paramilitaries.

Catholic Church-brokered peace talks broke down in June after Ortega rejected a key opposition demand to step down and bring forward presidential elections.

Last week, Ortega expelled the United Nations human rights mission after it published a report criticizing the "climate of fear" in the Central American country, one of the poorest in the region.

MANAGUA: People walk past closed stalls during a 24-hour nationwide general strike at the Roberto Huembes market in Managua on Friday. — AFP

The UN denounced a wide range of serious violations, including disproportionate use of force by police, which in some cases resulted in extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention and torture. Ortega, a former guerrilla leader who has been in power for the last 11 years, denied the claims and described the UN as "an instrument of the policies of terror, lies and infamy."

The United States condemned what it called the "arbitrary detention" of six prominent student members of the National Dialogue.

"These students are the latest example of the thousands of citizens who are peacefully and democratically protesting government actions, only to be harassed, detained, disappeared or even killed," the State Department said in a statement, noting five of the students had since been released.

"We will continue to stand by the people of Nicaragua and hold the Ortega government to account for its repression and violence." —AFP

EIB considering capital hike post Brexit

VIENNA: The European Investment Bank (EIB), owned by European Union governments, is considering a capital increase to allow some of its shareholders to increase their stake after Britain pulls out of the EU and the EIB in March next year, EU officials said.

Britain's exit will mean that the bank will lose 3.5 billion euros ($4.04 billion) of British paid-in capital. That money will be replenished by other existing shareholders on a proportional basis, one EU official said. The world's largest multilateral borrower and lender, the EIB relies on its AAA credit rating to borrow on the market and then lend on for investment projects. It works closely with other EU institutions to implement EU policy.

Replacing the UK capital after Brexit will be important for the bank to keep its top credit rating.

Separately, the bank is working on a plan to raise capital to allow some countries, like Poland, to raise their holding. "Poland has been vocal that it wants to increase its stake in the EIB, because the size of itseconomy has grown substantially since it entered the European Union in 2004," the official said.

The stake that each EU country has in the EIB is based on its economic weight within the bloc on the basis of its gross domestic product (GDP) at the time of its accession.

Poland entered the EU in 2004 with a GDP of around $217 billion, but by last year its economy had almost tripled in size to around $614 billion. It is therefore bigger than Sweden, Denmark, Belgium or Austria, all of which have bigger stakes in the EIB. The biggest shareholders in the EIB, apart from Britain, are Germany, France, Italy and Spain.

Because changes to EIB capital are rare, and usually happen only at the time when the EU accepts a new member, Poland wants to use the change forced by Brexit to review its stake, EU officials said. — Reuters

Ryanair U-turns on Poland but faces 'biggest' strike

LONDON: Ryanair performed a U-turn Friday, saying it no longer planned to transfer jobs and planes to Poland after a deal with pilots, but nonetheless faced a fresh pan-European strike.

In a joint statement Friday, unions across Europe threatened "the biggest strike action the company has ever seen" over their members' working conditions.

The strike, so far organized by unions in Belgium, Holland, Italy and Spain, is scheduled for the last week in September, with an exact date due by Thursday. However the walk-out could be called off should a meeting of Ryanair shareholders on September 20 meet union demands, the statement added following a meeting in Rome.

Separately Friday, Ryanair said it had decided "to restore six Dublin-based aircraft which were due to transfer to Poland in November". It added: "The related protective notices issued to 300 Dublin pilots and cabin crew in July have also been withdrawn."

In July, Ryanair issued 90 days' notice to more than 100 pilots and over 200 cabin crew under plans to cut its Dublin fleet from 30 to around 24 aircraft for the forthcoming northern hemisphere winter.

Ryanair had blamed the move on a downturn in bookings and plane ticket prices in Ireland, partly owing to strikes by Ireland-based pilots. Since then, the pilots have voted to accept an agreement on improved working conditions. Ryanair last month faced a coordinated 24-hour strike by pilots, causing the cancellation of hundreds of flights across Europe, affecting thousands of passengers. While the carrier is for the first time recognizing unions across Europe that represent its pilots and cabin crew, staff are unhappy that improvements have yet to be made on pay and other conditions. — AFP

KIEV: Ryanair sales and marketing executive for Central and Eastern Europe Denis Barabas (left), Boryspil Airport Director Pavlo Ryabikin (c), and Ukrainian Infrastructure Minister Volodymyr Omelyan (right) present the first flight of the Irish low-cost airline Ryanair to Berlin from Boryspil International Airport near Kiev. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.386186	0.400088
Czech Korune	0.005753	0.015053
Danish Krone	0.043343	0.048343
Euro	0. 344026	0.357726
Georgian Lari	0.134667	0.134667
Hungarian	0.001144	0.001334
Norwegian Krone	0.032068	0.037268
Romanian Leu	0.065042	0.081892
Russian ruble	0.004423	0.004423
Slovakia	0.009067	0.019067
Swedish Krona	0.029547	0.034547
Swiss Franc	0.307340	0.318340
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.208039	0.220039
New Zealand Dollar	0.192768	0.202266
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.225769	0.234769
US Dollars	0.299600	0.304900
US Dollars Mint	0.300100	0.304900
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002991	0.003792
Chinese Yuan	0.043928	0.046428
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036946	0.039696
Indian Rupee	0.003771	0.004543
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000016	0.000022
Japanese Yen	0.002665	0.002845
Korean Won	0.000260	0.000275
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070083	0.076083
Nepalese Rupee	0.002626	0.002966
Pakistan Rupee	0.001956	0.002726
Philippine Peso	0.005549	0.005849
Singapore Dollar	0.215620	0.225620
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001520	0.002100
Taiwan	0.010421	0.010601
Thai Baht	0.008955	0.009505
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.790574	0.807074
Egyptian Pound	0.014341	0.020059
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000200	0.000260
Jordanian Dinar	0.424048	0.433048
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022432	0.046432
Omani Riyal	0.782513	0.788193
Qatar Riyal	0.079129	0.084069
Saudi Riyal	0.079900	0.081200
Syrian Pound	0.001287	0.001507
Tunisian Dinar	0.105182	0.113182
Turkish Lira	0.041558	0.053058
UAE Dirhams	0.081261	0.082961
Yemeni Riyal	0.000987	0.001067

China's record trade surplus with US adds fuel to trade war fire

Aug export growth slows, imports accelerate

BEIJING: China's trade surplus with the United States widened to a record in August even as the country's export growth slowed slightly, an outcome that could push President Donald Trump to turn up the heat on Beijing in their cantankerous trade dispute. The politically sensitive surplus hit $31.05 billion in August, up from $28.09 billion in July, customs data showed yesterday, surpassing the previous record set in June.

Over the first eight months of the year, China's surplus with its largest export market has risen nearly 15 percent, adding to tensions in the trade relationship between the world's two largest economies.

China's annual export growth in August moderated slightly to 9.8 percent, the data showed, the weakest rate since March but only slightly below recent trends.

The number missed analysts' forecasts that shipments from the world's largest exporter would rise 10.1 percent, slowing only slightly from 12.2 percent in July. Even with US tariffs targeting $50 billion of Chinese exports in effect for their first full month in August, China's exports to the United States still accelerated, growing 13.2 percent from a year earlier from 11.2 percent in July.

"There is still an impact from front-loading of exports, but the main reason (for still-solid export growth) is strong growth in the US economy," said Zhang Yi, an economist at Zhonghai Shengrong Capital Management. Zhang said the impact from US tariffs on China's exports would likely be limited over the next few months.

China's imports from the United States grew only 2.7 percent in August, a slowdown from 11.1 percent in July. The world's largest trading nation got off to a strong start this year, but its economic outlook is being clouded by the rapidly escalating US trade dispute and cooling domestic demand.

Trump upped the ante on Friday, warning he was ready to slap tariffs on nearly all Chinese imports to the United States, threatening duties on another $267 billion of goods on top of $200 billion in imports primed for levies in coming days. Washington has long criticized China's huge trade surplus with the United States and has demanded Beijing reduce it. Still, disagreements between the two major economic powers run deeper than just the trade balance and tensions remain over limits on US firms' access to Chinese markets, intellectual property protection, technology transfers and investment.

Imports, a key gauge of the strength of China's domestic demand, grew 20 percent, beating forecasts. Analysts had expected growth of 18.7 percent, slowing from July's surprisingly high 27.3 percent.

That resulted in China posting a smaller overall trade surplus of $27.91 billion for the month. Analysts had expected the surplus would rise to $31.79 billion from $28.05 billion in July. The surplus with the United States was larger than China's net surplus for the month, indicating China would be running a deficit if trade with the world's largest economy was excluded.

Exports holding up

While no one predicted a sudden, sharp blow from US tariffs, China's official export data has been surprisingly resilient so far, with growth exceeding analysts' expectations for five months in a row. — Reuters

BEIJING: China's exports and imports rose at a sharply slower pace in August, but its global trade surplus remained stable at $27.9 billion amid a heated US trade war, official figures showed yesterday. — AFP

US workers see big wage gains in August as employment jumps

WASHINGTON: American workers saw the biggest bump in pay in nearly a decade last month amid a surprise late-summer hiring spree that offered no sign jobs markets could be cooling, the government reported Friday.

The unexpected gains, which saw jobs sprout up in construction, transportation, wholesale trade, finance and health care, was a shot in the arm for President Donald Trump, who was beset this week by reports his staff had actively sought to undermine him.

The US economy added 201,000 new jobs in August, well above analyst expectations, while the unemployment rate held steady at an already-low 3.9 percent. But the big story was that wages gained ground on inflation, as average worker pay grew by 2.9 percent compared to August of last year, the biggest annual increase since June 2009. That was in line with consumer inflation.

Meanwhile, a broader measure of unemployment, which includes underemployed and so-called discouraged workers who have given up looking for jobs, fell to 7.4 percent, the lowest level in 17 years.

Ahead of crucial elections in November, the White House-which had been at pains this week to counter reports of flagging wage growth-welcomed the news.

Top White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow hailed the surprise result, saying, "It shows the strength of the economy." He noted that "some people thought that the number was going to be 50,000 lower but it wasn't!"

But the strong gain in pay will also solidify expectations for the Federal Reserve to continue raising interest rates this year to keep a lid on inflation, something that has repeatedly drawn Trump's ire.

Long awaited wage growth

The August employment gain appeared even larger given a downward revision to July's comparatively weak numbers. "The labor market is tight but businesses are finding ways to get the workers they need. Job growth in August was solid once again," economist Joel Naroff said in a client note. The strong hiring report also brought average gains to 196,000 per month over the past year.

Professional and business services added 53,000, bringing job gains for the sector to 519,000 since August of last year. The hiring momentum was not shared by all, however, as jobs in auto manufacturing, retail and utilities fell.

The labor force participation rate and employment-to-population ratio also weakened slightly.

Naroff cautioned that with the labor force growing only moderately and the participation rate among the population stagnant, "it will be hard to replicate the above-growth gains we had recently."

The mining sector, an industry central to Trump's economic message of reviving the heavy industries of old, ticked slightly higher with 6,000 jobs added. —AFP

WASHINGTON, DC: In this file photo, men work on a construction site in Washington, DC. Hiring surged in the US in August, and employers increased wages by the most in nearly a decade as the jobs markets showed no sign of slowing, the government reported. — AFP

S Africa bank warns land expropriation could spark crisis

CAPE TOWN: South Africa's plans to change the constitution to allow the expropriation of land without compensation could hit property prices and trigger a banking crisis, the chief executive of Nedbank told parliament on Friday.

President Cyril Ramaphosa announced on Aug. 1 that the ruling African National Congress (ANC) planned to change the constitution to allow land to be expropriated without compensation, as whites still own most of South Africa's territory. Speaking to the Constitutional Review Committee, which is investigating proposed changes to the constitution, Mike Brown said there was no need to alter the law because the existing legislation already allowed the state to expropriate property for land reform purposes.

"As a commercial bank, we are a key role player in funding the economy and any material impact to property prices would adversely affect confidence in the banking system and could trigger a classic banking crisis with significant negative knock-on effects on the economy," Brown said. Nedbank is the fourth largest bank in South Africa. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, the ANC has followed a "willing-seller, willing-buyer" model under which the government buys white-owned farms for redistribution to blacks. Progress has been slow and most South Africans believe something has to be done to accelerate change, providing it does not hurt the economy or stoke unrest. — Reuters

Indonesia restaurant chain seeks 'rupiah warriors' amid currency crisis

JAKARTA: As Indonesia's currency trades at its weakest levels since the 1998 Asian financial crisis, a local restaurant chain is offering free meals to clients who can prove they have exchanged holdings of US dollars for the ailing rupiah. While easy to brush off as a marketing gimmick, the restaurant's online campaign "#bantaidolar", or "butcher the dollar", shows how alarm over the plight of the rupiah is becoming more mainstream in Southeast's biggest economy.

The rupiah, the second-worst performer among emerging Asian currencies behind India's rupee, has shed 9 percent so far this year amid an emerging market sell-off triggered by rising US interest rates and economic crises in Argentina and Turkey. "We want to raise the spirit of love in the nation and that is by loving the rupiah," said Agung Prasetyo Utomo, founder of fried chicken chain Ayam Geprek Juara, which so far says it has given out 83 free meals for customers who had sold their dollars, describing them as "rupiah warriors".

In Indonesia there is a particular sensitivity over sharp falls in the rupiah. The currency's slump in the 1998 financial crisis triggered rampant inflation, food shortages and riots in Jakarta that led to the fall of strongman ruler Suharto.

Indonesia's economy is in far better shape than in 1998 - the fall in the rupiah has been gradual, foreign debt levels are low and the banking industry has strong capital. And policymakers have been praised by analysts for responding to global pressures by hiking interest rate faster than any other central bank in Asia and taking steps to cut rising imports. Nonetheless, they have only been able to slow the rupiah's depreciation, and even with benign inflation right now - at 3.2 percent in August - prices of imported goods and those made using imported raw materials face upward pressure.

Prices of food containing imported dairy, beef and wheat are expected to be among the first to rise, according to research firm Nielsen Indonesia. Analysts have also said chicken prices could be affected through the increase cost for imported corn.

Rising prices, particularly of basic food, would bring the rupiah's woes home to ordinary Indonesians and be a blow to the government of President Joko Widodo, who is seeking a second term next year. The opposition has already launched social media campaigns attacking the government's economic management. —Reuters

Argentina could shed 40,000 construction jobs amid crisis

CB holds interest rates at 60% to curb inflation

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina could shed some 40,000 jobs in its construction sector in coming months as high interest rates hurt financing and the government scales back projects to cut its budget deficit, according to industry executives and union leaders.

With the central bank holding interest rates at a punishing 60 percent in an effort to curb high inflation and halt a slide in the peso currency, construction executives said there was no credit available to finance public works promised by President Mauricio Macri's government.

"Banks are withdrawing financing from public works companies. It's concern over the fiscal adjustment that will hit public works," according to Chamber of Construction President Gustavo Weiss.

The government announced a raft of austerity measures this week as it seeks to slash the deficit and restore confidence in the peso, which has lost 52 percent of its value so far this year. The government will slash spending and raise taxes in a bid to balance its primary budget next year - before debt servicing is taking into account - versus a previous target of a deficit of 1.3 percent of gross domestic product.

The tough new measures came as Macri seeks to convince the International Monetary Fund to accelerate disbursement of loans under a $50 billion financing deal reached in June, amid some investors' concerns that Argentina may not be able to service its dollar debts next year.

Weiss said that high interest rates and the weakness of the peso were making it very difficult for local companies to get financing for projects or to buy imported materials.

"It's possible that there will be 40,000 layoffs or even more because of cuts to public work," Weiss said, saying that the estimate was based on consultations with member companies.

That would account for around 10 percent of the roughly 400,000 workers formally employed in construction, according to the chamber's IERIC statistics agency, not including informal labor.

A sharp slowdown in Argentina's construction sector, already reeling from a major corruption scandal, would deal a heavy blow to an economy due to enter recession this quarter. It could also increase political pressure on Macri, who is expected to run for reelection next year.

A spokesman for the Labor Ministry downplayed what he said was a seasonal decline in the employment in the sector. "There has been a slowdown in growth, and a slight monthly decline in jobs due to the winter season and some instability in the industry," the spokesman said.

Scandal-hit sector

The corruption scandal that broke in August, involving allegations that officials from the previous administration took bribes from construction firms in return for public contracts, has impacted investment in the sector, government officials have said.

One senior banking executive, who asked to remain anonymous because of the sensitivity of the case, said banks were now carefully analyzing construction financing on a case-by-case basis to avoid working with companies involved in the scandal.

According to a central bank poll of economists published on Tuesday, Latin America's third-largest economy is expected to contract 1.9 percent this year. An official at Argentina's Construction Workers Union, who asked not to be identified, said the austerity program could reduce public works by 50 percent next year, based on feedback from companies in talks with the government.

The details of the 2019 budget will be presented to Congress this month.

The official said the union, the sector's largest, also estimated after consultations with businesses that there could be as many as 60,000 worker layoffs over the next six months as expectations for next year decline.

"If this crisis doesn't ease, it could be many more," he said. A spokeswoman for the Transport Ministry, which manages public works, said projects already underway as part of a Federal Roads Plan would go ahead, when asked about reductions next year.

She also said that public-private partnerships (PPP) initiated by Macri's government for more than 3,000 km of road construction would start in October and November.

Argentina awarded six road projects to different consortia under its first wave of PPP in June, including China Construction America, a unit of China State Construction Engineering Corp.

Macri has bet heavily on PPP to jumpstart building projects, generate jobs and boost the economy.

The president of one construction company, who asked to remain anonymous because of concerns over repercussions for his business, said a government decision to stall construction forced him to recently fire 200 workers, around 1/10th of his staff. "Suddenly, the government runs out of money, starts delaying payments and slowing down projects," he said.

A spokesperson for the Transport Ministry said that some works could be being slowed by winter weather, difficulties in purchasing materials, legal difficulties or the processing of some modifications in the works themselves. — Reuters

BUENOS AIRES: People have a snack at "Los Piletones" soup kitchen, run by Argentine social activist Margarita Barrientos in Villa Soldati neighborhood, Buenos Aires, on Friday. Affected by the economic crisis and spiralling inflation, each day more Argentines attend soup kitchens in Buenos Aires to receive a free meal. — AFP

26 new winners in Al-Hassad Islamic account

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al-Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 5th of September 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or owning their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al-Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Tareq Hussain Al-Bark.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Hamza Mohd AbedAli, Hisham Youssef Zarbul, Ahmad Hussain Ahmad, Fouzeyah Alhumaidi Al-Otaibi, Habeeb Rajab Al-Sarraf, George Abdulmasih Garabet, Qayel Mohamad Al-Otaibi, Malek Jaber Fahad, Hassan Mohammad Saleh, Mohammad Ibrahim Khaleel, Majeed Sulaiman Al-Dhafeeri, Farida Ahmad Sheer, Nabeel Ibrahim Hasan, Hamad Ebjad Al-Abdali, Sabeekah Abdullah Shabakouh, Nada Abdullateef Al-Kulaib, Ahmad Husni Hasan, Sauad S Al-Otaibi, Harjinder Singh Chadda, Sulaiman Fahad Al-Fahad, Mari Farid Dkhikh, Fawaz Khalil Bubshait, Safa Ferchichi, Ali Shawqi Ali, and Saeed Ali Zamil.

Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions.

Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year." Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.

Restructuring Program hosts KFH at exclusive job exhibition

KUWAIT: The Manpower and Government Restructuring Program hosted Kuwait Finance House at an exclusive job exhibition where KFH officials presented their offers to the graduates and job seekers in regard to job opportunities and advantages of working at KFH. The officials received applications from applicants and gave them full assistance in selecting the fields that suite their skills and capabilities. This activity is considered as part of the Restructuring Program efforts in the employment of Kuwaiti youth in the private sector and incarnates the strong and well established relationship between the two parties. KFH seeks always to attract, recruit and develop Kuwaiti youth to occupy leading positions through a joint initiative with the Restructuring Program.

The General Secretary of the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program Fawzi Al-Majdali received KFH delegation and praised KFH cooperation, efforts and initiatives to employ Kuwaiti nationals in various fields of business in order to achieve joint national goals. KFH sets the best example in this field. KFH has reiterated its significant role in supporting the development process.

The Group Executive Manager - HR Operations Talal Al-Mutairi affirmed the strong and well established relation between KFH and Restructuring Program which covers various fields in addition to the employment, training and habilitation of fresh graduates. He reiterated that KFH is keen on attracting and recruiting national youth with distinguished capabilities, provide all success factors and give them the ability to develop their skills. KFH stands as a school to graduate the best employees and officials and participate in the alleviation and enhancement of Islamic Banking in Kuwait and worldwide. He indicated that KFH has received hundreds of applications while KFH team was available at the Restructuring Program premises. Applications shall be studied and classified based on the needs of various KFH departments and sectors. Most appropriate means and methods shall be applied to attract such efficiencies and provide appropriate training programs to selected candidates.

Al-Mutairi emphasized that the recruitment and development of Kuwaiti youth is an ongoing strategy at KFH. This strategy is enhanced by the growth opportunities and significant market share which KFH enjoys. These opportunities require the recruitment of national cadets who are willing to achieve all targeted goals in various fields.

KUWAIT: Al-Majdali and Al-Mutairi in the middle of KFH delegation at the Restructuring Program Premises.

KUWAIT: Receipt process of applications from applicants

Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons continues biggest campaign on ACDelco batteries

KUWAIT: Yusuf Ahmad Alghanim & Sons announced the first winners of valuable gifts during the month of August, as well as its plan to continue the biggest offer on ACDelco batteries which includes thousands of gifts. With every purchase, customers will get a scratch and win coupon entitling them to win an IPhone X, Galaxy S9, Lenovo tab 4, Wansa TVs, X-cite vouchers, and many other rewarding prizes only from ACDelco Alghanim and till end of October 2018, keeping in mind that EVERYONE IS A WINNER!.

Customers can purchase the best battery in the Middle East, from any of Yusuf Ahmad Alghanim spare-parts retail outlets in Shuwaikh, Canada Dray Street, Sharq and Fahaheel, in addition to Bumper to Bumper outlets and more than 500 stores and puncture shops to cover most of the areas in Kuwait. Also, it's worth mentioning that customers can easily identify ACDelco Alghanim batteries from the yellow sticker that is placed on the battery box in all participating shops.

Constantly striving to deliver the best-in-class car care, ACDelco Alghanim's highly trained professional staff relies on premium ACDelco batteries, to ensure that the quality of the work is never compromised. Power your journey today with ACDelco Alghanim batteries, designed, tested, and manufactured for your specific vehicle

When reliable starting power is a priority, ACDelco Batteries are the answer. Whether the application is automotive, industrial, marine or recreational, ACDelco has a battery to meet virtually any need. Field-proven and backed with outstanding limited warranty coverage; ACDelco Batteries set the standard for performance.

Enjoy Jet Airways global fare sale

KUWAIT: Jet Airways, India's premier full service international airline, yesterday announced a special six-day global fare sale. The offer, starting September 4, 2018, will offer guests an attractive discount of up to 30 percent on economy and premiere fares.

Applicable on both one-way and return tickets, guests can fly from Kuwait, across India or via world-class airports in Mumbai and Delhi onwards to Bangkok, Colombo, Dhaka, Hong Kong, Kathmandu and Singapore.

The sale offer is valid only on Jet Airways operated flights and can be purchased through www.jetairways.com, the Jet Airways Mobile App or by contacting a travel agent. The final 48 hours of the promotion will only be available on www.jetairways.com and the Jet Airways Mobile App. The special offer ends on the 9th September 2018 and travel is available from 10th September 2018 with applicable blackouts.

Shakir Kantawala, Vice President Gulf, Middle East and Africa, Jet Airways, said, "These special fares offer an opportunity to our guests the chance to experience our airline's excellent services and unmatched network. Jet Airways uses every opportunity to create memorable experiences for its guests and this is another occasion for us to help our guests explore new destinations using our attractive, limited period fares."

Global stocks stumble on China tariff fears

NEW YORK: World equities stumbled Friday on worries over the US-China trade war that were amplified by a threat of fresh tariffs by President Donald Trump.

Trump jolted markets at midday by renewing threats to impose levies on all US imports of Chinese goods. Washington has already slapped duties on $50 billion in Chinese goods and plans are underway for tariffs on another $200 billion. But Trump told reporters on Air Force One that "there's another $267 billion ready to go on short notice if I want."

That would cover about 100 percent of the goods the United States imports from the world's second largest economy. Some US stocks were in positive territory part of the morning but indices fell to session lows following Trump's remarks. The major indices later cut their losses, but still finished in the red.

"This trade tactic is turning into more of a policy and it's disturbing the markets," said Jack Ablin of Cresset Wealth Advisors. "Investors also hold their breath because, as China imports less than the US, they could take steps on other parts of the economy, like US Treasuries or restrictions on US companies for example."

"If there were dramatic worries (about the trade war) you would see the market down even more, but it isn't," said Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial. "The major question would be: is the US economy strong enough to absorb these rates?"

Earlier, London closed lower, underperforming its peers thanks to a strong pound, while Frankfurt and Paris managed to recover late in the session, closing flat and slightly lower, respectively.

Markets have suffered heady losses in the first week of September, as investors worry over contagion from the ongoing emerging markets crisis-and the US-China trade spat. "There were no signs of an end of the week recovery, with September getting off to the worst start possible for the European indices," said Spreadex analyst Connor Campbell. — AFP

Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma plans to retire at 54: Report

Ma to devote his time to philanthropy

BEIJING: Alibaba's charismatic co-founder and chairman Jack Ma plans to retire from the Chinese e-commerce giant to devote his time to philanthropy focused on education, he told the New York Times in an interview.

Ma was an English teacher before starting Alibaba in 1999 and built it into a multibillion-dollar internet colossus, becoming one of the world's richest men and a revered figure in his homeland.

His own worth has soared along with that of the company, which has added cloud computing, films and e-payments to its growing portfolio and was valued at $420.8 billion when the stock market closed on Friday. Ma told The New York Times that he plans to step down from the company on Monday-his 54th birthday-referring to his departure as "the beginning of an era" rather than an end.

Ma, who gave up the title of CEO in 2013, said he now planned to devote his time and fortune to education. He is among China's richest men with a net worth of around $40 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

The way he chose to make the announcement was unusual. The New York Times is blocked in China by Communist Party censors and there was no official statement from Alibaba yesterday.

Alibaba's press office did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The firm posted a photo on social media yesterday of Ma meeting with the chairman of the Moutai liquor company.

In an interview with Bloomberg TV released on Friday, Ma hinted at his retirement plans, saying he wanted to follow in the footsteps of Microsoft founder Bill Gates, one of the world's most prolific philanthropists. "There's a lot of things I can learn from Bill Gates. I can never be as rich, but one thing I can do better is to retire earlier," he said.

"I think some day, and soon, I'll go back to teaching," he said, adding he had been preparing philanthropy plans at his eponymous foundation "for 10 years".

Ma is part of a generation of billionaire entrepreneurs who made their fortunes as China embraced the digital age, creating some of the country's largest and most successful companies in the space of little more than a decade.

Huge conglomerates like Alibaba, Tencent, Baidu and JD.com are to China what Facebook and Google are to the United States. Ma is the first of his generation of uber-wealthy tech bosses to retire, a rare move in a country where business figures often run their empires well into their 80s-Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing only retired in May at the age of 89.

An accidental entrepreneur

Ma's rags-to-riches story is particularly remarkable. Born into a poor family in Hangzhou, eastern Zhejiang province, Ma became a university teacher but gave the job up after discovering the internet.

After being knocked back by US venture capitalists in 1999, a cash-strapped Ma persuaded friends to give him $60,000 to start Alibaba, which operated out of an apartment in Hangzhou.

"The first time I used the internet, I touched on the keyboard and I find 'well, this is something I believe, it is something that is going to change the world and change China,'" Ma once told CNN.

The company, still headquartered in his hometown, initially allowed businesses to sell products to each other online but soon morphed into China's largest online retail market.

It transformed how Chinese people shop and pay for things, especially through the now ubiquitous Alipay digital payment service. The Alibaba empire now spans well beyond online retail and payments to include cloud computing, digital media and entertainment, with sterling revenue growth that jumped another 61 percent in the quarter ending June 30.

Jackson Wong, associated director at Huarong International Securities, said Ma's departure appears "a little bit rushed" but it also shows he has confidence in the company's leadership.

"But his retirement will definitely affect the overall image of the company because when you think of Alibaba, you think of Jack Ma," Wong said.

China regulations

Ma has inspired strong devotion among his employees and users, drawing comparisons with late Apple co-founder Steve Jobs-although he practiced a more open management style.

A devotee of tai chi, he has made references to Chinese martial arts in both business strategy and corporate culture. Chinese state media have burnished his rags-to-riches story, saying his parents were poorly educated and his father depended on a monthly retirement allowance of just $40 to support the family.

BANGKOK: In this file photo, Alibaba founder Jack Ma gestures as he arrives for a meeting with Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha in Bangkok. —AFP

Ma's retirement comes after a torrid couple of weeks for his rival tech CEOs in China.

Richard Liu, the billionaire founder of Alibaba's main competitor JD.com, was briefly arrested in the US over a rape allegation last week. He was released and returned to China, although the investigation remains active. Meanwhile internet and gaming giant Tencent, an e-payment rival, has seen its profits and share price drop amid an apparent regulatory squeeze on the tech giant's online gaming business. —AFP

Jack Ma's Alibaba: E-commerce, film and food delivery

BEIJING: Chinese internet tycoon Jack Ma is retiring from Alibaba today after transforming the e-commerce company into a global behemoth that has branched out into various businesses.

Here are the different ventures that have helped Alibaba grow into one of the world's most valuable firms, worth $420.8 billion based on its share price at the close of trade on Friday:

Tmall and Taobao

E-commerce is the company's bread and butter, the business that Ma launched in 1999 and which outmuscled eBay in China eight years later. With the click of a finger on the phone or computer, Chinese consumers can buy a wide array of products on the Taobao and Tmall platforms, from clothes to electronics, food, luxury products and more unusual goods, such as the Boeing 747 cargo planes up for auction last year.

E-commerce still accounts for more than 80 percent of Alibaba's business, and revenues in the segment surged 61 percent in May-June. Active users of its e-commerce marketplaces grew by 17 million in June to reach 634 million, the company said.

Customers can use Alipay, the e-payment app of Alibaba's affiliate Ant Financial, to pay for the products. In a sign of its growing global ambitions, Alibaba also has upped its investment in subsidiary Lazada, Southeast Asia's leading online shopping firm.

The spending surge is motivated by intense competition in China between Alibaba, internet giant Tencent, e-commerce rival JD.com, and rising upstarts like Pinduoduo for turf in the country's rich commercial cyber-landscape.

Entertainment

The company has splurged in the film and entertainment industry, with its Alibaba Pictures unit buying a minority stake in Steven Spielberg's Amblin Partners, which owns DreamWorks Pictures, in 2016.

Earlier this year, Alibaba paid $750 million for a stake in the cinema division of Chinese firm Wanda Film, becoming its second largest shareholder. The company has invested in Tom Cruise's "Mission: Impossible" blockbuster saga, with the latest instalment dominating the box office in China.

But one of its most recent productions was a monumental flop.

"Asura", the most expensive Chinese film ever made with a $113 million budget, was pulled from theatres on its opening weekend in July after bringing in a measly $7.3 million.

Alibaba also owns video streaming website Youku, which partnered with Chinese state broadcaster CCTV to show all of the 2018 World Cup games.

They were watched through 180 million unique devices, including cellphones and TVs, according to the company. Its revenue from digital media and entertainment rose to $903 million in the most recent quarter, a 46 percent year-on-year increase.

Cloud computing

Alibaba is also betting its future on cloud computing, which brought the company $710 million in revenue in the most recent quarter, a 93 percent increase. Its most recent earnings report said Alibaba Cloud's customers include InterContinental Hotels Group, which is using the technology to provide on-demand room booking for guests in China. China's Minsheng Bank adopted a "financial cloud" while the China Communications Construction Group uses the technology to improve its supply chain management. —AFP

Tesla tumbles on new executive departures, Musk interview

NEW YORK: Shares of Tesla Motors tumbled Friday as investors were rattled by the departures of two executives and a late-night interview in which chief executive Elon Musk was seen smoking marijuana.

Tesla shares sank 6.3 to close at $263.24 after the latest events that heightened concerns over Musk's erratic management style at the electric carmaker.

"Elon's actions are making it harder and harder to support Tesla as a company," said analyst Gene Munster of Loup Ventures. "His actions directly affect Tesla's share price because Elon is Tesla."

Munster said that while there may be more "upside" to Tesla, Musk's actions are hurting.

"The use of recreational drugs, legal or not, goes against the unspoken rules of being a public CEO," the analyst said in a blog post. Shares came under pressure at the opening following the Musk online interview and news that chief accounting officer Dave Morton was leaving only a month on the job, citing the company's frenetic pace.

Separately, human resources chief Gabrielle Toledano told Bloomberg she planned to exit the company, rather than return from a leave of absence.

Morton's departure further roiled the company, which has been under heightened scrutiny since Musk's chaotic Twitter announcement on August 7 that he was considering taking Tesla private, before reversing the plan two weeks later.

The ill-fated effort has prompted a US securities investigation and a class-action lawsuit alleging Musk was trying to punish investors who bet against the company. Morton's brief tenure with the company coincided with the aborted go-private push. "Since I joined Tesla on August 6th, the level of public attention placed on the company, as well as the pace within the company, have exceeded my expectations," Morton said in a securities filing.

"As a result, this caused me to reconsider my future. I want to be clear that I believe strongly in Tesla, its mission and its future prospects, and I have no disagreements with Tesla's leadership or its financial reporting."

Turning heads in podcast

Musk turned heads with a more than two-hour podcast interview with comedian Joe Rogan in which he drank whiskey and appeared to smoke a marijuana-and-tobacco cigarette proffered by the comedian as he mused about artificial intelligence and colonizing space.

At one point, Musk described the constant barrage of ideas in his mind as a "never-ending explosion," and said he wondered as a young boy whether he might be insane because it didn't seem to happen to other people. The appearance was the latest unorthodox move by Musk, who has often surprised investors with brash and unpredictable behavior as Tesla has sought to live up to lofty manufacturing targets for its Model 3 electric car.

MIAMI: In this file photo, people look at a Tesla Motors vehicle on the showroom floor at the Dadeland Mall in Miami, Florida. Shares of Tesla Motors opened sharply lower on Friday as a pair of executive departures added to the sense of turmoil surrounding the electric car maker. —AFP

Long a polarizing figure because of his swashbuckling style, Musk is seen by his champions as an entrepreneurial genius with the potential to remake the transportation system, while his detractors see him as an egotistical blowhard whose outsized promises have driven unjustified gains in the company's values.

Especially bizarre moments involving the Tesla chief of late include disparaging remarks about Vernon Unsworth, a Briton who helped save boys trapped in a Thai cave and the abrupt shutdown of Wall Street analyst's questions during a contentious earnings conference call.

"At times, Musk appears to be working against himself," analyst Munster wrote. "At the core, we believe he wants to prove his doubters wrong, but many of his actions strengthen the case against him. "If he wanted to prove them wrong with actions, he would delete Twitter, drop the Unsworth conversation and not use recreational drugs in a public setting."

In August, Musk told The New York Times he was exhausted from too much work and difficulty sleeping in an interview that sharpened questions about his mental stability. Some observers have said Tesla could be helped with a strong number-two executive, but Friday's departures create additional gaps in Tesla's ranks. —AFP

Apple says US tariffs on China would hit 'wide range' of products

NEW YORK: A "wide range" of Apple Inc products including the Apple Watch would be affected by proposed US tariffs on Chinese goods, the company told U.S. trade officials, but gave no sign of an impact on its iPhone cash cow.

Apple did not disclose specific revenues for most of the affected products, but of those the Apple Watch may be the biggest seller. It brought in about $6.1 billion in revenue last year, according to an estimate from analyst firm Bernstein. That represents a small portion of Apple's $229 billion in overall sales. Apple laid out the impact on its products of the Trump administration's proposed tariffs on $200 billion worth of Chinese goods in an unsigned letter it submitted on Wednesday to US officials as part of a public comment period.

On Friday, US President Donald Trump, speaking aboard Air Force One, said that he has tariffs on an additional $267 billion in Chinese goods "ready to go on short notice if I want."

Cell phones, the biggest US import from China, have so far been spared, but would be hit if Trump activates the new $267 billion tariff list.

AirPods headphones, some of Apple's Beats headphones and its new HomePod smart speaker also face levies as part of the proposed tariffs on $200 billion worth of Chinese goods, according to the letter submitted on Wednesday. "Our concern with these tariffs is that the U.S. will be hardest hit, and that will result in lower US growth and competitiveness and higher prices for U.S. consumers," Apple said in the letter.

Apple did not respond to requests for comment. The letter did not mention the iPhone, which accounted for about two-thirds of Apple's $229 billion in revenue in its most recent fiscal year. The letter also made no mention of the iPad, which brought in $19.2 billion in sales in the most recent year, or most of its Mac computers, which generated $25.8 billion.

Apple did say its MacMini, a low-priced computer that comes without a keyboard or mouse, would be affected.

Many Apple accessories, such as mice, keyboards, chargers and even leather covers for iPhones and iPads would face tariffs, Apple said. Reuters reported in July that the Apple Watch was likely to be affected by the tariffs. Shares of Apple closed down 0.8 percent in regular Nasdaq trade on Friday, and slipped another 1 percent in extended trading.

Apple also said that computer parts for its US operations would be hit by the tariffs. The company said that "main logic boards with microprocessing units" could face levies, along with equipment used for research and development. On Apple's most recent earnings call in July, Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook said the company could face such tariffs "related to data centers."

SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo taken, the Apple logo is seen on the outside of Bill Graham Civic Auditorium in San Francisco, California. —AFP

In its letter, Apple argued that the way US trade officials calculate the US trade balance - attributing the entire value of a product to a country like China where final assembly happens - fails to reflect the true value that Apple generates in the United States. The company noted it spent $50 billion with 9,000 U.S. suppliers in its most recent fiscal year, including Texas-based chip firm Finisar Corp and Kentucky-based Corning Inc.

"Given the balance of Apple's economic footprint, the burden of the proposed tariffs will fall much more heavily on the United States than on China," Apple said in its letter.

The technology sector is one of the biggest potential losers in the proposed $200 billion tariff list. Fitness tracker maker Fitbit said it would be hit by tariffs, and chipmaker Intel Corp said the levies could slow down the adoption of 5G networks, the next generation of wireless data technology for phones and other devices. —Reuters

CLINIC PAGE

Kuwait Times
248 33 199

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- Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders.
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- Fellow of American College of Surgery
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- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
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LAPA concludes its 'reading club' workshop for children

LOYAC Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA) concluded its workshop "Reading Club" for the children aged between 6-12 years, which lasted for a month, on September 6, 2018 at Al-Qibiliya school. Certificates along with the products carried out by the students at the workshop were distributed to the participants. The workshop aimed at training the children on how to use their imagination through reading stories and also to build their personal opinion which will increase their self confidence and awareness.

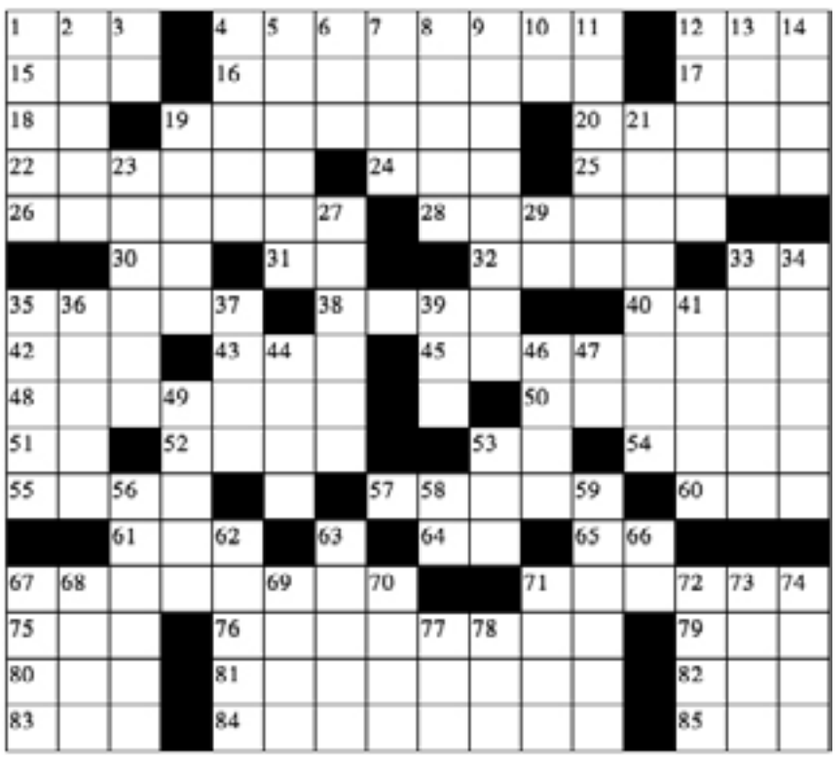
On her part, Artist Zainab Qambar expressed her happiness for holding such a workshop which helps children combine the imaginary world with the real world through reading, this also helps them find creative solutions that will enable them to overcome the problems they might face in the future. She added that the artwork made by the children was considered a great success in breaking traditional and standard styles of thinking. This unique style that the children used to create their piece of art helps them to explore new skill sets and ideas. This workshop has helped the children to overcome the barrier of traditional thinking and to use the characters of the stories in their own unique way.

ICSK Amman celebrates Teachers Day

To mark Teachers day, students of the Indian Community School Kuwait (ICSK), Amman organized special assemblies over the week to show their love and appreciation towards their beloved teachers as well as to raise awareness and understanding on the work and value of teachers. Special programs were organized by the students, through which they dedicated melodious songs, amazing dances, thought provoking skits and a mime which clearly depicted the importance of the role played by teachers in the life of a child.

The teachers were honored by the beautiful handmade cards created by the students in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the academic and personal growth of the students. Principal Rajesh Nair in his address advised the students to respect and obey the teachers in return of their invaluable service. As a surprise to the teachers, Radio Amman arranged a lucky draw to choose the lucky teachers of the day. The prizes were distributed by Principal Nair. A poetry writing competition for the students was also conducted to mark the occasion.

CROSSWORD 2004



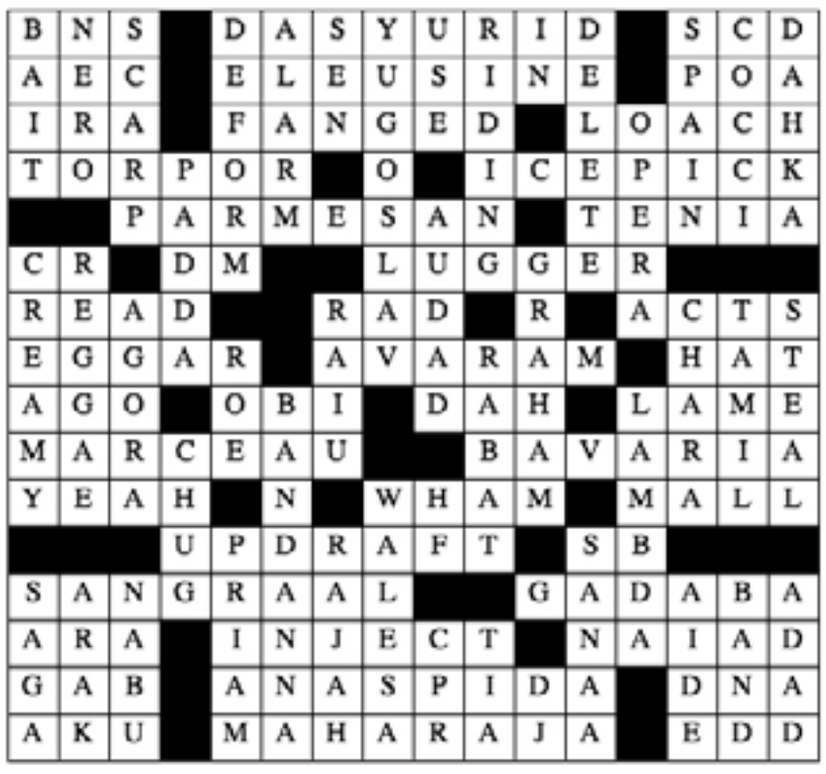
ACROSS

1. Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
4. A chronic drinker.
12. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
16. A final crushing defeat.
17. An overwhelming feeling of wonder or admiration.
18. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
20. A device that, on receiving radar signals, transmits coded signals in response to help navigators determine their position.
22. A lion-headed goddess.
24. Game in which matchsticks are arranged in rows and players alternately remove one or more of them.
25. A burn cause by hot liquid or steam.
26. Susceptible to being led or directed.
28. Mildly acid red or yellow pulpy fruit eaten as a vegetable.
30. A white trivalent metallic element.
31. Half the width of an em.
32. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
35. The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
38. Clean or orderly.
40. A cape at the southern tip of Norway.
42. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
43. A strong emotion.
45. Relating to or used in chemistry.
48. A state in southwestern Germany famous for its beer.
50. From sins, as in religious dogma.
51. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
52. Employed in accomplishing something.
54. Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.
55. (computer science) A data transmission rate (bits/second) for modems.
57. A desert in southern Israel.
60. Nocturnal mouselike mammal with forelimbs modified to form membranous wings and anatomical adaptations for echolocation by which they navigate.
61. A close friend who accompanies his buddies in their activities.
64. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
65. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
67. Any period of seven consecutive days.
75. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
76. Type genus of the Coraciidae.
79. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
80. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
81. Subject to change or variation especially in behavior.
82. Flower arrangement consisting of a circular band of foliage or flowers for ornamental purposes.
83. Tastelessness by virtue of being cheap and vulgar.
84. A great raja.
85. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.

DOWN

1. A fastener (as a buckle or hook) that is used to hold two things together.
2. A confusion of voices and other sounds.
3. Being ten more than one hundred ninety.
4. A person of unquestioning obedience.
5. A rapid series of short loud sounds (as might be heard with a stethoscope in some types of respiratory disorders).
6. (Sumerian) Sun god.
7. The compass point that is one point north of northeast.
8. Brightly colored venomous but nonaggressive snake of southeastern Asia and Malay peninsula.
9. Fishes having large mouths with a worm-like filament attached for luring prey.
10. An artificial language for international use that rejects rejects all existing words and is based instead on an abstract analysis of ideas.
11. Belonging to or on or near the back or upper surface of an animal or organ or part.
12. Tropical American tree producing cacao beans.
13. Absent without permission.
14. A circular segment of a curve.
19. Small crude shelter used as a dwelling.
21. Any of a series of radioactive elements with atomic numbers 89 through 103.
23. The third month of the civil year.
27. The cardinal number that is the sum of eight and one.
29. 1/1000 gram.
33. A chronic disease of the nose characterized by a foul-smelling nasal discharge and atrophy of nasal structures.
34. Armor plate that protects the head.
36. Squash bugs.
37. Affected manners intended to impress others.
39. A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
41. Sour or bitter in taste.
44. The basic unit of money in Cambodia.
46. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
47. A state in New England.
49. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
53. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
56. Pleasantly (even unrealistically) optimistic.
58. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
59. A member of the mercantile and professional Hindu caste.
62. Someone (physician or clergyman) who substitutes temporarily for another member of the same profession.
63. Unpleasantly stern.
66. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.
68. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
69. An island northwest of Wales.
70. A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
71. A pilgrimage to Mecca.
72. The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
73. In bed.
74. Set down according to a plan.
77. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
78. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK

Aries (March 21-April 19)

Have you ever felt as if you couldn't find the words to express your feelings? This is a predicament you may find yourself in today. You crave organization and just can't find the words to get across to others just what your feel needs to be done.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

When it comes to speaking your mind, today seems to find you an expert at that. You are opinionated and your thoughts and words are forceful. While this is a great quality, you may find others are easily offended if you are not careful with your approach. You are high energy and you will have the strength and determination to accomplish every goal you set your mind to. You crave organization in your world. Not only do things have a place but you also have a talent when it comes to putting people in the place they belong. This is very beneficial in the workplace as you are able to manage people efficiently.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Taking care of business and getting things done is first on your list today. You are practical and organized. This mixed with a high level of determination make success your only option. You may find your health and fitness become very important to you. You not only desire to have your affairs in order, you have a desire to get your body and mind in the best shape possible. Join the gym, start meal planning, or just get out and take a walk this evening. Set your plans in motion. Great reward should come from your efforts.

Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have your mind set. You have goals and your focus is solely on reaching them. Focus and determination will lead the way to your success. You have always been looked as a leader and this situation will be no different. Confidence and self-respect alone have taken you far in life. These are feelings that take on great importance in your world now. Reach for the stars.

Leo (July 23-August 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. We all need to take time to feed our soul.

Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may find yourself feeling a bit left out. For a short period, you may find yourself feeling a sense of isolation. Your standards are high, and you may not approve of all that goes on within your social circle and may find that rather than face that disapproval your friends may recently be excluding you. This feeling won't last long, however; you may want to surround yourself with a group you fit in with. You may find that tension is high at this time and could easily find yourself surrounded by conflict. Isolation may be a positive thing in your world for now.

Libra (September 23-October 22)

Are you happy? If not ask yourself what is missing. What needs to change to bring happiness into your world? Make a plan and set the wheels in motion. There comes a time we all need to assess our situation and make necessary changes. This is a great time for you to do some soul-searching. Make sure your feet are planted firmly on the ground. Reach out to those you respect the most and surround yourself with those who possess the wisdom and knowledge necessary to point you in the right direction. Set your goals and make it happen, Libra. There is no time like the present.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

As you are frequently focused on the happiness and well-being of others, today is a time for you to put yourself first. You need to be all about you! You are high energy and full of light. You are the person others long to be like. You are admired and respected and your success has gained much admiration from your peers. You have remained focused and dedicated and even when you felt as if you were not being appreciated or noticed others were not only admiring you from afar they were striving to be more like you. Your hard work has paid off and put you in a great position. Congratulations on your success today.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your dedication and devotion to friends and family you have earned a deep level of respect from those closest to you. You may feel if you should be allowed to claim some of these friends on your taxes as dependents as it seems every time you turn around they are there with their hand out. This is the price you pay for being the dependable and responsible one of the group. You would not trade your friends for anything. You value the level of respect they have for you. Today you find yourself surrounded by friends seeking your advice and asking for your helping hand. Sagittarius, you are a wonderful friend. Your thoughts and dreams seem to be ever present at this time. It is a great time to sit and thing and maybe reach out to share this with someone close to you.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You seem to be desiring a change in your world. You desire to not you may find yourself wanting to broaden your horizons. You know this is a big world and your life is contained in a tiny square of it. It may be time to take a step out of that box and find what the world has to offer you. You could find it difficult to communicate with others today because you find your mind is a million miles away. Curiosity has taken a hold on you and you can't seem to stay focused on the here and now. You may find this evening that a good book may be just what you need to find this escape you have been searching for. A good time for rest and relaxation is in order for you.

Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Have you ever felt as if you couldn't find the words to express your feelings? This is a predicament you may find yourself in today. You crave organization and just can't find the words to get across to others just what your feel needs to be done.

Pisces (February 19-March 20)

A strong need for nurturing is a deep desire for you now. You love deep and you want the same in return. You have a need to be needed. Even the strongest people have times they need the support and love of others. You were not meant to conquer this world alone. Drop your walls and let others in. A great evening could be spent with someone close to you and could be very beneficial in moving things along to the next level.

Wordsearch Puzzle

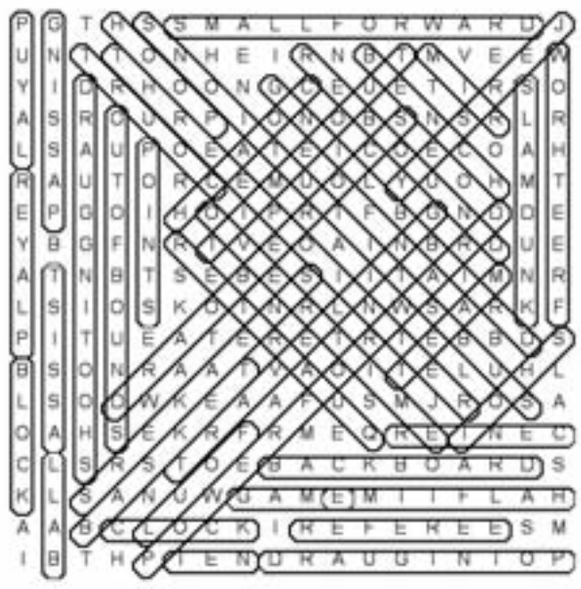
Beatles Songs 1

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

ANOTHER GIRL, ASK ME WHY, BIRTHDAY, BLACKBIRD, CRY BABY CRY, DAY TRIPPER, DEAR PRUDENCE, DIG A PONY, ELEANOR RIGBY, FIXING A HOLE, FLYING, GET BACK, GETTING BETTER, HELLO GOODBYE, HEY BULLDOG, HEY JUDE, HONEY PIE, I ME MINE, I WILL, IF I FELL, IN MY LIFE, JULIA, LADY MADONNA, LOVELY RITA, MICHELLE, NO REPLY, OH DARLING, PLEASE PLEASE ME, POLYTHENE PAM, SEXY SADIE, SOMETHING, SUN KING, TAXMAN, TELL ME WHY, THE END, TICKET TO RIDE, TWO OF US, WAIT, YER BLUES, YESTERDAY

Friday's Solution

Basketball



ASSIST, BACKBOARD, BALL, BASKET, BENCH, BLOCK, CENTER, CLOCK, COACH, COURT, DRIBBLING, FOUL, FREE THROW, GAME, HALF-TIME, HOOP, JERSEY, LAY-UP, NET, OUT OF BOUNDS, OVERTIME, PASSING, PLAYER, POINT GUARD, POINTS, POWER FORWARD, QUARTER, REBOUND, REFEREE, RIM, SCOREBOARD, SHOOTING GUARD, SHOT, SLAM DUNK, SMALL FORWARD, SNEAKERS, SUBSTITUTIONS, TEAM, THREE POINTER, TIME-OUT, TRAVELING

The hidden message is: THE INVENTOR OF BASKETBALL WAS JAMES NAISMITH

Daily SuDoku

7		1	4					
3		6		8	1			
			3					7
5		9		4		2		
	6						1	
		3		6		7		5
2					4			
			9	3		5		6
					8	3		4

Friday's Solution

8	9	7	4	1	6	3	2	5
5	1	4	3	9	2	8	6	7
6	3	2	5	8	7	1	4	9
2	8	1	9	4	5	6	7	3
4	7	6	1	2	3	5	9	8
3	5	9	6	7	8	2	1	4
9	2	3	8	6	4	7	5	1
7	4	8	2	5	1	9	3	6
1	6	5	7	3	9	4	8	2

Kuwait Times
Established 1961

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2018

People walk past a bridge adorned with rainbow-colored arches in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong. — AFP

The Indian artist drawing portraits with a typewriter

Clickety-clack, clickety-clack, ding rings out from a home in India's Mumbai where Chandrakant Bhide is creating his latest artwork-on a typewriter. The 72-year-old thumps the keys of the bulky, manual machine to draw portraits of famous people, all bearing an unmistakeable resemblance to their subject. From politicians and film stars to cricketers, animation characters and religious symbols, Bhide has produced around 150 pieces of typewriter art over the past half century.

"I have done many personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy. This is my hobby, my passion," he tells AFP. Bhide has held 12 exhibitions of his work and become something of a local celebrity since discovering his unique talent in the late 1960s while employed as a bank clerk. As a young man he had wanted to go to art school and become a commercial artist but his family was unable to afford the costs so he trained in stenography instead.

Indian artist Chandrakant Bhide creates artwork using his typewriter during an interview with AFP in Mumbai. — AFP photos

Indian artist Chandrakant Bhide poses with artwork showing various portraits of public figures and deities which he created using a typewriter.

Bhide was working in the administrative department of Union Bank of India when in 1967 his boss asked him to type up a list of staff intercom numbers. "I typed it in the form of a telephone itself. When I saw it I thought, 'This is fantastic, I can make art through this medium.' Everybody seemed to like it too," he recalls. Bhide started using the "x" key to produce images of Hindu god Ganesha to mark India's annual festival celebrating the elephant-headed deity.

He then began to experiment with other

keys-including "w", dash, asterisk, ampersand and percentage sign-progressing to create portraits of celebrities from India and abroad. While Bhide takes only 15 minutes to draw Ganesha, several hours are required to complete a famous face in what is a painstaking process.

No delete key

With steely focus he uses his left hand to grip the knob that controls the platen-the roller that feeds the paper through-as he taps the keys with his right index finger. He stops every so often to change the angle of the page before typing again. Sometimes he'll flick the color-change lever from black to red or vice-versa and he'll glance down regularly at the photograph he is working off to make sure he hasn't made an error.

"Typing requires dedication and concentration. If you put one stroke in the wrong place then you have to start again. "It's not like a computer where you can delete. Many times I've made mistakes and had to start again," says Bhide.

The septuagenarian has drawn several Indian actors over the years including Amitabh Bachchan and Dilip Kumar as well as American cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse and Archie.

Cricketers feature heavily, such as Brian Lara and Sachin Tendulkar, whose famous curly hair Bhide recreated with hundreds of "at" symbols used in email addresses. Bhide, who doesn't sell his artwork or take orders, has been featured in several Indian newspapers and has been able to show his portraits to many of the Indian stars he has drawn.

He says he plans to attempt Donald Trump, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. All of his works have been produced on the same Halda typewriter he used for the 30 years that he worked at Union Bank. The bank gifted it to him for one rupee when he retired in the mid-90s. "I have got so many things out of this typewriter. Typing is an art," he says. —AFP

Aretha Franklin dresses going on auction

Weeks after Aretha Franklin's death, an auction house on Friday announced the sale of more than 30 dresses worn by the Queen of Soul. Julien's Auctions said the outfits would go on sale along with items from other musical icons on November 9 and 10 in New York. Franklin's outfits, expected to fetch up to $4,000 each, include a red sequined dress designed by Arnold Scaasi, the late designer best known for dressing US first ladies, which Franklin wore at a 1991 performance at New York's Radio City Music Hall.

Other highlights include a knit jacket by luxury brand St. John that Franklin sported when she was presented the National Medal of the Arts in 1999 by president Bill Clinton. Julien's Auction did not reveal the owners of the outfits. Franklin, who grew up singing in her father's church and seized on her explosive voice to fuel songs such as "Respect" and "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman," died on August 16 from cancer. For her public viewing in her home of Detroit, she was dressed in a different outfit each of the three days.—AFP

Taiwan ex-gangster turns noodle chef

This picture shows Yen Wei-shun, left, a former criminal turned noodle shop owner for charity, and his mother Yen Lin-yin cooking noodles at their shop in Panchiao district, New Taipei City. — AFP photos

Yen Wei-shun poses for a photo in front of the 'thank you letters wall.'

For most of his life Yen Wei-shun was on the wrong side of the law, but the former Taiwan gangster says he is making up for lost time by churning out noodles for the needy. His family has run a noodle stall, tucked away in a bustling traditional market in New Taipei City, for decades. Now Yen, 40, is working alongside his mother to make free bowls of noodles for customers who cannot afford a meal.

Yen's venture has caught the attention of local media and a video of his life, made by a Shanghai-based online outlet, has been viewed hundreds of thousands of times on YouTube. His gangster life started young-at 15 he was convicted of manslaughter after fatally wounding a man in a group fight and jailed for four-and-a-half years, he says. But after his release, Yen continued his involvement and found himself in court again eight years ago on illegal gun possession charges.

He got away with a suspended sentence, something he considered a "second chance at life from heaven". "This case was like a wake-up call for me. I have come to realise I must cherish what I have from now on-my family and freedom," he told AFP. His family's cooking cart is loaded with steaming pots of broth and noodles. Bowls of noodles with pork, shrimp and cabbage sell for Tw$80 ($2.60) to regular customers.

But they can also give an extra Tw$75 to pay for a bowl for someone who cannot afford it. Yen says he gives away 600-700 free bowls a month, mostly paid for by donors, making up any shortfall himself. He has served 40,000 bowls of free noodles since he started the initiative over four years ago and offers delivery services to residents with physical disabilities. Those asking for free food are usually elderly or jobless young people, Yen said. He does other charity work and has also visited prisons to talk about his experiences.

One of the regulars at the noodle stall is a 62-year-old ex-gangster estranged from his family, who Yen says serves as a constant reminder not to go down the old path. "I see many old gangsters who end up like him. I feel very sad and realise how much time I've wasted already," Yen said. Support from his family and appreciation from people Yen has helped are keeping him on the right course, he added. "In my old gang days I felt like I was always walking a tightrope because I could meet enemy gangsters anytime. But now I meet people who are happy to see me." —AFP

Two local residents eat free food at Yen Wei-shun's noodle shop.

Yen Wei-shun, a former criminal turned noodle shop owner for charity, prepares food at his noodle shop.

Rapper Mac Miller dead at 26 after long substance struggle

Rapper Mac Miller, who found fame early with his raucous, retro hip-hop but struggled with substance abuse and a painfully public breakup with pop star Ariana Grande, died Friday, officials said. He was 26. The artist, who just a month ago released his fifth album whose new maturity and introspection won him once-elusive critical acclaim, was found unresponsive at his Los Angeles home by emergency personnel who pronounced him dead, the coroner's office said.

In this file photo US rapper Mac Miller performs on Camp Stage during day 1 of Camp Flog Gnaw Carnival 2017 at Exposition Park in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

His family confirmed his death in a statement, calling the rapper born as Malcolm McCormick "a bright light in this world for his family, friends and fans." Neither side revealed his cause of death, but the celebrity news site TMZ, which first reported the death, cited unnamed sources as saying he had overdosed on drugs. Miller's death comes several months after he ended a high-profile, two-year relationship with pop superstar Grande, who was often seen as the inspiration for his songs.

She guest-starred on his 2016 album "The Divine Feminine," and a year later Miller-sporting his signature baseball cap above his tattooed neck-welcomed Grande on the airport tarmac when she returned to the United States following the deadly attack on her concert in Manchester. In May, shortly after their breakup, Miller crashed his car and was charged with driving under the influence.

Grande at the time wrote on social media that she had long tried to help Miller become sober but described their relationship as "toxic" and said, "I am not a babysitter or a mother and no woman should feel that they need to be." Grande, who quickly became engaged to comedian Pete Davidson after splitting with Miller, did not immediately comment on the rapper's death but blocked comments on her Instagram page after a slew of critical remarks.

Open about struggles

Miller has been open about his trouble with substance abuse including an addiction to powerful cough syrup-known on the street as purple drank. He addressed both his drug use and his fragile emotional state on his latest album, "Swimming," and said he was improving. He told Rolling Stone when the album came out: "Have I done drugs? Yeah. But am I a drug addict? No." In an interview published just days before his death, Miller told New York magazine he was trying to tame his negative emotions. "I don't want to be depressed. I want to be able to have good days and bad days," he said. Born in Pittsburgh, the rapper first found fame releasing music online as a teenager, choosing a minimalist style with heavy beats that harked back to early hip-hop.

His delivery was uber-masculine, with hard-spit lyrics that often graphically described sexual encounters. On his debut album "Blue Slide Park," which went to number one on the US sales chart, he introduced himself: "I ain't no hipster / But girl I can make your hips stir." But Miller gradually tried to evolve from his frat-boy image. His later work incorporated jazz elements and he was set to tour later this year with Thundercat, the wide-ranging bassist whose music has gone from experimental hip-hop to thrash metal. —AFP

Wasteland makeovers bring creative cool to Paris suburb

Music throbs from a bar set up on a patch of scrubland and artists toil in what was once a tire factory. This is the Paris suburb of Seine-Saint-Denis, but not as the locals know it. Better known for concrete high-rises home to poor immigrants and France's highest crime rate, Seine-Saint-Denis is now welcoming flocks of Parisians to hipster oases that are bringing a welcome injection of cash and energy. When they set up in the northern suburb more than a decade ago, Soukmachines, a collective of young event planners, initially "had to clear what resembled a rubbish dump", recalls Anne-Sophie Levet.

These days she is deputy head of La Halle Papin, a vast pop-up arts space in the solidly working-class neighborhood of Quatre Chemins. In 2016, the local town hall had offered Soukmachines a year's use of the unoccupied tire and tool factory for a dirt-cheap rent, on condition that they breathed new life into it. One year was extended to three, and now it is a thriving hub of artists' studios and shops with a busy program of concerts and cultural events, a paddling pool and self-service barbecues. "There are jewelers, fashion designers, welders," says Franck Cardinal, an artist and architect who works on site. "It's a chance to meet other people who do different work, and enrich what we all produce here."

Changing stereotypes

Some 20,000 people visited last year, many of them Parisians-for whom the ring-road around the capital has traditionally marked a psychological barrier. "These are now places for strolling and for tourists to visit in greater Paris, for Parisians looking for a bit of space, and places to party," says the region's Socialist head Stephane Troussel. Paris is far from the first city to turn unwanted land into an edgy arts hub: similar projects have found success all over Europe, from the shipyards of Amsterdam's NDSM to RAW in Berlin, an unused train repair depot. Around 80 plots of wasteland have been given makeovers in Paris and the surrounding region. But local officials are proud that more than a third are in Seine-Saint-Denis-unloved areas turned into cultural spaces, community centers or even urban farms.

Regeneration

The region north of Paris boomed after World War II, drawing thousands of laborers from France's North African colonies to its chemical factories, metalworks and other industrial sites. But deindustrialization hit Seine-Saint-Denis hard from the 1960s onwards, emptying factories as the region's reputation shifted to one of crime and poverty. Today, a third of residents live below the poverty line, although authorities hope a massive infrastructure project dubbed "Grand Paris" will aid regeneration by enticing commuters to the suburb by 2025. —AFP

In this file photo people cycle past a portrait of French boxer Sarah Ourahmoune by the street artist Marko 93, painted on the wall of the Halle Pouchard, a former industrial wasteland housing the 'Grandes Serres de Pantin', in Pantin, on the outskirts of Paris. — AFP photos

In this file photo people sit and enjoy the bar of the Halle Papin, in Pantin, on the outskirts of Paris.

Spanish sculptures get kitschy colors in another botched restoration

A Spanish parishioner has painted three 15th century sculptures in garish colors, giving Jesus a bright green robe in the latest botched amateur art restoration to make headlines in the country. A wooden statue of the Virgin Mary at the chapel in El Ranadoiro, a hamlet in the northern Asturias region that is home to just 28 people, was given a bright pink headscarf, sky blue robe and eyeliner. The previously plain wooden carving also features a young Jesus in a bright green robe, while a third statue of Saint Peter now has him in blood red garments.

The makeover has led to comparisons with the botched 2012 restoration by an elderly parishioner of the "Ecce Homo" fresco of Jesus Christ in Borja which resembled a pale-faced ape with cartoon-style eyes. "It's crazy," said Luis Suarez Saro, who had previously restored the three El Ranadoiro sculptures in 2002-2003 with the regional government's approval. The woman who carried out the latest restoration, local resident Maria Luisa Menendez, received permission from the parish priest to give them a fresh lick of paint, local newspaper El Comercio reported.

"I'm not a professional, but I always liked to do it, and the figures really needed to be painted. So I painted them as I could, with the colors that looked good to me, and the neighbors liked it," she told the daily. Suarez Saro remarked to AFP that Menendez "likes to draw and paint, she did some courses... and she felt the sculptures looked better this way." While the paint job sparked hilarity online, Spanish art conservation association ACRE sounded the alarm. —AFP

This picture shows several Romanesque period religious statues displayed at the church of El Ranadoiro, close to Cangas del Narcea in Asturias region, after being 'restored' by a local woman. — AFP

Kate Spade honors Late founder at NY Fashion Week

Creative Director for Kate Spade, Nicola Glass, poses for Kate Spade New York during New York Fashion Week. —AFP photos

Models walk the runway during the Kate Spade New York Fashion Show during New York Fashion Week at New York Public Library in New York City.

Kate Spade put the sparkle into New York Fashion Week on Friday, paying tribute in a riot of color to the handbag brand's founder, three months after her tragic death. It was the label's first runway show at the bi-annual style fest, having previously opted for Instagram-able presentations, held this time in the lofty surrounds of the iconic New York Public Library. The new creative director, Northern Ireland-born Nicola Glass, was already working on her debut collection when 55-year-old Spade, who founded the company with her husband, committed suicide in June.

Silver glitter ran down the center of the pale pink-carpeted runway, a nod to the woman whose brand has been synonymous with a joyful outlook on life since its founding in 1993. "She left a little sparkle everywhere she went," said a pink note left on the seat of every guest. "In loving memory 1962-2018." "Even though she hasn't been here for over 10 years, her spirit's definitely still here at the company," Glass, a former Gucci handbag and jewelry designer who previously worked at Michael Kors, said.

The collection was rooted in the brand's DNA: color, fun, joyfulness for spirited women, sophisticated and feminine, yet wearable from day to evening. Kate Spade's spring/summer 2019 is one of pale lilac, hot pink, dark green, chartreuse, florals and print, with block-heeled sandals and knee-high boots, and liberal use of the spade symbol. "It feels more modern, less retro, there's more polished ease to it and prints, they've been evolved in a way where they're a little bit more graphic with unexpected details," Glass told AFP.

Pale white balloon-style lights were suspended from the ceiling and an unusually diverse stream of models, although each very slim, strode the runway before taking their places on silver diases. Besides the silk dresses, cropped pants, checked suiting and buttoned miniskirts, they sported purses, sunglasses and silk headscarves knotted at the nape of the neck. "She's a woman who, I think, is in love with life and has a sense of purpose," said Glass.

Spade sold her last shares in her namesake brand in the mid-2000s. The company is now owned by Tapestry, but Glass hailed Spade as a role model woman, entrepreneur and designer. Spade committed suicide in her Park Avenue apartment on June 5, having battled with depression and anxiety for years despite a dazzling career that made her the darling of American career women.

Dressing America

Guests of honor were Oprah Winfrey, Anne Hathaway, Jessica Chastain, Blake Lively, Pierce Brosnan, Kanye West and Priyanka Chopra, as well as Donna Karan, Michael Kors and Carolina Herrera were in attendance. Models sashayed through the oriental rug-lined Bethesda Terrace fountain in Central Park, before a frail looking Lauren, dressed in jeans, dress shirt and black tux, came out to a standing ovation, doing a lap of honor and tenderly embraced by his guests of honor.

Dozens of models, of every conceivable color, ranging from almost babes in arms to grey-haired men, encapsulated 50 years in which the 78-year-old has literally dressed America-his Ralph Lauren and Polo labels a one-stop shop for evening, day, business and sportswear. "In celebration of 50 years, I celebrate a woman's freedom of expression, her strength and individuality," he said simply.

Tory Burch cruises

The American founder of the global lifestyle brand Tory Burch was upbeat and happy, unveiling a collection, imbued with the memory of her wealthy parents and their Mediterranean cruises. The clothes were inspired by their steamer-hopping trips from Italy to Greece, and from Spain to Morocco, full of contrast from Cyprus lace to North African djellabas, and from flamenco flounces to safari suits. —AFP

Disney villains provide inspiration at New York fashion show

No one wants to be a fashion victim, but fashion villains owned the runway on Friday as designers The Blonds served up spicy and spiky styles with a show inspired by Disney's vamps and vixens. The "Disney Villains x The Blonds" fashion show electrified a wildly cheering audience that stood in marked contrast to the usual sangfroid reserve that typically prevails at New York's semi-annual Fashion Week. Similarly, models channeling the likes of "Snow White"'s Evil Queen, "The Little Mermaid"'s Ursula, "101 Dalmatians Cruella de Vil and "Sleeping Beauty"'s Maleficent strutted, sashayed, vogued and even break-danced their way down the runway.

A giant screen showed clips from the classic Disney films which inspired the dazzling looks in a presentation of fashion-as-theater that held its own against the most lavish Disney spectacle. "We always loved the vixen, the femme fatale, and all the villains have these qualities," David Blond told Reuters of the inspiration for the collection he envisioned along with partner Phillipe Blond. "They're the coolest characters, they're always the standout," he added. "They have the best personality-it's always something that's interesting and unusual."

Interesting and unusual the show inarguably was, featuring the sort of over-the-top, avant-garde looks more associated with runway shows in Paris than New York. Fabrics included leather, rubber and latex rendered almost exclusively in black or red. What wasn't any of those was mostly metallic, with endless sequins, beading, crystals and mesh. Boxy, spike-bedecked flight jackets topped sequined leggings, while a zaftig model channeling Ursula was decked out in black and purple feathers, calling to mind the late drag queen Divine.

Models wore spike-heeled thigh-high latex boots, sculpted bustiers and corsets, while one cradled the unusual runway accessory of a tiny dog. Despite the seemingly less-than-wearable nature of most of the looks, The Blonds' creations managed to stay on trend, with wide shouldered, waist-length jackets recalling the 1980s-era power suits that experts see making a comeback. "It works with our brand DNA so well," said David Blond. "It was so seamless." The designers have created looks for a host of performers known for their offbeat style, including Lady Gaga, Katy Perry and Lil' Kim.—Reuters

Designers David and Phillipe Blond receive applause after presenting The Blonds Spring/Summer 2019 collection during New York Fashion Week in the Manhattan borough of New York City. —Reuters photos

Paris Hilton

Models present creations from The Blonds Spring/Summer 2019 collection during New York Fashion Week in the Manhattan borough of New York City.

Tom Ford kicks off New York Fashion Week

Tom Ford walks the runway at the Tom Ford fashion show during New York Fashion Week at Park Avenue Armory in New York City. —AFP photos

New York Fashion Week opened with a bang with a masterclass from Tom Ford, A-list models oozing subdued sophistication in neutral palettes with Tom Hanks and break-out rom-com star Henry Golding front row. The US city kicks off a month-long fashion merry-go-round in which editors, celebrities and influencers descend first on the Big Apple before jetting off to fashion weeks in London, Milan and Paris.

Everyone from the biggest names in the industry to fresh-out-of-college hopefuls will pack a frenetic schedule from Thursday to September 12 as the Big Apple wilts under a late summer heatwave. Ford took a chill pill-opening the spring/summer 2019 season by sending down the runway models Kaia Gerber, Gigi Hadid, Joan Smalls in matte make-up, headscarves and smokey eyes. For men, the trademark Tom Ford suit was fashioned into candy colors and metallics, paired with block shades and a traditional mac.

For women, think feminine pencil skirts, little black dresses and feathered evening gowns worn with snake-skin-style jackets, with only minimal snatches of animal print after last season's feline riot. Hemlines fell below the knee with delicate lace detailing, and there was double-breasted black pant suit for evening that wouldn't look out of place on Meghan Markle, the newly minted Duchess of Sussex.

Guests of honor were Oscar-winner Hanks with wife Rita Wilson, rap star Cardi B, Vogue high priestess Anna Wintour and Golding, the hero of "Crazy Rich Asians" and ideal personification of the Tom Ford man. It's no longer news to say that the traditional runway show is in flux, but September's edition of the bi-annual style fest serves up a smattering of treats after several seasons in the wilderness. Kate Spade will show on Friday, the first since the label's founder ended her life in June, with a tribute to Spade expected. Barbadian superstar Rihanna steals an honor customarily enjoyed by Marc Jacobs, by closing out the week with a Savage x Fenty bash to baptize her brand-new lingerie line.

European transplants

Then there are the New York anniversaries: Ralph Lauren is marking half a century of collections in Central Park with a fashion show and gala dinner that is strictly A-list only. The location is the Bethesda Terrace fountain-a popular movie scene stealer-and the event an homage to the city where the 78-year-old designer was born, grew up and built his fashion empire. Jetting across the Atlantic are French label Longchamp celebrating 70 years with its first full-scale New York Fashion Week show and Germany's Escada making its New York debut for its 40th anniversary.

Rodarte and Proenza Schouler are back from Paris. Vivienne Westwood is hopping across the pond for buyer appointments only. Marchesa, the red-carpet label co-founded by the estranged British wife of disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein, is also back-by appointment only-after cancelling their show last season. Others are sitting New York out. Ex-Spice Girl Victoria Beckham is celebrating the 10th anniversary of her brand in London. Tommy Hilfiger held his show in Shanghai on Tuesday, the latest pit-stop on what has been a global tour since declining to show in the Big Apple since September 2016.

Alexander Wang, the king of cool, has switched to a June-December schedule and plenty of others make little secret of their a thirst for something new in a city that constantly glorifies innovation. "What we know traditionally as fashion week-and I love a runway show-is changing," designer Zac Posen told CNBC this week. "It's a very saturated field, so you have to find interesting creative ways of cutting through the market." His answer? Unveil his collection in a photo shoot starring up-and-coming actress Maya Hawke, daughter of Ethan and Uma Thurman.—AFP

US model Gigi Hadid

Puerto Rican model Joan Smalls

US model Kaia Gerber

Designer Ralph Lauren marks 50th anniversary

Models walk the runway during New York Fashion Week at Bethesda Terrace in New York City. —AFP/Reuters photos

Top fashion designer Ralph Lauren marked 50 years in the business on Friday with a celebrity-filled gala in Manhattan's Central Park. The American fashion house hosted the fashion show and dinner attended by a veritable who's who of names from the worlds of entertainment, media and fashion. Hollywood stars Robert De Niro, Anne Hathaway and Jessica Chastain rubbed elbows under the stars, as they sipped wine alongside journalist Anderson Cooper, media titan Barry Diller, director Steven Spielberg and Lauren's fellow designers, Diane von Furstenberg and Tommy Hilfiger.

Also on hand to pay tribute to Lauren were brand name powerhouses Oprah Winfrey and Martha Stewart, as well as fashion world doyenne Anna Wintour, who sported her signature dark glasses. "The real reason we're all here is not because of the show, but because of you Ralph," Winfrey told the glittering assemblage. A fashion show featuring well over 100 female, male, adult and child models was followed by a sit-down dinner in the park.

Lauren's looks hewed close to the traditional style for which he is famous, featuring plaids, tweeds, suede and western-themed fleece collared jackets. Muted earth tones prevailed, while gowns were rendered in burgundy and geometric metallics. The designer himself sported jeans and a suit jacket, topped by a bow tie, as he made his way through the A-list crowd, which included his grown children.

What evolved into a so-called lifestyle brand began humbly in 1967 as a collection of men's neckties, until a year later Lauren struck gold with his Polo menswear label. Lauren's designs for women did not appear until the 1970s. The brand is expanding in international markets through new small-format stores as its biggest North America market becomes saturated. Ralph Lauren is also wooing millennials through new designs that add embroidery, print and color blocking, refreshed fabrics and increased functionality. —Reuters

Designer Ralph Lauren walks the runway for Ralph Lauren fashion show.

Classifieds

Sunday, September 9, 2018

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	34 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	28 °C
ABDALY	46 °C	28 °C
BUBYAN	--- °C	--- °C
JAHRA	46 °C	33 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	44 °C	29 °C
SALMIYAH	40 °C	34 °C
AHMADI	39 °C	34 °C
NUWAISIB	45 °C	29 °C
WAFRA	46 °C	26 °C
SALMY	43 °C	28 °C

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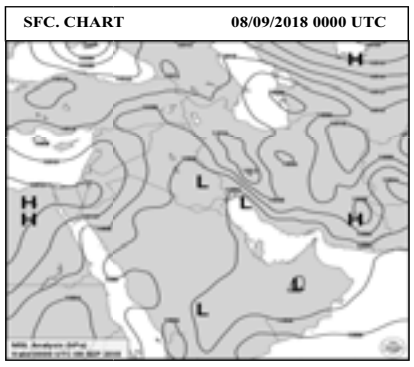

4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures MAX.	Temperatures MIN.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
Sunday	09/09	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	47 °C	28 °C	VRB	06 - 20 km/h
Monday	09/10	Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	46 °C	29 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Tuesday	09/11	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas	44 °C	27 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	09/12	Hot and Humid specially over coastal areas	45 °C	28 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:07
Sunrise	05:28
Zuhr	11:46
Asr	15:18
Sunset	18:04
Isha	19:22

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	27 °C
MAX. RH	60 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	W 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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6-9-2018

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.

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HOTLINE 128

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- Ph: 22452208.
(C 5416)

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(C 5417) 3-9-2018

It is notified for the information that my original qualifying examination certificate of main secondary examination of year 2014 and Roll No. 8105633 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate BADER MAHMOUD CHAMMOU, address: Hawally, Phone 66844674.
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«Marine Engineer»
- Bachelor degree in Marine / Mechanical Engineering
- Minimum 5 years experience in shipyard and maintenance of boats

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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
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

Flight Schedule

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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 9/9/2018

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	513	Sharm el-Sheikh	00:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:15
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50
KAC	102	London	00:50
KAC	504	Beirut	00:50
JZ	R539	Cairo	01:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:00
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15
AEE	956	ATH	02:25
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30
THY	768	Istanbul	02:40
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40
WAN	714	AGP	02:45
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05
RJA	648	Amman	03:05
KAC	418	Manila	03:05
KAC	382	Delhi	03:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:25
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30
JAI	572	Mumbai	04:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00
JZR	551	Alexandria	04:05
JZR	609	Hyderabad	04:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30
THY	1414	TZX	05:05
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:20
JZR	603	Mumbai	05:25
QTR	8511	Doha	05:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30
JZR	561	Sohag	05:55
BAW	157	London	06:10
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:25
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:25
KAC	204	Lahore	06:30
WAN	966	Tbilisi	06:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:45
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50
JZR	143	Doha	07:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00
MSR	2616	Sohag	07:05
KAC	358	Kochi	07:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:45
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
JZR	503	Luxor	07:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:55
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:25
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30
WAN	352	Luxor	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00
ABW	9022	SVO	10:15
SAW	703	Damascus	10:30
JZR	787	Riyadh	10:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00
JZR	903	Baku	11:10
JZR	165	Dubai	11:45
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:20
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45
THY	766	Istanbul	12:45
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50
JZR	239	Amman	13:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10
JZR	531	Asyut	13:10
RJA	644	Amman	13:20
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:30
KAC	792	Madinah	13:40
FEG	341	Sohag	13:50
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	13:55
KAC	672	Dubai	13:55
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15
JZR	125	Bahrain	14:15
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KAC	364	Colombo	14:20
KAC	618	Doha	14:20
KAC	516	Tehran	14:20
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:05
KAC	304	Mumbai	15:05
KNE	529	Jeddah	15:10
WAN	964	Tbilisi	15:15
KAC	562	Amman	15:20
OMA	645	Muscat	15:20
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
KAC	502	Beirut	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
KAC	154	Istanbul	15:45
SYR	341	Damascus	15:55
KAC	118	New York	16:00
SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
FDB	051	Dubai	16:20
FEG	241	Alexandria	16:45
FDB	8397	Dubai	16:50
NIA	361	Alexandria	16:50
KAC	542	Cairo	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:35
JZR	145	Doha	17:35
JZR	177	Dubai	17:40
QTR	1080	Doha	18:10
JZR	483	Istanbul	18:20
WAN	874	Istanbul	18:25
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
RJA	640	Amman	19:00
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
KAC	156	Istanbul	19:25
KAC	776	Riyadh	19:35
RBG	555	Alexandria	19:40
KAC	674	Dubai	19:40
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	178	Vienna	19:55
KAC	104	London	20:00
DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:05
OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
KAC	620	Doha	20:15
KAC	166	Rome	20:25
QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
JZR	803	Tbilisi	20:45
KAC	172	Frankfurt	20:45
JZR	553	Alexandria	20:50
UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:15
THY	764	Istanbul	21:30
KAC	676	Dubai	21:35
ETD	995	Abu Dhabi/Bahrain	21:50
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	564	Amman	21:50
QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
WAN	884	Sarajevo	22:05
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
KAC	786	Jeddah	22:15
AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
JZR	185	Dubai	22:50
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
MSR	2614	Cairo	23:30
WAN	416	Beirut	23:30
FDB	071	Dubai	23:35
JZR	241	Amman	23:40
PIA	205	Lahore	23:40

Departure Flights on Sunday 9/9/2018

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
MSC	502	Alexandria	00:15
WAN	965	Tbilisi	00:15
KAC	417	Manila	00:25
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
MSR	2615	Sohag	00:30
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
KAC	677	Dubai	01:30
THY	773	Istanbul	01:45
KAC	363	Colombo	01:50
DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
JZR	502	Luxor	01:55
PGT	859	Istanbul	02:15
THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
AEE	957	ATH	03:15
JZR	142	Doha	03:20
UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
WAN	351	Luxor	03:30
THY	769	Istanbul	03:35
OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25
LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
JAI	571	Mumbai	05:00
QTR	1077	Doha	05:15
JZR	902	Baku	05:30
KAC	303	Mumbai	05:35
KAC	103	London	05:45
FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
JZR	786	Riyadh	06:05
THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
JZR	530	Asyut	06:45
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
KAC	153	Istanbul	07:00
RJA	649	Amman	07:00
QTR	8512	Doha	07:00
JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30
KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:55
KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
JZR	238	Amman	08:00
MSR	2617	Cairo	08:05
WAN	713	AGP	08:10
BAW	156	London	08:20
KAC	165	Rome	08:25
KAC	177	Vienna	08:30
FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00
WAN	963	Tbilisi	09:00
KAC	791	Madinah	09:00
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:05
KAC	117	New York	09:05
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
WAN	133	Doha	09:30
KAC	561	Amman	09:40
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
KAC	773	Riyadh	09:45
JZR	534	Cairo	09:45
UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
JZR	482	Istanbul	09:55
KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
KAC	101	London	10:00
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
IRC	529	Ahwaz	10:00
WAN	873	Istanbul	10:15
KAC	617	Doha	10:20
KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
IRA	664	Shiraz	10:25
QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
JZR	124	Bahrain	11:20
SAW	704	Damascus	11:30
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
THY	767	Istanbul	13:40
JZR	144	Doha	13:55
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	552	Alexandria	14:05
AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
RJA	645	Amman	14:15
JZR	802	Tbilisi	14:50
FEG	442	Asyut	14:50
IAW	158A	Al Najaf	14:55
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KAC	775	Riyadh	15:55
KAC	785	Jeddah	16:00
JZR	606	Kochi	16:00
KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
KAC	563	Amman	16:10
KAC	619	Doha	16:15
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
WAN	415	Beirut	16:15
OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
SYR	342	Damascus	16:55
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
SAW	710	Latakia	17:00
KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
FDB	052	Dubai	17:20
QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	381	Delhi	17:45
FEG	242	Alexandria	17:45
NIA	362	Alexandria	17:50
FDB	8398	Dubai	17:50
KAC	331	Trivandrum	17:55
KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	283	Dhaka	18:00
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:25
JZR	240	Amman	18:30
JZR	650	Lahore	18:35
JZR	538	Cairo	18:35
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
WAN	975D	Baku	19:25
MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
RJA	641	Amman	20:00
ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
JZR	602	Mumbai	20:30
UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
DLH	624	Dammam	20:50
KAC	353	Bengaluru	21:00
KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
KAC	301	Mumbai	21:35
QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:05
JZR	1540	Cairo	22:10
KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
KAC	383	Delhi	22:25
THY	1403	AYT	22:25
UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
KAC	783	Jeddah	22:50
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:00
ABW	9923	Frankfurt	23:10
ETD	9890	SGN	23:15
KAC	411	Bangkok	23:15
QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
WAN	337	Alexandria	23:40
JZR	560	Sohag	23:45

HASS, Syria: Syrians check the wreckage at a site in Hass town after an airstrike by pro-regime forces on the south of Idlib province yesterday. Syria's last major rebel bastion Idlib was yesterday targeted by the 'most violent' Russian air strikes in a month, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a day after the failure of a three-way summit on the Syrian conflict. — AFP

The death penalty around the world

PARIS: The use of the death penalty is declining: more than two-thirds of countries have abolished or ceased to use it and executions continued to decrease in 2017, Amnesty International says. But capital punishment remains in place in 23 countries, with China still believed to be the "world's top executioner", the group's 2017 report says. Here is an overview:

Death penalty decline

Amnesty International says that at the end of last year, 142 countries - more than two-thirds - had abolished the death penalty in law or in practice, with 106 ending it in law for all crimes. The latest were Guinea and Mongolia which in 2017 abolished capital punishment for all crimes, while Guatemala outlawed it for civil crimes only. Sub-Saharan Africa made significant progress towards abolition with a big reduction in the number of death sentences throughout the region.

Only Somalia and South Sudan carried out executions in 2017 compared with five countries in the region in 2016. Burkina Faso, Chad, Kenya and The Gambia, meanwhile, took measures to end the use of capital punishment by adopting new legislation or introducing bills. In Europe and central Asia, Belarus was the only country to have carried out the death sentence in 2017, with at least two executions down from at least four the previous year, Amnesty says. Kazakhstan, Russia and Tajikistan maintained moratoriums.

Still killing

There were 993 executions recorded in 2017 in 23 countries, a decrease of four percent from 2016 and 39 percent from 2015, which was a peak year with 1,634 executions. Amnesty's numbers do not include the "thousands" it says are believed to have been executed in China, which classifies this information as a state secret. Excluding China, Amnesty says Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Pakistan-in that order-carried out 84 percent of all executions in 2017. Compared to the previous year, the figures were down by 31 percent in Pakistan and 11 percent in Iran.

In Iran, at least 31 executions were in public. Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates took up executions again in 2017. Conversely Amnesty recorded no executions in five countries that had applied the death penalty in 2016: Botswana, Indonesia, Nigeria, Sudan and Taiwan, though the latter did execute one man in August 2018. For the ninth consecutive year the United States was the only country on the American continent to execute prisoners, with 23 recorded.

The United States and Japan, where there were four executions in 2017, were the only countries in the G8 group leading economies to carry out executions. Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago meanwhile handed out death penalties. Countries carrying out the penalty last year used methods ranging from decapitation to hanging, firing squad and lethal injection, Amnesty says. — AFP

Qatar to invest $11.6 billion in Germany

BERLIN: Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani said in Berlin Friday his country would invest some 10 billion euros ($11.6 billion) in Germany, as he battles a policy of isolation by neighboring states. "We are announcing Qatar's desire to invest 10 billion euros in the German economy over the coming five years," the Gulf state leader said as he opened a German-Qatari business forum alongside Chancellor Angela Merkel. Qatar plans to invest in the car, high-tech and banking sectors-three traditional strengths of the German economy. Business daily Handelsblatt reported that Doha is especially interested in Germany's dense network of small- and medium-sized firms known as the "Mittelstand".

In recent years its German investments in larger industrial or financial firms have often soured, including in the country's troubled largest lender Deutsche Bank. For more than a year, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt have cut off ties with Qatar, accusing it of supporting "terrorist" movements, cosying up to Iran and undermining stability in the region. The cold shoulder from its neighbors has prompted Qatari leaders to fall back on more distant allies, with Germany now its third-weightiest trading partner after the US and China. Bilateral trade has more than doubled since 2011, to around 2.8 billion euros.

Also Friday, Merkel confirmed German plans to build a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal in Germany. Qatar is the world's largest exporter of the fuel. Both capitals also have a common interest in Turkey, with Qatar announcing $15 billion of investments there last month. Meanwhile Berlin is bound to Ankara by Germany's millions-strong Turkish diaspora community and an agreement for Turkey to hold back refugees from the Middle East from reaching Europe. Turkey's lira currency has been weakened recently as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and US President Donald Trump engage in a diplomatic face-off with mutual sanctions. — AFP

Facial recognition touted as a 'user friendly' system for airports

DULLES: As facial recognition technology use generates intense scrutiny, a new system unveiled at Washington's Dulles airport is being touted as a "user friendly" way to help ease congestion for air travelers. Officials at Dulles unveiled two new face recognition systems on Thursday, one to meet legal requirements for biometric entry-exit records, and a second to help speed processing of travelers arriving on international flights by matching their real-time images with stored photos.

The growing use of facial recognition has ignited debate over surveillance and privacy around the world, but officials told media this system was a way to help reducing annoying lines and wait times without compromising security. "The technology works," US Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan told reporters at an airport unveiling. "It's fast, it's user-friendly, it's flexible and it's cost-effective. And we believe it will change the face of international travel." Over time, officials say the biometric recognition system will allow a traveler's face to eliminate the need for a boarding pass. "No more fumbling with your boarding pass when you have two carry-ons, maybe a kid, no more trying to find a QR code or trying the refresh your screen," McAleenan said. In one test for the system, McAleenan said the boarding 350 passengers for an Airbus A380 aircraft was completed in 20 minutes, or half the normal time. At Dulles, officials showed how the new systems, operated with iPads mounted on poles, identified and matched the image of travelers during the boarding process.

Aiming for speed, security

The system is designed to boost security by ensuring that travelers are using their real passports and not forged documents, matching to existing photos from passports or images collected from foreign nationals when they enter. The Dulles system began operations in mid-August, ahead of the media event, and within three days was credited with the arrest of a man attempting to use a fake passport to enter the United States. The 26-year-old man traveling from Sao Paulo, Brazil sought to enter with a French passport but the facial comparison biometric system determined he was not a match to the passport he presented. A search revealed the man's authentic Republic of Congo identification card concealed in his shoe. Officials claim the new systems are being developed only for the boarding and entry process and not being tied to other databases for law enforcement surveillance. "We are not collecting or retaining any new data," McAleenan said. "We need to confirm that the party travelers are who they say they are." Dulles is one of 14 "early adopter airports" using facial recognition technology for the entry process. McAleenan said that because the new system uses only its own images and passport photos, its accuracy rate is "99 percent." "We are not seeing significant difference across gender or race," he added. The CPB system was developed within the agency, part of the Department of Homeland Security, with unspecified technology partners, according to McAleenan. Privacy activists say there are few safeguards on facial recognition databases used and that the technology evokes fears of a "Big Brother" surveillance state, pointing to China, where law enforcement has been aggressively deploying these systems. — AFP

Two health scares at US airports tied to Makkah pilgrims

CHICAGO: Two major health scares at US airports involving inbound flights are related to pilgrims returning from the Hajj, the Muslim pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia, which ended in late August, US health officials said on Friday. On Wednesday, US health officials sent an emergency response team with mobile diagnostic equipment to John F Kennedy International Airport in New York after they were told that more than 100 passengers aboard an Emirates airlines flight from Dubai were experiencing flu-like symptoms.

Dr Martin Cetron, director for the division of Global Migration and Quarantine at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told Reuters in a telephone interview that health officials evaluated nearly 549 passengers at the airport, and sent a total of 11 people to a local hospital for more testing. Ten people were tested for a battery of respiratory viruses and bacteria in hopes of ruling out serious pathogens that could present a public health threat. Two of them tested positive for an especially virulent type of influenza A virus, and one of the two, who was gravely ill with pneumonia, was co-infected with another respiratory virus, Cetron said. A third person tested positive for a cold virus. All three had taken part in the Hajj, which this year drew some 2 million people to Mecca, Cetron said. Seven crew members, who boarded the flight in Dubai and were not at the pilgrimage, tested negative for a number of respiratory infections of public health concern, Cetron said. The next day, two flights arriving in Philadelphia from Europe were screened by medical teams after 12 passengers reported flu-like symptoms. One of them had visited Mecca for the Hajj.

Cetron said health officials in New York had been prepared to quarantine a large group of sick passengers in an area at the airport. From a total of 11 passengers taken to hospital for evaluation, 10 were tested for respiratory symptoms; one showed signs of food poisoning. "It was a much smaller incident. That's not uncommon," Cetron said. "Often the incoming information from multiple sources can be exaggerated beyond what we really find." All 10 patients with respiratory symptoms tested negative for the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome or MERS, a highly infectious and deadly respiratory infection that was first identified in the Middle East in 2012. The CDC was not alerted in advance about the two flights that landed in Philadelphia from Paris and Munich, but several travelers had complained of illness, triggering a "medical review" of 250 passengers from those flights, a spokesman said. Twelve passengers were found to have sore throats and coughs, and one also tested positive for the flu, a CDC spokesman confirmed. The responses were part of a well-rehearsed network of public health officials trained to identify and contain pathogens as US airports and ports of entry, Cetron said. — Reuters

Lebanese arm wrestlers revive...

Continued from Page 1

A single fight can last a few seconds or several gut-wrenching minutes, with at least two referees hunched over the table to spot fouls. Pierre Harb, 31, stepped up to the elevated competition platform. "Arm wrestling has been part of my life since I was a child," said Harb, competing professionally for the first time. Despite possessing bulging arms and facing a 14-year old opponent, luck was not on his side.

Harb's rival-imposingly tall and bulky for his age-swiftly triumphed. Competitors were seeking to secure their slots in the annual national final on September 9, which will crown three champions: one in the under 90 kilogram men's category, one above that weight, and one woman.

Of the 300 participants in this summer's nationwide tournament, one in six were women. And it's the first time women have competed at the national level. In Jounieh, Amany Abi Khalil, 22, was determined to crush the misconception that physical strength is a purely male domain. "I came here to show that women can take part in this sport without becoming less feminine," said the theatre undergraduate. "Some were surprised by my decision, but my parents and my friends supported me," she said.

A competition was also held for male and female members of the army and security forces. Claudine Aoun, head of the National Commission for Lebanese Women, watched enthusiastically from a ringside sofa. "Women taking part in this competition is a message" that they can operate in sectors previously associated with men, she said. The winner of the women's competition on the day, 16-year-old Teresa Bassil, agreed. When she stepped up to the stage for the awards ceremony, she did so among a sea of male judges clad in red. "Strength is not just a man's thing. Women too can be strong," the teenager said softly, dressed in a purple t-shirt with her hair tied back in a ponytail. — AFP

Iraq PM urged to quit as key ally...

Continued from Page 1

The wave of protests first broke out in Basra in July before spreading to other parts of the country, with demonstrators condemning corruption among Iraqi officials and demanding jobs. Since then a total of at least 27 people have been killed. "We're thirsty, we're hungry, we are sick and abandoned," protester Ali Hussein told AFP on Friday in Basra after another night of violence. The anger on Basra's streets was "in response to the government's intentional policy of neglect", said the head of the region's human rights council, Mehdi Al-Tamimi. Iraq has been struggling to rebuild its infrastructure and economy after decades of bloody conflicts, including an eight-year war with Iran in the 1980s, the US-led invasion of 2003 and the battle against the Islamic State group.

In August, the oil ministry announced that crude exports for August had hit their highest monthly figure this year, with nearly 112 million barrels of oil bringing $7.7 billion to state coffers. Iraq, however, suffers from persistent corruption and many Iraqis complain that the oil wealth is unfairly distributed. Two months ago, Abadi pledged a multi-billion dollar emergency plan to revive infrastructure and services in southern Iraq, one of the country's most marginalized regions. — AFP

Global protests as UN climate...

Continued from Page 1

"I came here today to ask the government to put coastal erosion on the national agenda," 58-year-old fisherwoman Aree Kongklad said. She said that the mangrove forests near her coastal home had been destroyed, jeopardizing the supply of crabs which are her livelihood. In Manila, more than 800 people, including one dressed as a T-Rex holding a "Go Fossil Free" sign, marched through the streets protesting the country's heavy reliance on coal. Along with Bangkok, the Philippine capital is projected to be among the world's hardest hit urban areas by climate change impacts.

"We are among the most vulnerable and we are among those still stuck in an energy system that is backwards," campaigner Chuck Baclavon said, adding that the government is out of excuses. Around 10,000 school students and their teachers in northern India tied red ribbons to trees in a call to end deforestation. "We came out in support of this global initiative because it draws attention to a very urgent and important issue," said Red Tape Movement founder Prabhat Misra. In a separate initiative, the New Delhi local government launched a drive to plant half a million trees around the Indian capital yesterday.— AFP

Panthers, Cowboys makes big gains with new-look offenses

Might reveal the most about their 2018 fortunes

DALLAS: A couple of teams that made big gains on the ground last season are meeting in today's opener when the Dallas Cowboys and Carolina Panthers collide at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte. Major adjustments on offense might reveal the most about their 2018 fortunes when the season begins.

The Panthers are operating under new offensive coordinator Norv Turner. For quarterback Cam Newton, there are plenty of moving parts. "I think again, the more and more he plays within what we are doing, the more and more confidence he's going to have," Carolina coach Ron Rivera said. "We still have a long way to go."

For the Cowboys, it's a matter of third-year quarterback Dak Prescott trying to return to the efficiency that defined his rookie year. And do so without top receivers Jason Witten and Dez Bryant. Witten retired to the "Monday Night Football" booth — a landing spot the Panthers thought tight end Greg Olsen might choose last offseason — and Bryant was released prior to the draft. Prescott, who has drawn similarities to Newton, became more mistake prone last season, throwing 13 interceptions (after four pickoffs in 2016). "Dak for me, right from the get-go, is handling every situation really well," Cowboys coach Jason Garrett said. "That hasn't changed through success and adversity. He has had great offseason."

These teams did damage offensively on the ground last year, ranking in the top four in rushing yardage. Carolina added 1,000-yard rusher C.J. Anderson from Denver to compensate for releasing franchise rushing leader Jonathan Stewart. Anderson is the sledgehammer complement to second-year slasher Christian McCaffrey. The Cowboys have third-year running back Ezekiel Elliott, who gained 983 yards last season despite missing six games with a suspension. Dallas went 3-3 in his absence. "I'm definitely going into this year with a chip on my shoulder," Elliott said. "I want to prove that I'm the best back in the game." He might very well have that chance, particularly as Prescott tries to find a rhythm and adjust to a receiving corps without Bryant. "He has had a lot of success early in his career, but he wants to be great," Garrett said of Elliott.

'I just want to win'

Garrett calls Turner one of his best friends in football, someone who was coordinator when Garrett played for the Cowboys. "Attacks you a lot of different ways," Garrett said of Turner's approach. Newton doesn't get caught up in all the changes and moves, at least publicly. "I just want to win. That's it," Newton said. "That's all I want to do. I just want to win."

Taylor Heinicke won the second-string job behind Newton. The Panthers have dealt with significant preseason injuries along the offensive front. Left tackle Matt Kalil will miss at least eight weeks, and there could be other shuffling along the line. Right tackle Daryl Williams, who dislocated his kneecap and tore his medial collateral ligament in July, and left guard Amini Silatolu (meniscus surgery) are both questionable.

"I was very pleased with some of the things the veterans did in protecting the quarterback, giving him time to throw the ball," Rivera said of the preseason. Carolina's defense, which is under the direction of new coordinator Eric Washington, at least had time to react to the four-game NFL suspension handed linebacker Thomas Davis. This gives an opening for linebacker Shaq Thompson to rise into a more prominent role.

The Cowboys are 38-19 in NFL openers, sharing the highest all-time winning percentage. This is the first time since 2013 that the Panthers open with a home game. Under Rivera, Carolina is 3-4 in home openers, but the season has opened in Charlotte just once before under his watch. The Cowboys lead the series 9-4, including a 9-2 mark in regular-season matchups. The Panthers won the most-recent collision with a 2015 Thanksgiving Day road victory. The Panthers will be without wideout Curtis Samuel, who reportedly had a minor heart procedure this week. The Cowboys officially ruled out center Travis Frederick, who has not practiced since he was diagnosed with Guillain-Barre syndrome a few weeks ago. — Reuters

HOUSTON: Jordan Chunn #46 of the Dallas Cowboys rushes past Ufomba Kamalu #94 of the Houston Texans in the second half of the preseason game at NRG Stadium. — AFP

Farah eyes history bid in Great North Run

LONDON: Mo Farah will have history in his sights today as the British star chases a record fifth Great North Run title. Victory in Newcastle this weekend will make Farah the first man to win the Great North Run five times. That would be the perfect preparation for the 35-year-old ahead of his appearance at the Chicago Marathon in October.

After two years adapting to road racing following his epic track career, Farah admits he is still not the finished article. But the former Olympic champion is getting more confident by the day. "I'm still learning and understanding more and I'm not afraid to mix it in," Farah said. "In 2014, I was afraid to mix it because it was their territory and I was a track runner. But now I'm not afraid of anything.

"It's a totally different challenge and I'm enjoying every day of it. My goal is to win a major marathon. "For a track runner the highlight is the Olympics, and in the marathon the biggest thing you can do is win a major race." The Great North Run is part of a busy period for Farah, who admitted his previous victories in the race have signaled the end of the season — a landmark he traditionally celebrates by eating his favorite sticky toffee pudding.

While the desserts are on hold, Farah, who has run the London Marathon twice, coming third in April, would relish the sweet taste of success on Tyneside. "My aim (in Newcastle) is to run a decent time - I've still got another week from this point so it will be a good test for me on Sunday to see where I am and what I can do," he said. "I've never gone into this race having had this amount of training. I've always gone into it thinking - 'Great North Run, finish, sticky toffee pudding'. "But after this it's straight back to my training camp in Flagstaff to prepare for Chicago. "Doing that as the first five-time winner would be amazing." Farah's biggest challenge is likely to come from Kenya's Daniel Wanjiru, who won the London Marathon last year. —AFP

Lorenzo snatches MotoGP pole, Marquez crashes

MILAN: Jorge Lorenzo set a new track record to snatch pole position for today's San Marino MotoGP ahead of Australian Jack Miller and fellow Spaniard Maverick Vinales. World champion and current championship leader Marc Marquez of Honda suffered a shock fall that resulted in last year's winner qualifying fifth on a spare bike.

Three-time top-class world champion Lorenzo dominated Saturday's second qualifying session to claim his third pole so far this season with a record time of 1min 31.629sec around the Misano track. The 31-year-old from Majorca, who also took pole for the British Grand Prix which was cancelled two weeks ago because of torrential rain, bettered his own previous Misano lap record from last year.

Lorenzo — a three-time winner in Misano — finished 28 hundredths of a second ahead of Alma Pramac Racing's Miller with Yamaha's Vinales at 0.32sec. Lorenzo's Ducati teammate Andrea Dovizioso and Marquez closed out the top five, ahead of Britain's Cal Crutchlow, of Honda, who also crashed. Italy's Valentino Rossi was seventh fastest for Yamaha, at a venue where he has won three times - most recently in 2014.

In recent years, Spaniards have dominated at the track on Italy's Adriatic coast, not far from the tiny republic from which the race takes its name. The 25-year-old Marquez has won twice in the past three years for Honda. Marquez has suffered a two-race blip, but so dominant is the Spanish world champion that he still increased his lead in the MotoGP standings without winning. With seven races to go, Marquez is 59 points ahead of Rossi. Lorenzo and Dovizioso, who took the other podium places in the last two races, are 12 and 13 points further back. Italian Francesco Bagnaia of the Sky Racing Team took pole in the Moto2 category and Spaniard Jorge Martin leading Moto3 on his Honda. —AFP

MISANO: SKY Racing Team VR46's Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia celebrates winning the pole position after the qualifying session of the San Marino Moto2 Grand Prix race at the Marco Simoncelli Circuit. — AFP

Injury-hit Bangladesh recall Mominul for Asia Cup

DHAKA: Bangladesh have added batsman Mominul Haque to their squad for the Asia Cup as backup to several players carrying injuries, selectors said on Friday. "He is a top-order batsman, who can play as an opener or in (the) one-down position. So we thought his inclusion might be useful in the tournament," said Habibul Bashar.

Opener Tamim Iqbal has an issue with his finger while uncapped left-hander Nazmul Hossain hurt his left thumb during a recent training session. "We are hopeful they will both play. But we thought Mominul might play just in case they feel any problem," Bashar added. Bangladesh are Pool B alongside Sri Lanka and Afghanistan in the six-nation Asia Cup, which will run from September 15-28 in the United Arab Emirates.

The Tigers also have some fitness concerns regarding all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who was keen to skip the Asia Cup to have a surgery on a finger. But the Bangladesh Cricket Board insisted on playing him in the tournament, putting his surgery on hold until October when they host Zimbabwe. —AFP

Olympic taekwondo champion banned for life in abuse case

LOS ANGELES: Two-time Olympic taekwondo champion Steven Lopez has been handed a life ban by the US Center for SafeSport following an allegation of sexual misconduct, it was confirmed on Friday. Lopez has been deemed "permanently ineligible" from future competition in a ruling made by the center on Thursday following a four-month investigation. No other information was immediately available.

The 39-year-old, a gold medalist at both the 2000 and 2004 Olympic Games, had been suspended since May. His brother Jean, a coach on the US Olympic taekwondo team, had already been banned for life for sexual offenses. Steven Lopez could yet appeal his suspension, the center said on its website. The Houston Chronicle newspaper reported that the offense which prompted his ban involved a 14-year-old girl in 2000 when he was 22.

He reportedly began "grooming" the girl for abuse when she was 10 years old, the report cited investigators as saying. The suspension comes after four women athletes sued the US Olympic Committee and USA Taekwondo for sex trafficking in a federal lawsuit filed in May. The women alleged they were forced to train and travel with known sexual predators.

Heidi Gilbert, Mandy Meloon, Amber Means and Gaby Joslin alleged they suffered "two decades of sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking of Team USA's Olympic taekwondo athletes by the entities, officials, coaches and mentors who were entrusted to protect them." Both Jean Lopez and Steven Lopez were named in the lawsuit. Meloon, a two-time world champion, claimed in a 2007 complaint she was raped by Jean at the 1997 World Cup in Egypt when she was 15. She was left off Jean's 2007 squad, pressing her case to USOC arbitration. Gilbert said Jean had sexually assaulted her after events in Ecuador in 2002 and Germany in 2003. The lawsuit says women who wanted onto the US taekwondo team "had no choice but to submit to the Lopez brothers' sexual demands." If they refused to do so, they were benched, suspended or kicked off Team USA by the Lopez brothers. — AFP

RIO DE JANEIRO: In this file photo taken on August 19, 2016 US Steven Lopez (L) competes against Australia's Hayder Shkara during their men's taekwondo repechage bout in the -80kg category as part of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, at the Carioca Arena 3. —AFP

Puig homer helps LA Dodgers edge Rockies in pivotal opener

The teams face each other two more times this weekend

DENVER: Yasiel Puig hit a home run in his return from suspension, and Clayton Kershaw pitched six strong innings as the visiting Los Angeles Dodgers closed the gap on the first-place Colorado Rockies with a 4-2 victory Friday night. The Dodgers opened a key National League West series by moving a half-game behind the division-leading Rockies. The teams face each other two more times this weekend and three more times later this month in Los Angeles.

Puig went deep in the second inning for his 16th home run of the season and first since Aug. 11. He missed the past two games as discipline for an on-field confrontation with the San Francisco Giants' Nick Hundley in August. Kershaw (7-5) gave up two runs on six hits over six innings with one walk and seven strikeouts. He picked up his 22nd career victory over the Rockies, tied for his most against a single team (Giants).

DIAMONDBACKS 5, BRAVES 3

Paul Goldschmidt had two hits, including his 33rd home run, and left-hander Patrick Corbin pitched six strong innings as Arizona held off visiting Atlanta. Daniel Descalso had two RBIs, and Nick Ahmed had two hits for the Diamondbacks, who moved within 1 1/2 games of Colorado in the National League West. They had lost five of six. Johan Camargo had two doubles and a homer, Ronald Acuna Jr. had two hits and a stolen base and Nick Markakis had two hits for the Braves, whose lead in the NL East was shaved to 2 1/2 games over Philadelphia.

BREWERS 4, GIANTS 2

Jesus Aguilar broke a seventh-inning tie with a two-out, two-run double, leading Milwaukee past visiting San Francisco. The hard-fought win allowed the Brewers (80-62) to solidify their spot atop the National League wild-card race to 1 1/2 games over St Louis (78-63). Milwaukee also gained a half-game on the first-place Chicago Cubs (83-57) in the NL Central. Josh Hader (5-1), who struck out five over two scoreless innings in relief of Chase Anderson, was credited with the win. Jeremy Jeffress threw a 1-2-3 ninth with two strikeouts for his ninth save.

TIGERS 5, CARDINALS 3

Jeimer Candelario hit a two-run home run in the bottom of the ninth to give Detroit a win over visiting St Louis. Candelario's 18th homer of the season came off Jordan Hicks (3-4). Victor Reyes singled with one out prior to Candelario's opposite-field blast. Marcell Ozuna hit two solo homers for the Cardinals.

PHILLIES 4, METS 3

Aaron Nola kept pace in the National League Cy Young Award race, earning his 16th win by allowing three runs over seven innings as Philadelphia topped host New York. The Phillies won for just the sixth time in 18 games. Nola (16-4) gave up three hits and one walk while striking out eight as he moved into a tie for the NL lead in wins with one of his Cy Young competitors, Washington ace Max Scherzer.

ASTROS 6, RED SOX 3

Tyler White capped Houston's second consecutive three-run inning with an RBI single in the eighth, helping secure a win at Boston. The Astros extended their winning streak to six games with the come-from-behind victory. They trailed 2-0 entering the seventh inning, limited to one hit at that point by Red Sox left-hander David Price, who was making his first start since getting hit on the wrist by a line drive on Aug 29. After losing a 3-2 lead taken in the seventh, the Astros rallied again in the eighth against Red Sox right-hander Joe Kelly (4-2). George Springer, Jose Altuve and Alex Bregman opened the frame with consecutive singles, and each came around to score.

ATHLETICS 8, RANGERS 4

Ramon Laureano led off two innings with home runs, and Marcus Semien contributed a two-run homer to a four-run second, propelling Oakland past visiting Texas. A fourth win in their last five games allowed the A's (85-57) to keep pace with the Houston Astros (88-53) in the American League West and the New York Yankees (88-53) in the AL wild-card race. Oakland remains 3 1/2 games behind in each pursuit. Laureano, Semien and Matt Chapman collected two RBIs each for the A's, who beat Texas for the 11th time in 17 meetings this season.

YANKEES 4, MARINERS 0

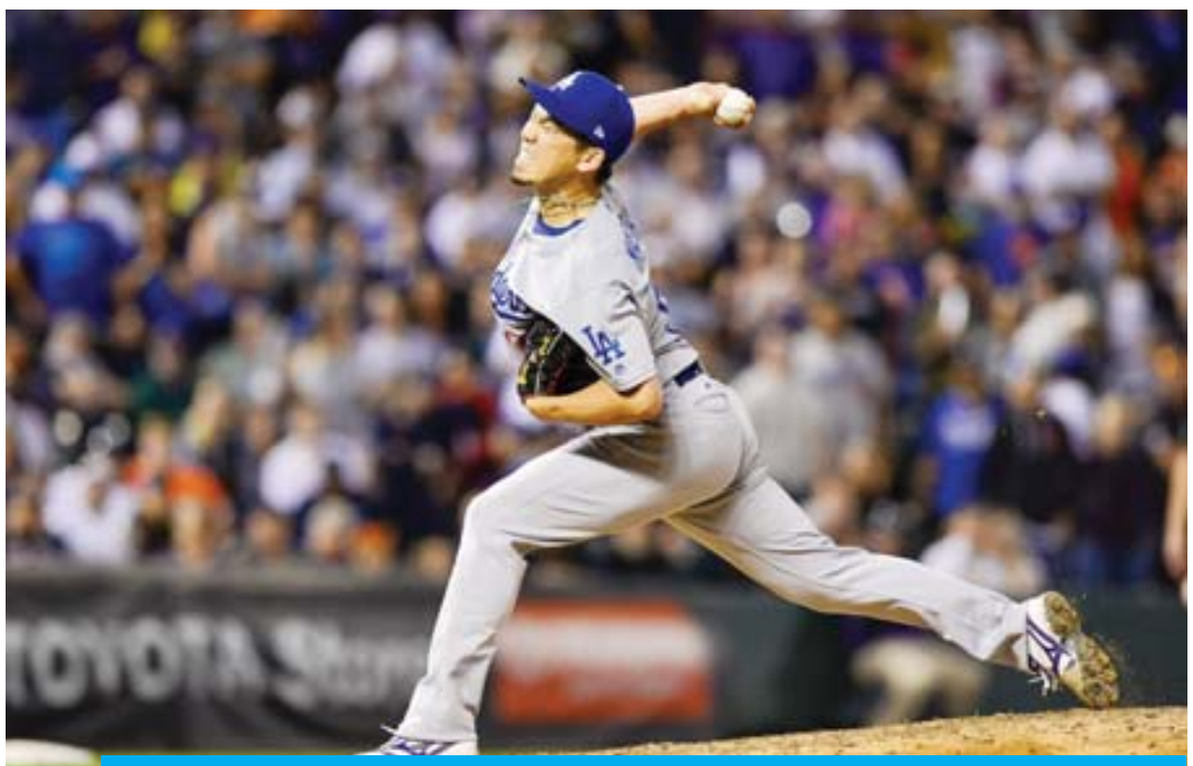
Masahiro Tanaka pitched eight scoreless innings as New York blanked host Seattle. Rookie Gleyber Torres and Andrew McCutchen each hit two-run homers for the Yankees. New York has hit 230 home runs this season and is on pace to tie the major league record of 264 set by the 1997 Mariners, who featured Ken Griffey Jr. and Alex Rodriguez in their lineup. Tanaka (11-5) allowed three hits, didn't walk a batter and struck out a season-high 10 to win his second September start after going 0-3 in August. The right-hander improved to 7-0 in eight career starts against the Mariners.

BLUE JAYS 3, INDIANS 2 (11 INNINGS)

Kevin Pillar hit the second walk-off home run of his career with one out in the bottom of the 11th inning as Toronto edged visiting Cleveland. The Indians had loaded the bases in the top of 11th against Jake Petricka on a single and two walks, but Danny Barnes (3-2) retired Jose Ramirez on a groundout to end the threat. Brad Hand struck out Rowdy Tellez to open the bottom of the 11th, his fourth strikeout in 1 1/3 innings, and was replaced by Adam Cimber (3-6), who allowed Pillar's 12th homer of the season.

ANGELS 5, WHITE SOX 2

Felix Pena threw seven strong innings, and Shohei Ohtani homered to lead Los Angeles to a win at Chicago. Pena (2-4) went seven innings, giving up two runs on seven hits while striking out six and walking none. Ohtani hit a three-run homer, his fourth in his last three games, to increase his season total to 19, a major league record for Japanese-born rookies. Before the game, Ohtani told reporters he will play out the season as a hitter and decide whether or not to have Tommy John surgery once the season is over. An MRI exam earlier this week showed Ohtani has new damage to the ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow.



DENVER: Kenta Maeda #18 of the Los Angeles Dodgers pitches in a ninth inning with a runner on and one out against the Colorado Rockies at Coors Field. — AFP

RAYS 14, ORIOLES 2

Blake Snell became the second 18-game winner in the majors by pitching 5 1/3 outstanding innings as Tampa Bay slugged four homers to send visiting Baltimore to its 100th loss. Snell (18-5) limited the Orioles to two runs on five hits. He tied a team record by winning his sixth consecutive start, becoming the fourth pitcher in Rays history to do. He joined Cleveland ace Corey Kluber as the second 18-game winner. Snell also became Tampa Bay's first 18-game winner since left-hander David Price went 20-5 in 2012.

PIRATES 5, MARLINS 3

Rookie Kevin Kramer hit a game-tying single for his first major league RBI, and Jordan Luplow followed with a two-run home run in the seventh inning to push host Pittsburgh past Miami. In the seventh against reliever Tayron Guerrero (1-3), Jordy Mercer led off with his career-high 28th double. Two outs later, Kramer made it 3-3 with a single to center. Luplow followed with his third homer, to right-center for a 5-3 lead. Josh Bell also hit a two-run homer for the Pirates, who have won four straight.

REDS 12, PADRES 6

Phillip Ervin drove in four runs with two homers, including a tiebreaking shot off Matt Strahm in the bottom of the fourth, and Scott Schebler hit a grand slam to cap a five-run sixth and lead Cincinnati past visiting San Diego. Right-hander Michael Lorenzen (3-1), who faced the minimum nine hitters while allowing one hit with a strikeout in three scoreless innings, was credited with the win. Strahm (3-4) took the loss in relief. The start of the game was delayed by two hours and 37 minutes due to rain.

TWINS 10, ROYALS 6

Eddie Rosario homered, and Ehire Adrianza had three hits and three RBIs as Minnesota snapped a five-game losing streak with a win over Kansas City in Minneapolis. Logan Forsythe scored three runs, Jake Cave had two hits and scored two runs and Jorge Polanco and Rosario also each had two hits for the Twins. Salvador Perez hit a three-run home run for the Royals. Cubs-Nationals, ppd. Washington and Chicago had their game at Nationals Park postponed after more than four hours of rain delays. — Reuters

Nash, Kidd highlight 2018 Basketball Hall of Fame class

LOS ANGELES: The 2018 Basketball Hall of Fame class includes a sharp-shooting point guard from Canada and two NBA stars who shared both the rookie-of-the year award and the inductee podium at Friday's ceremony.

Steve Nash went from being a unscouted high school phenom from the basketball backwoods of Victoria, British Columbia to an eight-time all star, while Jason Kidd and Grant Hill were co-rookies of the year in 1994-95 before going on to play a combined 37 seasons in the NBA.The trio were part of an impressive list of 13 inductees to the 2018 Naismith Memorial National Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts.

"I was never supposed to be here," Nash, who looks like he can still play, said as he began his acceptance speech. The same could likely be said for the other inductees which included former players Maurice Cheeks, Dino Radja and Charlie Scott and ex-college coach Lefty Driesell. This inductee list was heavy on point guards as Nash, and Americans Allen and Kidd, all had record setting careers.

The six-foot-three Nash won back-to-back MVP awards in 2004-05 and 2005-06 and led the league five times in assists. His 18-year-career included playing in eight all-star games and finishing sixth on the all-time assist list. "The secret is to build the resolve and spirit to enjoy the plateau. Never stop striving to reach your goals," Nash said. Nash was born in Johannesburg, South Africa before the family moved to Vancouver Island on Canada's west coast. He switched schools halfway through high school but failed to attract the attention of American college scouts, sending his demo tape off to 30 schools but getting no takers. He finally landed one scholarship offer from Santa Clara University in California and the unlikely journey was underway.

"Nobody really liked what they saw on those tapes," Nash said. "But what they couldn't see on the tapes was the relentless obsession and work ethic that would not diminish in 20 plus years." He finished with averages of 51.8 percent shooting from the field, including an NBA record 90.4 percent from the free-throw line. His influence on Canadian basketball cannot be overstated, says hockey icon Wayne Gretzky. "I think he was a huge influence on all these kids," Gretzky said in a video tribute to Nash. Coast to coast, Vancouver to Newfoundland, he gave them the opening and ability to believe they could play in the NBA." Nash thanked his Olympic coach Jay Triano, who is now a coach with the Charlotte Hornets. "The greatest experience of my career was playing in the Olympics Games for Canada," Nash said.

'Do it every day'

"My coach was Jay Triano. Jay was a hero to me and taught me to love the game. He always said 'shooting is like beathing, you got to do it every day to live.'" The 10-time all-star Kidd climbed to number two all-time in assists during his 19-year playing career that included winning the 2011 NBA title with the Dallas Mavericks.

The point guard was co-rookie of the year with Hill and is No. 2 on the all-time steals list. Seven-time all-star Hill made the NBA first all-star team in 1996-97. He won back-to-back US college national titles at Duke University in 1991 and 1992. — AFP

SPRINGFIELD: Inductees Grant Hill, Jason Kidd, Charue Scott, Ray Allen and Steve Nash pose for a photo during the 2018 Basketball Hall of Fame Enshrinement Ceremony on September 7, 2018 at Symphony Hall. — AFP

BRISBANE: Australia's Will Genia (C) is tackled by South Africa's Pieter-Steph Du Toit (R) during the Rugby Championship Test match between Australia and South Africa at Suncorp Stadium.— AFP

Wallabies edge SA in Brisbane arm wrestle

BRISBANE: Australia overcame a week of turmoil to edge South Africa 23-18 in their Rugby Championship clash in Brisbane yesterday. The Wallabies capitalized on a poor second half by the Springboks, who led 18-17 at half-time but were let down by a host of handling errors after the break. After two big losses to New Zealand to start the tournament, the Wallabies had to cope with the injury-enforced withdrawals of David Pocock and Israel Folau in the lead-up to the match.

They then lost towering lock Adam Coleman on the day of the match due to family reasons. "We put a lot into our preparation this week and not all of that may have happened on the field, but... when someone tries to take (the win) away from you, you fight harder for it," Australian coach Michael Cheika said. "That's what happened tonight — we fought harder." Cheika said the Wallabies had coped well without Pocock and Folau. "They took a step up in maturity as a team," he said.

The Wallabies appeared unfazed by the disruption when they scored in just the second minute of the match, captain Michael Hooper crashing over after 11 phases close to the South African line. South African coach Rassie Erasmus had made a host of changes to the team that lost to Argentina a fortnight ago, with an eye on next Saturday's clash against the All Blacks. They regrouped after conceding the early try and slowly gained the ascendancy. Fly-half Elton Jantjies kicked a penalty to make it 7-3 to the Wallabies, before hooker Bongi Mbonambi crashed over at the back of a devastating rolling maul to put the visitors ahead 10-7. Right wing Makazole Mapimpi made it 15-7 with 10 minutes remaining in the half when he slid over in the corner following a beautiful flat pass from scrum-half Faf de Klerk. But four minutes later Mbonambi turned hero to villain when he missed his target from a long throw in at a defensive line-out.

Wallaby inside centre Matt Toomua pounced on the loose ball to score under the posts. A second Jantjies penalty put the South Africans out to an 18-14 lead but right on half-time, Wallabies outside centre Reece Hodge converted a 53-metre penalty to make it a one-point game at the break.

The second half became an arm wrestle as both teams began to struggle with greasy conditions after a day of rain in Brisbane. The Australians piled on the pressure for the opening 15 minutes of the second half as the South Africans' error rate began to climb. The Springboks resisted bravely, but eventually conceded a penalty and Toomua put the home side back in front 20-18. A second Toomua penalty gave the Wallabies some breathing space and they were able to hold on in the face of some huge late pressure from the South Africans. — AFP

Confidence lacking, says Mancini as mediocre Italy rescue a point

Chelsea's Jorginho late penalty ends game in draw

BOLOGNA: Roberto Mancini believes that only confidence is needed to turn a mediocre Italy into a world class team again after Jorginho rescued a point for the new-look Azzurri in a 1-1 draw against Poland in their Nations League A Group 3 opener on Friday. Jorginho's penalty 12 minutes from time made amends after the Chelsea midfielder's blunder had allowed former Napoli teammate Piotr Zielinski's opener for Poland just before the break in Bologna.

Mancini, 58, was appointed after the four-time winners' shock failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. And after a timid start, key substitutions-including promising Fiorentina forward Federico Chiesa-allowed the former Inter Milan and Manchester City manager to save face in his first competitive game in charge. "I knew it was going to be difficult. They are a team that, at this moment, have more confidence than us," said Mancini. "In the first half we made some technical mistakes, but then in the second half the guys were very good."

Mario Balotelli, making his first competitive appearance since the 2014 World Cup for Italy, had an uneventful night before being replaced after an hour. "Mario needs to play, he is an experienced player on the international stage, but his fitness levels are an issue right now," explained Mancini of the 28-year-old Nice player.

"There are many young players we can build on and I think we saw that in the second half, as we pushed forward and more importantly didn't make as many errors in our passing. "Chiesa? Like him these are all boys to bet on." Italy struggled early in all areas, Zielinski opening 40 minutes in by converting Robert Lewandowski's pass after Jorginho was caught in possession.

Newcomers provide spark

Mancini brought on Giacomo Bonaventura, 29, in place of Lorenzo Pellegrini, 22, but star Poland striker Lewandowski almost snatched a second goal for the visitors to the thunderous applause of the 4,000 Polish fans. Andrea Belotti then came on for Balotelli to a mixture of whistles and applause, with Chiesa replacing Lorenzo Insigne after 71 minutes.

The newcomers provided the spark that was needed. The son of former international striker Enrico Chiesa, the 20-year-old Fiorentina player forced a save from Lukasz Fabianski and was then brought down by Jakub Blaszczykowski for a penalty, which Jorginho converted. Italy pushed for the winner but had to settle for a point before their trip to Lisbon where they will be playing a Portugal side missing Cristiano Ronaldo. "We could not find the passing lines, to give rhythm to our play," said Brazil-born Jorginho. "I personally made a lot of mistakes. It takes time. We don't play much together, but I'm confident because I see a team trying to play football. "This is important. We are on the right track. If you play with fear you have the possibility to make mistakes." "We have no room for error on Monday," added Juventus defender Leonardo Bonucci.

"Cristiano Ronaldo is very strong, but his absence shouldn't deceive us: Portugal are still a very good team, they are the European champions and we will have to give them the maximum respect." Poland will play their next matches in the Nations League at home on October 11 against Portugal and on October 14 against Italy. "It's an important point, it's just a pity we were unable to make more of our chances," said coach Jerzy Brzeczek, who took over after Poland crashed out in the group stage of the World Cup. — AFP

BOLOGNA: Italy's midfielder Federico Bernardeschi (R) fights for the ball with Poland's defender Arkadiusz Reca during the UEFA Nations League football match between Italy vs Poland at Renato Dall'Ara Stadium. —AFP

Neymar, Firmino on target as Brazil cruise over USA

EAST RUTHERFORD: Roberto Firmino and Neymar scored the goals as Brazil cruised to a 2-0 friendly victory over an inexperienced United States here Friday. Brazil, playing their first international since a disappointing World Cup quarter-final exit, were in complete control throughout a low-key encounter at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

The South American giants had won their previous 10 games against the United States, whose lone victory came way back in 1998. There was never much doubt that Brazil would extend their winning record to 11 consecutive wins as they dominated throughout against an American team who are rebuilding after their shock failure to qualify for the World Cup.

Brazil glided through a one-sided first half, with the hosts paying the price for repeatedly squandering possession cheaply. The opening goal came after 11 minutes, when Juventus winger Douglas Costa found himself in space on the right flank. British-born left-back Antonee Robinson rushed in to close down Costa, but was left for dead as the Brazilian skipped past him all too easily before picking out Firmino with a pinpoint low cross.

The Liverpool forward tapped in an easy finish past Columbus Crew goalkeeper Zack Steffen for 1-0. Costa had Robinson in trouble again after 31 minutes, going clear to whip in another low cross. This time however Neymar was unable to get on the end of it as the Americans cleared. In the 39th minute Steffen saved smartly from Liverpool signing Fabinho as Brazil continued to exert pressure.

The South Americans doubled their lead three minutes from half-time when US captain Wil Trapp clipped Fabinho in the penalty area. Paris Saint-Germain striker Neymar stepped up to stroke in his 58th international goal in his 91st game. Neymar, who was handed the captain's armband by manager Tite for this game, is now only five goals away from surpassing Ronaldo in second place on Brazil's all-time scoring charts. Ronaldo has 62 goals, while Pele tops the charts with 77.

Brazil's sense of superiority was underscored by the fact that Brazil goalkeeper Alisson was not required to make a save until the 71st minute, turning around a low shot from Trapp. US coach Dave Sarachan, who has spent nearly a year as the team's caretaker boss following the exit of Bruce Arena after the World Cup debacle, admitted his team had paid the price for ceding possession too cheaply. "We played one of the best teams in the world," Sarachan said. "We were a little nervy. Probably should have done a little better with the ball, but that's why you play these games. "It wasn't going to be an easy night when you play a team like Brazil." — AFP

EAST RUTHERFORD: Brazil's forward Neymar lies on the field after a fault during the friendly match against US at the Metlife Stadium. — AFP

Maradona's new club owned by powerful clan with shady ties

MEXICO CITY: The latest chapter in Argentine football legend Diego Maradona's colorful career will be coaching Mexican second-division club Dorados, a team owned by a powerful family that has faced accusations of ties to drug trafficking.

Maradona, 57, raised eyebrows Friday with the announcement that he had signed on to manage the struggling club in Sinaloa, a state best known as home to the drug cartel of jailed kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. Rumors and jokes immediately swirled online about what interest Maradona, who has publicly struggled with drug addiction, might have in such a deal.

"Maradona is headed to a place full of narcos. What could possibly go wrong?" cracked one Twitter user. But joking aside, the clan behind the club, the Hank family, has faced accusations of links to Mexico's lucrative and violent drug trafficking industry. The family patriarch, Jorge Hank Rhon, is a businessmen and politician whose company, Grupo Caliente, owns an empire of casinos, hotels and a dog racing track in Tijuana, across the US border from San Diego.

The company also owns first-division football club Xolos in Tijuana, in addition to Dorados. Hank Rhon's son, Jorgealberto Hank Inzunza, is the president of both clubs. He said Dorados — who are currently in 13th place in their 15-team league — want Maradona to stay for the remainder of the 2018 season and all of next season. "In my conversations with him he's been very excited to come coach here. Honestly, it was easier to convince him than I thought," he told ESPN.

Powerful eccentric

Dorados were previously best known as the club where Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola wrapped up his playing career. They are based in Culiacan, the capital of the western state of Sinaloa. But the Hanks's stronghold is Tijuana, in the north. Hank Rhon, 62, was Tijuana's mayor from 2004 to 2007. He has faced accusations of involvement in organized crime.

In 2011, he was arrested when authorities raided his mansion and seized more than 80 guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition. Prosecutors said two of the guns had been used to commit murders. But a judge ordered Hank Rhon's release after 10 days, in a widely criticized ruling. Authorities also brought him in for questioning in 2009 over a woman's murder, but released him without charge.

Known for his wealth, eccentric style and love of exotic animals, Hank Rhon owns a private bullring and zoo on the sprawling property where his racetrack is located. He has been accused of trafficking in endangered species, including tigers and chimpanzees. His "favorite animals," he once said, are women. Twice married, he has 19 children, one of whom is named Tigre.

'Philanthropic side'

The ex-mayor, a heavyweight in the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), is alternately feared and revered in Tijuana, according to Victor Clark, head of a local human rights group and a professor at the University of San Diego. "He's controversial, there's no doubt. But he has a lot of people who support him. He's a sort of patron figure," Clark said. —AFP

Lukaku, Hazard help Belgium hammer Scotland 4-0

GLASGOW: World Cup semi-finalists Belgium capitalized on a series of Scotland mistakes with goals from Romelu Lukaku, Eden Hazard and a Michy Batshuayi double to thrash the hosts 4-0 in a friendly at Hampden on Friday. Roberto Martinez's men showed their class and no hangover from their exertions in finishing third in Russia to warm-up for their Nations League opener against Iceland on Tuesday.

However, the visitors were handed a series of gifts by a Scotland side that slumped to a fourth defeat in five games since manager Alex McLeish was appointed for a second spell in charge. "We were very clinical in front of goal," said Martinez. "The players were well focused overall and for us it was a good exercise for Tuesday."

The contrasting fortunes of the two nations was summed up by Belgium playing to a crowd less than that which celebrated their return from Russia in July at a barely half-full Hampden. Martinez named a strong side with six of those that started the World Cup semi-final defeat to France in the starting line-up. But it took a gift from Aston Villa's John McGinn to get the visitors going when the midfielder was caught in possession on the edge of his own box and Mousa Dembele and Thorgan Hazard teed up Lukaku for his 41st international goal.

Eden Hazard smashed home Belgium's second a minute into the second-half, but again McLeish might have been disappointed to see goalkeeper Craig Gordon beaten at his near post. A truer test of McLeish's ability to qualify Scotland for a first major tournament in over 20 years will come when Albania are the visitors to Hampden on Monday in the Nations League.

However, vast improvements will need to be made in possession as Valencia striker Batshuayi scored twice in eight minutes before the hour mark after pouncing on slack passes by Charlie Mulgrew and Ryan Jack. "It was just a catalogue of errors," said McLeish. —AFP

LONDON: Chelsea's Italian head coach Maurizio Sarri looks on from the touchline during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Bournemouth at Stamford Bridge. — AFP

Sarri found out he was sacked on TV

MILAN: New Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri revealed on Friday that he found out he was sacked as coach of his previous club Napoli on television. Sarri had two years left on his contract after leading his hometown club to challenge champions Juventus for the title last season. But after Sarri asked for more time to consider his future, former Chelsea and Real Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti was appointed as new coach of the Serie A runners-up.

The 59-year-old Sarri told Il Mattino: "We were having dinner ... discussing whether or not to stay. We turned on the TV and we saw Ancelotti entering Filmauro (the headquarters of Napoli owner Aurelio De Laurentiis). "I had some doubts, that's fair, but there was a clause in the contract and it wasn't something I had asked for. The timing wasn't respected. "Now I hope that Ancelotti can achieve what I came so close to." Napoli won their last Serie A title during the days of Diego Maradona in 1990. Sarri — who took over from another Italian Antonio Conte at Chelsea — has won his first four games in England. "I didn't win anything in Naples. Conte here has won (Premier League 2016-2017) and it is difficult to take his place," said Sarri. "Here it is totally different: it is an absolute party, it is a pleasure to arrive in the stadiums and see the fans with different shirts drinking a beer together. "I sign autographs for the fans of the opposing team on the sidelines, before and after the match. "There are games with so much intensity, physicality. The English game is a different football from the Italian one, played in extraordinary stadiums. "But at the beginning it's not so simple to understand things. I know less about the teams I face and the opponents."

It is the first time that Sarri, who started out as a banker, has coached outside Italy. "Close up (life in Italy) is full of problems. But when we are far away, there is a bit of nostalgia and something is always missing. "More than all the food, even though I'm getting used to the meat and salmon here. But I can't find anyone who makes coffee like Tommaso (Napoli coffee maker)." — AFP

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Buttler puts England in command of India finale

India are 174-6 at the close with a deficit of 158 runs

LONDON: India's Rishabh Pant (L) watches as England's Joe Root plays a shot during play on the second day of the fifth Test cricket match between England and India at The Oval. — AFP

LONDON: India were 174 for six in reply to England's first-innings 332, a deficit of 158 runs, at stumps on the second day of the fifth Test at the Oval yesterday. Test debutant Hanuma Vihari was 25 not out, with Ravindra Jadeja unbeaten on eight. India suffered a huge blow before the close when captain and star batsman Virat Kohli, the leading run-scorer this series, was caught at second slip by England skipper Joe Root off Ben Stokes for 49.

Jos Buttler, on his 28th birthday, made 89 — the fourth time in England's last five Test innings he has been the top-scorer — before he was last man out, caught at slip off Jadeja, a left-arm spinner. Jadeja, playing his first match this series, led India's attack with four wickets for 79 runs in 30 overs.

England, who had already won this five-match series at 3-1 up, started the second day in danger of being dismissed for under 200 at 198 for seven. Yet when Buttler was last man out they had made a total of 332. At tea, India were 53 for one in reply, a deficit of 279 runs. KL Rahul was 35 not out and Cheteshwar Pujara 15 not out.

Buttler and Stuart Broad (38) frustrated India with a ninth-wicket stand of 98 as, yet again this series, England bounced back with the bat after a top-order collapse. Significantly, this was the fourth time in five innings that Buttler, recalled to Test duty earlier this season by new national selector Ed Smith, had been England's top-scorer.

Alastair Cook, in his final Test appearance before international retirement, made 71 on Friday. But the left-handed opener's dismissal sparked a slump that saw England lose six wickets for 48 runs. Buttler, who had been given out lbw to Mohammed Shami on eight on Friday only for a review to reveal an inside edge, was 11 not out overnight, with Adil Rashid unbeaten on four.

Bowling conditions

Despite overcast conditions that promised to assist India's fast bowlers, Rashid was quickly into his stride with two well-struck fours off Jasprit Bumrah. But on 15 he fell lbw to the fast bowler, with England then 214 for eight. New batsman Broad was peppered with several short-pitched deliveries but hung in long enough to on-drive Shami down the ground for a textbook four. Buttler then clipped Ishant Sharma behind square for four to raise a fifty stand with Broad. And Buttler then completed his own fifty in 84 balls, including five fours.

Buttler followed up by driving Sharma through extra cover for four before Broad's two off the same bowler brought up the 300. England scored 106 runs in Saturday's morning session, with Buttler 63 not out at lunch and Broad 36 not out. Broad's valuable innings ended on 38 when a soaring mistimed drive off left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja was well caught over his shoulder by a diving Rahul, running back from mid-on. Buttler, on 69 at the time, responded to the arrival of last man James Anderson by hitting two sixes in three balls off Bumrah — a drive over long-on and a hook over long leg. But looking for a single to keep the strike, he fell short of what would have been his second Test hundred when he guided Jadeja to Ajinkya Rahane at slip.

Jadeja, playing his first match of the series after off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin was sidelined through injury, had fine figures of four wickets for 79 runs in 30 overs. Bumrah and Sharma took three apiece but fellow paceman Shami, who repeatedly beat the bat, was unlucky to bowl 30 wicketless overs that cost 72 runs. Anderson started India's innings needing four wickets to equal Australia great Glenn McGrath's record for the most Test wickets taken by any fast bowler of 563.

But it was longstanding new-ball partner Broad who made the breakthrough when, with his first delivery Saturday, he had Shikhar Dhawan lbw. Off-spinner Moeen Ali, who took a hat-trick to complete a win over South Africa in his last Test appearance at the Oval, almost struck in his first over on Saturday when Pujara, on 10, turned him off his hip only for Cook to drop a sharp one-handed chance at short-leg. — AFP

Del Potro, Djokovic in US Open final as Nadal quits with knee injury

NEW YORK: Juan Martin del Potro set up a US Open final clash against Novak Djokovic on Friday after defending champion and world number one Rafael Nadal quit his last-four clash against the giant Argentine with a knee injury. Third seed Del Potro, the champion in 2009, was 7-6 (7/3), 6-2 ahead when Nadal retired.

Del Potro will now face Djokovic, the 2011 and 2015 winner, who reached his eighth final at the tournament and 23rd of his Grand Slam career with a 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 stroll past Japan's Kei Nishikori. Djokovic boasts a 14-4 lead over Del Potro in a 10-year rivalry, including two wins without dropping a set at the US Open in 2007 and 2012. "We have never met in a Grand Slam final. I have tremendous respect for him as a person and a player. He's a great guy," said Djokovic who missed the 2017 tournament through injury. "He's had lots of injury problems in the past but he's a big-match player."

Nadal was devastated by having to pull out although he believes he hasn't suffered any long term damage. "I hate to retire," said Nadal, a player plagued by a series of knee injuries throughout his career. He also retired trailing in the fifth set of his Australian Open quarter-final against Marin Cilic in January. "It's not a tennis match when one is playing and the other is at the side of the court."

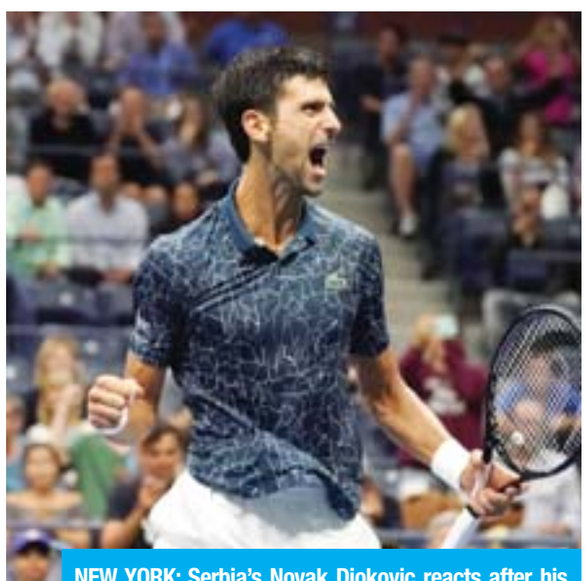
Nadal, bidding for a fourth title in New York and 18th major, had spent the best part of 16 hours getting to the semi-finals. That included almost five hours to defeat Dominic Thiem in an epic quarter-final which stretched into the early hours of Wednesday morning. The effort took its toll, with the Spaniard twice needing to have his right knee bandaged before calling it a day after the conclusion of the second set. "Well of course it's not the best way to win a match. I love to play against Rafa because he's the biggest fighter in this sport and I don't like to see him suffering," said 29-year-old Del Potro who will be playing in his second Slam final.

'Sad for Rafa'

"I am sad for him but I'm also happy to do my best." Nadal's challenge looked doomed even as early as the first set, as he was feeling the injury after just four games, he admitted. He needed his right knee strapped after the seventh game before gallantly fighting off two set points in the 10th game, breaking Del Potro who was serving for the set. But the Argentine swept through the tiebreaker, wrapping up the opener after 69 minutes of impressive shot-making.

The Spaniard called a medical timeout after three games of the second set to have the right knee rebandaged. Del Potro sensed blood and broke for 3-1 as Nadal struggled for movement. He broke again for 5-2 on his way to a two-set lead and eventual victory. "It means a lot to be back in the final," added Del Potro after his sixth win over Nadal, all on hard court. "I didn't expect to get to another Grand Slam final in my favorite tournament. "I had my biggest memories on this court in 2009 when I beat Rafa and Roger (Federer, in the final). I was a kid then; now I am much older."

Wimbledon champion Djokovic, playing in his 11th US Open semi-final, claimed a 15th win in 17 clashes against Nishikori. It was plain sailing for the 31-year-old Serb who is chasing a 14th Slam title to take him level with Pete Sampras on the all-time list. He broke serve four times while an under-par Nishikori saved 13 of the 17 break points he faced and committed 51 unforced errors. — AFP



NEW YORK: Serbia's Novak Djokovic reacts after his win against Japan's Kei Nishikori during the Men's Singles Semi-Finals match at the 2018 US Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center. — AFP