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Unions insist on raising annual leave to 35 days

Assembly panel accuses govt of appointing more expats

Algerian president Bouteflika resigns

ALGIERS: Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has submitted his resignation, state news agency APS said yesterday, following weeks of mass protests against his rule. Bouteflika "officially advised the Constitutional Council of the end of his term of office as President of the Republic" from yesterday, said a news ticker on state television. The ailing, 82-year-old leader stood down shortly after the army chief of staff demanded immediate action to remove him from office. "There is no more room to waste time," state news agency APS quoted Lieutenant General Ahmed Gaed Salah as saying.

On Monday, Bouteflika, who was in power for 20 years, had said he would quit before the end of his term on April 28. But a protest leader and opposition parties rejected this as insufficient, while hundreds of students marched through the capital Algiers yesterday to demand to replacement of a political system widely seen as incapable of significant reform. Bouteflika has rarely seen in public since he suffered a stroke in 2013 — Agencies



Abdelaziz Bouteflika

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The proposed amendments to the labor law in the private sector appear to be increasingly becoming a flashpoint between MPs and trade unions on one hand and the government on the other. Head of the National Assembly's health and labor committee MP Humoud Al-Khudhair said trade unions that attended yesterday's meeting to discuss the amendments insisted that annual leave days must be raised from the current 30 to 35 days.

The amendment, along with other minor changes to the labor law approved in 2010, was passed in the first reading by the Assembly last month without any government objection. However, the government later rejected the amendment, saying it will harm Kuwaiti businessmen - especially small businesses - and only a small number of Kuwaitis working in the private sector will benefit from the increase.

Khudhair said more meetings will be held to discuss the amendments before the committee holds its final vote and sends the report to the Assembly for the second and final vote on April 16. The lawmaker hinted at a possible compromise with the government without providing details. MPs have said that they wanted to increase benefits in the private sector to encourage Kuwaitis to join the sector and reduce pressure on the public sector, which employs around 80 percent of Kuwaiti manpower.

Meanwhile, the head of the Assembly's human

resources development committee - a panel entrusted with pressing the government to create more jobs for nationals - stopped short of accusing the government of cheating on the issue of creating jobs for the Kuwaitis by dismissing expats. MP Khalil Al-Saleh said the government dismisses a certain number of expats from government jobs, but later ministries appoint a larger number of expats on temporary contracts.

Then the government provides figures on expat public sector employment without including the temporary employees, claimed Saleh, who warned that he will resort to grilling any minister who fails to find jobs for Kuwaitis. The lawmaker said the policy of replacement stipulating dismissing expats and replacing them with Kuwaitis is not working, and accordingly is unacceptable.

Saleh warned MPs are running out of patience, adding, "we have become suspicious that there are some who work against Kuwaiti employment and at the same time help crowd ministries with expats". The lawmaker claimed 600 Kuwaiti mechanical engineers cannot find jobs, adding the government should work more seriously to create jobs for 36,000 Kuwaitis who graduate annually, with the figure expected to rise to 60,000 in 2030. Saleh called on authorities to correct the demographic structure because "the number of expatriates has crossed three million and this is unacceptable". Separately, MPs who attended a meeting with the oil minister said the minister and other officials did not provide a clear answer whether the ministry will increase its employment of Kuwaitis.

Aircraft delivery delays hit Kuwait Airways flights

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways Corporation (KAC) announced yesterday the carrier might have to cancel some of its flights and merge others due to a delay in receiving new aircraft. In a press statement, it said delivery of new Airbus A320 aircraft from the manufacturer was postponed from March to June, October and November. This came as the airline suspended operations of its old planes from April 1, 2019 pending their sale, but it anticipates receiving new leased planes within a fortnight. KAC added that it is currently working hard to resume its normal operations in a few days and vowed to find alternative flights for passengers affected by the changes, apologizing for the inconvenience.

Kuwait Zoo stays closed to deal with infected animals

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait Zoo has been closed since Friday

after 18 animals were found infected with the Brucella bacteria. The bacteria can spread from animals to humans. The zoo's PR staff did not confirm when the park will reopen, saying that this decision will only come from the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR). According to a PR staff member, deer and nilgais were among the 18 infected animals, which were destroyed.

"We took samples from all the animals at the zoo - excluding carnivores - to make sure they all are free from infection. The closing of the zoo is just a precau-

tionary measure, and it will reopen soon to welcome visitors," he told Kuwait Times. "The zoo is safe - Brucella is not infectious to humans unless they get in direct contact with the infected animal," he said.

Specialists from PAAAFR go on periodic visits to the zoo to ensure the safety of the animals and their environments. Brucellosis is an infectious disease caused by Brucella. Brucella are aerobic, gram-negative coccobacilli. Brucellosis is a zoonotic infection, which refers to a disease that occurs mainly in animals but can be occasionally transferred to humans.

UN chief warns against rising anti-Muslim hate

CAIRO: UN chief Antonio Guterres warned yesterday against growing hatred of Muslims, less than a month after a deadly attack on mosques in New Zealand killed at least 50 people. His remarks came during a speech at Egypt's Al-Azhar, the Sunni Muslim world's foremost religious institution, where he met Grand Imam Ahmed Al-Tayeb. "Around the world, we are seeing ever-rising anti-Muslim hatred, anti-Semitism, racism

and xenophobia," the UN secretary general said.

He cited the March 15 New Zealand mosque attacks by a white supremacist as well as a 2018 synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh that killed 11 people and is believed to be the deadliest against Jews in US history. Guterres warned of a surge in hate speech he said was "entering the mainstream, spreading like wildfire through social media". "We see it spreading in liberal democracies and as well as in authoritarian states," Guterres is on a two-day trip to Egypt.

"Islam is under a vicious attack aimed at accusing it of terrorism, while the most victims are Arabs and Muslims," said Guterres.

Continued on Page 24



CAIRO: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivers a speech following a meeting with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar yesterday. — AFP

Residents force Egypt embassy to move from Salam

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources at the foreign ministry said the Egyptian consulate's new building will be moved from Salam to a commercial area in less than a month. The sources explained that the ministry responded to demands by Salam residents conveyed through third constituency lawmakers, noting this was the same reason the consulate was moved from Rawda to Salam.

The sources added that the decision to move is up to the consulate and the foreign ministry has no say in it, but noted that it is against municipal council bylaws to have consulates or embassies in residential areas, especially if residents reject it, the way they previously did with the Philippine and Bangladeshi embassies. Finally, the sources said the large numbers of Egyptians visiting the consulate for various transactions had been causing traffic jams and disturbing residents living nearby, especially over parking.

Greek PM visits North Macedonia after name deal

SKOPJE: Greece's prime minister landed in Skopje yesterday for a landmark visit to the newly renamed North Macedonia after a decades-long identity row between the two countries. The one-day trip comes a month after Alexis Tsipras and his Skopje counterpart Zoran Zaev finalized the deal that added "North" to Macedonia's name to distinguish it from a bordering province in Greece. It is the first official visit by a Greek prime minister since the former

Yugoslav republic declared independence in 1991, kicking off the name row that roiled diplomatic ties for nearly three decades as the neighbors tussled for ownership of the name Macedonia and its cultural heritage.

In the end, Skopje agreed to the change in exchange for assurance that Athens would stop thwarting its efforts to join NATO and the European Union. "The first prime minister of Greece to

Continued on Page 24



SKOPJE: Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev (left) takes a selfie with his Greek counterpart Alexis Tsipras prior to their meeting yesterday. — AFP

Local

Tunisian leader praises Amir's participation in Arab summit



TUNIS: His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah contributed productively to pan-Arab talks held recently in the Tunisian capital. President

Beji Caid Essebsi said yesterday. The Tunisian leader's remarks came as he bid farewell to HH the Amir upon his departure at the airport, according to a statement from the

presidency. The Tunisian president was highly impressed by HH the Amir's efforts to keep Arab nations on the same page, hailing his well-chronicled humanitarian endeavors.

HH the Amir was seen off by Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi, Kuwait Ambassador to Tunisia Ali Al-Thifeeri and other senior officials.—KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received the visiting Bahraini Finance and National Economy Minister Sheikh Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by Kuwait's Finance Minister Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf.—KUNA

Al-Jarallah touts GCC decisions to serve citizens

MUSCAT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday confirmed that GCC countries have adopted many decisions to serve their citizens' interests. Al-Jarallah made his remarks to KUNA at the end of the 19th meeting of the GCC ministerial committee charged with monitoring the implementation of GCC resolutions, held in the Omani capital yesterday.

He stressed the importance of the GCC's role, confirming GCC countries' keenness on preserving this experience. "We meet every year to review the implementation of decisions in order to overcome any obstacles in this regard," he said. He praised the bilateral relations between Kuwait and Oman, which he described as distinct and historical, pointing out the intimate and special relationship between His Highness the Amir Sheikh



Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah

Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Omani Sultan Qaboos bin Said. He highly valued the relationship between the two brotherly countries.

Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah left Oman yesterday and was seen off at the airport by Kuwait's ambassador to the

Sultanate of Oman Sulaiman Al-Harbi and embassy members. The participating Kuwaiti delegation included Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs Ambassador Nasser Al-Mezyen and Assistant Foreign Minister for Al-Jarallah's Office Affairs Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar.—KUNA

Kuwaiti exports hit \$ 413m in March

KUWAIT: Kuwait's exports last March amounted to KD 125.1 million (USD 413 million) against KD 11.6 million (USD 38 million) in the same month of the past year, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a press release yesterday. The value of Kuwaiti exports to Arab States, minus GCC countries, reached KD 115.5 million (USD 381 million) in March against KD 7.5 million (USD 24.7 million) of the same month in 2018.

Arab countries that have imported the Kuwaiti products are Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Palestine, Syria, Sudan and Libya. Egypt topped these countries in terms of largest volume of Kuwaiti imports, valued at KD 110 million (USD 363 million), higher than the past year by 80.25 percent, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), at KD 2.1 million (USD seven million), then Italy at KD 2.1 million (USD seven million), rising by 120 percent compared to March 2018. Qatar came fourth, KD 1.8 million (USD 5.9 million).

Jordan ranked sixth with KD 1.4 million (USD 4.6 million), higher by 15.8 percent compared to the same month last year, followed by Belgium, with KD 922,000 (USD three million). Lebanon came eighth, KD 774,000 (USD 2.5 million), with a 27.7 percent increase, followed by Yemen with KD 683,000 (USD 2.2 million), then Spain with KD 533,000 (USD 1.8 million), falling by two percent.

Meanwhile, Kuwait's stock exchange looks set



Kuwait Stock Exchange

to secure foreign investment worth USD 2.5 billion after it improved its ranking in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index. Kuwait National Investment Company said yesterday. This is likely to trigger an enticing business environment in the country, besides gaining the trust of investors and ensuring better governance and transparency, according to

a report issued by the company. Kuwait bourse's promotion will also allow the local stock exchange to focus on priorities including shareholder returns and introducing new tools to the stock market, it added. Kuwait stock exchange's promotion on the FTSE 100 index is "tentative at this point," pending confirmation in June, the report indicated.

Crown Prince meets Kuwaiti figures



KUWAIT: His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received Mrs Suad Khaled Ali Al-Bahar and Dr Dalal Sameer Adeb Al-Ghawas at Seif Palace

where she delivered a copy of her doctorate on atherosclerosis. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad also received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.—KUNA



Amir receives letter from Palestinian President



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a letter yesterday from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on boosting bilateral ties

on all levels. The letter was handed to Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah by Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub.—KUNA

Local

Kuwait urges accountability for int'l humanitarian law violators

Implementing humanitarian law is more important than ever before

NEW YORK: Kuwait has called for bringing to accountability violators of the international law and perpetrators of crimes against humanity. "It is necessary to ensure accountability for perpetrators of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity," Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said Monday at a special UN Security Council session on the international humanitarian law.

He stressed the need for condemning human rights violations by all warring parties and to make sure that those targeting civilians are held accountable. He warned that the impunity for violators in current conflicts had led to grave consequences. "This impunity has led to the continuation of the most egregious violations of all fundamental principles of the international humanitarian law, international human rights law and all relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council," he regretted.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled commended UN efforts that take actions against the international humanitarian law violators in the world hotspots. In this regard, he voiced support to the UN mechanisms to investigate the most serious crimes against humanity in Syria, Myanmar and Iraq. "We also commend the UN Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2379 (2017), which called for the formation of an independent team to investigate the crimes committed by the so-called Islamic State (IS) or Da'esh group and demanded its accountability for its heinous crimes in Iraq," he said.

mechanisms are important to end impunity. Accountability for those who committed serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are essential to achieve sustainable peace." The Kuwaiti top diplomat emphasized that the rule of law and international humanitarian law must be enforced during armed conflicts. The UN, and particularly the Security Council, has a vital role to play to promote the rule of law and warring parties' respect of international humanitarian law through the full implementation of its relevant resolutions, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said.

He argued that the UN peacekeepers must also assume responsibility for the protection of civilians by taking the necessary measures to provide security for refugee camps, carry out medical evacuation of the wounded people and boost the capacity of the national police to protect vulnerable people. He added that United Nations forces, warring parties and international organizations operative in conflict zones must abide by all relevant laws, including the international humanitarian law, and accountability must also be ensured for humanitarian law violators.

On the national level, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said that Kuwait had implemented a range of initiatives, to build capacity of national cadres in the international humanitarian law. He reiterated that in light of the current global situation, implementing humanitarian law is more important than ever before. While the Geneva Conventions have long been ratified, parties continue to blatantly disregard those texts in some of today's current conflicts, he lamented.

reached record levels, with more than 130 million needing assistance around the world, he said. He shed light on the international humanitarian law violations in the Palestinian territories and Syria. "The Israeli occupation of the occupied Arab territories, including Palestinian land, for more than five decades has been a flagrant violation of international conventions and norms," "Israeli practices and policies constitute blatant violations of international law — such as the expansion of existing settlements and the construction of new settlements — and have lasting negative consequences on the daily lives of the Palestinian people for decades." He also cited as example of the Israeli violations the findings of a recent report by the International Independent Investigation Commission on the Israeli troops' human rights violations and war crimes against protesters in Gaza Strip.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also noted that the Syrian conflict, which has entered its ninth year, witnessed the most egregious violations of international humanitarian law including the continued and deliberate targeting of civilians and their property, installations and public facilities and the obstruction of humanitarian agencies and organizations from delivering aid to the needy people. The session was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office Director Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayyen, and several foreign ministry senior officials.

On the sidelines of the ongoing UNSC



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah addressing the UN Security Council session on the international humanitarian law. — KUNA photos

meetings yesterday, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met with Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs Jacek Czaputowicz. During the meeting, the two sides addressed their bilateral relationship and ways to boost them in various fields and on all levels. They also discussed ways to boost Kuwaiti-Polish cooperation and active coordination within the framework of the two countries' non-permanent seats at the UNSC.

The two top officials also exchanged views and ideas on regional and international updates, in addition to discussing a number of issues of mutual interest. The

meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office Director Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Ambassador Nasser Al-Hayyen, and several foreign ministry senior officials. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and his accompanying official delegation arrived in New York on Sunday to take part in UNSC meetings within the framework of Kuwait's non-permanent seat at the Council. —KUNA

Rule of law

"Such mechanism and other (similar)

Israeli occupation

Meanwhile, humanitarian needs have



An old Quran copy dates back to Ottoman era.



Ancient copies of the Holy Quran



Kuwaiti scholar collects rare Quran copies, Islamic documents

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Researcher Mohammad Kamal's personal museum boasts many rare ancient Holy Quran copies, and Islamic documents and antiquities. Kamal owns many old 150-650-year-old gold-engraved Quran prints that come from Baghdad, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Damascus, Egypt, India and Morocco. He participated in many specialized exhibitions and events where unique ancient Islamic antiquities are put on display.

The founder and coordinator of "Expo 965" for Kuwaiti and Islamic Heritage, said in a statement to KUNA yesterday, that he is fond of collecting old and rare

manuscripts, noting that he owns some documents that date back to the 3rd and 4th century After Hijra (AH). Every era has its own engraving characteristics that help in identifying where and when documents were printed, he said, elaborating that carvings have different colors, including rose, blue and saffron.

As colors differ from one country to another, Indian and Kashmiri Qurans, for example, are brown, but the Ottoman one is lighter. Kamal noted that he travels around the world searching for Quranic copies and rare Islamic items, pointing out that thanks to technology it is now easier to find them online through differ-

ent auctions or antique stores.

The Kuwaiti researcher indicated that the price of such relics could reach up to KD 25,000-plus, depending on the rarity of the edition. He owns Caucasian, Chinese and Baghdad Quranic copies that are around 650, 450 and 600 years old respectively. He asserted that it takes a lot of effort and care to be able to protect these ancient items, since it is necessary to store them in an air-conditioned room away from humidity, all year round. Furthermore, the Quranic books and manuscripts should be touched only without gloves and light must be very dim, he concluded. — KUNA



Mohammad Kamal

UN: Kuwait emerging as major player in humanitarian world

BRUSSELS: A top United Nations official yesterday heaped praise on Kuwait's global humanitarian efforts and its International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) for philanthropic works around the world. "Kuwait we know is emerging as a major player in the humanitarian world and IICO the leading humanitarian organization in the Islamic world," said Daniel Gustafson, Deputy Director General of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

He was speaking to the media ahead of the signing of a letter of intent between FAO and IICO on the sidelines of a major international conference against hunger in Brussels yesterday. "It is a pleasure and privilege for us to do this now as part of the launch of global food crisis report and as part of the conference of the Global Network Against Food Crises," he noted.

"We are embarking on a new partnership with the IICO and we are delighted about it," said the top FAO official. He also noted that the IICO chairman Dr Abdullah Al-Matouq has again been appointed for the third year in a row as a special adviser to the UN Secretary General. "We very much appreciate IICO's recognition of the link between resilience, agriculture, livelihoods, the humanitarian development nexus and peace building and it's been a key component of the vision of IICO and are very appreciative of that," said Gustafson. "We are committed to the same ideals and we are hoping that this can be a starter of a productive exchange of information and knowledge collaboration and we look forward to working closely with IICO," he said.

Key partner

The FAO official stressed that "the government of Kuwait is a key partner, a key member of FAO in Rome and elsewhere but it is the voice of Kuwait within the collective discussions of FAO member countries in Rome which is a strong one due to the excellent work of the team." "We need to re-double our efforts into combating hunger and poverty and look forward to increasing on all levels. We are delighted to do this today as part of the Brussels high-level event," he added.

On his part, Bader Al Sumait, General Manager of IICO said "on behalf of Dr Abdullah Al-Matouq, the Advisor to the Amiri Diwan, the Special Advisor of UN Secretary General, the Chairman of the IICO, I would like to thank and highly commend our colleagues in FAO for the excellent job and tremendous effort they exerted in co-organizing this high-level and timely event with the EU Commission and the World Food Program." "We see this today as another elevation of the level of partnership and collaboration together. We are happy to sign this agreement with the leading organization in combating hunger, FAO," he stressed.

IICO, as one of the leading humanitarian organizations in the Muslim world, is keen to raise the level of cooperation and partnership with international organizations for the good of humanity, he noted. In this context, IICO welcomes the signing of letter of intent with FAO to cooperate, in joint initiatives, towards raising the level of resilience in the affected and vulnerable communities and combating hunger and food insecurity, said Al Sumait.—KUNA

KJA takes part in gender equality council meetings

KUWAIT: Represented by board member and Bareeq Al-Danah magazine's managing editor, Dana Emad Bokhamseen through a video-conference, Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) recently took part in the gender equality council meetings organized by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) on March 26 in Brussels. The meeting discussed preparations for the IFJ conference due to be held in Tunis from May 11-14 in addition to funding the gender equality council and reminding IFJ to have its committee equally comprising of elements from both genders, combating online bullying, equal wages and sexual violence against female reporters. Notably, the meeting included Mindy Ran from UK, Natalia Jolsnova from Russia, Lobna Jeerar from Pakistan, Zoliana Otero from Peru, Meriam Lionsen from Germany, Jennifer Muro from Canada, Dana Bokhamseen from Kuwait, Martha Barcenella from Spain and Jeremy Dir.



Dana Emad Bokhamseen

Kuwait, Bahrain sign multilateral financial frameworks



KUWAIT: Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf with Members of Bahrain's Ministry of Finance, (KFAED), and the Arab Monetary Fund. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Finance Ministry yesterday announced the signing of frameworks for multilateral financial arrangements on cooperation for the financial balance program in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The agreement comes as part of several measures to support the economic reforms in Bahrain, which aimed at strengthening the financial and economic rules of the GCC countries, the ministry said in a statement.

The agreement was signed between Bahrain's

Ministry of Finance and Kuwait's Ministry of Finance and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) and the Arab Monetary Fund, it added. Kuwait was represented by Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf, KFAED by its Director-General Abdulwahab Al-Bader, and the Arab Monetary Fund by General Manager Abdulrahman Al-Humaidi, and Bahrain by Minister of Finance and National Economy Sheikh Salman bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa. — KUNA

Local

Photo of the Day



A morning view of the Kuwait Towers taken from the shoreline. — Krishnadas Ramanujam/ KUNA

In collaboration with US Embassy, Zain hosts NASA at its Innovation Center

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, hosted a special talk on science and technology innovation featuring The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in collaboration with the Embassy of the United States of America in the State of Kuwait. The talk was held at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh.

Zain hosted the special talk in line with its continuous keenness to offer world-class specialized programs for those who are interested in developing their talents within all areas, especially in science and technology innovation. Zain, being a leader in the Kuwaiti private sector, believes in the importance of enriching the talents of the community in which it operates by adopting such initiatives.

The special talk, held at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh, featured Zainab "Nagin" Cox, a senior engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), who discussed many of NASA's missions like the Kepler telescope mission that aims at searching for earth-like plan-

ets around other stars, and many more interesting topics related to technology, science, and innovation. Currently, Cox is a Mission Lead on the operations team for Mars Science Laboratory (MSL), NASA's Mars Curiosity Rover, which landed in August of 2012 and has been exploring Mars ever since.

The Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) is a hub for entrepreneurs and digital investments launched as a platform for the innovations of students, youth, and entrepreneurs. ZINC encourages young minds to think and act creatively outside of the norm in an open, supportive environment for entrepreneurs to generate new ideas and develop them into viable opportunities.

Zain affirms that it is committed to exerting more efforts into offering similar programs that enrich human resources development in all areas. The company will spare no efforts in making its capabilities and resources available as well as reinforce its collaboration with entities and organizations that provide such initiatives and actively develop Kuwaiti talents.



Nagin Cox with Zain officials at ZINC

30 conferences and 40-50 workshops set for next year: Khashti

KUWAIT: Health Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Quality Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Khashti said the ministry's conferences committee will meet in a few days to account for conferences set to be held next year. Al-Khashti who spoke on

the sidelines of Kuwait's ninth annual anesthesia conference said "the meeting will discuss what was done last year, as well as account for conferences to be approved for next year."

He said there will be around 30 confer-

ences and 40-50 workshops, depending on the budget which was set to be KD 1.8 million. He said that they do not expect any increases made to the proposed budget while expressing his wish to increase the number of conferences and workshops.



KUWAIT: Within its social responsibility activities, The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently presented a financial contribution to support Sulabikhat coop's social activities. In this regard, CBK's individual banking services manager for the capital region, Fatima Al-Rasheed presented the contribution bond to Sulabikhat coop board chairman, Talal Gemlas Al-Khuraij who expressed his gratitude and praised the roles CBK plays in supporting the coop's activities.



Local

Palestinian Embassy holds Naji Al-Ali art exhibition



KUWAIT: The Palestinian Ambassador, Rami Tahboub, during the opening ceremony of the exhibition. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT: Rima Al-Khaldi, wife of the Palestinian Ambassador, explains the photo of the first woman photographer.

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Embassy of Palestine held a photo exhibition displaying pictures and cartoons by the late Palestinian cartoonist Naji Al-Ali on Monday. This was followed by a screening of "The Story of the Land" at Abdhussain Abdulredha Theater.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, Palestinian

Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub said "This is the second day of activities related to 'Palestinian Land Day' that began on March 30. The exhibition showcased the pre-1948 Palestinian exodus to highlight Palestinian creativity and culture. The embassy has brought old photos from Palestine for the exhibition to let the world know that the Palestinian people existed before Israel and that the civilization and culture of

Palestine has extended for more than a hundred years, especially in the fields of photography, pottery and perfume making."

Tahboub noted that the exhibit is being held in commemoration of the anniversary of Naji Al-Ali's assassination and it shows his great work that he started in Kuwait. "The other part of the exhibition displays pictures that show the violations of the Israelis against the

Palestinians." He also noted that "The Story of the Land" is made by Palestinian director Rashid Mashharawi who has been making films in Jerusalem since its occupation. His latest work highlights the suffering of the Palestinians and the state the city of Jerusalem before and after the occupation by documenting the daily life of Palestinians and the daily violations they face under the Israeli occupation forces.



Guyanese ambassador hails ties with Kuwait



Ambassador Shamir Ally



Guyanese Ambassador presents a memento to Javid Ahmad of Kuwait Times.



By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: In an exclusive interview, Kuwait Times spoke with Guyanese Ambassador to Kuwait Shamir Ally about Guyana's relationship with Kuwait and to learn more about this extraordinary country that should be discovered by tourists and adventure seekers. Ally praised the good ties with Kuwait and both sides' commitment to strengthen this relationship. "We have a great relationship with Kuwait since the first ambassador came to Kuwait in 2011 to represent Guyana's interests," he said.

Ally pointed out that Guyana has signed several agreements with Kuwait, such as a memorandum of understanding between the foreign ministries of both countries on conducting bilateral consultations, agreement of establishing a joint commission for cooperation between Guyana and Kuwait, a cultural and artistic agreement, agreement for the encouragement and reciprocal protection of investments, a trade

agreement, agreement for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to income and capital taxes, an air services agreement, and an agreement for economic and technical cooperation.

On the tourism sector, Ally revealed that Guyana was named the best ecotourism destination in the world by the ITB global travel trade fair in Berlin. Guyana is a South American country with six ethnicities and a rich Amerindian culture. Guyana has Atlantic beaches to the north, staggering mountain ranges to the west, never-ending savannahs to the south and 18 percent of the world's tropical rainforests.

The ambassador welcomed Kuwaitis and expats to apply for a visa that only takes two days for issuance to discover Guyana. The country provides Muslims with halal food and good hospitality. "Guyana has more than 12 percent Muslims, living along with 30 percent Hindus and 58 percent Christians. Also, it will be easy to communicate in Guyana because it is the

only-English speaking country in South America, and is positioned as the next must-see destination for travelers," Ally said.

Guyana has expended considerable effort in recent years not only to develop new and innovative eco-friendly tourism products as a part of the national Green State Development Strategy, but also to incorporate sustainable tourism best practices into all aspects of its strategy, planning and programming, while educating the world about its deep commitment to maximizing the positive socioeconomic and conservation outcomes from tourism.

Guyana also provides a good environment for investors. Guyana is a rich country full of resources such as oil, gold, diamonds, bauxite, manganese, laterite, glass sand, ceramic clay, columbite, tantalite, mica, chromium, tungsten, haematite, kyanite, magnetite, copper, nickel, molybdenite, marmite, potant, cassiterite, zinc, magnetite, topaz, agate, jasper, amethyst, feldspar, niobium, peat, phosphates, rare earth and uranium.

Stepfather beats his daughter for coming home late

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti in her twenties accused her stepfather of assaulting her. He said that he did it to punish her for coming home late. The woman submitted a medical report which showed that she had bruises on her face and shoulder which she said were caused by her stepfather. Police are investigating the matter.

Syrian to be released

A Kuwaiti vouched for a Syrian who was found with a police vest and an axe in his car. The citizen told criminal detectives that the items belong to him and the Syrian was only test-driving the car. The Syrian will be released soon.

Brother beaten

A Kuwaiti lodged a complaint against a man, accusing him of beating his brother and breaking his leg. The citizen gave police a medical report stating his brother sustained a compound fracture in his left leg. The deputy prosecutor general labeled the case as a felony and detectives were asked to arrest the suspect.—Al-Rai

Accident on King Fahd Road

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti was killed and two other citizens and an Arab expat were injured in an accident between four vehicles on King Fahd Road. One of the vehicles had flipped over. The injured were sent to Mubarak Hospital.

Building safety

KFSD Director General Lt Gen Khalid Rakan Al-Mikrad met the Director General of Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi and other officials to discuss safety conditions in buildings under construction and procedures of demolishing buildings safely after incidents of workers falling from heights. The two sides discussed coordination in case of buildings collapsing and issuing citations to engineering offices and contracting companies that are in violation of safety and security conditions.

Shisha ban

The Municipal Council technical committee approved the proposal of a member to ban shishas in restaurants and cafes frequented by families. The council may discuss the recommendation during its April 15 session.

Reckless driver

The General Security Department arrested two drivers who appeared in a video clip on social media driving recklessly in Jaber Al-Ahmad. Operations received a call about motorists behaving recklessly, so police went there and were able to impound two vehicles for grave violations.

Environmental violations

KFSD's PR and information department said the prevention sector carried out a joint campaign in cooperation with the Environment Public Authority (EPA), environment police and finance ministry in Sulaiybiya agricultural area. Many violations were discovered as they constitute a hazard to people and property. These violations are not related to KFSD only, but to other government authorities too. The deputy director general for the prevention sector said combustible material, random stores, unlicensed buildings and buildings built on state property without permits were found.

In my view

Only in Kuwait



By Talal Al-Ghannam

Good morning dear brothers and sisters - I welcome you again after a hiatus of nearly a year. In this article, I would like to pinpoint some issues that keep happening here in Kuwait and are not yet resolved.

Only in Kuwait a hole in the street can remain a year without getting fixed.

Only in Kuwait a hole in the street breaks your wheel and shreds your car's tire and cannot be compensated.

Only in Kuwait you can find a hole in the street shaped like a heart - meaning that you love your government so much for caring for car drivers.

Only in Kuwait Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh is considered a crime zone where authorities sometimes are hesitant to deal with wrongdoings there.

Only in Kuwait flying gravel pounds your car as a result of a few inches of rain, and such bad roads are left till the end of the rainy season before deciding to fix them.

Only in Kuwait manic drivers drive on both emergency lanes at 100 kilometers per hour, not taking into account those who respect traffic rules.

Only in Kuwait the left emergency lane with a speed limit of 45 km per hour can mean 45+100 km per hour.

Only in Kuwait restaurants and cafes are more than the population.

Only in Kuwait if you don't let a maniac pass you, you can get beaten by him.

Only in Kuwait if you give a signal to pass, you might be subject to unwanted troubles.

Only in Kuwait one can make KD 1,000 per month excluding salary when he or she gives illegal tutoring.

Until the next article insha Allah!

Municipality to continue campaign

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Municipality PR department announced that the demolition campaign organized by the safety, the cleaning and road blockage departments in the capital would continue to remove all violations on public property. In this regard, the capital municipality manager, Bader Borqob said that a meeting had been held with the department managers to discuss intensifying inspection campaigns on various stores, companies and storage warehouses. Borqoba added that construction contractors dumping Dupree and construction material wastes in non-designated areas would be subject to penal legal measures.

International

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Libya chaos leaves the city residents struggling for water

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Facebook's call for global Internet rules sparks debate



HERAT: Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers take part in a drill exercise at a military base in the Guzara district of Herat province. — AFP

Swapping Kalashnikovs for bat and pads

Afghan cricket, the Taliban and peace

JALALABAD: During a lull in Afghanistan's never-ending war, before the fighting season resumes once again in the spring, Taliban fighters recall laying down their Kalashnikovs and, for a brief moment, enjoying a game of cricket. The sport is the only one most of the fighters enjoy, commanders say, with matches attracting hundreds of spectators from Taliban-controlled villages when there is no fighting. They are also fans of the increasingly successful national team.

"I love cricket," said Mullah Badruddin, a Taliban commander in Khogyani district of Nangarhar, on the border with Pakistan, where a tournament organized by the militants at the start of last winter drew large crowds. "When Afghanistan play against another team, we listen to the radio with great interest and we also check for scores in social media and follow those in Facebook who give live updates," he told Reuters by telephone.

First played in Afghanistan by British troops in the 19th Century, the game was adopted by Afghans in the refugee camps of cricket-loving Pakistan, where more than 3 million fled a Soviet invasion and civil war in the 1980s and 1990s, and has since made huge strides in the country, particularly among ethnic Pashtuns in the eastern border provinces.

Taj Malook Khan, who helped set up the Afghan Cricket Club in Kacha Gari refugee camp outside the

Pakistani city of Peshawar in the 1980s, and a small group of players used to cross into Afghanistan during the 1990s Taliban era to play and promote cricket. The Taliban had banned games such as cricket and football in the early years of their austere rule because they believed they kept men away from prayers, according to former national cricketer Hasti Gul, but later became more tolerant of cricket. From there, despite at least two attacks in the past couple of years on cricket matches claimed by the ultra radical Islamic State group, the game now rivals football for popularity in a country that has long been cut off from international sport.

Star names

Admitted as a full member of the International Cricket Council in 2017, Afghanistan won its first five-day Test match against Ireland last month after making steady progress in the lower levels of the international game. However it is in the dynamic, shorter form of the sport that Afghans have had most impact.

Players such as spin bowler Rashid Khan or big hitting batsman Mohammad Nabi Esakhil have become undisputed stars of the Indian Premier League (IPL), the razzle-dazzle showcase of so-called T20 cricket, the 12th season of which has just got under way. Despite the Taliban's former suspicion of organized sports and their

opposition to much of the transformation in Afghanistan since their hardline Islamic regime was toppled in 2001, many of the mainly Pashtun movement's fighters are fans.

Unlike football, which offends the sensibilities of some very conservative Muslims because it is normally played in shorts, cricket is played in long sleeves and trousers, in line with traditional dress codes. It also bears some resemblance to traditional Afghan children's games involving throwing and using sticks to hit smaller sticks or balls. Karim Sadiq, a former batsman in the national team and an early pioneer of the sport who visited some Taliban-controlled areas in eastern Afghanistan this year, said he was mobbed by fighters asking about the game and their favourite players.

A video clip he shot on his mobile phone shows dozens of Taliban, many with Kalashnikov automatic rifles slung across their shoulders, dissecting the quality of the team. "I like all the players but my favorite is Rashid Khan Arman," says one fighter, referring to the young spin bowler who stars for the Afghan national side and IPL's Sunrisers Hyderabad. "His bowling is amazing."

With the approach of the cricket World Cup in England and Wales from May to July, Afghanistan's hopes of making a dent in the tournament are higher than they have ever been, even if few give them a chance against giants of the game such as India, Australia or England.

"We have a very strong team and my dream is Afghanistan bring the World Cup home," said Hazrat Gul, a young cricketer in the eastern city of Jalalabad, as he prepared to play a friendly match against a team from neighboring Kunar province. As peace talks between the US government and Taliban officials continue and Afghanistan looks for a way out of 40 years of conflict, excitement is building and officials and government ministers lavish praise on the players, whom President Ashraf Ghani has called national heroes.

From the other side of the war, the feeling is similar. Sadiq who has just returned to practice after a long injury, aiming to take part in the upcoming World Cup, said the Taliban usually send them congratulatory messages through social media and on his cellphone when Afghanistan win. Such broad appeal has seen the sport widely hailed as a unifying force in Afghanistan, a patchwork of different languages and cultures, sometimes at peace with each other but increasingly in recent years in conflict. Not everyone is on board the cricket bandwagon, however. Look deeper, and the state of the game has much to say about a country where sport has repeatedly attracted violence, including suicide attacks on cricket and wrestling matches, and where politics is increasingly divided along ethnic lines that shade into all aspects of life.—Reuters

Gandhi promises Indians cash, jobs and cleaner air

NEW DELHI: India's main opposition Congress party vowed yesterday to end abject poverty by 2030, hand cash to 50 million families and tackle the "emergency" of air pollution as it unveiled its election manifesto. Recent opinion polls, although notoriously unreliable, suggest Congress is trailing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ahead of India's annual six-week mega-election beginning April 11.

In its 55-page manifesto, Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said Modi has offered only "grandiose promises, empty slogans, failed programs, false statistics and an overall climate of fear, intimidation and hatred". "The manifesto is the voice of the people," Gandhi, scion of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, said at the launch of the "Congress will Deliver" program at party headquarters in New Delhi.

"I do not want a single thing in this manifesto that is a lie because we have been hearing large number of lies spoken every day by our PM," the 48-year-old said. Describing unemployment as "the gravest challenge to our country", the party promised to give the "highest priority to protecting existing jobs and creating new jobs", helped by the creation of a new Ministry of Industry, Services and Employment.

It also pledged an "ambitious program" of cash transfers of 72,000 rupees (\$1,045) to India's poorest 50 million families, while still



NEW DELHI: Indian National Congress party president Rahul Gandhi (right) and the party's former president Sonia Gandhi (left) look on at an event to unveil the party's election manifesto in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

bringing the fiscal deficit to under three percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2020-21. The manifesto promised a separate budget to focus on the welfare of more than 260 million farmers in India that have been under severe distress due to falling crop prices, poor yields and crippling loans.

On the environment, the manifesto said it recognized air pollution — 22 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India, according to Greenpeace—to be a "national public health emergency". "We will significantly strengthen the National Clean Air Program in order to urgently tackle the problem of pollution. All major sources of emission will be

targeted, mitigated and reduced to acceptable levels," it said. The BJP, which decimated Congress as it swept to power in 2014, is yet to publish its own manifesto.

Modi, 68, has sought in the campaign so far to project himself as India's "chowkidar" ("watchman") protecting the country against Pakistan-backed "terrorism", while also depicting Gandhi as weak. In their most serious standoff in years, New Delhi and Islamabad launched tit-for-tat air strikes in late February after a suicide bombing, claimed by a militant group based in Pakistan, killed 40 Indian troops in Kashmir.—AFP

Over 113 million people suffer 'acute hunger'

PARIS: More than 113 million people across 53 countries experienced "acute hunger" last year because of wars and climate disasters, with Africa the worst-hit region, the UN said yesterday. Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Syria were among the eight nations accounting for two-thirds of the total number of people worldwide exposed to the risk of famine, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said in its 2019 global report on food crises.

Launched three years ago, the annual study takes stock of the countries facing the greatest difficulties. African states were "disproportionally" affected as close to 72 million people on the continent suffered acute hunger, the FAO's emergencies director Dominique Bourgeon said yesterday. Conflict and insecurity remained key factors, along with economic turbulence and climate-related shocks like drought and floods, the report found.

In countries on the verge of famine, "up to 80 percent of the population depend on agriculture. They need both emergency humanitarian aid for food and measures to help boost agriculture," Bourgeon said. The report highlighted the strain put on countries hosting large numbers of refugees, including neighboring nations of war-torn Syria as well as Bangladesh, which has

received more than a million Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar.

Venezuela food crisis

The FAO said it also expected the number of displaced people to increase "if the political and economic crisis persists in Venezuela" which is likely to declare a food emergency this year. Bourgeon said he was concerned by the "important and significant rise" in poverty in Venezuela, as it grapples with dire economic and living conditions worsened by an ongoing political crisis. Globally, the study noted that the overall situation slightly improved in 2018 compared to 2017 when 124 million people suffered acute hunger.

The drop can partially be attributed to the fact that some countries in Latin America and the Asia Pacific region for instance were less affected by weather disasters that had struck in previous years. However, the FAO warned that the year-on-year trend of more than 100 million people facing famine was unlikely to change in the face of continued crises. Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria all suffered bad droughts in 2018, which severely impacted agricultural output. The FAO also stressed that "high levels of acute and chronic malnutrition in children living in emergency conditions remained of grave concern".—AFP

International

Nigerians join online protests to denounce police brutality

Police team held after football fan shot dead

LAGOS: Tens of thousands of Nigerians came together online yesterday to condemn the police after a young man was shot dead as he watched a football match. The protesters called on the government to end police brutality, after several years of complaints, with Amnesty International calling the latest death an "unlawful killing". Thousands of messages of condolence and anger were posted throughout the day after a video showing the body of Kolade Johnson went viral. Johnson was apparently hit by a stray bullet fired by police in broad daylight in Lagos.

"This is the price you pay for being a young Nigerian male not from a high-ranking family," wrote one of his neighbors @m_k_v_ng on Instagram. He said he had never heard of the Nigerian police's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) firing "anyhow" in upmarket neighborhoods of the financial capital. "His blood is on your hands," he told the police. The hashtag #EndSARS was created in

2016 by a group of human rights defenders. One of them, Segun Awosanya, wants reform of the police and all spe-



The latest victim of Nigeria's SARS

cial units to be disbanded, which he said have had military training and act with impunity.

"After a year of advocacy, things were better. The presidency stated that SARS elite squads must respond only to distress calls concerning house-breaking and kidnapping," he told AFP. "But early January the new inspector general of police came in and we are back to square one. 'We've lost a lot of lives, police blatantly telling people at gun point, 'I will kill you and nothing will happen'. And guess what, nothing happens. We live under oppression.'" Amnesty International has in recent years campaigned against police brutality and the use of torture in Nigeria, including by SARS units.

Its Nigeria director, Osai Ojigbo, described Johnson as "the latest victim" of SARS, "which has become notorious for extrajudicial killings, torture and extortion". "This appears to be an unlawful killing which must be impartially and thoroughly investigated, with any officers suspected of criminal responsibility for wrongdoing brought to jus-

tice in fair trial before an ordinary civilian court. "It is shameful that more than two years since Amnesty International highlighted crimes under international law and human rights violations by SARS, these shocking incidents continue unabated."

Police team held

Meanwhile, the members of a police squad suspected of killing a Nigerian football fan have been detained for questioning, a force spokesman said after an outcry online. Kolade Johnson was watching a match involving English Premier League club Liverpool on Sunday afternoon when he was hit by a stray bullet fired by police. The killing sparked public outrage and renewed opposition to the police units such as the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), which has become synonymous with brutality, extra-judicial killings, torture, extortion and impunity. — Agencies

Libya chaos leaves Zintan residents struggling for water

ZINTAN: Hundreds of blue pipes lay abandoned in Libya's Zintan, leaving residents struggling to get enough water after the 2011 revolution halted their spot on the world's largest irrigation project. "We have nothing in Zintan," said Al-Sid Chanta, a trucker who collects water supplied from a reservoir to deliver to residents' homes. Without the pipes in place to channel water directly to the city, he makes the trip eight times a day just to meet people's basic needs. "The (public) services are very poor," said Chanta, who estimated each family needs around 40,000 liters of water a month.

Zintan was set to be part of Libya's Great Man-Made River Project, a vast scheme to tap water from underground aquifers deep in the Sahara desert, purify it and transport it north. But the city's place on the project was abandoned after the 2011 ousting of dictator Muammar Gaddafi, leaving locals to rely on the old delivery system for water. The reservoir feeds wells at the foot of the Nafusa mountains, where water is collected by truckers who take the steep road to supply less than 50 percent of Zintan's 60,000 residents.

Abdallah al-Rammah, director of city hall's water department, said there is a "large deficit" in water and the distribution network dates to the 1970s. The same system is used by other cities around the mountains, such as Rojbane, Nalout and Yefren. Zintan also lacks a public sewage system, meaning used household water feeds into septic tanks which have polluted the groundwater - later pumped and used by residents. That has resulted in regular Hepatitis C diagnoses, especially among children, a doctor in Zintan said on condition of anonymity.

The mayor of Zintan, Mustafa al-Barouni, said the city has suffered "injustice" and decades of marginalization. "We find that some cities have basic services, telecommunications, roads, ports and job opportunities, and others (like Zintan) have nothing," he said. The mayor hit out at "corruption and the waste of resources" by transitional authorities, claiming the city receives barely a pittance



ZINTAN: Mahmud Al-Rammah, Director of water department in Zintan, shows water pipes waiting to be installed at the Zintan water pumping station in the city of Zintan. — AFP

from the state budget despite a drive for decentralization. "We have often resorted to debt," he said, working with local investors to fund projects. City authorities cannot meet the water needs of all residents, meaning some have to pay for privately-run trucks which are expensive. Political power remains divided in Libya, with a UN-backed Government of National Accord established in the capital Tripoli in 2015.

But a rival administration sits in the east of the country, supported by Khalifa Haftar and his self-styled Libyan National Army. Such deadlock has hit the finances of the oil-rich country, evident in Zintan by the cash-strapped shuttered banks and the long queues at petrol stations. There is little sign of development in the city, apart from a

few private construction sites, while African migrants carrying hammers or shovels wait desperately for work. "We lack everything," said Mohamad al-Garaj, in his 60s, who complained of price rises.

But for him, the water shortage remains the greatest problem: "We ask for help from the government and international organizations." Development projects were put on hold in the wake of the revolution and international efforts to break the political impasse have so far failed. Attention now turns to a United Nations conference mid-April, which Zintan's mayor hopes can bring changes to his resource-strapped city. "The tension is such, that everyone at this point is convinced of the necessity of finding a solution," he said. — AFP

Tehran accuses US of 'economic terrorism'

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif accused the United States of impeding aid efforts and "economic terrorism" on Monday as authorities ordered the immediate evacuation of flood-stricken cities in western Iran. US sanctions are "impeding aid efforts by #IranianRedCrescent to all communities devastated by unprecedented floods," Zarif tweeted, referring to search and rescue operations being conducted after huge rain-falls triggered vast flooding.

"Blocked equipment includes relief choppers," the tweet read, adding that "this isn't just economic warfare; it's economic TERRORISM." The evacuation was ordered after rivers burst their banks, dams overflowed and vast areas were cut off from communication.

A chronic shortage of rescue helicopters in Iran, due to US sanctions, has forced the emergency services to request help from military helicopters and amphibious armored personnel carriers to assist in the rescue operations. The authorities declared a "situation red", the highest level of alert, in Lorestan province with four or five cities "completely critical", state television news network IRINN reported from Khorramabad, the region's capital.

"In Khorramabad the water has risen by as much as three meters in parts... and reports are coming in of regions... completely submerged with residents stranded on their rooftops," it added. The Red Crescent's provincial director, Sarem Rezaee, said his organization had lost contact with much of the region. "Telephones are not working, our radio communications are down... at this moment we have no news of other cities and villages," he told IRINN, adding roads were flooded and helicopters were unable to take off due to the bad weather.

"We have requested emergency help from neighboring provinces but at the present no one can do anything." The airport in the western city of Khorramabad was flooded, with images showing water submerging the runway and cutting the province's main air link to the rest of the country. Authorities in Lorestan ordered evacuations in many regions, bringing in the armed forces to forcibly remove those who do not comply, local media reported.

'Lost all contact'

The authorities said Pol-e-Dokhtar and Mamulan cities were already half submerged, with one fatality reported in Mamulan. Images on local media show water gushing through streets in Pol-e-Dokhtar where the water level had reached 1.5 meters. Every village in the vicinity of the two cities had been surrounded by flood waters while all five dams in Lorestan had reached capacity and four of them were overflowing.

"We have lost all contact with Pol-e-Dokhtar," the Lorestan Governor General Mousa Khademi told the semi-official ISNA News Agency. "We do not have any



AHVAZ, Iran: An Iranian family walks through a flooded street in a village around the city of Ahvaz, in Iran's Khuzestan province. — AFP

information on the situation there... we do not know how many people have been affected by the floods," he added. Numerous rivers had burst their banks and landslides blocked many roads, said the reports. Media outlets showed images of collapsed bridges and oil and gas pipelines destroyed by the flood.

The main railway line linking Tehran to the south of the country had also been blocked by the flood. This is the third major flood to hit Iran in the past two weeks with unprecedented rainfalls in the mostly arid country that had endured a decades-long drought until this year. The first occurred in the northeast of the country on March 19 and the second struck the west and southwest of Iran on March 25 with a combined toll of 45 people killed.

The present flood has again struck in the west and southwest following heavy rain that is set to continue into today. Apart from Lorestan half a dozen other provinces are also facing critical circumstances, with the emergency services reporting 23 out of Iran's 31 provinces have been affected and could face floods. With the consecutive floods the reservoirs of many dams have reached full capacity forcing emergency discharge, as much as 1,800 cubic meters per second in some cases, to prevent them from breaking. — AFP

In close election, Netanyahu relies on 'us versus them'

JERUSALEM: Being on the wrong side of Wonder Woman may not seem to be a smart move, but past experience shows Benjamin Netanyahu was well aware of what he was doing. An argument that put the prime minister at odds with Israeli actress Gal Gadot, who played Wonder Woman in the Hollywood blockbuster, was one example of the pre-election populist rhetoric that has become his trademark.

As Israel approaches an April 9 general election, Netanyahu is again resorting to right-wing populism that critics say amounts to the demonization of Arab Israelis and others to appeal to his support base. The social media dispute that drew in Gadot was one in which Netanyahu faced an outcry over his comments regarding Arab Israelis.

Some analysts expect more to come in the campaign's final days as Netanyahu fights a close election under the threat of indictment for corruption. "What you're probably going to see is him exacerbating the polarisation — us versus them," said Reuven Hazan, political science professor at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. "He realises that this is a battle for his survival." On election day in 2015, Netanyahu infamously warned that Arab voters were going to the polls "in droves" - and, according to state investigators, made sure a news website featured the video.

This year, he has continually sought to convince voters that his main opponent, former military chief Benny Gantz, would ally with Arab political parties. As part of that argument, he has used the catchphrase that the election is a choice between "Bibi or Tibi" - using his own nickname and referring to prominent Israeli Arab politician Ahmad Tibi, a staunch anti-Zionist. Israeli Arabs, the descendants of Palestinians who remained on their land following the creation of Israel, account for some 17.5 percent of the country's population.

Sawsan Zaher, deputy director general of Adalah, a legal centre for Israel's Arab minority, said the rhetoric amounted to "not only racism, but even intentional racism". "And what will this incitement lead to on the ground and on the streets against Arabs?" Zaher asked. Some analysts say they see Netanyahu's rhetoric less as expressions of his true beliefs than as bare-knuckled politics. Israeli politics has moved sharply to the right in recent years, with much of the electorate disillusioned by failed peace efforts with the Palestinians. As one example of Netanyahu's opportunism, analysts point to a deal he brokered with the extreme-right Jewish Power party which many see as racist to try to ease its way into parliament. The agreement drew widespread disgust, but Netanyahu defended it by saying he needed to ensure no right-wing votes go to waste as he eyes his next coalition. — AFP

US suspends F-35 program deliveries to Turkey over Russian arms

WASHINGTON: The United States said Monday it was halting all deliveries and joint work with Turkey on the F-35 fighter jet program after the NATO ally insisted on a major arms purchase from Russia. After months of warnings, the United States said that Turkey's decision to buy Russia's S-400 missile system was incompatible with remaining part of the emblematic US warplane program.

"Until they forgo delivery of the S-400, the United States has suspended deliveries and activities associated with the stand-up of Turkey's F-35 operational capability," Pentagon chief spokesman Charles E. Summers Jr. said. "Should Turkey procure the S-400, their continued participation in the F-35 program is at risk," he said in a statement.

US officials have voiced concern that, with Turkey in both camps, Russia could obtain F-35 data to improve the accuracy of the S-400 against Western aircraft. The Pentagon said that it had started to look at secondary sources to produce parts for F-35s that were being developed in Turkey. "We very much regret the current situation facing our F-35 partnership with Turkey, but the (Defense Department) is taking prudent steps to protect the shared investments made in our critical technology," Summers said.

Turkey had planned to buy 100 F-35A fighter jets, with pilots already training in the United States. The plane's manufacturer, Lockheed Martin, said that contracts with Turkish companies to build parts for the F-35 had been expected to reach \$12 billion. Among the eight Turkish companies involved in the purchase, Ayesas has been building a panoramic cockpit display for the F-35 and Fokker Elmo makes 40 percent of the electrical wiring and interconnection system, according to Lockheed Martin.

Growing tilt to Russia

The purchase of a Russian system is highly unusual for a member of NATO, the Western alliance forged to counter the Soviet Union. The US suspension announcement comes two days before foreign ministers from the 29 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are due in Washington to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the alliance - and hours after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's AKP party suffered a surprise rout in elections in major cities including Istanbul.

Erdogan, whose relations with the West have soured sharply as he cracks down on dissent at home, has increasingly looked to Moscow as a partner. Russian tourists have made Turkey their top destination, providing a vital economic boost. Last week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov traveled to Turkey, where Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu insisted that the S-400 purchase would go ahead. "We have an agreement with Russia and we are bound by it," Cavusoglu told reporters.

Hoping to offer an alternative, the United States last year approved the sale of Patriot missiles to Turkey — a deal to which Ankara said it was open. Four senators last week proposed legally barring the transfer of F-35s to Turkey if it buys the S-400. One of the senators, Democrat Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, praised the Pentagon suspension and pledged to "continue working in the Senate to prevent this dangerous possibility from becoming a reality."

Rocky ties with US

Turkey's relations with the United States plunged last year when President Donald Trump imposed tariffs, battering Turkey's lira, over the jailing of an American pastor detained as part of a mass roundup following a coup attempt against Erdogan. The pastor, Andrew Brunson, was freed and Trump appeared to grow fond of Erdogan, speaking to him before his sudden decision to withdraw US troops from Syria.

But tensions quickly resurfaced with the United States fearful that Erdogan will strike US-allied Kurdish fighters in Syria and a Turkish court trying a US consulate staffer, Metin Topuz, on charges of spying. Topuz, a Turkish citizen, is accused of ties to Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish preacher who lives in self-imposed exile in the United States. Erdogan has repeatedly demanded that the United States extradite Gulen, whom the Turkish leader accuses of fomenting the coup. — AFP

International

Too close for comfort? Beyonce and Biden trigger personal space debate

Social media debate weighs 'how close is too close'

NEW YORK: Megastar Beyonce and former US vice president Joe Biden found themselves on opposite sides of a heated debate over personal space yesterday, sending social media into fits over how close is too close. The debate concerns less sexual assault than the concept of the "personal bubble" - a sense of necessary physical distance particularly valued in America - set against the backdrop of the #MeToo movement.

Separate incidents saw the unlikely duo find itself the subject of water cooler talk after Beyonce, 37, was crowned "Artist of the Year" late Saturday at the NAACP Image Awards, a celebration of achievements in the African American community. But it was a seemingly misplaced kiss that got her fans riled up, after a clip of Omari Hardwick, 45, saw the actor kiss her twice on the cheek, once dangerously close to her lips. Beyonce hasn't commented on the incident but appeared visibly uncomfortable as the encounter played out on camera, with her husband Jay-Z standing nearby. Her fans were quick to react, with many Twitter users lambasting Hardwick for breezing past personal boundaries.

As that drama played out, a similar one saw Biden - a longtime Democratic party stalwart - accused of kissing the back of Nevada state lawmaker Lucy Flores's head in 2014 and making her feel "uneasy, cross, and confused." Biden, 76, has repeatedly dismissed allegations of inappropriate behavior - but the controversy has seen a number of other photos surface that show the politician

getting "touchy-feely," potentially nipping his potential White House bid in the bud.

In one 2015 picture, he is seen holding the shoulders of the wife of then defense minister Ash Carter, seemingly whispering in her ear. Stephanie Carter quickly refuted any notion that Biden's actions were intrusive - but the debate was already simmering. "I felt invaded. I felt there was a violation of my personal space," Flores said. "It's been dismissed as if

ters) out from a person's body, which is followed by a personal distance for interactions with other close friends and family, social distance for acquaintances and a public distance for speaking events. According to Princeton researcher Michael Graziano, the zone is "more robust" around the head - on a crowded subway car, for example, "we'll tolerate people pressed up against our shoulders, but not against our faces."

Audrey Nelson, a Colorado-based communications and gender expert, told AFP the concept of personal space is "highly culturally variable" and in the US, a "very powerful communicator." "Joe Biden - he was absolutely in the taboo zone," she said, referring to his interaction with Flores. "To get that close and then touch anything - your hair, massaging the shoulder - good God. It's very inappropriate." "This behavior is reserved for intimates," she continued. "I don't care if he is vice president, it's inappropriate."



Biden accused of kissing the back of Flores' head

it's just Biden being Biden. Boys will be boys. No big deal. "It is a big deal."

'Very powerful communicator'

The concept of a "body buffer zone" - the area surrounding a person that, when invaded, triggers discomfort - is not unique to the United States but highly valued here. The late anthropologist Edward Hall in 1963 coined the term "proxemics" to explain the concept of necessary physical distance.

According to Hall, the "intimate distance" spans approximately 18 inches (46 centime-

'Basic respect'

In terms of Beyonce, Nelson said women are less likely than men to command their own personal bubble. "This ventures into blaming the victim," Nelson said. "Just because a woman is petite, has a soft voice, doesn't command a lot of space, doesn't mean you can invade it." Beyonce, she noted, is "powerful, she's a strong woman" and actions like Hardwick's can be a means to "equalize the power."

In a similar incident, the officiating pastor



DOVER: Combo shows Beyonce and former US Vice President Joe Biden. Megastar Beyonce and former US vice president Joe Biden found themselves on opposite sides of a heated debate over personal space - sending social media into fits over how close is too close. — AFP

at Aretha Franklin's funeral last year was accused of groping pop royalty Ariana Grande, after he wrapped his hand around her waist onstage in a move many cast as far too familiar. For Graziano, some cultures dictate that when it comes to touching, people should "just accept it and not complain too much."

"In other cultures, you're allowed to be more outspoken and reactive." American women in recent years have launched efforts

to reclaim their personal space. The New York metro system, for example, ran a campaign to end "manspreading," or spreading thighs wider than the seat while sitting. It's an effort ushered along by #MeToo, Nelson said, saying "personal space has always been there. What's changed is our awareness level." "Some men think they can take liberties," she said, saying the #MeToo movement has said "no more." "It just comes down to basic respect." — AFP

News in brief

'Living with the bomb'

SAINT PETERSBURG: A Russian family was stunned yesterday to discover a mortar shell under the floorboards during renovation work at their flat in Saint Petersburg, a local official said. The building in the centre of Russia's second-largest city was evacuated for a few hours while bomb disposal experts removed the munition, Alexandra Sokolova said. The city was under military blockade by Nazi forces between 1941 and 1944. At least 800,000 people died in the Siege of Leningrad - the city's name at the time - from hunger, disease or shelling, with many historians saying the figure is much higher. — AFP

Palestinian killed in clash

RAMALLAH: A Palestinian was killed during a clash with Israeli forces near Jerusalem overnight, the Palestinian health ministry and residents said yesterday. The ministry said Mohammed Adwan, 23, was killed and three others were wounded. Two residents said soldiers arrived in the Qalandiya area yesterday to carry out arrests and young men threw stones at them. The Israeli army said there was a "riot" during an operation in the nearby Kufri Aqab area, and "rocks and explosive devices were hurled at the troops, who responded with fire." "A report was received regarding an injured Palestinian. The incident will be examined," the army statement said. Qufri Aqab is located on the other side of the Israeli separation barrier which divides Jerusalem from the occupied West Bank, but is still considered part of the city. — AFP

Fifth stabbing in 4 days

LONDON: London police said yesterday they were investigating a fifth stabbing in four days in the same north London district as authorities try to contain a surge in knife crime in Britain. Four victims were stabbed from behind over the weekend in the Edmonton area of northwest London, and detectives said they believed it was not linked to terrorism and a single suspect was involved. Two men were arrested on suspicion of grievous bodily harm and remain in custody. In the fifth attack, police said a man in his 30s was found with stab injuries yesterday morning and was in a life-threatening condition in hospital. A man in his 30s was later arrested on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm and detectives said they were working to see if the incident was linked to the weekend's stabbings. — Reuters

AKP challenges results

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling AKP yesterday appealed against the results in Istanbul after this weekend's elections citing what it called "excessive" irregularities. Sunday's municipal vote delivered a setback to Erdogan after preliminary tallies showed the AKP lost the capital and the economic hub Istanbul after a decade and a half in power. Erdogan's AKP and coalition partner won more than 50 percent of the votes nationwide, but defeat in two key cities would be a blow after Turkey slipped into recession for the first time in a decade. The AKP appeal with electoral authorities, who have two days to decide whether it has any merit, may signal further challenges from the ruling party to opposition victories in the two key cities. "We have filed our objections with the electoral authorities in all 39 districts," AKP's Istanbul district chief Bayram Senocak told reporters. — AFP

NATO, the world's biggest defense alliance

PARIS: Created 70 years ago as a safeguard against the threat of Soviet aggression, NATO is the world's biggest defense alliance, grouping 29 European and North American countries. Here is some background about the Belgium-based organization that formed at the start of the Cold War and then took on modern challenges such as terrorism:

1949: Soviet threat

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed on April 4, 1949 by 12 countries alarmed by the Soviet Union's drive to spread communism around the world via military aggression. They united "for collective defense", says the founding Washington Treaty signed by Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United States. The key Article 5 states that "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all". It would require other members to undertake "such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force". Next to join were Greece and Turkey (1952), Germany (1955) and

Spain (1982). When the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991, the Alliance endured in the face of new challenges.

1994: combat

In its first combat action, NATO in 1994 sent US fighter jets to stop Serbian bombing raids into Bosnia in violation of a no-fly zone. Four Serbian planes were shot down. In 1995, a NATO peacekeeping force deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina in its first major crisis-response operation. In 1999, a NATO force launched a 78-day bombing campaign against Serbia to end its bloody crackdown on its Kosovo province. Serbian troops withdrew and Kosovo came under UN administration, with a 40,000-strong alliance force deployed to ensure security. In 1999, the first ex-communist countries signed up to the alliance: the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

9/11 attacks

NATO's "one for all and all for one" pledge was invoked for the first time after the 9/11 attacks on the United States. It joined the US "war on terrorism" in 2003, taking the lead of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) deployed to Afghanistan to root out Al-Qaeda and other Islamist militants. As the European Union expanded, so did the alliance: Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined in 2004. The admission the same year of the three ex-Soviet states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania particularly annoyed Russia. Albania and Croatia fol-



WASHINGTON: Activists rally in Lafayette Square to protest ahead of the 70th anniversary of the summit meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Washington, DC. — AFP

lowed in 2010 and Montenegro in 2017.

Piracy, trafficking

NATO largely ended its combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014, leaving behind a 16,000-strong residual force for training and counter-terrorism operations. In 2011, it took sole command of air strikes in Libya under a UN mandate to use "all necessary measures" to protect civilians. The seven-month campaign led to the overthrow of strongman Muammar Gaddafi. NATO now contributes to fighting piracy off the Horn of Africa and mon-

itoring human trafficking in the Mediterranean, while also operating a unit to defend against cyberattacks.

Still tense with Russia

Although NATO and Russia established post-Cold War ties in 1997, relations remain tense, plummeting in 2014 over Moscow's role in Ukraine - including its annexation of Crimea. In 2016, NATO deployed four multinational battalions to Poland and the Baltic states to guard against possible Russian adventurism. — AFP

Disorderly exit looms as May seeks way out of Brexit maelstrom

LONDON: The European Union said yesterday that Britain could be heading for a potentially disorderly exit in just 10 days time as Prime Minister Theresa May met with ministers to thrash out ways to break the Brexit deadlock. Nearly three years since the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU in a shock referendum result, May's exit strategy is up in the air as her government and party are still squabbling over how, when or even if Brexit should happen.

May's divorce deal has been defeated three times by the lower house of the British parliament, which failed on Monday to find a majority of its own for any alternatives. She is expected to try to put her deal to a fourth vote this week. The deadlock has already delayed Brexit for at least two weeks beyond the planned departure date to 2200 GMT on April 12. "Over the last days a no-deal scenario has become more likely, but we can still hope to avoid it," EU chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier said in Brussels.

May chaired several hours of cabinet meetings in Downing Street in a bid to find a way out of the crisis. It was unclear what, if anything, had been agreed. Barnier said May's deal was the only way to ensure an orderly EU exit for the world's fifth-largest economy. If the deal was rejected, London must choose between a no-deal Brexit and a long delay, he said. European Central Bank policymaker Francois Villeroy de Galhau said markets needed to price in the growing risk of a no-deal.

The cacophony of warnings over a disorderly Brexit ratchet up the pressure on British lawmakers as some try to grab control of parliament to prevent a no-deal. If May cannot get her deal ratified by parliament then she has a choice between leaving without a deal, trying to trigger an election, or asking the EU for a long delay to negotiate a Brexit agreement with a much closer relationship with the



LONDON: Demonstrators wave an EU flag and hold placards in Westminster, central London yesterday. — AFP

bloc. At least half of her Conservative Party wants to leave the EU without a deal, though some lawmakers and ministers are telling her she must keep the United Kingdom firmly within the bloc's economic orbit.

May will set out next steps ahead of an emergency EU summit on April 10, her spokesman said. May remained opposed to another referendum, he added. "I hope that we can still find a solution. The British parliament has said itself that it doesn't want a disorderly Brexit," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said. The defeat of May's deal after pledging to quit if it was passed has left the weakest British leader in a generation facing a spiraling crisis. The British electorate, its two major parties and May's cabinet are all divided over Brexit. May risks ripping her party apart whichever way she tilts.

Brexit chaos?

Investors and diplomats are in despair at the chaos and such is the volatility of Brexit news from London that some traders have stepped away from sterling - which has seen a surge on Brexit news since the 2016 referendum. Sterling fell towards \$1.30. The EU said a no-deal would disrupt financial markets and have an impact on liquidity.

"Markets were betting as recently as yesterday that there would be a deal and they are going to need to price in the growing risk of a no deal, including on the value of the pound," the ECB's Villeroy told French radio station BFM Business. Britain's top civil servant, Mark Sedwill, said a no-deal Brexit would push up food prices by 10 percent, force direct British rule in Northern Ireland and compromise national security, the Daily Mail reported. — Reuters

International

Despite being exposed, fake news thrives ahead of India elections

Election Commission, companies struggle to eliminate menace

MUMBAI: Two weeks after a suicide bombing in Kashmir in February killed 40 Indian policemen, a Facebook user called Avi Dandiya posted a live video in which he played a recording of a call purportedly involving India's home minister, the president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and an unidentified woman.

The trio could be heard talking about arousing nationalist sentiment ahead of India's general election, with the BJP president allegedly saying in Hindi: "We agree that for election, we need a war". Within 24 hours, one of Facebook Inc's fact-checking partners in India, BOOM, exposed Dandiya's video as fake. An analysis on BOOM's website said the video was created by splicing audio from older political interviews.

By the time Facebook took down the post, it had received more than 2.5 million views and 150,000 shares. There is no Indian law that specifically targets fake news, but police in New Delhi registered a case of forgery against Dandiya and an official said investigations were ongoing. Still, Reuters last week found at least four edited copies of Dandiya's videos on Facebook with about 36,000 views. One on Google's YouTube has been seen 2,800 times while another on Twitter has 22,000 views.

Messages and e-mails to Dandiya, an avid Facebook user who last appeared in a live video on March 23, went unanswered. The home ministry, the BJP president and party's information-technology chief did not respond to requests for comment. The videos underline how social media companies are struggling with fake news in India despite saying they've taken steps to tackle the menace ahead of India's general election, which starts on April 11.

With 900 million people eligible to vote and an estimated half-a-billion with access to the internet, fake news can have an enormous impact on the election. Dandiya's video, for example, could have seriously damaged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP if enough people thought it was true. Policing content has

become a massive global problem for social media giants which have no template for consistently preventing online fake news or eliminating it.

Fierce internet disinformation battles gripped countries such as Brazil and Malaysia last year ahead of elections. Authorities in Indonesia and the EU, which are due to hold polls, have warned of the threat of fake news. In India, Facebook has partnered with fact checkers and, like Twitter, ramped up efforts to block fake accounts. On Monday, Facebook said it had deleted 1,126 accounts, groups and pages in India and Pakistan for "inauthentic behavior" and spamming, many linked to India's opposition Congress party.

Google has partnered with fact-checkers to train 10,000 journalists this year to better tackle fake news. Facebook's popular messaging app WhatsApp has launched newspaper and radio campaigns to deter the spread of misinformation. Social media companies say they don't outrightly remove all fake posts as that would jeopardize free speech. Facebook has said that circulation of posts which are debunked, or discovered to be

fake, is reduced by more than 80 percent.

No silver bullet

Posts that violate Facebook's community guidelines, including hate speech or content that could incite violence, are completely deleted, the company said, adding that Dandiya's video came under that category. But even when content has been identified as fake and removed, slightly modified versions of the same images, video or text can escape detection and spread further. "This is a highly adversarial space, so we still miss things and won't catch everything - but we're making progress," said a Facebook spokeswoman, who added that the overall volume of false news had been reduced on the platform.

"There's no silver bullet solution in fighting misinformation." Twitter said it deeply cares about the potentially harmful effects of misinformation and encourages



BEIJING: Photo shows the Whatsapp application logo on a smartphone screen in Beijing. WhatsApp launched a hotline yesterday allowing Indians to flag rumors circulating ahead of the upcoming election, a major concern in a country where fake news has fuelled violence. — AFP

users not to share unverified information. A YouTube spokesman said the company will continue to embrace the "democratization of access to information" while providing a reliable service to users. Twitter and YouTube did not comment on Dandiya's video.

Shown to be false

Another fake post that went viral recently was on popular Indian student leader Kanhaiya Kumar, who was arrested and charged with sedition after a 2016 rally to commemorate the execution of a Kashmiri separatist. Opposition parties said Kumar's arrest by federal police was an attempt by authorities to curb free speech. Some Facebook posts in February described Kumar as anti-India and showed his photo in front of a map that depicted some Indian states as part of Pakistan.

Two Facebook fact-checkers in India investigated the

posts and said the image was doctored. Still, a month later, Reuters found at least two copies of those posts on Facebook with 375 comments and 1,500 shares. Facebook in February announced an expansion of its fact-checking company partners to seven, from two. Facebook says it also issues an alert to users who try to share a post which its fact-checkers have debunked, but doesn't prohibit further sharing. Reuters found that when debunked posts of Kumar were shared, an alert popped up with a link to the fact-checkers' analysis. However, all four variants of Dandiya's videos could be shared without such fake news alerts from Facebook. "There is no way you can solve this problem (quickly) ... the magnitude of the problem is really huge," said Kanchan Kaur, a Bengaluru-based assessor at International Fact-Checking Network at U.S.-based Poynter Institute. — Reuters

Slain Saudi journalist Khashoggi kids 'paid'

WASHINGTON: The children of murdered Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi have received multimillion-dollar homes and are being paid thousands of dollars per month by the kingdom's authorities, The Washington Post reported Monday. Khashoggi—a contributor to the Post and a critic of the Saudi government—was killed and dismembered in October at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul by a team of 15 agents sent from Riyadh. His body has not been recovered.

The payments to his four children—two sons and two daughters—are part of an effort by Saudi Arabia to reach a long-term arrangement with Khashoggi family members, aimed in part at ensuring that they continue to show restraint in their public statements, the Post said. The houses given to the Khashoggi children are located in the port city of Jeddah and are worth up to \$4 million, the newspaper reported. Salah, the eldest of the children, plans to continue living in the kingdom, while the others, who live in the United States, are expected to sell the homes, the paper said.

In addition to the properties, the children are receiving \$10,000 or more per month and may also receive larger payments that could



Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi

Khashoggi's fate but later blamed rogue agents for his death. Its public prosecutor has charged 11 people over his murder.

Pakistan probes photo

In another development, Pakistan's interior ministry ordered investigations into six journalists who had posted pictures online of murdered Saudi columnist Jamal Khashoggi, global media watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said. RSF said it was "appalled" to learn of the investigations, adding that it "condemns this latest case of intimidation, especially given the Pakistani police's past behavior towards dissident journalists".

The investigations had been ordered in a letter dated March 13 from the cybercrime wing of the Federal Investigation Agency, part of the interior ministry, the group said in a statement. AFP has been unable to independently verify the letter, which has been widely circulated on social media, and Pakistani officials have not responded to requests for comment.

According to RSF, the FIA letter named the journalists as part of what it called "a targeted social media campaign" against Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman during his visit to Pakistan in February. The campaign consisted of "repeatedly posting photos of Jamal Khashoggi... throughout the crown prince's visit", the watchdog said. The visit came five months after the crown prince came under intense pressure following the murder of Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Khashoggi had been a fierce critic of the prince, and his killing ignited a diplomatic crisis.

Pakistan, long allied with Saudi Arabia, was seeking much-needed investment during the visit. The letter said posting Khashoggi's pictures online "conveyed a very disrespectful message" towards the visiting crown prince. Daniel Bastard, the head of RSF's Asia-Pacific desk, said: "This kind of harassment of journalists, whose only crime is posting content online that displeases the authorities, is symptomatic of the treatment that the Pakistani political establishment reserves for dissidents."

"The six journalists targeted by these investigations by the FIA are known for being outspoken on social networks, which are now the only place where they can express themselves freely," he added. Pakistan routinely ranks among the world's most dangerous countries for media workers. Coverage critical of the country's powerful military is considered a red flag, with reporters at times detained, beaten and even killed for running afoul of the security establishment. During his visit to Islamabad, the Saudi crown prince ended up signing investment deals worth up to \$20 billion. — Agencies

Facebook's call for internet rules sparks debate

WASHINGTON: Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg's call for "globally harmonized" online regulation raises questions about how internet platforms can deal with concerns about misinformation and abusive content while remaining open to free speech. Here are key questions about the latest proposal from Facebook:

What is Facebook seeking?

The leading social network wants a single set of rules on content to avoid running afoul of national requirements to remove "hate speech" or inappropriate content, kicking responsibility to a to-be-determined entity to avoid being accused of censorship. Zuckerberg said in a weekend post that "a common global framework" rather than country-by-country regulation "will ensure that the internet does not get fractured, entrepreneurs can build products that serve everyone, and everyone gets the same protections."

The Facebook chief says that the US and other countries "should build on the protections" offered in Europe's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), but stopped short of offering specifics. He did say any plan should not require data to be stored locally, "which would make it more vulnerable to unwarranted access."

The latest proposals appear to go a step beyond Zuckerberg's call last year for a "supreme court" to make decisions on questionable content. Analysts say Facebook desperately wants to avoid being the final arbiter for what is allowed or removed—which would put the platform in a difficult position each time there is controversy. "Zuckerberg understands there is deep public concern about social media and digital platforms," said Darrell West, director of the Brookings Institution's Center for Technology Innovation.

"By calling for some global regulations, he is acknowledging that reality, but seeking to direct regulation in unobtrusive ways. He is hoping for mild reforms that don't disrupt the Facebook business model and endanger ad revenues." Adam Chiara, a professor of communication at the University of Hartford, said regulations may end up helping giants like Facebook which have the resources to comply. "Other smaller tech companies may not have the means to adhere to strict regulation," Chiara said. "So in a sense, strict regulation could, ironically, be good for Facebook now since they had years to build an empire with little oversight."

How could global system work?

Internet regulations vary considerably by country, with what is considered hate speech in some countries is protected in the US and elsewhere. Similarly, there are vast differences on how private user data is collected and used in different parts of the world, with GDPR rules among the strictest. Lee McKnight, a Syracuse University professor of information studies, said some activists for more than a decade have been calling for a global convention of sorts that could set rules for online content.

"These platforms transcend individual nation states, so there is a logic to addressing them globally," said McKnight, who argued for a system like the international Law of the Sea. "However, to implement anything like that could be a decade-long process—if it had started 10 or 15 years ago we would be in a better spot today." It would be challenging to harmonize rules while enabling Facebook and other online firms to use "targeted" advertising, which is the business model for these companies. "A good start would be a federal privacy law in the United States," said

Nuala O'Connor, president of the Center for Democracy & Technology, a digital rights group, says a good start would be passage of an internet privacy law in the United States. "At present the US has been only a marginal player in the conversation around global data protection law, and should come to the table with a meaningful, comprehensive approach that allows new technologies to flourish, while ensuring that the digital dignity of the individual is protected."

What happens next?

Skeptics say Facebook is seeking to buy time amid calls for tougher regulation in the US and elsewhere—with some calls to break up major tech firms and other activists questioning whether they should maintain immunity from liability for content posted by users. "Zuckerberg's comments were not surprising given the mounting public pressure and looming fines and penalties," said David Carroll, a professor at the Parsons School of Art & Design of The New School who follows social media. "Feels like it's a good strategy to soften the blow." Others say Facebook is just now beginning to address, on a global scale, the difficult issues of privacy and content moderation.

"It's not just a problem of one company," said Anjana Susarla, a professor of information systems at Michigan State University. "Maybe we cannot resolve all those issues but we need to establish some framework and Mark Zuckerberg has taken the first step." McKnight said it would be too cumbersome for governments to try to come together on regulations, and that there is no real alternative to social platforms monitoring in compliance with laws around the world. — AFP

Murder of child maid forces Pakistan to soul search

LAHORE: The battered body of 16-year-old servant Uzma Bibi was found dumped in a canal and her wealthy employer charged with murder, the latest case highlighting the dangers domestic workers - especially children - face in Pakistan. Police said Uzma died after blows to the head with a kitchen utensil.

She had been working for the family in Lahore for eight months when she was killed in January this year. Her employer and two other women remain in custody as a police investigation into the murder and allegations of mistreatment drags on. "I will not give up. I prefer death, I will not let them go. I want to see them pay for what they did," Uzma's distraught father, Muhammad Riaz, told AFP.

The teenager earned just 4,000 rupees (\$28) per month. In Pakistan, 8.5 million domestic workers - including many children - labor for wealthier families according to the International Labour Organization (ILO). "Parents often see their children as a way to lift their families out of poverty," explained Arooma Shahzad, general secretary of the Domestic Workers' Union, the country's first - and still its only - such organization.

But domestic workers often face exploitation, violence, and sexual abuse. Pakistan's patriarchal culture, with its rigid social class structure, often prevents them from having a voice. Children are particularly vulnerable, and Uzma's case is the latest in a growing number of incidents involving minors. In 2016 a Pakistani judge and his wife were imprisoned for torturing their 10-year-old maid, while in 2017 a famous TV presenter was charged for forcefully detaining her teenage maid.

"Minors who become domestic workers often find themselves in a very vulnerable position, the target of abuse and exploitation by their employers," warned Shahzad. Theoretically it is illegal to employ anyone



LAHORE: Muhammad Riaz, father of 16-year-old Uzma, a maid who was found dumped in a city canal, shows her picture on a smartphone during an interview with AFP in Lahore. — AFP

under the age of 15 in Pakistan, but it remains a common practice. Saba, 15, had to leave school to work as a maid in Lahore. "I do not really have a choice, I have to work in two homes every day (to help) my family," she said. Her younger sister is expected to follow in her footsteps soon.

'Lack of humanity'

Details of Uzma's murder were sensationally revealed during a popular TV show, during which presenter Mukarram Kaleem made a passionate plea for justice. The tragic story gave rise to a torrent of outrage on social media with many using the #JusticeforUzma hashtag, and a broader debate on the rights of domestic workers in Pakistan, including children. —AFP

Analysis

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Shelter for man and beast: Can cyclone refuges protect all?

When forecasters predict a cyclone is about to blast into India's coastal state of Odisha, livestock owners face several bad choices. They can stay at home to protect their animals, risking their own lives, or leave their livestock behind and flee to storm shelters, risking livestock losses from wild weather or thefts. They also have a third option: bringing their animals along to shelters built to accommodate both people and beasts - though that is proving difficult to make work in practice, according to livestock owners and experts who have studied or worked with the shelters.

Odisha abuts the Bay of Bengal from where, in 1999, a super cyclone battered the state with 250 km-per-hour winds and drowned land many kilometers from shore. Around 10,000 people died, along with 316,000 cattle and 1.8 million poultry, according to government statistics. In response, the state created the Odisha Disaster Management Authority which, with help from organizations such as the Indian Red Cross Society, has built more than 200 cyclone shelters across six coastal districts, according to its website.

These are designed to accommodate livestock as well, according to Krushna Chandra Bisoi, the authority's shelter coordinator. Odisha's history of cyclones has made it one of the most disaster-prepared states in India, according to Mahesh Chander, an expert in livestock disaster management at the Indian Veterinary Research Institute. After Cyclone Phailin swept through Odisha in 2013, Margareta Wahlstrom, then head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, said the state's handling of the storm was a "landmark success".

But in practice, sheltering animals as well as people from storms remains a challenge. The cyclone shelter in Bentapur, a village of around 2,500 people outside the state capital of Bhubaneswar, for instance, can fit around 200 animals, according to Ramakanta Behera, who lives there and raises livestock. But that's not enough space for the village's many cattle, buffalo, goats, sheep, and chickens - and there is no food or water stocked for the animals, who must remain on the exposed ground floor, he said.

In nearby Ramachandrapur, a village of about the same size, an aging two-story pastel pink shelter stands between a school and a local government office and faces similar limitations. It is big enough to protect several dozen people and - in a squeeze - just 15 cattle, according to Debabrat Patra, a regional manager with ActionAid, a nonprofit that has experimented with and advocated for larger three-story shelters. The government-built shelter in Ramachandrapur has a partially closed upper floor for people and an open ground floor that can be used for livestock.

This design can leave animals vulnerable to flooding and high winds even inside the shelter, said Saudamini Das, a climate change adaptation expert at the Institute of Economic Growth in New Delhi. Questions about whether animals will find room in the shelter - and whether they will be safe there - can be a disincentive to use the facilities, livestock owners said. Pramod Kumar Patra, who keeps animals in Bentapur, said in his view shelters were constructed with animals as an afterthought - and if livestock die, their owners are left without their main source of income.

Gajender Sharma, the India country director for World Animal Protection, noted that "people always get priority, and so animals don't get a space even though it's designated for them. That often happens." The risks, which are likely to grow as climate change brings wilder weather, were evident last year in India's southern state of Kerala, where a massive flood killed more than 480 people. Around 46,000 livestock and 2.5 million poultry also perished, according to a World Animal Protection report citing government figures. Without shelters designed for livestock, people clustered with cattle and buffalo on overpasses, Rahul Sehgal, a senior director at Humane Society International who worked in Kerala after the flood, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a telephone interview.

Compensation

Another problem facing storm-prone states such as Odisha is how to compensate farmers who lose livestock in disasters. According to a 2017 state disaster management plan, each farming household can receive about \$430 for a full-grown cow or buffalo, \$360 for a horse, and about \$43 for a sheep, goat or pig - up to a limit of three cows or 30 goats, sheep or pigs. A large flock of chickens or ducks can bring up to 5,000 rupees (\$72). The regulations seem straightforward, but counting livestock after a disaster is nearly impossible, said Dipak Beura, a district training coordinator at the Odisha Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Department. Some owners stuff goats, sheep or chickens into small, illegal structures, and don't accurately report how many animals they own even in normal conditions, he said. When an inspector knocks after a storm, people tend to exaggerate about lost livestock, he added. "We face a lot of difficulties during that time," Beura said.

When a disaster happens years after the most recent nationwide livestock census - last done in 2012 and being conducted again in 2019 - livestock records reflect only the animals owned at the time of the survey, said Hrushiksh Pattasani, a state livestock inspector for almost 30 years. — Reuters



In this photograph taken on March 27, 2019, an Afghan orthopedic technician makes artificial limbs in a workshop at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) hospital for war victims and the disabled in Kabul. — AFP

Mines take growing toll in Afghanistan

At a rehabilitation center in Afghanistan, Imran Gul clasped two parallel bars, cautiously easing his weight onto his new leg. The 25-year-old nomad had been driving a tractor on hilly farmland when a landmine exploded, making him the latest victim of a scourge that has worsened in recent years as fighting intensifies between the government and the Taliban. "I did not hear the sound of the bomb," Gul told AFP as he tried out his prosthetic limb.

"I touched my leg and saw there was no leg, and there were pieces of shrapnel in my eyes. My hands were soaked in blood," he added. The blast in the eastern province of Ghazni also took two of Gul's fingers. According to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), casualties from landmines and so-called "explosive remnants of war" have soared five-fold between 2012 and 2017, the last year full data was available.

Casualties have increased as a result of the intensifying fight between the Afghan government and the Taliban, especially since 2014. Battlefields have been left strewn with landmines, unexploded mortars, rockets and homemade bombs - many of them picked up by curious children. "We are struggling to handle significant increases in the number of minefields in Afghanistan," said Patrick Fruchet, the UNMAS program manager in Kabul.

The Afghanistan government has signed an international anti-landmine treaty, but the Taliban and other militants are bound by no such rules. The UN hopes to raise attention to the issue Thursday, the annual International Day for

Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. "In 2012, we were down to about 36 casualties (killed and wounded) per month in Afghanistan - which is still enormous," said Fruchet. But those numbers have jumped. In 2017, there were more than 150 casualties a month. In addition to the new explosive detritus, Afghanistan is still grappling with the legacy of mines from the Afghan-Soviet war in the 1980s and the civil war in the 1990s.

Lack of funds

Mohammad Jamshidi, UNMAS deputy program manager, told AFP that a lack of funds means the country will probably miss the UN goal of being mine-free by 2023. The "deadline seems to be difficult to achieve because all these new contaminations and the lack of sufficient funding for the mine action", he said. In an effort to prevent further tragedies, various organizations hold information sessions to warn civilians, including children.

Hashmatullah Yadgari, who works for the Danish Refugee Council, said many Afghans - particularly returning former refugees - have no idea what landmines and other explosives even look like. People "do not have any information about it", Yadgari said. In a tent inside a refugee camp on the outskirts of Kabul, a family was recently shown the various types of explosive device they may well encounter. "We had no knowledge and awareness about the landmines," said Sakina Habibi, a mother of three who has just returned to Afghanistan after nearly 30

years in Pakistan and Iran. Many survivors of blasts go to one of seven orthopaedic rehabilitation hospitals funded by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

'Lucky to be alive'

At the same rehab center where Gul, the nomad who lost a leg, was being treated, other patients tried out their new prosthetics. Abdul, an Afghan mine clearer who only gave his first name, stood unsupported for the first time since getting fitted with two legs. He was disarming mines hidden in a house recaptured from the Taliban five months ago when the blast happened. "I de-activated five pressure mines. The sixth was designed to explode when exposed to light. When I moved my lamp closer - boom," Abdul said. "I did my job, I prevented people from being killed by these mines. Even though I lost my legs, I'm lucky to still be alive," he added. The resilient father of two wants to keep his job, "to again save lives", he said, mimicking holding a mine detector in one hand and a walking stick in the other. Of the 12,000 new patients received annually by the ICRC, between 1,500 and 2,000 are casualties of war, some four-fifths of whom are wounded by landmines, said Najmudin Helal, head of the Kabul center. Aside from physical rehab, the center works with patients to help them find a new place in society. Nearly half of the 300 staff at the Kabul hospital are disabled. "They learn easily and they can teach the new disabled easily. It's a hope (for new patients) to see that life carries on," Helal said. — AFP

Brunei sultan seeks conservative support with laws

Brunei's imposition of sharia laws, including death by stoning for gay sex and adultery, is a bid by the country's ruler to boost support among conservatives and highlights a steady drift away from the West, observers say. The tough punishments, which also include amputation of a hand and foot for theft, will come into force today when a new penal code is fully implemented after years of delays. The decision to move ahead with the laws has sparked a global outcry, with the United Nations branding them "cruel and inhumane" and actor George Clooney leading calls for Brunei-owned hotels to be boycotted.

By making his country the first in East or Southeast Asia to introduce a sharia penal code on a national level, analysts believe all-powerful Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah is seeking to burnish his Islamic credentials among conservative supporters at a time the economy is weakening. Brunei, a resource-rich former British protectorate on Borneo island with a population of about 400,000, was plunged into recession in recent years as oil prices plummeted and its crude reserves declined.

"Brunei is becoming Southeast Asia's Saudi Arabia," Bridget Welsh, a Southeast Asia expert from John Cabot University, told AFP. "The regime has increasingly been relying on religious legitimacy, appealing to a conservative Islamic ideology. The weakening economy in Brunei as well as concerns about possible erosion of support underscore this increasing reliance on religion."

Shift to China

The Muslim-majority nation's implementation of punishments that may scare off Western businesses also signals a shift towards investment from China, which typically refrains from criticizing trading partners on human rights, observers said. As in many other parts of Asia, Chinese companies are investing huge sums in the absolute monarchy, part of an infrastructure drive aimed at extending Beijing's economic and geopolitical clout. Initiatives include a multi-billion-dollar oil refinery - Brunei's biggest ever foreign

investment project - a dam and a highway. Xi Jinping visited the country in November last year, the first trip by a Chinese president in 13 years. Experts say it is hard to gauge the level of public backing for sharia law in Brunei, as most citizens would not publicly voice criticism of the sultan. But it is believed to have substantial support among the country's Muslim ethnic Malays, who make up some 70 percent of the population. Those who speak publicly generally welcome it.

"I'm proud, because implementing the law feels like it solidifies the Islamic identity of Brunei," Muhammad Antoni, a 27-year-old oil and gas company worker, told AFP. Others were irritated at the calls for a boycott of nine Brunei-owned hotels in Europe and the United States. "Regarding celebrities calling for a boycott, it's not their place," said Haziha Zainal, a 36-year-old civil servant. "These actions seem ignorant as they have not even been here to experience what it's like." There was some unease online, however, where people can comment more freely. "This worries me so much for Brunei's economy," one user posted on social media platform Reddit, adding that it would mean "losing more business overseas".

Global alarm

In reality, it is not yet clear if the toughest punishment - death by stoning - will be implemented. Brunei has long had capital punishment, and any execution should be carried out by hanging. But the last known instance of someone being put to death in the country was in 1957, according to Matthew Wolfe of human rights group The Brunei Project. While condemning the new penal code, Amnesty International said the country was "abolitionist in practice" when it comes to the death penalty.

The burden of proof is high before someone can be sentenced to death by stoning. An accused person must either confess to the offence, or it must be witnessed by at least four people who have to then testify. The sultan, the world's second-longest ruling monarch, has weathered controversies before - the monarchy was deeply embarrassed over revelations the ruler's brother Jefri allegedly embezzled billions of dollars - and is unlikely to back down. In a weekend statement, the government defended its right to introduce the new penal code, saying that sharia law "aims to educate, respect and protect the legitimate rights of all individuals". — AFP

Seeking justice: The long hunt for Rwanda's killers

The houses along the quiet tree-lined street look just like the normal homes found all across the Rwandan capital. But behind the walls of the three adjoining villas in Kigali are the headquarters of a global operation involving investigators and prosecutors who are working to track down the very worst killers of Rwanda's 1994 genocide. Inside, French investigators have come to talk to witnesses and to gather evidence. A Norwegian team is also on site. All are supported by Rwanda's Genocide Fugitive Tracking Unit (GFTU), a special team created in 2007 to prosecute the architects behind the slaughter of some 800,000 mostly Tutsi victims.

"The mandate was to investigate and compile case files for the fugitives who were still at large," said Faustin Nkusi, spokesman for the National Public Prosecution Authority, which oversees the unit. After the bloodshed, many perpetrators escaped. Some were arrested and taken to the UN-backed International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), based in Tanzania. That court closed in 2015 after several dozen convictions. For many of those who carried out the killings, justice has been at a local level through community tribunals known as "gacaca" courts. Between 2005 and 2012, these courts put nearly two million people on trial, with some two-thirds of cases resulting in a conviction. But the search for justice continues.

72,000 convicted in absentia

A quarter of a century after the genocide, Rwanda is as determined as ever to make sure the key suspects are arrested and put on trial over the killings. Many are still at large, scattered all over the world. The GFTU has issued 1,012 international arrest warrants for suspects in 32 countries. Several are in neighbouring nations like Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Tanzania. Others are further afield in places like Kenya, Malawi and Zambia. And still others fled to Europe, North America or even Australia.

Key suspects on the run include Felicien Kabuga, once one of Rwanda's richest men

who is accused of financing the genocide. He was reportedly spotted in Kenya. Another is Augustin Bizimana, a former defense minister believed to be hiding in DR Congo. The team is having an impact: 19 people who were allegedly involved in plotting the genocide have been arrested and returned to Rwanda for trial, while 22 others have been tried abroad. But this is only a drop in the ocean.

When the gacaca process closed in 2012, the courts handed the GFTU a list of nearly 72,000 fugitives who had been sentenced in absentia. And tracking down all those people along with other remaining suspects is tough. "It's not easy," Nkusi said. "We don't have the upper hand in investigating and arresting. We have to work together with other institutions from those countries." The GFTU team, which involves both investigators and prosecutors, works with teams across the world, including their judicial counterparts in countries where suspects are hiding. It also works with UN experts and the international policing agency, Interpol.

'Justice has to be done'

Investigators face many challenges: By now, suspects have grown much older and have had years to perfect their changed identity as well as to slip across borders. Some have obtained political asylum. After Rwanda abolished the death penalty in 2007, countries were encouraged to send suspects home. In recent years, suspects have been extradited from United States, Canada and The Netherlands. Other nations, however, argue that they do not have extradition treaties with Rwanda while also demonstrating a reluctance to try suspects themselves. "We wish they would be brought back to the country, to the scene of the crime," Nkusi said, but pointed out that some countries were "not politically willing to do that".

France, which denies Kigali's accusations of supporting the Hutu regime that planned the genocide, has refused multiple requests from Rwanda to extradite suspects. So far, only one former Rwandan army officer and two mayors have been sentenced in France. "They have an obligation to judge these people," said Nkusi. With Rwanda set this month to mark a quarter of a century since the genocide, Nkusi hopes the speed of extraditions will increase. "Justice has to be done," Nkusi said. "People have to be arrested. People have to be tried - to either be found innocent or be convicted." — AFP

Business

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WASHINGTON, DC: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde speaks at the US Chamber of Commerce yesterday in Washington, DC. — AFP

Global growth outlook 'precarious': IMF

Lagarde says world economy outlook vulnerable to trade, Brexit and financial market shocks

WASHINGTON: Global growth in 2019 should be even slower than previously expected but a "precarious" rebound later this year is likely, the head of the International Monetary Fund said yesterday.

In a speech ahead of next week's spring meetings with the World Bank, IMF chief Christine Lagarde said the world economy was vulnerable to shocks from Brexit, high debt levels and trade tensions, as well as unease on financial markets.

Lagarde, in a preview of the April 12-14 IMF and World Bank Spring Meetings, said the global economy is "unsettled" after two years of steady growth, with the outlook "precarious" and vulnerable to trade, Brexit and financial market shocks.

"The expected rebound in global growth this year is precarious," she said in prepared remarks at the US Chamber of Commerce. "This is a delicate moment that requires us to handle with care." Lagarde said the IMF next week was due to cut its global growth forecasts even further than it had in January, with more than two thirds of the world economy likely to see slowing growth.

At the start of the year, the fund had already lowered

its expectations several notches from a prior outlook, calling for global GDP to expand by 3.5 percent this year and next. Next week's meetings—a semi-annual Washington conclave of central bankers and finance ministers—comes with the backdrop of fraught negotiations between Beijing and Washington to resolve their eight-month trade war.

Gloom about slowing growth in Asia, Europe and the United States, as well as the protected US-China trade war, have sparked periodic jitters on markets since last year.

But Lagarde pointed to some grounds for optimism, saying major central banks, including the US Federal Reserve, were showing patience about the speed of interest rate increases while China had moved to stimulate its economy. "These policy responses have supported an easing of financial conditions and increased capital flows to emerging markets, where currencies have strengthened relative to the US dollar," Lagarde said.

She called on member governments to help avert mounting dangers by modernizing tax systems, cutting public debts and reducing wealth inequalities through

spending on education, health and infrastructure, recommendations the IMF has made before.

Lagarde repeated warnings about imposing tariffs, saying such barriers to trade were "potentially self-inflicted wounds" that threatened to dent economic growth and leave no winners.

But Lagarde also said governments should address the dangers posed by the concentration of market power in the hands of corporate giants, especially in the tech sector, with major players often able to block out competition and garner the lion's share of profits for themselves.

While IMF research showed this concentration had so far had little effect on business investment, production and worker pay, according to Lagarde, there was still a danger that it could.

"I am not saying that we currently have a monopoly problem," she said. "But I am saying that we should take appropriate measures so that it does not become a problem."

Lagarde cautioned, however, that years of high public debt and low interest rates since the financial crisis a decade ago have left limited room in many countries to

act when the next downturn arrives so countries need to make smarter use of fiscal policy. This means striking a better balance between growth, debt sustainability and social objectives and acting to address growing inequality by building stronger social safety nets.

She previewed new IMF research showing that rising trade barriers were hurting investment in plant, machinery and job creating projects.

Lagarde also said that the IMF has revised its analysis of the US-China trade war's impacts, showing that if all trade between the world's two largest economies were subjected to a 25 percent tariff, US gross domestic product would fall by up to 0.6 percent while China's GDP would fall by up to 1.5 percent.

US President Donald Trump has threatened to subject all imports from China to a 25 percent tariff if the two sides cannot resolve their disputes in negotiations. Chinese Vice Premier Liu He is due in Washington for another round of talks starting today. "Nobody wins a trade war," Lagarde added. "That is why we need to work together to reduce trade barriers and modernize the global trade system." — Agencies

US, China leading race for 5G wireless: Survey

WASHINGTON: The United States and China are in a virtual deadlock in the race for 5G, or fifth-generation wireless networks expected to unlock new services, an industry survey showed yesterday.

The report shows the United States has closed the gap with China in "readiness" for the ultrafast wireless systems and has more 5G deployments planned in 2019 than any other country. The study for the wireless industry group CTIA and conducted by the research firm Analysys Mason showed the US moved ahead of South Korea in 5G readiness over the past year to a virtual tie with China, as a result of considerable investment in 5G systems.

CTIA president Meredith Attwell Baker said in a statement that the United States has made "impressive strides" in preparing for the new technology but that more is needed to maintain leadership. "We can't be complacent as the 5G race has really just begun," she said.

"We must redouble our efforts to combat the 5G ambitions and investments by China and others."

Analysts expect 5G networks to play a cru-



LAS VEGAS: In this file photo, LG Senior Vice President David VanderWaal discusses 5G at the LG press conference at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center during CES 2019 in Las Vegas. — AFP

cial role in delivering data for autonomous vehicles, remote medicine and other services with heavy data usage. US officials have sought to block Chinese firms such as Huawei from deploying 5G systems on national security grounds, raising concerns that this will slow the rollout of high-speed networks. Officials have also floated the idea of a government-backed 5G network which could be more secure against foreign espionage, an idea

roundly opposed by the telecom industry.

According to the report, the US leads with 92 commercial 5G deployments planned for 2019 but noted that China's wireless operators are conducting "hundreds of large-scale 5G trials across the country." "China retains a significant infrastructure advantage," the report said. "A recent study showed China with more than 14 wireless cell sites per 10,000 people, compared to 4.7 in the United States." — AFP

US core capital goods orders dip, shipments flat

WASHINGTON: New orders for key US-made capital goods slipped in February and shipments were unchanged, but data for January was revised slightly higher, which could support views that the manufacturing sector was stabilizing.

The Commerce Department report on yesterday came on the heels of a survey showing a rebound in a measure of factory activity in March from a more than two-year low. Manufacturing has been hurt by slowing global growth, a trade war between the United States and China, as well as the dollar's strength last year. Orders for non-defense capital goods excluding aircraft, a closely watched proxy for business spending plans, fell 0.1 percent, pulled down by declining demand for machinery and computers and electronic products.

Data for January was revised slightly up to show these so-called core capital goods orders increasing 0.9 percent instead of rising 0.8 percent as previously

reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast core capital goods orders unchanged in February. Core capital goods orders increased 2.6 percent on a year-on-year basis. Shipments of core capital goods were unchanged in February after an upwardly revised 1.0 percent rise in the prior month. Core capital goods shipments are used to calculate equipment spending in the government's gross domestic product measurement.

They were previously reported to have gained 0.8 percent in January. The February report was delayed by a 35-day partial shutdown of the federal government that ended on Jan. 25. The March report will be published on April 25 as scheduled.

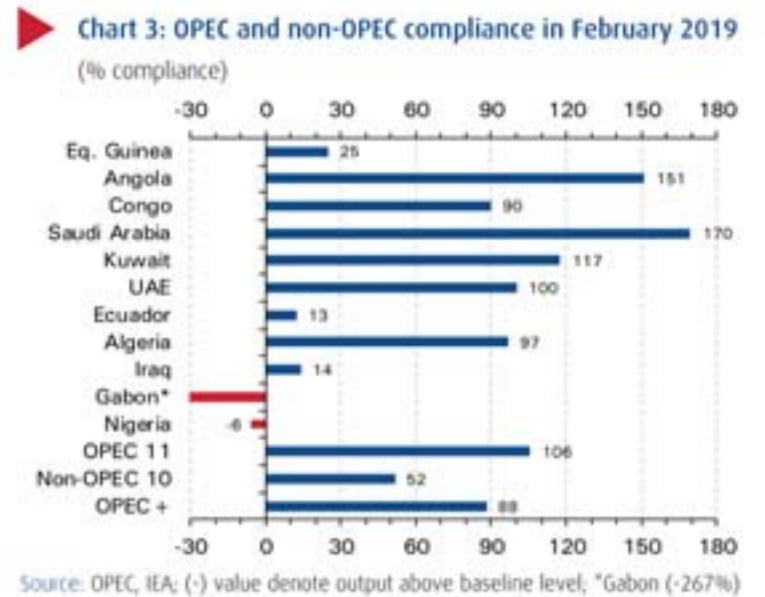
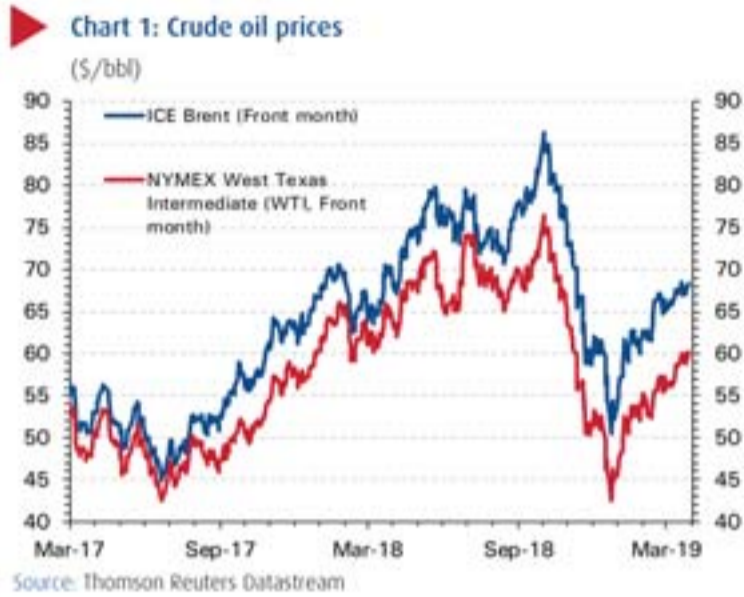
US financial markets were little moved by the data. The Institute for Supply Management said on Monday that its index of national factory activity rose to a reading of 55.3 in March from 54.2 in February, which had marked the lowest level since November 2016. The ISM reported strong order growth in March. The strong ISM survey, together with a mixed February retail sales report, solid construction spending and January business inventory data, tempered expectations of a sharp slowdown in economic growth in the first quarter. — Reuters

Business

NBK OIL MARKET COMMENTARY

Tightening supplies drive oil to best quarterly performance in 10 years

Downside risks include US shale gains and end to OPEC+ supply curbs



KUWAIT: Oil prices closed out March with their best quarterly performance since 2009, with Brent and WTI rising by 27 percent and 32 percent, respectively, in 1Q19. Benchmark Brent crude ended March at \$68.4/bbl, having traded sideways in the \$66-68 range for most of the month. The US marker, West Texas Intermediate (WTI), hit \$60 last week for the first time since November 2018.

Oil prices have been buoyed by signs that the market is tightening, with Saudi Arabia, especially, taking the lead in cutting oil production aggressively to drain any excess supply that could put downward pressure on the price. Russia, its non-OPEC partner, also recently reaffirmed its commitment to the Vienna Agreement by indicating that it was on track to meet its quota obligation by the end of March or the beginning of April. Furthermore, OPEC's efforts have been augmented by falling output from Iran and Venezuela due to political turmoil, mismanagement and US sanctions as well as by lower supplies from Canada and Libya. Iranian production was down 28 percent y/y at 2.74 mb/d in February, according to OPEC secondary sources, while its exports over the same period were almost halved to 1.3 mb/d, Bloomberg reported. In Venezuela, crude production was at around a 28-year low of 1.0 mb/d in February, according to OPEC data.

Even in the US, the data has been less bullish of late. While US crude production continues to break new ground, reaching 12.1 mb/d in the week-ending 22 March, the number of oil drilling rigs has fallen for six consecutive weeks, by a cumulative 69, or 7.8 percent in 2019 to 816, according to Baker Hughes.

As a measure of market optimism, hedge fund man-

agers have increased wagers on oil prices rising to the highest since October 2018. Money manager net length (the ratio of long to short positions) reached 308,606 combined futures and options contracts as of 19 March.

Led by Saudi Arabia, which appears determined to prop up oil prices (allegedly targeting \$70 barrel), OPEC-11 compliance (Iran, Venezuela and Libya are excluded) reached 106 percent in February, with aggregate production falling by 812 kb/d from the Vienna Agreement partners' reference level to 25.9 mb/d (30.6 mb/d for OPEC-14). GCC oil exporters Saudi Arabia and notched up a second consecutive month of overcompliance, while the UAE reached its production quota target for the first time. Non-OPEC compliance, meanwhile, improved to 52 percent in February from 25 percent in January. Russia reiterated last week that it intends to fully comply soon.

Oil supply/demand balances indicate tighter market

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has left unchanged its global oil demand growth estimate for 2019 at 1.4 mb/d, a slight increase on 2018's estimate of 1.3 mb/d, but with a synchronized global growth slowdown, this could be revised down. Assuming that OPEC-11 continues on its current trajectory of over-compliance (and production in Iran/Venezuela/Libya stays at February levels) and factoring in the IEA's projection for non-OPEC supply growth of 1.8 mb/d this year, then the demand/supply balance should flip into a deficit over 2Q-3Q19. It should then revert back to a slight surplus in 4Q19.

Oil prices might be expected to thus firm up over 2Q-

3Q19, which seems to be the consensus at the moment. Of course, the oil price outlook rests on several moving parts, not all of which will come into play to the extent envisaged or at all during the remainder of the year. Of those that could affect prices positively, the expiration and non-renewal of the 180-day US sanctions waivers on Iran in early May might be expected to have the greatest impact, possibly shaving another few hundred thousand barrels per day off global crude supply. But it is not clear yet what the Trump administration intends to do in this regard.

On the one hand, Trump will want to honor his pledge to be tough on Iran but on the other he will want to keep gasoline prices low for the US consumer and to improve his re-election chances in 2020. A more aggressive response vis-a-vis Iran in the context of falling Venezuelan production could lead to an even tighter market, especially in heavy crude, and propel crude prices above what the president would be comfortable with. Extending the waivers for another six months or slowly tightening the criteria, by reducing the list of countries eligible for waivers, for instance, might be an attractive middle way.

Quarterly oil demand and supply balance in 2019

Downside risks to oil prices could include: (i) greater-than-expected US shale-led supply gains; (ii) termination of the OPEC+ supply agreement in June, or under-compliance by a few members; and (iii) a further weakening of global economic growth. The former is looking less likely at the moment, however, with reports of pipeline block-

ages in Texas, slowing-to-stalling average monthly production, and a sixth-consecutive week of declining rig counts. Indeed, in early March the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) cut both its 2019 and 2020 oil production forecasts, by 110 kb/d to 12.3 mb/d in 2019 and by 170 kb/d to 13.03 mb/d in 2020, respectively. Drilling in the smaller shale plays has become more circumspect amid a focus on shareholder returns.

Enter the IMO 2020 regulations as the wildcard

Looming over the horizon is the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) 2020 regulations on ships' sulfur emissions. These will come into force on 1 January 2020 and require all ships to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions from 3.5 percent to 0.5 percent. To comply, ships will be forced to switch from high sulfur fuel oil (HSFO)-which are among the residual products of the refining process-to low sulfur diesel/gasoil or install scrubbers to remove the sulfur.

Demand for oil from maritime shipping accounts for 3 percent of the market (5 mb/d), and the phasing out of HSFO is expected to put upward pressure on diesel prices and crude oil prices indirectly in late 2019 and early 2020. But the oil price impact could be asymmetrical, with upward price pressure on light sweet crudes such as Brent, which are low in sulfur, and downward pressure on heavier sour crudes such as Dubai and Iraqi crudes, which yield higher levels of sulfur in comparison. Much will depend on how prepared global refineries are for the change, and it may take until 2H19 for the situation to become clearer.

Trade slowed in Q4, auto tariffs, Brexit are 2019 risks, says WTO

GENEVA: World trade shrank by 0.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2018 and is likely to grow by 2.6 percent this year, slower than 3.0 percent growth in 2018 and below a previous forecast of 3.7 percent, the World Trade Organization said yesterday.

In its annual forecast, the WTO said trade had been weighed down by new tariffs and retaliatory measures, weaker economic growth, volatility in financial markets and tighter monetary conditions in developed countries. It forecast in September that 2018 growth would be 3.9 percent, down from 4.6 percent in 2017. WTO Director-General Roberto Azevedo told a news conference that the lower forecast was no surprise, given the trade tensions between the United States and China.

WTO chief economist Robert Koopman said worse may be to come, with an even bigger impact if US

President Donald Trump goes ahead with a plan to impose high tariffs on global imports of cars later this year. "US-China trade is about 3 percent of global trade. Automobile trade globally is about 8 percent of global trade. So you can imagine that the impact of automobile tariffs is going to be bigger than the impact of the US-China trade conflict."

"I think it's pretty clear that any automobile tariff would likely have bigger knock-on effects through the global economy than what we see from the US-China conflict."

The WTO did not make a specific prediction about the impact of Brexit, but Koopman said in the worst case it would help push global trade growth down to the bottom end of the WTO's forecast range in 2019, 1.3 to 4.0 percent. "The UK's own analysis suggests that 'no deal' or 'hard Brexit' would shave 7.6 percent off British GDP. That would be a big number. It would force our numbers down to that lower part of our range," Koopman said.

"If we end up in the fall with a revision, my guess is the likelihood of a revision is that it's downward, based on any number of factors from Brexit to no resolution in the US-China trade conflict, and other trade conflicts going on." Although the volume of global trade grew only slowly in 2018, the dollar value rose 10 percent to \$19.48 trillion, partly because oil prices rose 20 percent, the WTO said.

The value of commercial services trade grew by 8 percent to \$5.80 trillion in 2018, driven by strong import growth in Asia. — AFP

ECB in no hurry to spare banks' negative rates

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank will consider carefully before moving to soothe the effects of negative interest rates on eurozone lenders, board member Sabine Lautenschlaeger said yesterday.

"We need first to better understand if and to which extent banks are affected on a net basis by the negative deposit rates," Lautenschlaeger said. When banks park cash with the ECB rather than lending it out or investing it, they suffer a negative interest rate of -0.4 percent.

That leaves the sector as a whole paying around 7.5 billion euros (\$8.4 billion) per year to the Frankfurt institution for the privilege. However, the burden on banks is eased by the ECB's low-cost loans, known as targeted long-term refinancing operations (TLTROs), which offer increasingly favorable rates the more banks lend to the real economy.

Central bank chief Mario Draghi said last week that he was ready to come to banks' aid if negative interest rates

proved to be hurting their profitability. Markets believed he was hinting at a so-called "tiering" system, which would exempt part of lenders' deposits with the central bank from the costliest negative rates.

Denmark and Sweden already have such measures in place. But eurozone central bankers are divided over the need for the step, which could be complex to set up and risk confusing signals about future policy.

Lautenschlaeger said it was not yet clear "whether there is a monetary policy case for such an instrument and which consequences tiering would have" on the ECB's goal of securing inflation just below 2.0 percent. "I am not yet convinced" that it is necessary, she added.

While Dutch central bank head Klaas Knot has similar reservations to Lautenschlaeger, France's Francois Villeroy de Galhau is in favour of offering banks relief.

Both governors sit on the ECB's 25-strong governing council, made up of all 19 of the bloc's central bank chiefs and the six members of the executive board.

The body has yet to discuss tinkering with its negative rate policy. But the central bankers agreed last month to offer a new round of TLTRO loans later this year, although at less generous conditions than previous ones. The next wave, set to start in September, will include an "incentive" for banks to "smoothly move out" of their dependence on central bank lending, Lautenschlaeger said. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	305.200
Euro	344.110
Sterling Pound	402.250
Canadian dollar	230.340
Turkish lira	56.620
Swiss Franc	307.820
US Dollar Buying	304.000

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.742
Indian Rupees	4.417
Pakistani Rupees	2.199
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.745
Nepali Rupees	2.754
Singapore Dollar	226.330
Hongkong Dollar	38.881
Bangladesh Taka	3.606
Philippine Peso	5.818
Thai Baht	9.653
Malaysian ringgit	78.056

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.441
Qatari Riyal	83.881
Omani Riyal	793.242
Bahraini Dinar	810.950
UAE Dirham	83.149

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.700
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Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.594
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.226
Tunisian Dinar	105.240
Jordanian Dinar	431.200
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.400
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.434

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.340
Canadian Dollar	227.760
Sterling Pound	404.095
Euro	345.095
Swiss Frank	305.505
Bahrain Dinar	809.355
UAE Dirhams	83.265
Qatari Riyals	84.500
Saudi Riyals	82.055
Jordanian Dinar	430.540
Egyptian Pound	17.619
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.727
Indian Rupees	4.420
Pakistani Rupees	2.169
Bangladesh Taka	3.617
Philippines Peso	5.768
Cyprus pound	18.105
Japanese Yen	3.760
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.766
Malaysian Ringgit	75.495
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.665

Thai Bhat	10.550
Turkish Lira	56.685
Singapore dollars	225.141

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.391603	0.405503
Czech Korune	0.005240	0.014540
Danish Krone	0.041707	0.046707
Euro	0.334223	0.347923
Georgian Lari	0.112778	0.112778
Hungarian 0.000971	0.001161	
Norwegian Krone	0.031422	0.036622
Romanian Leu	0.054772	0.071622
Russian ruble	0.004664	0.004664
Slovakia	0.009136	0.019136
Swedish Krona	0.028764	0.033764
Swiss Franc	0.2988355	0.309835
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.207677	0.219677
New Zealand Dollar	0.200376	0.209875
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.222655	0.232655
US Dollars	0.301100	0.306400
US Dollars Mint	0.301600	0.306400
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003063	0.003864

Chinese Yuan	0.043948	0.047448
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036792	0.039542
Indian Rupee	0.003777	0.004549
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002654	0.002834
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.071000	0.077000
Nepalese Rupee	0.002686	0.003026
Pakistan Rupee	0.001543	0.002313
Philippine Peso	0.005783	0.006083
Singapore Dollar	0.219624	0.229624
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001368	0.001948
Taiwan	0.009771	0.009951
Thai Baht	0.009283	0.009833
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.794978	0.811478
Egyptian Pound	0.017776	0.020376
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.425563	0.434563
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021462	0.045462
Omani Riyal	0.786409	0.792089
Qatar Riyal	0.079541	0.084481
Saudi Riyal	0.080300	0.081600
Syrian Pound	0.001294	0.001514
Tunisian Dinar	0.096925	0.104925
Turkish Lira	0.048789	0.060269
UAE Dirhams	0.081670	0.083370
Yemeni Riyal	0.000092	0.001072

6 reasons why Huawei P30 Pro is the super camera phone we've all been waiting for



Huawei P30 Series regional launch event in Dubai

A Leica Quad camera system and 10 times Superzoom among key features



Gene Jiao, President of Huawei Consumer Business Group - Middle East & Africa



Jason Chen, Chief Marketing Officer Middle East & Africa



Kuwait Times Marketing Manager Taleb Kanjo with Jason Chen, Chief Marketing Officer Middle East & Africa, Huawei in Dubai.

KUWAIT: Huawei P30 series was revealed to the Middle East and Africa during a regional launch event at the Burj Park in Dubai. The series include three different devices: Huawei P30 Pro, Huawei P30 and Huawei P30 Lite. While each phone embeds with different features, the Huawei P30 Pro is dubbed the super camera phone that packs extraordinary features.

During the event, the audience was treated to a mesmerizing lightshow projected on the Burj Khalifa, artistically depicting the Huawei P30 Pro's unprecedented technological capabilities before welcoming on stage the renowned television presenter, and Arab world personality Lojain Omran, who was invited to describe her experience with the Huawei P30 Pro as she was one of the first users to try out the super camera phone and share her hands-on experience when it comes to its fantastic camera and the optimized Snapchat experience.

The Huawei P30 Pro was designed to push the envelope in terms of innovation, completely changing people's expectations of smartphone photography and videography with a game changer Leica Quad camera system. So, what exactly are the 6 reasons making this new gem a super camera phone, and how can they take your pictures and videos to the next level?

#1 - An optimized Snapchat experience

Huawei also announced that it has worked to optimize the Huawei P30 series camera for Snapchat, bringing more camera innovation to users, aiming for Snapchatters to soon be able to enjoy more experiences using the Huawei P30 camera.

#2 - A 40MP Leica Quad Camera system for the clearest images you could possibly take

The Huawei P30 Pro features four rear cameras - an absolute game changer in smartphone photography and videography capability. The Leica Quad Camera system includes a powerful 40MP main camera with a Huawei SuperSpectrum Sensor that lets more light in so clear photographs and video content can be captured in the dark; a 20MP Ultra Wide Angle Camera which enables you to take wider shots both horizontally and vertically; a 8MP telephoto camera with a Huawei SuperZoom which captures brings objects at great distance closer.

A Huawei Time of Flight (ToF) Camera designed to measure depth of field producing portraits with beautifully blurred backgrounds and sharp subjects in the foreground. Last but not least is a 32MP front camera which allows you to take selfies in unprecedentedly highly quality.



#3 - Bringing distant objects closer to you with the Huawei Superzoom

Despite its ultra-slim and sleek chassis, the device embeds a mighty Huawei Superzoom lens - no short than an engineering marvel. It features a 5x optical zoom, a 10x hybrid zoom and an unprecedented 50x digital zoom which can capture objects at a great distance in clear, pristine images. Your naked eye will fail to define the details of a bird on a tree branch or those of a boat on the horizon, or even your favorite artist performing on stage. The Huawei P30 Pro's zooming technology can however capture all

of these in clear quality, enabling you to unlock a world of discovery.

#4 - Two views are better than one with Huawei Dual-View

Whoever has said 'less is more' has not yet experienced Huawei Dual-View technology, which is about to change the landscape of videography. Huawei Dual-View Video enables users to simultaneously capture a large area and a close-up and view the two shots together on one screen. With this feature, you can capture your loved one's surprise party in one frame and the expression on their face in another, as they see the



crowd - giving a richer and more meaningful feeling to your videos.

#5 - More usage and less time-wasting with a massive battery and the Huawei SuperCharge

Understanding users who are constantly on the go, the Huawei P30 Pro's battery and charging technology was designed to empower you, allowing you to spend more time using your device and less time charging it. With a hefty 4200mAh battery, you will have more than an entire day of intensive usage without having to worry about running out of charge, while dramatically

shortening your charging breaks with the Huawei SuperCharge adapter which tops up the battery to approximately 70 percent in only 30 minutes.

#6 - Take steadier and brighter shots with the Super Night Mode

Night photography has always been limited on smartphones due to shutter technicalities, which prevent you from taking clear shots. Images taken in low-light conditions are often darker than desired and either shaky, blurry or both. This has led Huawei to create the Super Night Mode - a groundbreaking technology, enabling you to snap much clearer and brighter photos while filtering and adjusting movements caused by shaky hands, leaving you with sharp, crisp and steady images, without the need of a tripod. Additionally and for the first time, videos can benefit from this incredible feature, making dark shots extremely clear. With one touch of the shutter button, you can snap stunning videos in the dark without compromising color, clarity or detail.

With the Super Night Mode, photos and videos taken during parties, concerts, of extravagant city lights or low-noise starry skies can all be captured brightly with gorgeous details on the Huawei P30 Pro.

A better themes and music service
At Huawei mobile services, Huawei Themes aims to bring more unique designs this year coupled with more dynamic themes, including themes inspired from works of Da Vinci, Monet, Van Gogh and many other legendary artists as well as themes based on local events like Ramadan. Huawei P30 series also comes with 3 months free VIP trial for Huawei Music. Millions of Arabic and International tracks are available now in Huawei Music for new subscribers.



Business

Agility reports 18.4% jump in net profit to KD 81.1 million in 2018

Company holds AGM and EGM for 2018 financial year

KUWAIT: Agility, a leading global logistics provider, held yesterday its Annual Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly Meeting at the Radisson Blu Hotel, with a quorum of 76 percent.

The company's shareholders approved all the items on the agenda, including Agility's audited financial results, and endorsed the Board of Directors' recommendation for a cash dividend of 15 percent (15 fils for every share) and a bonus share distribution of 15 percent (15 shares for every 100 shares). These dividends are entitled for the shareholders who will be registered on the company's shareholders' record on the settlement date 29 April 2019. Dividends will be distributed on 1 May 2019. The Annual Ordinary General Assembly also elected new board of directors for the coming three years.

New board members are as follows:

- 1 Public Institution for Social Security
- 2 National Real Estate Company
- 3 Henadi Anwar Essa Al-Saleh
- 4 Tarek Abdulaziz Sultan Al-Essa

5 Naser Mohammed Fahed Al-Rashed
6 Faisal Jameel Sultan Al-Essa
7 Sultan Anwar Sultan Al-Essa
In 2018, Agility reported a net profit of KD 81.1 million, or 56.06 fils per share, an increase of 18.4 percent from 2017. Revenue for the year reached KD 1,550.2 million, and EBITDA was KD 154.8 million, increases of 10.2 percent and 14.5 percent, respectively. Cash flow from operations has been healthy and growing, while free cash flow has been limited as a result of capital expenditure that led to increased borrowing to fund strategic investments.

"Agility continues to invest in its future by building more than 1 million sqm of new warehousing and industrial facilities across the Middle East and Africa; building, through one of its subsidiaries, the \$1.2 billion Reem Mall mega project in Abu Dhabi; and investing more than \$100 million in Shipa, its digital logistics platform," said Agility Vice Chairman and CEO Tarek Sultan. "As always, we thank our shareholders, customers, employees, and partners for their trust and support in Agility. We look forward to an even better 2019," Sultan said.



KUWAIT: Agility holds its Annual Ordinary and Extraordinary General Assembly Meeting at the Radisson Blu Hotel yesterday.

Nissan Al-Babtain celebrates a decade in continued customer trust

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the sole authorized dealer of Nissan in the State of Kuwait recently celebrated its solid and successful partnership of one of the most trusted brands in Kuwait with its key clientele during the "Nissan 10th Annual Aftersales Customer Awards Ceremony" held at the Crown Plaza Hotel, on March 27th, 2019.

This year, the annual event witnessed a grand celebration of a decade of excellence that honors its customers and clients responsible for Nissan's sustained progress as well as 70 years of success by the homegrown conglomerate. Customers were rewarded and entitled to enter a raffle draw and win 10 valuable prizes.

The "Nissan 10th Annual Aftersales Award ceremony" was attended by General Manager Automotive Division at Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain - Laurent Pernet, Surendra Acharya - General Manager - Aftersales Nissan Gulf and Sanjeev Aggarwal - Director Aftersales (NMEF), as well as Al-Babtain top management in the Sales and Aftersales. Business community leaders from different industries, senior officials, government officers, and Nissan vehicle owners were also present.

Al-Babtain Automotive GM - Laurent Pernet said, "At Al-Babtain, our commitment with Nissan is to provide best in its class service for the large and growing Nissan customer base in Kuwait. One of our main focus is to provide Nissan Aftersales services at very competitive, affordable prices with quality, reliability for peace of mind driving. This is our daily job and our commitment. For 70 years Al-Babtain has represented and developed the brand Nissan in Kuwait: 70 years of presence, this is an exceptional sign of loyalty and dedication, an exceptional sign of belief in the Brands, including Infiniti and Renault, and their products. And despite our old age, we keep moving the business forward and more than ever excited when we meet



our best and long term partners. Particularly delighted to be here with you to celebrate our 10th event, bringing together customers from various segments of the market, mainly from Fleet wholesale, Government organizations, insurance and independent garages, retail shops.

He further added, "As leading pioneers in a competitive market, Al-Babtain was also the first to introduce this type of an awards ceremony in the GCC which soon became a signature practice of Nissan. We thank our business partners, loyal customers for their confidence in our unique range of products, services, and personnel."

A leading name among all segments and demographics in Kuwait, Al-Babtain Group is headed by its full-fledged dedication to customized, state of the art services that have earned it a solid reputation locally and regionally. Al-Babtain Group now represents some of the world's major international corporations and distributes a wide variety of products and services. Marking its 70th year, the Group has experienced continued recognition, owing to its advanced flexible management style and long-term vision. The astounding results were achieved due to a versatile strategic formula focusing on growth amongst its sphere of activities: including automotive, technology, investment, information technology, industrial and Finance.

Presently, Nissan Kuwait has the largest Aftersales Service and Parts Network in the State of Kuwait with eight quick service centers, three main service centers and two body repair centers, in addition to 13 parts outlets established in strategic locations for easier accessibility. The latest addition to the wide network is the designated Nissan Quick Patrol Workshop, to support the needs of its expanding clientele in Kuwait.



Juncker wants 'extra efforts' as Italy growth falters

ROME: European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker called yesterday for "extra efforts" from Italy's populist government to keep the increasingly stagnant economy growing, after talks with Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. "I'm a little worried to see the Italian economy continuing to regress. I would like the Italian authorities to make extra efforts to keep economic growth alive," Juncker told journalists alongside Conte.

The budget agreed late last year between Rome and Brussels predicted one percent growth for 2019, but "we know today that this figure must be revised down,"

Juncker said. Economy Minister Giovanni Tria on Sunday warned that Italy was headed for zero economic growth this year, while brushing off possible changes to the government's big-spending budget.

Italy's central bank and the International Monetary Fund have both estimated that the eurozone's third-largest economy would expand by a meagre 0.6 percent this year, while the European Commission was more pessimistic, pencilling growth of just 0.2 percent.

Italy's public debt now sits at 2.3 trillion euros (\$2.6 trillion), or 131 percent of Italy's GDP-way above the 60 percent EU ceiling. "Given Italy's heavy debt level, all policies revolving around the notion of relaunching the economy will have limited effect," Juncker said.

"We but we remain in contact to see how we'll move forward."

In the fourth quarter of 2018, the Italian economy contracted owing to a slowdown in exports, plunging it into a technical recession and increasing the government's budgetary problems. — AFP

Burgan Bank's Airport branch to open on holiday

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announces that its airport branch will serve its customers and resume the normal working hours during "Al-Esraa Wal Mearaj" holiday, on Thursday (4th of

April, 2019). The branch operates 24 hours in an effort to accommodate banking requirements for travelers during the public holiday. For more information on any products or services,

customers are required to contact Burgan Bank's call center 1804080 during the holiday. On this occasion, Burgan Bank extends its best wishes and greetings to the public.

Ooredoo announces winner of Infiniti Q60

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, in collaboration with Al-Babtain Turnkey Solutions, the distributor of Samsung in Kuwait, announced a special draw for customers when purchasing Samsung Galaxy S10 plans during the Samsung Galaxy S10 event held last March. Customers who subscribed to Shamel plans with the new device where automatically enrolled to enter a draw on the Infiniti Q60 car. The winner of the Infiniti Q60 car was announced in a draw held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on March 27,

2019. Customers can get the Galaxy S10 devices starting from KD29 per month with unlimited local minutes and 100GB internet. This offer comes in line with Ooredoo's commitment to enriching the experiences of customers with their different needs and lifestyles, in addition to providing the best in class mobile devices. Customers can track their usage of Ooredoo's services on the My Ooredoo app, available for free on iOS AppStore and Android's Google Play Store, giving customers real-time updates on plan usage.

The new devices boast a number of key specifications, such as the Infinity-O Display, multi-camera with ultra wide camera, ultrasonic fingerprint scanner, wireless power share, 24-hour intelligent battery, and game optimization. The Galaxy S10 screen sizes range from 6.4" on the Galaxy S10+, 6.1" on the Galaxy S10, and 5.8" on the Galaxy S10e with external memory of up to 512GB.

Committing to its position as the leader of telecommunication in Kuwait, and continuing its promise to deliver products and services that enrich the lives of its customers, Ooredoo Kuwait collaborated with Al-Babtain Turnkey Solutions for the second consecutive year earlier this month to launch the new Samsung flagship smartphone devices, the Galaxy S10, Galaxy S10+ and the Galaxy S10e.

Customers and technology enthusiasts attended the event at Ooredoo's head office, which was launched with exclusive Shamel plans for the attendees of the event. The event was attended by several social media influencers in addition to representatives of Al Babtain Turnkey Solutions, the official distributor of Samsung in Kuwait, and representatives of the international brand Samsung, who lauded Ooredoo's efforts in organizing a big event to launch the new flagship devices.



Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 31st March 2019 announcing the names of its winners for the week from the 24th March till the 28th March 2019, in which five winners will receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:

- Mansourah Jawad Mohamad
- Fayed Khafeef Jeheel Ali
- Mohammad Hussain Ali Ashkanani
- Danah Hussain Ali Aladwani
- Saleh Sulaiman Ibrahim Almurjan

The first Gulf Bank Al-Danah's second quarterly draw 2019 for the prize of KD 250,000 will be held on 26 June 2019, and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 on 25 September 2019. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two

days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2019 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw.



VIVA launches 'Al-Neira' draw campaign

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched the unique 'Al-Neira' draw, for both postpaid and prepaid customers.

With a grand total of more than \$300,000 to give away, VIVA gives its customers a wonderful opportunity to win amazing 4 cash prizes quarterly of \$10,000 each for three quarters, and a mega prize of \$200,000 at the end of the campaign. Customers are able to accumulate winning chances upon any VIVA transaction through Direct Debit, VIVA website, VIVA Kiosks, VIVA App or by calling 102, where they will have to send an SMS 300 to 567 to enter the draw. Customers earn 1 chance for each KD 1 they spend, increasing their chances to win every time they spend.

On this occasion, Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA said: "We are really thrilled to launch this exciting promotion that shall prove VIVA a true customer-focused enterprise and always looking forward to meeting its customer's aspirations."

What's On



IWG attends Kuwait Distinguished Women Awards Ceremony

In support of women in general, and Kuwaiti women in particular, the International Women's Group (IWG) attended the Kuwait Distinguished Women Awards Ceremony held under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (Opera House) on March 21, 2019.

HE the Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Maryam Al-Aqeel, addressed the KDWA. The aim of the ceremony was to emphasize the importance of

honoring the winners who received those awards that are recognized as high-level international awards highlighting outstanding women in the public, private and civil society sectors. This is the fifth objective from the goals of sustainable development on the empowerment of women. It falls within the framework of national cooperation with Kuwait and its development partners.

The winning women have been selected by the Supreme Council for Planning, Development, and the Academic Sector, represented in the Center for

Women's Studies and Research in the Social Sciences division at the Kuwait University, the private sector and the United Nations program. The group's attendance was a confirmation of its role in supporting women at all local and international levels. The International Women's Group consists of female Ambassadors, Ambassador's wives and VIP women, prominent within the Kuwaiti society, who constantly support each other and other women through monthly meetings and many outstanding events and initiatives.

Marina Hotel Kuwait celebrates Earth Hour 2019

Joining millions of people and business organizations around the world in raising awareness of and taking action against the worldwide global warming issue, Marina Hotel Kuwait marked Earth Hour 2019, by turning off the lights of the hotel on March 30, 2019 for an hour. The activity demonstrates the commitment of the hotel to protecting the environment and mitigating climate change. It has a great impact and involves everyone in the hotel to switch off the lights in all guestrooms and public areas.

As a symbolic gesture to warn against global warming for 60 minutes, non-essential lighting and electrical appliances around the property were switched off in an effort to reduce their environmental impact and draw attention to environmental issues. In addition there was a spectacular display made up of candles illuminating the lobby. Employees of each department including Sales and Marketing, Front Office, Food & Beverage,

Housekeeping, Engineering, Finance, IT, Admin, Human Resources along with the General Manager Nabil Hammoud were present, assisting with candles set-up around the hotel and creating awareness for guests to contribute to global environmental change.

"It's a privilege for us to support Earth Hour because it echoes our focus on the environment. Earth Hour is one of the ways we show our commitment to energy conservation, commented Nabil Hammoud, General Manager, Marina Hotel. "Today, business plays a critical role in taking on our world's most pressing social and environmental issues, including climate change. Observing Earth Hour reflects a philosophy we aim to practice through our sustainability and social impact platform. It is one of the activities we uphold in relation to our corporate responsibilities to help raise awareness for climate change with our employees and guests."

Earth Hour is an annual international event created by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), to raise awareness towards the need and take action on climate change. With the challenges of the global economy, leaders and people remain focused on the growing threat of climate change and place a high priority on environmentally-friendly solutions as one of the ways to overcome those challenges.



Box Hill College Kuwait welcomes German ambassador

The Business Department at Box Hill College Kuwait organized the lecture "Contemporary Germany" which was delivered by the German Ambassador to Kuwait Karlfried Bergner on March 13, 2019 at Essa Al-Rifai Auditorium in the college. The lecture was organized under the supervision of Bassem Alkassam, a faculty member at the department, and was attended by Dr Abdulrahman Al-Shaiji, the chairman of the board of directors, Dr Ali Arifa, the president, Dr Arezou Harraf, the Head of Department, faculty members, and the students.

The lecture shed light on Germany's past and present, and the reflection of the deep-rooted German history on the culture and the economy of the Federal Republic of Germany. The lecture highlighted the quality of education in the German universities, many of which have long academic history and contribution to humanities. The Ambassador spoke about how quality education helps building educated and productive generations in different fields including applied, vocational and higher education.

He encouraged the students to consider Germany as one of the best options to continue their higher education. He also encouraged them to visit the embassy's which includes a lot of valuable and interesting information about Germany, German education and tourism. Ambassador Bergner expressed his admiration of the college and its building. He added: "While I was touring your impressive campus, I saw how excellent and



equipped the facility and the classrooms were. I also noticed how warm and friendly the students and the faculty members were, and I realized the reason why you are proud of your college".

This lecture was organized as part of a guest speaker series for the students of the Business Department especially, for those who undertake the course International Business. The college has recently hosted a number of speakers with vast knowledge and experience in global and regional trade, international operations, economics, and culture and history. This includes Piet Heirbaut, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium; Rolando Lozada, the Deputy Head of Mission at the Peruvian Embassy; Majid Abdulrahman, the Commercial Director at ABC; and the trade and economic counselors at the Belgian, Canadian, and British embassies.

Bassem Alkassam who is a specialized faculty member in International Business and Business Management commented: "Such lectures help the students expand their horizons and understanding of global trade and economics, and the way economics influence decisions made by international organizations in different markets". He added: "These lectures enable the students to be future leaders capable of taking part in informed decision making processes".

Abdulrahman Al Shaiji and Dr Ali Arifa thanked the Ambassador for his lecture and emphasized the role of such lectures in reinforcing theoretical knowledge through practical experience. Box Hill College Kuwait is always eager to host such specialized lecturers in different fields to enrich the practical aspects of education through allowing the students to embark on their interaction with the guest.

Red Bull Paper Wings lands in Kuwait

Applications in Kuwait are now open for Red Bull Paper Wings, the world's largest paper plane competition. The idea is simple and ingenious at the same time: students must make a plain sheet of paper fly as far, as long or as artistically through the air as possible. Some of the world's best student pilots will take on their rivals in hundreds of national qualifiers for the chance of winning a spot in the Red Bull Paper Wings World Final, taking place in May in Austria.

This year, tens of thousands of self-trained, student pilots, will put their outstanding creative skills to the test to enter the world's leading paper plane contest. Applicants in Kuwait can register for the event through the website, downloading the Red Bull Paper Wings App or entering an aerobatics challenge via our Instagram channel. Kuwait's qualifier will take place on April 13, 2019 at 360 Mall. To participate in the competition, students must make a single piece of paper fly as far and as long as artistically possible through the air. The Kuwait winners of three categories - Longest Distance, Longest Airtime and Aerobatics - will be



invited to the World Final in Austria.

Applications are open to university students, 18 years or older. Entrants can enter all three categories, as individuals, but will only be able to win one category. The judging criteria differs based on the category. The winner of the longest distance category will be the plane that flies the longest distance between the lift-off and the landing point while the winner of the longest airtime will be the plane that manages to stay in the air the longest, counted to the tenth of seconds.

New this year, the Aerobatic Category will be fully taken online, as students will be invited to submit a

short video via Instagram, including @redbull and #RedBullPaperWings in the caption and tagging Kuwait in the location feature. The number of votes aggregated 1/3 of the best videos. Two jury members will define the best video as the winner of the category. Once Kuwait finalists are selected, the successful student pilots will descend on Salzburg's Hangar-7 for the World Final. Each pilot will be armed with a single A4 sheet of paper, ready to impress fans and judges across the three distinct categories.

Through the Red Bull Paper Wings App, students will have the opportunity to learn how to fold different

types of paper planes through augmented reality (AR) and help them with the means to measure their distance and time while they practice. The Red Bull Paper Wings App will also include: events geo-localization, sign-up opportunities, games and much more.

Global winners for Distance, Airtime, Aerobatics and Best ranked player of the AR game will get as a prize a Red Bull Air Race Weekend Experience consisting of flight tickets, accommodation, full pass to watch the training and race over the weekend, access to sky lounge depending on the race, tour and meet and greet with one of the pilots of Red Bull Air Race.



It was a memorable moment at the Redeemed Christian Church of God (Mount Zion Parish) on the March 25, 2019 as family, friends and well-wishers gathered to celebrate with Pastor/Mrs Samuel Kasali as they dedicate their baby to the Lord. May God bless baby - Dominion as he grows to be a blessing to the family.

Health & Science

Endangered Bolivian amphibians get long-awaited first date

10th highest level of amphibian diversity found in Bolivia

LA PAZ: The fate of a species may just rest on this love story. Happily, the first date between Romeo, once the last-known Sehuencas water frog, and Juliet, who was discovered deep inside a Bolivian cloud forest in January, went so well the two have been living together in the male's aquarium since. According to a statement by Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC) on Monday, the pair were introduced on March 1 after being cleared of chytridiomycosis, which has decimated amphibian populations throughout the Neotropics region.

After a period of observation, they were moved into Romeo's aquarium, where he made a mating call for the first time since 2017: a clear sign he is eager to breed. "Romeo has been really sweet to Juliet, following her around the aquarium and sacrificing his worm meals for her," said Teresa Camacho Badani, chief of herpetology at the Museo de Historia Natural Alcide d'Orbigny in Bolivia, which is working on the project with the GWC. "After he's been alone for so long, it's wonderful to see him with a mate finally."

Romeo had been found in the same cloud forest a decade ago and it was feared that he was the last survivor of his species. With a lifespan of 15 years, time was running out to find Romeo a mate to ensure the survival of the species, although the frog himself never gave up hope, continuing to call out for a mate during his decade in captivity.

Twinkle-toed performance

But it's not quite happily ever after, at least not yet.

Romeo hasn't fully figured out amplexus—the mating position for frogs where the male holds the female until he can fertilize her eggs as she lays them. Some species of frog need to go into amplexus for weeks or even months, but it isn't known how long it lasts for the Sehuencas. So far Romeo has gotten into the correct position a handful of times—the longest for about 15 minutes on the first day the two were put together.

Since meeting Juliet, Romeo has also exhibited a behavior water frog experts had not encountered for this species: a performance in which he rapidly twinkles the toes of his back feet, likely intended to impress the female. Apart from Juliet, four other Sehuencas water frogs were brought in from the wild during the same expedition: two males and two additional females. They were the first Sehuencas frogs that researchers had seen in the wild in a decade. The others have just begun showing signs of being ready to breed, and remain together in a single aquarium.

According to the GWC, Bolivia has the 10th highest level of amphibian diversity in the world, but 22 percent of those species now face the threat of extinction. The Sehuencas frog, which is completely aquatic, was once found in abundance at the bottom of small streams and rivers or in ponds deep inside mountain forests. A combination of climate change, habitat destruction, contamination, chytridiomycosis and the introduction of invasive trout provoked the abrupt demise of many aquatic frog species in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru. — AFP



COCHABAMBA, Bolivia: Handout photo released by the Museo D'Orbigny shows Romeo, right, and Juliet, two Sehuencas Water Frogs (*Telmatobius yuracare*) - a species in risk of extinction-, taken in Cochabamba, Bolivia. — AFP



UNITED STATES: This handout photo courtesy of the University of Kansas shows, left to right, Jan Smith, Robert DePalma, Walter Alvarez, and David Burnham as they collect a box core sample of the KT boundary from Tanis deposit. — AFP

Fossils tell story of day meteor struck Earth

WASHINGTON: Paleontologists generally grapple with a time frame of millions of years. But Robert DePalma believes he can explain the minutes and hours that followed one of the most cataclysmic events in the history of the Earth—the day a meteor slammed into the coast off of what is now Mexico. The impact of the Chicxulub asteroid 66 million years ago left a massive crater and triggered the mass extinction of land and sea creatures.

DePalma has been digging for the past seven years at a site in North Dakota that he and other scientists believe provides a unique fossilized record of what happened on that day. "You almost never get this opportunity at fine tuning the timing of any event in geologic history," DePalma said in an interview with AFP. "It's very, very rare to get this." DePalma, a 37-year-old paleontol-

ogist, and 11 co-authors published a preliminary study of their findings on Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. It has the scientific world buzzing.

DePalma first began digging, while a graduate student at the University of Kansas, at the site known to dinosaur hunters as Tanis in the Hell Creek Formation in North Dakota. Over the years, he and several of his assistants discovered in a layer of sediment about four feet thick the fossils of fish, plants, trees and mollusks jumbled together. "You've got this deposit that was almost instantaneously laid down," DePalma said. "This muddy deposit that locked in place all these plants and animals almost instantaneously, within moments," he said. DePalma likened it to Pompeii, the Roman city buried in a volcanic eruption in 79 A.D. and left remarkably preserved. "Very similar to Pompeii," he said. "You've got this instant preservation of so many different things."

Extinction of dinosaurs

The asteroid struck 1,895 miles away in what is now the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico. Scientists have long pointed to the impact of the Chicxulub meteor as responsible for the extinction of the dinosaurs,

paving the way for the rise of mammals including humans. Fire, smoke, ash and debris engulfed the atmosphere, eventually destroying almost all plants and wiping out 75 percent of species on Earth.

The scientists believe Chicxulub caused a powerful earthquake whose seismic waves reached Tanis just 13 minutes later. The seismic surges triggered a sudden, massive torrent of water and debris from an arm of an inland sea known as the Western Interior Seaway. At Tanis, the surge left "a tangled mass of freshwater fish, terrestrial vertebrates, trees, branches, logs, marine ammonites and other marine creatures," DePalma said.

Some of the fish were found to have inhaled tiny beads of glass, or "spherules" that were ejected by the Chicxulub event and rained down on Tanis probably about 15 minutes after the impact. Many of the fossils found at the Tanis site are preserved in three dimensions instead of just flat shapes. "Until this deposit, there were only three or four articulated fish ever found in the Hell Creek Formation, ever," said DePalma, an adjunct professor of geosciences at Florida Atlantic University. —AFP

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Kuwait Times

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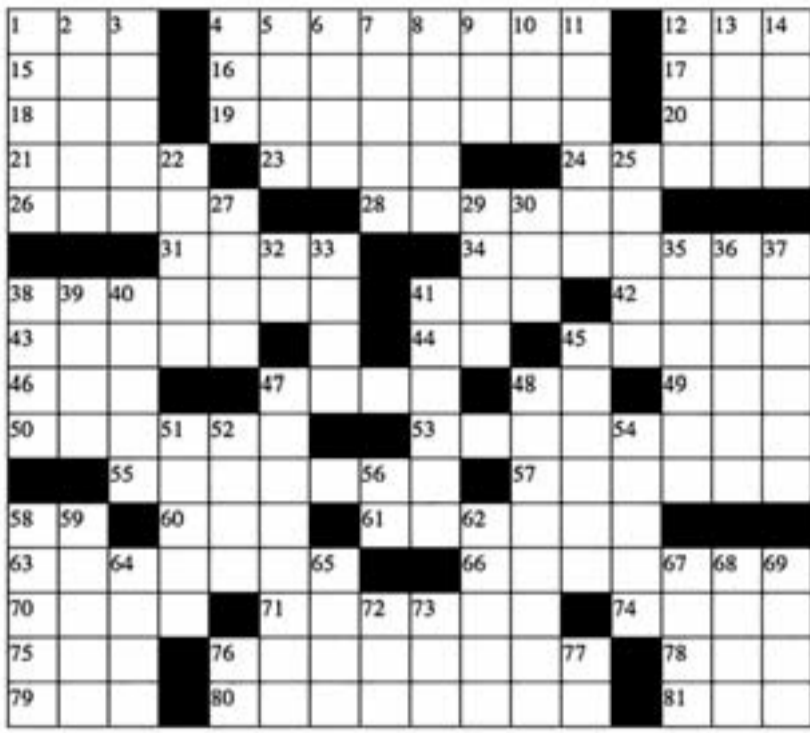
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2174



ACROSS

1. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
4. A dark brown to greenish oleoresin that has a fragrant odor and is used as a fixative in perfumes.
12. An informal term for a father.
15. A widely distributed system consisting of all the cells able to ingest bacteria or colloidal particles etc, except for certain white blood cells.
16. Arouse hostility or indifference in where there had formerly been love, affection, or friendliness.
17. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
18. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
19. Of or relating to or characteristic of Bermuda or its inhabitants.
20. The cry made by sheep.
21. An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
23. Moderate to inferior in quality.
24. Atypically small.
26. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
28. American singer (1918-1990).
31. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
34. Any tropical Asian palm of the genus Calamus.
38. A member of the Caddo people formerly living between Kansas and central Texas.
42. Russian physicist (1895-1971).
43. A Greek epic poem (attributed to Homer) describing the siege of Troy.
44. (Greek mythology) A maiden seduced by Zeus.
46. A human limb.
49. A humorous anecdote or remark.
50. A bet that you can pick the first and second finishers in the right order.
53. Type genus of Geastraceae.
55. A wheeled vehicle adapted to the rails of railroad.
57. A stiff chitinous seta or bristle especially of an annelid worm.
58. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
60. Fiddler crabs.
61. A Black youth subculture and religious movement that arose in the ghettos of Kingston, Jamaica, in the 1950s.
63. The Mongol people living the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
66. A heavenly place (peaceful and beautiful) where those who are favored by the gods can go when they die.
70. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
71. A covered passageway.
74. An inactive volcano in Sicily.
75. Seed vessel having hooks or prickles.
78. Being one hundred more than two hundred.
79. How long something has existed.
80. Distribute loosely.
81. A tool with a flat blade attached at right angles to a long handle.

DOWN

1. A mountain range in western Russia extending from the arctic to the Caspian Sea.
2. (Greek mythology) A princess of Colchis who aided Jason in taking the Golden Fleece from her father.
3. An association of nations dedicated to economic and political cooperation in southeastern Asia.
4. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
5. A city in northwestern Syria.
6. A pen that has a small metal ball at the point of transfer of ink to paper.
7. Relieve from military service.
8. Frogs, toads, tree toads.
9. A coenzyme derived from the B vitamin nicotinic acid.
10. A reptile genus of Iguanidae.
11. Founder of the science of genetics (1822-1884).
12. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
13. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
14. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
22. Boiled or baked buckwheat.
25. English architect (1746-1813).
27. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
29. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
30. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
32. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
33. A small cake leavened with yeast.
35. Large European marine food fish.
36. A diacritical mark (two dots) placed over a vowel in German to indicate a change in sound.
37. A white secretion of the sebaceous glands of the foreskin.
39. A large genus of dicotyledonous trees and shrubs of the family Aquifoliaceae that have small flowers and berries (including hollies).
40. A roll of tobacco for smoking.
41. Virility drug (trade name Viagra) used to treat erectile dysfunction in men.
45. A square dance figure.
47. A desert in southwestern Africa - largely Botswana.
48. Lacking or showing a lack of what is fitting and considerate in dealing with others.
51. Seal with caulking.
52. A metallic tapping sound.
54. One of two pieces of armor plate hanging from the fauld to protect the upper thighs.
56. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
59. A gesture involving the shoulders.
62. (Judaism) The ceremonial dinner on the first night (or both nights) of Passover.
64. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
65. (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
67. A contagious skin infection caused by the itch mite.
68. Beyond what is natural.
69. (trademark) A liquid that temporarily disables a person.
72. A tight-fitting headdress.
73. Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
76. A ductile silvery-white ductile ferromagnetic trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
77. A brittle silver-white metalloid element that is related to selenium and sulfur.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is a day to enjoy work. Ideas flood your brain and you like considering the best way to use those thoughts. This is for you, Aries, because you need to work and feel good about yourself. Appreciation for your life and all that comprises it is given special consideration now. Gratitude does as well. Friends and family are the center of your attention both because of the love provided by them and the security of that love, Aries. You feel needed by those you love which adds to the good feelings you're basking in now. You may even want redecorate right now.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is the perfect time to try new ideas which seem to come out of nowhere. You know that you're not the kind to make changes easily. If something occurs to you such as this change has, you've thought it over and realize it should work for you on the job or at home. Call it psychic or gut but you know this was sent to you for your good as well as for those for which you care. Love is more in the air for you than it has been lately, Taurus. Make it a party later with the one you love. Have a dinner picnic by the pond watching ducks.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

The one thing you do have right now is nervous energy but that can rattle you to your bones. Thoughts conflict because they come at you a mile a minute. This could cause issues with your boss and the one at home as well. Before you shoot the messenger, think about what's happening. Take a deep breath, breathe out and think. This could be a bad day but it could also turn into a good one as well. It's all in how you handle it. Gemini, you know that your brain is good and tomorrow you have a likelihood of it being much better. Take time at home to relax tonight.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

People may comment that you're spontaneous and alive. You may feel isolated from others right now but that too will pass. You want to mother others and need to be mothered yourself. Others think you're doing well but that's face value. You're thinking of what you want and the method in which you can achieve it. Only those very close to you such as close family and friends know what you really need. A new home might be just the thing along with all the amenities. Now just to finding the way to make the money for it is the thing.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Home and family are a priority at the moment. You may be considering the thought of a new home where you and family can flourish in beautiful new surroundings. Talk with your mate before you just drop your decision on him or her. Allow them to be part of the planning. Otherwise you may find a great thought becomes an intense failure or at least an argument with loved ones ensue. You need peace and harmony now. Make it easy on yourself, Leo. Career may present challenges today.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your job makes you happy especially when your boss tells you that you've done well. Working for kudos gives you huge payment today unlike yesterday. You're in the limelight and you love it. You've got the sensitivity to do the job right and to help those who come to you in need. Besides, you don't mind. It's what you do, Virgo. You speak wisely and with grace to a group of your coworkers or customers. You're able to deliver a great message with poise and wisdom.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

If you get into an argument with someone today, be it at work or at home, it'll become a knock-down-drag-out. Think before you engage either your mouth or the argument. Keep your temper cooler rather than hot. Some issues there's no coming back from, Libra. You may find yourself questioning authority today. Being deceived is a scary thing always, but now the dishonesty part really plays on your nerves. Get your work done quickly as possible and join your friends for an evening of comradery.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

These few days preceding and following today might not be the best. Go with the flow and try not to let it bother you very much because you're now aware that you need to be more lenient with these issues. This isn't the best time to make a point or to try to educate another on the issue. You're having problems with the study and motivation of your own sensitive side. Explosions may arise when you have someone argue the point. Moreover, you can't explain to another how they're psyche should work, Scorpio. And don't try it at work. Good luck with the handling of this hot topic.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Those at work look to you to make the big decisions which you seem to be able to do with ease. Emotional frustration at home makes you look forward to work more now. You can't run away from your home life though so you may as well use the intuition you have to fix that part of your life. Arguments with those you love come easily now. Remember that those quarrels take two to tango. Both of you will be seen as dumb when people outside the situation look in, Sagittarius. Try to fix your home life because it influences your work life too.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Achievement is a quality you hold in high regard now. The respect that comes with it is a need. Using your ambition to get to this venerable pinnacle is what you're working towards in a diligent, tough manner. This means a lot to you. Being able to see in a material manner what you've achieved lets you notice each day how productive you are. Leaving a legacy for your family is the ultimate prize to you, Capricorn. Woe be unto anyone who messes with your family. A mama bear has no more fury than you when your children or grandchildren are bothered and you know about it.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Today is a day of less mental clarity than you've had in a while. It's not that thoughts aren't appearing. It's just that you have other things on your mind. This might be a partnership forming or it could be love. Or, it could be both. Either can make your mind work so hard that it seems it's at a standstill, with the thoughts parading around your mind without you're being able to catch them. Both issues can be what it takes to make you more successful, Aquarius. Don't go into either without looking each up and down and around. You want physical luxury and material possessions but you want love more. Both are available to you now if you just consider the possibilities.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You're being recognized for your better qualities at work and it gives you a little boost. You've got support from your coworkers which helps. You're able to be understanding and give good advice to someone who needs it today even though the subject may be prone to being volatile. You can usually keep secrets easily but sometimes you're face shows your awkwardness, Pisces. Then the anger that you've been put on the spot shows up too. Emotions and thanks of those close make you feel better about your situation. Enjoy your night at home.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Animals 7 - Word Search

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

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| AARDVARK | KIWI | STORK |
| BEAR | KOALA | TROUT |
| CHEETAH | MARLIN | VULTURE |
| FLAMINGO | MINK | WOODPECKER |
| FOX | OCTOPUS | ZEBRA |
| GECKO | PARTRIDGE | |
| HEDGEHOG | ROBIN | |
| HIPPOPOTAMUS | SALMON | |

Animals 6 - Solution

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

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------|
| ALBATROSS | FERRET | PHEASANT |
| ANACONDA | GIBBON | SHARK |
| ARMADILLO | GULL | SQUIRREL |
| BADGER | HYENA | VULTURE |
| CHAMELEON | LEMUR | WILDBEEST |
| COUGAR | LOON | |
| CROCODILE | MARTEN | |
| EGRET | MONGOOSE | |

Yesterday's Solution

T S S C L A D O D E A C T S
A C T L I P A R I S G A I A
L A H E P I C A R P O D D S
A D B A C E L T A N D E S
L E T H A L I C A O
A G H A L O A S A D D O
R O C O T B C M A T E D
M O S H A K U A B I L E N E
A B C A C E I B R D C G S
D E S C R I B E A A R H U S
A R I E T T A E G G S Y E A
D E B N H C
A D H E R E K E Y B O A R D
I A A I D O L A T E R B A A
D I E A D R O I T L Y B I N
E L M L A R O D O P A E N E

Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2019



Abu Zakkour poses near his statue erected by a local restaurant owner in the northern Syrian city.



Abu Zakkour, Aleppo's so-called 'yellow man' eats a cob of corn in the central Saadallah Al-Jabiri square in the northern Syrian city. — AFP photos



Abu Zakkour shows his yellow watch and clock.



Abu Zakkour walks along with pedestrians in the central Saadallah Al-Jabiri square.

ALEPPO'S MYSTERIOUS 'YELLOW MAN'



Abu Zakkour shows his collection of yellow shoes at his house.

Dressed in yellow from head-to-toe, Abu Zakkour is hailed as part of the "heritage" of the northern Syrian city of Aleppo, along with its mediaeval citadel and its ancient covered markets. For nearly 36 years, the 70-year-old has strictly abided by a full monochrome look, sporting only yellow apparel and accessories. Now, Aleppo's so-called "Yellow man", says he is eyeing entry into the Guinness Book of World Records. "I have worn yellow since 1983," says Abu Zakkour.

"All my things are yellow: my clothes, my mobile phone, my pillow, my watches," he adds. "I really love its flair." A crowd gathers around him in Aleppo's central Saadallah Al-Jabiri square, where young men and women pester him for pictures. Abu Zakkour says he has grown accustomed to the fanfare. "It takes me more than four hours to cross a nearly one-kilometer-long road because so many people stop me for pictures," he says. The widower and father of three lives alone in a small apartment in the city.

Here too, the eye-catching splash of yellow is everywhere: Yellow underwear hangs from his balcony. Inside his house, bright shoes, chairs and tables make for a sunny interior. His wardrobe is also crammed with variations of yellow. "I have a hundred items of clothing in yellow: pants, hats, shirts, glasses and ties," he says, opening the doors of his closet. "I struggled a lot to collect this fortune, and I don't think anyone could have done what I did," says the retiree who declines to give his full name.

'The Trump of Aleppo'

At once eccentric and discreet, he refuses to reveal the reasons behind his fascination with the color. His "secret", he says, will be divulged in his dying will. His reputation has become such that a restaurant owner in the city erected a small statue of Abu Zakkour inside his establishment. "The Trump of Aleppo", he wrote in Arabic above the stat-



Abu Zakkour poses near his statue erected by a local restaurant owner.

ue, referring in particular to the American president's hair color. A large portrait of the famous Syrian singer Sabah Fakhri hangs nearby.

As does a photo of the mediaeval citadel of Aleppo, a UNESCO world heritage site. "Abu Zakkour is part of Aleppo's heritage, so we placed (his statue) near the symbols of the city," says restaurant owner Majid Sharshakji. Customers crowd around Abu Zakkour as soon as he enters the restaurant. He stands in front of his statue, smiling proudly, as people ask for photos.

His popularity, however, has not always worked in his favor. When eastern Aleppo was under rebel control between 2012 and 2016, Abu Zakkour was detained by fighters on charges of having conspired with government forces, he says. At the time, a video circulated on social media networks purporting to show him being interrogated and harassed by rebels inside a car. Despite the ordeal, he never took off his yellow clothes, he says. "I will continue to wear these clothes until I die." — AFP



Abu Zakkour eats a cob of corn.



Abu Zakkour shows his mobile telephone.



Abu Zakkour walks in the central Saadallah Al-Jabiri square.

Lifestyle | Gossip



Lloren wants to be the first Voice contestant to have hits

Lloren is confident she can be the first contestant from 'The Voice UK' to have hits. The 27-year-old singer - formerly known as Lauren Bannon - wants to be more than "just a pretty voice from a TV show" and is determined to use the "platform" she gained after appearing on the ITV talent show last year to become a major pop star and buck the trend which has seen all the winners and other hopefuls fail in their attempts to crack the UK charts. In an exclusive interview with BANG Showbiz, she said: "I hope so, I think many people assume when you've got so far on a television show, you've made it. When really it actually takes a lot of time and hard work - that kind of exposure

can only be the beginning. "I'm grateful to the show for giving me a platform, but I'm aware to cut it as an artist I've got to be more than just a pretty voice from a TV show." The 'Into The Fire' singer has been watching the latest series of the show and is backing her former mentor Olly Murs to win this weekend's final with either of his two acts, Molly Hocking and Jimmy Balito. They are up against Sir Tom Jones' two hopefuls, Bethzienna and Deana. When asked if she has been watching this year's show, she said: "When I get time too. Obviously, I'm Team Olly all the way." As for whether she and the 'Dear Darlin' hitmaker - who shot to fame on 'The X Factor' in 2009 - stay in touch, she said: "Of course, we still talk

and I saw him at an event a few months ago!" Lloren also revealed that Olly often offers up his advice about the music business and she appreciates it even though it isn't always "the most helpful". She said: "Olly and I had the same agent and I asked him for some advice on his thoughts within the industry. His advice isn't always most helpful, but his heart is always in the right place." Lloren's 'Into The Fire' music video is available via her YouTube channel and the track is available on all streaming platforms now.

Foals returning to The Great Escape for intimate Spotlight gig

Foals will return to The Great Escape Festival, 12 years after making their debut at the emerging talent extravaganza. Yannis Philippakis and co will come full circle when they play label Transgressive's 15th Anniversary Spotlight Show at Brighton's Concorde 2 on May 10, over a decade after they played to just 350 fans at the East Sussex city's Horatio's venue as part of the event in 2007. Toby L, the co-founder of London music company Transgressive, commented, "The Great Escape is easily one of the world's most progressive and exciting showcase platforms and since Transgressive always endeavours to unearth and support brand new artists that offer something to say, it felt entirely apt to kickstart a year of parties, special releases and other birthday related gimmickry in Brighton at an event we've supported since its inception. "It's fair to say we wanted to do something pretty big to launch our birthday year,

and I guess that's how / why we've landed here..."Foals have some incredible history with Concorde 2 and it seemed like an absolute dream to reunite them. "We'll have some new artists from the roster in support on the night, too, plus some friendly faces behind the decks. And we'll hopefully be well warmed up by then as we are looking forward to staging another event the night before at The Old Market, co-hosted with our friends at Fender... More on that one soon, too." The indie rock band - who recently dropped their first release since 2015, 'Everything Not Saved Will Be Lost Part 1', with 'Part 2' coming this spring - will be supported by fellow Transgressive artists Blaenavon and Bonifac. Tickets for Foals' show will be sold separately to The Great Escape and go on sale today. The Great Escape Festival takes place between May 8 and May 11.



McCartney FaceTimed Eilish's parents

Sir Paul McCartney made Billie Eilish's parents "cry" with joy when he FaceTimed them. The 17-year-old pop sensation has found it surreal the amount of famous faces she has connected with since becoming a viral success, and recalled how her mom and dad burst into tears when the Beatles legend video-called them, after Billie told his fashion designer daughter Stella McCartney they are massive fans of his. Appearing on 'The Ellen DeGeneres Show' on Monday night, which saw Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl in the audience - who is a huge fan of Billie - she said: "I feel like recently I've met a lot of people that my parents few up as fans of ... you know, that's no disrespect to your age ... Dave. "I was in a meeting with Stella McCartney and she FaceTimed her dad, who is Paul McCartney! My mom cried, my dad cried." Another "unreal" celebrity encounter Billie had was with Spice Girl Mel C - who watched her perform at London's Shepherd's Bush Empire recently and came backstage to meet her. She said: "In London, Sporty Spice (Mel C) came backstage. "When I was growing up, we would watch 'Spice World' (the film). I watched that movie, like, 40 times." The 'Bury A Friend' hitmaker also opened up about her battle with Tourettes Syndrome and admitted she doesn't let the neurological disorder - which is characterized by repetitive, involuntary movements and vocalizations called tics - "define" her. She said: "It's not anything different, you know? I never said anything because I didn't want that to define who I was. "I think I've also learned that a lot of my fans have it, which made me feel kind of more at home with saying it." Former Nirvana drummer Dave recently revealed his daughters are "obsessed" with Billie's music and said she has the same "connection" with her fans as the grunge band did in the 90s. The 'Learn to Fly' hitmaker - who has 12-year-old Violet, Ophelia, four, and nine-year-old Harper with wife Jordyn Blum - tweeted the transcript of what he said at a Pollstar convention, which had been wrongly interpreted, which read: "... I went to see Billie Eilish not too long ago. Oh my god man. Unbelievable. My daughters are obsessed with Billy Eilish. And what I'm seeing happening with my daughters is the same revolution that happened to me at their age. "My daughters are listening to Billie Eilish and they're becoming themselves through her music. "She totally connects to them. "So we went to go see her play at the Wiltern, and the connection that she has with her audience is the same thing that was happening with Nirvana in 1991. "The people in the audience knew every word. And it was like our little secret. So I don't know...and her music is hard to define! "I don't know what you call it! I try to describe her to people and I don't know.....I don't even know what to call it. But it's authentic. And I would call that rock n roll. So.... I don't care what sort of instruments you use to do it. When I look at someone like Billie Eilish, I'm like...s**t man...rock n roll is not even close to being dead... (sic)".

ORIGINAL OASIS DRUMMER MCCARROLL WANTS REUNION

Original Oasis drummer Tony McCarroll wants the band to reunite. The 47-year-old musician was in the iconic Manchester group from the very start, with brothers Liam and Noel Gallagher, guitarist Paul 'Bonehead' Arthurs and bassist Paul 'Guigsy' McGuigan, and he has admitted he would jump at the chance to play with his old bandmates once again - despite taking them to court. Tony left the group in 1995, but sued the band in 1999 and ultimately agreed an out-of-court settlement of over £500,000 that also saw him give up all future royalties. Asked if he'd like to see the 'Some Might Say' hitmakers get back together, he told the Daily Star newspaper: "I would love that. If I got the phone call, that would be a nice way to round things off. End it where it started. "That wall of sound we had with me, Guigsy and Bonehead, that power, it was all there." Tony was hit hard by his departure from the Britpop group and hit the booze "for three whole years". He also admitted that he was "young" and naive to take the band to court. He recalled: "I couldn't get myself out of a suitcase for the next few years. "The band were getting bigger, good on them, but I needed to get away from the whole thing. "Really I got drunk for three whole years. "But at the same time the court case was all ongoing, so I'm dealing with questions from solicitors round the clock. "And that just wasn't me. I was a young lad, I didn't appreciate or care about law and litigation and I was just gutted I had to go through that." The sticksman also finds it impossible to escape the band as he's reminded of their music and success everywhere he goes. He said: "You're reminded every single day of Oasis. "On the radio, one of your mates, someone you work with. "I'll never get away from being the original Oasis drummer and that's something I've got to take on the chin." Recalling how he repaired his friendship with Liam, 46, at a 'Supersonic' film screening in Manchester in 2016, Tony said: "We were all drunk and I just thought whatever." He also had a fractious relationship with Noel, and upon his exit from Oasis, the band's chief songwriter had stated that Tony wasn't up to playing their new material, despite drumming on their first number one single 'Some Might Say'. Noel said at the time: "I like Tony as a geezer but he wouldn't have been able to drum the new songs." Tony was replaced by Alan White, who remained until 2004. Whilst Tony is keen for a reunion, he will have a hard job trying to convince feuding siblings Liam and



guitarist Noel, 51, to agree to reform Oasis. Noel - who quit the group after a backstage fight with his younger brother at their concert in Paris in 2009, which ultimately led to their split - repeatedly insisted he has no intentions of rejoining his old band. Although Liam had given up hope of a reunion, the singer had said he was open to commemorating the 25th anniversary of 'Definitely Maybe', which Tony played on, with Bonehead - who frequently joins Liam on stage at his solo gigs - and Guigsy. Asked if he'll mark the anniversary of the band's seminal 1994 debut album, he said in January: "Who knows? I love having Bonehead around, he's a good craic, but as for having him in full-time, I couldn't handle it and vice versa. "Been there, done that. I've not heard from Guigsy for a long time, I hear he's still in London."

Keira Knightley's comedy fears

Keira Knightley doesn't work on comedy films because she can't tell if she's doing a "good job". The 'Aftermath' actress loves a "challenge" in her work and gets "bored" quickly if she doesn't feel she's being pushed, but being funny on film is a struggle for her as people on set only laugh during the first take of a scene. She said: "I love a good challenge. If I don't get out of my comfort zone, if a role doesn't scare me in some way, I get bred. "I love doing great dramatic films and I'm fascinated by darker characters. Maybe that's why comedies aren't really me. The first time you say a joke, everyone laughs on the set. "Then you repeat the line in the next few takes and nobody laughs so you haven't the faintest idea whether or not you're doing a good job." Keira, 34, is best known for her work on period dramas and while she used to feel "guilty" about making too many movies set in the past, she's now "embraced" that fact that's what she's drawn to. She said: "I love period films I always have and although I've gone through times when I felt guilty about starring in too many of them, I now embrace them. There's something about the escapism that makes me want to take on these dramas and I often relate to historical characters far more strongly than others." And the 'Pride and Prejudice' star has found period pieces offer her much more interesting roles. She told Psychologies magazine: "Sometimes those kinds of movies have been the only ones that offered me the chance to play strong, independent women. I can't tell you how many scripts I've read in which women are subjected to violence or portrayed as the passive girlfriend or wife. The period films I've done have enabled me to tell stories about formidable and fascinating women."



Taraji P. Henson's acting dreams

Taraji P. Henson always knew she wanted to be an actress. The 48-year-old actress never had second thoughts about her chosen career path, particularly because she didn't want to send the wrong message to her child. Asked if she ever thought of looking for a stable job, she said: "Never. Time was ticking. I was in my 20s and you're fearless then. I was waiting for my chance. I never turned an audition down. I didn't care what it was for, I was just hungry. When my dad was alive, he wouldn't allow me to quit. It wasn't an option. Once I had my son, I realized if I quit, I'm teaching him to quit. There were times I got scared and my dad was there to champion me, like, 'Hang in there, because you don't see what I see, it's coming.' He'd seen my plays, he knew my talent. My mom and my aunt would send me money. There was no space to quit." And the 'Empire' star - who plays matriarch Cookie Lyon in

the drama series - also opened up about feeling threatened when a man decided to "hit" on her during a flight. She said: "A man hit me on the plane the other day. They think they know you and come and grab you. But Cookie is a character and I'm Taraji so I'm like, 'Please don't touch me'. I didn't want to be that person but now my security flies with me in first. "The 'Hidden Figures' star has taken some time to find global fame and she admitted it's "crazy" to have reached the successes she now has. She told Marie Claire magazine: "It's crazy. I've been working so much and then it's like ... Time magazine! My grandmother is 94 and about to witness her granddaughter getting a Hollywood star. That's history!"





People mourn for rapper Nipsey Hussle in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos



People look at one of the makeshift memorials as they mourn for rapper Nipsey Hussle.

Nipsey Hussle death underscores deep-rooted violence of US streets



In this file photo Nipsey Hussle arrives at the Warner Music Group Pre-Grammy Celebration at Nomad Hotel Los Angeles.

The shock murder of Nipsey Hussle triggered an outpouring of grief among artists and activists alike—and for many crystallized the chronic dangers of street life the LA rapper aimed to uproot. For some, his death recalled the 1990s era of targeted hip hop killings thought to be bygone: the assassination of Hussle, 33, comes more than two decades after a spate of slayings claimed the lives of rap superstars including Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G. Sunday's killing in broad daylight, which Los Angeles police believe is gang-related and personal in nature, prompted some comparisons to those fatal shootings: all talented musicians, all from impoverished neighborhoods, all shot dead at a young age.

But for Najee Ali, a California civil rights activist, "music has nothing to do with it." "Poverty and low-income areas have everything to do—that's what breeds violence, it's not the music." Indeed, the eulogies from superstars like Beyonce, Kendrick Lamar, Drake and Cardi B to the Grammy-nominated Hussle—colloquially known as "Nipsey" or "Neighborhood Nip"—that mushroomed on social media told the story of a local legend and community leader who invested back into the streets that raised him.

And perhaps most importantly, they crafted a heartrending portrait of a black man killed by gun violence in America. "This hurts," wrote New York rapper Nas on Instagram. "It's dangerous to be an MC. Dangerous to be a b-ball player. It's dangerous to have money. Dangerous To Be A Black Man." It is not an "easy fix," he continued. "Hard to fix anything when kids are still living in poverty." "Nipsey is a True voice. He will never be silenced. He still is A stand up General for the People who never left his people."

Credibility through violence

For decades, the public image of rap has been closely intertwined with those of gangs: early West Coast hip hop in particular grew out of notoriously gang-plagued areas in California, with late 1980s groups like N.W.A. rapping about hardships and social injustice there. The 1990s heyday of Los Angeles gangsta rap—a subgenre that saw artists boast of violence, misogyny and drug use in constructing their hardcore image—saw massive success for rappers like Snoop Dogg, a known member of the Crips gang. "Rap is a musical genre that demands a level of authenticity from its artists," said Geoff Harkness, a Rhode Island College soci-

ologist focused on hip hop.

"Even for rap musicians with no interest in or connection to violence, there is immense pressure to gain authenticity and credibility through violent acts," he told AFP. Less than a year ago XXXTentacion—the Miami rapper who catapulted to fame on his dark lyricism and muffled style—was also shot dead. Prior to his murder, the 20-year-old lived a life violent even by rap world standards, embodying a stereotype Harkness said is sometimes encouraged by the music industry. "Record companies and media corporations reap untold fortunes by urging young, often poor, black men to

service on Monday for slain rapper Nipsey Hussle in Los Angeles, the city's fire department said. Hundreds had gathered in the southern part of the city outside Hussle's The Marathon Clothing store where the Grammy-nominated musician was gunned down on Sunday in a suspected gang-linked attack that wounded two other people.

A stampede started just past 8:00 pm (0300 GMT Tuesday) during the service, but it was not clear what triggered it. "Reports of shots fired at the vigil do not appear to be accurate. We do have injured in the chaos and are attempting to restore order," the Los Angeles Police Department said on

Crenshaw—an open-air museum describing itself as "1.3 miles of art & culture celebrating black LA"—along with a science, tech and math education center. "He was not just a rapper," said activist Ali. "Nipsey was our shining black prince who overcame adversity and gang life to become a Grammy-nominated artist and one of our most influential community leaders."

"He could've easily moved to a gated community—he chose to stay." In the end, Hussle's life was taken on the very corner he sought to revive, shot several times at close range by a suspect still at large. News of his death saw many fans sharing his



People mourn for rapper Nipsey Hussle in Los Angeles, California.



People gather to mourn for rapper Nipsey Hussle.

play up or even fabricate criminal backgrounds in order to sell more product," Harkness said, adding "the rappers are also complicit in this process."

Hussle was also a Crip-fans laid out royal blue candles at makeshift memorials to the slain rapper, the color of the notorious gang—and even his music echoed the old school gangsta rap sound. But in recent years, the artist, entrepreneur and philanthropist had led efforts to eradicate the organized violence ripping apart his hometown.

Steve Soboroff, the Los Angeles police commissioner, said the rapper had planned to meet with top law enforcement officials Monday to "talk about ways he could help stop gang violence and help us help kids." "I'm so very sad." Nineteen people were injured during a stampede at a memorial

Twitter.

The Los Angeles Fire Department said in a statement that it transported 19 patients, two of them critical, and another two with serious injuries. The rest had "non-life threatening injuries." It added that there was "no evidence of any gunshot wounds" and that most people sustained "trample injuries." An LAPD spokesman told AFP some of the injured were "possibly stabbed."

More than a rapper

Hussle, an Eritrean-American born Ermias Asghedom and raised in LA's Crenshaw district, had transformed the block he would hustle on into a retail, job-creating hub for his Marathon Clothing company. He had also backed Destination

songs—he didn't release a label debut album until last year's acclaimed "Victory Lap," but boasted a number of mixtapes—with his poignant lyricism lighting up social media. "I'm just young and I'm reckless, I'm just on for my section," he rapped in one song, "Ocean Views."

"I just write down these confessions... died to get life around me. I guess that I'm an exception / Blessings."—AFP



Better Life Music visits Kuwait

The Better Life Music team from Egypt will visit the National Evangelical Church on April 4 and 5, 2019. They will conduct a free Children's Music Festival on April 4 at 10 am in Arabic and English and free Music concerts on April 5, in Arabic at 7:30 pm and 8:00 pm respectively.

The Children's Festival and concerts are open to all. The team has traveled to Arab countries, Australia, North America and Europe. Better Life also produces TV programs for women, families, teens and Children, for satellite stations.

They proclaim the message of hope and abundant living to all classes, nationalities and religious backgrounds. Their following has expanded to approximately 3 million social media users world-wide. They started in 1978 as a gathering of young people and now their music has grown beyond their daring dreams. Today they have 100 volunteers working, singing and producing music and traveling all around the world. They also host children's and teen programs that teach moral values in a fun and relevant way.

Drake pays tribute to Hussle at The O2

Drake paid tribute to Nipsey Hussle during the opening night of his London residency at The O2 arena on Monday evening. The 32-year-old rap star—who is on his 'Assassination Vacation Tour'—kicked off the much-anticipated first night of his seven-night stay at the venue by paying homage to the late rapper, who was shot dead outside his clothing store in Los Angeles on March 31. Drake stood in the centre of the stage and opened up about the 'Racks In The Middle' rapper whilst telling his fans that he was "thankful" to be with them. Drake said "He [Nipsey] was somebody that provided for his people, somebody that always treated you with respect when he saw you, somebody that commanded respect when he walked in the room."

"So I really want to do this shout out for Nip tonight and I just want everybody to look around and be grateful and happy that we're all here together, alive and well, because life can end at any moment. I just want to say I love you, I'm thankful to be with you tonight. London, as long as you'll have me back I'll stand in the middle of this building and give you everything I've got. Cheers to my brother, rest easy my g. London, I love you." Whilst on stage Drake projected an image of Hussle's face onto screens before he performed the track 'Elevate' from his latest album 'Scorpion'. Before the song started, he told the crowd: "Want you to make some noise for the people who love you unconditionally because you never know how short life is."

The Canadian rapper and DJ Tiffany Calver also brought out special guests to join the 'Nonstop' hit-



maker onstage, with Unknown T and Digdat making an appearance. Giggs also joined the rapper for their track 'KMT', from Drake's 2017 mixtape 'More Life'. Drake's set was packed with hits and he ended his concert with 'God's Plan' much to the delight of the capacity crowd. — Bang Showbiz

Lifestyle | Features



Ahmed Al-Bindari, an Egyptian historian and photographer of modern (19th-20th century) Cairene architecture, points at an architecture catalogue showing the historic Sherif Pasha Serail (dating to 1870), during an interview at his office in the capital Cairo.



Ahmed Al-Bindari, an Egyptian historian and photographer of modern (19th-20th century) Cairene architecture, holds up an architecture catalogue showing the historic Cairo Opera House (dating to 1896) which burnt down in the mid-20th century (left) and the First Museum of Modern Art at the Musairi Serail (right), during an interview at his office in the capital Cairo.



A view of the Said Halim Pasha Palace (1896-1899) in Champollion street, in the capital Cairo central downtown district.



A view of the central Talaat Harb square in the Egyptian capital Cairo's downtown district.

Cupcakes to keychains, Japan new era name brings souvenir boom

No sooner had Japan announced the name of its next imperial era than enterprising businesses across the country began emblazoning "Reiwa" on everything from cupcakes to keychains. At several coffee shops, enterprising and skillful baristas rendered the name that implies "harmony" in the foam of lattes, with one artist even depicting the entire scene of Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga holding the new name aloft. The impulse to quickly monetize the new era name is virtually unprecedented, because for hundreds of years, each new name has been announced upon the death of the previous monarch, during a period of mourning when such enterprise would have been unseemly.

But because Emperor Akihito has opted to abdicate the throne, which will be assumed by Crown Prince Naruhito next month, a festive, and entrepreneurial, spirit surrounded the era announcement on Monday. And while the current imperial couple enjoy widespread support, some feel less warmly about the Heisei era of Akihito's reign.

"Some Japanese also have negative feelings towards the Heisei era," said Kazuo Yawata, a former bureaucrat who now teaches at Tokushima Bunri University, citing events including the collapse of the bubble economy and natural disasters. "So they are happy that we are moving to another period, and that was solidified by the festive atmosphere that was seen straight after the announcement," he told AFP.

Reiwa pizza

Yawata was among those waiting for the era name's

announcement for his own reasons: just three hours after "Reiwa" was unveiled, his new book was listed for sale online entitled "Reiwa, History of Japan: The Journey of the 126th Emperor and the Japanese." "Given the current context, I suspected the direction they would take with the new era name, so I wrote it beforehand and I basically just had to add the chosen name into the book and the cover," added Yawata, a supporter of the nationalist positions of Japan's government.

But most of those waiting for the name to be revealed for business reasons had less intellectual offerings, like the Osaka restaurant that put a pizza on its menu featuring



Women taking their commemorative photos of the printed T-shirts with the new era name "Reiwa" distributed for free at an event in Tokyo. — AFP photos



An employee of a department store displaying sweets designed with the new era name "Reiwa" with its packages in Yokohama.



A soft drink bottle with the new era name "Reiwa" label distributed at a station square in Tokyo.

Downtown Cairo battles to keep cosmopolitan heritage alive

Cairo's downtown, with its old European-designed buildings, is wrestling to preserve its cultural heritage as Egypt readies a new capital in the desert. A stroll through the district takes pedestrians past buildings that meld Islamic and European motifs, neo-classical columns and ornate decorations. But its elegance and prestige are fading, as the one-way streets and former palaces fall into ruin and shops selling cheap clothes and odds and ends have moved in.

"Some buildings are in a seriously dilapidated state," said Ahmed El Bindari, an architectural historian and volunteer tour guide, in the middle of a group of tourists. He enthusiastically recounts the history of the old buildings, some housing government ministries, and little passageways but complains of a lack of political will in heritage preservation. Bindari and others fear for the future of the district's old vacant buildings and worry that those in urgent need of repair will fall victim to a drive for urban renewal.

European influences

In the heart of Cairo and bordering Tahrir Square, the district is commonly known as Khedivial Cairo after Khedive Ismail Pasha, an Ottoman ruler who governed Egypt in the mid-19th century. He is credited with transforming Cairo into a modern metropolis with European influences after being inspired on a trip to Paris. Khedive Ismail ordered the building of the first opera house in the Middle East in 1869 to celebrate the inauguration of the strategic Suez Canal.

He also commissioned French architects to design geometric, tree-lined streets and downtown became the cultural hub of the city flourishing with cafes, cinemas and shops. With its big avenues, facades and bronze statues recalling the French or Italian capitals, the district has also long hosted a lively literary cafe scene, as well as government ministry buildings. Authorities have traditionally been careful to ensure the buildings retain their style, and many in the city of around 20 million residents are fond of the area.

'Regeneration banner'

Since the 1950s however, middle-class residents have progressively moved out of the area in favor of quieter, smarter and more modern suburbs. The ministries and public authorities still there are due to



This picture shows a view of the central Talaat Harb square in the Egyptian capital Cairo's downtown district. — AFP photos

move too, once the new administrative capital being built in the desert some 45 kilometers (28 miles) from the city center is ready. "What will become of the many ministries such as agriculture, education and health housed in historic palaces and buildings?" Bindari asked.

He points to the gentrification of the so-called Maspero Triangle area hugging the banks of the River Nile which the government is redeveloping into a financial center, with luxurious shopping malls and hotels. It has led to thousands of residents in informal housing being relocated to alternative accommodation. "I'm afraid that under the banner of regeneration, entire urban areas... will be razed to the ground," Bindari added.

Cause for optimism?

But Riham Aram, director of the Historic Cairo Restoration Project, is more upbeat. Since 2014, some 350 buildings have already been restored under an initiative for Khedivial Cairo, she said. "We've repainted entire buildings and restored decorations using similar material to what was originally used during construction," she said. "We must maintain this historic district so it doesn't turn into slums in the future," she warned. And she said that ways to reuse 18 government buildings in central Cairo would be examined.

Economic return

The private sector has also become involved in efforts to preserve the down-

town area. In 2008, a group of businessmen from local construction firm Ismailia Consortium set up an arm of the company to restore city center cultural heritage. "We found that the best way to conserve downtown Cairo is that there needs to be economic returns," said managing director Karim El-Shafei. "A lot of the apartments are empty. They can be renovated and rented out or sold bringing in profits because they are being used productively," he added.

The firm has bought 32 downtown buildings as well as the historic Cinema Radio located on Talaat Harb street. But it faces several bureaucratic hurdles even for routine procedures such as opening a new cafe. Shafei is also keen to draw tourists to the center to shop for locally made brands.

But it is not all about investing just to make money, when it comes to restoring important sites, some experts note. "Along with the focus on the new capital, we hope that interest is not lost in the conservation of Cairo's cultural heritage," said Soheir Hawas, a Cairo University professor, who authored a volume on the area's architecture. Hawas, also a member of the National Urban Harmony Committee, wants to see government buildings turned into museums and cultural centers. "These are important pages in Egypt's long and continuous architectural record and must be preserved," she argued. — AFP



Ahmed Al-Bindari, an Egyptian historian and photographer of modern (19th-20th century) Cairene architecture, holds up a photo of the Said Halim Pasha Palace (1896-1899) in Champollion street, during a tour in the capital Cairo.



A view of the Said Halim Pasha Palace (1896-1899) in Champollion street in the Egyptian capital Cairo's downtown district.

Classifieds

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Warm with light to moderate variable wind to north easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Cool with light to moderate north easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 02/04/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	25 °C	18 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	26 °C	13 °C			
ABDALY	26 °C	10 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	26 °C	14 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	25 °C	17 °C			
SALMIYAH	25 °C	18 °C			
AHMADI	26 °C	19 °C			
NUWAISIB	27 °C	16 °C			
WAFRA	26 °C	12 °C			
SALMY	23 °C	10 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	04/03	Warm and some high clouds will appear	28 °C	15 °C	NE-SE	10 - 32 km/h
Thursday	04/04	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear	31 °C	18 °C	NE-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Friday	04/05	Relatively hot and Partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	32 °C	19 °C	SE	10 - 40 km/h
Saturday	04/06	Warm and Cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	27 °C	19 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:16
Sunrise	05:36
Zuhr	11:52
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:07
Isha	19:25

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	26 °C
MIN. Temp.	18 °C
MAX. RH	81 %
MIN. RH	17 %
MAX. Wind	W 68 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

I, NARASAPURAM NARASIMHULU holder of Indian Passport No. R8271290 & Civil ID No. 261070100176 has changed my name from NARASAPURAM NARASIMHULU to NARASAPURAM SRINIVASULU hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of NARASAPURAM SRINIVASULU. (C 5510) 3-4-2019

I, Priyanka Elizabeth Babu (given name) holder of Indian Passport L4904943 do hereby change my name to Priyanka Elizabeth (given name) Babu (surname) for all purposes. I also undertake to effect the change in all my other public documents. (C 5507)

I, Noble John holder of Indian Passport No: J5545465 issued at Kuwait on 19/05/2011.

Hereby declare that, my given name is Noble and surname is John. (C 5509)

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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 3/4/2019				Departure Flights on Wednesday 3/4/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	RBG	123	Dubai	13:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	Alexandria	554	Alexandria	13:10
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	JZR	115	Doha	13:25
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	521	Al Najaf	13:30
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	IAW	158C	Al Najaf	13:55
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	CLX	912	Hanoi	14:20
ETH	3717	LGG	02:00	RBG	218	Asyut	14:35
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	FJB	103	Bahrain	15:05
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:55	Dubai	060	Dubai	15:05
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	JZR	125	Dubai	15:50
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	105	Jeddah	15:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KNE	530	London	15:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
JZR	722	Alexandria	03:50	KAM	743	Dammam	16:05
PIA	239	Sialkot	04:00	JZR	301	Istanbul	16:10
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	796	Madinah	04:25	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:30	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	155	Istanbul	17:35
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:45	KAC	503	Beirut	17:40
JZR	154	Mashhad	05:50	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
KAC	206	Lahore	06:15	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:10
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
KAC	358	Kochi	07:10	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	19:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:15	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KNE	351	Kochi	20:45
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	KAC	232	Riyadh	20:50
IAW	157B	Al Najaf	10:00	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
JZR	216	Jeddah	10:55	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	RBG	214	Sohag	21:35
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
UAE	2541	Dubai	11:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
AHY	119	Baku	12:05	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	KAC	383	Delhi	22:50
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	JZR	407	Ahmedabad	22:40
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
CLX	7912	Luxembourg	12:45	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
IAW	157C	Al Najaf	12:55	KAC	1543	Cairo	23:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				JAV	622	Amman	23:15
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
				SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45



People watch as two of three elephants stuck in deep mud on the shores of the seasonal Lake Kapnarok, situated at the base of the Kerio valley, part of the Kenyan Rift Valley's ecosystem in Baringo County, are rescued on Monday. The three pachyderms ventured deep into the drying lake bed in an effort to reach the receding waters and ended up mired taking scores of villagers and a Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) team six hours to free the giants. — AFP

E-cigarettes haven't made teen smoking cool again

PARIS: The rapid spread of e-cigarette use among young teenagers has not slowed the decline in smoking in the same age group, much less reversed it, according to a new study. Nor has vaping caused 13-to-15 year olds canvassed in Britain to see tobacco use in a more positive light, researchers reported yesterday. The findings, published in the BMJ journal Thorax, are the latest to conclude that nicotine-delivering electronic cigarettes are not, as once feared, a gateway drug for tobacco.

"Our research does not support the hypothesis that e-cigarettes 'renormalized' youth smoking during a period of growing but largely unregulated use in the UK," the study concluded. But neither did it alleviate growing concern about the health consequences of vaping, which remain largely unknown in part because the practice is so new. It took decades, experts point

out, to determine that smoking tobacco - which accounts for more than seven million premature deaths worldwide every year - is truly dangerous.

Research on nearly 100,000 adults in the United States - presented at a major conference last month there - showed that e-cigarette use increases the likelihood of heart attacks, coronary artery disease and depression by 34, 25 and 55 percent respectively. Rates of these conditions were far higher among smokers. Another study from February, published in the Nature Journal Scientific Reports, linked chemicals used in 90 percent of vaping systems to impaired lung function.

"We must take aggressive steps to protect our children from these highly potent products," the US Surgeon General said in a rare public advisory in December, warning of the harmful impact of nicotine on still-developing

brains. The new findings looked at changes in behavior and attitude among a quarter of a million young teens in Britain from 1998 to 2015. During that period, they found, the percentage of 13-to-15 years olds who had smoked at least once fell from 60 to 19, and the share of regular smokers dropped from 19 to five percent.

Perceptions changed as well. Only 27 percent of young teens in 2015 said it was "OK to try a cigarette", compared with 70 percent 15 years earlier. Crucially, the rate at which these shifts took place barely slowed, if at all, from 2011 to 2015, the period when e-cigarettes were taking off. "Favorable perceptions of regular smoking among this age group also fell at a faster rate after the proliferation of e-cigarettes, which would not be expected if smoking was in the process of being 'renormalized'," the authors concluded. Figures from the rest of

Europe and North America suggest similar trends.

The use of e-cigarettes in the United States jumped by more than 75 percent in 2018 compared with the year before, prompting the US Food and Drug Administration to call last fall tighter regulations. Teens in every age bracket are today more likely to vape than to smoke cigarettes, according to the US National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Nearly 10 percent of 13-to-14 year olds said they had vaped within the last month, but less than four percent had lit up a cigarette, the NIDA reported in November. For 17-to-18 year olds, the gap closed, but the number of smokers was still 50 percent lower than users of e-cigarettes. In the United States today, one in 20 adults - or more than 10 million people - use e-cigarettes, while three times as many are smokers. — AFP

In Egypt, rice samples judged in the kitchen

CAIRO/DUBAI: With steaming plates of rice and freshly sliced apples on the side, a group of Cairo-based food scientists work in their lab to decide whether the foreign grains will suit Egyptian palates. The scientists cook and taste samples of rice on offer at state tenders before they are accepted. The process, which began late last year, has so far eliminated Indian origin rice and approved of Chinese and Vietnamese offers. Egypt has spent \$46.8 million on Chinese rice in two tenders since November. A third is ongoing.

Egyptians are major rice consumers and take pride in the quality of their local crop. But after planting less local rice in 2018 to conserve water, Egypt tapped the international market in November, requesting samples for a cooking test. Rice is a heavily discounted staple on Egypt's subsidy program, under which the state purchases foodstuffs that are offered to subsidy card holders, currently around 60 million people.

The scientists' role is to ensure that the rice bought by the state is suited to familiar cooking methods and tastes. "Here, as a unit, we are all (academic) doctors as well as mothers in our homes," said Nahed Lotfy, director of the test kitchen. "We are all trained judges who have completed training courses." Samples are anonymized, said Nasra Ahmed, one of the taste testers. "We get a sample on which we have almost no information at all," she said. "Everything arrives with a code."

Researchers inspect grains for water absorption, color and smell. After cooking, the rice is presented to the tasters. "We evaluate the product based on



color, taste, aroma, flavor, as well as general response," Lotfy said. Researchers cannot wear perfume or smoke cigarettes. Sliced apples and water act as palate cleansers. Traders say the taste test drives up costs by forcing them to keep their offers open indefinitely while it takes place. They say the testing process is unique to Egypt. "It is something that doesn't happen globally," Mostafa Al-Naggari, a major Egyptian rice exporter and importer, told Reuters. "In other countries, the cooking instructions are simply written on the packet."

On the private market, importers have contracted to bring in 150,000 tonnes of Indian rice from October until end April, with no complaints from Egyptian consumers. Naggari, who buys Indian rice to supply Egypt's private market, said he was not clear why Indian samples had failed the test. "These are the rules of the tender and we will respect it, but I am happy selling rice on the private market."

But Nomanani Nomani, an advisor to the supply minister, said the cooking tests were necessary to avoid the rice piling up in subsidy stores like it did three years ago when Egyptians refused to buy it. "Of course if an Indian rice sample that suits Egyptian taste is presented we will accept it, but the cooking test is necessary to make sure the rice we are importing suits consumers," he said. — Reuters

WhatsApp to fight fake news during India mega elections

MUMBAI: WhatsApp yesterday launched a service for Indians to check the veracity of information, in the messaging platform's latest attempt to combat fake news in India ahead of national elections beginning this month. WhatsApp said in a statement it was working with local startup Proto to classify messages sent to the service by users as true, false, misleading or disputed. They will also build a database of such content to better understand misinformation.

The move comes as WhatsApp, with over 200 million users in India, battles criticism of its platform being used for the spread of misinformation, while social media companies across the board work to prevent the phenomenon - particularly during sensitive events such as elections. WhatsApp owner Facebook Inc said on Monday it had deleted 712 accounts and 390 pages in India and Pakistan for "inauthentic behaviour", saying many were linked to India's opposition Congress party and others related to Pakistan's military. The first phase of India's elections are scheduled to begin on April 11, with final results expected on May 23.

Major Indian political parties have accused each other of propagating fake news on WhatsApp while denying they do so themselves. In February, a senior WhatsApp executive said parties were trying to use

the app in "ways for which it was not intended". WhatsApp had a similar challenge during Brazilian elections last year, when politicians had faced claims of spreading falsehoods on the platform.

"The goal of this project is to study the misinformation phenomenon at scale," Proto's founders Ritvij Parikh and Nasr ul Hadi said in a statement. "As more data flows in, we will be able to identify the most susceptible or affected issues, locations, languages, regions, and more." WhatsApp said Proto would be helped by two other organizations with experience working on misinformation-related projects. "The challenge of viral misinformation requires more collaborative efforts and cannot be solved by any one organization alone," WhatsApp said.

The new service, dubbed Checkpoint Tipline, can receive messages in the form of images and video as well as text in English and four regional languages, it added. Checkpoint is a research project commissioned by WhatsApp. Reuters received a message on WhatsApp containing false information and forwarded it to the service around 0640 GMT. It was still awaiting classification more than two hours later. "Thank you, we've received your request and you should hear from us again shortly," a reply said.

WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption allows groups of many users to exchange text messages, images and video beyond the oversight of independent fact checkers or even the company itself. In July, the company introduced a measure limiting the number of messages a user can forward, a move aimed at curbing mass forwards in India, where the spread of rumours led to several killings and sparked calls for government action. — Reuters

Greek PM visits North Macedonia...

Continued from Page 1

visit North Macedonia. Truly historic day," Zaev wrote on Twitter beneath a photo of the two leaders embracing outside the government building, where they took a selfie before entering inside. With the name issue behind them, the neighbors are also touting the promise of boosting economic ties. Tsipras is joined by 10 ministers and more than two dozen Greek business leaders with him attended a business forum in the afternoon.

Ahead of the visit, Zaev told AFP there would be new Greek investments worth more than 500 million euros in North Macedonia, which is much smaller and poorer than its EU member neighbor. "The Republic of North Macedonia will have huge economic benefits from the deal that I believe will be seen in every area of the economy," the prime minister added.

Since the initial name accord was inked in June 2018, congratulations have poured in from around the globe for the two young premiers, who took on risky political

battles at home to push the deal through, enraging nationalists in both countries. Even before the deal was finalized, the pair were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by 2015 winner Wided Bouchamaoui of Tunisia. "This visit is historic," Tsipras told the state-run MIA news agency on Monday, hailing a new future for the "partners and allies".

But he conceded that a "significant portion of the Greek people" are still "seriously concerned" about the name deal. "It is our responsibility - mine and Zoran's - to show that our nations can only benefit from the path that is now open," he said, condemning "rising forces of nationalism". Disgruntlement is also palpable in Skopje among some who feel the name-change is an embarrassing concession to Greece and that the end-goal - entry into the EU - may never materialize.

North Macedonia is in the process of joining NATO and hoping the EU will open accession talks in June. Yet the timeline is unclear, with appetite for enlargement shrinking considerably among several members of the bloc, particularly France. Meanwhile, in his own protest, the Balkan state's President Gorge Ivanov has been refusing to sign bills from parliament ever since North Macedonia became the official name. The two-term president will be replaced in elections later this month. — AFP

UN chief warns against rising...

Continued from Page 1

"The world is witnessing political wars that use religious and sectarian slogans to achieve different interests at the expense of the blood of innocent people, which should be taken care of," he added. Guterres stressed the role of Al-Azhar as an important example of the true face of Islam, praising Al-Azhar's initiative to open dialogue with religious institutions around the world, especially the Vatican, which will help consoli-

date peace and coexistence.

Tayeb affirmed Al-Azhar's readiness to carry a global message of peace to cooperate with the UN to achieve their common goals of consolidating world peace and achieving equality among all. He highlighted the great role of Al-Azhar in confronting terrorism, laying down the principles of human goodwill, equality and justice among people. He stressed that Al-Azhar trains Muslim imams and preachers and receives thousands of students from all over the world to qualify them and provide them with the knowledge and values necessary to carry this noble humanitarian message. Following his visit to Al-Azhar, Guterres was scheduled to meet President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi. On Sunday, he attended an Arab League summit in Tunisia. — Agencies

Sports

Blue Jays lose second straight as late rally over Orioles falls short

Brewers blow lead, edge Reds with 9th-inning run

TORONTO: Baltimore starter David Hess exited after throwing 6 1/3 no-hit innings, and teammates Jonathan Villar and Trey Mancini both homered as the visiting Orioles held on for a 6-5 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays on Monday night. Hess (1-0) was still working on his no-hitter and held a 6-0 lead when Baltimore manager Brandon Hyde pulled him after the right-hander retired the first batter in the seventh. Hess struck out eight and walked one. The no-hitter ended quickly after reliever Pedro Araujo entered. He walked Justin Smoak, the first batter he faced. Randal Grichuk then lined a two-run homer. Toronto's Freddy Galvis added a solo homer off Mike Wright Jr. in the eighth.

CARDINALS 6, PIRATES 5 (11 INNINGS)

Paul DeJong scored on a two-out, bases-loaded passed ball in the top of the 11th inning as St. Louis spoiled Pittsburgh's home opener. The Cardinals loaded the bases against Steven Brault (0-1) before a Nick Kingham pitch got away from catcher Francisco Cervelli with Yairo Munoz at bat. St. Louis erased a four-run deficit before Colin Moran's solo homer in the eighth gave Pittsburgh a 5-4 lead. In the top of the ninth, Cardinals pinch hitter Jose Martinez hit a one-out RBI double for a 5-5 tie.

BREWERS 4, REDS 3

Christian Yelich helped Milwaukee win a game even without the aid of a home run. His double and run in the ninth inning were the difference as the Brewers won at Cincinnati. After hitting a home run in each of his team's first four games to match a major league record, Yelich was 0-for-4 and had left three runners on base against the Reds before hitting a two-out double in the ninth inning. Ryan Braun followed with an RBI double as the Brewers won for the fourth time in five games. Alex Wilson (1-0) pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings to earn the victory. Josh Hader pitched a scoreless ninth inning for his third save in three chances, working around a lead-off double by Curt Casali.

INDIANS 5, WHITE SOX 3

Roberto Perez and Greg Allen drew consecutive bases-loaded walks to a cap a four-run uprising in the eighth inning, as Cleveland topped Chicago to win its home opener. Indians starter Mike Clevinger surrendered just one hit and struck out a career-high 12 batters in seven innings before a leaky bullpen left him with a no-decision. Carlos Santana and Max Moroff each had an RBI single for the Indians, who matched their run total of the previous three games. Ryan Cordell belted a pinch-hit, two-run homer in the eighth inning, and Yoan Moncada had an RBI double for the White Sox, who dropped 14 of 19 encounters with Cleveland last season.

AS 7, RED SOX 0

Aaron Brooks threw six shutout innings as Oakland blanked visiting Boston. Khris Davis, Ramon Laureano

and Chad Pinder homered off Red Sox starter David Price (0-1), and Matt Chapman teed off against the Boston bullpen as the A's won for the fourth time in five games at home after an 0-2 start in Japan. Brooks (1-0) followed in the footsteps of Mike Fiers, Marco Estrada, Brett Anderson and Frankie Montas, dominating a Red Sox team that had scored 24 runs in its season-opening, four-game series in Seattle. The 28-year-old gave up just two hits and one walk while striking out six.

MARINERS 6, ANGELS 3

Felix Hernandez ended an eight-game losing streak, and Seattle continued its best start since 1995 with a win over visiting Los Angeles. Hernandez (1-0), the 2010 AL Cy Young Award winner who will turn 33 on April 8, went 5 1/3 innings, allowing three runs (one earned) and seven hits. He struck out four and didn't walk a batter. In his previous 11 appearances (10 starts) since his last victory, Hernandez had gone 0-8 with a 6.34 ERA. Seattle committed four errors through the first four innings but still maintained a 4-3 lead when Hernandez departed. Jay Bruce hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning to give Seattle some insurance en route to its sixth win in the first seven games.

DIAMONDBACKS 10, PADRES 3

Adam Jones drove the game's third pitch from Matt Strahm into the left field stands, triggering a 15-hit attack that led Arizona to a 10-3 victory at San Diego. David Peralta and Ketel Marte each had three hits in five at-bats for the Diamondbacks. The benefactor of the offense was Merrill Kelly, who was making his major league debut after pitching the past four seasons in South Korea. Kelly (1-0) gave up three runs on three hits in his sixth and final inning after shutting out the Padres on two hits over the first five innings. The last hit allowed by Kelly was also the first home run by 20-year-old rookie Padres shortstop Fernando Tatis Jr., who pulled a 395-foot drive into the far corner of the Western Metal Supply Co. building in left. The two-run shot made Tatis the second-youngest Padre (to Hall of Famer Roberto Alomar Jr.) ever to homer.

RAYS 7, ROCKIES 1

Kevin Kiermaier and Brandon Lowe homered and combined to drive in six runs as Tampa Bay beat visiting Colorado to win its fourth straight. Kiermaier (four RBIs) and Lowe (two RBIs) both had two hits and slugged their first home runs. Ji-Man Choi also had a pair of hits. Ryan Yarbrough (1-0) pitched 4 1/3 innings-most of it with a tissue plugging up a nose bleed-and gave up just one run after entering in the second inning. Nolan Arenado had three hits, including a run-scoring double, and David Dahl had two hits. Chad Bettis (0-1) gave up six runs in 5 2/3 innings as Colorado lost its third straight.

BRAVES 8, CUBS 0

Atlanta got solo homers from Ender Inciarte and



TORONTO: Jonathan Villar #2 of the Baltimore Orioles and Joey Rickard #23 and Cedric Mullins #3 cannot get to a bloop double hit by Randal Grichuk #15 of the Toronto Blue Jays in the ninth inning during MLB game action at Rogers Centre in Toronto, Canada. — AFP

Ronald Acuna Jr. and took advantage of six Cubs errors to beat visiting Chicago for its first win of the season. The beleaguered Braves bullpen worked five scoreless innings, and rookie Wes Parsons (1-1) tossed one inning to earn his first career victory. Cubs starter Kyle Hendricks (0-1) worked 4 1/3 innings and gave up seven runs (only two earned) on 10 hits and three walks. He struck out four.

GIANTS 4, DODGERS 2

Brandon Belt hit a home run and drove in three runs as visiting San Francisco rallied against Los Angeles' bullpen for a victory. Belt hit a sixth-inning home run on the first pitch from Joe Kelly and delivered a two-run double in the seventh on the fourth pitch from Scott Alexander as the Giants won for the second time in five games. Chris Taylor and Alex Verdugo hit fifth-inning home runs for the Dodgers, who have gone deep 16 times while compiling a 3-2 record to start the season.

METS 7, MARLINS 3

Rookie Pete Alonso's first major league home run capped a four-run ninth inning as New York won at Miami. Dominic Smith led off the ninth with a single and Juan Lagares was hit on the hand while attempting to sacrifice. With one out, Ahmed Rosario grounded a single to right off Drew Steckenrider (0-1) to score Smith before Alonso sent a first-pitch fastball over the center field fence for a 444-foot three-run homer. The Marlins loaded the bases against Mets closer Edwin

Diaz in the bottom of the inning before Diaz fanned three straight to end it. Lagares also homered for the Mets, and Jeury's Familia (1-0) pitched a scoreless eighth for the win.

ASTROS 2, RANGERS 1

Brad Peacock, making his return to the rotation after spending 2018 in the bullpen, surrendered just two hits in 6 2/3 innings to help Houston snap a three-game skid and squeak out a win in Arlington, Texas. Peacock (1-0), who struck out five and walked none, allowed a game-tying solo home run in the third inning to Ronald Guzman, and a seventh-inning infield single to Rougned Odor that second baseman Jose Altuve nearly stabbed. George Springer belted a homer to start the game, and Robinson Chirinos drove in the tiebreaking run with a sixth-inning double.

YANKEES 3, TIGERS 1

Domingo German and four relievers combined on a two-hitter, and New York beat visiting Detroit after putting two more players on the injured list. The Yankees rebounded from consecutive losses to the Baltimore Orioles after putting Giancarlo Stanton on the 10-day injured list with a strained left biceps and Miguel Andujar on the injured list with a strained right shoulder. Gary Sanchez and Brett Gardner hit solo homers while Luke Voit scored on a single by Greg Bird following a fielding error by left fielder Christin Stewart. — Reuters

Jockey Ali Al-Farmawy wins Kuwait Derby Cup

KUWAIT: The horse "Rasham" with Jockey Ali Al-Farmawy won the "Kuwait Derby" Cup during the sixth run for 1800 meters, of horses born in 2016 with a time of 1:52.3 minutes at the conclusion of the 19th joint race between the Equestrian and Hunting Club and Mubarak Al-Kabeer Equestrian Club. KEHC Secretary General Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser handed the trophy to Al-Mashaan stable.

Head of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Club Talal Al-Nisf thanked the administration of KEHC for the invitation to carry out its activity on the main racing track, adding that the cooperation between the two clubs during the race is unprecedented.

The horse "Fares Al-Bedoor" of Al-Mutairi ridden by Jockey Khan, won the Arab Horse Center "Beit Al-Arab" cup for Arab horses, local production during the fifth run for 1400 meters with a time 1:42.4 minutes.

The horse "Ghadanfar Al-Ameed" of Al-Mutairi ridden by Jockey Ali Al-Farmawy won the AHC Cup for 1400m for the original Arab horses for 1:38.8 minutes.

The horse "Al-Ashras" for Al-Daeya won the cup of



the late Ahmad Abdallah Al-Ayoub during the third run of mixed horses for 1000 meter in 0:57.5 minute.

The horse "Al-Muarab" of Al-Daeyah won the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Club Cup during the second run of

first grade horses for 1600 meter in 1:38.8 minutes.

The horse "Buraq Al-Daeyah" won the Emarat Markets Club during the first run for the third degree horses for 1200 meters in 1:11.2 minutes.

Royal backdrop for Cricket World Cup launch party

LONDON: The launch for this year's cricket World Cup in England will take place on The Mall in central London, organisers hoping for a 4,000 sell-out crowd said yesterday. The Mall-which links Buckingham Palace to Trafalgar Square-will host the party on May 29, the eve of the opening game between England and South Africa, featuring "music, dance and some of the biggest names in sport", according to the organisers.

"The opening party will capture the very essence of what makes this tournament so special and will be hugely exciting for the fans that are lucky enough to attend," said World Cup managing director Steve Elworthy.

"The Mall, with Buckingham Palace in the background, is synonymous with some of the biggest events held in the UK and is instantly recognisable to everyone around the globe. "It will be a fitting celebration of a World Cup, cricket and sport with diversity at its core," added the 54-year-old former South Africa bowler.

Tickets for the launch party for the tournament-which runs from May 30 to July 14 - will be allocated in a free ballot which opens tomorrow. — AFP

Mick Schumacher tests with Ferrari in Bahrain

MANAMA: Mick Schumacher, son of seven times world champion Michael, made his Formula One test debut with Ferrari yesterday at the Bahrain circuit, where 15 years ago his father won the first grand prix in the Middle East.

The 20-year-old European F3 champion made his Formula Two debut at the Sakhr circuit over the weekend, finishing eighth and sixth in the two races. The German, whose father won the Bahrain Grand Prix from pole position in a Ferrari one-two on April 4, 2004, will also test with the Ferrari-powered Alfa Romeo team (formerly Sauber) today.

Yesterday's test in the SF90 was Mick's first experience of a modern F1 car, although he did drive his father's 1994 title-winning Benetton at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit before the

2017 Belgian Grand Prix.

"Obviously, with the name and being the son of Michael, there's certainly some links and expectations," four times champion and current Ferrari driver Sebastian Vettel said last week. "The way he has developed in the last years, he deserves where he is now. Now we should give him the time and the peace to do his job."

Michael Schumacher, who still holds the record of 91 grand prix wins, won five of his titles with Ferrari in a golden period from 2000 to 2004. He left the team in 2006 before a comeback with Mercedes from 2010-12.

Schumacher senior has not been seen in public since he suffered severe head injuries in a skiing accident in the French Alps in December 2013. He turned 50 in January. Mick, who joined the Ferrari academy in January, was the only debutant on track in a rain-hit opening session that followed Sunday's second grand prix of the season.

They were joined by double world champion Fernando Alonso, who left Formula One at the end of last season but was back in a McLaren testing tyres for Pirelli. — Reuters

Pakistan's Umar Akmal fined for night out in Dubai

KARACHI: Pakistani cricketer Umar Akmal's dancing skills off the pitch have landed him in trouble as the maverick middle-order batsman was fined 20 percent of his match fee for a night out in Dubai.

The 28-year-old talented yet indiscipline player was in the United Arab Emirates for a five-match series against Australia, which Pakistan lost 5-0 in Dubai on Sunday. It was his first international fixture since January 2017.

But a video clip circulating on social media showed Umar attending a concert and dancing on Friday night in Dubai. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement late Monday that Umar had apologised after team manager Talat Ali charged him with breaching the team's curfew and going to a club, a violation of the rules for tours.

"I am glad that Umar has realised his mistake, and has accepted and apologised for his actions, which were clearly unprofessional and in no way can be ignored or overlooked," PCB managing director Wasim Khan said.

"The PCB expects a high level of professionalism and commitment from its players, and this action is a reiteration and timely reminder that any indiscipline shall not be tolerated or accepted."

Umar managed just 150 runs in the five matches-a disappointing show that could have a negative impact on his potential selection for the 2019 World Cup, to be held in England and Wales from May 30 to July 14.

The player has had a history of disciplinary problems since making his international debut in 2009. He was infamously arrested for a day in 2014 after attacking a traffic warden. In 2015, he was dropped from the Pakistan team after local media reported another raucous night of dancing.

Waqar Younis, Pakistan's previous head coach, also suggested the PCB keep Umar away from the team over disciplinary problems following the World Twenty20 in India in 2016. He has also clashed repeatedly with current head coach Mickey Arthur. — AFP

Sports

Lightning reach 60 wins with rout of Senators

Oilers see playoff hopes end during loss to Knights

TAMPA BAY: Yanni Gourde and Nikita Kucherov each had three points as the Tampa Bay Lightning cracked the 60-win plateau with a 5-2 road victory over the Ottawa Senators on Monday. The Lightning became just the third team in NHL history to win 60 games in a season, following the 1995-96 Red Wings' 62 wins and 1976-77 Canadiens' 60 wins in the pre-overtime era. With three games remaining on the schedule, Tampa Bay (60-15-4, 124 points) still has a chance of breaking Detroit's record. Gourde collected an assist and scored twice for his first multi-goal outing of the season. Kucherov notched three assists, marking the 18th time in what could be an MVP season that the forward has had at least three points in a single game. And Steven Stamkos scored late in the third period to give the star center 15 points (eight goals, seven assists) in his past nine games. Ottawa got goals from Brady Tkachuk and Max Veronueau. Craig Anderson gave up five goals on 26 shots in his 400th appearance for the Senators.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3, OILERS 1

Jonathan Marchessault scored what proved to be the winning goal on a breakaway in the second period, and Malcolm Subban finished with 18 saves as host Vegas ended a team-record, five-game losing streak with a victory over Edmonton. Cody Eakin and Pierre-Edouard Bellemare also scored goals for Vegas, which already had clinched third place in the Pacific Division and a first-round Stanley Cup playoff matchup with the San Jose Sharks. Subban, playing in his ninth consecutive game, improved to 14-2-1 all-time at T-Mobile Arena. Edmonton's Connor McDavid tied his career high with his 41st goal. The Oilers were officially eliminated from the Stanley Cup playoff race during the game when Avalanche picked up a point in their shootout loss at St. Louis.

MAPLE LEAFS 2, ISLANDERS 1

John Tavares scored against his former team in the third period and Toronto clinched a playoff berth with a close win in Uniondale, N.Y. Defenseman Calle Rosen scored his first career NHL goal and Frederik Andersen made 28 saves for the Maple Leafs, who averted a season sweep by New York and moved within four points

of second-place Boston in the Atlantic Division. Jordan Eberle scored to extend his goal-scoring streak to three games for the Islanders, who fell for the second time in six contests to remain just two points ahead of third-place Pittsburgh in the Metropolitan Division.

PANTHERS 5, CAPITALS 3

Roberto Luongo—three days short of his 40th birthday—made 27 saves, and host Florida held on in a wild finish to defeat Washington. The Capitals scored three goals—by Evgeny Kuznetsov, Nicklas Backstrom and Jakub Vrana—in the final 10 minutes to cut into what had been a 4-0 deficit. Vrana scored with 2:21 left to make it 4-3, and the Capitals then pulled rookie backup goalie Pheonix Copley for an extra attacker. However, Florida escaped when Vincent Trocheck scored an empty-net goal with 27 seconds left, his second tally of the night.

BLUES 3, AVALANCHE 2 (SO)

Jordan Binnington had 24 saves through overtime and three more in a shootout, and Ryan O'Reilly scored the shootout winner against his former team as St. Louis beat visiting Colorado to complete a sweep of the four-game season series. The win moved St. Louis into a tie with Nashville for second place in the Central Division, with the Blues holding the first tiebreaker with three games remaining for both teams. Gabriel Landeskog had a goal and an assist, Alexander Kerfoot also had a goal, and Philipp Grubauer had 25 saves for the Avalanche, who earned a valuable point to increase their lead over Arizona to two points for the final wild-card spot in the West. Both teams have three games remaining.

JETS 4, BLACKHAWKS 3 (OT)

Jack Roslovic scored twice, and Kevin Hayes tallied the overtime winner as Winnipeg claimed a road victory over Chicago that restored the Jets' lead for the top spot in the Central Division. Goalie Connor Hellebuyck made 25 saves for the Jets, who snapped a three-game losing skid. Winnipeg is two points ahead of the St. Louis Blues and Nashville Predators for first place in the Central. All three teams have three games remaining in the regular season. The Blackhawks remained mathematically alive by forcing overtime in a crazy game that



UNIONDALE: Jordan Eberle #7 of the New York Islanders skates against the Toronto Maple Leafs at NYCB Live's Nassau Coliseum in Uniondale, New York. The Maple Leafs defeated the Islanders 2-1. — AFP

saw a Jets goal overturned with three minutes left in regulation and Dylan Strome force the extra frame with his 19th goal with 2:20 left in the third.

FLAMES 7, KINGS 2

Derek Ryan scored twice while Mark Jankowski netted one goal and two assists as visiting Calgary leaned on some of its more unusual suspects one night after securing top spot in the Western Conference and still throttled Los Angeles. The Flames sat out their top four defensemen—Mark Giordano, TJ Brodie, Travis Hamonic

and Noah Hanifin—as well as second-line forwards Mikael Backlund and Matthew Tkachuk, yet goalie David Rittich needed to make just 23 saves. Calgary has won three straight and nine of its past 12. Ryan and Sam Bennett—who left the game after taking a late and high hit from Kurtis MacDermid in the second period—traded first-period goals with Kyle Clifford and Dustin Brown, who was honored prior to the game for becoming the Kings franchise leader in games played last week. Anze Kopitar assisted Brown's goal in his 1,000th NHL game for Los Angeles. — Reuters

Neville calls for Premier League grounds to host women's games

BURTON-ON-TRENT: England women's manager Phil Neville has urged the Premier League's biggest clubs to "blow the rest of Europe away" by opening their grounds to host women's matches in the manner Atletico Madrid and Juventus have in recent weeks.

Over 60,000 spectators saw England international Toni Duggan score in Barcelona's 2-0 win over Atletico last month to set a new world record for a women's club match.

That beat a European record of 48,000 set in February when Athletic Bilbao hosted Atletico at San Mames, one of the venues for the mens Euro 2020 tournament.

Just short of 40,000 fans also set an Italian record for Juventus' 1-0 win over Fiorentina in March, attendances bolstered by free or cheap tickets. Neville believes there is even more support for the women's game in England on a consistent basis and called on the likes of Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea to follow suit to build momentum ahead of the women's World Cup in France this summer.

"Looking at the attendances in our league yesterday (Sunday), I actually think that is better than the attendances for a one-off game in Spain, Portugal or Italy," said Neville ahead of World Cup warm-up friendlies against Canada and Spain.

"What I would say is some of the teams in England, the big teams in England, have got to open their big stadiums and fill it. 'Let's blow the rest of Europe away because I think our game in this country is in a far better place than in Spain, Italy or Portugal.'"

Neville's former club Manchester United look set to be promoted to the English Women's Super League (WSL) in their first season since the formation of their female team. Arsenal lead Manchester City in a tight WSL title race, while Chelsea face European champions Lyon in the semi-final of the Champions League later this month.

"Now we've got to say Man Utd if they win the league, or Arsenal throw open your stadium. A Champions League game at Chelsea, why not play it at Stamford Bridge?"

"Get 30 or 40,000 in. Our players, the WSL is at the level now where clubs have got to open their stadiums. 'Let's fill it and blow away the rest of Europe. That's my feelings having watched (Athletic) Bilbao, Juventus. They've done it but let us do it two or three times between now and the rest of the season.'"

Chelsea's Champions League quarter-final victory over Paris Saint-Germain was overshadowed by crowd trouble as police seized weapons and drugs from travelling French fans before the first leg in London. However, Neville insisted that game showed that women's football can now generate the passionate atmosphere associated with men's games at the highest level. — AFP

German FA president Reinhard Grindel resigns over gift

BERLIN: The president of the German Football Association (DFB) Reinhard Grindel confirmed yesterday that he had stepped down with immediate effect, ending three controversial years in charge. The 57-year-old has been under growing pressure following controversies culminating in a newspaper report on Monday that he had accepted the gift of a 6,000 Euro (\$6,700) watch from Hryhorii Surkis, a UEFA vice-president and honorary president of the Ukrainian football federation.

"I am stepping down from the position of DFB president, and I apologise for my less than exemplary behaviour regarding my acceptance of a watch," said Grindel. Surkis sat alongside Grindel on the executive committee of European football's governing body UEFA until last February. Yet Grindel denied that he had been given the watch for political reasons.

"For me this was an entirely private gift which I was bound to accept out of politeness," he said. "I did not have any idea how expensive the watch was and it was a grave oversight on my part not to find out. In doing so, I could have avoided the impression that I was acting inappropriately."

Tottenham bank on new stadium to deliver bright future

LONDON: Tottenham throw open the doors of their new 62,000-capacity stadium today, hoping it will give them the financial firepower to compete with the Premier League and European elite. Mauricio Pochettino's men will also banking on a short-term boost, with a dire run of results threatening to leave Spurs without Champions League football next season.

Tottenham played their final game at their old White Hart Lane stadium in May 2017 but the address is the only thing that has remained the same, with a gleaming new ground rising out of the rubble of their creaking old home in north London.

The new stadium, with a capacity of 62,062, is the biggest club ground in London and second only to Manchester United's Old Trafford in the Premier League. Tellingly the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, built at a reported cost of £1 billion (\$1.3 billion), is marginally bigger than the home of Tottenham's great north London rivals Arsenal.

Crystal Palace are the first Premier League team to visit on Wednesday, but the stadium has ambitions beyond football—underneath the retractable turf is an artificial surface to be used for NFL games. Spurs have an agreement to stage at least two matches a year for 10 years. In an effort to match the atmosphere at grounds such as Borussia Dortmund's Signal Iduna Park, the stadium boasts a special single-tier stand with a capacity of 17,500, dubbed the "White Wall".

And it's not just about the action on the pitch. Tottenham claim the stadium offers levels of food and drink that consign the old British stadium offering of

Grindel said that Surkis had "no economic interest in the DFB". "I am deeply shaken to have to give up my role as DFB president over such an issue," Grindel said. "I ask myself: why has this happened? I can only say that I was completely convinced that I was doing nothing wrong and that, in the stress of my position, I did not question myself enough."

MESUT OZIL SCANDAL

A former journalist and member of the German parliament for the centre-right CDU party, Grindel had been president of the DFB since 2015. In recent months, he oversaw Germany's successful bid to host Euro 2024, but also came under fierce criticism for his handling of various scandals.

He was singled out by Mesut Ozil, who accused Grindel of overseeing a culture of institutional racism, when the Arsenal midfielder retired from international duty last July. "In the eyes of Grindel and his supporters, I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose," wrote Ozil in his explosive resignation statement.

Grindel has also come under increasing fire from the media in recent weeks. In March, he broke off an interview with broadcaster Deutsche Welle after refusing to answer questions about the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

On Friday, magazine Der Spiegel alleged that Grindel had kept quiet about 78,000 Euros (\$87,380) of income which he had received from a DFB subsidiary in 2016 and 2017. The DFB responded with a statement saying that Grindel had declared all his



FRANKFURT: Reinhard Grindel, president of the German Football Association (DFB), addresses a press conference yesterday in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, to announce his resignation. — AFP

income correctly.

Yesterday, the association confirmed that vice-presidents Rainer Koch and Reinhard Rauball would take over as joint interim presidents until Grindel's successor is elected. Bild has already named ex-Germany and Real Madrid defender Christoph Metzelder, 38, as a possible replacement.

Former Bayern Munich player Philipp Lahm has ruled himself out of the running, saying that he had "no interest" in the presidency. — AFP

Everton probe Pickford brawl allegations

LONDON: England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford is under investigation by his club Everton about his alleged involvement in a brawl in Sunderland on Sunday. The 25-year-old—who shone at last year's World Cup—is believed to have reacted when revellers in a bar directed derogatory remarks at his fiancée Megan, who recently had their first child Arlo.

A video has spread on social media in which onlookers can be heard shouting "Jordan" as a fight breaks out before the man, believed to be Pickford, is dragged away. Pickford had played in Everton's 2-0 away win over West Ham on Saturday before spending a day off in his home city.

"The club has been made aware of an alleged incident involving one of our players and we are looking into the matter," the Premier League club said. Pickford came through the system at Sunderland but joined Everton for an initial £25 million (\$32.6 million) when they were relegated from the Premier League in June 2017.

He made his England debut five months later and was Gareth Southgate's first choice at the World Cup and was instrumental in their surprise run to the semi-finals. He saved a spot-kick in the penalty shootout victory over Colombia in their last 16 clash and was man of the match in England's 2-0 win over Sweden in the quarter-finals. — AFP

pies and soggy chips to history. Craft beers are made at an on-site microbrewery—and the feature that excited many fans at the test events were pint glasses that filled from the bottom.

Spurs boss Pochettino is bowled over by the club's new home and will hope it can give his faltering team the lift they need for a late-season push to secure a Champions League spot.

"The stadium is the best in the world, we can confirm that now," he said. "Every space is the best I have seen in my life, you can't compare that with anything. "It's an amazing project, it is going to be fantastic for the future of the club. It is going to be a massive boost for our fans and it must be for our players too."

Spurs will feel a sense of relief when they kick off against Crystal Palace in the Premier League on Wednesday after months of frustrating delays that forced them to play almost a second full season at Wembley.

There were some memorable nights at the national stadium as Spurs beat Real Madrid, Manchester United and Borussia Dortmund twice. But it was never truly home. Jurgen Klinsmann, who had two spells with the club in the 1990s, played in a test event at the new ground on Saturday.

"I'm really honoured and really happy to be here and it is such a special day to get this new stadium going," the German said. "Hopefully it takes Spurs into the future, with a lot of trophies."

Tottenham will not have the luxury of time to settle into their new stadium but it could play a pivotal role for the rest of the season, with five of their remaining seven Premier League games at home as they attempt to fend off United, Arsenal and Chelsea, with four teams chasing the final two Champions League spots.

They will also take on Manchester City there in the quarter-finals of this year's Champions League, with the first chapter of the story of their new home waiting to be written. — AFP

Sports

Arsenal climb to third place as Ramsey, Lacazette sink Newcastle

It's a new history, we are creating our own way: Emery

LONDON: Unai Emery challenged revitalised Arsenal to write their own history after they climbed to third place in the Premier League with a 2-0 win against Newcastle on Monday. Aaron Ramsey's first half strike was followed by Alexandre Lacazette's killer second in the closing stages at the Emirates Stadium, maintaining Arsenal's impressive progress under Emery.

Emery's side climbed two points above fourth placed Tottenham and fifth placed Manchester United to bolster their chance of qualifying for the Champions League via a top-four finish with seven games to go.

It is the first time Arsenal have been as high as third place since April 2017, highlighting their improvement since former Paris Saint Germain boss Emery replaced Arsene Wenger at the end of last season.

Ramsey's fifth goal of the season was only the Wales midfielder's second since he signed a lucrative pre-contract agreement to join Juventus at the end of the current campaign. But, while Ramsey won't be part of Emery's long-term plans, the future still looks bright for Arsenal, who recorded a 10th consecutive home league victory for the first time since December 1997 to May 1998. Arsenal finished with 63 points in Wenger's final season, but Emery has matched that tally with seven games to spare. No wonder Arsenal fans celebrated an important win by taunting their spluttering north London rivals with chants of "are you watching Tottenham".

"It's a new history. We are creating our own way. Our target is very clear," Emery said. "We have created a big atmosphere here. We are in a good moment, a good mentality with the players. "We are improving and making progress, but we know it is difficult. Tottenham, Chelsea and Manchester United are going to win a lot of games."

Newcastle remain seven points above the relegation

zone after a 12th defeat in their last 13 meetings with Arsenal. "If you don't take the chances and aren't precise against a good team, you know it is a matter of time until you make a mistake," Newcastle boss Rafael Benitez said, before taking a shot at owner Mike Ashley's lack of investment in new players.

"We have been speaking all season about the final third, you have to spend £50 million. £75 million (to have players to make a difference)." Ramsey thought he'd given Arsenal the lead when he swept home at the far post from Sead Kolasinac's flick.

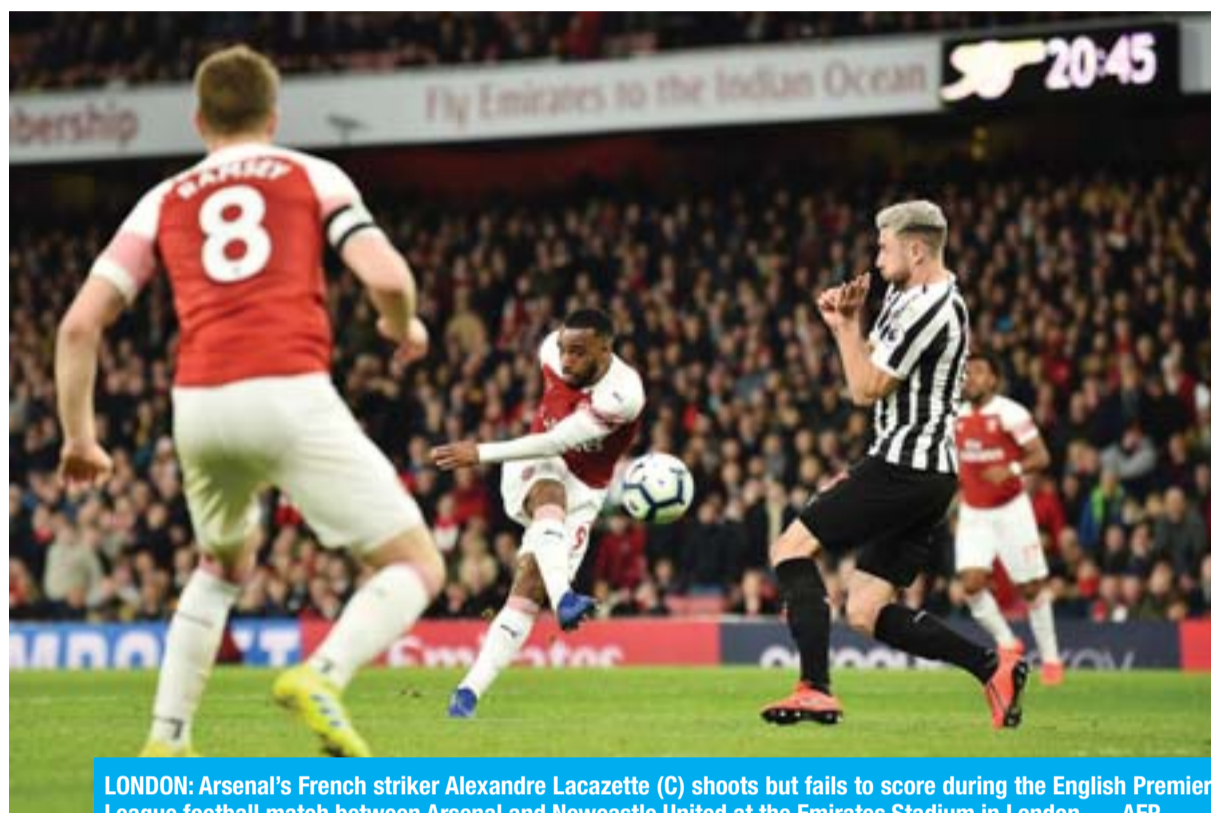
But his celebrations were curtailed as the goal was controversially ruled out by referee Anthony Taylor for Sokratis's shirt tug on Florian Lejeune. If Arsenal felt aggrieved by that debatable decision, they poured their frustration into breaking down Newcastle's five-man defence.

Emery had surprisingly left Gabon forward Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang on the bench as Mesut Ozil started behind Lacazette. Aubameyang has 22 goals in all competitions this season, but his absence wasn't a problem for Arsenal as they unhinged Newcastle's massed rearguard in the 30th minute.

Matteo Guendouzi passed to Ramsey and his clever flick picked out Lacazette in the Newcastle area. Lacazette was surrounded by three defenders and as he twisted to find space, the ball cannoned off DeAndre Yedlin into Ramsey's path and he guided a low shot past Newcastle keeper Martin Dubravka via the far post.

Arsenal remained by far the dominant force and Lacazette almost doubled their lead on the stroke of half-time when his shot was brilliantly headed off the line by Matt Ritchie. Looking for the decisive second goal, Emery sent on Aubameyang with half an hour left.

Ramsey departed to a rousing ovation after taking a



LONDON: Arsenal's French striker Alexandre Lacazette (C) shoots but fails to score during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Newcastle United at the Emirates Stadium in London. — AFP

knock that forced his substitution, then Aubameyang went close when he found space for a low shot that Dubravka turned away. And it was Aubameyang who was the catalyst for Arsenal's second in the 83rd minute. Guendouzi clipped a pass to Lacazette and he

redirected it to Aubameyang, who cleverly headed the ball over the statuesque Jamaal Lascelles. With Lascelles too slow to react, Lacazette nipped ahead of the Newcastle captain and chipped over Dubravka for his 15th goal in all competitions this term. — AFP

FA chairman wants tougher rules to tackle racism

LONDON: Football Association chairman Greg Clarke called for zero tolerance on racism yesterday and said it needed to be easier for referees to stop a game and take players off the pitch if racially abused.

Addressing an Equal Game conference organised by European soccer body UEFA at Wembley Stadium, Clarke said he had rewritten a planned speech after racist abuse of England players in Montenegro last week.

He said UEFA's three-step protocol on tackling racism could be improved. The protocol allows the referee to stop a match if 'racist behaviour is of a strong magnitude and intensity'. "There should be no judgement call on whether something is of a

strong magnitude," said Clarke. "Racism is racism and we should have zero tolerance for it."

England defender Danny Rose was subjected to monkey chants during the Euro 2020 qualifier won 5-1 by his side in Podgorica while Raheem Sterling was also targeted. Clarke said the protocol was designed to deal with mass chanting but abuse from one fan should be enough for the referee to act.

"Receiving a torrent of vile, racist abuse from one person when you are taking a throw-in or a corner is wholly unacceptable too," he said. "So we should look again at our definitions to make sure the protocol covers this, because this needs to stop."

Clarke said the FA was looking at how incidents were dealt with in England and a board meeting last week agreed to review the processes for spectator misconduct and how clubs are sanctioned.

"I also worry that there is an undue burden on the player to report incidents themselves," said the FA chairman. He said every complaint should be investigated, rather than just reported by match officials, with video technology and lip-readers used.

"We all know what racism looks like. We should see how we can better report incidents through the

UEFA match delegate or through employing specific spotters and take the weight off the players' shoulders and act ourselves," he said.

"The responsibility should not be on them to instigate action," Clarke was speaking after UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin, in an opening address, said he was ashamed to see banana skins thrown onto football pitches and hear monkey noises coming from the stands.

The Slovenian also spoke out against 'sickening fascist nostalgia' in stadiums and said it shamed soccer that there were still places in the world where women could not play or attend games. "It is worrying to see certain leaders and politicians playing down these incidents when they occur in their own countries," he added.

Momir Durdevac, the general secretary of the Montenegro FA, told delegates later through a translator that he had heard no racist abuse at the match and blamed a "handful of idiots" if there had been any. He said they should be condemned, rather than the country, and apologised "to all those who have gained a very bad impression from Podgorica." — Reuters



LONDON: File photo taken on March 30, 2019 shows a general view of the exterior of the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium. Tottenham throw open the doors of their new 62,000-capacity stadium today, hoping it will give them the financial firepower to compete with the Premier League and European elite. — AFP

Pochettino gives backing to under-fire Hugo Lloris

LONDON: Mauricio Pochettino said yesterday that Hugo Lloris will remain in goal for Tottenham despite a series of costly errors this season. Lloris has endured fresh criticism after his fumble led to Toby Alderweireld's decisive own goal in the final minutes of Tottenham's 2-1 defeat at Liverpool on Sunday.

It is not the first time this term the Tottenham captain has made a mistake that ended up haunting his team. But Spurs boss Pochettino has always backed the France World Cup winner, even in the wake of a drink-driving charge earlier in the campaign.

Pochettino confirmed Lloris would be in goal for Tottenham's first game in their new stadium against Crystal Palace today. "He is my captain. He's one of the best keepers in the world. There's no doubt," Pochettino said. "There's no doubt that Hugo is one of the best and he's going to be in the goal. "It's a situation that is so painful because I think we deserved more (at Liverpool), but in that kind of situation, which happens in football, it's only to be strong and back our

player. "I think Hugo is going to be, like always, great for us. He was great for us. "He was so important in all that process in five years, and for sure he's going to be one of the most important players for the future of the club too." Tottenham's return home to their 62,062-seater stadium could not have come at a better time as they look for a morale boost after a wretched run. They have taken just one point from their past five Premier League games, which has seen them not only drop out of the title race but also put their top-four place in serious peril. There were signs of promise in the cruel loss to Liverpool and Pochettino is sure that their new home will be graced by Champions League football next term.

TOP-FOUR FIGHT

"Of course, the best stadium in the world must have the Champions League," he said. "It would be a shame to not be in the next Champions League. "But we are going to fight. We are in the top four, disappointed

with the last result but of course it's not the same.

"Against Liverpool we deserved more, played really well second half, the feeling was so good. Playing like this I have no doubts we are going to be in the top four and playing in the Champions League next season.

"It's in our hands. It's a mini-league and playing five games in our new stadium will be a big boost for our players and fans. It's up to us to achieve that." Tottenham, who have been playing at Wembley for the past two years, have had a painstaking wait following frustrating delays to the stadium's opening this season, which have postponed their moving-in date from August 2018.

But Pochettino is ready for a special day in the club's history. "It's going to be very special, at last the new stadium is a reality," he said. "Now it's so close, just over 24 hours until we play in our new home. "It's an exciting moment in the history of the club. Everyone will realise the magnitude of the project." —AFP

Live		Matches on TV	
		(Local Timings)	
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
Manchester City v Cardiff City	beIN SPORTS HD 2	21:45	
Tottenham Hotspur v Crystal Palace FC	beIN SPORTS HD 1	21:45	
Chelsea FC v Brighton & Hove Albion	beIN SPORTS HD 5	21:45	
SPANISH LEAGUE			
Athletic de Bilbao v Levante	beIN SPORTS HD 3	20:30	
SD Eibar v Rayo Vallecano	beIN SPORTS	21:30	
Huesca v Celta de Vigo	beIN SPORTS HD 8	21:30	
Valencia CF v Real Madrid CF	beIN SPORTS HD 3	22:30	
FRENCH LEAGUE			
Montpellier HSC v EA Guingamp	beIN SPORTS	20:00	
RC Strasbourg v Stade Reims	beIN SPORTS	20:00	

Guardiola places faith in Jesus with Aguero hurt

MANCHESTER: Manchester City will be without injured leading scorer Sergio Aguero as they try to regain the advantage in the Premier League title race against struggling Cardiff today. A thigh injury means the Premier League's leading marksman—he has 19 goals to his name—will sit it out with Brazil star Gabriel Jesus taking his place.

Victory over a side they thrashed 5-0 in the away fixture earlier this season would see City leapfrog Liverpool to lead the title race by a point, with both having played the same number of games.

City manager Pep Guardiola admitted Aguero faces a race to be fit for the FA Cup semi-final with Brighton on Saturday and the first leg of the Champions League quarter-final away to Tottenham next Tuesday.

"Today Sergio is not able to play," said Guardiola. "He didn't train the last two days. "Hopefully he can on Saturday or next Tuesday. We will see his evolution in the next few days." Guardiola, whose side is bidding for a historic quadruple in winning the Premier League, the FA Cup and the Champions League to add to their League Cup success already this term, has faith in Jesus being able to fill in for Aguero.

"Gabriel is ready," said Guardiola. "He is having a good season and it is not always easy to play in this club as a striker in the same position as Sergio. "He is fighting against one legend and an incredible top player in his best season since we have been at the club.

"When Gabriel played, he played well. Tomorrow he is going to help us and fight and score goals and create space for others." City might still have been top but for a late error by France's World Cup-winning captain Hugo Lloris gifting Liverpool all three points on Sunday in a 2-1 win over Tottenham Hotspur.

"When you see that, you say 'Ah s...'," he said. "But after five or ten minutes, you think it's a nice but terrible challenge. "Nobody said it would be easy. Nobody. We knew it and I knew it.

"Everybody is excited for what we are going to live in the next weeks. "Let's beat Cardiff for the main target to go back top of the league with six games left. "After that we live again, Wembley, to achieve the one final (FA Cup) I never experienced in my life in the oldest trophy, and after that the Champions League." — AFP

25 Blue Jays lose second straight as late rally over Orioles falls short



26 German FA president Reinhard Grindel resigns over gift



27 Arsenal climb to third place as Ramsey, Lacazette sink Newcastle



Turner's triple-double leads Blazers

Suns pile up double-doubles in win over Cavaliers



MINNEAPOLIS: Seth Curry #31 of the Portland Trail Blazers shoots the ball against the Minnesota Timberwolves at Target Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. — AFP

MINNEAPOLIS: Rodney Hood scored 21 points, and Evan Turner came off the bench for a triple-double as the Portland Trail Blazers pulled away for a 132-122 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Monday night in Minneapolis. Turner went 5-for-5 from the field while collecting 13 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in only 24 minutes for the Trail Blazers, who have won 10 of their past 12 contests. Enes Kanter contributed 20 points, 11 rebounds and five blocked shots, and Seth Curry scored 19 points for Portland, which shot 54.9 percent from the field and made 15 of 30 3-point attempts. Andrew Wiggins had 21 points, and Karl-Anthony Towns scored 17 points with 12 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who have lost eight of their past 10. Tyus Jones had 14 points and 10 assists.

SUNS 122, CAVALIERS 113

Devin Booker, who scored 25 points and handed out 13 assists, was one of four Phoenix players with double-doubles as the Suns ended a six-game losing streak by beating visiting Cleveland. Josh Jackson came off the Phoenix bench for 19 points, 10 rebounds, a career-high five blocks and four assists. Richaun Holmes had 13 points and 10 rebounds. Dragan Bender contributed 12 points and 10 boards. Collin Sexton led the Cavaliers with 21 points, one more than Jordan Clarkson. Tristan Thompson and Ante Zizic each scored 15, and Brandon Knight had 10 as Cleveland lost its sixth game in a row.

BUCKS 131, NETS 121

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 28 points, 14 of them in

the fourth quarter, to lead Milwaukee to a win over Brooklyn in New York. With the win, the Bucks' magic number for clinching home-court advantage throughout the playoffs is one. The Toronto Raptors kept pace with the Bucks in the race for the best record in the league by beating the Orlando Magic. The Nets remained a half-game ahead of the Pistons in seventh place in the Eastern Conference as Detroit lost to Indiana. All five Bucks starters scored in double figures, led by Eric Bledsoe with 29 points. D'Angelo Russell paced the Nets with 28 points.

RAPTORS 121, MAGIC 109

Danny Green scored a season-best 29 points and added five rebounds to help Toronto defeat visiting Orlando, which had won seven of its eight previous games. The Raptors gained a split in the four-game season series with the Magic, who are still trying to get into the playoffs. Orlando remains a half-game back of the Miami Heat, who also lost Monday, for the final spot in the East. Kawhi Leonard added 15 points and seven rebounds for the Raptors. Serge Ibaka scored 15 points. Evan Fournier scored 21 points for the Magic, and Nikola Vucevic had 13 points and 13 rebounds.

CELTICS 110, HEAT 105

Al Horford's second career triple-double led host Boston over Miami in the opener of a home-and-home as the Heat narrowly held onto the eighth and final playoff spot in the East. Horford had 19 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his first triple-double since 2015. Kyrie Irving added 25 points and eight rebounds, Jayson Tatum scored 19, and

Marcus Smart had 16 points as the Celtics maintained a share of fourth place in the Eastern Conference, along with Indiana. Goran Dragic scored 30 to lead the Heat, while Bam Adebayo had 19 points and 14 rebounds and Dwyane Wade chipped in 17 points in his last regular-season game in Boston.

JAZZ 111, HORNETS 102

Donovan Mitchell scored 25 points to lead a balanced attack that propelled Utah over Charlotte Hornets in Salt Lake City despite a 47-point night for the Hornets' Kemba Walker. Rudy Gobert added 18 points and 18 rebounds for the Jazz while Ricky Rubio chipped in 20 points and 13 assists. Five players scored in double figures to help the Jazz win for the 10th time in 11 games. Jeremy Lamb added 23 for Charlotte, which dropped their third straight game on their current four-game road trip.

MAVERICKS 122, 76ERS 102

Justin Jackson scored 24 points to carry host Dallas past Philadelphia. Trey Burke added 16 points for Dallas while Salah Meiri contributed 16 points to go along with a season-best 14 rebounds. Dwight Powell scored 14 points and rookie Jalen Brunson had 13 for the Mavericks, who won handily despite the fact that Luka Doncic wasn't available because of a thigh injury. JJ Redick led the Sixers with 26 points while Tobias Harris added 25. Ben Simmons scored 17. The Sixers, who played without center Joel Embiid (load management) and guard Jimmy Butler (back), had their brief two-game winning streak snapped. Philadelphia is 7-8

without Embiid this season.

PACERS 111, PISTONS 102

Thaddeus Young and Bojan Bogdanovic led a balanced attack with 19 points apiece and host Indiana topped Detroit in Indianapolis. Young also had nine rebounds and five assists, while Bogdanovic racked up seven rebounds, six assists and three steals. Domantas Sabonis delivered 18 points and 12 rebounds off the bench before fouling out. Wayne Ellington led the Pistons with a season-best 26 points. Reggie Jackson supplied 22 points, six rebounds and four assists while Andre Drummond contributed 18 points, 17 rebounds, five assists and four steals. Thon Maker added 14 points, six rebounds and four blocks.

KNICKS 113, BULLS 105

Luke Kornet scored a career-high 24 points on 8-for-11 shooting, and New York pulled away for a win over visiting Chicago. Kornet hit 5 of 7 shots from beyond the 3-point arc, pulled down six rebounds and blocked three shots as part of one of the best performances of his two-year career. His previous high was 23 points, which he reached once as a rookie and twice this season. New York snapped a six-game losing streak and won for only the second time in its past 16 games. The Knicks' most recent victory had been March 17 against the Los Angeles Lakers. Robin Lopez scored a game-high 29 points for Chicago, which lost its fifth game in a row. JaKarr Sampson added 22 points off the bench in his Bulls debut after appearing in 169 games with three teams over parts of the past four seasons.—Reuters

Pogba wants to stay at Man Utd, says Solskjaer

MANCHESTER: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer says he has been assured by star midfielder Paul Pogba that the Frenchman does not want to leave Manchester United despite mounting speculation over a switch to Real Madrid.

United midfielder Pogba last week described Madrid, managed by France great Zinedine Zidane, as a "dream club for

every player" while on international duty. Fuel was then poured on the fire ahead of Madrid's game at the weekend when the Real boss admitted that Pogba would be welcome at the Bernabeu if and when he decides to call time on his United career.

Zidane is expected to have a big transfer budget this summer to shake things up. Real crashed out of the Champions League to Ajax at the last-16 stage and trail Barcelona by 12 points in La Liga.

Solskjaer was only appointed permanent manager at Old Trafford last week but the future of United's most high-profile player is once again in the spotlight. Madrid have a track record of taking some of United's star names, with both David Beckham and

Cristiano Ronaldo swapping Old Trafford for the Bernabeu, but Solskjaer said he is not worried by the Pogba situation.

"It doesn't really concern me because my thought of action was to sit down and speak to Paul," he said on Monday. "I have had my chat with Paul and we're fine. He is going to do his utmost here because he knows I am very fond of him as a player and as a person. He is important for us here, so there are no issues. He is happy here."

Solskjaer's immediate priority is United's trip to Wolves on Tuesday for their rearranged Premier League game. They have a big chance to put pressure on their rivals for a top-four spot by picking up a win at Molineux but know it will not be

easy after Wolves knocked them out of the FA Cup last month. Saturday's 2-1 win at home to Watford moved United level on points with Tottenham and they would go third, at least temporarily, with another victory. United languished 11 points off the top-four spots when Solskjaer replaced Jose Mourinho in December and the Norwegian is delighted that his team are now in control of their own destiny.

He has set a target of five wins from their remaining seven games and does not feel his players are going to ease up, despite a sub-par performance against Watford. "I don't think I need to remind the players about their standards dropping," he said. "They know themselves. They want to be in

the Champions League and they want to perform as well as they possibly can.

"Maybe they didn't believe in it themselves in November or December but we are in with a chance. "Everyone knows that if we do our jobs and get 15 points over the last seven games, we will be in the Champions League next year.

"It's the final stretch, so it's not a time to change. We need the same mindset as we have had. It's a question of going into games thinking that we are going to win.

"Against Watford we did not get going until 15 or 20 minutes into the match but I am not worried because we have so many nice games to look forward to between now and the end of the season." —AFP