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World Bank recognizes Amir for supporting development, peace

Amir thanks World Bank for award • Senior officials hail unprecedented honor

WASHINGTON: World Bank Chief Executive Officer Kristalina Georgieva, Kuwaiti Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf, Kuwait's Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah and other senior officials are seen during a ceremony to award HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday. — KUNA

KUWAIT/WASHINGTON: World Bank Chief Executive Officer Kristalina Georgieva announced on Friday an exceptional award handed to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in recognition of his support of economic and social development worldwide and global peace. This came at a press conference announcing the award in Washington, attended by representative of HH the Amir, Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf. This is another recognition by an international organization for HH the Amir's endeavors to helping people and countries in need, after the UN named the Amir a "Humanitarian Leader" in Sept 2014.

Georgieva revealed World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa Ferid Belhaj will be visiting Kuwait on April 28-30 to present an official commemoration to HH the Amir in person. The occasion is unprecedented and is the first time the World Bank has bestowed such a recognition upon a world leader. It comes in appreciation of HH the Amir's globally-recognized role in supporting political, economic and social stability, in addition to his tireless efforts in assisting people in need around the world.

On behalf of HH the Amir, Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah expressed gratitude to the World Bank Group and Ivanova for offering the special award to the Amir in recognition of his support to social and economic development in the Arab region and beyond. The World Bank honoring reaffirms the eminent status of HH the Amir and Kuwait

in the eyes of the international community and comes in recognition of the relentless efforts to foster humanitarian causes on the regional and international levels, the minister said.

Sheikh Ali cited the numerous humanitarian initiatives launched by HH the Amir to alleviate the suffering of needy people in crisis-hit areas. HH the Amir is deeply grateful for the World Bank's kind and unprecedented award, and is looking forward to the visit of Belhaj to Kuwait later this month to present the award certificate, the minister added.

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated HH the Amir for the award. The World Bank honoring deservedly crowned the march of giving and humanitarian efforts of the Amir and the generous people of Kuwait across the Arab and Muslim nations and worldwide, the Crown Prince wrote in a cable to the Amir. The world's most prestigious organizations recognized HH the Amir as an icon of peace and humanitarian action, he said. He expressed pride in the leadership of HH the Amir, who affirmed the eminent status of Kuwait at the international level.

Hajraf said during the ceremony the award was a recognition of HH the Amir's regional and global efforts to support peace, development and humanitarian assistance. Under the Amir's wise leadership, he said, Kuwait has the diplomatic ability to lead the march in support of peace and humanitarian and development initiatives in the region.

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News in brief

Explosive package found at airport

KUWAIT: Security officers are investigating a suspicious package at Kuwait's airport over the possibility it may contain unidentified "dangerous substances", authorities said on Friday. The package, in the shape of a book, was found after a routine cargo check, said the interior ministry, adding the package has been taken to forensics as investigations are ongoing. Al-Jarida newspaper elaborated in a report that the explosive package was being sent via courier to a military office in the US, adding the hollowed-out book contained batteries and TNT. — Agencies

Rising health insurance premiums

KUWAIT: Well-informed sources said the company that will provide health insurance for expats by 2020 will get KD 520 million for the first two years of the contract, KD 600 million for 2022-2023, KD 680 million for 2024-2025 and KD 760 million for 2026-2027 to provide annual health insurance at a cost of KD 130 during the first two years, then KD 150, KD 170 and KD 190 respectively. But the sources warned that such a cost will too much for expats in view of the low wages they get and the rapidly increasing cost of living in Kuwait. — A Saleh

Lebanon seizes 800K Captagon pills

BEIRUT: Lebanon's police said yesterday it has seized more than 800,000 pills of the amphetamine-type stimulant Captagon worth around \$12 million in a bust coordinated with Saudi authorities. Police stopped a refrigerated truck containing 142 kg of the illicit drug on April 9, according to a statement. The bust came after Saudi Arabia's Directorate of Narcotics Control tipped off Lebanese authorities on a plan to smuggle a large Captagon shipment to an unidentified "Arab country" by land, it said. Lebanon has previously stopped several shipments of Captagon to Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia. — AFP

BJP minister threatens voters

NEW DELHI: A member of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's was in hot water yesterday for appearing to threaten people to vote for her in the ongoing mega-election. A video showed women and child welfare minister Maneka Gandhi warning a gathering of Muslim community members to vote for her or be shunned if she returns to power. "I am winning with the help of the people. But if my victory comes without the support of Muslims, then I will not feel good," Gandhi said during a campaign rally on Friday. "It will leave a bitter taste. And then when a Muslim comes for any work, then I will think let it be." — AFP

New junta ruler vows to 'uproot' Bashir regime

KHARTOUM: Sudan's second new military leader in as many days vowed yesterday to 'uproot' deposed president Omar Al-Bashir's regime and release protesters, in a bid to placate demonstrators demanding civilian rule. "I announce the restructuring of state institutions according to the law and pledge to fight corruption and uproot the regime and its symbols," General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan said, a day after he was sworn in to head Sudan's new ruling military council. He also ordered the release of all prisoners jailed by special emergency courts and the immediate lifting of a night-time curfew imposed by the council earlier this week.

Career soldier Burhan took the helm of Sudan's transitional military council on Friday when his predecessor General Awad Ibn Ouf - a close aide of ousted veteran president Bashir - quit after little more than 24 hours in power. Burhan also pledged yesterday that individuals involved in the killing of protesters would face justice. His initial announcements indicated he wanted to show the tens of thousands of protesters on the streets that he is not part of the regime's old guard and was genuinely committed to reform.

The new leader also yesterday accepted the resignation of the head of the feared National Intelligence and Security Service, Salah Abdallah Mohammed Salih - widely known as Salih Ghosh - the military council announced.

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Qatar seeks to transform care for diabetes

DOHA: In an unremarkable office in a Doha hospital, a study is taking place which could transform the way Qatar deals with one of its most persistent health issues - diabetes. A small team led by professor Khalid Hussain has since last year been entering youngsters aged up to 18 with diabetes into a nationwide database, something he claims is unique in the region and possibly the world. "What we want to do is recruit every child with diabetes in Qatar into our

KHARTOUM: Lieutenant General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, the new chief of the military council taking over in Sudan following the ouster of president Omar Al-Bashir, speaks with demonstrators outside the army headquarters on Friday. — AFP

DOHA: A man tests Qatari child Tamim Abdelmoniem Al-Lafi's blood during the 19th international Al-Bawasil children with diabetes camp on Jan 3, 2019. — AFP

Egypt unveils colorful Fifth Dynasty tomb

CAIRO: In a major archaeological discovery, Egypt yesterday unveiled the tomb of a Fifth Dynasty official adorned with colorful reliefs and well preserved inscriptions. The tomb, south of Saqqara, a vast necropolis south of Cairo, belongs to a senior official named Khuwy who is believed to have been a nobleman during the Fifth Dynasty, which ruled over Egypt about 4300 years ago.

"The L-shaped Khuwy tomb starts with a small corridor heading downwards into an antechamber and from there a larger chamber with painted reliefs depicting the tomb

SAQQARA, Egypt: Mohamed Mujahid (left), head of the Egyptian mission which discovered the tomb of the ancient Egyptian nobleman Khuwy dating back to the 5th dynasty (2494-2345 BC), inspects the tomb's walls inside the Saqqara necropolis yesterday. — AFP

SAQQARA, Egypt: Mohamed Mujahid (left), head of the Egyptian mission which discovered the tomb of the ancient Egyptian nobleman Khuwy dating back to the 5th dynasty (2494-2345 BC), inspects the tomb's walls inside the Saqqara necropolis yesterday. — AFP

Local

Crown Prince departs on a private trip



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah departed Kuwait yesterday on a private trip. Upon departure, His Highness the Crown Prince was seen off at the airport by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Acting Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and senior state officials. — KUNA

Kuwait Towers shine over Amir's honoring



KUWAIT: Kuwait Towers glowed Friday evening with delight as the World Bank Group honored His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah earlier in the day. The towers were decorated with expressive glittering images of His Highness the Amir, in a first global honoring of its kind. The atmosphere was glimmering with this hon-

oring in recognition of His Highness the Amir's role in supporting the global stability and aiding all needy people everywhere. World Bank Chief Executive Officer Kristalina Georgieva announced an award handed to His Highness the Amir in recognition of his role in supporting economic and social development worldwide, and global peace. — KUNA

Kuwait provides right environment for startup launching: Developer

DEAD SEA, Jordan: Kuwait has all requirements for launching a successful startup, especially in the IT sector, said a Kuwait-based Egyptian entrepreneur, whose newsfeed app Nabd appeared twice on the World Economic Forum's list of top 100 Arab start-ups. "We chose Kuwait to launch our startup due to its market stability and availability of all requirements for founding and marketing startups, especially in the technology sector," Abdulrahman Al-Sayyed said.

Sayyed is the co-founder of the Kuwait-based Waveline Media company and the developer of widely-used newsfeed application 'Nabd' (pulse) which was named by the World Economic Forum as one of the top 100 promising startups in Arab World in 2019 and 2017. "We have proven that a global company can be launched from Kuwait," he said. "Today, we have offices in four Arab countries in addition to the head office in Kuwait."

Nabd is a personalized Arabic content platform, used by millions of Arabs across the world on a daily basis to stay up-to-date with their favorite news, videos and content. He suggested that the high connectivity of Kuwaiti people was instrumental to the success of the IT startups in Kuwait. "The Kuwaiti society is highly connected - in reality through Diwanis, social gathering places, and virtually via social networking sites,"

Sayyed stated, adding that the easy access to internet had facilitated marketing of applications. He cited other examples of the outstanding startups initiated by young entrepreneurs in Kuwait that left hallmarks in the Arab world and beyond including Carriage; Q8.car; Talabat and For Sale.

Sayyed noted that Nabd was not the first successful application he launched from Kuwait. Yabila application, an ad platform enables advertisers to reach local consumers seeking offers, discounts, and new arrivals, was launched in 2011, one year before Nabd. It has attracted more than 100,000 users in a short time and managed to retrieve its costs in just five months, he boasted. He elaborated that the company did not allocate any budget to market the application, "but we shared it through social networking sites and communications applications such as WhatsApp, which attracted over 100,000 downloads in a short time."

Sayyed said that this success of Yabila prompted the company's executives to think about a larger project directed to the Kuwaiti market first, then the Gulf region and the entire world, which led to the launching of Nabd application in 2012. On the remarkable success of Nabd, which has 15 million users from across the world, Al-Sayyed said the prime reason was adhering to the objective of

commissioners," he said.

In his speech, Otaibi expressed hope that discussions will contribute to bush more women participations into peacekeeping process through using several means including highlighting the role of women working in peacekeeping. In this context, Otaibi pointed to Major General Kristen Lund, who was present among participants in the session, as being the first female force commander in peacekeeping operations which can be a good example for many women in the military field who participated in Kuwait liberation in 1991.

Peace in Colombia

In other news, Kuwait renewed its full support to peace process in Colombia praising initiatives taken by President Ivan Duque to implement the peace agreement reached in this regard. The remarks came in a speech Otaibi delivered Friday before a meeting for the Security Council on Colombia. "We meet on the third anniversary of signing the Colombian



Abdulrahman Al-Sayyed

introducing an application that "enriches Arab content on the Internet."

He added that the application helped smart phone users follow up news from its reliable sources once they occur. "It allows the user to choose favorite news sources," he said. Sayyed stated that the WEF recognition of their startup would "encourages us to do more to offer more value added products to the Arab societies." He called for more efforts to be done to streamline government procedures, especially speeding up paperwork, and reforming investment laws to encourage young entrepreneurs and attract investors. —KUNA

peace agreement which put an end to a bloody conflict that lasted for more than 50 years, and left many dead, wounded, and missing." Otaibi said in the speech. In spite of the positive impact of the peace agreement on the general situation in Colombia, and all national success achieved in this regard, the agreement still face challenges that needs to unite effort of the concerned parties in order to maintain those successes, he added.

Ambassador Otaibi appreciated the efforts of the Colombian government in the process of social and economic reintegration of former members of the revolutionary armed forces of Colombia (FARC) through collective and individual plans, initiatives and projects approved by the National Council for Economic and Social Policy. He looked forward to achieving the objectives of the reintegration process within the time-bound scope of the measure and accelerating the reintegration process by providing legal and security guarantees for former members of FARC.—KUNA

NoufEXPO hosts Consulting Services for Development Plan Forum

KUWAIT: NoufEXPO announced yesterday that the company is finalizing plans for the convening of the '2nd Consulting Services for the Development Plan Forum.' The event will convene from April 30 to May 2, 2019 at the Diamond Ballroom of Sheraton Kuwait hotel. ENCON2 is held under the motto of 'Role of the Private Sector in Execution and Automated Integration among Related Agencies to Boost Productivity and Combat Corruption.' This motto reflects the event's focus on ensuring the success of implementing the Kuwait Development plan 2035 and paving the way for future prosperous Kuwait.

NoufEXPO commented on the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, of the event by saying, "The patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense reflects his keenness and responsibility to ensure the success of the Development Plan and was instrumental in defining the event's objectives and topics." The company affirmed, "they would continue their policy in holding the events that contribute to the economic and social welfare of Kuwait and its people."

Widespread government participation

NoufEXPO commented on the participation of government agencies by saying, "ENCON2 was called for by the Federation of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, the Central Agency for Public Tenders, the Central Agency for Information Technology, and Kuwait Municipality."

NoufEXPO moved on, "We also welcomed the participation of the Agency for Developing Madinat Al-Hareer (Silk City) and Boubyan Island, Kuwait Fire Direct Investment Promotion Authority, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate, Ministry of Electricity and Water, Environment Public Authority, Ministry of Public Works, Public Authority for Roads and Transportation, Ministry of Health, Kuwait University, Ministry of Education, and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, and the World Bank. We also welcome the participation of the supervisory authorities: State Audit Bureau, Department of Legal Advice and Legislation, Kuwait Anticorruption Authority, the Financial Supervisory Authority, and the Government Performance Follow-up Agency."

Many engineering offices, consulting firms, and

technology companies will be presently benefiting from this invaluable business development opportunity. They all look forward to being part of implementing the projects of the Kuwait Development Plan 2035.



Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

Stringent requirements

Badr Al-Salman, President of the Federation of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses, commented on the cooperation with NoufEXPO by saying, "ENCON2 will feature a significant gathering of public and private sector organizations from Kuwait and abroad. The event will also have a significant impact on the course of executing Kuwait's Development Plan 2035. NoufEXPO is outperforming our stringent requirements to ensure the success of this highly visible event. We are pleased to join forces with NoufEXPO's professional team, and we are confident that the outcome will be not less than satisfactory."

ENCON2 objectives and topics

NoufEXPO summarized the event's objectives and topics by focusing on improving the work environment for delivering consulting services for projects in Kuwait, especially those related to the Development Plan. Improvements include automation and integration among all related agencies through a unified portal. ENCON2 will also focus on implementing new procedures that help to combat wastage and corruption. Such procedures may include shortening of the development cycle and imposing severe restrictions on variation orders. The Forum will discuss how the private sector can claim a more significant role in executing projects while empowering the supervisory role of the public sector. The company said that ENCON2 would feature a special exhibition where participating and sponsoring organizations, agencies, and companies can display their services and technologies.

NoufEXPO welcomed the cooperation with the Federation of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses thanking them for their continued collaboration and confidence. Finally, NoufEXPO invited all interested sponsors, organizations, and individuals to contact the company on their phone number +965 22469921. They can also send their inquiries to info@noufexpo.com.kw, or visit ENCON2 website at www.noufexpo.com.kw/encon2. The Federation of Kuwaiti Engineering Offices and Consultant Houses may also be contacted on +965 22420482 or through their website www.kfeoch.org.kw.

Filipinos begin absentee vote for midterm election



KUWAIT: A voter is seen inside the Philippine Embassy yesterday. — Photos by Ben Garcia

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The first day of the month-long Filipino Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) period kicked off yesterday at the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait. The turnout was unprecedented compared to previous OAV's witnessed by Kuwait Times. "This is an unexpected turnout on the first day of voting. I am very happy to see the enthusiasm demonstrated by our fellow Filipinos to cast their vote. You can see the queue and voters outside - they came to the embassy since six in the morning. It means the trust and confidence of our voters in our government and the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) has been restored," stated Charge d'Affaires Mohammed Noordin Lomondot.

"The voting for overseas Filipinos will last one month. I am calling on all registered voters to come forward and exercise their right to elect people who they trust most to lead our people in congress," he said. "These are the midterm elections halfway in the term of President Duterte. Show that we care for our country's future and for our next generation - it has a great impact on our country's future. Vote wisely and according to your conscience," he added.

Voters are allowed to elect 12 senators and one party list representative. The Philippine Embassy in Kuwait prepared for this exercise after the successful final testing and sealing of vote counting machines (VCMs) at the embassy last week. Names of registered voters can be checked at the Philippine Embassy website if they are included as overseas voters. Those who have registered and can't find their names on the

COMELEC list of overseas voters can consult the embassy's Special Board of Election Inspectors (SBEI) Chair Esnairah Dansal. Registered voters can cast their votes from April 13 till May 13, 2019 - including weekends - from 8 am till 5 pm.

Asked for the documents needed, Dansal, the current head of mission, said voters should bring their Philippine passport or civil ID, or any Philippine government-issued ID. Each voter can spend at least 3 to 5 minutes to vote depending on how well they are prepared to tick the names of their desired candidates. "My advice is for the voters to come with the list of their candidates, so it will be easier and faster once you are seated in your precinct," Lomondot concluded.



Voters lined up outside the embassy.

Women in peacekeeping missions important: Kuwait

NEW YORK: Kuwait underlined the importance of women's presence in peacekeeping missions due to their ability to communicate better with communities. The remarks were made during a speech delivered by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi during the Security Council meeting on the role of women in peacekeeping. "Most of peacekeeping forces who are on missions, work in areas where protection of civilians, including women, is the most important thing," Otaibi added. "Troop-contributing countries who work hard to ensure the deployment of peacekeeping forces, including trained women, reflects our commitment that we have made in more than one United Nations forum," he noted. Kuwait joined more than 150 countries, to ensure the participation of women in all stages of the peace process, including peacekeeping. "Developing performance is an important entry point for increasing the integration of women at all levels, including leadership positions such as troop commanders and police

Local

No changes to livestock prices in Kuwait during Ramadan, supplier reassures

South African, Romanian imports to cover shortages in Australian livestock

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Livestock Transport and Trading Company (Al-Mawashi) Bader Al-Subaei said amidst the difficulties the company is facing to import livestock from Australia, it managed to open new markets for importing livestock such as South Africa and Romania. Speaking to reporters following the company's general assembly meeting held with the presence of 88.55 percent of stakeholders, Mawashi CEO Osama Boodai stressed that the company is ready to provide all livestock supplies needed during Ramadan, noting that those supplies are already in stock. Boodai added that prices will remain the same at all company outlets during Ramadan, reminding that the last shipment to arrive from Australia is due on May 31 after Australian suppliers decided halting exports to Kuwait from June to August every year. "The company managed to get PAAAFR approval to import livestock from alternative sources and this is an added value, because we will

compare prices in South Africa, Romania and other African countries to those in Australia and will opt for the cheapest," Boodai explained.

Violations

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah said the health insurance companies contracted to provide medical care for retired citizens through the 'Afya' program reported some violations in the receipts issued by some private medical centers and clinics. Responding to an inquiry filed by MP Abdulkareem Al-Kandari, Sheikh Bassel denied that any of the aforementioned centers and clinics had issued any fake receipts.

The minister added that the ministry is only responsible for technical supervision of the quality of medical services these centers provide, while checking and revising prices of the services is the responsibility of the contracted company, which are also responsible for contracting with hospitals and clinics providing the service.

Replacement policy

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Sholah stressed that the policy of replacing expats with citizens is being applied in all sectors at Kuwait Municipality without exceptions. Sholah added that the municipality will be soon restructured and that staff in various municipal offices in different governorates will soon be reshuffled in collaboration with Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi. In addition, Sholah said a special committee had been formed to review the current municipality law and suggest new amendments to handle waste, namely construction waste.

Alcohol shipment

In anticipation of MP Khalil Al-Saleh's plans to grill Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf over violations at the custom department, Hajraf responded to a number of parliamentary inquiries starting with one concerning a container that passed Shuwaikh port customs search and was stopped by Ahmadi security on Aug 22, 2017



with a load of alcohol. "This particular container was manually searched because the x-ray device was out of order," Hajraf explained, pointing out that the responsible custom inspector was punished by deducting 10 days of his monthly wage, "which is disciplinary enough because the hidden liquor was hard to find by normal manual inspection," Hajraf underlined.

Man brought 43 kg of drugs into Kuwait by sea

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Coastguards arrested a man who entered Kuwait illegally by sea. The suspect told police that he brought in 43 kg of drugs and led them to the place where he had hidden them. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Fugitive caught

Interpol detectives arrested an Egyptian man wanted in his country over felonies. The man was at large for two years, moving from one place to another because he was internationally wanted and in violation of the residency law, Al-Rai reported. Detectives were able to locate him in Hawally governorate and learned that he only goes out around noon as he knows there are no checkpoints at that time, and spends most of his time in remote cafes. Detectives arrested him after he attempted to escape between buildings. The suspect was deported and handed to his country's police.

Beating and indecency

Two Iraqi women lodged a complaint of beating and indecency against a Kuwaiti who was with a girl at a Farwaniya area restaurant, reported Al-Rai. A security source said the citizen and his companion were in front of the restaurant's entrance when the two Iraqi women were leaving. One of them objected to the way the Kuwaiti looked at them and asked "why are you looking?" An argument ensued, followed by an exchange of blows. A police patrol went to the restaurant and referred all parties to the police station, where the



Iraqis lodged their complaints.

Training course

As part of the strategy of the security establishment, a training course on improving skills of dealing with the media was concluded under the patronage and presence of Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs and operations Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh and Director of the Specialized Training Center for Traffic Affairs and Operations Col Salem Al-Ajmi. The course was held at the police officers club from April 7-11. Media personality Dr Bassam Al-Jazzaf gave lectures on the correct delivery and how to deal with the audiovisual media, as well as the art of managing press conferences.

Kuwait urges int'l efforts to deal with war remnants

NEW YORK: Kuwait urged for international efforts to deal with the remnants of war, stressing that mines have become a major obstacle for peacekeeping missions and relief agencies to carry out their duties and responsibilities. This came in Kuwait's speech during the Security Council session, which was delivered by the second secretary Fahd Hajji on explosive ordnance on Friday. "We are discussing a topic of utmost importance to the international community and especially important to us in Kuwait," Hajji said. "We are still suffering from the presence of landmines in various parts of Kuwait that have killed many innocent civilians and injured others with permanent disabilities," he added.

Hajji stressed on strengthening national capacities for mine clearance and prevention, assisting victims and the need to establish a rapid response system to address mines, explosive remnants of war wherever they appear so that the focus can be shifted from reaction to prevention. Hajji affirmed that Kuwait is committed to joining multilateral international efforts to mitigate the impact of the threat of explosive ordnance in various places of conflict not only for the safety of civilians but also to promote stability and peace and support the process of sustainable development. He praised the work of the UN Mine Action Service through mine risk education courses and the dissemination of life-saving education.

Hajji pointed to Resolution 2365 adopted by the Security Council in 2017, which constituted a positive development in the work of the UN to address the threat of mines and explosives caused by the effects and remnants of war. He reiterated that measures to limit the use of mines would save the lives of many civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeeping personnel. Hajji noted that the number of casualties caused by these weapons recorded a huge increase in the year 2017, where the number of victims more than 15,000 people between wounded and killed in different conflict areas.

Hajji reiterated that Kuwait condemns the use of mines and improvised explosive devices that are indiscriminately planted and endanger the lives of civilians in clear violation of international humanitarian law. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The ring road for drivers coming from Jahra into King Fahad Highway towards Kuwait City will be closed from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am every day starting from yesterday until further notice, the Interior Ministry announced. The right shoulder and right lane of King Fahad Highway between the entrances of the fourth and fifth ring roads will also be closed during the same period to make way for road repairs, the ministry added.

Kuwait embassy in Sudan affirms full commitment to Kuwaitis

KHARTOUM: Kuwaiti embassy in Sudan confirmed yesterday its commitment to carry out its duties to serve Kuwaiti citizens and to protect their interests. In a press statement, the embassy assured its readiness to help all Kuwaiti citizens in Sudan. The statement was issued after reports circulated in some social media, which highlighted a voice recording of a Kuwaiti citizen claiming that the embassy did not perform its duties in getting him, and a group of Kuwaiti citizens, back to the country after the prevailing conditions there. "We were surprised to receive a call from an official from the embassy of Saudi Arabia informing us of the presence of Kuwaiti citizens there. In return, the embassy contacted the citizens to find out why they did not go directly to it and issued the voice recording," the embassy said. The embassy stressed the need for Kuwaiti citizens to abide by the warning issued by the Foreign Ministry earlier to avoid traveling to Sudan at the current time.

Separately, Sudan's embassy in Kuwait has regretted the "inappropriate conduct" of two nationals who removed and then smashed a framed photo of former president Omar Al-Bashir from the embassy's reception hall. In a press statement on Thursday, the embassy censured the act and urged nationals to ensure safety of public properties and respect laws of the hosting country (Kuwait). It also thanked Kuwaiti police for rushing to provide protection to the embassy building after the new developments in Sudan. It dismissed as untrue claims that the incident took place in the Kuwaiti embassy in Khartoum. Earlier on Thursday, Sudan's military removed the embattled president Omar Al-Bashir from office and has put him under arrest with an interim military government set up in his place. The move comes after thousands across the country have been taking to the streets since December, calling for Bashir to step down after remaining in power for nearly 30 years. — KUNA

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Local

Kuwait keen to develop surgical sector with latest developments

Obesity main topic of discussion at Kuwait Surgery Conference



Ministry of Health's Assistant Undersecretary Dr Mohammed Al-Khashti (center right), Conference President Sheikh Dr Salman Al-Sabah (center), CEO of Central Circle Company Dr Ziad Al-Alyan (center left), J&J country manager Peter Lane (second left) and other participants pose for a group photo.



KUWAIT: A group photo of participants in the Kuwait Surgery Conference. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: Ministry of Health confirmed on Friday that it is keen to provide its basic surgical and operational department with the latest medical equipment and technologies. This came in a speech delivered by Assistant Undersecretary for Planning and Quality Affairs Dr Mohammed Al-Khashti on behalf of the Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Bassel Al-Sabah during the opening of Kuwait Surgery Conference.

Coinciding with the launch of the first national report on obesity surgery, the conference was attended by surgical consultants from the International Federation for the

Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorder (IFSO). The selection of the Organizing Committee of 'obesity' as a main topic of discussion comes from its assumption of responsibility to develop and work to alleviate the suffering of obese patients, said Khashti. He referred to the specialized programs for postgraduate studies at the Kuwait Institute of Medical Specialties, as well as promoting international health cooperation, and benefiting from international expertise in hospitals and medical centers to bring in visiting consultant doctors, and exchange experiences and protocols of health care.

The ministry welcomed members of the American Confederation of Obesity Surgery, the World Federation of Obesity, the American Society of Endocrinology and the Arab Association for Obesity Surgery, and is looking forward to further cooperation with them, Khashti noted. He stressed the Ministry's commitment to the global goals of sustainable development related to health and implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

Meanwhile, Conference President Sheikh Dr Salman

Al-Sabah said in his speech that the opening of the conference coincides with the launch of the first national report on obesity surgery in Kuwait, a basis for planning based on scientific data for conducting studies, research and medical education and follow-up indicators of quality and patient safety. Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah pointed out that the indicators related to the prevalence of obesity in the world, including Kuwait, put everyone under the responsibility of redoubling efforts for prevention and treatment to alleviate the problems of obesity caused by individuals and society. — KUNA

Kuwaiti doctor completes stem cell transplant program in UK

LONDON: Kuwaiti Dr Sondos Al-Shereda completed a two-year training program in cultivation of stem cells at the Leeds Medical Center in the United Kingdom. Shereda is the first Kuwaiti to receive a stem cell transplant certificate from Leeds-based training center in the United Kingdom which is recognized by the European Group for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT), and International Society for Cell and Gene Therapy (ISO). Dr Becky James, program supervisor at the Leeds Center said.

Shereda said that she has specialized in stem cell transplantation since 2016 until the end of her studies in mid-March, noting that during her studies at the center, she participated as a stem cell consultant and pediatric obstetrician in the Leeds, which serves sev-

en counties starting from Yorkshire. She pointed out that she is the second consultant working in the center after Dr Becky James. During her stay in Britain, she worked on growing multiple stem cells for children to cure various diseases such as bone marrow disease, Beta thalassemia, severe sickle cell disease, Leukemia, and non-genetic sickle cell anemia by using the most recent technologies used to treat implant rejection, she have successfully addressed the most difficult cases of implantations and their problems.

Shereda is the first Kuwaiti and Gulf doctor to be a member of the British Board of Pediatric bone marrow Transplantation, and European Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT). Shereda stressed that she is seeking to make Kuwait a center of the Jesse international educational organization, which will enables Kuwait to join the (EBMT). She expressed the hope that the Ministry of Health will support the establishment of the Stem Cell Program for Children, which will be presented to the Ministry soon, in coordination with the Center for Transplantation of the bone marrow at the Sheikhda Badriya Al-Ahmad Center in Kuwait and the National Bank Hospital. — KUNA

Growing number of Kuwaiti doctors migrating to private hospitals

KUWAIT: The growing numbers of private hospitals and clinics in Kuwait attracted many Kuwaiti doctors from the government health facilities in the recent years, which turned to be a phenomenon of migration. This phenomenon adds strains on the medical staff at public hospitals and poses risk to the efficacy of the health system in its entirety, observers believe. There are administrative, technical and financial causes that prompted the medical staff to turn to private health facilities. These include the lack of a legal system to protect Kuwaiti physicians against claims of medical errors in case of adverse effects on patients, the retirees' health insurance program dubbed 'Afiya,' and the relatively low salaries at public hospitals.

Dr Hussein Al-Majadi, chief anesthetist and head of the ICU at Al-Razi Hospital, suggests reconsideration of the experiment of integrating the private health sector into the government-run one. "This integration negatively affects the performance of physicians," he said. "The phenomenon of migrating physicians led to shortage in the medical staff at public health

facilities and added strains on the doctors who choose to continue to work," he pointed out.

Dr Majadi highlighted the need of implementing a supervisory mechanism for the private health facilities and beefing up the inspection teams in keeping with the expansions of this sector with a view to minimizing the practices that could harm the medical profession. On the relation between Afiya program and the phenomenon of migrating physicians, he said the idea of the program is generally good and signals the care of the Ministry of Health for the retirees' health. "However, some privately-run health institutions have manipulated beneficiaries from this program and offer drugs and medications that already exist in government-gun hospitals," he said, noting that the public hospitals offer better service.

Dr Majadi called for controls on practices such as patients' resumption of their medication at public hospitals after expiry of their Afiya credits and patients' missing of the dates of their surgeries or magnetic resonance sessions without notifying the concerned hospital, which leads to plunder of public funds.

Meanwhile, Dr Ra'ed Behbahani, eye surgery consultant at Al-Bahar Ophthalmology Center, said Afiya program materialized the desire of the Ministry to involve the private sector in providing better health service to the citizens and cope with the population growth. He voiced hope for expanding the program to include other age groups. Regarding the attractiveness of the private sector health facilities, he said these facilities provide competitive environment where doctors feel more



Dr Hussein Al-Majadi

Dr Ra'ed Behbahani

independent and free from the bureaucratic, administrative and technical constraints besides the financial returns.

Asked on the integration of doctors' work at public and private health facilities, he said this experiment is followed in many other countries. Behbahani believes that this practice has no impact on the performance of doctors. He urged early finalization of the draft law on regulation of the medical profession, highlighting the need to protect physicians against coerced litigation resulting from confusion of medical errors with implications of certain drugs.

He also called for modernization of the civil service laws relating to remunerations in a way that could avoid late remuneration of doctors and take stock of their efficiencies. Dr Behbahani appreciated the efforts of the Ministry of Health to provide quality service for patients and ensure complementarity of the public and private health facilities. — KUNA

AUB marks Autism Day

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) partnered with the Kuwait Autism Center to sponsor events of Autism Day, which took place recently at The Avenues on the occasion of the World Autism Day. The objective of the bank's initiative was to contribute to increase awareness of autism and share in highlighting the need to communicate with the afflicted individuals, help increase their confidence and encourage them to express their talents through assimilation with others within the society around them.

On this occasion, Sahar Dashti, General Manager for Customer Protection being also responsible for the bank's social responsibility program, said: "We are more than happy to co-sponsoring this event and are filled with pride for being able, through our branch at The Avenues to distribute pamphlets containing valuable information to the visitors. We have also presented to the children of the Kuwait



Autism Center numerous activities and amusements that, we hope, succeeded in lightening the hardships of autism patients and their families and planted happy smiles on their faces."

Dashti added: "Within the framework of Ahli United Bank's social responsibility program inspired by the New Kuwait Vision 2035 that had been launched by His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (May Allah protect him). We are always eager to participate in awareness events and days that shed light on the challenges brought about by various illnesses. To this end, we are more than willing to launch awareness programs that help families increase their positive communication with their afflicted relatives. We consider it our mission to acquaint them with the symptoms of the disease and the means of detecting it in its early stages through early check-ups."

Dashti went on to say that "Ahli United Bank is careful to deepen the concept of cooperation and humanitarian initiatives implemented through cooperation with the numerous specialized humanitarian centers concerned with caring for the challenged segments of our society."

Kuwait achieved positive rates in reducing infant mortalities

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Health yesterday stressed its interest in childcare and harnessing all resources and capabilities to acquire more achievements related to children's lives

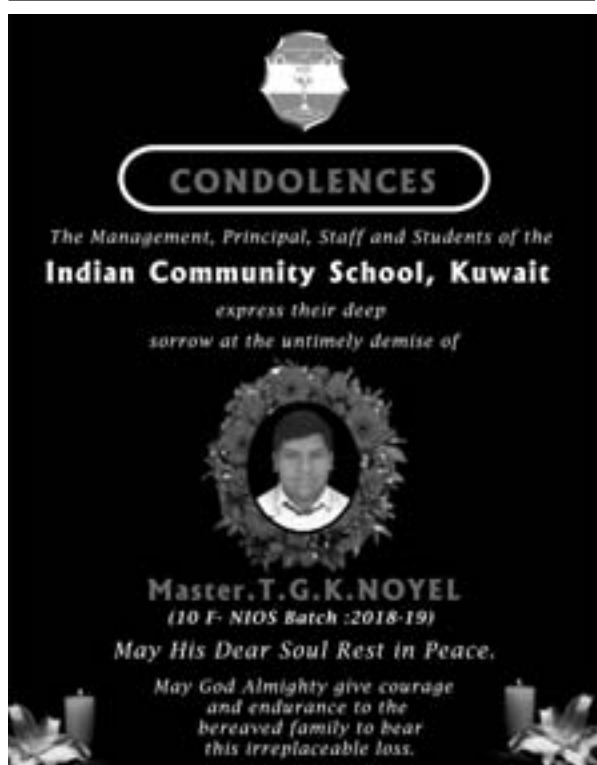
and health. This came in a speech delivered on behalf of Health Minister Dr Bassel Al-Sabah by Assistant Undersecretary for Supportive Medical Services Dr Fawaz Al-Rifai on the occasion of the opening of the fifth conference on pediatrics under the title 'Future Vision' which will last for three days. Dr Rifai said that Kuwait has achieved positive rates, which have been documented in the reports of international organizations over reduction of infant mortality rates below five years of age, in addition to coverage of basic vaccinations and polio eradication for decades.

Kuwait was committed to the global goals and objectives of sustainable development relat-

ed to the lives and health of children and to ensuring their enjoyment of health and well-being, he added. He pointed out that the conference coincided with the achievements of the huge health projects witnessed recently under the framework of the state's development plan and the future vision of Kuwait 2035 to ensure comprehensive health coverage related to child health. The ministry was ready to provide the necessary support to work towards the implementation of the recommendations of the conference and to strengthen the capacity of the health system with its various components to address the challenges related to the life and health of children. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials, organizers and participants of the 5th conference on pediatrics pose for a group photo. — KUNA



Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sunset at Shuwaikh beach. — Photo by Hassan Mahmoud (KUNA)

UN official lauds Kuwait's role in children protection

BRUSSELS: A top United Nations official praised Kuwait as a 'strong and positive force' in the world body. "Kuwait is a very strong and a very positive force in the UN Security Council. Kuwait is also a member of the working group on children and armed conflict of the Security Council in New York and they are very active and positive member," the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba said in an interview in Brussels. "On the other hand Kuwait is also a member of the coalition in support of the legitimate government in Yemen. It is one of the 12 countries that have supported the government of Yemen," she noted.

Kuwait was elected in 2017 as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for a two-year term, which started in January 2018. Gamba was in Brussels to launch a global campaign called 'act to protect children affected by conflict' in the European Parliament on Wednesday. It was launched in New York last week and now the launch for the Asia region will be done soon. This campaign aims to call attention to the six grave violations against children in times of armed conflict: recruitment of children, killing and maiming of children, sexual violence against children, abductions of children, attacks on schools and hospitals at times of war and denial of humanitarian assistance to children at times of war.

"A better understanding will lead to action at national, regional and international levels. More actions are needed to protect children and to ensure that programs are put in place to prevent their victimization in the first place," said Gamba from Argentina who brings more than 30 years of experience and professional leadership on issues relative to disarmament, peace and human security. She described the problem of children affected by armed conflict as 'very acute.' Last year alone there have been over 24,000 violations against children. She said an armed conflict could mean military clashes but also involvement of armed groups like in Nigeria where the Boko Haram is abducting and killing children although there is no war in the country.

In the Middle East, her office covers the situation in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel. In Syria, there has been a huge number of children suffering because the conflict that began in 2011 has a lot of international actors and many armed groups, which use extreme violence, she said. "In Yemen, there has been a lot of child violations. I would say that since 2014 till today there have been 7,300 verified killing and maiming of children and a huge number of children recruited," the UN diplomat said. "The recruitment of children in Yemen has been overwhelmingly responsibility of the Houthis who have recruited hundreds of children. The situation in Iraq was very hard and had a huge number of children casualties mostly when Daesh (IS) was strongly operative in the country especially in Mosul. Daesh specialized in the recruitment of children. After their defeat there has been a drop in the number of figures of child recruitment," she said.

According to UN standard, a person below 18 years of age is considered to be a child soldier. The UN official said she has visited Saudi capital Riyadh twice where the Coalition military headquarters is based. She concluded by saying that until the end of 2022, the act to protect campaign will advocate for more tangible actions and commitments ranging from how to provide justice and to ensure proper reintegration programming is put in place for children released from armed groups and armed forces. — KUNA


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Nightmares, guilt and awards: 5 years after the Chibok kidnapping

India, Britain mark ‘horrific’ colonial massacre centenary

Page 9



PILANI, India: Indian cow caretakers look on as they stand next to stray cattle at a temporary shelter in Pilani in Rajasthan. — AFP

Man killed in new cow lynching in India

Christian killed for skinning the carcass of an ox

NEW DELHI: Indian police said yesterday one man was killed and three injured in an attack by a mob while they were skinning a dead ox, in the latest case of so-called cow lynching. The animal is revered by Hindus and according to Human Rights Watch, 44 people died in cow-related violence between May 2015 and December last year by Hindu vigilantes. Opponents of Prime Minister Narendra Modi say that such groups have become emboldened since his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept to power in 2014. The latest incident happened in the

eastern state of Jharkhand late on Thursday when men from a local Christian community were skinning the carcass of an ox in a field. “The men were armed with iron rods and sticks and attacked the group of skinners brutally,” said M L Meena, a senior Jharkhand police official. The three men injured in the attack were sent to hospital. Two men have been arrested for alleged murder and five more were on the run, Meena said. It was unclear whether the accused were part of a Hindu vigilante group or acted on their own initiative, he added,

saying the four men attacked were from a local tribal group and had been charged with illegal cow slaughter. Meena said the charges were based on a complaint by a Hindu villager who said he witnessed the slaughter of the ox. “So far the investigation has showed the ox died naturally. We are doing a thorough probe,” he said.

Beef ban

Cow slaughter and the consumption of beef is illegal in mineral-rich Jharkhand - and in 19 other states - but restricted slaughter of other bovines like buffalo and

ox is allowed. Modi, who is running for a second term in elections that began on Thursday and run until May 19, has condemned cow-related violence. Under his government, laws about cow slaughter are now applied more strictly and punishments have increased. In 2017 his government tried to ban the cattle trade for slaughter nationwide, only for it to be rejected by the Supreme Court. Aside from the violence, which is mostly directed at India’s minority Muslim community and low-caste Dalits, the number of stray cows in India has also risen

sharply. This is because the fear of prosecution or violence has led to farmers abandoning old and sick cows instead of selling them for slaughter. Last year a top minister in Modi’s cabinet was criticized for celebrating eight people convicted of lynching a Muslim cattle trader after they were released on bail. Last week a Muslim man was brutally assaulted by a mob in north eastern Assam state over allegations he was selling beef. There is no prohibition on cow slaughter or beef consumption in the state.— AFP

Pedal power: India crusader cycling for ‘real’ democracy

PATNA: Lal Mani Das raises his voice above the morning din outside a railway station in the eastern Indian city of Patna city to make an appeal: Vote for a strong democracy. The 45-year-old from impoverished Bihar state is not a vote-seeking politician or a government election agent in the world’s biggest election that began on Thursday. Instead he is an ordinary snack-hawker with a bicycle on a mission to exhort people to vote - and with their heads - during the almost six-week polling period lasting until May 19. “I felt a strong urge to do something about how people waste their votes by either electing wrong candidates or not voting at all,” Das told AFP as he cycled along a chaotic road with banners festooning his bike and body. The champion for democracy juggles between his evening job of selling traditional snacks and his “Cycle Jagrukta Yatra” (“Cycle Awareness Journey”) mission. With thousands of candidates competing for the 543 seats in the lower house of parliament from India’s 900 million voters, he is concerned about the caliber of those running. “Voting in India is either personality or party driven. No one ever bothers to vote for a candidate on merit, like how honest he is or if he is a criminal,” said Das.

He engages with random members of the public and his customers alike, explaining to them the importance of exercising their democratic right to cast a ballot. Das said he spent 10,000 rupees (\$145) out of his own pocket that he had earmarked for his four children’s education to print thousands of flyers with his vision of India. But he rejects taunts from friends and family that he is an eccentric who has squandered his kids’ future, and argues that the money is also an



PATNA: Indian bicycle-snack-hawker, Lal Mani Das, hands out a voting information pamphlet during his election awareness campaign in Patna in the India state of Bihar. — AFP

investment in their lives.

Vibrant

Despite being a vibrant democracy, and the largest on the planet, critics point to the Indian system’s many imperfections. This includes the sometimes opaque selection process for candidates to parties bribing voters with cash, liquor and other freebies - or resorting to violence. Das says his mission is to train people to screen each candidate carefully. For this he has drafted a checklist - which he wears - of 10 points to look out for in a candidate, including their criminal past, honesty and spending habits. If candidates do not pass muster then he has a suggestion: Vote “NOTA” - none of the above - something that six million people did at the 2014 election, or 1.1 percent of votes cast. Das said it also pains him to see politicians fight inside parliament - the “temple of democracy,” he calls it - instead of tackling matters of public concern. “Should we elect a

parliamentarian who goes to Delhi to fight instead of discussing our problems?” he tells a crowd of curious onlookers. The outgoing parliament spent 40 percent less time in session compared to previous terms, mostly due to frequent adjournments following ruckuses between MPs. Forty-six bills failed to clear the house, while 133 bills were passed, many without parliamentary discussion. One-third of the parliamentarians elected in 2014 had criminal charges against them, including seven charged with murder. And he feels sour about the estimated 100 million people working away from their homes who are unable to vote because they have to be physically present in their registered hometown to cast their ballot. If nothing works, he might himself jump into the election fray someday to improve the lot of India’s 1.3 billion people. “If people want me to contest the elections, I would be more than happy,” said Das, adding his only wish is to see India become a real democracy. — AFP

Cows come home to haunt India’s leader

PILANI, India: One of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s signature policies has been protecting cows, but for Raghuvir Singh Meena - a Hindu farmer struggling to protect his crop of chickpeas from roaming cattle - it has gone too far. Farmers overwhelmingly supported Modi’s nationalist party when he swept to power in 2014 but the strict measures on cows, which are sacred to Hindus, have caused major headaches for rural communities. “We have tried everything - scare-crows and barbed wire - but the stray animals never miss a chance to eat away our crop,” Meena told AFP, looking askance at his lush fields in the Pilani district of Rajasthan in western India. “They (the government) are playing their politics, they don’t care about poor farmers,” he said ahead of elections that began on April 11, with Modi running for a second term. Even before Modi came to power, cow slaughter and the consumption of beef was banned in Rajasthan and many other states in officially secular India, which also has substantial Muslim and Christian populations. But laws are now applied more strictly and punishments have increased. In 2017 the government tried to ban the cattle trade for slaughter nationwide, only for it to be rejected by the Supreme Court. Critics say Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is on a mission to impose “Hindutva”, the hegemony of Hindus, on 1.25-billion-strong India. They also warn that the BJP has emboldened fringe Hindu vigilante groups to attack minority Muslims and low-caste Dalits with impunity for eating beef, slaughtering and trading in cattle. Incidents of mob lynchings have

spiked, with 44 people - including one in Rajasthan - killed in cow-related attacks between May 2015 and December last year, says Human Rights Watch. The BJP says it opposes all violence, but even the fear of attack and tougher laws have badly disrupted the cattle trade. This has led to farmers abandoning old and infirm cows instead of selling them for slaughter, resulting in more bovines on the loose - causing road accidents and wreaking havoc in rural areas, where 70 percent of Indians live. The number of strays was put at 5.2 million in a 2012 livestock census - which is carried out every 10 years, just as for people - but the numbers are believed to have shot up since. Wandering cattle, often eating plastic rubbish or ruminating at busy traffic intersections, have become a much more common sight in India’s towns, villages and cities since Modi came to power. In 2015, the last year for which government figures are available, more than 550 people were killed in accidents involving stray cattle. “No one dares” “Because of these cow protectors no one dares touch the cow now,” said Sumer Singh Punia, a former village head in Churu district. “There are not enough cow shelters and the ones that are there they are so overcrowded that each day one animal dies,” he said. “We are Hindus, we don’t want to hurt the cow but we can’t afford to keep and feed so many strays when we are struggling ourselves to make ends meet.” Voter unhappiness was already evident when the BJP lost state elections in the largely agricultural states of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in December to the opposition Congress.— AFP

International

Teenage brides trapped between the Islamic State and its victors

Syrian, Lebanese teens forced to come by militant husbands

AL-HOL CAMP: Rawan Aboud tried to escape Islamic State after the death of her abusive first husband, a militant killed fighting for the group. She was jailed and forced to marry another fighter. When he died, she finally fled. Now she is interned with fanatic supporters of the violent jihadist group she has sought refuge from since the age of 13. "I married age 12," said the Syrian girl, now 18. "My husband then brought me to Raqqa. He beat me and said I was an apostate for trying to leave."

Thousands of women, especially foreigners who flocked from Europe and North African countries, willingly joined Islamic State, subscribing to its brutal interpretation of Islam and marrying militants. Some remain ardent supporters of its ideology and live in camps they fled to in eastern Syria which are under the control of the US-backed forces that drove IS from its final piece of territory last month. But many like Aboud, married off by conservative Muslim families in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, had no choice.

About, several Syrians and a Lebanese woman also wed as a child to a man who joined IS are now detained alongside its die-hard adherents in a guarded section of Al-Hol camp. Regarded as suspect by Kurdish-led forces that helped defeat the jihadists and persecuted by women they

are locked up with, they fear they will rot in detention or face death at the hands of their extreme fellow detainees.

Aboud has spent three months at Al-Hol along with more than 60,000 people who fled the battle for Baghous, the final shred of populated territory that Islamic



Foreign women flocked to join jihadist group

State had held until its defeat there last month. In an interview with Reuters this month, she wore a green coat, fingerless gloves and eye make-up behind her veil, which she only wears to avoid drawing the attention of IS supporters. She used the pejorative acronym Daesh for IS, rather than "dawla", Arabic for state, which many in the camp still use.

She said her husbands were dead, not martyred, as slain militants are usually described by supporters.

"My first husband was killed fighting three years ago, thank God." Aboud tried to flee IS territory and was jailed in its Raqqa stronghold. When the US coalition began bombing the city, her nine-month-old daughter was killed. Militants moved her and other women from town to town as they retreated, and married her to another fighter who also killed several months ago. She then escaped with her other daughter, now four. They face an uncertain future.

"I want to go to my family in Idlib. But right now I'd settle for just another part of the camp, away from the foreigners. Somewhere I can use a phone," she said. The security forces that guard al-Hol have denied her requests to move, she said. "They keep saying tomorrow and asking, why did you marry an IS fighter." The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) that run the camp did not immediately respond to a request for comment on her detention.

'Swine and infidels'

"Because I fled and how I dress, the other women call me an infidel. They throw stones at me. When I queue for water, they say this isn't a line for Syrians." Amal Susi, the

Lebanese woman in the same section of the camp, complained of similar treatment and feared never returning home. The 20-year-old surrendered herself and her two children in 2017 to the SDF after her husband was killed in Raqqa. Months later she was returned to IS territory in a prisoner swap, she said. "It was back to zero," she said.

Her husband took her as a teenager to Syria to live in Islamic State's self-declared caliphate. Susi is also waiting to be transferred to another section of the camp. "Those of us forced to come should get to leave. IS supporters call us swine and infidels, say we're spies for the Kurds, and assault us." The SDF is struggling to cope with the number of suspected militants and supporters languishing in detention centres and camps while some Western countries refuse to allow their citizens to return.

Most Syrians and Iraqis roam Al-Hol camp separately from foreign women who are guarded by the SDF. Many foreigners use derogatory jihadist terms against non-extremists and blame their plight solely on Islamic State's enemies. Aboud, Susi and many others hope to get as far away from them as possible. "We're not rid of Daesh. They've basically moved the Islamic State here, that's what they believe. They say we'll build it again right here. The camp is under their control," Susi said. — Reuters

Nightmares, guilt and awards: 5 years after Chibok kidnap

ABUJA: Five years after being kidnapped by Boko Haram, freed Chibok girls have nightmares about their 100 missing classmates and are burdened by guilt for surviving, while shielding parents of dead friends from the truth about their daughters' fate. The mass abduction of 276 schoolgirls on April 14, 2014, from their school in northeastern Nigeria - the biggest publicity coup of Boko Haram's jihadist insurgency - sparked an global outcry and the #BringBackOurGirls social media campaign.

On the fifth anniversary of the kidnapping, which the Thomson Reuters Foundation exclusively revealed was the accidental outcome of a botched robbery, many former captives are still haunted by a tragedy the world has largely forgotten. "Sometimes, it can make me sleepless because I'm thinking of them. Sometimes, they are even appearing in my dreams. It is very painful," Margret Yama said in a phone interview from Yola, in northeastern Nigeria.

The 22-year-old is among the 107 Chibok girls who were found or rescued by the Nigerian military, or freed in negotiations between the government and Boko Haram. President Muhammadu Buhari made crushing Boko Haram a pillar of his 2015 election campaign and he has vowed to spare no effort in ensuring all abducted Nigerians are freed. But his administration has failed to defeat the decade-long insur-

gency, who have been waging attacks since 2009, with an uptick in attacks on military bases and strategic towns ahead of February elections, in which Buhari secured a second term.

"Efforts are being intensified to secure the release of all hostages, not just the Chibok girls," said presidential spokesman Garba Shehu. "The operations are ongoing and the aim is for comprehensive engagement and settlement," he said, adding that a split within Boko Haram - with the break-away of the Islamic State in West Africa faction in 2016 - has affected government efforts. Yama is one of scores of young women that the government sent in 2017 to a special remedial course at the American University of Nigeria (AUN) in Yola.

Although she received months of counseling and medical care after her ordeal, she feels sad when she remembers her friends still stuck in Boko Haram's Sambisa Forest hideout, where many died from snake bites, childbirth and sickness. "I am thinking, how are they feeling now? More especially when it is raining season, I am thinking of them because no shelter, no room, without even a mat to sleep on, talk less of a bed," Yama said. "Also this aeroplane that used to go to Sambisa and drop bombs and kill people, so I am thinking of them, too," she said, recalling Nigerian military air raids on the forest.

Awards

Some of the Chibok girls refused to go home when approached by mediators during a second group release in 2017, fuelling fears that they had been radicalized, or felt afraid, ashamed or even too powerful to return to their old lives. Relatives of missing girls often ask those who have returned home about their daughters. "We didn't tell their families about the ones that died. But they are always asking us and we tell them that they are fine," said 22-year-



CHIBOK, Nigeria: Musa Maina holds a picture of her kidnapped daughter, Hauwa in Chibok. — AFP

old Hannatu Stephens, also a student at the AUN. "We don't know how to tell them they are dead." Stephens lost a leg and some close friends who were sitting and chatting when a military plane attacked the hideout. "Yesterday, I am thinking about (one of her friends) ... I cried about that girl, about her, and I am thinking about her mother," said Stephens, in a voice quivering with emotion. Although the government provided Stephens with a prosthetic limb, she said the pain in her leg sometimes prevents her from sleeping at night or focusing on her studies. For 21-year-old Kauna Bitrus, who is in her second semester at a community college in the United States, sadness sometimes strikes while she sits in class. She fantasises that her missing classmates could attend lessons with her.

Bitrus was among 57 girls who escaped by jumping off the trucks ferrying them

away from their Chibok school. She vividly remembers holding her friend's hand as they decided to jump, then spending the night running and hiding in the forest. "We decided that it was better to die in the forest (than go with Boko Haram)," said Bitrus, who was taken to the United States by a charity and lives with a host family.

Bitrus said she was scared that she could not cope with the rigors of education after all she had been through. But she was pleasantly surprised to earn a high score in her first semester and the college plans to honor her with an 'Against All Odds Award' during a special awards dinner on April 17, almost exactly five years since the traumatic kidnap. "I wish my schoolmates are here with me so that they can have this education that I am having together," she said. "I feel so sad that they didn't get to come back." — Reuters

The struggle to save youngsters from Boko Haram

MOZOGO: "My life changed completely," said 14-year-old Ina Viche, recalling the day in 2016 when her parents were killed by Boko Haram jihadists. "While our parents were alive, we went to school. It was no longer possible when they died." At the age of 11, she had to find work to feed herself and her younger brother - and a new home, too, for their village in Cameroon's Far North region was abandoned by its inhabitants after the attack. The two orphans now live in Mozogo, a village farther from the Nigerian border, from which Boko Haram launch their murderous raids.

Ina has a long walk to the onion fields, where she works for pitifully low pay. "I start at 8am and finish at 1pm. I am paid 600 CFA francs (0.91 euros/one dollar) per day," she said. "It's very hard. We lack everything. We need a place to live in, food, clothing. My dream is to have a piece of land to grow my own crops." Ina and her brother are among more than 270,000 people - a UN estimate that dates from August 2016 - displaced from their homes in the Far North by the Nigerian insurgents. More than half of them, 56 percent, are children.

Fodder for the jihad

Young people in the Far North are victims of Boko Haram in other ways. Kidnappings are dreaded in rural areas of this tongue-shaped projection of territory that abuts Nigeria. Unicef said last year that Boko Haram had abducted more than 1,000 children in northeast Nigeria - including 276 girls infamously taken from their school in Chibok in 2014. But thousands are believed to have joined the group of their own will, having nowhere else to turn as the jihadists destroy their homes, schools and families.

"Many young people in my village followed Boko Haram because they took the

bait of money and the promise of eternal life," said 16-year-old Denise Bedekui, whose birthplace in the Far North was wiped off the map by the group. "I have friends who decided to go voluntarily. Others were forced. They (Boko Haram) appealed to them with clothes, food and jewellery. They also promised the girls motorbikes and they gave in." Many young people are "easily manipulated by Boko Haram" because they are "out of work and left to fend for themselves", said Mozogo's traditional chief, Abba Mahama Chetima.

Boko Haram, enlisting young boys, cultivates a warrior status which enables the recruit to have his own weapon, he explained. To gain this status, the boy is made to prove his loyalty by going back to loot his home village, including their own family. Girls are made to carry looted property or are forcibly married to jihadists, said the chief. Once the recruit earns a weapon, he is given the status of "emir", a leader of troops, while the youngest are often used as human shields, he said.

Integration and support

Cameroon is claiming progress in its fight against Boko Haram. It says it has dismantled many of the group's cells and some of the networks that traffic goods to sustain the fighters. The Cameroon and Nigerian armed forces have freed batches of civilians, including many children, during military operations against the extremists.

The government has also launched schemes aimed at integrating former Boko Haram members and supporting their child victims. In February, the authorities announced the voluntary return of some 200 ex-radical Islamists, who were granted 11 hectares of land to make a fresh start. The United Nations and local NGOs last year launched a campaign to build "resilience to extreme violence" by involving young people in farming, stock breeding and sewing. Some of these schemes are changing lives. Bedekui, who fled the Far North village of Hondogo three years ago for fear of being kidnapped, has now settled in Mozogo and sells onions for a living. — AFP

News in brief

36 Burundi rebels killed

KINSHASA: Congolese troops killed 36 Burundian rebels in clashes with two armed groups in the east of Democratic Republic of Congo and three soldiers were also killed, the DRC army said yesterday. The Congolese army mounted a series of operations between April 6 and 8 in the eastern province of South Kivu aimed at regaining territory against the Burundian rebel groups National Liberation Forces (FNL) and the Burundian Republican Forces (FOREBU). "During the three days of combat, 36 of these rebels have been neutralized," army spokesman Dieudonne Kasereka said. FNL leader general Aloyse Zabampema was seriously wounded, he said. Several areas formerly under the control of rebels have been recovered by Congolese soldiers, he added. Reuters was unable to immediately confirm the army report. — Reuters

Man admits abusing Muslims

CHRISTCHURCH: A 33-year-old New Zealand man pleaded guilty Friday to harassing Muslims outside one of the Christchurch mosques where dozens were gunned down in a massacre last month, but said he can't remember anything about it. Daniel Nicholas Tuapawa was said to have been shocked and did not realize what he had done until police showed him a video in which he was yelling abusive comments including "all Muslims are terrorists". When Tuapawa appeared in court charged with disorderly behavior that was "likely to cause violence," his lawyer said his client was ashamed of his actions and could not explain how or why it happened, local media reported. Tuapawa was wearing a shirt emblazoned with the name of US President Donald Trump when he shouted abuse at Muslims outside the Al Noor mosque on Wednesday. He was arrested on Thursday. — AFP

Freed 25 Yazidis repatriated

QAZLAJOKH: Syrian Kurds yesterday repatriated 25 women and children from Iraq's Yazidi minority after freeing them during the final push against the Islamic State group, a local official said. The US-backed fighters say they rescued some 300 Yazidi women and children during the fight to take the jihadists' last scrap of territory in eastern Syria. "Today, we will hand over 25 people - 10 women and 15 children - to the Yazidi council in Sinjar," said Ziyad Rustam, an official with the Kurdish-run group Yazidi House, which reunites rescued Yazidi children with surviving relatives. "They will be sent to their families," he said. At the Yazidi House headquarters in a village near the northeastern Syrian city of Qamishli, women wearing colorful robes collected children scampering around the compound before boarding busses bound for Sinjar, the Yazidi heartland in Iraq. — AFP

Taleban spring offensive begins

KABUL: The Taleban yesterday claimed responsibility for an attack in eastern Afghanistan that the group said was part of its newly announced spring offensive. According to Afghan officials, Taleban fighters on Friday night detonated two truck bombs in the Shirzad district of Nangarhar province, east of Kabul. The assault came hours after the Taleban announced the start of Operation Fath, the name the militants have given to this year's spring offensive. "Both sides have sustained casualties," the Afghan defense ministry said. "Clashes are ongoing between (Afghan security forces) and Taleban terrorists." The Taleban, who frequently exaggerate numbers, claimed to have killed or wounded "more than 200 soldiers, police and militias". Nangarhar provincial governor spokesman Ataullah Khogyani said two Afghan troops had been killed, along with 27 Taleban fighters. — AFP



JALALABAD: Members of the Afghan security forces stand behind alleged Islamic State fighters being presented to the media in Jalalabad, following their arrest. — AFP



TRIPOLI: Photo shows a smoke plume rising from an air strike behind a tank and technicals (pickup trucks mounted with turrets) belonging to forces loyal to Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA), during clashes in the suburb of Wadi Rabile. — AFP

Brexit black hole: The divorce implosion, deal, or election?

UK exit from EU delayed until October 31

LONDON: The United Kingdom now has until Oct 31 to leave the European Union but the British political elite is still squabbling over how, when or if to Brexit. Some EU officials think the United Kingdom could change its mind - a spectacular reversal that would illustrate the bloc's fortitude and keep one of Europe's top powers inside the club. Eurosceptic supporters of Brexit say the divorce is under threat from what they cast as an undemocratic plot that risks undermining political stability in the United Kingdom. Below are possible scenarios:

No Brexit

The fresh delay gives time for the opponents of the divorce to push for a revocation of the formal Article 50 divorce notification, or for a referendum - either via parliament or an election. Prime Minister Theresa May, who voted for remaining the EU in 2016, has repeatedly ruled out either revocation or another referendum. But if she is toppled, a successor might be tempted to call an election. The outcome of any election is uncertain and while both main parties' manifestos support Brexit, the opposition Labor Party backs a "confirmatory referendum" on any deal.

Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn, who voted against membership in 1975 and gave only reluctant backing to the 2016 campaign to remain in the EU, has signaled only lukewarm backing for another referendum. His party, though, is clear it wants one. May's finance minister, Philip Hammond, said on Friday it was very likely that the idea of a second Brexit referendum would again be put to parliament at some point, though the government remained opposed to any new plebiscite.

Parliament has been in deadlock over the terms of

Brexit, having rejected May's withdrawal plan three times since January. When over the past month lawmakers twice held a series of votes on the various Brexit options aimed at breaking the stalemate, a second referendum was the most popular option, although it fell short of reaching a majority.

On April 1, a proposal for another referendum drew the support of 280 lawmakers - 40 seats short of a majority. A week earlier, it had the backing of 268 lawmakers. If parliament agreed to a second referendum, Britain would probably have to ask for an extension

beyond the end of October to allow enough time for a campaign. Yet in Brussels, that idea is not outrageous. More delays are on the cards, depending on developments in Britain, according to EU officials and diplomats.

Three of the four former British prime ministers still alive - John Major, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown - have said a referendum is the way to

resolve the crisis. The case for a second referendum could be enhanced if europhile candidates - mainly from centre-left parties - do well in the May 23-26 European Parliament elections. To get another referendum, the British parliament would have to approve new legislation and settle on a question.

Britain's electoral regulator would then ideally need six months to test the question with the public and then grant a period for the campaign to take place, a spokesman said. Both sides of the Brexit divide are preparing for the possibility of another referendum. It is far from clear how the United Kingdom would vote and even if it did vote to remain, Brexit supporters would demand a third and decisive vote. Goldman Sachs puts a 40 percent probability on a no Brexit.



Election, second referendum are still options



BIRMINGHAM: Supporters hold placards as British politician and The Brexit Party leader, Nigel Farage addresses the first public rally of their European Parliament election campaign in Birmingham, central England yesterday. —AFP

Her kingdom for a deal

May still hopes parliament will approve the deal she completed with the EU in November, though it has gone down to repeated, heavy defeat in parliament since then. May promised to resign if her deal is approved, but that moved neither eurosceptic nor pro-EU opponents to support her, so she is now warning that Brexit may never happen. If talks with the Labor Party ultimately collapse, May has said she will accept the will of parliament on what to do next. Votes in the fractious House of Commons have shown that none of the alternatives to May's agreement - such as leaving with no deal, a referendum or a much

closer post-Brexit economic relationship - can yet muster a majority.

One option that could win over Labor lawmakers is to have a post-Brexit customs union with the EU and to align with many of the rules of the bloc's single market. Brexiters and many supporters of membership both say such an option is foolish as it would leave the United Kingdom with no say over rules it would have to abide by. The EU would be happy to do that and could do it fast. Such a deal, Brexiters say, would be "Brexit In Name Only". Goldman Sachs puts a 50 percent probability on the ratification of a modified deal. — Reuters

News in brief

Egypt foils attack on Sinai

CAIRO: Egyptian security forces foiled an attack Friday on a checkpoint in the south Sinai resort region, shooting dead two attackers, one of whom wore an explosive belt, the interior ministry said. "Security forces prevented the attack exchanging gunfire ... which led to the deaths of two perpetrators" at the checkpoint in Oyoun Moussa, said a ministry statement. "One of them wore an explosive belt with the intention to target the checkpoint ... bomb experts defused the device," it added. Egyptian security forces have been targeted by extremist groups since the army overthrew Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. Most insurgent attacks have been concentrated in the restive northern province of the Sinai, to the east of the country. — AFP

Blast kills 20 in Pakistan

QUETTA: At least 20 people were killed and 48 wounded by a powerful suicide blast apparently targeting the Shia Hazara ethnic minority at a crowded fruit market in Pakistan's Quetta city, officials said. Body parts littered the scene and injured people screamed for help as black smoke cloaked the market after the explosion. A faction of the Pakistani Taliban claimed the attack, which occurred in the capital of southwestern Balochistan province. The group said it collaborated with Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), which has been behind numerous bloody attacks on Shiite Muslims in Pakistan. There was no immediate confirmation from LeJ. Balochistan - which borders Afghanistan and Iran - is Pakistan's largest and poorest province, rife with ethnic, sectarian and separatist insurgencies. — AFP

US serviceman found dead

TOKYO: A US serviceman and a Japanese woman were found dead at an apartment in Okinawa yesterday, police said, with the man reportedly suspected of killing the woman before taking his own life. The 32-year-old soldier and the 44-year-old woman, were found bleeding at the apartment on the southern Japanese island, a police spokesman said. "They both had stab wounds and their deaths were confirmed later," the spokesman said. Okinawa island hosts more than half of the 47,000 American military personnel - a presence that has frustrated local residents with problems ranging from noise and military accidents to crime involving base residents. — AFP

7 Burkina soldiers killed

OUAGADOUGOU: Burkina Faso's army said yesterday that seven soldiers were killed during an "anti-terrorist" operation in the east of the country which also led to the arrest of some 100 jihadists. The army had launched the operation on March 7 to restore the state's authority in a region where the population is daily threatened by armed "terrorist" groups and criminal gangs. "Seven of our comrades in arms fell during this operation and nine others were wounded," said army chief General Moise Minigou at a media briefing at Fada N'Gourma, the main town in the eastern region. Around 100 jihadists were arrested and are being held in a high security prison, he added. He also claimed that some jihadists were killed in the operation but refused to give the number. — AFP

Assange's ex-neighbors breathe a sigh of relief

LONDON: Outside the Ecuadoran embassy in London, the police and the demonstrators have disappeared; and for the local community, at last after seven years, the Julian Assange circus has left town. "My God, this nightmare is over, what a relief!" said Tony Knight, a financial consultant in his 60s who lives near the embassy, a two-storey apartment just behind the swanky Harrods emporium in the plush Knightsbridge district. "This whole area, people who live here were getting upset about what was going on, because they had police presence, demonstrations," he told AFP. "It wasn't every day but it was a situation that went on and on for seven years."

"Fortunately I live around the corner, because living right in front of the embassy must have been horrible," Knight, who has lived in the area for more than 30 years, said it even had an effect on sale and rental prices for houses. "Somebody told me that prices had gone down, they had to give a 30 percent rental discount because of this," he said, pointing to the four-storey, red-brick building which houses the embassies of Ecuador on the left and Colombia on the right, plus a dozen private apartments.

Both are reached through the main front door that WikiLeaks founder Assange was dragged out of in handcuffs on Thursday. Up the short flight of stairs, inside, a security guard sits in a small marble-floored, dark-walled reception. After nearly seven years, Ecuador revoked Assange's asylum and allowed the British police inside to arrest the Australian 47-year-old for jumping bail by entering the embassy in 2012.

The United States also wants to extradite him on hacking charges. When he was dragged out into Hans Crescent and bundled into a waiting police van, the Colombian embassy staff could not use the main entrance and had to come and go through a back door. Apart from that, the presence of Assange in the neighboring flat hardly bothered them at all. "It has not really been a nuisance," said one employee, who did not wish



LONDON: A view of Wandsworth prison in southwest London where WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is believed to be held according to media reports. —AFP

to be named. "It was just like having a neighbor that you never see."

Dirty protest allegation

Outside, however, traces of the numerous protests and rallies, some featuring celebrities such as the veteran British fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, still remain on the other side of the street. On the piled-up metal barricades once used by police to contain the demonstrators hangs a sign with a picture of the former computer hacker and a large white banner reading "Free Assange".

The WikiLeaks head had been granted asylum by president Rafael Correa, but his successor, President Lenin Moreno, was less warm towards his residency in the London mission, denouncing his behavior as provocative and disrespectful. "This man with his faeces smeared on the walls of the embassy," Moreno said — an allegation Assange's lawyer denied. A handful of news crews and reporters were waiting around Friday just in case anything further happened, for example if a

"done a lot of good but I don't agree with them on Brexit". He said he would even consider voting for Nigel Farage's new Brexit Party - much to the consternation of companion Lisa. "I'm Scottish first, then European," she said.

'Sick of all the Brexit'

Some pro-EU voters who wanted to stay in the United Kingdom in the 2014 referendum are now in favor of independence, but the issue risks pushing away those who want a clean break from both London and Brussels. Former SNP deputy leader Jim Fairlie said the government's policy of independence within the EU was an "oxymoron", and that tying the two issues together meant "they're not going to get the votes of traditional nationalists like me." "All the SNP has to do to keep the independence movement together is to decouple it from membership of the EU," he added.

But over 60 percent of Scots voted to stay in the EU, and some are being won over to the independence cause. "I know quite a lot of people... who voted to stay with the UK... who now say because they're sick of all the Brexit, they've changed their minds," said local resident Mary Cryan amid the hubbub of Edinburgh's Royal Mile, in the shadow of the city's centuries-old castle.

The shifting blocs have largely cancelled themselves out so far, with polling stuck at around 55 percent versus 45 percent in favor of staying in the United Kingdom, according to polling expert John Curtice,

cleaning squad were to go in to muck out the tiny room that had been Assange's den of seven years.

Staff at the Ecuadoran embassy declined to speak to the press. Outside the Houses of Parliament, Ambassador Jaime Marchan told AFP on Thursday that Assange's rights had been respected but his stay had been terminated due to his "continuing and repeated breakage of his obligations under the American treaties on asylum. "This was a termination of long wait for this to be concluded in the framework of international law," he said.

"He didn't comply with any of his obligations and that obliged Ecuador to put into effect last October a special protocol of living together in an embassy... he continued to break that protocol." Right behind the television cameras still visible in Hans Crescent, a 50-year-old woman scrubbed the steps of a grand-looking private residence. "At the beginning there was a lot of police here every day, and that went on for some years," said the Polish housekeeper, who did not want to give her name. —AFP

from the University of Strathclyde. But independence supporters think that the chaos in Westminster could shift the balance. "It certainly makes the democratic case easier because it really does throw into stark relief this democratic deficit problem," Kevin Pringle, a former director of strategic communications for the SNP, told AFP in his Edinburgh office.

'Concentrate on the day job'

Independence supporters still face a stiff challenge in winning over more conservative voters, who wanted to stay in both the EU and the UK. "The SNP should concentrate on the day job rather than looking at independence," 50-year-old public servant Craig told AFP in the city's Scots Guards Club, as pipers and other folk musicians played in the background. Complicating the task for the SNP, Brexit has become something of a moving target since the terms of the withdrawal and the date are far from certain. "It's a bit like a mirage in the desert," Pringle said.

Key to the calculations will be whether Britain will remain in the European customs union after Brexit or not, which would take any volatile "hard border" debate out of a future independence campaign. Campaigners must also soon must also find a united position on a raft of economic issues, including what currency an independent Scotland would adopt. Pringle added: "It's a challenge that can be achieved but I don't think anybody underestimates the scale of it". — AFP

International

Finland: From suicide hotspot to world's 'happiest country'

Finland's suicide rate was the second highest in the world

VANTAA: When the UN crowned Finland the world's happiest nation last month for the second year running, there were still quite a few eyebrows raised. How could this Nordic country, better known for its harsh weather and high suicide rate, be the world's happiest?

Although international comparisons are imperfect due to holes in the data, in 1990 official statistics did indeed indicate that Finland's suicide rate was the second highest in the world, behind Hungary. But Professor Timo Partonen at Finland's National Institute for Health and Welfare, warns against the temptation to blame the problem on Finland's dark, cold climate, or its bleak, concrete, postwar towns. "If you are depressed in any place in the world, you bear a similar risk of suicide," Partonen said.

"I think that the social connections and how willing you are to seek help and receive help are the most important things here." Suicides in Finland have now fallen to less than half of 1990 levels. That is thanks largely to a decade-long public health drive to improve treatment and support for those at risk, as well as to make media reporting of the issue more responsible. These days it is also much more socially acceptable for Finns, especially men, to open up about their feelings, says Partonen.

"Now it's easier to talk about it if you are depressed

for example, and it's easier to get treated and have adequate treatment as well." According to the World Health Organization, Finland's suicide rate is now 22nd highest in the world, lower than the US and one spot higher than Australia. Even today however, many Finns still describe themselves as taciturn and prone to melancholy - and admit to eyeing public displays of joyfulness with suspicion.

Quietly satisfied

Finland's residents enjoy a high quality of life, security and public services, with rates of inequality and poverty among the lowest of all OECD countries. But as the country votes in this week-end's general election, the issue of how to continue funding Finland's cherished welfare state in future appears to be on many voters' minds. In an EU survey last year, 86 percent of Finns said they were satisfied with their work-life

balance, against an EU average of 78 percent. That leaves more time for a favorite pursuit of many Finns - going outdoors to enjoy the country's vast forests and thousands of lakes.

"You forget all your daily things that maybe are going on inside your head, and you can just breathe deeply and listen to nature," said Petri Honkala, a phys-



HELSINKI: The chairman of the National Coalition Party and parliamentary candidate Petteri Orpo (center) speaks next to the Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness of European Commission Jyrki Katainen (left) and the Vice President of European Investment Bank Alexander Stubb during a campaign rally for the parliamentary elections yesterday. — AFP

iotherapist of his daily walks and runs in the forest by his house. Since Finland's success in the UN's world happiness rankings, which compared various social and economic measures in 156 countries, Honkala and seven other Finns have been employed by the country's tourist board as "happiness guides" for foreign visitors. Later this year he will host guests at his home to

share the secrets to Nordic wellbeing - and a trip to his favorite nearby forest spots will be top of the agenda. "I have been in my own little business all the time, I haven't been employed, so I haven't had any vacation for example, I don't go to the Canary Islands," Honkala said, as he barbecued sausages over a bonfire in a small forest clearing. — AFP

India, Britain mark 'horrific' colonial massacre centenary

AMRITSAR: Britain's high commissioner to India laid a wreath yesterday at commemorations for the 100th anniversary of the Amritsar massacre, one of the worst atrocities of colonial rule for which London is still to apologize. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, as it is known in India, saw British troops fire on thousands of unarmed men, women and children in the northern city of Amritsar on the afternoon of April 13, 1919. The number of casualties from the event, which galvanized support for independence, is unclear. Colonial-era records put the death toll at 379, but Indian figures put the number closer to 1,000.

Even 100 years on, Britain has still made no official apology and Dominic Asquith, high commissioner, on Saturday followed suit at the Jallianwala Bagh walled garden where bullet marks are still visible. "You might want to re-write history, as the Queen said, but you can't," Asquith said. "What you can do, as the Queen said, is to learn the lessons of history... We will never forget what happened here." In the memorial's guest book Asquith, a descendant of Herbert Asquith, prime minister from 1908-16, called the events "shameful".

"We deeply regret what happened and the suffering caused," he wrote, echoing comments by Prime Minister Theresa May in parliament on Wednesday when she too stopped short of apologizing. Prime Minister Narendra



AMRITSAR: Indian Vice President Venkaiah Naidu (center) salutes to the Border Security Force (BSF) personnel after laying a wreath to pay tribute to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre martyrs on the occasion of 100th anniversary yesterday. —AFP

Modi in a tweet called the tragedy "horrific" and that the memory of those killed "inspires us to work even harder to build an India they would be proud of." Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi was present in Amritsar and on Twitter called the massacre "a day of infamy that stunned the entire world and changed the course of the Indian freedom struggle".

In a visit in 2013 then British prime minister David Cameron described what happened as "deeply shameful" but stopped short of an apology. In 1997, Queen Elizabeth II laid a wreath at the site but her gaffe-prone husband Prince Philip stole the headlines by reportedly saying that Indian estimates for the death count were "vastly exaggerated". On Wednesday, May told the House of Commons that the massacre was "a shameful scar on

British Indian history".

"We deeply regret what happened and the suffering caused," May said. Amarinder Singh, chief minister of Punjab state, said May's words were not enough. He said "an unequivocal official apology" is needed for the "monumental barbarity". Singh said thousands attended a candlelight march Friday in memory of the victims ahead of a commemoration ceremony later on that was attended by the Indian vice-president and hundreds of people.

Around 10,000 unarmed men, women and children had gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh walled public garden in Amritsar on April 13, 1919. Many were angry about the recent extension of repressive measures and the arrest of two local leaders that had sparked violent protests three days before. — AFP

UK's shame, and still not sorry: The Amritsar massacre

AMRITSAR: The Amritsar massacre, 100 years ago in which British troops opened fire on thousands of unarmed protestors, remains one of the darkest hours of British colonial rule in India. Known in India as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, it is still an emotive subject with many demanding a British apology - which so far has been unforthcoming. The number of casualties on April 13, 1919 is unclear, with colonial-era records showing 379 deaths while Indian figures put the number at closer to 1,000.

The prelude

In March 1919, the British colonial government passed the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, or the Rowlatt Act, extending repressive measures in force during World War I (1914-18). These included incarceration without trial, and caused widespread anger, particularly in the northern Punjab region, with Mahatma Gandhi calling for a nationwide general strike. In Amritsar news that prominent Indian leaders had been arrested and banished from that city sparked violent protests on April 10. These saw soldiers fire upon civilians, buildings looted and burned, while angry mobs killed several foreign nationals and attacked a Christian missionary.

High walls

Brigadier General Reginald Edward Harry



AMRITSAR: An Indian girl looks at a painting of the martyrs during the 100th anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar. — AFP

Dyer was tasked with ensuring order, and imposed measures including a ban on public gatherings. On the afternoon of April 13 some 10,000 people gathered at the Jallianwala Bagh, an area in Amritsar surrounded by high walls with only one exit. It was also Baisakhi, a harvest festival in northern India. The crowd included men, women, children and pilgrims who were visiting the nearby Golden Temple, one of the holiest sites in Sikhism. Some estimates put the crowd at 20,000.

Enter Dyer

Dyer, later dubbed "The Butcher of Amritsar", reached the spot with dozens of soldiers and sealed off the exit. Without warning, he ordered the soldiers to fire on the

unarmed crowd. Many tried unsuccessfully to escape by scaling the walls. Others jumped into an open well at the site. Reportedly the troops fired until they ran out of ammunition, letting off hundreds of rounds into the crowd before withdrawing. The Indian Express newspaper earlier this week shared eyewitness accounts compiled by two historians. They included Mani Ram, whose 13-year-old son Madan Mohan used to play in the square with his friends. "I, with eight or nine others, had to search for about half an hour till I could pick up his corpse as it was mixed up with hundreds of dead bodies lying in heaps there," Ram said. Dyer said later that the firing was "not to disperse the meeting but to punish the Indians for disobedience." —AFP

Doctor 'fathered 49 kids' in IVF scandal

THE HAGUE: A Dutch doctor at the centre of an IVF scandal fathered at least 49 children, an organization representing parents and children born through his now-closed clinic said Friday. Jan Karbaat, who died in 2017, is the father of 49 children born after women visited his Rotterdam clinic where he used his own sperm instead of sperm from a chosen donor to inseminate them, Defense for Children said.

Results of DNA tests conducted Friday at a hospital in the southeastern city of Nijmegen "showed that 49 children in the case are direct descendants of the late Karbaat," the organization said in a statement. "The results confirm serious suspicions that Karbaat used his own sperm at his clinic," Defense for Children added.

The controversial case became public after a Dutch court ruled in February that the results of Karbaat's DNA test should be made available to parents and children to conduct their own comparisons. Before his death, aged 89, Karbaat reportedly admitted to having fathered about 60 children in his time at the discredited clinic which closed in 2009 amid reports of irregularities. Karbaat later also admitted to mixing sperm from

various donors and issuing fraudulent donor documentation, the Dutch daily newspaper NRC reported.

The group of suspected "Karbaat children" dragged his family to court to force them to release Karbaat's DNA profile, which was kept locked in a safe. The Karbaat family's lawyers had argued that their clients' right to privacy had to be respected. "However, with the judges agreeing to the paternity test, the judge placed the children's rights above those of Karbaat and his family," Defense for Children advisor Iara de Witte said.

"Now, after years of uncertainty the plaintiffs can finally close a chapter and start processing the fact that they are one of Karbaat's many descendants," De Witte said. One of the children, Eric Lever, recently told the NRC newspaper he was "not angry with Karbaat." "I don't get the feeling that he cheated my mother," he told the NRC paper. "She really wanted a child and could not have one with my parental father," he said. The Defense for Children added it was likely that Karbaat sired even more donor children than the 49 revealed on Friday.

"Sperm belonging to the late doctor was also distributed to other clinics," Dutch news agency ANP quoted the organization as saying. The organization has appealed to anybody who may suspect that Karbaat was their donor father to apply to a Dutch database for DNA matching. Applicants can apply in writing to an official body called the FIOM, which maintains a DNA database to match children conceived via anonymous donors. — AFP

Indian parties hit by funding, TV clampdown

NEW DELHI: India's Supreme Court on Friday ordered parties to name anonymous donors behind tens of millions of dollars in funding as hostilities intensified in the country's mega-election. The order came ahead of the second round of voting and after the election watchdog called for a clampdown on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal television channel, saying it breached campaign rules. While Modi and his opposition rival Rahul Gandhi returned to the campaign trail, the country's top court gave parties seven weeks to name people who have bought "electoral bonds" in recent months.

Rival parties are said to be spending up to \$7 billion on the election, which started Thursday and runs through to May 19, and funding sources have come under the spotlight. The bonds-bought for between \$15 and \$140,000 and then given to a designated party-are controversial because they are anonymous. India's election commission and watchdog groups which took the case to the Supreme Court said the bonds should be ended because of the risk of businesses making secret contributions to influence decisions.

Modi's government, which introduced the bonds in 2017, opposed naming donors. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the biggest beneficiary of the bonds, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), one of the groups behind the case. More than \$150

million in bonds were bought in 2018, according to the Factly Indian data journalism portal. Experts estimate that at least the same amount was bought in the months ahead of the election.

NaMo blow

According to the ADR, the BJP-the world's biggest political party-received about \$150 million in total donations in 2018, of which more than half came from anonymous sources. Congress brought in about \$30 million and about 60 percent was anonymous. The prime minister, who won a landslide in 2014 and is considered frontrunner in this race, faced increased pressure after the election commission said his NaMo TV breached campaign rules.

The commission ordered NaMo TV, which is sponsored by the BJP, to submit all of its content for approval. Under Indian election rules, any content deemed campaign material-including adverts, films and even social media-needs permission from the independent watchdog. NaMo TV shows 24-hour programs on Modi rallies, speeches, and even rap songs and dance routines devoted to the normally austere leader. It was being broadcast as normal on Friday.

The order was the commission's second blow to the Modi campaign in 48 hours, after it postponed the release of a flattering movie about the 68-year-old prime minister until after voting finishes. Producers of the film insisted they had no links to the BJP. But the commission said the film "PM Narendra Modi", which tells of the Hindu nationalist leader's ascent from selling tea at a train station to prime minister, could not be released during the election. — AFP

Analysis

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Washington Watch

Protecting Americans' right to hear from the leader of BDS

By Dr James J Zogby

I awakened early Wednesday to listen to a voicemail message from Omar Barghouti, a leading member of the Palestinian movement to Boycott, Divest, and Sanction (BDS) Israel. In the message, Omar told me that he was at Ben Gurion Airport and despite holding a valid US visa and a boarding pass for his flight to Washington, DC, the airline would not let him board the plane. He was informed that American immigration officials had notified the airline that he was being barred from entry into the US.

We had invited Barghouti to Washington to speak at a number of educational programs and to have him meet with members of congress or their staffs. Apparently, it was exactly this sort of dialogue and education that the Trump Administration did not want to occur. While polling shows that a plurality of Americans support the Palestinian's right to call for a boycott in protest against Israel's settlement expansion and persistent violation of Palestinian human rights, in Congress and in state capitols around the US there is an anti-BDS hysteria. This near-feverish campaign to penalize individuals and entities that support BDS has succeeded in more than two dozen states and is the subject of a number of bills and resolutions before this session of Congress.

Since the language in the Congressional resolutions, we believe, mischaracterizes the BDS movement and misquotes Barghouti, we felt that it would be important to bring him to Washington to directly address the concerns of legislators and policy-makers.

We planned three events: a discussion moderated by Peter Beinart, a leading American Jewish intellectual who writes for The Atlantic Magazine and the Jewish Forward Newspaper; a conversation with young Jewish and Arab Americans (co-hosted with Jewish Voice for Peace); and a briefing for congressional staff. We also wrote to the original co-sponsors of the Congressional legislation asking them to privately meet with Barghouti. There were, additionally, programs set at Harvard University, New York University, and at a major synagogue in Chicago.

When confronted by Barghouti's denial of entry we decided, nevertheless, to go forward with the program, conducting two of the scheduled Washington sessions via Skype. It was not the way we had hoped to have this dialogue - but we were determined that it was important to have this conversation and not allow our effort to be completely derailed by the Administration's decision to prevent us from hearing Barghouti directly.

As the programs unfolded, listening to Barghouti's responses to the questions from Beinart and the audience, it became clear why pro-Israel groups and supporters in "official Washington" are so afraid of letting Barghouti be heard. His answers were so informed and smart and his explanation of the BDS movement were quite compelling. However, seeing Barghouti via a large screen on wheels on the stage meant that we were all undoubtedly missing Omar's presence, imposing a distance between us that extended the sense of Palestinians as the other and hindered our ability to have a back and forth with him as a real person.

As I expected, when it became clear that we did not cancel the events, opponents of BDS reacted negatively. One congressional critic, Rep Lee Zeldin issued a release that applauded the barring of Barghouti, denouncing him in especially harsh language. Zeldin's statement said: "We have witnessed the rise of anti-Semitism and anti-Israel hate throughout the world, in our nation, on college campuses and within the halls of Congress, and whether this bigotry is brazen or shamefully masked as 'legitimate' we must reject it...Barghouti's anti-Israel and anti-Semitic hate must not be tolerated, empowered or embraced and I applaud the Administration's denial of his entry to the United States." We had hoped that if Zeldin had a chance to meet with Barghouti in person, he would have developed a better understanding of the movement and the man. Zeldin's remarks echoing the views of President Trump's new special envoy on anti-Semitism who, when asked for the reason why Barghouti was barred from coming to the US, first said he could not comment on the case but then went on to denounce both Barghouti and the BDS movement as anti-Semitic. We have been gratified that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and PEN America have been forthright in joining with us to protest the barring of Barghouti's entry into the US. The ACLU statement read:

"This looks like an ideological exclusion, which is a long-discredited form of government censorship that prevents Americans from meeting with and hearing from a speaker whose views the government dislikes...it's a disgrace and a violation of Americans' First Amendment right."

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

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Supporters of president of South Africa and of the ruling party African National Congress (ANC) take part in a campaign rally at the Alexandra Stadium on April 11, 2019 in Alexandra, South Africa. — AFP

Graft scandals overshadow ANC election bid

With less than four weeks to go until South Africans vote in a general election, corruption scandals again threaten to tear open old rivalries within the long-governing African National Congress. After 25 years in power, widespread graft allegations have tainted the ruling party, which forced out shamed former president Jacob Zuma last year. Despite his replacement President Cyril Ramaphosa vowing to tackle corruption, new claims about the moral rot at the heart of Nelson Mandela's party have emerged.

The latest in the firing line is the ANC's Secretary General Ace Magashule, a key Zuma ally. A recent book entitled "Gangster State: Unravelling Ace Magashule's Web of Capture" claims he was at the centre of a scheme to loot millions from state coffers for his own financial gain. Magashule immediately denounced the allegations as lies, stating: "I am not corrupt." The party also quickly dismissed the book as "propaganda" and part of a "vicious character assassination campaign" ahead of the May 8 election.

But at a time when the ANC has faced criticism for including candidates implicated in corruption, not everyone towed the party line. "I am not prepared to simply dismiss all the allegations as lies," said Tourism Minister Derek Hanekom, a close associate of Ramaphosa. "Nor would most of my... comrades," he added. His comments, effectively breaking rank with the ANC, come as the largest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), puts the fight against corruption at the heart of its campaign.

"ANC corruption is now an established fact. Everyone is now convinced that ANC is rotten to its core and that it's not going to change ever," said DA leader Mmusi Maimane.

Tainted candidates

Although Ramaphosa became ANC president on a clean-up ticket, several Zuma allies associated with graft have said they will seek election for the ruling party. They include Nomvula Mokonyane, the environment minister who was recently implicated at a corruption enquiry, and Bathabile Dlamini, who was at the centre of a social welfare payments fiasco. The inclusion of discredited ANC figures on the candidate list will hand ammunition to opposition parties, say analysts.

Despite the controversy, a recent survey still put the ANC on course to win more than half of the parliamentary seats. The ANC currently holds 249 seats of 400, according to the parliament website, and Ramaphosa hopes it can still snare a parliamentary majority, which would enable him to win a five-year presidential term. The key question, analysts say, is over the margin of victory for the ANC, which has won every election since the end of apartheid in 1994, which saw the scrapping of white minority rule. "We are not a dictatorship. We function in terms of the rule of law," Ramaphosa said last week.

Two months ago the president set up a special tribunal to fast-track corruption prosecutions and he emphasized his commitment to the process. "If there needs to be jail

time, it must be jail time. Those who did wrong will be punished," he said. The promise to take action has not convinced everyone.

'Not about the poor'

Lumkile Mondli, senior lecturer at Wits School of Economics and Business Science, said the ANC needs to show it can successfully tackle corruption. "Most of us are sceptical, until I see one big ANC fish (in jail). It will be very positive for the country if one big fish is caught," he said. Life for most South Africans is a struggle, with sluggish economic growth, poor government management and corruption helping to ensure society remains deeply unequal. Officially, the ANC has distanced itself from the Magashule case and Ramaphosa has been careful not to make public appearances with him. But the party faithful are worried. "He (Magashule) should resign because those allegations have an impact on the whole party," said an activist in his Free State province, Fourie Sentimile, while also pledging his support to Ramaphosa.

Undaunted by the allegations against him, and concerns of ANC members, Magashule has continued to campaign as if nothing has happened. "Let's make sure we win this elections," he said Thursday. "After elections... let us sit down, let us talk, let us build the ANC proper." The next day, Magashule received a message of support from Zuma, loathed by many others in the party and the country. "Stay resolute during these times," tweeted Zuma to Magashule. — AFP

Finland populists eye election upset

In the remote, northern Finnish town of Oulu where he has lived for seven years, Syrian-born Jabo Waleed recently started feeling that some people's behavior towards him was becoming less welcoming. "My wife is Finnish, I have lots of Finnish friends, but if you walk alone in the streets or drive somewhere or go into a shop then people really do look at you differently," Waleed told AFP in fluent Finnish from behind the counter of his kebab shop in the town center. "I can honestly say it's not like before," he added.

Waleed's experiences have been echoed by many other immigrants across Finland, since police in Oulu announced in December the arrest of nine suspects - all of whom had arrived in the EU country as refugees or asylum seekers - for suspected sexual offences against minors. A handful of similar arrests followed in subsequent months. The heavily publicized incidents spread outrage through Finland, and helped the far-right, populist Finns Party capitalize on anti-immigration sentiment ahead of Sunday's legislative elections.

The Finns Party's election manifesto, released after the arrests, goes into detail about a perceived security risk posed by immigrants, particularly in the areas of sexual assault and terrorism. After three years as the fifth largest party in public opinion polls, pre-election forecasts put Finns Party support at around 16 percent, which could make it the second largest party after Sunday.

Immigration to the fore

Finland's population has the lowest share of foreign-born residents in western Europe, and the Nordic country was singled out by an EU study last year as having the highest rates of racially motivated violence and harassment against people of African descent out of 12 countries surveyed. Until recently, immigration was a minor election issue, with concerns such as social care and climate change dominating the public debate.

However, the Finns Party, under the leadership of hardline MEP Jussi Halla-aho, has focused on migration since the alleged Oulu assaults. This has prompted major parties on both the left and right to echo Halla-aho's calls for tougher measures on immigrants who commit crimes. Finnish police have said around a quarter of last year's 1,400 reports of sexual assaults against children involved suspects of foreign backgrounds - higher than the proportion of foreign-born people in the population, which is 6.6 percent.

"People are being raped, people are being killed. But the other parties are only interested in whether the Finns Party's support is going up," Halla-aho said at the time.

Tuomo Turja, research director of polling agency Taloustutkimus, says the Finns Party's opposition to immigration, plus their skepticism towards climate change, set them apart from the rest of the Finnish political field. "The support base is mostly male, working class but also small business owners, they are relatively well off, middle income, they are situated in southern and western Finland, mostly in small towns and villages," he told AFP.

Party split

The Finns Party are no newcomers to the populist stage, having snatched a surprise third place in the 2011 general election under the larger-than-life leadership of Timo Soini, who campaigned against EU bailouts to Portugal and Greece. Its popularity rattled European financial markets and helped galvanise anti-bailout sentiment elsewhere in the EU. A further election success in 2015 saw the Finns Party join a centre-right coalition government. Faced with the realities of governing, concessions on the Greek bailout and on immigration proved fatal for the party's popularity.

Amid spiralling poll numbers, the party split and the headline faction dropped out of government in 2017, when it elected Halla-aho as leader. Under Halla-aho, and back in opposition, the party's message has taken a more nationalistic turn away from euroscepticism. Halla-aho now intends to lead his party back to power. "The message (of other parties) is 'don't vote for the Finns Party because there will be no government cooperation with them'," Halla-aho told national broadcaster Yle in February. "I wouldn't give too much value to talk like that."

Finland's other parties have expressed distaste at the idea of joining a coalition with the Finns Party, though few have ruled cooperation out entirely, wary of the populists' record of outperforming expectations at the ballot box. "It may not be that socially acceptable to say you vote for the Finns Party, so they may have these hidden supporters," pollster Turja said.

Back on the streets of Oulu, it proves hard to find anyone who says they will vote for the Finns Party. Heikki Lehtovuori, a retired doctor who has yet to decide how to vote but knows it will not be the Finns Party, told AFP climate change would be his main concern in these elections, not migration. "This Finnish way of thinking, which has got lots of publicity, is completely foreign to me. I'm sure the majority of people think the same as me, that other people need jobs here as well as just Finns," he said. — AFP

Scaffolding or modern art? Jury out on new Paris fountains

Expensive decorative scaffolding, or a welcome addition to the French capital's most famous avenue? New designer fountains on the Champs-Elysees have reopened a debate in Paris about how to add modern twists to the city's beloved classic architecture. Located at a roundabout around halfway between Tuileries Garden and the Arc de Triomphe, the fountains were inaugurated by Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo on March 21, and have divided opinion in the City of Light.

"When you're close up, it's original, but when you go down the Champs-Elysees and you look at them all together, you might think that it's a bunch of scaffolding that's been put up and needs to come down at some point," one long-time resident grumbled to AFP as she walked past. The six shiny fountains, which rotate to mimic the swirling traffic at the busy intersection, resemble oversized pencils jutting into the air.

Each fountain is comprised of a four-storey-high, bronze-alloy pole that supports three descending arms made of pieces of Swarovski cut crystal studded with LED lights that sparkle at night. Other Parisians are pleased with the result. "It's better than before," said Ibrahim Ngaiye, a bicycle courier for the food delivery service Glovo, who was waiting for his next order. "Before, there were just trees, trash cans and smaller fountains. The roundabout's better like this."

Art controversies

The structures, designed by brothers Ronan and Erwan

Bouroullec to replace a set of stone fountains that had fallen into disrepair, pack nearly three tonnes of crystal. The 6.3-million-euro (\$7.1 million) project is the first major initiative of the Paris Foundation, which was established in 2015 to raise money for public projects with a "strong emphasis" on contemporary art. The project was fully funded by private donations and helped along by a significant discount on the crystal.

Introducing modern art to the streets of Paris has often been controversial, and many residents object to what they see as eyesores - or frivolous projects financed with public money. At the end of 2017, a public campaign was launched to prevent the installation of a privately funded sculpture of giant tulips by artist Jeff Koons which was "gifted" to the city after the 2015 Paris terror attacks.

Just over a year after its inauguration, many residents of the poverty-wracked Porte de Clignancourt area on the northern edge of the city are still unhappy with a giant red heart installed on a pole that cost 650,000 euros in public money. And some locals still cringe at the memory of a giant sculpture appearing to show a man having sex with an animal that was destined for the gardens in front of the Louvre, and another that resembled a sex toy erected in the middle of the Place Vendome, opposite the Ritz hotel.

Perhaps the most controversial of all was the publicly financed glass-and-metal pyramid installed in front of the Louvre palace in 1989 in central Paris. Designed by the Chinese-American architect I M Pei, it was denounced by some at the time for ruining the sight of the former royal palace, but has since become a popular attraction in its own right. Nadia, who runs a newsstand near the new fountains, said she found them particularly attractive after the sun goes down. "At night, they sparkle," she told AFP. "With the jets of water coming out of the bottom, it looks like a rocket that's taking off." — AFP

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Business

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MUMBAI: Jet Airways employees listen to their spokesperson during a protest at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International airport in Mumbai on Friday. — AFP

Jet suspends int'l flights as airline teeters

Etihad shows interest in bidding • Passengers stranded, staff stage protests

MUMBAI: India's Jet Airways extended a suspension of all of its international flights until tomorrow, the latest blow to the debt-stricken carrier battling to stay afloat. The development Friday came after the government said it would investigate Jet's ability to continue flying as lenders seek a buyer to keep the beleaguered airline running.

Passengers have been left stranded, and on Friday airline staff protested at Mumbai's airport. A collapse would deal a blow to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pro-business reputation as Indians vote in a mega six-week-long election that started Thursday.

A Jet Airways source told AFP that all of Jet's international flights out of and into India until Monday (tomorrow) had been scrapped, extending a series of cancellations announced on Thursday. Aviation minister Suresh Prabhu earlier tweeted on Friday that his ministry would "review issues related to Jet Airways" and "take necessary steps to minimize passenger inconvenience and ensure their safety".

Jet was until recently India's second-biggest airline

by market share but is close to going under with debts of more than \$1 billion. The Mumbai-based carrier has been forced to ground the majority of its fleet after months of defaulting on loans and struggling to pay lessors and staff.

It told the Bombay Stock Exchange Thursday that 10 more planes could not fly due to non-payment.

The airline has a fleet of 119 aircraft but Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola said it would fly only six or seven of them over the weekend on domestic routes, after flying 11 on Friday, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported. That is below the 20 required by Indian aviation regulators to fly overseas.

Thousands of customers have been stranded in recent weeks after hundreds of flights were cancelled, in some cases with little or no notice.

Flights to London, Paris, Amsterdam, Colombo and Singapore were among those cancelled Thursday and Friday. Airline staff are also in limbo. Dozens of uniformed Jet workers protested on Friday at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport,

where they carried signs saying "Save Jet Airways" and "Save Our Future."

Close of play Friday was the deadline for prospective bidders to express an interest in acquiring a 75-percent stake in Jet. A consortium of lenders led by the State Bank of India started the stake sale process on Monday. Any interested parties will then have until April 30 to make a formal bid.

Kharola said bankers asked the airline to "rework its proposal" on interim funding, and a meeting with bankers is scheduled for tomorrow, according to PTI.

"Depending on what the banks decide, the future course of action would be taken," he said.

Several airlines, including Etihad, are interested in bidding, according to reports.

Etihad interested

The consortium took control of Jet Airways last month after creditors injected \$218 million of "immediate funding support" as part of a debt resolution plan. The deal saw founder Naresh Goyal step down

as chairman. Etihad Airways, which owns a 24-percent stake in Jet, has submitted an expression of interest to buy a controlling stake of up to 75 percent, according to Indian business dailies. PTI, quoting sources, said Goyal has put in a bid for the airline, although it was not clear whether he had partnered with another entity or airline.

Alarm bells for Jet Airways first rang in August when it failed to report its quarterly earnings or pay staff, including pilots. It later reported a loss of \$85 million.

In February, it secured a \$1.19 billion bailout from lenders to bridge a funding gap, but its crisis has deepened. The carrier has been badly hit by fluctuating global crude prices and a weak rupee, as well as fierce competition from budget rivals.

Mismanagement has also plagued the airline. Analysts trace the start of Jet's financial problems to its 2006 purchase of Air Sahara for \$500 million in cash. Goyal reportedly ignored the advice of associates who said the cost was too much. — AFP

GBM and IDC whitepaper: 60% of firms to be digitized by 2022

KUWAIT: Gulf Business Machines, in partnership with International Data Corporation (IDC), has released a study highlighting the need for organizations to overcome the organizational and technology barriers in the path of their digital transformation. The whitepaper titled 'Breaking the Deadlock and Accelerating Digital Transformation', released at GBM's inaugural DX Summit, explains the 'digital deadlock' organizations face and identifies specific strategies to revitalize their digital transformation projects.

Based on recent studies done by IDC, it is expected that by 2022, more than 60 percent of the global economy will be digitized. Global IT-related spending on digital transformation is also expected to reach \$7.5 trillion. According to IDC's CIO Survey 2018, 53 percent of large enterprises in the Gulf countries (excluding Saudi Arabia) are currently undergoing digital transformation, while 19 percent are about to commence, and another 25 percent are planning their digital transformation.



KUWAIT: Speakers address GBM's inaugural DX Summit. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Regionally, the public sector organizations are leading the way, driven by federal and state-level transformation strategies. The banking, retail, healthcare, telecommunications and oil and gas companies have also initiated digital transformation projects.

However, the whitepaper indicates that nearly 60 percent of organizations globally are trapped in a 'digital deadlock'. While many organizations are able to execute relatively smaller digital projects within departmental or functional silos, a large proportion of them are unable to move beyond these ad hoc digital projects and scale transformation across the organization.

"Digital transformation can be a key enabler of Kuwait's Vision 2035, and the country has already put plans in place to drive digital innovation to nearly \$988.88 million (KD 300 million) and transform the region digitally with smarter applications, easier financial transactions and efficient services. As such, it is the need of the hour to quickly overcome the digital deadlock faced by both public and private sector entities," said Wassim Seliman, General Manager of GBM Kuwait. "As the technology partner to our clients, we help develop a company-wide digital transformation strategy and build their confidence in the digital transformation process. Our goal is

to help them overcome the challenges in the process and leverage digital technologies to strategically prepare themselves for the future."

The whitepaper outlines that digital transformation can be achieved when organizations develop an agile, scalable and secure technology infrastructure, build a robust information architecture, and redesign and efficiently automate business processes. As a result of this transition, organizations can expect greater agility, improved efficiencies, transformed customer experiences and opportunities for new revenue generation.

The first edition of the GBM DX Summit

created a platform for businesses in Kuwait to engage in and experience breakthrough innovations and technologies, which would enable them to put digital transformation into action. Leading industry analysts and practitioners came together to discuss ways to break the current digital transformation deadlock, and digital experts also provided guidance and insights into best practices to overcome the challenges companies face in the path of digital transformation. In addition, CIOs and line of business executives from leading global and local companies were brought together in sessions curated to offer advice based on their own digital transformation journeys.



Business

Recovery from Venezuela ‘economic implosion’ could take decades: IMF

‘Crude oil production falling precipitously’

WASHINGTON: Recovering from its “economic implosion” will take Venezuela “a decade or decades,” a top International Monetary Fund official told AFP on Friday.

Alejandro Werner, head of the IMF’s Western Hemisphere Department, said the country with the largest proven oil reserves in the world was suffering a catastrophe that resembled those of post-war countries. Below is an interview he gave to AFP on plans to help rebuild the Caribbean nation, which the IMF projects will contract another 25 percent this year-for a total of 61 percent since 2013, with hyperinflation of 10 million percent and unemployment of over 40 percent.

Question: The IMF’s forecasts for Venezuela are catastrophic. How do you see the oil industry?

We have seen an economic implosion that is even bigger than we anticipated, with all the humanitarian consequences that implies, including the mass migration in the region. In addition, crude oil production will continue falling precipitously. The forecast is that it will fall to 600,000 barrels a day.



WASHINGTON: Alejandro Werner, head of the International Monetary Fund Western Hemisphere Department, speaks during an interview yesterday in Washington, D.C. — AFP

Q: What is the IMF doing about it?

We’re working, thinking about the economic policy components, for the time when Venezuela has a govern-

ment that will look for help from the international community. This can be part of the effort to help in the reconstruction. The first step will be humanitarian aid to address the main deficiencies of health, food, water supply and electricity. And after that would be the even greater effort to rebuild this economy.

We see a humanitarian problem, destruction of the economic system, of production, distribution of goods, hyperinflation and obviously debt.

Q: How long will it take for the economy to recover?

In the range of a decade or decades. Based on experiences with countries that have suffered similar collapses, due to armed conflicts, civil wars or natural disasters, for most of them to recover living standards similar to what they had before the collapse it has been a question of a decade or decades.

Q: There has been talk of a loan for Venezuela of around \$80 billion. Is that accurate?

There are people talking about figures like that. But first

there have to be authorities in Venezuela who are in control of economic policy to know exactly what the needs are.

Q: What was the cause of the debacle?

The destruction of the economic system, the productive system, of the institutions, caused the economy to begin to implode, independent of the drop in oil prices in 2014. That obviously accelerated the collapse, but the economy stopped growing and inflation began to rise before that. Other economies with high dependency on oil have managed the issue much better.

Q: Has oil been a curse for Venezuela?

It could be that the abundance of resources has been one of the reasons they are where they are, but it’s also true that Venezuela has a wealth of resources for its recovery. So to the extent that Venezuela can reestablish the petroleum sector, that can be a lever that maybe countries that suffered similar collapses did not have.

The rise of raw material prices clearly created important challenges for those countries that generated economic imbalances during that boom. — AFP

Gulf Bank welcomes winner of quarterly Al-Danah draw

Amirah Awadh Al-Ali

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank was delighted to welcome Amirah Ahmad Awadh Al-Ali, the lucky winner of the first quarterly Al-Danah draw and a cash prize of KD 150,000. Amirah received her grand cash prize upon visiting the bank’s Head Office on 11 of April 2019, where she was welcomed by members of the Bank’s senior management.

Amirah was announced as the winner of the bank’s quarterly draw live on Kuwait Pulse’s (88.8 FM) ‘Diwaniyat Al-Yaqout & Al-Ansari’ program, commenting: “I never expected to win the amazing prize of KD150,000 and would like to thank Gulf Bank for continuing to provide exciting cash prizes and benefits.”

Commenting on Amirah’s visit, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank, said: “We are delighted to congratulate the winner of the first quarterly Al Danah draw of the year, and warmly welcome her to the Bank. We look forward to continuing to offer our customers exciting rewards, offers and benefits across our range of products.”

Gulf Bank’s Al-Danah second quarterly draw 2019 will

be held on 26 June 2019, for the prize of KD 250,000, 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.

Customers can 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 is the only draw account in Kuwait that transfers all your chances from the previous year onto the following year as an award for your loyalty. Furthermore, 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.

Google takes on ‘Africa’s challenges’ with first AI center in Ghana

ACCRA: An artificial intelligence research laboratory opened by Google in Ghana, the first of its kind in Africa, will take on challenges across the continent, researchers say.

The US technology giant said the lab in the capital Accra would address economic, political and environmental issues. “Africa has many challenges where the use of AI could be beneficial, sometimes even more than in other places,” Google’s head of AI Accra, Moustapha Cisse, told AFP at the centre’s official opening this week.

Similar research centers have already opened in cities around the world including Tokyo, Zurich, New York and Paris. The new lab, Cisse said, would use AI to develop solutions in healthcare, education and agriculture—such as helping to diagnose certain types of crop disease.

Cisse, an expert from Senegal, said he hoped specialist engineers and AI researchers would collaborate with local organizations and policymakers.

Google is working with universities and start-ups in Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa to enhance AI development regionally, he said. “We just need to ensure that the right education and opportunities are in place,” he said. “That is why Google is sponsoring a lot of these young people for their degrees... to help develop a new generation of AI developers.”



ACCRA: Moustapha Cisse (center), head of the Google Artificial Intelligence (AI) center Ghana, talks with some colleagues inside a meeting room in the Google AI office in Accra. — AFP

‘Clear opportunity’

Other tech companies, including Facebook, have launched initiatives in Africa and demographics are a key factor behind the drive. Africa’s population is estimated to be 1.2 billion, 60 percent of them under the age of 24. By 2050, the UN estimates the population will double to 2.4 billion. As online social networks expand, that presents a huge market for US tech giants to tap into.

“There’s a clear opportunity for companies like Facebook and Google to really go in and put a pole in the sand,” said Daniel Ives, a technology researcher at GBH Insights in New York. “If you look at Netflix, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, where is a lot of that growth coming from? It’s international,” he told AFP in a recent interview. —AFP

S&P 500 closes near record high as earnings season begins

NEW YORK: US stocks closed near record highs on Friday after the largest US bank, JPMorgan Chase & Co, soothed worries that the first-quarter earnings season would dampen Wall Street’s big rally back from last year’s slump.

The S&P 500 is now within a percent of September’s record closing high, and the S&P 500 Total Return Index, which includes reinvested dividends, in fact regained record levels, recovering ground lost after a punishing sell-off in the closing months of the year which brought the benchmark index within a rounding error of bear market territory. Since then, the three major indexes notched their best quarterly gains in nearly a decade in the first quarter, but have spent April in a holding pattern ahead of first-quarter earnings season.

JPMorgan, effectively jump-starting the quarterly earnings reporting season that will dominate investor sentiment

in coming weeks, blew past analyst estimates, easing fears that slowing economic growth could weigh on its results. Its stock rose 4.7 percent and led a broad rally in bank stocks.

“JPMorgan earnings are important because their operation touches on a wide portion of the economy,” said David Carter, chief investment officer at Lenox Wealth Advisors in New York. “It’s a bellwether for other corporate earnings.” Analyst now expect S&P 500 companies to show a 2.3 percent year-on-year decline in earnings, slightly improved from their last reading, per Refinitiv data. But first-quarter profit is still seen logging its first annual contraction since 2016.

However, of the 29 companies in the S&P 500 that have reported thus far, 79.3 percent have come in above analyst expectations. Walt Disney Co jumped 11.5 percent to an all-time high, providing the biggest boost to the Dow and the S&P 500 after pricing its upcoming streaming service.

Streaming rival Netflix Inc slid 4.5 percent. The Nasdaq and the Dow are both about 1.5 percent below their previous record highs. For the week, both the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq showed their third straight gains, while the Dow posted a nominal weekly loss.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 269.25 points, or 1.03 percent, to 26,412.3, the S&P 500 gained 19.09 points, or 0.66 percent, to 2,907.41 and the Nasdaq Composite added 36.81 points, or 0.46 percent, to 7,984.16. — Reuters



KUWAIT: Amirah Ahmad Awadh Al-Ali with Gulf Bank team members

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	305.200
Euro	344.110
Sterling Pound	402.710
Canadian dollar	229.730
Turkish lira	54.990
Swiss Franc	307.200
US Dollar Buying	297.800

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.740
Indian Rupees	4.400
Pakistani Rupees	2.199
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.742
Nepali Rupees	2.742
Singapore Dollar	225.990
Hongkong Dollar	38.881
Bangladesh Taka	3.606
Philippine Peso	5.862
Thai Baht	9.592
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	0.204
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.434

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.840
Canadian Dollar	228.350
Sterling Pound	95.450
Euro	344.725
Swiss Frank	307.490
Bahrain Dinar	810.685
UAE Dirhams	83.400
Qatari Riyals	84.640
Saudi Riyals	82.185
Jordanian Dinar	431.245
Egyptian Pound	17.628
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.744
Indian Rupees	4.412
Pakistani Rupees	2.160
Bangladesh Taka	3.618
Philippines Peso	5.851
Cyprus pound	18.135
Japanese Yen	3.725
Syrian Pound	1.595
Nepalese Rupees	2.758
Malaysian Ringgit	75.435
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.805

Thai Bhat	10.550
Turkish Lira	54.575
Singapore dollars	225.511

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY Europe	SELL
British Pound	0.392262	0.406162
Czech Korune	0.005374	0.014674
Danish Krone	0.041866	0.046866
Euro	0.337641	0.351341
Georgian Lari	0.132196	0.132196
Hungarian	0.001149	0.001339
Norwegian Krone	0.031660	0.036860
Romanian Leu	0.065326	0.082176
Russian ruble	0.004758	0.004758
Slovakia	0.009116	0.019116
Swedish Krona	0.028761	0.033761
Swiss Franc	0.298050	0.309050
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.210764	0.222764
New Zealand Dollar	0.200298	0.209798
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.223695	0.232695
US Dollars	0.300650	0.305950
US Dollars Mint	0.301150	0.305950
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003057	0.003858

Chinese Yuan	0.043881	0.047381
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037081	0.039831
Indian Rupee	0.003786	0.004558
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002644	0.002824
Korean Won	0.000259	0.000274
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070522	0.076522
Nepalese Rupee	0.002681	0.003021
Pakistan Rupee	0.001510	0.002280
Philippine Peso	0.005820	0.006120
Singapore Dollar	0.219972	0.229972
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001400	0.001980
Taiwan	0.010172	0.010352
Thai Baht	0.009254	0.009804
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.793785	0.810285
Egyptian Pound	0.017747	0.020347
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.424927	0.433927
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021412	0.045412
Omani Riyal	0.785240	0.790920
Qatar Riyal	0.079417	0.084357
Saudi Riyal	0.080180	0.081480
Syrian Pound	0.001292	0.001512
Tunisian Dinar	0.097030	0.105030
Turkish Lira	0.046910	0.058410
UAE Dirhams	0.081547	0.083247
Yemeni Riyal	0.000991	0.001071

Business

US oil giant Chevron says will acquire Anadarko for \$33bn

Deal strengthens oil giant's production holdings in home market

NEW YORK: Chevron announced Friday it will acquire smaller US rival Anadarko for \$33 billion in a deal that strengthens the oil giant's exploration and production holdings in its home market.

The cash-and-stock transaction is centered on Anadarko's properties in the Permian Basin in Texas and the Gulf of Mexico, two areas where Chevron is already a big player and where economies of scale can help drive value with suppliers and in key drilling and production operations. The Permian is among the leading shale regions that have vaulted the United States back into the big leagues of global energy. Anadarko also has a handful of overseas ventures, including a major liquefied natural gas project in Mozambique that Chevron said would help bolster one of its major global businesses.

Chevron's purchase of Anadarko at \$65 a share had competition from Occidental Petroleum, which bid \$70 a share but whose offer was hindered by "structural issues," CNBC reported, adding that Occidental was considering its options.

Occidental did not respond to queries from AFP. Chevron Chief Executive Mike Wirth said the deal "builds strength on strength for Chevron." With the addition of the Anadarko acreage, Chevron will have a "75-mile (121 kilometer) wide highly contiguous corridor, where we can drill, develop, operate and build infrastructure, all with great efficiency," Wirth said on a conference call with analysts.

The company plans to add rigs for the Anadarko acreage, but still estimated a \$1 billion reduction of the combined capital spending of the two companies because of economies of scale, he added.

The oil giant will also "high grade" its portfolio and sell off some \$15 billion to \$20 billion of assets.

Tiramisu of oil

The advantages of scale in the Permian include hav-

ing greater clout with drilling companies and other suppliers, not only in terms of setting pricing but in establishing a long-term development plan, said Kris Nicol, director of corporate research at Wood Mackenzie, a consultancy. With control of so much territory, Chevron will be able to set up multiple production hubs, another efficiency advantage.

"You can be more forward-looking, which ultimately should be more cost-effective," Nicol said.

Nicol said these attributes are particularly useful in the Permian, which requires more drilling than other leading shale basins because it is larger and also because it is imbued with layers of hydrocarbon, piled one on top of each other. More wells are needed to tap these resources. Other leading shale regions in North Dakota and other parts of Texas lack this feature, which Nicol likened to the Italian dessert tiramisu.

Getting bigger

For Chevron, the takeover of Anadarko marks its biggest deal since its purchase of Texaco, which closed in 2001 and vaults the company into the realm of "UltraMajors" as Wood Mackenzie put it, second only to Exxon Mobil in production. In another big transaction, Chevron in 2005 bought Unocal for \$18.3 billion after raising the price during a high-profile bidding war with China's CNOOC that drew interest from lawmakers in Washington.

The acquisition is composed of 75 percent stock and 25 percent cash, with Anadarko shareholders receiving 0.39 shares of Chevron and \$16.25 in cash for each Anadarko share held.

The deal is expected to close in the second half of 2019. In 2018, Chevron had \$42.4 billion in revenues and pumped 3.1 million barrels of oil equivalent per day, above the level of most members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.



MILL VALLEY: In this file photo, a sign is posted in front of a Chevron gas station in Mill Valley, California. Chevron announced on Friday it will acquire smaller US rival Anadarko for \$33 billion in a deal that strengthens the oil giant's exploration and production holdings in its home market. — AFP

Anadarko had \$13.4 billion in revenues last year and pumped 666,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day.

Anadarko is perhaps best known for being a minority partner on BP's ill-fated Macondo project in the Gulf of Mexico, the site of the worst offshore oil spill in US history in 2010 following a well explosion that killed 11 people. Anadarko in October 2011 transferred its inter-

est in Macondo to BP as part of a settlement that resolved claims between the two companies.

Anadarko shares surged 32.0 percent to \$61.78, while Chevron fell 4.9 percent to \$119.76. Also notable were gains by other midsized oil companies such as Devon Energy, EOG Resources and Marathon Oil amid speculation the takeover could spur other deals. — AFP

Cuban austerity bites as retail sales plummet

HAVANA: Cuban retail sales fell sharply through March, state media said on Friday, reflecting shortages of basic goods and threatening the overall growth of the economy.

Internal Trade Minister Betsy Diaz Velazquez told a closed-door session of the National Assembly on Thursday that sales in the first quarter totaled 92.5 percent of the government's target, short around 500 million pesos, which are officially equal to the dollar. The government's goal was only a few points above that of 2018. Diaz explained that food shortages this year, ranging from cooking oil and eggs to bread and chicken and which have sent residents scampering in search of basics, were largely due to fewer imports of spare parts, feed and food, the report said.

"These numbers reflect the reduction in the availability of several products, many of them in high demand, and this includes imported goods and others of domestic production that use imported raw materials," said a local economist, who asked not to be identified due to restrictions on talking with foreign journalists.

Communist-run Cuba relies on imports directly or indirectly for much of what it consumes, and the Caribbean island purchases those supplies with foreign currency it earns from exports, as the peso has no value outside its borders. Foreign trade fell 25 percent



HAVANA: Communist-run Cuba relies on imports directly or indirectly for much of what it consumes, and the Caribbean island purchases those supplies with foreign currency it earns from exports, as the peso has no value outside its borders.

from 2013 through 2017, with imports dropping to \$11.3 billion from \$15.6 billion, largely due to the crisis in Venezuela, from which Cuba receives oil and cash in exchange for health and other technical assistance.

Trade declined again last year, according to the government.

More recently, the advent of a far-right government in Brazil led to the scrapping of a doctors-for-cash deal. The tightening of US sanctions also has hurt tourism and other foreign exchange earnings.

The fall in revenue has led to cuts in fuel and energy consumption by state companies and service providers. Communist Party

leader Raul Castro on Wednesday warned that the economic situation could worsen in coming months.

Cuba forecast growth this year at 1.5 percent, slightly above its 2018 performance of 1.2 percent, but local economists said that was now in doubt, in part because retail sales account for 20 percent of gross domestic product.

"Trade is a key component of GDP. Unfortunately, the only way to change the landscape is an increase in imports, given the restrictions on domestic supply, and that seems unlikely this year," the Cuban economist said. — Reuters

Tesla to stop selling \$35,000 Model 3 online

NEW YORK: Tesla has pulled the plug on Internet sales of its cheapest Model 3 sedan in the latest shift to the company's retail strategy. The electric car maker plans to keep taking online orders for the Standard Plus Model 3, which starts at \$39,500 and is now the lowest-price option available to digital consumers, along with higher-end models. But online customers will no longer be able to order the Model 3 Standard for \$35,000, a long-promised price for a vehicle that has

been seen as essential to Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk's ambition to disrupt the auto industry. "Model 3 Standard will now be a software-limited version of the Standard Plus, and we are taking it off the online ordering menu, which just means that to get it, customers will need to call us or visit any one of the several hundred Tesla stores," Tesla said in a blog post on Thursday night.

The shift was needed to "simplify our production operations to better optimize cost, minimize complexity and streamline operations," the company added. The announcement reverses Tesla's announcement on February 28 that the \$35,000 model could only be purchased online. At the time, Tesla also announced plans to close many of its retail stores, but later retreated on that plan. — AFP



A sign shows a Tesla Model 3 sedan at a Tesla showroom in Washington, DC. Tesla has pulled the plug on Internet sales of its cheapest Model 3 sedan, Tesla said in a blog post on Friday. — AFP

General Electric in \$1.5bn US settlement on mortgages

NEW YORK: The Justice Department announced Friday that General Electric has agreed to pay \$1.5 billion over subprime mortgages, finalizing a settlement on conduct prior to the 2008 financial crisis.

GE had announced a preliminary agreement on the subprime case in January, but the Department of Justice (DOJ) said the matter was now resolved. The alleged violation came from subprime residential mortgage originator WMC, which GE acquired in 2004 and which went on to originate more than \$65 billion in mortgages between 2005 and 2007, the DOJ said.

These mortgages, later bought by investment banks and repackaged, in many cases were approved despite not meeting criteria as WMC sought to boost loan volume, said the DOJ.

WMC's statements were reviewed or made with knowledge of people from GE, the DOJ said. US officials have cracked down on numerous banks and other financial players over similar allegations tied to subprime mortgages since 2008. "The financial system counts on originators, which are in the best position to know the true condition of their mortgage loans, to make accurate and complete representations about their products," said Assistant Attorney General Jody Hunt. — AFP

US sanctions firms sending Venezuelan oil to Cuba

WASHINGTON: The US Treasury on Friday unveiled financial sanctions on four maritime shipping companies and nine of their oil tankers over crude deliveries to Cuba, to pressure Havana to end support for Venezuela. The sanctions raise US pressure on the "the illegitimate regime of former President Nicolas Maduro," the Treasury said in a statement.

"We continue to target companies that transport Venezuelan oil to Cuba, as

they are profiting while the Maduro regime pillages natural resources," US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in the statement.

"Venezuela's oil belongs to the Venezuelan people and should not be used as a bargaining tool to prop up dictators and prolong oppression."

Mnuchin said that since losing popular support, Maduro has been relying on the support of Cuba's military and intelligence services to remain in power.

Venezuela is suffering an economic collapse and humanitarian crisis including shortages of basic food and medicine and the exodus of millions of people. The US sanctions targeted three Liberian shipping corporations and one based in Italy. Of the nine tankers penalized, four had delivered Venezuelan crude to Cuba. The sanctions freeze US-based assets of the company and also block them from much of the global financial system. — AFP

Shunned by investors, poorer nations seek to climate-proof growth

BARCELONA: As droughts and floods cut crop harvests and storms tear up buildings and power lines, countries vulnerable to climate change - from Bangladesh to Kenya and Guatemala - have proposed new ways to access cheaper financing to tackle the risks.

A group of 48 developing economies, known as the V20, together with development banks this week announced plans for new financial instruments aimed at lowering the cost of capital and unlocking large capital flows for green development.

The effort could help safeguard the prosperity gains of at least 1 billion people as the planet warms, V20 finance ministers said in a statement.

"The moment calls for a robust response to protect economic growth from the risks of climate change and secure continued progress," said V20 chair Benson Wase, finance minister of the Marshall Islands, in a statement issued during the spring meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

The V20 economies include Barbados, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Honduras, Lebanon, Morocco, Nepal, the Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Tuvalu and Vietnam.

A 2018 report commissioned by UN Environment calculated that the V20 countries had coughed up an additional \$62 billion in interest payments alone over the past 10 years because of their climate vulnerability.

The V20's planned new instruments, aimed at fostering climate resilience and helping countries transition to 100 percent renewable energy, include, among other things, investment guarantees and efforts to better combine public and private money.

The countries also proposed a "Sustainable Insurance Facility" to pro-

mote insurance among smaller business as a way to help them address climate risks. The new instruments would tap funds from a range of investors, including development banks and the private sector.

In a statement, the V20 said they faced barriers such as higher costs of capital, which limit the scope of projects, as well as "huge inefficiencies" in accessing international climate finance.

The financing difficulties listed by the V20 chimed with the conclusions of a separate report issued this week by the London-based Overseas Development Institute (ODI) on blended finance, which involves using funds provided by governments and development banks to encourage private investment in poorer nations.

The report found policy makers have overblown expectations about how much private money can be mobilised, especially for low-income countries which are receiving very little.

The ODI researchers calculated that every \$1 of public money invested mobilised just \$0.37 of private cash in low-income countries, and only \$0.75 in all developing states - ratios much lower than those often cited by development banks.

Reality check

Lead author Samantha Attridge, a senior research fellow at ODI, said the figures showed "an urgent reality check on blended finance is needed".

The report said international expectations that blended finance could bridge the financing gap for reaching 17 global goals - which include ending poverty and hunger by 2030, and adapting to climate change - were unrealistic.

For example, only 1 percent of all private finance mobilized by the British government from 2012 to 2015 was in the poorest countries. — Reuters

Business

EU ‘ready to respond’ to US in Airbus/Boeing row

Europe could hit back at any US tariffs: Le Marie

WASHINGTON: French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire warned on Friday that Europe was ready to hit back at any US tariffs over Airbus subsidies as he pleaded for an “amicable solution” to the long-running dispute. “If we were to be hit again by unjustified and unjustifiable US sanctions, Europe would be ready to respond in a united and strong way,” the minister said after his meeting with his US counterpart Steven Mnuchin.

“All this would be bad for growth and bad for American and European prosperity,” he said at a news conference on the sidelines of the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

“We must avoid this... On the basis of the WTO’s conclusions, it seems to me that the voice of wisdom is to reach an amicable agreement between the United States and Europe on a final settlement of the Airbus-Boeing case,” he said, adding that the case has been going on for far too long.

Le Maire had already pleaded on Tuesday for an amicable solution. And on Friday, he met US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and top White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow.

“It was constructive and frank but also difficult and tense,” said a French official who spoke on condition of anonymity. “Still, the talks were useful to clear up misun-

derstandings,” the person said, adding that participants had raised the subject of impeding new French taxes on tech companies, including US giants.

USTR did not immediately respond to a request for comment. US President Donald Trump on Monday threatened the European Union with new tariffs if it did not end subsidies to Airbus, at the risk of reviving a fragile trade truce. This was another step in a 14-year conflict between Boeing and Airbus where the US and EU accuse each other at the World Trade Organization (WTO) of providing illegal state aid to their respective aeronautical champions. The EU had immediately warned that “in the parallel dispute over Boeing”, it also intended to “take prompt action” in retaliation.

According to several European sources on Friday, it will make public on Wednesday a list of American products likely to be taxed up to 20 billion euros.

But it will be left to a WTO-appointed arbitrator to determine the amount of retaliation duties, which will be less than the 20 billion.

In 2012, “the EU had requested the WTO to authorize \$12 billion in countermeasures,” a commission source told AFP. “The EU will now await the decision of the WTO appointed arbitrator regarding the final amount,” the source added. — AFP



BLAGNAC: In this file photo, a logo at the Airbus A380 is seen at the assembly site in Blagnac, southern France. A simmering transatlantic trade row risked escalating after the US threatened to impose tariff counter-measures of up to \$11.2 billion on a host of European products. — AFP

Mimecast named as a leader in information archiving

DUBAI: Mimecast, a leading email and data security company, yesterday announced it has been named a Leader in The Forrester Wave(tm): Information Archiving Cloud Providers, Q1 2019 and a Top Player in the Radicati Information Archiving - Market Quadrant, 2019.



Shane Harris

According to the Forrester Wave, “Mimecast excels in customer support, user experience, and email protection”, while the Radicati Group highlighted how Mimecast’s integration of Security, Archiving, Protection and Continuity means archives are fully accessible even during email outages and archived data remains fully protected against email-borne threats.

Organizations trust the guidance of industry analysts to make informed decisions. The reports provide a detailed evaluation of information archiving cloud providers and show how each one measures up, helping enterprise architecture professionals select the best solution for their needs.

“IT and governance teams around the world are facing ever-growing demands to gain more insights from their data while maintaining compliance and looking for help to tackle this challenge,” said Shane Harris, senior director of product management at Mimecast. “Thousands of our customers have transformed their approach to Archiving from legacy systems saving them time, money and maximize their IT resources. We have our customers to thank for all their great feedback on our next-generation product innovation, exemplary customer support, and advanced expertise across archiving, security and business continuity.”

In order to build the most efficient, cost-optimized and risk-adverse solutions for our customers, feedback is essential. Mimecast recently surveyed customers asking them to share their experiences with Mimecast Cloud Archive and services in their own words. When asked how likely Ken Gowing, an IT professional at Datacom Systems (NSW) Pty Ltd, would be to recommend Mimecast Cloud Archive he said “I’ve not seen any other product that is as good as Mimecast for any environment.” While, Deepak Vyas, an IT Specialist at City and Guilds of London Institute, noted that Mimecast Cloud Archive is “Much more efficient than [its competitors] at e-discovery and simplified tools with granular modification.”

On the heels of these new reports from Forrester and Radicati, Mimecast was also recently named a Leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Information Archiving for the fourth year in a row.

This industry recognition follows Mimecast’s recent acquisition of Simply Migrate, an innovative provider of archive data migration technology. This technology is engineered to further expand migration services for customers by helping to more effectively migrate data to the cloud - helping to reduce costs, safeguarding intellectual property, preserving institutional memory and accelerating E-discovery and archive compliance.



Amazon tribe protests Ecuador’s oil exploration plans

PUYO, Ecuador: In dugout canoes and on foot, dozens of people from an indigenous tribe have emerged from the Amazon rainforest in eastern Ecuador to protest against government plans to open up their lands to oil exploration. With painted faces and wearing tufts of multicolored feathers, traditionally dressed Waorani people marched through the streets of the town of Puyo to the provincial courthouse, where a legal bid to halt the process began Thursday.

“They have come from far away to make their claim,” said Nemonte Nenquimo, head of the Coordinating Council of the Waorani Nationality. Some, she said, had been “walking for eight hours. Some came in canoes for about three days.” The marchers represented 16 Waorani communities scattered across the dense Amazonian jungle in the north of Ecuador’s vast Pastaza province. At stake is some 180,000 hectares of ancestral lands. Puyo, the provincial capital, is located on the eastern edge of Ecuador’s Amazon basin.

‘The jungle is our life’

Under a large banner that read “The jungle is our life. No more oil,” the procession marched to the courthouse for the start of a hearing in their suit taken to protect their



PUYO: Waorani people from Ecuador’s Amazon rainforest gathered in the town of Puyo to protest plans to open up their lands to oil exploration. — AFP

Malabar Group Headquarters wins Forbes India Design Awards 2019

KUWAIT: Malabar Group, a leading business conglomerate from India with presence in 10 countries and the parent company of Malabar Gold & Diamonds has bagged the recognition of having the ‘Best Commercial Architecture’ for its Headquarters (M HQ) situated in Kerala, India.

The Special Recommendation award was won at the Forbes India Design Award 2019 in the event held at Mumbai, India. Tony Joseph, Principal Architect, Stapati who designed the Malabar Group Headquarters (M HQ) received the award from Ar. Sanjay Puri, Principal Architect, Sanjay Puri Architects and Sonal Sancheti, Principal Designer, Opolis, in the presence of Subair MP, Deputy Regional Head, West Region, Malabar Gold & Diamonds. The picturesque global headquarters of the diversified Malabar Group, at Kuttikattoor, Calicut, Kerala, India houses all its subsidiaries including its flagship brands like Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Malabar Developers, Malabar Watches, Eham Digital, etc.

The Forbes India Design Awards is a national award which honors the

people who shape India’s vibrant architectural and design landscape. It celebrates the best talent in the Indian design industry. Drawn from the worlds of architecture and interiors, they recognize a spectrum of architectural and interior practices in India that have evolved to match the best in the world.

Covering a range of categories, the awards offer architects and designers a prestigious platform to communicate a shared vision for the future, from culturally integrated city skylines to sustainable urban communities. The Forbes India team has put together a judging panel comprising of the most extraordinary individuals that have shaped Indian architecture and design milieu.

The Malabar Group Headquarters (M HQ) situated in the tropical context of Kerala is built on a unique style steep sloping site, facing the west pre-

senting a picturesque landscape view from the building. It has been built at Montana Estates, the 150-acre serene township, situated at 800 feet above the sea-level, away from the bustle of the City. The roof is designed as a landscaped gathering space which slopes all the way down to the ground and has amphitheaters, lounges, pavilions and plenty of vegetation, serving as a space to get together and unwind. Natural vegetation comes into the interiors through spill out balconies and the central landscaped spine with dense greenery, providing opportunities for social interactions and enhances the psychological well-being of the employees.

The inherent honesty in usage of materials along with the contextually relevant design helps in creating a highly sustainable building, one which is integrally connected to nature.



The critical need for threat intelligence in Middle East

By Jeff Ogden

In the Middle East we’re seeing the same attacks that are making waves globally. Interestingly we’re not seeing too many new attack types, but better execution of existing ones through better social engineering and data correlation. Phishing has become almost flawless with criminals preying on the gaps in human firewalls because phishing emails are becoming harder to identify.



Cybercriminals use homographs and homographs - subtly changing characters and words in URLs and email addresses. These types of attacks often bypass certain email security systems because the URLs seem legitimate. To create lookalike domains, attackers use non-Western character sets to display letters that look identical to the naked eye. Combined with a fake SSL certificate, it becomes much harder to spot a fake website. This creates prime conditions for phishing attacks: 36 percent of UAE organizations in a 2019 Mimecast and Vanson Bourne research report saw an increase in targeted spear phishing attacks using malicious links over the past year.

Ransomware also remains a challenge, with organizations having to ask themselves how prepared they are for such an attack. The fact is that without the right security measures in place, there’s a chance that your business could become a victim, which would lead to downtime and loss of data. This highlights the importance of having a cyber-resilience strategy, which includes layered security protection, independent data storage and alternative access routes to key systems like email, for when the worst does occur. A successful ransomware attack could wipe out your entire corporate memory which would have devastating consequences for your business. At the very least, it could lead to significant downtime which would bring the productivity of your organization to a halt. According to Mimecast and Vanson Bourne’s study, 87 percent of organizations experienced downtime of two to five days following a successful ransomware attack.

In terms of industries most affected, healthcare remains a top target. This sector is growing at a rapid pace, with the region becoming a healthcare hub. But unfortunately, as per global trends, this is one of the hardest hit sectors. There are several reasons for this. To perform the highest level of medical care, organizations must process and become custodians of highly sensitive patient data. The value of medical records on the black market is at least 10 times higher than credit card data. That’s because Protected Health Information (PHI) contains more personal data points and cannot just be reissued in the event of a problem. Bank account details and passwords can be changed following a breach; but information about allergies, disabilities, mental health or hereditary conditions, can’t. When PHI is stolen, attackers steal identities and know the patients’ ailments, which they either use or sell to then obtain prescriptions. These are then traded or sold illegally, which means it’s become a trickle-down economic system.

So, what can organizations do to manage the threat landscape? As mentioned, they need to ensure they have the right preventative measures to protect themselves, before, during and after an attack. A critical part of any cyber resilience strategy is making use of actionable threat intelligence. It’s important to take available threat information and convert it into value for business. Actionable threat intelligence helps security professionals manage and prioritize today’s evolving advanced threats. There is a lot of data out there but focusing on the information that matters to your organization will help you mitigate future risks. No organization, no matter the size, should be ignoring the value of intelligence and the role it plays in preventing cyberattacks. — Jeff Ogden is General Manager - Middle East, Mimecast

What's On



Al Jeri Holding Group and UNHCR ends refugee children campaign

In a new cooperation between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuwait and Kuwait's private sector pioneers, the awareness campaign "Together We Bring Back Hope to Refugee Children" with Al Jeri Holding Group, was concluded on Sunday 31 March 2019. This awareness campaign encompassed an art contest led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kuwait in collaboration with Al Jeri Holding Group along with the participation of the group's students'.

The campaign was launched on November 1st 2019 for students aged from 12 to 18 years old among the schools and educational centers of Al Jeri Holding Group, to encourage students on expressing their artistic talents and demonstrate their participation for refugee children with hope and support whilst highlighting the commonalities between refugee and non-refugee children and the means to help them feel safe and welcome by drawing using oil and painting of recyclable materials.

Concluded in March 2019, this campaign sought of investing culture and arts to raise students' awareness through drawing, aiming simultaneously at enhancing the notion of solidarity among students and encourage them to support refugees in all intellectual and cultural fields, even building up the realization that a refugee is a capacity that can be positively invested. Al Jeri Holding Group, through its cooperation with UNHCR, has also contributed in guiding and expanding the prospects of its students on the refugee cause and shedding light on refugees' crises, where the numbers of refugees and displaced persons reached 68.5 million person around the world as of the beginning of 2019.

More than 10,000 students from various age groups participated in the competition and presented outstanding artworks were the top 10 drawings were honored in a grand ceremony in the auditorium at Cambridge English School - Mangaf. The group's students also presented an



Dr. Samer Haddadin UNHCR Kuwait Head of Office honoring Talal Al Jeri



Honoring Walid Abo Jaoude

array of various artistic demonstrations, as well as a musical opetta representing the refugees' journey and the hardships they face till they reach safety, in the presence of Al Jeri Holding Group Management represented by the Chairman and Managing Director Talal Khalifa Al Jeri, the Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait Dr Samer Haddadin and Dr Faleh Al Azab Former Minister of Justice and Minister of State for the Affairs of the National Assembly.

Talal Khalifa Al Jeri, Chairman of Al Jeri Holding Group, stated: "In conclusion of this awareness campaign, I am glad that this final ceremony offered us the chance to reaffirm the keenness of the Kuwaiti private sector in raising awareness on the refugee crisis in general and refugee children in particular being in alignment with the State of Kuwait directives', on the importance of humanitarian action, not only at the regional level but also on a global level. Additionally, Al Jeri also emphasized on the group's commitment in supporting this noble cause in addition to other humanitarian issues through various existing means.

The Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait, Dr Samer Haddadin, mentioned: "We conclude today with the Al Jeri Holding Group, the awareness campaign "Together We Bring Back Hope to Refugee Children" with our belief in the role of education, in highlighting refugee issues and instilling the spirit of participation in the students. Hence, it's worth acknowledging the importance of education in protecting refugees, fortifying them from various kinds of dangers and helping them to build a better future for themselves.

Moreover, education is needed as a means to raise awareness in the new generation about the humanitarian

Humanitarian Work. UNHCR hopes to forge partnerships with private sector pioneers to serve refugee issues and work with this sector on highlighting Kuwait's role as a global humanitarian center through initiatives that raise awareness and provide durable solutions."

Noting on the role of Al Jeri Holding Group, Dr Haddadin concluded: "We are pleased to cooperate with Al Jeri Holding Group, one of the most important educational groups in the State of Kuwait in educating the young generations and encouraging them by instilling the values of cooperation and humanity along with raising awareness of the challenges facing refugees worldwide."

Over half of the world's refugees are children. Many will spend their entire childhoods away from their homes and villages, sometimes separated from their families. They may have witnessed or experienced violent acts and, in exile, are at risk of abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, trafficking or military recruitment. However, UNHCR seeks to focus on the refugee children' resilience which through learning, playing and exploring skills, enables them in finding better ways to deal and cope with various situations allowing them to draw strength from their families and communities by working with national authorities, other international and local organizations.

Since 1950, UNHCR has consistently sought to protect the rights and lives of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide, where the numbers reached more than 68.5 million people to this day. Further, UNHCR has made significant efforts through 11,517 staff, 87% of whom are in the field and distributed in 128 countries around the world, by offering basic assistance that has helped in saving lives and in building a better future for the millions of people who have been forced to leave their homes, in addition to providing protection, shelter and access to health care for refugees, as well as to protect people and spare them the plights of war.



AOU concludes visits to Indian, Pakistani, and Filipino schools

The Arab Open University (AOU) visited many bilingual, Indian, Pakistani and Filipino schools in Kuwait in order to interact and communicate with high school students and prospective students in parallel with the opening of admission for the summer semester of the academic year 2018/2019 via its website: www.aou.edu.kw

Ghazi Sayer Al-Enezi, Head of Public Relations and Media at the AOU, said that the University offers three Bachelor majors: the English Language and Literature, Business Administration, and Information Technology and Computing. Al-Enezi added that graduates from the AOU would obtain two bachelor degrees: one locally accredited from Ministry of Higher Education in Kuwait and the other one accredited from the UK under the partnership between the AOU and the Open University in the UK; thereby allowing the AOU to teach the OU curricula delivered in English to its students.



He pointed out that the AOU adopts the blending learning system, which is suitable for all society segments, such as newly graduated students, employees, and married individuals, and in order to avoid the conflict between the work and the study time, the AOU's flexible system allows its students to choose their lecture schedule according to their circumstances. Al-Enezi said that the AOU seeks to develop and disseminate knowledge, and build expertise according to international quality standards for the sake of contributing and preparing manpower for development needs, and labor markets.



Health & Science

To get to the Moon in 2024, the rocket is NASA's first headache

COLORADO SPRINGS: In the shadow of the Rocky Mountains, Alan Campbell, a project manager for space systems at the famed Draper Laboratory that built the computer which took astronauts to the Moon 50 years ago, is waiting for news from NASA. His firm has continued to specialize in the advanced technology required for space travel and is a natural candidate to help the US space agency in its quest to return to the Moon by 2024 — once final requests for proposals go out.

"We don't know when those are going to be because NASA is all thrown into a loop right now," Campbell told AFP from Draper's booth at the 35th Space Symposium, which is being held in Colorado Springs. "They're still trying to figure it out," he said. "We can't really work on their problems until they tell us, 'These are the problems we want people to work on.'" It's a similar wait for hundreds of other companies, ranging from aerospace giants to the most specialized of sub-contractors, many of whom are at the annual space industry event.

Until March 26 of last year, American boots were set to return to the Moon in 2028 following the last such mission by Apollo 17 in 1972. Last month though, the administration of President Donald Trump said it was speeding up that timetable by a full four years, throwing NASA into overdrive. The first problem is linked to the super heavy rocket required for the lunar mission, the skyscraper-sized Space Launch System (SLS). Boeing, the prime contractor, is years behind and isn't certain it will be ready for its first test flight, without humans, in 2020. At its booth, the US aerospace giant had relegated a model of the SLS to a corner.

Europeans await anxiously

The Orion capsule that will transport the astronauts, built by competitor Lockheed Martin, should be ready, program manager Michael Hawes assures AFP, and it will be delivered in January to the Kennedy Space Center. Lockheed Martin has proudly displayed a life-size model of the Orion outside the conference hall.

But walking on the Moon will require more than a

rocket and a capsule: NASA wants to assemble a mini-station in lunar orbit, called the Gateway, where the astronauts will make a stop-over before their descent to the lunar surface. Sierra Nevada Corporation envisions an inflatable space habitat to house the astronauts while in moon-orbit. At this stage, the company does not know when NASA wants it delivered.

Kimberly Schwandt, a spokeswoman for the company, is unperturbed. "Whatever NASA decides for the timetable, we are ready and willing," she said at the company's booth. Europeans are also here in large numbers and ready to pitch in with a communications module. "Technically, we know that we can do it," said Johann-Dietrich Worner, director general of the European Space Agency (ESA). "And we hope that we can do it in time." It depends a little bit also on the calendar of the Americans," Worner said.

The heads of European space agencies attending the symposium told NASA chief Jim Bridenstine they need a plan to be finalized before the fall because the ESA budget will be approved in November. "I'd be happy to make a trip out to Europe in order to give their political leadership the assurances necessary," said Bridenstine, aware that Trump's abrupt shift in the Moon timetable was done without consultation with international partners.

Loosen NASA bureaucracy

The most urgent priority, according to industry executives, is for NASA to come up with the full requirements for the lander that would take the astronauts from the Gateway to the Moon. Some of the more experienced firms caution that it may already be too late to build one in keeping with the accelerated timetable.

"We need to be bending metal next year, which means tooling already has to be in house," said Rob Chambers, director of Human Space Exploration Strategy at Lockheed Martin Space. "And I hope somebody ordered a bunch of aluminum." Others warned that NASA will need to loosen its legendary bureaucracy to move things ahead.



Visitors at Playalinda Beach look on as a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket launches from Pad 39B at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, on April 11, 2019. — AFP

Lockheed Martin's Hawes, the Orion program manager, pointed to development of the capsule to illustrate the point. "Just to give you an example, on the Orion program we have 400 regularly scheduled meetings a week between the NASA team and the Lockheed Martin team," Hawes said. "Does that speak

urgency to you?" Another issue is spacesuits. "If you're going to do something on the Moon, you need spacesuits," said The Aerospace Corporation's Dean Eppler, who has spent 20 years testing prototypes. The current calendar calls for delivery of a new spacesuit prototype to NASA in 2023 — for testing. — AFP

Scientists create monkeys with human brain genes

HONG KONG: Chinese scientists have implanted human brain genes into monkeys, in a study intended to provide insights into the unique evolution of human intelligence. Researchers inserted human versions of MCPHI, a gene that scientists believe plays a role in the development of the human brain, into 11 rhesus monkeys.

They found the monkeys' brains — like

those of humans — took longer to develop, and the animals performed better in tests of short-term memory as well as reaction time compared to wild monkeys. However, the monkeys did not grow bigger brains than the control group. The test, the latest in a series of biomedical experiments in China to have fuelled medical ethics debates, has already drawn ethical concerns, and comparisons with dystopian sci-fi "Planet of the Apes".

It was conducted by researchers at the Kunming Institute of Zoology and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, working with US researchers at the University of North Carolina. The study was published last month in Beijing-based journal National Science Review. "Our findings demonstrat-

ed that transgenic nonhuman primates (excluding ape species) have the potential to provide important — and potentially unique — insights into basic questions of what actually makes human unique," the authors wrote.

Questionable ethics

The monkeys underwent memory tests requiring them to remember colors and shapes on a screen, and were subjected to MRI scans. Only five of the monkeys survived into the testing stage. The authors said the rhesus monkey, though genetically closer to humans than rodents, is still distant enough to alleviate ethical concerns. However, some questioned the ethics of the experiment. "You just go to the 'Planet of

the Apes" immediately in the popular imagination," said Jacqueline Glover, a University of Colorado bioethicist.

"To humanize them is to cause harm. Where would they live and what would they do? Do not create a being that can't have a meaningful life in any context," she told MIT Technology Review. Larry Baum, a researcher at Hong Kong University's Centre for Genomic Sciences, downplayed sci-fi comparisons. "The genome of rhesus monkeys differs from ours by a few percent. That's millions of individual DNA bases differing between humans and monkeys," he said. "This study changed a few of those in just one of about 20,000 genes. You can decide for yourself whether there is anything to worry about."

Baum added that the study supported the theory that "slower maturity of brain cells might be a factor in improving intelligence during human evolution."

In January, Chinese scientists unveiled five macaques cloned from a single animal that was genetically engineered to have a sleep disorder, which all developed signs of mental problems including depression, anxiety and behaviours linked to schizophrenia. They said the study was intended to aid research into human psychological problems. And last year, Chinese researcher He Jiankui shocked the scientific community after revealing that he had successfully gene-edited twin girls born in November to prevent them from contracting HIV. — AFP

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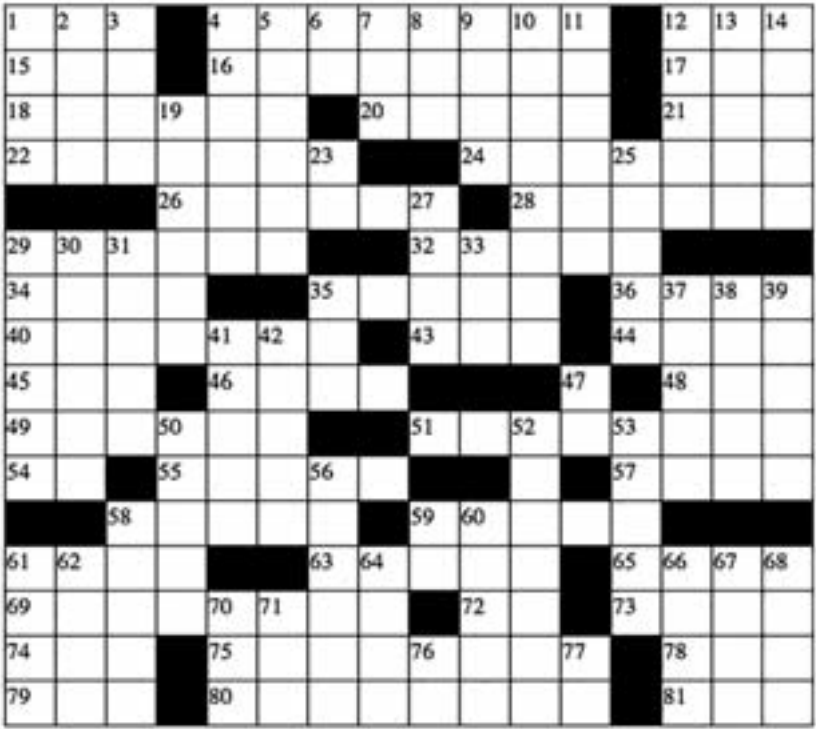
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CROSSWORD 2182



ACROSS

1. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
4. Marrow squash plant whose fruit are eaten when small.
12. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
15. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
16. Formally supported especially by public statement.
17. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
18. Axis of a compound leaf or compound inflorescence.
20. Supporting stalk or stemlike structure especially of a pistil or fern frond or supporting a mushroom cap.
21. Seed vessel having hooks or prickles.
22. Causing fear or dread or terror.
24. Large South African antelope.
26. One of the evil spirits of traditional Jewish and Christian belief.
28. Of or relating to the spleen.
29. A clay pipe with a short stem.
32. Conforming to an ultimate standard of perfection or excellence.
34. An elaborate song for solo voice.
36. A mixture of mashed malt grains and hot water.
40. A Dravidian language spoken in southern India.
43. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
44. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
45. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
46. A steep rugged rock or cliff.
48. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
49. The capital and largest city of Albania in the center of the country.
51. A sheath for a sword or dagger or bayonet.
54. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
55. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
57. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
61. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
63. The vertical triangular wall between the sloping ends of gable roof.
65. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
69. Smallest guenon monkey.
72. A state in midwestern United States.
73. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
74. Black tropical American cuckoo.
75. A native or inhabitant of Vietnam.
78. An actor's line that immediately precedes and serves as a reminder for some action or speech.
79. (sports) The chief official (as in boxing or American football) who is expected to ensure fair play.
80. Someone who reasons logically.
81. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
4. A family of fish in the order Zeomorphi.
5. Not seen or perceived.
6. Being one hundred more than three hundred.
7. Ratio of the adjacent side to the hypotenuse.
8. Hormones (estrogen and progesterin) are given to postmenopausal women.
9. Goddess of fertility.
10. Of or pertaining to or characteristic of Nepal or its people or language or culture.
11. Deciduous round-headed Asiatic tree widely grown in mild climates as an ornamental for its heart-shaped leaves and fragrant yellow-green flowers followed by hanging clusters of fleshy orange-red berries.
12. Hungarian choreographer who developed Labanotation (1879-1958).
13. A popular island resort in the Netherlands Antilles.
14. The chief source of beryllium.
19. Of or relating to or characteristic of Hades or Tartarus.
23. Diabetes caused by a relative or absolute deficiency of insulin and characterized by polyuria.
25. A city in central Alabama on the Alabama river.
27. Denoting a quantity consisting of one more than eight and one less than ten.
30. A family of Ural-Altaic languages.
31. The basic unit of money in Yemen.
33. A doctor's degree in dental surgery.
35. The cry made by sheep.
37. The table in Christian churches where communion is given.
38. Sudden mass fear and anxiety over anticipated events.
39. A member of a seafaring group of North American Indians who lived on the Pacific coast of British Columbia and southwestern Alaska.
41. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
42. Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus Draba having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
47. A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
50. Jordan's port.
52. Cause to be more favorably inclined.
53. English monk and scholar (672-735).
56. An island in the Aegean Sea in the Saronic Gulf.
58. The civil and religious leader of a Muslim state.
59. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali metal group.
60. Not contained in or deriving from the essential nature of something.
62. A stick that people can lean on to help them walk.
64. Type genus of the Anatidae.
66. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
67. (computer science) A data transmission rate (bits/second) for modems.
68. In bed.
70. (in golf) The standard number of strokes set for each hole on a golf course, or for the entire course.
71. Used of a single unit or thing.
76. A polyvalent metallic element that resembles chromium and tungsten in its properties.
77. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

DOWN

1. A lyric poet.
2. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
3. Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This morning you find yourself brimming with energy. What to do? Wake up with a nice exercise program with your mate to start the day. Otherwise, you'll be relegated to waking up with your pets. You want to be around people today. Start with family and friends who call or visit. After all, this is your special day. Knowing what you want and going after it is on your agenda. If you don't have a love interest, you'll be looking seriously today. Allow it to come to you after listing everything you want in a lover but don't sit home waiting for love. You have to give thought and energy to something so that it can manifest. Have a wonderful day.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may get complimented today because of your delightful demeanor. Take the compliment as gospel and feel good about it. Today is a day for enjoyment. It's a time to do what you please for yourself. Take the time to thank your God for the world you've created. You may want to go shopping but continue to be frugal meaning shop the sales. Your emotions seem to be on a steady keel today. That makes the day even better!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

"You're in the mood for love, dear," is the song you're singing now. You like being the center of attention and make your lover think he or she is as well. Deep understanding and love mark this day. You two should go on a picnic or do something similar to enjoy being alone but together. Give each other that extra gift of your time and show your lover how much he or she means to you. This one day will help you during the rest of the week by giving you a harbor in the storm, so to speak. Enjoy what you have.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You're fighting the demons of taking care of yourself right now but also of being the center of attention. You can have all of that just by setting your mind to it. It shouldn't be hard. Have dinner out with friends. Enjoy some conversation of your choice. Work is big time on your mind so invite some work friends to join you as well. All of you may come up with a solution to increase your finances if you work well together. Being together in this way solidifies the desires you all have and gives you the ability to come together as a team with one mind.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You'll look back on this day with affection and pride. You are truly the center of attention at work because of the good work you've done, hot because you've demanded it. Praises are shared by all towards you. Isn't that wonderful? You want to help others and you have where work is concerned and more. Working for accolades as well as security makes you feel that you've done your best job. Friends and family bring home the bacon when you get home topping off a wonderful day you'll remember for a lifetime.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You prosper by seeking your most moral, deep seated dreams. Let no one take that from you. Use meditation to visualize and endorse creative visualization through a group with whom you work. This process works to help you all further your career. With your quick mind and wit, a myriad of solutions is at the ready for any problem you may run into now. You're happier and feel better than you have in a week or so. It's time to present your lover with a proposition that both will like because the stars are playing. Enjoy your night.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Romance may find you today even though you may not be looking. Shopping for someone fabulous is probably going to occur whether you really look or not. There's something about the air (aura) you present to others. It takes over when you think that it might be nice to spend time with a significant other. Only the word, "might," brings people you may be attracted to even when at the grocery store. Before deciding to march down that primrose path, make sure you think of all the niceties you want in that love affair, from toothpaste to sex.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Guess what. You're in a rare mood of appreciating who you are. Generally, there's doubt but today, you know you're worth appreciation. And, you're enjoying that fact. You want to be involved with friends in group activities right now. It's imperative to be a part of the whole, learning or making something that appeals to you and is outside work. Watch out that you don't dampen the happiness your having by saying something others may find inappropriate. Just have fun while playing.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is a romantic time for you but it's also a time that makes you want to be the center of attention. It's either from your dog or cat on this fine Saturday or you have your lover's full attention. It's an easy and very calm day. You may find yourself having a visitor you love, someone who has authority in your life. He or she is there for your support now. This day is a day you'll look back upon with fondness.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You need to be wanted, to be the center of attention in someone's life and you are. Get the care and consideration you want from the person you love. Take time to yourself today because you know you're about to be looking for a better job come Monday, perhaps even today. You're wanted by people in your work community and you know it. This could even reach into your lifestyle with change too. Tension and challenges have created this situation and you're going to fix it now. This couldn't have happened at a better time for you to make an informed, intelligent decision.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You want kudos for what you've accomplished but you don't just crave them from work mates. You want them from friends, family and your lover too. Those really mean the most to you now. Because of this you're asking to be the center of attention. This could cause a sensitive issue to take hold by those you love. Realize these people have had your back since before you became intimately enamored with your work life. Let this feeling go because you just seem to be turning over the wrong card of worms, in their eyes. Making this an issue won't turn out well. You'll only continue being frustrated. Try to enjoy time with your lover tonight.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may not agree with family in family issues right now that needs great sensitivity in the helping. Try to sit back and watch instead of giving your opinion. That's going to be hard for you if you take this tact. If you do, be sure not to allow another family member to draw you into the web they've spun. Be more thoughtful about your own life's needs instead of trying to advise another just now. Money and love mean more to you now. Make that your goal. Helping this family member without thinking this problem over thoroughly can come back to haunt you and more quickly than you think.

Wordsearch Puzzle

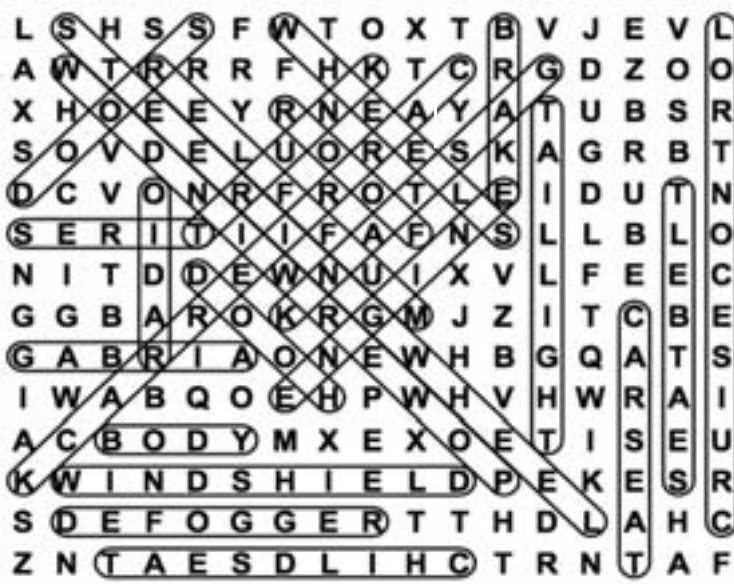
Car Parts 2 - Word Search



- ALTERNATOR
- AXLE
- BATTERY
- BUMPER
- CARBURETOR
- CLUTCH
- COOLING FAN
- CRANKCASE
- DRIVE SHAFT
- FRAME
- FUSE
- HEADLIGHT
- HORN
- IGNITION
- MIRROR
- RADIATOR
- STARTER
- SUSPENSION
- TRANSMISSION
- TURN SIGNAL
- WHEEL RIM

Friday's Solution

Car Parts 1 - Solution

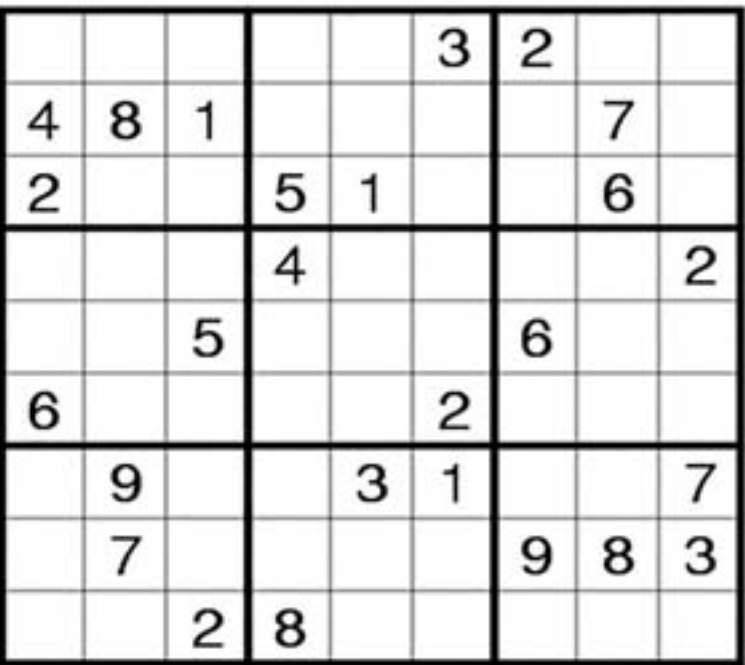


- AIR BAG
- BODY
- BRAKE
- CAR SEAT
- CARRIER RACK
- CHILD SEAT
- CRUISE CONTROL
- DEFOGGER
- ENGINE
- GAS TANK
- HOOD
- MUFFLER
- POWER WINDOW
- RADIO
- ROOF
- SEAT BELT
- TAIL LIGHT
- TIRES
- TRUNK
- WHEELS
- WINDSHIELD

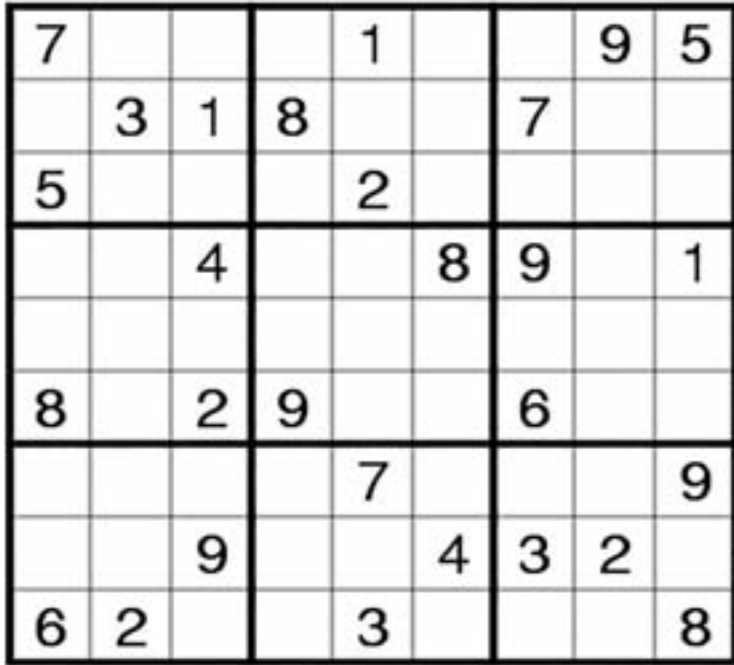
Friday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2019



An installation called “Sleeping piles”, by Estudio Campana is exhibited at the Milan University (L’Universit degli Studi di Milano) during the Fuorisalone 2019 design week. The Milan Furniture fair week is taking place in various locations across Milan from April 9 through 14, 2019. — AFP

Crude oil touted as health cure in Azerbaijan

Immersed up to her neck in a dark viscous liquid, Sulfiya smiles in delight, confident that the fetid substance will cure her painful condition. Sulfiya, a Russian woman in her 60s, has travelled to Azerbaijan’s north-western city of Naftalan in the hope that crude oil baths at a local sanatorium will end her years of suffering from polyarthritis, a disease affecting the joints. “This is so pleasant,” she enthuses, despite the reek of engine oil. Her naked dip in oil heated to just above body temperature lasts 10 minutes, after which an attendant scrapes

the brown oil off her skin and sends her into a shower. The native of Russia’s Tatarstan region said she and her friends “have long dreamed of coming” for treatment in Naftalan. The petroleum spa resort in the oil-rich Caucasus country is a draw for visitors despite its proximity to Nagorny Karabakh, a region disputed between Azerbaijan and Armenia in a long-running armed conflict. After 10 days of bathing in crude oil Sulfiya says she now feels “much better” and has even reduced her medication for the polyarthritis that she has had for 12 years. “It is a gift from God,” agrees 48-year-old Rufat, an Azerbaijani journalist and opposition party member who is undergoing treatment in the sanatorium called Sehirlı, or “magic” in Azerbaijani.

Azerbaijan’s vast oil deposits were discovered in the mid-19th century, making what was at the time part of the Russian Empire one of the first places in the world to start commercial oil production. Oil exports to markets all over the world are the largest sector of Azerbaijan’s economy, but the crude that comes from subsoil reservoirs in Naftalan is not suitable for commercial use.

Instead the local oil is used to treat muscular, skin and bone conditions as well as gynaecological and neurological problems. According to a legend, which spa staff readily tell clients, the healing properties of Naftalan’s “miraculous oil” were discovered by accident when a camel left to die near a pool of oil was cured. The small town of Naftalan some 300 kilometers (185 miles) from the capital Baku became a popular health resort for



A man bathes in a tub filled with Naftalan crude oil during a treatment session at Sehirlı Naftalan Health Center, some 300 kilometers (186 miles) from capital Baku. — AFP photos

Soviet citizens in the 1920s. “In the past, when there weren’t any hotels or sanatoriums, people would come to Naftalan and stay with locals,” said one of the doctors at the Sehirlı sanatorium, Fabil Azizov, sitting in her office under a portrait of strongman President Ilham Aliyev. “But as time passed, sanatoriums were built and treatment methods developed.”

Controversial benefits

Some specialists warn the method has dangerous side effects. “Despite the stories of past cures, the use of crude oil for medicinal purposes has been condemned by Western doctors as potentially carcinogenic,” former journalist Maryam Omidı wrote in a 2017 book published in Britain about Soviet-era sanatoriums.

In fact, the oil at Naftalan is almost 50 percent naphthalene, a carcinogenic substance found in cigarette smoke and mothballs that in large amounts can damage or destroy red blood cells. But doctors and

patients at Naftalan brush aside any misgivings and the sanatorium even has a small museum displaying crutches that once belonged to patients who have recovered from their illnesses.

‘We heard gunshots’

During its heyday in the 1980s, Naftalan would host more than 70,000 visitors a year. But in 1988, a bloody war began with neighboring Armenia for the control of Azerbaijan’s separatist Nagorny Karabakh region, which unilaterally proclaimed independence from Baku in 1991. The conflict claimed the lives of some 30,000 people from both sides and forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes.

A 1994 ceasefire agreement ended hostilities, but the arch foes have yet to reach a definitive peace deal and there are frequent skirmishes along the volatile frontline. During the war, the sanatoriums in Naftalan—a few kilometers from the frontline—were converted into hospitals for wounded soldiers and temporary accommodation for refugees. Over the last two decades, the Azerbaijani authorities have worked hard to re-establish Naftalan’s reputation as a health resort.

They resettled refugees in other regions, demolished decrepit Soviet-era sanatoriums and built brand-new tourist facilities. Modern Naftalan is a blend of kitsch-looking high-end spas where a week’s treatment costs some 1,000 euros, and modest sanatoriums where a week’s treatment costs around 100 euros. The simmering Karabakh conflict may be out of sight, but guests can still feel uncomfortably close to the military action. During one of the deadliest recent bouts of fighting in April 2016, “we heard gunshots,” said a member of staff at Naftalan’s luxurious Garabag spa, adding quickly that “everyone stayed on.” — AFP



A man bathes in a tub filled with Naftalan crude oil during a treatment session.



Naftalan crude oil flows from a tap to fill a bathtub during a treatment session.



A man bathes in a tub filled with Naftalan crude oil during a treatment session.



Nepal bans online game PUBG on concerns over children

Nepal has banned the hugely popular but brutal online game “PlayerUnknown’s Battlegrounds” over concerns about its impact on children, officials said Friday. In the multiplayer game, commonly known as PUBG, players parachute onto an island and scavenge for weapons and equipment to kill others and survive. The last player or team standing wins. Nepal’s telecommunication authority issued a circular to all internet service providers on

Thursday to block PUBG on instruction from the Kathmandu district court.

“We sought an order from the court to ban PUBG after floods of complaints from parents, guardians and school organizations to block the game citing psychological impact on teenagers and students,” senior police official Dhiraj Pratap Singh told AFP. The survival-themed battle game, made by South Korean firm Bluehole Inc, has been downloaded more

than 100 million times around the world since it was launched in 2017.

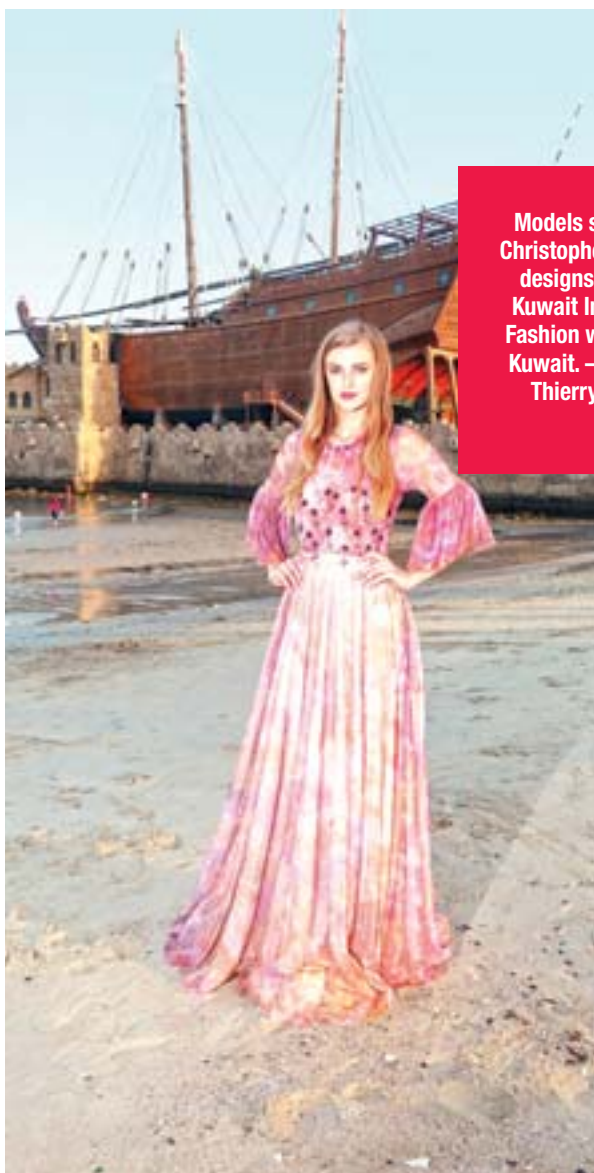
Parents and educators say the game incites violence and distracts students from their studies. Saugat Joshi, 28, an occasional player said parents should instead speak to their children about better gaming habits. “Banning is not a solution. Right now PUBG is viral but next year there might 10 others, we can’t ban everything,” Joshi said. Last year, China announced new

controls on the number of games that can be played online, limited new releases, and imposed rules on underage players to reduce their screen time. PUBG is also banned in the Indian state of Gujarat, where dozens of people have been arrested for playing. A minister in the coastal Indian state of Goa has described PUBG as “a demon in every house”. — AFP

Kuwait Times' exclusive interview with the brilliant French designer *Christophe Guillarme* in Kuwait

By Sahar Moussa

There are five main fashion events in the world - Paris Fashion Week, Milan Fashion Week, New York Fashion Week, London Fashion Week and Kuwait International Fashion Week, that was proudly able to be recognized on the global fashion map, positioning the region as a significant market for the international fashion industry and further establishing a main pillar for the creative economy in the region. Kuwait International Fashion Week, was supposed to open for the fourth year in a row on March 21, 2019 at the iconic heritage building Beit Al-Bader, sponsored by Karman Line Company and featuring local and international fashion designers from around the globe. But it was shut down half an hour before it started for unclear reasons and shocking fashion lovers including royalty, ambassadors, social media sensations, bloggers, attendees and the media. However that sad incident did not stop Kuwait Times to take the chance to have an exclusive one-on-one interview with one of the most talented French designers who was supposed to showcase his vibrant designs during the event, Christophe Guillarme.



Models showcasing Christophe Guillarme's designs during the Kuwait International Fashion week 2019 in Kuwait. — Photos by Thierry Marsaux



French designer Christophe Guillarme (center) posing with two models showcasing his designs during the Kuwait International Fashion week 2019 in Kuwait. — Photos by Thierry Marsaux

'Kuwaiti women are a bit more sophisticated, more into the details, less show off and less Bling Bling'



Guillarme obtained his degree from the Ecole Supérieure des Arts Appliqués Duperré. He initiated a fashion artistic approach and gave birth to collaboration with an artist, making his first fashion show a real artistic installation. He had various experiences with Jean-Charles de Castelbajac, Dice Kayek and Stella Cadente, before launching his first collection as a young fashion designer in 1998. "My style is noticeable at first sight. I'm a real keeper of traditional creative approaches and exquisite finishing. My gowns are a mix between glam rock and couture. My ultra-feminine style shows the contemporary way of creating glamorous icons," he said, describing his amazing style.

Guillarme has been invited many times worldwide to fashion weeks of Dubai, Marrakech, Monaco, Bangkok, South Korea, Kazakhstan and Kuwait, as well as Cannes. This led the young fashion designer to generate more fame and compliments on his style and collection. Some excerpts.

Kuwait Times: This is the second time you have come to Kuwait to participate in Kuwait International Fashion Week - why did you decide to visit Kuwait for the second time?

Christophe Guillarme: I actually decided to come for the second time to Kuwait because the first time was really amazing, where I had a great moment at Hotel Jumeirah and Kuwait International Fashion Week was a huge success for us. I would like to thank the CEO Rabab Hamadi, who invited me for the second time this year.

KT: What really attracts you the most in Kuwaiti women's style?

Guillarme: Compared to other Arab countries, I think Kuwaiti women are a bit more sophisticated, more into the details, less of showoffs and less bling-bling, I would say.

KT: What was your main inspiration for this season? Can you tell us more about the collection and all the related details?

Guillarme: I am still with my inspiration of all time - a mix of dolce vita and glamour and that arises from where I originally come from, which is Cannes in the south of France. Since I was young, I used to see all those girls walking and coming down the stairs without shoes, with dresses billowing in the wind and disappearing in the Riviera. It was a great image in my mind. Then I mixed it with couture, which I learned in Paris for three years. So this is actually a mix of couture that has exquisite finish-

ing, refined tailoring and shape aspect of the pieces. It is then mixed with the Riviera, which adds more colors and embroidery with a little oriental touch as well.



Lindsay Lohan wearing Christophe Guillarme's design during amfAR gala in Cannes.

KT: I realized that you are trying to mix eastern and western taste in your designs - in which direction you are working to satisfy the taste of all ladies in all regions at a wider level?

Guillarme: I am working with some stores in Kuwait and Dubai. I need to actually offer them some style that they really want to wear and not only for the runway. I am really somebody who is trying to be real, so it is more interesting to dress a real lady than to dress a model. It is more challenging, so I think it is really important to know what is the actual style that the ladies want and adapt to it. Therefore, changing your style accordingly is where you will find creativity - when you find something that works for everybody.

KT: Inform us about your color palette for this season, the in-style accessories and tips to mix and match different styles together. Do you do bridal dresses?

Guillarme: The colors are nude like beige, and scarlet, which is something strong and gives a strong attitude to the ladies when they wear it. Also, there is navy blue mixed with fuchsia pink. All these colors were inspired by the forest under the sunset. As for accessories, I am always collaborating with the same company - Carmen Steffens - for clutches and shoes, which creates exclusive pieces for my runway in Paris. As for jewelry, I work with Charriol, which also creates exclusive jewelry pieces for my collection using real diamonds and emeralds. I have to mention that I collaborated with them as well during my participation at the Cannes film festival and runway in Cairo. We did a photo shoot in front of the Pyramids, which was really amazing. I do not do bridal for the runway; I however accept special requests.

KT: Due to the recession and what is going on politically in France - I am speaking here about the yellow vest



Paris Hilton wearing Christophe Guillaume's design in Cannes.



Lindsay Lohan wearing Christophe Guillaume's design.



Saudi singer and entertainer wearing Christophe Guillaume's design.

movement that started a few months ago - did you take into consideration the financial situation in making the collection's prices more affordable for your clients?

Guillaume: Actually the yellow vest movement is a big problem for us, because I am based on Champ Elysees and for almost 20 weeks in a row, there weren't any Saturdays - everything is shut down. For example, the Fouquet restaurant was completely destroyed weeks ago, which was really crazy, because three weeks earlier there was the Cesar awards and my dress was on the upcoming best actress entering the Fouquet. Then we see it all on fire - I was about to cry. I know that the situation is quite difficult and there are lots of conflicts around the world. With globalization, everyone is price conscious.

KT: The perception to fashion is changing due to what is happening in Paris, since Paris is the main city for fashion week, and this is scary for everyone; how do you see the future concerning the fashion week?

Guillaume: Actually at the last fashion week, we had less people attending, because some of them did not fly from abroad due to the current situation. They were scared of what was happening. But at the same time, we have to be really price conscious because everyone now knows that they can check your work on Instagram. They can check the store and send you a private message asking about the collection and the prices. Due to social media, everything is changing, so we just have to follow the trend and check what will happen next. All the prices are going down. We are still trying to do amazing creative stuff but less expensive, because this is not really the time to spend that much money.

KT: You worked with many celebrities and we saw you at the Cannes film festival as well. Which celebrity would you wish to work with if you have the chance to choose and why?

Guillaume: I have an obsession with Halle Berry, because she was the first black American to win a Best Actress Oscar. I love her style, especially when she had short hair. She has something unique which is a mix between being savage and at the same time being equi-

site and very polished. I really love her! Who knows, maybe one day I will be able to dress her.

KT: Tell us more about dealing with celebrities and how they differ from dealing with VIPs, princesses and regular women. What are the steps you have passed through from your experience?

Guillaume: It is a very interesting question - actually when I dressed Paris Hilton at Cannes for "Fashion for release", it took me five years to actually strike a real friendship with her. We met each year in Cannes and bit by bit got to know each other - we used to have a lot of fun. After five years, she told me 'I am picking one of your dresses for the red carpet in Cannes'. I also loved doing this with Lindsay Lohan when I dressed her for the amfAR in Cannes. It was a huge success - she asked me about a dress inspired by Grace Kelly in the movie and this was really a nice moment, because we didn't really know what she was doing and she just appeared looking flawless and cute. This was a strong moment for her. I really like to be close to the girls and get to know them personally, where something is built in the relationship - a friendship and collaboration. It is really very interesting. It is not only one shot: it is much more valuable than just wearing my dress and giving it back to me.

This is what I also did with American actress Blanca Blanco, who I dressed recently for the Golden Globes; she then appeared at the Oscars in my dress, and after two days, was opening my runway in Paris.

KT: What do you take into consideration for conservative ladies and veiled women in your designs? What is your advice or tips to ladies in Kuwait who are huge fans of yours?

Guillaume: This is what's happening at the Gallery Lafayette in Dubai - I have some Emirati customers who ask me to customize the pieces for them as conservative ladies. I know that in Muslim countries, we have more modest dressing, but still looking edgy, fashionable and glamorous. They need to combine all these aspects and

that I think is the challenge.

KT: It is a big challenge? Does this motivate you more?

Guillaume: Yes exactly - it is really more interesting to do something for real life and not only for the runway. It is easy to put gowns on skinny models and take pictures, but that's not the truth. The truth is the real ladies - those who will actually feel amazing in your dresses. Size doesn't matter.

KT: What are your upcoming projects?

Guillaume: The next big step for me after Kuwait will be the Cannes film festival in a month and half. I have already started to have my first nightmare over the opening ceremony because of the preparations.

KT: So now your main focus is Cannes?

Guillaume: Yes, because it is a big challenge. All the big brands are there and there is a lot of competition. I am not a very big brand there is no comparison; but if I have someone looking good in my dress, getting pictures, attracting the media: this is enough for me.

KT: Do you compete with yourself and not with others?

Guillaume: You have to compete with everybody now I think. Because of social media, everybody knows what the others are doing. Now you cannot avoid people; you cannot pretend that you do not know. It is more like a competition.

KT: What is your fashion quote for this season?

Guillaume: I hope that everyone will love my golden gowns in Kuwait.

* Contributed by Suzan Moussa



Photos show American actress Blanca Blanco wearing Christophe Guillaume's designs during Paris Fashion Week 2019 in Paris.

Carrie Fisher in trailer for final 'Star Wars' movie

Lucasfilm delighted "Star Wars" fans Friday with a glimpse of Carrie Fisher in sneak-peek footage of the hotly-anticipated final episode of the space opera-more than two years after her death. Director J.J. Abrams told the US "Star Wars Celebration" event the writers had agonized over giving Fisher's beloved General Leia Organa a fitting send-off in the ninth installment, revealed as "Star Wars IX: The Rise of Skywalker." "Every day it hits me that she is not here but it's so surreal because we're working with her still... she's in scenes," Abrams told the rapt crowd at the five-day event in Chicago.

A world-first trailer released at the convention-and dropped on the internet-reintroduced the "next generation" characters from the final three films alongside old favorites from as far back as the 1977 original. "Star Wars IV: A New Hope." They included Lando Calrissian, portrayed by the original actor Billy Dee Williams, and the voice only of Mark Hamill-Luke Skywalker himself-who appeared to die in the last film but was widely expected to

have some role in the latest movie.

"No one's ever really gone," Skywalker says in voiceover, as Leia hugs apprentice Jedi Rey, played by English actress Daisy Ridley, who has top billing in the latest of the three trilogies that makes up the long-running saga. Abrams said it would not continue the story exactly where the last one - 2017's "Star Wars: Episode VIII - The Last Jedi"-left off.

'Weird miracle'

Leia was still alive at the end of 2017's "The Last Jedi" but the actress herself died a year earlier, in December 2016. Disney said last year Fisher's role would be gleaned from previously unreleased footage from "The Force Awakens," with the blessing of her daughter, Billie Lourd. Abrams described the "weird miracle" of being able to continue Leia's story by looking at old footage. Speaking at a panel discussion moderated by comedian and late night television host Stephen Colbert, the director said the film was in post-production. It is not the first time Fisher's like-

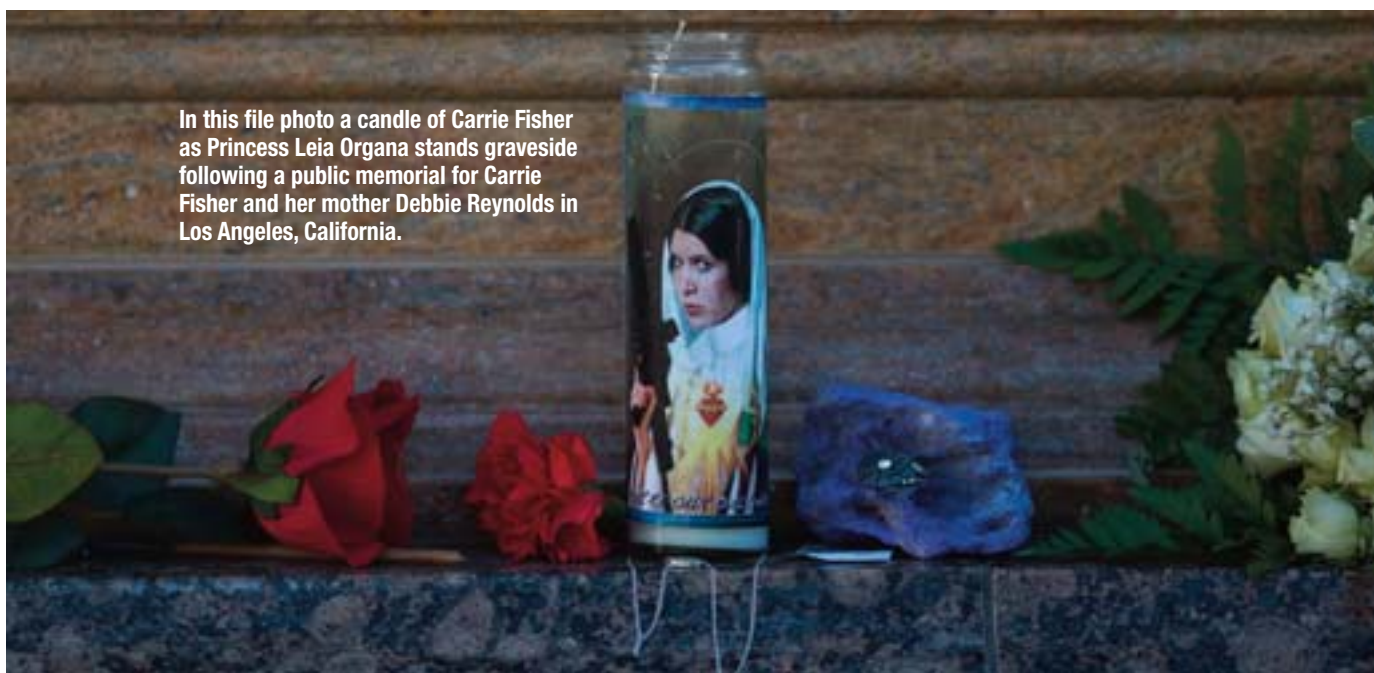
ness has featured in a "Star Wars" movie despite being absent from its filming.

"Rogue One," a 2016 spin-off from the main series, directed by Gareth Edwards, had been in theaters for a couple of weeks when Fisher's death from a heart attack was announced. A much younger version of Fisher as Leia appears in that movie, thanks to the controversial application of computer wizardry to animate her image. Cast members returning with Ridley for the final episode include Adam Driver, John Boyega, Oscar Isaac, Lupita Nyong'o, Domhnall Gleeson, Kelly Marie Tran and Joonas Suotamo.

Naomi Ackie as a character called Jannah and Richard E. Grant are among the new faces, while old "Star Wars" hand Anthony Daniels returns as C-3PO and Ian McDiarmid reappears as the dastardly Emperor Palpatine. - AFP



In this file photo taken on January 29, 2017, actress Carrie Fisher is seen on a screen during the In Memoriam of the 23rd Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards show at The Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California.



DR DEVIKA SCREENS 'SARPATATWAM' TO SHOWCASE THE POWER OF DANCE

By Sajeev K Peter

Through a masterful synthesis of music, movement and mysticism, Indian classical dancer Dr Methil Devika, explores the compelling allure of the serpent in her pioneering documentary short film 'Sarpatatwam' or the 'Serpent Wisdom'. The unfurling serpent glides through mysterious spaces to transport its audience into the depths of the primordial. Devika, through the art form of Mohiniyattam, seeks to interpret the universal serpent philosophy propounded by an 11th century seer physician Pambatty (snake-charmer) Siddhar. During a recent visit to Kuwait



Dr Methil Devika

to attend the annual dance event of Upasana, Dr Devika screened 'Sarpatatwam' in front of a select audience comprising dancers, dance students and media persons. Following the screening, she held an interactive session with the audience and spoke about why serpents are both feared and revered in many cultures.

In various civilizations, not in India alone, for centuries, the serpent motif has always had religious connotations. However, contesting this claim, Devika argues that it is a 'secret code' and her

documentary was an attempt at 'unlocking this secret code'.

"We can see this manifest in Chinese, Egyptian, or Greek civilizations. Even our medical symbol the Rhode of Asclepius is associated with serpent", she pointed out.

Interestingly, 'Sarpatatwam' or the Serpent Wisdom was premiered at the Valley Plaza Theatre in Los Angeles in September 2018 and was voted into the contention list for the Oscars making it the first Indian classical dance based documentary short film to hit the contention list.

In an exclusive interview with the Kuwait Times, Dr Devika said she is using dance as a medium to outline the concept of serpent wisdom. "Here, the visual is me, it is my dance. Through this dance, in a very passive way, I seek to open out visuals in the minds of the audience. For instance, today morning I received several messages from people who watched the documentary said they could not sleep last night. So, the visuals begin when the documentary ends. That, precisely, is the whole connection it has with people," she elaborated.

According to Dr Devika, the documentary is not particularly disturbing, but rather is thought-provoking. "I spent several sleepless nights during the making of the documentary. In a way, whatever unrest I had during the making of it, I transfer it to the audience. So, I am glad if people had at least one sleepless night and it only means there was some sort of communication," she quipped.

A classical danseuse par excellence, Dr Devika uses Mohiniyattam as her medium. Making a breakthrough here, she seeks to liberate Mohiniyattam from its conventional confines, lending it a more contemporary appeal without diluting its classical purity.

"I wanted to be true to the content. That was my purpose. I think I am most comfortable with dance in general and it comes naturally to me. Because I have the ability to adapt styles very fast," she explained.

She said dancers like Kamala Lakshman had choreographed the same song 'Adupambe.' "To me, those pieces appeared more like acrobatics. So, I took some of the hitherto unknown stanzas from the poem. Its lyrics had deeper layers of meanings and I wanted to tap the soul of these lyrics. And Mohiniyattam being my place of research, I knew it was the most suitable art form owing to its meditative quality. I knew it was the art form through which I could tap into the essence of the lyrics," Dr Devika said.

Elaborating further on the metaphysical connection, she said, "In human life, one evolves or transcends, either philosophically or physically, sometimes emotionally or spiritually. It covers all those layers just like a snake sheds its skin on a periodic basis. That is the underlying philosophy. Here I bring in the Kundalini aspect of yoga to explain the concept," she added.

Talking about the rationale behind documenting the work, she said, "I thought of archiving my works as a series. Incidentally, 'Sarpatatwam' was the first of the series," she explained.

Initially, Dr Devika wanted to put the documentary on the Youtube channel. "But when I finished the work, people like Adoor Gopalakrishnan advised me against uploading it on the Youtube. He told me if I did it, it would go off on a tangent. That is how it was premiered in Los Angeles. It became the first Indian classical dance to get voted into the contention list of the Oscars. Even the very growth of the documentary was serpentine," she chuckled.

Dr Devika has a master's degree in Performing Arts from the Rabindra Bharati University with a first rank and gold medal. She completed her PhD in Mohiniyattam from Bharathidasan University as well.

"In fact, the phenomenal success of this work is prompting me to do more works. In a larger sphere, the popularity or the significance of this work has become very pertinent in the sense that it is also a part of preserving our civilization," she explained.



A still from the dance documentary 'Sarpatatwam'

"Dance is a part of our intangible heritage. Unfortunately, it is seen as mere entertainment today. When I use it as a medium to preserve other aspects of our heritage, other philosophies and our knowledge system, then the effect becomes manifold. That's why I am sure this documentary has stood out and it is the first of its kind in live performance filming," she said.

Dr Devika appeared in a 2015 theatre adaptation of the play 'Naaga' with her actor-husband Mukesh and his sister Sandhya Rajendan which was directed by theatre director Suveeran. Later in 2017, she made her film debut in 'Humans of Someone.'

Asked why she is not pursuing a film career, she said, "I am not against movies. It is just that none of the scripts excite me, very honestly speaking. In cinema, dance is still a motif of entertainment and beauty."



In this file photo British musician Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones performs during a concert at The Velodrome Stadium in Marseille as part of their 'No Filter' tour. — AFP

Satisfaction: Rolling Stones Jagger posts first pic since surgery

Legendary Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger has posted his first photograph since reportedly undergoing heart valve replacement surgery in New York, showing him standing casually before trees in bloom. "A walk in the park!" the 75-year-old singer said on Twitter and Instagram Thursday, alongside a photo in which is seen clad in black sneakers and with his hands in his jean pockets. The post prompted thousands of fans including fellow rockers Lenny Kravitz and Jools Holland to send their good wishes.

"Yeah man!" Kravitz wrote on Instagram. The flamboyant Stones founder's post came one week after he said he was "feeling much better now and on the mend" following what industry tracker Billboard said was a successful minimally invasive procedure. The transcatheter aortic valve replacement allowed the artist to avoid major surgery that would open his chest. Doctors accessed the heart valve of the British rocker through the femoral artery in his thigh, Billboard said, meaning he needs rest to ensure there is no severe bleeding.

After the band that formed in 1962 announced the tour postponement of 17 shows in the US and Canada, Jagger tweeted that he was "devastated" and would "be working very hard to be back on stage as soon as I can." Jagger, who has eight children, five grandchildren and a great-granddaughter, has maintained his energetic stage performances well into his 70s. — AFP

Banned at home, Mexican narco anthem group plays Coachella

Despite their name, Los Tucanes de Tijuana-one of Mexico's most famous narco-ballad bands-cannot perform in Tijuana. The northern border city banned them in 2008 over their glorification of drug traffickers. But on Friday, they are playing one of the world's biggest stages-the Coachella music festival, a short drive across the border in the southern California desert. Los Tucanes (The Toucans) are among the best-known bands of Mexico's norteno, or northern, music style-an accordion- and guitar-laden genre whose aesthetic is heavy on cowboy hats and giant belt buckles.

They are also masters of a hugely popular but highly controversial sub-genre, the "narcocorrido"-songs that celebrate the exploits of Mexico's drug traffickers. Los Tucanes, whose members actually hail from the north-western state of Sinaloa-home to the drug cartel founded by Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman-named themselves for Tijuana because they played their first concert there, in 1987. But their love affair with the border city took a bad

turn in 2008, when they allegedly gave a shout-out to two notorious drug traffickers during a concert.

That did not please Tijuana's headline police chief at the time, Julian Leyzaola, who had outlawed public displays of "narcoculture" as part of a crackdown on organized crime. He banned the group from the city. And even though Leyzaola is no longer police chief, Los Tucanes say the local authorities have not allowed them to play there since.

But Coachella has invited them to play the opening day of one of the trendiest music festivals on Earth, headlined this year by superstars Ariana Grande and Childish Gambino. "The narcocorrido, which used to be shrouded in the violent secrecy of drug traffickers, is now being consumed at Coachella," said Oswaldo Zavala, author of a book on narcoculture. "Don't be surprised to see hipsters rocking up in drug trafficker costumes," he told AFP.

'La Chona Challenge'

Los Tucanes have more than 15 million record sales and a Latin Grammy under their belts. But Coachella marks a new level of acceptance for a band that has long complained of being censored on Mexican radio stations, said Zavala. "Coachella is the embodiment of hipster consumerism. It represents not only the legitimization of their music, but its intersection with the markers of power, race and class at the highest level of American consumer culture," he said.

Ariana Grande, reigning teen pop idol with a defiant edge

Bubblegum pop coquette on the outside, saucy master of celebrity on the inside, there is perhaps no current star better at re-fashioning her own trials into larger-than-life success than Ariana Grande. While suffering a highly publicized burst of personal and professional upheaval-the deadly 2017 Manchester bombing at one of her concerts, the suicide of her ex-boyfriend rapper Mac Miller, the demise of her whirlwind engagement to comedian Pete Davidson-Grande has proven poised in the face of tragedy and a deft manipulator of her own image, all while catapulting to global stardom.

Grande's adept use of social media to slam her naysayers, drum up support from her "Arianator" fans and flirt with the gossip machine has created the perception that only she is in the driver's seat. After a resounding year of hits that saw industry tracker Billboard name the 25-year-old teen idol its 2018 woman of the year, Grande is set to headline a number of major festivals as part of her global tour, including this weekend's influential Coachella lineup.

She's just the fourth solo woman to headline the premier festival in the California desert-and the youngest artist ever to nab the coveted spot. The feat comes after Grande shattered a number of US chart records and released two albums in six months, feeding the streaming beast with earworms while carving out her own version of the modern female pop star.

Feminist manifesto

A Floridian by birth, the petite Italian-American Grande moved to New York as a teen for a spot on Broadway before finding fame on US kids network Nickelodeon. She forayed into pop music shortly thereafter, releasing her debut studio album to commercial success in 2013. A fan of miniskirts rarely seen without her signature ponytail snaking down past her hips, Grande had all the makings of a teen pop droid-batting her eyelashes and pouting her lips while wielding her



In this file photo US singer Ariana Grande attends Billboard's 13th Annual Women In Music event at Pier 36 in New York City. — AFP

impressive four-octave range to deliver saccharine lyrics.

But in recent years the superstar has co-opted that traditional ingenue image, adding a heavy dose of sex appeal and a biting demand for control. In 2015 she issued a feminist manifesto attacking the public appetite for news on her personal life and those of other women. And while last year's "Sweetener" album-released in the midst of Grande's turmoil-felt like an optimistic catharsis, her rapid follow-up "Thank U, Next" saw the star baring but owning her vulnerabilities, declaring this the year of Ariana.

Sexual empowerment

Yet Grande's celebration of feminine power while simultaneously flaunting her sexuality and pinning her art to her tumultuous love life has drawn criticism that she is propping up the very double standards she seeks to destroy. Her hit "God is a Woman," hailed as a coming-of-age empowerment anthem, was also derided as

embracing tropes of women catering to male pleasure. "In 2018, at the height of the #MeToo movement and when women are trying (and succeeding) at rising above our worth being tethered to our sexuality, this is the last thing we need," wrote Erin Parker for the pop culture magazine Nylon.

Jacqueline Warwick, a scholar of music and gender studies at Canada's Dalhousie University, agreed that Grande's feminist bent can "feel a little hollow," saying the star is "playing into these very conventional ways of looking at women's bodies-and that seems certainly very well worn." But Warwick said Grande also "is articulating desire and speaking very frankly and candidly about her sexual pleasure-that's certainly refreshing and possibly empowering." "It's not easy for young women artists to be taken seriously and be successful in a pop medium without doing the things that she's doing," the academic told AFP.

Maintain the buzz

In recent days Grande-often celebrated for supporting LGBT rights-was also accused of "queerbaiting," teasing gay fans by suggesting in her new collaboration track "Monopoly" that she is bisexual. "I think she's certainly figured out that people are interested in her sex life-that it's not a bad thing to keep people interested by dropping hints," Warwick said. Creating such buzz maintains a steady base keen for Grande's next bop, which she's taken to releasing whenever inspiration strikes.

She has voiced irritation with the commodified packaging of pop stars, championing the free release model more associated with hip hop artists. "My dream has always been to ... put out music in the way that a rapper does," Grande told Billboard recently. "It's just like, 'Bruh, I just want to ... talk to my fans and sing and write music and drop it the way these boys do.'" — AFP

their mainstream acceptance back to their native country. "How great that Los Tucanes are playing Coachella-which just happens to be very close to the promised land, Tijuana," said Mexican writer Elmer Mendoza, a pioneer of the genre known as "narcoculture." — AFP



In this file photo Los Tucanes de Tijuana pose with the trophy for Best Norteno Album during the 13th Annual Latin Grammy show in Las Vegas, Nevada. — AFP

Classifieds

Sunday, April 14, 2019



STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Warm and Clouds will decrease gradually with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 12 - 36 km/h with a slight chance for scattered rain.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 38 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div>SFC. CHART13/04/2019 0000 UTC</div>	
KUWAIT CITY	29 °C	23 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	30 °C	20 °C		
ABDALY	35 °C	21 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	32 °C	22 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	28 °C	20 °C		
SALMIYAH	26 °C	23 °C		
AHMADI	25 °C	23 °C		
NUWAISIB	27 °C	20 °C		
WAFRA	28 °C	19 °C		
SALMY	31 °C	20 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	04/14	Relatively hot	33 °C	19 °C	NW	20 - 38 km/h
Monday	04/15	Relatively hot	34 °C	20 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 28 km/h
Tuesday	04/16	Relatively hot and Partly cloudy to cloudy	37 °C	22 °C	VRB-S	06 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	04/17	Relatively hot and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	35 °C	23 °C	SE-NW	08 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:02
Sunrise	05:26
Zuhr	11:49
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:12
Isha	19:32

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	29 °C
MIN. Temp.	20 °C
MAX. RH	94 %
MIN. RH	32 %
MAX. Wind	E 57 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Joao Felix Arthur Afonso holder of Indian Passport No. T1939039 and Civil ID No. 259102302627 change my name from Joao Felix Arthur Afonso to Joao Felix Artur Afonso hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by the name Joao Felix Artur Afonso. (C 5515) 14-4-2019

I, Alexander S/O Christudoss Paul born on 30.07.1975 and

permanent residential address - No.61, Hitchins Road 2nd Cross, St.Thomas Town, 2nd Cross, Bangalore - 560084, have changed my name to Alexander Christudoss Paul. (C 5513)

I, Abhishek Anil Kumar Nair, holder of Passport No. S2915570 issued at Cochin on 04/06/2018, hereby declare that, my given name is Abhishek Anil Kumar and Surname is Nair. (C 5514) 11-4-2019

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22424993
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 14/4/2019							
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	364	Colombo	14:35
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	KAC	792	Madinah	14:40
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KAC	562	Amman	14:40
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	JZR	222	Riyadh	14:45
JZR	710	Luxor	01:05	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	618	Doha	14:50
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55
PGT	840	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	118	New York	15:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	602	Baku	15:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	516	Tehran	15:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	692	Muscat	15:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	02:20	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	546	Cairo	15:50
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	FEQ	341	Sohag	16:00
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	FDB	051	Dubai	16:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	JZR	732	Cairo	16:10
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	502	Beirut	16:15
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	116	Doha	17:05
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	IRA	665	Shiraz	17:35
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:30	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:35
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	JZR	124	Dubai	17:40
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	JZR	104	Bahrain	18:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	302	Istanbul	18:20
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
KAC	552	Cairo	05:35	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
JZR	112	Doha	05:45	RJA	640	Amman	19:05
BAW	157	London	05:50	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:25
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40
QTR	8511	Doha	07:00	RBG	555	Alexandria	19:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	104	London	20:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	166	Rome	20:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:10
JZR	708	Luxor	08:45	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	542	Cairo	20:35
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	704	Asyut	21:00
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	THY	764	Istanbul	21:30
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	676	Dubai	21:45
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	622	Doha	21:50
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	KAC	564	Amman	21:55
JZR	716	Sohag	12:10	KAC	162	Geneva	22:00
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:20
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	JZR	128	Dubai	22:50
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	MSC	405	Sohag	23:15
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	MSR	614	Cairo	23:30
JZR	212	Jeddah	13:45	FDB	071	Dubai	23:35
				PIA	205	Lahore	23:40

Departure Flights on Sunday 14/4/2019				JZR	115	Doha	13:25
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	541	Cairo	13:30
AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
JZR	713	Sohag	00:10	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
MSR	615	Cairo	00:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:40	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10	JZR	703	Asyut	14:35
THY	773	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
KAC	363	Colombo	02:00	FDB	060	Dubai	15:05
JZR	111	Doha	02:10	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
THY	765	Istanbul	02:50	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
PGT	859	Istanbul	02:50	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
PGT	841	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
UAE	854	Dubai	03:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
OMA	644	Muscat	04:05	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
QTR	1087	Doha	04:15	FEG	442	Asyut	16:55
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
PGT	861	Istanbul	04:20	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
LMU	511	Cairo	05:00	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10	KAC	503	Beirut	17:40
KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
QTR	1077	Doha	05:15	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
KAC	103	London	05:20	KAC	343	Chennai	17:50
FDB	070	Dubai	06:00	KAC	621	Doha	17:50
THY	771	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:10
RJA	649	Amman	07:00	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
JZR	121	Dubai	07:15	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
KAC	165	Rome	08:00	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
BAW	156	London	08:00	JZR	501	Lahore	18:35
IGO	1756	CNN	08:10	IRA	664	Shiraz	18:35
FDB	054	Dubai	08:35	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
KAC	501	Beirut	08:50	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
KAC	561	Amman	08:55	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
KAC	161	Geneva	09:00	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	613	Bahrain	09:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
QTR	8512	Doha	09:00	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
KAC	117	New York	09:05	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KAC	791	Madinah	09:10	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:20
KAC	691	Muscat	09:20	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
JZR	601	Baku	09:20	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40	KAC	351	Kochi	20:45
JZR	731	Cairo	09:45	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
UAE	856	Dubai	09:50	KAC	333	Trivandrum	21:05
JZR	301	Istanbul	09:55	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
OMA	642	Muscat	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
KAC	101	London	10:05	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
KAC	515	Tehran	10:35	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	617	Doha	10:40	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
KAC	155	Istanbul	10:40	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
QTR	1071	Doha	10:40	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
FDB	056	Dubai	10:40	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
JZR	221	Riyadh	11:20	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
MEA	405	Beirut	11:55	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
SYR	342	Damascus	12:00	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
QTR	1075	Doha	12:10	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
JZR	123	Dubai	13:10				

Families of Lebanon’s war missing see hope

BEIRUT: As Lebanon marked 44 years since the start of its civil war yesterday, families whose loved ones disappeared during the conflict hope they might finally get some answers. The small multi-confessional country passed a landmark law in November to determine the fate of thousands of Lebanese who went missing in the 1975-1990 war. But political parties once involved in the fighting must now encourage followers with key data such as the location of mass graves to come forward to help.

Wadad Halwani, who heads the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Missing, says the new legislation has given grieving relatives a glimmer of hope. “It’s the first time we commemorate the war with a law to enshrine the right to know... the fate of all the missing, dead or alive,” she said. More than 150,000 people were killed during Lebanon’s civil war and some 17,000 people went missing, according to official figures. Halwani’s husband was among them, abducted, never to return.

For more than a decade, she and a dozen other women have regularly protested in the garden outside the UN headquarters in Beirut, clutching faded photographs of their long-gone loved ones. The new law is “crucial to allow relatives of the missing to move on with their lives like everyone else, instead of wasting them waiting”, she said.

Law 105 gives families the right to know the place of abduction or detention of their loved one, as well as the whereabouts of their remains and the right to retrieve them. To do this, the cabinet must set up an official commission of inquiry to gather testimonies and investigate mass graves. But five months on, nothing has been done. Former lawmaker Ghassan Moukheiber, who co-drafted the law, said political will was key to moving forward. The “decision to pass this law now needs to be translated into appointing a commission and facilitating its work”, he said.

The probing body is to include, among others, family

representatives, lawyers, an academic and a forensic doctor. Once formed, its first task should be to draw up a unified list of all those missing, Moukheiber said. They will have to “track down... those still alive and work towards their return, as well as retrieving the remains of those killed or dead”, he said.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has said it is willing to hand over all information and DNA samples it has collected into a database on the missing since 2012. But what Moukheiber describes as the commission’s “purely humanitarian” mission is also a highly sensitive one. After Lebanon’s war ended, parliament in 1991 passed a general amnesty law that saw former warlords breathe a sigh of relief and move on to politics.

Almost three decades later, their parties are still going strong, and persisting differences have repeatedly sparked government deadlocks. “A number of parties that were once militias and have... a past of war crimes have started to at least tentatively fear this commission’s future work,” Moukheiber said.

With numerous groups implicated, choosing where to start will also be delicate. “In what mass grave should the inquiry begin?” asked the former lawmaker. “There are burial grounds all over Lebanon, in every area once under control of” an armed group, he said. “Choosing where and how to exhume these graves will require wisdom and courage.”

All previous calls to investigate the fate of Lebanon’s missing have come up against uncooperative political parties and inactive governments. Researcher Lokman Slim, who has spent years gathering data on the missing, says there was little chance the commission would produce tangible results. “That a political authority with blood-drenched hands actually voted on this law just means that it doesn’t fear its consequences,” said the head of the



BEIRUT: Mothers and relatives of Lebanese citizens who disappeared or went missing since the Lebanese civil war in 1975 carry their pictures during a press conference in this Nov 28, 2018 photo. — AFP

Umam Documentation and Research center.

“It knows very well that, as with so many issues in Lebanon, the law will simply remain ink on paper. In parliament, in government, in the circles of Lebanese leaders, there are dozens... who have the detailed information we need about the fate of the missing or locations of mass graves,” Slim said. But he says he doubts the law’s ability

to spark collective introspection into “what led them into a bloody war” in the first place.

Relatives of the missing, however, are determined. “Successive governments have accused us of pouring salt into old wounds,” said Halwani. But “the whole of society needs to know the truth because it’s the only way forward towards real reconciliation”, she added. — AFP

Egypt inmates dread noose as executions rise

CAIRO: After years of anxiously waiting in cramped prison cells, appointments with the noose can come fast to the many on Egypt’s death row. Leila’s brother Amr was hanged in February. The news of his impending execution - one of many carried out under incumbent President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi - shook her. “I found out at night that he would be hanged the next day,” Leila told AFP, which has used pseudonyms in this story to protect families’ identities. “We were all in shock. My mother was hysterical,” Leila said. “It was a very tough night. I wouldn’t wish it on anyone”.

Amr was accused, along with eight others, of assassinating former prosecutor general Hisham Barakat, who was killed in a car bomb in June 2015. Leila said Amr was preparing to get married - buying suits and readying a new home - when he was arrested in Feb 2016, in the family residence in a major southern Egyptian town. She alleges he disappeared for two

weeks, and that the family only found out where he was thanks to lawyers, and relatives of other prisoners. Amr said she saw signs of torture, including scars, on her brother’s body during jail visits.

Executions - always by hanging - have risen sharply under Sisi, with a second term in March last year. So far this year, fifteen people have been executed in two separate trials, calculations by AFP show. And between early 2017 and late 2018, Egypt executed 92 people, according to a recent report by local rights groups Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and Adalah for Rights and Freedoms. These numbers are far higher than for previous governments, including that of former dictator Hosni Mubarak, who was deposed in the 2011 Arab Spring protests. A total of 11 people were executed in the last three full years of Mubarak’s rule, according to Amnesty International.

At a February summit with European Union leaders in the resort town of Sharm El Sheikh, Sisi vehemently defended use of the death penalty. “You are not going to teach us about our humanity...respect our humanity...as we respect yours,” he said. The United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on executions Agnes Callamard told AFP the increased “use of the death penalty ... (constitutes) arbitrary killings” that are designed to crush dissent. — AFP

World Bank recognizes Amir...

Continued from Page 1

The status of Kuwait today is amongst the ranks of advanced nations in the field of development-related work. Speaking to KUNA after the ceremony, Hajraf said the award “shows how this leader and historic man is being highly appreciated by international institutions”. “We and the World Bank Group are sending a message of appreciation for the great role of His Highness the Amir which has contributed to this well-deserved recognition...and for his relentless faithful endeavors to promote peace, support sustainable development at the social and economic levels, as well as help countries in need around the globe,” he said.

Georgieva also commended the partnership between Kuwait and the World Bank. She praised Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development’s role in supporting development in developing countries, and said Kuwait’s hosting of the Feb 2018 international conference for the reconstruction of Iraq reflected the Gulf country’s development, peace and humanitarian role. Belhaj

thanked Kuwait and its leadership for supporting sustainable development and elimination of poverty worldwide. Belhaj also commended Kuwait’s contributions to regional and international institutions, including the International Development Association (IDA), which is a World Bank Group’s key body.

Kuwait’s Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah, in a statement to KUNA, congratulated HH the Amir for his unprecedented award by the World Bank, the second international institution to honor the Amir in five years. HH the Amir “plays a great role in the humanitarian and development work. We in Kuwait know that very well, but now it is global; this is why this day should be a source of pride for people of Kuwait,” said Sheikh Salem.

Mirza Hassan, World Bank’s Executive Director and Head of Board of Executive Directors, said: “We are very proud of this well-deserved honoring of HH the Amir.” Mirza, a Kuwaiti himself, commended Kuwait’s contribution to development ever since it joined the World Bank in 1962 and establishment of KFAED a year earlier. Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait Mohammad Al-Hashel said the award was a reflection of HH the Amir’s instructions to help the needy and spread peace around the world. Director of Kuwait’s Cultural Bureau in Washington Aseel Al-Awadhi congratulated HH the Amir, who she considered a “role model”. — KUNA

way he can “tailor their treatment”, he adds. As many as 1,200 children with diabetes - Qataris and expats - are expected to take part in the project, Hussain says, with the first findings expected to be published sometime in July.

The small size and huge wealth of Qatar helps make professor Hussain’s study possible. He says only “Norway and Sweden” have made similar attempts to get the “whole picture”. His office may be modest but it sits in the vast new \$8 billion Sidra medical center and overlooks 14 giant bronze sculptures by artist Damien Hirst charting the moment of conception to birth - a testament to the Qatar’s riches.

Zain Al-Yahri runs weekly diabetes camps - unrelated to the Sidra study - to help children cope with the disease. He says diabetes not only has an impact on children but also their parents. “A lot of kids here, especially in Qatar or in the Middle East, when the kids become diabetic, parents feel like they have failed him,” says Yahri. At the camp is eight-year-old Ali Mohamed Ali Alazba. “I have two brothers that are bigger than me that have diabetes,” he says. “So, at home, we have three that have diabetes.”

Back at Sidra, professor Hussain says his study is already having an impact. After speaking with AFP he was about to tell a 15-year-old patient he would no longer need insulin injections - “which he hates” - and would instead use oral medication to manage his diabetes. “If we can start working on them early, identify them now and stop them from developing diabetes as adults, we will have achieved something,” he says. — AFP

US takes a backseat in new mini-Arab Spring

WASHINGTON: The United States initially cheered on the Arab Spring but as fresh popular uprisings sweep through Sudan and Algeria, President Donald Trump has taken a more passive role, convinced that strongmen can be his best partners. The State Department on Thursday hailed the “historic moment” as Sudan’s President Omar Al-Bashir was toppled after 30 years in power but appeared to be taken by surprise, with a senior official just days earlier declining to describe the mounting protests as a “crisis”.

In both Sudan and Algeria, where veteran president Abdelaziz Bouteflika was pushed out last week, the United States has only gently encouraged the two countries’ new military leaders to support democracy, voicing support for “the people”. The reticence contrasts with former president Barack Obama who in his speeches allied himself with the aspirations of street protesters, even if he also turned hesitant as the region became engulfed in bloodshed.

Trump sent a powerful, if unstated, message on protests Tuesday at the White House when he welcomed and hailed Egypt’s military ruler turned president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, who in 2013 deposed the leader elected after the Arab Spring, with authorities shortly afterward killing 700 protesters in two Cairo squares. Testifying later Tuesday before a Senate subcommittee, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pointedly refused to call Sisi a “tyrant”.

“There’s no doubt that it’s a mean, nasty world out there. But not every one of these leaders is the same,” said Pompeo, who liberally denounces the leaders of Venezuela and Iran as tyrants. “Some of them are trying to wipe entire nations off the face of the Earth and others are actually partnering with us to help keep Americans safe,” he said.

Trump has praised Sisi’s crackdown on Islamic State extremists and forged a close bond with Saudi leaders despite the killing of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The US leader has even said he is “in love” with North Korea’s Kim Jong Un, described by human rights groups

New junta ruler vows to ‘uproot’...

Continued from Page 1

Salih Ghosh had overseen a sweeping crackdown led by NISS agents against protesters taking part in four months of mass demonstrations that led to the toppling of Bashir in a palace coup by the army on Thursday. Dozens of protesters were killed and thousands of activists, opposition leaders and journalists arrested.

The police said Friday that 16 people had been killed in live fire in Khartoum alone over the previous two days as NISS agents led a desperate last stand for Bashir before the army intervened. A photograph published by state news agency SUNA had shown Burhan talking with protesters outside army headquarters on Friday, before his elevation to the top job.

Khartoum erupted with joy when Ibn Ouf tendered his resignation on Friday night barely 24 hours after taking the oath of office. Car horns sounded as jubilant crowds streamed out of their homes chanting: “It fell again, it fell again”. But the organizers of the mass protests called on demonstrators to keep up their week-old vigil outside army headquarters. Ibn Ouf had served as Bashir’s defense minister right up to the president’s downfall, after three decades of iron-fisted rule.

A former military intelligence chief, Ibn Ouf remains under US sanctions for his role in the regime’s brutal response to an ethnic minority rebellion which erupted in the western region of Darfur in 2003. Bashir himself came to power in a 1989 Islamist military coup, which toppled an elected government led by Sadiq Al-Mahdi. Burhan is a career soldier who comes with less baggage from Bashir’s deeply unpopular rule than Ibn Ouf.

The Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA),

as perhaps the world’s most repressive leader, as Trump seeks to negotiate a landmark nuclear accord.

Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the left-leaning Center for American Progress, said that Trump “seems to have a personal affinity for dictators and autocrats of all stripes around the world” and has also stripped down US diplomatic resources. “For more than two years, the Trump administration has gutted America’s diplomatic tools to respond to the complicated political transitions unfolding in Sudan and Algeria, and his team has made freedom and democracy a much lower priority in America’s foreign policy agenda than any other US administration in recent memory,” Katulis said. “So in a very real sense, America is sitting on the sidelines and not doing much but watching events unfold,” he said.

Katulis called the absence “a missed opportunity,” as the United States has a strong interest in encouraging reforms - and as the Arab world could still see more uprisings. While Trump is unequivocal in backing US-friendly authoritarian rulers, Obama was more conflicted. In 2011, he made the fateful decision to encourage Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak to bow to protesters and exit, despite the long-time president’s alliance with Washington and Israel’s continued support for him. Obama balked at intervening in Syria’s brutal conflict and only reluctantly backed a campaign to oust Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, which eight years later remains a war zone.

And it was the Obama administration that opened a dialogue offering to ease sanctions and mend ties with Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of genocide and war crimes in Darfur. Robert Malley, a former aide to Obama who is now president of the International Crisis Group, said the Trump administration was “playing it much more carefully” on backing protesters. But the critical question is how the administration supports the countries’ transitions, he said.

Sudan’s demonstrators, he said, are unlikely to be satisfied by coup leaders’ decision to stay in power for two years. “It will be important for the new leadership in Khartoum, whatever it is, to understand that sanctions are still there and won’t be lifted until certain steps are taken,” Malley said. “In both Sudan and Algeria, the big questions start now,” he said. — AFP

whose grassroots membership of doctors, teachers and engineers have spearheaded the nationwide protests, hailed Ibn Ouf’s departure as “a victory of the people’s will”. But it demanded that Burhan swiftly “transfer the powers of the military council to a transitional civilian government”. “If this does not happen we will continue with our sit-in in front of the army headquarters and other towns,” the SPA said in a statement.

Bashir remained in custody and his National Congress Party yesterday called on the military council to release arrested personnel. “We consider (the) taking of power by the military council as violating the constitution’s legitimacy,” the NCP said in a statement. “The NCP rejects the detention of its leaders, among them its acting president” Ahmed Harun, it added, calling for their immediate release.

Outside the Middle East, the formation of a military government to replace Bashir has met with widespread criticism. The African Union said Bashir’s overthrow by the military was “not the appropriate response to the challenges facing Sudan and the aspirations of its people”. The European Union urged the army to carry out a “swift” handover to civilian rule. Former colonial ruler Britain said that the two-year transition announced by the military “is not the answer”. “We need to see a swift move to an inclusive, representative, civilian leadership,” said Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Members of the military council have sought to reassure foreign diplomats about its intentions. “This is not a military coup, but taking the side of the people,” the council’s political chief Lieutenant General Omar Zain al-Abdin told Arab and African diplomats at a meeting broadcast on state television on Friday. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has long standing arrest warrants against Bashir for suspected genocide and war crimes during the regime’s brutal campaign of repression in Darfur. But the military council has said it would never extradite him or any other Sudanese citizen. —AFP

San Francisco Giants outlast Colorado Rockies in 18 innings

Astros blast two slams, snap Mariners’ win streak

SAN FRANCISCO: Brandon Belt opened the 18th inning with a double, and he slid home on Erik Kratz’s bases-loaded ground ball one out later, giving the San Francisco Giants a 3-2 victory over the Colorado Rockies in a game that started on Friday night and ended on Saturday morning. The win was the Giants’ second in two games in the four-game series and gave them their first winning streak of the season. Colorado, which led 2-0 but did not score in the final 14 innings, dropped its seventh straight. Left-hander Travis Bergen (2-0) got the win for the Giants after pitching two scoreless innings, striking out five. The game was the longest of the major league season as well as the longest in Rockies-Giants history.

ASTROS 10, MARINERS 6

Jose Altuve and Yuli Gurriel hit grand slams as Houston defeated host Seattle. It was the fourth consecutive game in which Altuve has gone deep, and he has five home runs over that span. George Springer also homered for the Astros, who extended their winning streak to seven games. The Mariners had their six-game winning streak snapped. Tom Murphy hit a solo homer in the ninth inning to extend the Mariners’ major league record of consecutive games with a home run to start a season to 16.

METS 6, BRAVES 2

Brandon Nimmo belted a two-run homer to highlight his three-hit performance as visiting New York won at Atlanta. The Mets matched a franchise record by scoring at least six runs in their sixth straight game. Jeff McNeil ripped a two-run double and Robinson Cano and Michael Conforto each had an RBI double for the Mets, who also scored at least six runs in six straight games in 1997, 1998 and twice in 2007. Georgia native Zack Wheeler (1-1) allowed two runs on six hits and struck out eight to improve to 6-3 in 11 career starts versus the Braves.

RED SOX 6, ORIOLES 4

Eduardo Rodriguez became the first Red Sox starter to win a game this season as Boston held off visiting Baltimore in the opener of a four-game series. Rodriguez, who entered the seventh having allowed just one hit, gave up a two-run home run to Dwight Smith Jr. with two outs in the inning, ending his night. He yielded the two runs on three hits, striking out eight and walking none. Entering the game, Boston starters had been 0-8 with a league-worst 8.79 ERA this year.

The Orioles dropped their fourth straight game and have lost eight of their past nine following a 4-1 start.

PHILLIES 9, MARLINS 1

Andrew McCutchen went 3-for-4 with a three-run homer as Philadelphia routed host Miami. Jean Segura also had three hits, and J.T. Realmuto and Bryce Harper each had two hits and one RBI as the Phillies snapped a two-game losing streak. This was Realmuto’s first game against the Marlins, the team that drafted him. Marlins catcher Jorge Alfaro—who arrived from the Phillies in the Realmuto trade this spring—went 2-for-3 with a run. Jake Arrieta (2-1) struck out eight batters in seven innings to earn the win. He allowed five hits, one walk and one run.

PIRATES 6, NATIONALS 3 (10 INNINGS)

Pinch hitter Colin Moran hit a three-run homer in the top of the 10th off Justin Miller on an 0-2 pitch as Pittsburgh prevailed in a back-and-forth contest with Washington. Miller has now allowed four homers this year in seven outings. Moran was batting for Jung Ho Kang after Melky Cabrera and Adam Frazier got on base against Matt Grace (0-1). The winner was Nick Burdi (1-1), who allowed a double by Howie Kendrick in the ninth but didn’t give up a run. Former Nationals pitcher Felipe Vazquez pitched the last of the 10th for the Pirates to earn his fourth save of the season.

RAYS 11, JAYS 7

Austin Meadows and Brandon Lowe each homered twice—including one each into the 500 level—and visiting Tampa Bay defeated Toronto. The blasts were the 21st and 22nd home runs hit to the 500 level of Rogers Centre since it opened in 1989. Willy Adames added a two-run homer for the Rays. Luke Maile homered for the Blue Jays, who rallied from an 8-0 deficit to draw within one run before the Rays scored three in the ninth.

ATHLETICS 8, RANGERS 6

Khris Davis continued his slugging ways with an eighth-inning solo homer that completed visiting Oakland’s rally from a five-run deficit for a win in Arlington, Texas. It was Davis’ fifth home run in his last three games and his 10th of the season. His grounder to third base in the sixth inning scored Mark Canha as part of a four-run rally that included an RBI double from Stephen Piscotty that shrunk a 6-1 Rangers lead to 6-5. In his first game against his former team, A’s second baseman Jurickson Profar had two hits, drove in



SAN FRANCISCO: Trevor Story #27 of the Colorado Rockies tags out Kevin Pillar #1 of the San Francisco Giants stealing second base in the bottom of the fifth inning at Oracle Park in San Francisco, California. —AFP

Oakland’s first run and scored the A’s final run, an insurance run in the ninth.

PADRES 2, DIAMONDBACKS 1

Four San Diego pitchers retired the final 19 batters, Fernando Tatis Jr. doubled home the tiebreaking run in the seventh inning, and the Padres beat Arizona in Phoenix. Padres rookie Chris Paddack allowed three hits and one run in 5 1/3 innings. He was pulled after 88 pitches despite retiring eight consecutive batters following an RBI single by David Peralta in the third inning. Paddack struck out five and walked one in out-dueling Arizona’s Luke Weaver (0-1). Gerardo Reyes, called up from Triple-A El Paso earlier Friday, retired both batters he faced to end the sixth inning and get a win in his major league debut. Adam Warren worked two perfect innings before giving way to Kirby Yates, who earned his eighth save.

ROYALS 8, INDIANS 1

Kansas City hit for the cycle its first time through the order and grabbed its biggest lead of the season in a

six-run first inning en route to a victory over visiting Cleveland. The Royals snapped a 10-game losing streak. Brad Keller (2-1) gave up one run on three hits and five walks over 6 2/3 innings, with a career-high 10 strikeouts. He has now pitched at least six innings in nine straight starts, the longest active streak in the majors. Alex Gordon had four hits, including three extra-base hits, and three RBIs for the Royals.

WHITE SOX 9, YANKEES 6 (7 INNINGS)

Eloy Jimenez snapped a tie with his first career home run, a two-run shot in the fifth inning, then homered in his next at-bat in the seventh as Chicago halted a five-game losing streak with a rain-shortened victory over host New York. In his 46th career at-bat, the rookie left fielder gave the White Sox a 7-5 lead by leaving no doubt about his milestone. Jimenez slugged a 2-1 four-seam fastball by Jonathan Holder over the center field fence and on to the netting above Monument Park. The game was halted after a delay in the top of the seventh inning. —Reuters

Lomachenko destroys Crolla with fourth round KO to retain lightweight title

LOS ANGELES: Southpaw Vasiliy Lomachenko brutally knocked out former title holder Anthony Crolla in the fourth round Friday to retain his World Boxing Association and World Boxing Organization lightweight titles.

The 31-year-old Lomachenko delivered a devastating right hook to the temple that sent the Englishman crashing face first to the canvas just 58 seconds into the fourth round. The Ukrainian pound-for-pound king had his complete arsenal at his disposal, including blazing hand speed, devastating punching power and a superior ring IQ.

It turns out he didn’t need it as in the end he barely broke a sweat to retain his WBO title for the second time. “I want to unify all the titles,” said Lomachenko, adding he wants to fight Mikey Garcia, who holds the WBC lightweight title. “I want to thank all the fans who came to support me.”

The knockout came just one round after Lomachenko scored the first knockdown of the fight when he landed a barrage of rights and lefts while the challenger was pinned and defenceless on the ropes. Lomachenko initially thought the fight had been stopped. The crowd of 10,100 at Staples Center Arena came looking for a knockout and they got exactly that. The knockout punch was so loud it could be heard by those sitting outside the ring.

Crolla remained face first on the canvas until his trainer came into the ring and helped him roll over. He stayed there for some time but even when he was helped to his feet his camp still had to support his wobbly legs.

Lomachenko appeared to injure his hand and was seen



LOS ANGELES: Vasiliy Lomachenko celebrates defending his WBA/WBO lightweight titles after knocking out Anthony Crolla at Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

holding it and talking to his trainer after the fight. Lomachenko, a two time Olympic gold medallist, improved to 13-1 with 10 knockouts as he dominated the third and fourth rounds against Crolla who was a massive 100-1 underdog. Crolla dropped to 34-7-3 as he landed just a handful of punches and only survived the third round because of the bell.

Crolla, 32, wasn’t Lomachenko’s first choice as an opponent. Lomachenko wanted to fight IBF champion Richard Commey, but Commey suffered a hand injury. Had Lomachenko not taken the Crolla fight, he would have been stripped of one of his 135-pound belts.

Lomachenko’s rise to the top of the boxing world has been meteoric. He fought for a world title in just his second professional fight and is the fastest fighter in history to become a three division world champion.

Crolla, who was the top ranked mandatory contender, held the WBA belt from 2015-2016.

But Crolla has now lost three of his last six fights. He lost his belt in consecutive defeats to Jorge Linares before winning three straight bouts.

Just being in the ring is a win for Crolla. Four years ago he was badly injured after confronting two men who broke into a neighbour’s house. — AFP

Big comeback win keeps NZ perfect at Singapore Sevens

SINGAPORE: New Zealand produced a stirring comeback as they recovered from a 17-point deficit to beat Samoa and top their pool with a perfect record at the World Rugby Sevens Series in Singapore yesterday.

Series leaders the United States, South Africa and Australia were also undefeated on the opening day of the tournament, while defending champions Fiji and England reached the quarter-finals despite losing two games in their respective pools.

The top two teams from each of the four pools advanced to the last eight today at the National Stadium with New Zealand set to face Fiji while Australia meet England, South Africa take on Samoa and the US go up against Argentina.

New Zealand started the tournament with big wins against Japan (43-0) and Spain (53-0) but they appeared to be headed for defeat in their last Pool D game when

David Afamasaga scored early in the second half to give Samoa a 17-5 lead.

However, the All Blacks Sevens came storming back with converted tries by Regan Ware, Tim Mikkelsen and Akuila Rokolisoa giving them a 26-22 win. The US also began well in Singapore as they topped Group C after victories against Wales (31-12), Kenya (17-14) and England (22-7).

The English had earlier suffered a surprise 12-0 loss to Wales but they scraped through to the quarter-finals with a better point differential than the Welsh because of a 36-7 victory over Kenya in their opening game.

Fiji won the Hong Kong Sevens for the fifth consecutive time last week but the defence of their title in Singapore did not start well as they were beaten 19-12 by Scotland and 17-7 by South Africa in Pool A. However, a 50-12 victory against Canada saw them go through on a better point differential.



SINGAPORE: France’s Gabin Villiere (R) is tackled by Australia’s Henry Hutchison as teammate Maurice Longbottom (L) looks on during the Singapore Rugby Sevens match between France and Australia in Singapore yesterday. — AFP

South Africa topped the section after beating Scotland 36-10 and Canada 36-0 in their earlier games. France reached the final of the last two tournaments in Vancouver

and Hong Kong, but they finished third in Pool B and will be playing for the challenge trophy in Singapore after losing 24-12 to Australia and 19-7 to Argentina. — AFP

Ginting stuns Chou to continue dream run in Singapore

SINGAPORE: Anthony Sinisuka Ginting used his leaping smash to devastating effect to end Chou Tien-chen’s Singapore Open title defence with a thrilling semi-final victory yesterday. The athletic Indonesian caused a major upset against double world champion Chen Long on Friday, and backed it up with another brilliant display to claim a 21-17 18-21 21-14 triumph at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

A contest of contrasting styles saw Ginting employ an aggressive attacking approach as Taiwan’s Chou was content to defend and counter when opportunities arose. After splitting the first two games, Ginting sent Chou sprawling around the court with a series of booming smashes to surge seven points clear in the decider, going on to complete victory with a smart lob beyond his opponent.

“Yes, I have enjoyed two good wins in as many days, but now my focus is on recovering for tomorrow’s final,” the 22-year-old world number nine told reporters. Ginting will need to deliver another shock today after Kento Momota displayed his credentials as world number one with a 21-15 21-18 victory over third seed Viktor Axelsen in the other semi-final.

Momota eased through the opener but was buried by a barrage of crosscourt smashes to trail 16-6 in the second, before the left-hander rallied for victory in 46 minutes. Earlier, Taiwan’s Tai Tzu-ying battled back from the brink of defeat to stun Japan’s Akane Yamaguchi in another three-game thriller to book a spot in the women’s singles final.

The world number one showed patience and resolve in abundance as she saved five match points before securing a 15-21 24-22 21-19 victory in a rematch of last week’s Malaysian Open final, which Tai also won.

“It helped that I am familiar with her game. I felt relaxed towards the end of the match as Yamaguchi started to make more mistakes,” Tai said. The unflappable Tai will meet another Japanese player in the final after Nozomi Okuhara enjoyed a much more routine victory, the second seed easing past India’s P.V. Sindhu 21-7 21-11 in just 37 minutes. — AFP

Jackets blow out Lightning for stunning 2-0 series edge

Blues win see-saw battle to take 2-0 series lead over Jets

TAMPA BAY: Matt Duchene had a goal and three assists as the Columbus Blue Jackets defeated the host Tampa Bay Lightning 5-1 Friday night, taking a stunning 2-0 lead in an Eastern Conference first-round playoff series. Tampa Bay lost each of the first two games of the best-of-seven series at home after tying the NHL single-season record for wins (62). Nikita Kucherov, who led the NHL with 128 points this season, was held pointless and had just three shots on goal. Kucherov's frustration was apparent, as he was assessed a minor penalty for tripping, a major penalty for boarding and a game misconduct for an incident involving Columbus' Markus Nutivaara with 4:26 remaining. The Lightning star will have a hearing Saturday with the NHL's department of player safety to discuss that hit. Per the NHL, boarding is the grounds on which the league is considering additional discipline-which could include a suspension.

ISLANDERS 3, PENGUINS 1

Jordan Eberle and Josh Bailey scored fewer than four minutes apart in the third period of Game 2 of the Eastern Conference quarterfinals for New York, which beat Pittsburgh in Uniondale, NY. The Islanders, who have home-ice advantage for the first time since 1988, hold a 2-0 series lead for the first time since they swept the Edmonton Oilers in the 1983 Stanley Cup. Among NHL, NBA and MLB teams, only baseball's Montreal Expos/Washington Nationals and Pittsburgh Pirates have gone longer without holding a 2-0 series lead. The Penguins are down 0-2 in a series for the first time since being swept by the Boston Bruins in the 2013

Eastern Conference finals.

BLUES 4, JETS 3

Ryan O'Reilly's early-third-period goal was the game-winner as visiting St. Louis beat Winnipeg to claim both road games in the Manitoba capital and stake a 2-0 lead in their opening-round Western Conference playoff series. With the score tied in the third period in a back-and-forth affair, O'Reilly raced up the ice and used the defenseman as a screen when he shot from the right faceoff dot and hit the mark on the stick side at the 3:46 mark of the final frame. Taking a lead for the third time was the charm for the Blues. Oskar Sundqvist scored twice for St. Louis, which also got a goal from Patrick Maroon. Patrik Laine, Mark Scheifele and Blake Wheeler scored for Winnipeg.

KNIGHTS 5, SHARKS 3

Max Pacioretty had a goal and an assist, and William Karlsson and Colin Miller each scored short-handed goals to lead Vegas past host San Jose to even their first-round Western Conference playoff series at 1-1. Mark Stone and Cody Eakin also scored goals, and Paul Stastny added two assists for Vegas. Marc-Andre Fleury finished with 34 saves for his 76th career playoff win, one behind Mike Vernon for seventh all-time. Logan Couture had a goal and an assist, Joe Thornton and Tomas Hertl also scored goals, and Erik Karlsson had two assists for San Jose, which finished just 1-for-8 on the power play. Aaron Dell, who replaced Martin Jones at the 6:39 mark of the first period, wound up with 14 saves. — Reuters



TAMPA: Nick Foligno #71 of the Columbus Blue Jackets blocks a shot in front of teammate David Savard #58 as Yann Gourde #37 and Tyler Johnson #9 of the Tampa Bay Lightning look for a rebound during the first period in Game Two of the Eastern Conference First Round during the 2019 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Amalie Arena in Tampa, Florida. — AFP

Lakers split with embattled head coach Luke Walton

LOS ANGELES: The Los Angeles Lakers continued their clearout after a disastrous first season following the arrival of LeBron James by terminating the contract of head coach Luke Walton on Friday.

The club said they had mutually agreed to part ways. "We would like to thank Luke for his dedicated service over the last three years," said general manager Rob Pelinka. "We wish Luke and his family the best of luck moving forward."

Walton, a former Lakers player, had been coach since 2016, building a 98-148 won loss record. The Lakers have failed to reach the playoffs for the last three seasons. "I want to thank Jeanie Buss and the Buss family for giving me the opportunity to coach the Lakers," said Walton. "This franchise and the city will always be special to me and my family."

On Tuesday, Magic Johnson plunged the Lakers into further crisis when he surprisingly quit his post as president. Johnson was reportedly unhappy at the prospect of firing Walton. Despite the addition of future hall of famer James 10 months ago, the Lakers went 37-45 in what was another embarrassing losing season for the once-storied NBA franchise.

Los Angeles was 20-14 when James suffered a groin injury during a Christmas Day win over the champion Golden State Warriors-and it was downhill from there. "They are losing one of the best human beings in the NBA," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr of Walton and the Lakers. "They are losing a guy who knows the game as well as anybody I've ever met. They are losing somebody who the players believe in and the players want to play for."

"I feel for Luke. He was dependent on circumstances just like all of us We got wonderful people stabilizing our organization every day. I am lucky to be in this position and to be surrounded by these people. It doesn't happen often in the NBA."

What was supposed to be a revival story turned into a season-long nightmare that saw the losses and injuries pile up and eventually led to the club sitting star players like a healthy James down the stretch in a desperate attempt to secure a better pick at the summer entry draft. The team used more than 25 different starting lineups this season.

But even that strategy isn't a sure thing as tanking became such a big problem that the NBA was forced to bring in a lottery system to determine the order of the top draft picks. The Lakers will not only be hunting for a new coach but also a big-ticket free agent as a right-hand man to James. All-star Kevin Durant, Kawhi Leonard and Kyrie Irving top the list of possible targets when free agency begins July 1.

The Lakers are the fourth NBA franchise to unload their coach since the end of the regular season on Wednesday, following Memphis, Sacramento and James's former team Cleveland. Among the candidates for the Lakers' job is Tyrone Lue, who coached James in Cleveland, and Philadelphia 76ers assistant Monty Williams.

"I liked playing for him," Lakers guard Josh Hart said. "He's a player's coach. Lets you kind of play your game, play with passion, so it was fun to play for him. I think he'll get another job fairly quickly."

Walton may not be unemployed for long as the Sacramento Kings are reportedly interested in interviewing him for their vacant post. — AFP

Ganguly backs India opener Dhawan to shine at World Cup

NEW DELHI: There is not a bowler in the world that can stop Shikhar Dhawan when the opener is in determined mood and the left-hander will be crucial to India's hopes at this year's Cricket World Cup, former captain Sourav Ganguly has said.

Dhawan smashed 97 not out off 63 balls in Delhi Capitals' seven-wicket victory against Kolkata Knight Riders in Friday's Indian Premier League (IPL) contest at Eden Gardens, much to the delight of Ganguly, an advisor to the Capitals.

Captain Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma are India's batting mainstays in one-day cricket but Ganguly puts Dhawan, who has 16 centuries from 128 ODIs with a 93-plus strike rate, in the same league.

"The three best players in one-day cricket-Dhawan, Rohit, Virat," Ganguly told the IPL website. "When he (Dhawan) gets set and gets in he's unstoppable. "All I expect from him is determination. When he is determined, no bowler in the world can stop him."

Dhawan's second fifty of this IPL season, which catapulted Delhi into the top four, augurs well for India ahead of the May 30 to July 14 World Cup in England and Wales. Along with opening partner Rohit, the onus



KOLKATA: Delhi Capitals' Shikhar Dhawan plays a shot during the 2019 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Capitals at the Eden Gardens Cricket Stadium, in Kolkata. — AFP

will be on Dhawan to give India strong starts in the tournament and the southpaw has performed well on English soil.

Named 'man of the series' in their triumphant 2013 Champions Trophy campaign, Dhawan was also the tournament's leading scorer four years later when India

lost in the final to Pakistan. "If he gets set, he takes the game away. This is how he plays for India," Ganguly, who led India to the final of the 2003 World Cup, later told reporters. "He's a class act." Two-time champions India begin their World Cup campaign against South Africa in Southampton on June 5. —Reuters

Tiger stalks stellar leading group in Masters 3rd round

AUGUSTA: Tiger Woods headed into the third round of the Masters yesterday chasing a gold standard gaggle of leaders all out to add to their major championship resumes. Francesco Molinari, Jason Day, Brooks Koepka, Adam Scott and Louis Oosthuizen shared the 36-hole lead on seven-under par 137.

Together they own seven Grand Slam titles-an impressive total but still just half of Woods's 14. And it was the US superstar's push toward the top, with four birdies in his last 10 holes, that had the crowds roaring at Augusta National on Friday.

"It's good stuff," said Woods, who claimed the last of his majors at the 2008 US Open and the most recent of four Masters crowns in 2005. The 43-year-old headed a list of four players on six-under 138, a group that included another major winner in Dustin Johnson.

The odd men out among the top nine were South African Justin Harding, this year's Qatar Masters winner who is making his Masters debut, and American Xander Schauffele, the 2017 US PGA Tour Rookie of the Year who has no major on his resume but does count an elite WGC win among his four tour titles.

"I think it's going to be an incredible weekend," said Scott, the 2013 Masters champion who played the par-5s in four-under on Friday on the way to a four-under 68. Reigning British Open champion Molinari and 2015 PGA Championship winner Jason Day both posted 67s.

Koepka, the two-time reigning US Open and PGA Champion who shared the 18-hole lead with Bryson DeChambeau, endured "atrocious" putting but showed his resilience in a second-round 71. The single-minded American was likely to have no trouble setting aside that rocky round, just as he wasn't one to be intimidated by the wealth of talent at the top.

"Just because it's a major on a Saturday, I'm not going to go out and do anything different," he said. "Nothing changes. I'm not thinking about, 'Man, if I make birdie here this is going to happen.' "I think that's when you feel pressure, when you start thinking about results."

Oosthuizen, the 2010 British Open champion who lost to Bubba Watson in a playoff at the 2012 Masters, had the lowest round of all the leaders with a six-under 66. His goal for Saturday was "a decent, solid round."



AUGUSTA: Tiger Woods of the United States celebrates after making a putt for birdie on the 15th green during the second round of the Masters at Augusta National Golf Club. — AFP

"This golf course, you win it on the back nine today," he said. "We've seen over the years anything can happen on the back nine." Whether that drama will unfold smoothly remains to be seen, with severe weather predicted for crunch time today afternoon.

In the meantime, the week's wet weather may be a boon, Woods said, taking some of the fire out of Augusta's notorious greens. "We were able to stop six-irons and five-irons," he said. "That's something that you don't normally see here."

With so much star-power at the top of the leaderboard, it was easy to overlook the fact that plenty of marquee names weren't too far back. Three-time Masters winner Phil Mickelson was just three adrift after a second-round 73. — AFP

Stokes backs Archer to make England World Cup squad

LONDON: England's Ben Stokes believes fellow all-rounder Jofra Archer has a strong chance of being included in their World Cup squad, saying the "naturally gifted" player could improve any team in world cricket.

Barbados-born Archer, who shone for Sussex last season and in Australia's Big Bash Twenty20 league for Hobart Hurricanes, is eligible for national selection under new England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) residency rules.

The uncapped 24-year-old has played 28 first-class games and has a number of high-profile admirers, including former players Nasser Hussain and Devon Malcolm. "Jofra makes any team better," Stokes told The Doosra podcast on BBC Radio 5 Live.

"He is the most naturally gifted bowler I've seen and I don't think he quite realises how good he is. Some of the things he can do at the click of a finger are just 'wow'. It's pretty special to watch. "To have someone at the pace he bowls and the skills he has... the selectors are going to be scratching their heads... it's a great position to be in as an England team when you've got a player with the skill level Jofra's got."

Archer and Stokes are team mates at Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League. In February, England coach Trevor Bayliss said a decision over Archer was the "final piece of the jigsaw" in their World Cup plans.

Hosts England, who are set to name their provisional squad next week, begin their World Cup campaign against South Africa at The Oval on May 30. — Reuters

Sports

No Kane? No problem as Lucas treble fires Spurs into third

Tottenham have settled well in their new £1 billion north London home

LONDON: Mauricio Pochettino believes Tottenham's 4-0 demolition of Huddersfield could be a key moment in their battle to finish in the Premier League's top four as Lucas Moura's hat-trick filled the void left by Harry Kane. Despite the absence of injured stars Kane and Dele Alli, Pochettino's much-changed side made it three victories from their first three games at the impressive Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Pochettino's understudies filled in nicely as Kenya midfielder Victor Wanyama rolled in the opener before Brazilian forward Lucas took centre-stage with an eye-catching treble. Tottenham have settled well in their new £1 billion north London home and already relegated Huddersfield provided the ideal warm-up for Wednesday's Champions League quarter-final second leg at Manchester City.

Bidding to qualify for next season's Champions League, Tottenham are one point clear of fourth-placed Chelsea and have the best goal difference of the three teams directly below them. "It is going to be a very tough race. To score several goals is important. The goal difference can be decisive to achieve the top four at the end," Pochettino said.

"We have a very tough period. If we approach this period with confidence then we can achieve all the targets we have." It was a reassuring afternoon for Tottenham, whose 1-0 quarter-final first leg win against City on Tuesday came at a heavy cost.

Kane is likely to miss the rest of the season after suffering yet another ankle ligament injury, this time in a tackle on City's Fabian Delph, while Alli sustained a fractured hand that left him unable to face Huddersfield.

Adding to Pochettino's problems, England midfielder Harry Winks was ruled out of Saturday's game with a groin injury. Pochettino admitted Alli is far from certain to return for the City clash.

"We will see. Today it is difficult to say. He needs to

be comfortable to play," he said. "Of course it is a little bit painful because he broke two parts of his hand." But for all the panic about Kane's injury potentially ruining Tottenham's hopes of a successful end to the season, they have won all five of their league games without the England striker this season.

Much sterner tests than Huddersfield lie ahead, including successive Champions League and Premier League matches at City next week, so Pochettino made seven changes, leaving Son Heung-min, Danny Rose, Toby Alderweireld and Kieran Trippier on the bench.

STRENGTH IN DEPTH

Huddersfield were so limited in all areas, that Tottenham's make-shift line-up were able to play their way into rhythm. Showing their strength in depth, Tottenham deservedly took the lead thanks to two of their understudies in the 24th minute.

Ben Davies passed towards Fernando Llorente and the Spaniard used his strength to hold off Jon Gorenc Stankovic, allowing the ball to run to Wanyama. Bursting into the space behind the Huddersfield defence, Wanyama cleverly rounded goalkeeper Ben Hamer before slotting into the empty net for his first goal since February 2018.

Three minutes later, Tottenham struck again. Moussa Sissoko dinked a pass into Lucas's path and the Brazilian took a touch before drilling a fierce shot across Hamer into the far corner. The often maligned Llorente has quietly had a hand in 15 goals in 18 starts for Tottenham, scoring 11 and setting up four.

He almost got another with a volley that cannoned back off the crossbar. Lucas, a candidate to start against City, stole the show in the second half, controlling Eriksen's pass to smash home the third goal in the 87th minute.

Lucas wasn't content with that as he ran through to



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's Brazilian midfielder Lucas Moura (2nd R) shoots past Huddersfield Town's English goalkeeper Ben Hamer (L) to score their fourth goal, his third, during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Huddersfield Town London. — AFP

drive another fine finish past Hamer for the first hat-trick at Tottenham's new stadium. The former Paris Saint Germain star was cheered off as he celebrated his man of the match performance with a kickabout with his 1-year-old son on the pitch after the final whistle.

"I saw him with his son. It's amazing, very emotional, so nice for him. So happy for him and his family," Pochettino said. "Players need to play to show their quality. The hat-trick is going to build his confidence." — AFP

Spectacular Africa Cup of Nations draw throws up intriguing groups

CAIRO: Under the gaze of the Sphinx, a spectacular Africa Cup of Nations draw in Giza on Friday night produced an intriguing set of groups that leave many riddles to be answered. After an open-air event against the illuminated backdrop of the pyramids, hosts Egypt, winners of the competition a record seven times, will face double champions Democratic Republic of Congo. Uganda and Zimbabwe fill the last two places in Group A.

Egypt will kick off the event against Zimbabwe in Cairo on June 21. The tournament ends on July 19. Group F in the 24-team tournament brought together the second and third most successful sides in its history. Cameroon, who won their fifth continental crown last time and were originally set to host the competition, will face four-time win-

ners Ghana. Benin and Guinea-Bissau complete the group.

Every draw contains a so-called 'group of death' and in this instance it is undoubtedly Group D with former champions Morocco, Ivory Coast and South Africa plus outsiders Namibia. Senegal, the only one of the six top seeds never to have won the event, will face a former champion Algeria as well as the East African pair of Kenya and Tanzania in Group C.

Nigeria take on Guinea, Madagascar and Burundi in Group B. Tunisia face Mali, Mauritania and Angola in Group E. The host put on a colourful show, though it strangely included an acrobatic troupe imported from Austria who performed dressed as African zebras.

Uganda coach Sebastian Desabre said: "Our chances in advancing will be tough because of the similar level of the teams in our group. It will be a difficult match-up facing the Pharaohs on their home turf amid their passionate fans." Recently appointed Tunisia coach and former France star Alain Giresse pinpointed their opening match against Angola in Suez as crucial. "Facing Angola in the opening matches of the tournament will decide the fate of which team will top the group," he said.

Group D brings old acquaintances face to face in a deadly struggle. French coach Hervé Renard guided the Ivory Coast to a long-sought title in 2015 — 23 years after they first conquered Africa—and then switched to

Gaza amputees tackle trauma with football

DEIR EL-BALAH: When 12-year-old Abdel Rahman Nofel was shot in the leg near the Gaza border, he thought he would never play football again.

But on an artificial pitch in the coastal enclave, the young amputee controlled the ball, leaned heavily on his crutches and took a shot.

He is one of dozens of players preparing for kick-off later in Gaza's first football tournament for amputees. More than 6,500 people have been shot by Israeli forces during a year of weekly mass protests along the Gaza border, according to Palestinian figures. More than 125 have had amputations and many others are permanently disabled. Nofel, the youngest in his team, said he was shot during a kick-about near where protestors were clashing with Israeli forces. He was transferred to the occupied West Bank for treatment and eventually given an artificial limb. "I hadn't thought of playing again," he said. But his father received a phone call from a member of the team.

"They told him there's a match for people with amputations," Nofel said. Gaza's first football team for amputees pre-dates the protests, with most players either born disabled or losing limbs in the three wars between Israel and Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas.

But interest has grown strongly since the start of the protests. Protestors launched weekly rallies in March 2018 demanding Israel lift its crippling blockade of Gaza and allow refugees to return to homes their families fled in the late 1940s as the Jewish state was born.

Some have burned tyres and thrown rocks and explosive devices at Israeli forces, who have responded with live ammunition. At least 264 Palestinians have been killed, along with two Israeli soldiers. Israel has been widely criticised for what rights groups say is a heavy-handed response.

Simon Baker, head of the European Amputee Football Federation who was visiting Gaza to train the six teams taking part in today's tournament, said he aimed to keep politics out of his work. "None of these players have talked about what happened to them and I haven't asked them, because we are here to play football," he said. Baker, who himself lost a leg in a building site accident, said sport can help sufferers of trauma to recover.

"Any sport... is a great way to rehabilitate people and get people back into society," he told AFP. "Just because you have lost your leg, it doesn't mean you are disabled, it doesn't mean you are useless." — AFP



GAZA: Palestinian amputees using crutches participate in a football match overseen by Irish coach Simon Baker, general secretary of the European Amputee Football Federation, in Gaza City yesterday. On a pitch in the coastal enclave of Gaza, young amputees leaning heavily on crutches controlled footballs and make shots, as they play in the first football tournament for amputees. —AFP

Women footballers find the world is finally watching

PARIS: During the first Women's World Cup in 1991, only fans in host nation China could watch games on television. This year's edition in France will be shown live in more than 200 countries. FIFA, the governing body of world football, is aiming for a global audience of one billion for the 24-team women's football showcase that runs from June 7 to July 7.

The competition can help women's football emerge from the shadow of the men's game, particularly in Jamaica and South Africa, who have qualified for the first time. In some countries, particularly where the national team excels, women's football has been more and more visible on TV with more and more women working as analysts and commentators. Audiences have been growing too.

In the United States, three-time world champions and four-times Olympic gold medalists, the biggest TV audience to view a football match was 27 million who tuned in for the 2015 World Cup final win over Japan, played in a

convenient time zone in Vancouver, Canada.

In Japan, who won the 2011 World Cup and lost the 2012 London Olympics final, both against the United States, a women's match at the London Games drew a 30 percent share of the TV audience.

"There is a tradition of sport on TV that has been expressed through men's sport," said Laurent-Eric Le Lay, director of sports at France Television, one of the host broadcasters for the upcoming World Cup.

However, in France, advertising slots during women's matches shown on prime-time cost as little as half those shown during men's World Cup games. "Women's football developed later. Maybe one day the trend will be reversed," explained Le Lay.

Attention is increasing though, and that is both a product of the rising level of the women's game and a stimulus to the rising level. With standards being raised across the board, competition is improving all the time.

"The sporting show is of interest, a priori, only when there is a real opposition", said Yann Imine, a professor at Paris-Sud University where he specialises in the development of women's football. Germany is one of the leading forces in women's football, and the women's game there has really been on the rise since the country hosted the competition in 2011. National team matches are regularly broadcast.

A key moment came in 2014 when Turbine Potsdam refused a request from Eurosport to put back the kick-off of a Champions League semi-final against German rivals Wolfsburg because the broadcaster was showing motor sports.

In Brazil, the World Cup could be a pivotal moment for women's football. For the first time, Globo, the country's biggest TV channel, is showing all the national team's games.

In the past, TV largely ignored the Brazil women's team even though Marta was world player of the year six times. — AFP



PADERBORN: File photo shows Germany's goalkeeper Almuth Schult (2ndL) jumps to save a ball that Germany's Pauline Bremer (R) stops during the friendly football match Germany v Japan in Paderborn, western Germany on April 9, 2019. — AFP

<div><div><div><div><div></div></div></div><div>Live</div></div></div> <div>Matches on TV</div> <div>(Local Timings)</div>		
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Crystal Palace FC v Manchester City	16:05	
beIN SPORTS		
Liverpool v Chelsea FC	18:30	
beIN SPORTS		
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Real Valladolid v Getafe CF	13:00	
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Athletic de Bilbao v Rayo Vallecano	15:00	
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Real Sociedad v SD Eibar	17:15	
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Girona v Villarreal CF	19:30	
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Valencia CF v Levante	21:45	
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Torino FC v Cagliari Calcio	13:30	
beIN SPORTS		
ACF Fiorentina v Bologna FC	16:00	
beIN SPORTS HD 12 EN		
US Sassuolo Calcio v Parma Calcio 1913	16:00	
beIN SPORTS		
UC Sampdoria v Genoa CFC	16:00	
beIN SPORTS		
AC Chievo Verona v SSC Napoli	19:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Frosinone Calcio v Internazionale Milano	21:30	
beIN SPORTS		
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
TSG 1899 Hoffenheim v Hertha Berlin	14:30	
beIN SPORTS HD 8		
Fortuna D.sseldorf v Bayern Munich	16:30	
beIN SPORTS		
Eintracht Frankfurt v FC Augsburg	19:00	
beIN SPORTS		
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Stade Rennais v OGC Nice	16:00	
beIN SPORTS HD 6		
Montpellier HSC v Toulouse FC	16:00	
beIN SPORTS		
Saint Etienne v FC Girondins de Bordeaux	18:00	
beIN SPORTS		
LOSC Lille v Paris Saint-Germain	22:00	
beIN SPORTS		

25 Lomachenko destroys Crolla with fourth round KO to retain lightweight title



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SPAL puts Juventus title on hold

Much-changed Barcelona held by Huesca



FERRARA: SPAL's Italian defender Kevin Bonifazi (C) scores an equalizer during the Italian Serie A football match SPAL 2013 vs Juventus yesterday at the Paolo-Mazza stadium in Ferrara. —AFP

MILAN: Teenager Moise Kean scored his sixth goal in as many league games but champions Juventus slumped to a shock 2-1 defeat at lowly SPAL yesterday to put their Serie A title celebrations on hold.

Massimiliano Allegri's side had needed just a point to claim a 35th Scudetto with a record six games to spare and Napoli a distant second. Kean opened the scoring for the seven-time reigning champions when the 19-year-old stuck his foot out to direct a Joao Cancelo effort home after half an hour in Ferrara.

But Kevin Bonifazi (49) and Sergio Floccari (74) responded with precious goals which eased SPAL's fight for top-flight football next season. "Making records is very difficult, it takes energy and there is also Europe to concentrate on," said Allegri, who rested key players including Cristiano Ronaldo ahead of next week's Champions League decider against Ajax in Turin.

"If we had put all our regulars in it would have been easier to win it, but there is also the goal to obtain on Tuesday." Juventus have a 20-point advantage on Napoli and can still seal the title in record time today if Carlo Ancelotti's side fail to win at bot-

tom club Chievo.

Otherwise, they could win their eighth consecutive Scudetto next Saturday at home against Fiorentina. Then they would match the previous best of winning the title with five games to spare achieved by Torino in 1947-1948, Fiorentina in 1955-1956 and Roberto Mancini's Inter Milan in 2006-2007.

Allegri experimented with an eye towards the quarter-final, second leg game against Ajax after a 1-1 draw in Amsterdam. Ronaldo was rested after returning from injury to score in the first leg against Ajax, with forwards Federico Bernardeschi and Mario Mandzukic also starting on the bench.

Mattia Perin replaced Wojciech Szczesny in the Juventus goal with Kean getting his second start alongside Paulo Dybala up front. Cuadrado and Andrea Barzagli returned from lengthy injury lay-offs with young defender Paolo Gozzi, 17, and midfielder Grigoris Kastanos, 21, handed debuts.

"We paid a little for our inexperience," said Allegri. "We played with a lot of youngsters. I regret this defeat because I think the match deserved more a draw than a loss." "I needed to see the conditions of

Juan Cuadrado, who is unfortunately off the Champions League squad list, and also Dybala, whose fitness levels weren't at their best," he added.

In Madrid, Barcelona held back for Manchester United by resting every outfield player possible on Saturday, including Lionel Messi, as La Liga's run-away leaders were held to a goalless draw by Huesca. Goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen was the only one to keep his place at El Alcoraz as coach Ernesto Valverde made clear his focus is on sealing progress to the Champions League semi-finals after the 1-0 first-leg win at Old Trafford in midweek.

Messi was left out of the squad completely while the suspended Gerard Pique posted a picture on social media of him watching the game on television, with a bowl of paella on his lap. The draw gives Atletico Madrid the chance to reduce the gap at the top of the table to nine points if they can beat Celta Vigo at home later on Saturday but, with six games left after this weekend, the difference is likely to prove irrelevant.

For Huesca, who are bottom of the table in their first-ever season in Spain's top flight, a hard-earned

point means they sit five adrift of safety, albeit having played a game more than those immediately above them. Their survival bid remains unlikely but alive. Malcom came closest to a winner, his shot hitting the post, but Huesca were good value for the draw and could even have snatched victory themselves in the second half.

Messi left Manchester with a swollen nose and cheek on Wednesday after a clattering challenge from Chris Smalling but there is little concern about the Argentinian being fit for the return game at Camp Nou. Barca's huge advantage at the top of La Liga has afforded them the luxury now of prioritising success in Europe, the only issue perhaps for Valverde the small matter of maintaining momentum. Overall, they were better than Huesca but never really got out of second gear.

Like Pique, Luis Suarez was also banned while Ivan Rakitic, Sergio Busquets and Clement Lenglet were among those rested. Ousmane Dembele came in after recovering from a hamstring injury and, after playing 67 minutes, his chance of a start next week would appear enhanced.—AFP

Bottas pips Hamilton for Mercedes lockout at landmark Chinese GP

SHANGHAI: Valtteri Bottas pipped Lewis Hamilton to pole position for today's milestone Chinese Grand Prix in a dominant Mercedes front-row lockout. Sebastian Vettel was third-fastest for Mercedes' arch-rivals Ferrari for the race in Shanghai, the 1,000th grand prix in Formula One.

Bottas, who leads the world championship by a point ahead of title-holder Hamilton after two races, scorched to a best time of one minute 31.547 seconds. That was just 0.023 secs ahead of Hamilton, the Briton who has been wrestling with his Mercedes and has voiced concern about Ferrari's superior straight-line speed.

Mercedes though appear to have the edge on the corners. "The car has been really good this weekend and Lewis also improved a lot in qualifying, it was

super close," said the flying Finn Bottas, who is beginning to climb out of the shadow of his more famous team-mate.

Vettel, the four-time world champion who has been in the spotlight after a series of unforced errors stretching back to last season, was 0.301secs off Bottas.

The German this time got the better of his decade-younger Ferrari team-mate Charles Leclerc, who is fourth on the grid and failed to so far to match his performance last time out in Bahrain.

Fifth was Red Bull's Max Verstappen and sixth his team-mate Pierre Gasly. The young Dutchman Verstappen was infuriated after traffic prevented him from clocking a final, flying lap, and made his anger clear in an expletive-filled message over his radio.

Seventh and eighth were the Renault duo of Daniel Ricciardo-last year's victor in China-and Nico Hulkenberg. Bottas though is the man in form, going fastest in the last two practice sessions after Vettel topped the times in first practice.

Bottas had also gone quickest in Q1, but five-time world champion Hamilton was marginally faster in Q2. Hamilton, who snatched victory in Bahrain after Leclerc's Ferrari failed, said that he had been "struggling with the car so I was just battling the thing", despite joining Bottas on the front row. — AFP

Liverpool great Tommy Smith dead

LONDON: Liverpool legend Tommy Smith, one of the key figures in the club's first golden era, died on Friday at the age of 74. Smith's no-nonsense performances at the heart of Liverpool's defence saw him nicknamed the 'Anfield Iron' during his 18-year spell on Merseyside.

Making 638 appearances for the Reds between 1960 and 1978, Smith won a host of medals as the club rose to prominence both domestically and in Europe. Under the management of the great Bill Shankly, Smith helped Liverpool dominate for two decades.

Reflecting his tough style of play, Shankly once said of one of his favourite players: "Tommy Smith wasn't born, he was quarried". Smith, who captained the club for three years, was one of the most influential members of the Liverpool team that won the FA Cup for the first time in 1965.

Twelve years later, with Bob Paisley at the helm, he

would head a crucial goal as Liverpool won their maiden European Cup by defeating Borussia Moenchengladbach in the 1977 final in Rome. In total, Liverpool-born Smith, who grew up in the shadow of Anfield before joining the club he supported as a boy, won the English title four times, the FA Cup twice, the European Cup once and the UEFA Cup twice.

Speaking to Liverpool's official website, Smith's daughter Janette Simpson said: "Dad died very peacefully in his sleep shortly after 4.30pm today. "He had been growing increasingly frail and suffering from a variety of ailments over the last three months especially. We are obviously all devastated."

Smith left Liverpool for Swansea, managed by his old Reds team-mate John Toshack, in 1978, and helped them to promotion from the old Third Division. He received the MBE for services to football and retired from playing in 1979. A brief return to Anfield as youth coach preceded a career as an after-dinner speaker and newspaper columnist.

Smith suffered a heart attack in 2007 before being diagnosed with Alzheimers and dementia in 2014. Smith's former Liverpool team-mate Phil Thompson told Sky Sports that his fellow defender was an 'icon'. —AFP