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Stranded umrah pilgrims back in Kuwait after harrowing ordeal

52 expats stuck in kingdom for 20 days after passports go missing from hotel



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah presents the Amir Football Cup to captain of Kuwait SC Hussein Hakim and other players at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium yesterday. Kuwait SC defeated Qadsiya 2-0 to secure their 14th Amir Cup. — KUNA (See Page 28)

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Forty-four out of 52 umrah pilgrims from Kuwait, who were stranded in the holy city of Makkah after losing their passports and documents, returned to Kuwait yesterday. They had spent more than 20 traumatic days in the kingdom waiting for new travel documents. They arrived to a rousing welcome early yesterday, and were received at the border by police officers, office-bearers of the India Sunni Jamaat organization, volunteers and relatives.

However, eight of the pilgrims could not enter Kuwait as they only had exit passes and no passports, and had to go back to Makkah. According to sources, the tour operators who took the pilgrims to the kingdom on umrah visas offered to help them complete their formalities and promised them air tickets to go back to their respective countries at the earliest. "We entered Kuwait around 6 o'clock in the morning, as we had to spend almost a day at the Kuwait-Saudi border because eight people in our group didn't have passports," said Razak Cheruthurthy, one of the pilgrims. He said Kuwaiti officials had to resolve some technical problems, as they were entering the country on new passports.

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News in brief

Public sector Ramadan timings

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission decided working hours for government departments during the month of Ramadan will be from 9:30 am to 2:00 pm. These timings apply to the ministries of commerce, awqaf, justice, public works, education, services and information, authorities of housing care, ports, agriculture, youth, sports, environment, industry and minors' affairs, departments of customs and fire, Credit Bank, Zakat House, Municipality, Civil Service Commission and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters. The timings for all other departments are from 10:00 am to 2:30 pm. — A Saleh

Saudi Arabia executes 37

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia yesterday executed 37 of its citizens convicted of terrorism. The executions were carried out in Riyadh, Makkah, Madinah, the province of Qassim and the Eastern Province. The men were executed "for adopting terrorist and extremist thinking and for forming terrorist cells to corrupt and destabilize security", said the official Saudi Press Agency. It said one person was crucified after his execution. — AFP

UAE launches 'Ministry of Possibilities'

DUBAI: The UAE yesterday unveiled a new branch of government, a Ministry of Possibilities, three years after launching a department in charge of happiness. "The virtual ministry, administered by the cabinet, will address pressing national portfolios and build future government systems," tweeted Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, the UAE's premier and ruler of Dubai. — AFP

Survivors offered NZ residency

WELLINGTON: New Zealand will grant permanent residency to all survivors of the mass shooting at two Christchurch mosques in which 50 Muslim worshippers were killed, it said yesterday. Immigration New Zealand said a new visa category called the Christchurch Response (2019) visa had been created. People who were present at the mosques when they were attacked on March 15 can apply, as can immediate family members. — Reuters

MPs file to grill info minister

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Three opposition lawmakers yesterday filed to grill Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri over alleged administrative and financial violations and misuse of powers. Acting Assembly Speaker Essa Al-Kandari said the grilling will be listed on the agenda of the April 30 session, but the minister has the right to postpone the debate for two weeks.

This will be the second grilling on the agenda of the next session, after a grilling against Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs

Anas Al-Saleh. MPs have also threatened to grill the prime minister and finance minister. MP Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei has said he will file to grill Commerce and Industry Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan, and yesterday said he will grill the health minister if what he called "treatment tourism" abroad does not stop.

The grilling against Jabri was filed by MPs Riyadh Al-Adasani, Mohammad Al-Dallal and Adel Al-Damkhi, who said after handing over a copy of the grilling that their main object is reform and fighting corruption. The grilling accuses the minister of having committed a number of legal, financial, technical and administrative violations at the ministry of information, the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources and the Public Sports Authority, which fall under the minister.

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: MPs Riyadh Al-Adasani, Adel Al-Damkhi and Mohammad Al-Dallal filed to grill Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri yesterday. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

IS claims Lanka blasts, releases pic of attackers

BEIRUT: The Islamic State group yesterday claimed a series of bombings that killed more than 320 people in Sri Lanka, and released a photo and video of the men it said were responsible. The massive casualty toll would make the Easter Sunday attacks the deadliest overseas operation claimed by IS since the group

proclaimed its caliphate in mid-2014. "Those that carried out the attack that targeted members of the US-led coalition and Christians in Sri Lanka the day before yesterday are Islamic State group fighters," IS propaganda agency Amaq said in a statement.

In a later statement, the group gave the noms de guerre of seven people it said were behind the "blessed attack" that targeted Christians during their "blasphemous holiday". Amaq also released a photo of eight men it said were behind the blasts. Seven of them had their faces covered and three of them held knives.

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An image grab taken from a video by the Islamic State allegedly shows eight men it said carried out a string of deadly suicide bombings on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka, lined up at an undisclosed location. — AFP

Self-powered 'pacemaker for life' unveiled

PARIS: Scientists yesterday unveiled a battery-free pacemaker that generates its energy from the heartbeats of pigs in what could pave the way for an "implant for life" in humans suffering from heart defects. Millions of patients rely on pace-

makers - small electrical implants in the chest of abdomen - to help regulate their heartbeats after chronic or acute illness. Even with recent technological advances, pacemaker batteries can be rigid or bulky, and may need replacing several times over the lifespan of a device.

Energy harvesters, which generate electricity from pulses sent by the body, have shown to be effective in recent years, but only in small animals such as rats, as well as cell models with low energy demands.

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PARIS: A handout photo shows a symbiotic pacemaker (battery-free device), able to generate its own energy from heart beats to power a cardiac pacemaker. — AFP

Local



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

Amir to attend teachers' honoring ceremony today

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is set to attend an awards' ceremony to honor distinguished teachers, held under His Highness' auspices, the Amiri Diwan announced yesterday. The event will be held today at 10:00 am at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training main theatre in Shuwaikh. In other news, His Highness the Amir received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Separately, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of

condolences to President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte over the victims of the series of earthquakes that jolted a number of cities in the country. In the cables, His Highness extended deepest condolences, wishing mercy to the deceased and the swift recovery for the injured. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent cables of similar sentiments to President Duterte. — KUNA

Kuwait's Speaker concludes official visit to Russia

MOSCOW: Kuwait National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem concluded yesterday a three-day official visit to Russia, which was upon an invitation from Chairperson of the Federation Council (upper house of the Russian parliament) Valentina Matviyenko. He was seen off by Kuwait

Ambassador to the Russian Federation Abdulaziz Al-Adwani and the diplomatic staff of the embassy. Ghanem, leading a parliamentary delegation, held talks with Matviyenko and Deputy Chairman of the State Duma (lower house) Sergei Neverov. Boosting parliamentary cooperation between the Ghanem and Neverov, and sharing experience in the field was discussed during the meeting, in addition to issues of mutual concern, especially the recent developments in Yemen, Libya, Syria and Palestine. Moreover, the two sides agreed on holding meetings prior to Inter-Parliamentary Union's conferences to unify views and stance on different matters. — KUNA



MOSCOW: Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Deputy Chairman of the State Duma (lower house) Sergei Neverov. — KUNA

PAAET qualified to reform workforce in Kuwait: Official



KUWAIT: His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Minister of Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi in a group photo with the honorees. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training's Director-General Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf affirmed Monday that PAAET's graduates are qualified to reform the workforce structure in Kuwait and make new wave of talented workers. Mudhaf made his remarks in a speech at an honoring ceremony held for PAAET graduates under the auspices and attendance of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Minister of Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi. The honorees gained their education and work experience in PAAET laboratories and practical training in the Kuwaiti labor market, he noted, affirming their competency to make decisions based on self-edu-

cation and self-consciousness.

They are also able to transfer their technical experience, knowledge, and national affiliation through multiple generations simultaneously, he said. Mudhaf expressed his gratitude and appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad for his continued encouragement and special sponsorship of the applied education sector, adding Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad strongly believes in applied training's significance in achieving the "Kuwaiti Dream."

Meanwhile, Deputy Director General of PAAET for Training Affairs Tareq Al-Ameeri stressed the importance of applied training sector in the development

process in Kuwait, particularly in providing efficient manpower to economic sectors, as well as an elite of specialized technicians and their assistants to various fields and occupations the country needs. PAAET has succeeded in achieving several major projects through its students, Ameeri noted, adding the number of applicants to study in the Authority continues to be on the rise. This poses a major challenge for PAAET to accommodate such a large number of male/female applicants, especially since the number of enrolled students reached nearly 9,000 in the academic year 2018/19, he added.

In the meantime, Ameeri noted that PAAET has

implemented 30 joint programs with most state ministries, institutions, and authorities, in addition to partnerships with oil and private sectors through organizing 60 workshops in cooperation with beneficiary bodies and implementing bureaus. Around 170 training courses were held at Ibn Al-Haytham training center during the academic year 2018/19, with some 3,700 trainees from 40 bodies, including ministries, state and civil institutions, he added. All directorates and institutions at the applied training sector received this year certificates of quality assurance (ISO 9001:2015) in addition to academic, programmatic, and institutional accreditation from Paris Academy, said Ameeri. — KUNA

Zain concludes strategic partnership of Arab Media Forum

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, concluded its strategic partnership of the 16th edition of the Arab Media Forum. The event, which was held at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC), came under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The representative of His Highness the Prime Minister, the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri and Director of the Arab Media Forum Madhi Al-Khamees recognized Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti for Zain's strategic partnership of the forum, which came this year for the eighth consecutive time. The recognition came during the opening ceremony, which witnessed the presence of many ministers, media personalities, and public figures from all around the Arab world.

Zain is keen on enriching the various media and cultural aspects within the community, being a leading private sector company in the country. Zain believes in the strong impact media has on individuals and communities, and it strives to reach out to all of the different segments of the society through this very vital tool.

This year, the 16th edition of the forum featured the participation of over 250 Arab media figures and over 150 students of media and journalism from all over the Arab world. The event also featured 12 panel discussions, workshops, and open talks that hosted high-profile executives from the Arab world, including foreign affairs ministers, media and information ministers, owners and executives of Arab media institutions, and more. In addition, the event also featured many media personalities, journalists, authors, and actors. This year, the event hosted the



KUWAIT: Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri and Director of the Arab Media Forum Madhi Al-Khamees recognize Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti for Zain's partnership.

Sultanate of Oman as the 16th edition's guest of honor.

Zain's strategic partnership of this forum highlights its social commitment, as the company believes in the importance of the role press and media plays in the development of communities. Zain will continue supporting this very important sector which carries significant and informative messaging to the public at large and the communications world as a whole.

The Arab Media Forum has proven itself to be one of the region's most prominent events that attend to Arab media. Since 2003, the event brought together many ministers, editors-in-chief of local and regional newspapers, media executives, journalists, academics, authors, actors, businessmen, and social figures from all around the Arab world.

AUB organizes awareness workshop for its partners

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) held an awareness workshop for the partners that deal with the bank concerning the supervision instructions issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait to regulate the electronic payment of funds. The workshop highlighted the Central Bank's resolution no 44/430/2018 specifying all limits and conditions that should be observed by those who carry on this activity and their partners.

The resolution set a deadline for them to comply within the framework of the latest developments in modern financial technologies and electronic payment means with a view to serving the interests of the national economy, improving macroeconomic performance and providing their services within the framework of the Central Bank's inclusive financial policy.

The workshop sought to identify the duties and

responsibilities of the bank and its partners in terms of the requirements related to the particulars of their counterparties in electronic payment operations, the method of implementing them, determining the time schedule for receipt by the bank of all the requirements for regularizing the partner's status according to the Central Bank's requirements and the penalties for non-compliance. The workshop ended with a questions and answers session to respond to enquiries or concerns raised by the parties concerned with implementation.

Speaking on the occasion of the workshop, Huda Al-Madani, General Manager, Digital Transformation and Alternative Channels at Ahli United Bank, said: "Ahli United Bank is keen to comply with the instructions of the Central Bank in the best interests of both financial institutions and their customers. With the attainment of full compliance in mind, AUB held this workshop in order to increase the awareness of the partners who deal with us with regard to the supervision instructions issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait to regulate the electronic payment of funds. This workshop is part of the bank's 2019 on-going digital transformation program to enhance banking services presented to our customers to fulfill their needs."



Local

Proposed labor law amendments present great danger to economy: KCCI Chief

Bourse's privatization first true privatization in Kuwait's history: Ghanem

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The proposed amendments to the labor law in the private sector present a great danger to the Kuwaiti economy, especially small and medium companies, which will not be able to bear such costs, a leading Kuwaiti economist said yesterday. Small and medium projects that are being formed currently by pioneers are legally committed to hire Kuwaiti labor, and will be the most harmed from the increase in the cost of the labor element, "which contradicts the state's vision and our keenness over projects," Ali Al-Ghanem, President of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said in a speech during the 55th general assembly of KCCI.

The National Assembly's health and labor committee had last week succumbed to pressure by the government and the business community and decided to rescind its earlier approval of increasing the annual leave for private sector employees to 35 days. The amendment had been approved by the committee about two months ago and then passed by the National Assembly in the first reading last month. The Assembly was due to pass the amendment in the second and final reading more than three weeks ago, but the government delayed the vote. The government clearly told the panel that the amendment harms the interests of Kuwaiti businessmen against a minor benefit to a small number of Kuwaitis employed in the private sector.

The overwhelming majority of employees in the private

sector are foreigners, who would have been the main beneficiaries of the amendment. "Allowing more than 1.7 million non-Kuwaiti workers to get advantages and exceptional conditions with the claim of attracting Kuwaiti labor to the private sector is unjustified," Ghanem said yesterday.



Authorities coordinate to monitor Ramadan prices

"It is clear that the proposed amendment looks at the private sector through its strongest establishments such as banks and telecommunication companies, but small and medium facilities make up 90 percent of the sector, and the majority of these facilities cannot financially bear the large financial increase in calculating annual leave."

Bourse's privatization

In the meantime, Ghanem said that the bourse's privatization is the first true privatization in the history of Kuwait.



KCCI President Ali Al-Ghanem

"This success calls upon us to be optimistic," he said, adding that Kuwait's ports are considered the most important element in its basic economic structure. He said Kuwait's political, social and economic history is linked to it being a free, strategically located and highly efficient port.

Ghanem said that after successfully privatizing the bourse, the project to privatize Kuwait's ports must be a guide to a serious and new direction in attracting direct foreign investment and an effective passage to achieve the development vision which includes northern Kuwait and islands.

Employees' rewards

Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower Ahmad Al-Mousa said the Civil Service Council responded to the authority's request to grant its employees the rewards that are decided according to the council's decision 45/2006 starting from April 1, 2019, and the authority will pay the dues for April retroactively with May's salary. The decision was taken to prevent any financial discrepancies in monthly salaries between the authority's employees and those of the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program after activating the Council of Minister's decision 875/2017 issued on July 3, 2017 to move the program to the manpower authority.

Price control

Head of the Kuwait Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies Khalid Al-Hudaiban said a joint committee between the union and social affairs ministry will carry out inspection tours of cooperatives during the month of Ramadan to monitor prices and ensure there are no artificial price increases. He said the union stands against all attempts by some companies to approve increases in prices, adding that he has designated a hotline for all consumers - citizens and expats - to call and inform about any increase in prices. He said the union is about to receive its new warehouses in Sulabiya spread over an area of 6,000 m, which provides place to store food supplies of co-ops that do not have enough storage space.

Acting Premier meets Canadian Defense Minister

KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah met the visiting Canadian Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan at Bayan Palace yesterday. During the meeting, Sheikh Nasser said such visits contribute to promoting cooperation between both friendly coun-

tries, the Defense Ministry said in a press statement. He stressed deep relations between Kuwait and Canada and pointed out mutual willingness to bolster and consolidate bilateral ties, according to the statement. The Canadian minister arrived in Kuwait on Monday evening on an official visit. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Canadian Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan. — KUNA

Ministry staff resume protests

KUWAIT: Several employees at the Ministry of Public Works resumed their sit-in yesterday at the ministry's building in South Surra, in protest over not receiving their dues and allowances. The protesters said the ministry did not cooperate with engineers' demands and deliberately stopped paying site allowances to ministry engineers and technicians, depriving them of their basic rights, according to their statements. They

are demanding site, remote area, risk, shift and screen allowances. — Meshaal Al-Enezi

Attempted murder

A Kuwaiti woman was found stabbed in her neck in front of her house. The woman was rushed to hospital, where medical tests revealed the stab is deep. The woman accused her husband of stabbing her, but he denied it. A case of attempted murder was filed. — A Saleh

Mobile traffic cameras

The traffic department has adopted the use of mobile traffic cameras to cover the new road network until permanent cameras are installed.

Security sources said this deployment is important in areas that lack cameras, as it is easier to move them according to reports received by the department about reckless driving, and this will curb such behaviors. — A Saleh

Medical center bills

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah asked the assistant undersecretary for financial affairs at the ministry Mohammad Al-Azmi, head of the Kuwait health office in Washington Dr Ali Al-Enezi and financial and administrative employees to settle hospital and medical center bills after getting discounts in favor of public funds. — Meshaal Al-Enezi

Kuwait, Japan share info on energy projects

TOKYO: Kuwait and Japanese representatives yesterday discussed ways to further enhance cooperation and shared information about the electricity and water sector in Kuwait. In the presence of visiting Kuwaiti Minister of Oil, Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel, the 'High-Level Seminar on the Electricity and Water in Kuwait' was held in Tokyo with more than 100 officials from energy-related Japanese companies attending. In his opening remarks addressing the one-day seminar, Dr Fadhel commended the long-lasting relationship between the two countries and voiced his ministry's keenness to enhance bilateral cooperation based on the Japanese long-term experience and its advanced technology. The minister also highlighted a target announced by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to ensure that 15 percent of Kuwait's power demand to be met through renewable energy sources by 2030.

The seminar was organized by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in connection with the Kuwait-Japan Policy

Dialogue on the electricity and water sector, which was established by the two governments in 2015. The dialogue aims to exchange information of future projects in Kuwait and applicable technologies of Japan, and discuss possible cooperation projects in the electricity and water sector.

Jassem Al-Nouri, Assistant Undersecretary for Transmission of Electrical Networks of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) briefed the participants on the ministry's future plan for electricity infrastructure, including the second and third phases of the Az-Zour North IWPP with 2,700 MW production capacity and the Al-Khairan Phase 1 development with 1,800 MW capacity. According to Nouri, Kuwait's maximum peak power demand recorded 13,910 MW, up 0.8 percent from the previous year, on July 10 last year, when temperatures reached 50 degrees.

Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for Water Projects of the MEW Humoud Al-Rowdhan said in his presentation that, due to the scarcity of fresh water from its natural resources, Kuwait has worked towards the desalination of seawater to meet the needs of its population to supply fresh water using the latest technologies. Rowdhan also listed a number of future water projects, such as ground reservoir for fresh water with the total capacity of 115 MIG at Mutla City and 87-km fresh water pipeline from Wafra to the Six Ring Road. — KUNA

NBK sponsors 'Digital Business Transformation' forum

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing support to programs that aim to introduce knowledge and experience among professionals and the society as a whole, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsored 'The Dynamics of Disruption in Digital Business Transformation' forum that was organized by the Institute of Banking Studies and presented by IMD Professor of Innovation and Strategy, Michael Wade. Held at Symphony Hotel, the discussions focused on the strategic advantages gained through a flexible business as well as how to link strategies to on-ground execution.

Twenty-eight individuals took part in the forum and discussed the concept of digital business transformation, managing principal business goals, as well as increasing revenue, reducing cost, maintaining profitability, increasing market share, and ensuring customer satisfaction through digital tools.

During the workshop, participants were trained on how to let go of traditional methods in business management, look at changes introduced in other business sectors regionally and internationally, and identify challenges and opportunities associated with the process of digital transformation.

Emad Al-Ablani General Manager of Group Human Resources, said, "NBK's main sponsorship of the event falls as part of our commitment to actively contribute to increase the knowledge in the work sector and develop the skillset of professionals working in the banking sector." He added that the discussions on innovation and creativity are the key focus of NBK in increasing the performance of its employees through training programs that apply leading international standards.

Ablani further explained that NBK continues to sponsor programs aimed at developing the skills of Kuwaiti professionals in general and in the banking sector in particular, to enable professionals to easily adopt at work and qualify them to lead in the future. Ablani highlighted the



KUWAIT: The participants pose for a group photo.

significance of the role of the Institute of Banking Studies in spreading the culture of banking through programs and events that contribute to the development of employees in the financial and banking sector in Kuwait.

Michael Wade is the Director of the Global Center for Digital Business Transformation at IMD and has published nine books, more than one hundred articles, presentations, and case studies, writes a regular column for Fortune on digital disruption, and appears frequently in the mainstream media. His Latest book is Orchestrating Transformation: How to Deliver Winning Performance with a Connected Approach to Change, published in early 2019.

He was named one of the top ten digital thought leaders in Switzerland from 2016 to 2018. He was also nominated for teaching awards in the MBA, International MBA, and Executive MBA programs. Michael sits on three company boards as a digitally-focused advisor. Prior to joining IMD, he was the Academic Director of the Kellogg-Schulich Executive MBA Program in Canada.

On the sidelines of the seminar, the Director General of the Institute of Banking Studies, Dr Yacoub Al-Rifai, presented an honorary shield to Ablani in recognition of NBK's role in supporting the seminars and programs organized by the Institute of Banking Studies.

Legalese

Ramadan in Kuwait



By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Many of us in Kuwait are getting ready for Ramadan, expected to begin in the first week of May. Ramadan is a chance for many people who practice Islam to change their lives for the better, whether it is by detoxing, forgiving, quitting a bad habit or spending more time with family. What I love about Kuwait also is that we are very diverse, and this means if you want to - regardless of what your religion or belief is - you can also practice or experience Ramadan with the Muslims living in Kuwait.

I really do hope this year brings positive changes for everyone. For those who are new to Kuwait or not sure about the legal impacts that Ramadan brings, here is an article that may help you understand. Blessed Ramadan everyone!

Working hours

Question: It is my first year in Kuwait working in a private sector and I have heard that our working hours will be less in Ramadan. Is this true? I am not a Muslim though - is this only for Muslims fasting?

Fajer: Yes, work hours are reduced in the private sector to six hours a day according to the labor law's article 64, which states: "It is forbidden to allow workers to work for more than 48 hours per week or eight hours a day, except in such events as are specified in this law. Working hours during the month of Ramadan shall be equal to 36 hours per week" for employees working six days a week, ie six hours per day.

Eating in public

Question: As it is my first year in Kuwait in Ramadan, can you explain to me if I can eat in public before iftar? Is food available for purchase then?

Fajer: Food will be available before iftar time. There are legal restrictions on some restaurants, but this does not mean that food will not be available. Law no 44 of 1968 dictates punishments under the law for eating or drinking in public in Ramadan. The law states the following punishment:

Punishment up to KD 100 and/or jail for up to one month

- i) for anyone who eats/drinks in public during daytime in Ramadan
- ii) for anyone who assists anyone to eat/drink in daytime during Ramadan

The punishment is up to one month in jail. So theoretically speaking, someone may be jailed on the first day of Ramadan until Eid, but I would think that common practice has been to only impose a fine for first-time offenders.

Whether or not you can get deported for eating or drinking in public, under Kuwaiti law, you can get deported for committing any criminal offense - eating in public during daytime in Ramadan is a criminal offense. As for commercial businesses that are caught serving food/beverages to the public during daytime in Ramadan, they will be punished by having their business sites shut for two months.

For questions or queries, please email us at info@tl-legal.com.

Silk City draft law aims to establish int'l trade region with independent activities, legislations, management

KUWAIT: The Board of Trustees of Silk City and Boubyan Island prepared a draft bill to regulate the affairs of the proposed northern area development project, including the long-awaited Silk City. Dubbed the 'Draft Law to Establish the Silk Region,' the proposed bill seeks to establish an investment and commercial region of international character that is attractive for investors. The following is a translation by Kuwait Times for the draft law, which was obtained and published recently by Al-Qabas Arabic daily:

Project Aims:

- 1- To establish an international trade transit region under Kuwait's sovereignty with independent activities, legislations and management.
- 2- Provide job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth and create an environment that will induce creativity and entrepreneurship in a competitive atmosphere open to international expertise.
- 3- Utilize both local and international private sector potentials in developing the Silk Region into a basic resource for Kuwait's economy as well as create an investment-attracting business environment.
- 4- Achieve better living conditions and welfare for Kuwaiti citizens and other regional inhabitants in accordance to international standards.
- 5- Support Kuwait's basic goals and plans to develop the national economy in compliance with the New Kuwait 2035 vision and any other strategic plans, as well as establish a flourishing, sustainable and diverse economy based on developing economic sectors other than oil.
- 6- Support Kuwait's security and economic stability through diversifying its economy, regional linkage and attracting more regional and international investments.

7- Encourage the state's industrial and socio-economic sectors in parallel to environmental protection.

8- Enhance the production of goods and services by both local and foreign private sectors to enhance foreign currency reserves.

9- Increase and encourage the flow of direct local and foreign investments into the region and encourage Kuwait's industrial and economic cooperation with other states.

10- The establishment will be funded from outside the state's budget after winning international investors' trust and attracting international capital as a model for non-oil based development.

11- Encourage import and export of goods, and work on boosting national products' quality to create commercial competitiveness for the state's best interests.

Charter of Principles

All the Silk Region's employees in various positions will abide by the following:

- 1- Utilize all their potentials to achieve the Silk Region's success and efficiently and seriously perform the tasks to which they are assigned.
- 2- Not to use the powers or privileges invested in them through their positions except in achieving the Silk Region's goals. They will also vow not to obtain any personal privileges or gains.
- 3- Doing their job tasks, employees will, at all times, practice their authorities, make independent decisions, opt for objective judgment in various matters, avoid conflicts of interest, minimize any external effects, and make decisions after studying related facts and invalidating all irrelevant ones. They can also seek views from concerned bodies prior to deciding on a certain matter. Decisions must be clearly causative.
- 4- All tasks, practice of jurisdictions and decision-making will at all times comply with the Silk Region's and the state's highest interests, requirements and goals.
- 5- All tasks, practice of jurisdictions and decision-making will be done in a way that ensures effective execution, transparency and integrity that will allow all residents, investors and other stakeholders to make the right decisions in view of the available information that allows investigating and scrutinizing all procedures.
- 6- The Silk Region's laws, charters and legislations will be respected and put into practice with integrity and transparency.

Laws and Regulations

The Silk Region's laws, regulations, executive regulations and the decisions accordingly made by the Silk Region Establishment will be applied within the Silk Region side by side with the laws of Kuwait, except for those exempted by special regulations.

Commitment to Issuing Special Regulations

The Silk Region's governors will be, within the maximum of one year effective on issuance of their appointment decrees, committed to issue this law's executive regulations that should include a full statement of the Silk Region's rules, activities and works, such as:

- 1- The mechanism of issuing the Silk Region charters and regulations and forming committees to prepare amendments for the legislations the region needs to be submitted to the concerned minister.
- 2- The mechanism of the Silk Region governors' work, their authorities, procedures on holding their meetings, decision making, execution and rules of governance.
- 3- Conflicts of interest and how to avoid them.
- 4- The CEO powers, tasks and authorities and his relations with the region's governors, personnel affairs and how personnel can apply for jobs with the Silk Region Establishment.

5- The rules, procedures and conditions of issuing visas for the Silk Region's workforce and the issue of visit and residency visas.

6- Regulations on employer-employee relations within the Silk Region and the rights of each party.

7- Regulations of monitoring imports and exports to and from the Silk Region.

8- Issue of licenses to practice business within the region, trust systems and the establishment of all legal bodies including all commercial establishments, companies, banks, joint ventures, organizations, associations and other legal bodies.

9- Environmental protection and development within the Silk Region.

10- Establishing the bodies needed to regulate the banking sector and fighting money laundering and terrorism funding in collaboration with the Central Bank of Kuwait.

11- Special real estate registry system that regulates all in-kind rights and subjectivity of real estate properties within the Silk Region.

12- Conditions and requirements for people desiring to own or utilize real estate properties within the Silk Region.

The Establishment will be committed to issue the law's executive regulations within the period motioned in the previous article and in case of violating this and on expiry of the said period, will be committed to report to the concerned minister in writing explaining the reasons, setting a new date for issuance and doing whatever needed to avoid further delays. The Cabinet will report to HH the Amir with the reasons of delay so that he can take proper actions he deems fit.

Relations with the state

1- The Silk Region will be under full sovereignty of the State of Kuwait and will be subject to all other agreements, treaties and memos of understanding the state is part of on passing this law.

2- None of the state's public servants will have any powers, authorities or tasks within the Silk Region except within the limits stated in this law or the Silk Region's laws and regulations.

3- The government of Kuwait will be responsible for providing the military protection needed for the Silk Region and defend it against any foreign threats. None of the bodies operating within the Silk Region will object to this regardless of their status.

4- Kuwait's ministry of interior (MoI) will be responsible for internal protection and security within the Silk Region, provided the interior minister coordinates with the Establishment and issue a decision upon which a special police unit will be formed from MoI personnel (officers and non-warrant officers) who will be selected and appointed according to specific conditions and regulations to be stated in the decision. Police personnel working within the Silk Region will be committed to implement only the Silk Region's laws and regulations and nothing else.

5- The Silk Region Establishment will have all the authorities of governmental and public establishments operating in the state. No body, other than the Establishment, will carry out any of the Silk Region Establishment tasks. In collaboration with officials in those bodies and the bodies themselves, the Establishment will be committed to founding special departments and having each play the role of a government body. The executive regulations will define the mechanism of implementing this clause.

6- Taking the previous clause into consideration, the Silk Region Establishment will have no authority or jurisdiction related to the following bodies:

- Bodies related to armed forces and national defense.
- The foreign ministry.
- Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (concerning oil exploration, development and production).

In collaboration with the state's relevant bodies, the Silk Region Establishment will be committed to the following:

- 1- Sponsoring and issuing work permits for manpower working with the Silk Region.
- 2- The jurisdiction of the Silk Region Establishment employees outside the Silk Region boundaries.
- 3- Imports, exports, loading, unloading, storage or any other activity related to hazardous, radioactive or environment-unfriendly materials.
- 4- Combating criminal activities including money laundering, terrorism funding or any other crimes on both local and international levels in a way that will ensure safety of both the Silk Region and the state.
- 5- The currency used within the Silk Region will be Kuwaiti dinar, and the Silk Region Establishment will coordinate with the Central Bank of Kuwait through setting protocols of cooperation concerning currency control and regulating banking operations.
- 6- The minister in charge of the Silk Region Establishment will supervise the work of and have the power of requesting reports and documents, procure information and inquire from and advise the region's governors.
- 7- Any other matters that need coordination according to the region's governors' views upon agreement between the Establishment and relevant state bodies.

The Silk Region Establishment

A public institution and independent legal entity called the General Establishment of the Silk Region shall be established under this law. It will be legally independent under the supervision of a concerned minister. The Silk Region Establishment may open its offices inside and outside Kuwait.

1- The Silk Region Establishment will be managed

by seven governors to be named by an Amiri decree upon nominations made by the concerned minister. The decree will appoint one of the governors as chairman and another as vice-chairman and will determine the wages, bonuses and any other incentives or allowances of the chairman, vice-chairman and other governors.

2- Appointed governors should be regular, experienced individuals known for their integrity who have never been declared bankrupt or indicted in crimes or disgraceful felonies or are employees of the government of Kuwait.

3- The Silk Region Establishment (SRE) chairman will represent it before others and courts and will execute the establishment's decisions. The SRE chairman will also supervise all its technical and administrative bodies and practice his liabilities in accordance to this law and its executive regulations. Along with other governors, the SRE chairman will be responsible for running SRE and have the right to authorize one of the other governors or any SRE administrative unit with some of his liabilities.

4- In case of the SRE chairman's absence or the vacancy of his position while the vice-chairman is, for whatever reason, incapable of performing his job responsibilities, the SRE board will meet within two weeks and authorize an acting SRE chairman.

5- SRE governors' tenures will be four years renewable for one more term with a maximum of eight years, with exemption of the first phase members, from whom three governors will be reappointed for an extra term to add up the total to three four-year tenures. A governor's position will be deemed vacant by his demise, disability or resignation. A governor will also lose his position, which he declared vacant by force of law, and a decree will be issued terminating his membership in the following cases:

- Passing a final court order declaring his bankruptcy.
- If he is indicted by power of a final court order in a disgraceful crime or subjected to a liberty-restricting penalty in a crime.
- If during one year, he misses four consecutive or eight non-consecutive meetings without an excuse.
- If he gets appointed in a government position in the State of Kuwait.

6- SRE governors can belong to any nationality and will be appointed in accordance with their local and international experiences in government affairs and legislations, international commerce supervision and administrative affairs and their reputation in other international fields.

7- SRE governors will annually hold 12 meetings at least upon invitations from the SRE chairman or requests from two other governors. Meetings will be deemed valid if attended by a majority of governors including the chairman or vice-chairman, with the exception of the meeting mentioned in clause 4 of this article. Meetings' decisions will be issued by a majority of the governors' votes.

8- SRE governors may form permanent or temporary advisory committees to be assigned to study specific topics within their specialties defined in this law.

9- SRE will have a legal affairs department that reports directly to the SRE chairman in all cases, represents it before all courts and arbitration authorities, provides legal consultancy and conducts investigations. The department can be also utilized in preparing bills and regulations related to SRE and its operations.

10- In case a member position is declared vacant, this vacancy will be filled by powers of an Amiri decree passed upon nomination made by the concerned minister.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

1- SRE governors will appoint a CEO to carry out the tasks entrusted to him and which are explained and regulated in his appointment decision. The CEO's appointment will be made upon the approval of at least two-thirds of the board and he will not be dismissed unless with the same ratio. In case the CEO position is declared vacant, SRE governors will appoint a temporary CEO for no more than three months or until another is appointed according to the previous regulations.

2- The CEO can belong to any nationality and gets appointed based on his local and international experiences, good reputation and achievements in other international fields deemed fit to qualify him for the position.

Tasks and Powers

SRE will do all tasks needed to achieve the Silk Region's goals in accordance to the provisions of this law, namely the following:

- 1- Work and development plans according to the following:
 - Develop the policies and procedures necessary for the successful development and management of the Silk Region in accordance with the provisions of this law.
 - To establish, develop and maintain the entire infrastructure of the Silk Region and to provide administrative services, transportation, IT services and any other service required by the region to achieve its objectives.
 - Prepare and adopt the strategies, policies and objectives of the Silk Region in full and follow up the implementation of these policies, strategies and objectives.
 - To develop and provide opportunities for partnership with investors and investment funds from the public and private sectors and other institutions, both regional and international, to encourage, motivate and

facilitate investment in the Silk Region.

• Establish, manage, operate and develop the free zone, industrial zones, economic zones and other areas within the Silk Region boundaries.

• Forming advisory committees of local and international experts for the Silk Region as it deems appropriate.

2- Operation of the Silk Region activities will be done by:

• Establishing legal entities, departments or economic bodies and entrusting them to the authorities and tasks required in accordance with the needs of the Silk Region.

• To play the role of state administrative bodies and replace them within the borders of the Silk Region in order to achieve the region's objectives.

• Monitor and supervise all activities in the Silk Region and ensure compliance with all laws and legislations and implement general strategies and policies adopted in the Silk Region.

• Approve the licensing, establishment and organization of all types of legal entities (including, but not limited to, companies, institutions, limited liability companies, corporate and joint-stock companies, single-person companies, investment funds, unions and organizations) within the Silk Region.

• Take necessary measures to protect and develop the environment within the Silk Region.

• Set the rules and conditions for practicing banking within the Silk Region in coordination with the Central Bank of Kuwait.

• The conclusion of contracts of partnership with the public and private sectors to invest in the Silk Region.

• The conclusion of agreements, contracts and memorandums of understanding with any party inside and outside Kuwait, provided that such agreements shall not prejudice the sovereignty of the state or cause any harm to it.

3- Finance, accounting and financial reporting:

• Managing SRE financial resources.

• SRE shall have the right to impose fees on the services it provides, as well as on the activities specified by the executive regulations of this law.

• SRE shall have the right to collect fines within the limits of the application of this law and its executive regulations.

• Opening and managing the bank accounts for SRE.

• Issuing bonds and obtaining loans and other financial facilities for the Silk Region from local and international banks and any other entity. This shall only take place upon the consensus of the Silk Region governors. The lender shall not have recourse to the state for any claim arising from lending to SRE.

• Buy, own, sell and lease real estate assets and other assets including securities and any other intangible assets and invest inside and outside the Silk Region in the manner it deems appropriate.

• Ensure compliance with the requirements related to the financial statements and annual budgets stipulated in this law in respect of the SRE.

• Submit an annual report to the Cabinet in addition to any additional special reports that may be occasionally requested by the Cabinet on the operation of the Silk Region, the SRE and the courts.

4- Powers and real-estate related rights:

• The executive regulations of this law shall determine the regulations governing all dispositions of land and real estate owned within the boundaries of the Silk Region. SRE may conclude leasing and all types of contracts on such lands and real estate.

• Allocate a residential area within the Silk Region and mark its boundaries on the general outline shown in annex number 1 of this law. The SRE shall establish the regulations governing the sale of real estate in the Silk Region. All natural persons may apply for their purchase if they meet the regulations and conditions set by the executive regulations of this law.

• The SRE may establish separate entities for the management of real estate within the boundaries of the region and may conclude all types of contracts in order to facilitate the process of development and construction.

Financial Resources

• The SRE will be legally, financially, administratively and economically independent. It has a special commercially-prepared budget. SRE is deemed a merchant in its relations with others. It conducts its operations and organizes its accounts according to commercial rules.

• The SRE's assets and resources consist of:

1- In-kind assets, which comprise of the property allocated to SRE and detailed in the scheme attached in annex 1 of this law.

2- Cash contributions provided by the ministry of finance or any other government body upon instructions from the Cabinet.

3- Cash contributions presented to SRE from any party within the limits of the Silk Region law and its executive regulations.

4- Revenues of services and activities carried out by SRE, including corporate and investment returns, through any type of companies established, as well as fees and fines, and any amounts imposed by the SRE in accordance with this law and its executive regulations.

5- Gifts and donations that are presented to the SRE, provided the rules of transparency and integrity are fully respected.

6- Revenues made from issuing bonds, instruments or other financial facilities received directly or indirectly by the SRE.

7- Any other resources approved by the SRE in accordance with the provisions of this law and its executive regulations.

Local

The Penal Law

- With exception from the application of the provisions of law no. 16 of 1960 pertaining the issuance of the penal code, the prison sentence provided for in articles 237 and 240 will be abolished and only financial penalties will be imposed for offenses within the borders of the Silk Region, provided this provision shall not apply to crimes relating to cheques unless it shall be proved in writing that the issuance of the cheque was linked to a contractual obligation.
- The governors of the region shall be committed to prepare a proposal for alternative amendments to the exempted texts referred to in the preceding clause and submit them to the concerned minister pending submission to the National Assembly and issuing a law thereon.
- In all cases, the customs, traditions and norms of the countries of the persons residing in the Silk Region shall be observed in respect of the acts occurring therein, as well as the laws issued for the region.

Trade Law

- Articles 23, 24, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285 and 286 of law no. 68/1980 are excluded from implementation of the law promulgating the trade law within the Silk Region.
- The executive regulations of this law shall set the rules governing the practice of foreigners for their commercial activities within the boundaries of the Silk Region. In any case, the foreigner may engage in trade without Kuwaiti partners.
- The executive regulation of this law shall specify the activities foreigners are banned from practicing within the borders of the Silk Region.
- Commercial agency contracts shall regulate the rights of both agents and principals and the compensations arising from termination of the agency. The courts of the region shall hear disputes arising from contracts of commercial agencies executed within the borders of the territory unless the concerned parties agree to resort to arbitration.

Shop Licenses

With the exception of the provisions of law no. 111 of 2013 pertaining the licenses of shops, non-Kuwaitis may open shops within the boundaries of the Silk Region in accordance with the conditions and terms specified by the executive regulations of this law.

Non-Kuwaitis' Property Ownership

- With exception from the provisions of law no. 74 of 1979 regulating non-Kuwaiti ownership of real estate, non-Kuwaiti citizens shall have the right to own real estate within the boundaries of the Silk Region, in accordance with the conditions and regulations specified by the executive regulations of this law.

- Taking the preceding clause into consideration, it is prohibited to sell the property during the period of development, processing and construction of the Silk Region. The property will only be leased. The executive regulation of this law shall specify the rules for sales operations exempted from the application of this clause.

- The executive regulations of this law shall regulate the conditions of real estate development in light of the Silk Region's general structural plan and the establishment of regulations that lead to avoiding speculation in real estate and ensure fair dealing in all real estate transactions. The regulations should also include the proportion of real estate designated for housing purposes.

**Establishment of Independent Courts
The Judicial Organization of the Silk Region**

The comprehensive court shall establish the "Silk Region Court", which will be headquartered in the Silk Region. The court shall consist of the following:

1- Criminal chambers will solely have jurisdiction over criminal cases related to the crimes stipulated in this law and crimes within the borders of the Silk Region. The criminal chamber shall consist of three judges, at least one of whom should be a counselor. The misdemeanor chamber shall be composed of at least one first-degree judge. The regulations and procedures set forth in this law, and the code of criminal trials and proceedings, will be followed before these courts.

2- Non-penal chambers will be exclusively concerned with adjudicating non-criminal cases relating to commercial, civil and administrative disputes arising out of the implementation of the provisions of this law and the regulations relating to the region and substantive implementation disputes arising from the judgments issued therein, regardless of the value of these disputes. These chambers shall be composed of three judges, at least one of whom should be a counselor.

3- One or more judges to be appointed by the court in a timely manner and without prejudice to the origin of the right in matters the court has jurisdiction over time. The court shall also issue temporary orders and orders for petitions and performance orders in accordance with the provisions of this law and its executive regulations.

The judicial papers and summonses issued by investigators or the court to the accused shall be submitted by representatives of the SRE in accordance with the rules set forth in chapter two of part one of the code of criminal procedures and trials. The accused may also be notified at his workplace by handing over photocopies of the summon warrant to whoever he deems responsible for managing this shop or one of his employees. Such documents and summon orders may be communicated to individuals other than the accused by fax or email. The executive regulations shall regulate how to notify in this manner.

Notwithstanding the rules relating to the declaration of judicial documents stipulated in the civil and commercial proceedings law, judicial documents relating to civil, commercial and administrative disputes stipulated in this law may be communicated by fax or email. In coordination with the ministry of communications and the SRE, the minister of justice will issue a decision on the conditions and regulations for the organization of declaration and notification procedures, the quality of the devices and programs used in making the declaration, the forms and shape of the summons notifications and response thereto, and the method of payment of judicial fees for them. Violation of the provisions of this article leads to annulment.

Notwithstanding the provisions of articles 49, 59 and 91 of the code of civil and commercial proceedings, the following shall be observed:

1- Upon the defendant's request, the case will be deemed null and void, if due to the plaintiff's action, the defendant had not been summoned within 30 days from the date of submitting the writ of summons.

2- If neither the plaintiff nor the defendant appears at the first hearing or at any other hearing, the court will pass a sentence or decide to cancel it, after verifying the validity of the declaration process. The court will also decide to cancel the case if both parties are present and agreed to write it off. If the plaintiff or appellant fails to attend the hearing for the second time, the court will then deem the case null and void rather than dismissing it.

3- If the absentee opponent shows up in court before the end of the hearing, the write-off shall be deemed null and void. The court shall also consider the case null and void if both parties fail to attend the proceedings or if one of the other litigants does not declare others with the case within 30 days of its write-off. Calculation of this period will include the write-off period, even if it intermittently recurs. The timing will be deemed void unless the declaration reaches the opponent before it expires.

4- Upon litigants' agreement to withhold the case for a maximum of two months effective on the court approval of such an agreement, the case may be suspended. Such suspension shall not have an effect on any time limit that the law has determined for its execution. If one of the litigants fails to decide resuming litigations within 15 days following the expiry of the suspension term - whatever the duration of the suspension is - the plaintiff shall be deemed to have dropped his claim and the appellant to have given up his appeal.

The court of appeal shall have a criminal, non-criminal chamber or more specialized chambers to

hear appeals on verdicts passed by the Silk Region court, and its ruling shall not be challenged by any means of appeal. The appeal chambers in the court of appeal and the comprehensive court will continue hearing appeals issued in cases that have become the jurisdiction of the Silk Region court and have been referred to it following this law's entry into force until a final judgment is issued.

Upon filing appeals, contests or challenges against sentences, the presiding judge will determine to schedule a hearing for the appeal to be filed in the writ of summons at the time of its submission. This shall be regarded as a declaration for the appellant, even if the appeal is filed by his legal representative. The declaration department will communicate the petition to the rest of the opponents by fax through SRE representatives.

A special prosecution, called the Prosecution of the Silk Region, shall be established to be exclusively responsible for investigating, disposing and prosecuting crimes heard by the Silk Region court and challenging the verdicts issued therein.

With exception of law no. 23/1990 pertaining the organization of the judiciary and its amendments, the judges, attorney general deputies and public prosecutors appointed in accordance with the provisions of this law shall meet the following conditions:

- 1- Fluency in English.
- 2- International expertise in legal disputes and litigations.

Whenever needed, foreign judges who are good in Arabic may be appointed or legal translators shall be appointed for them.

All proceedings and sentences will be done in Arabic.

1- An arbitration center shall be established in the Silk Region under the name of the Arbitration Center for the Silk Region, and will have the authority to adjudicate the following disputes:

- All civil and commercial disputes and proceedings to which the parties expressly agree on the jurisdiction of the arbitration center in respect of disputes arising between them.

- Disputes the center will be responsible for will be in accordance with the legislation of the Silk Region.

2- The judgments issued by the center shall be final and enforceable under the terms and conditions, unless the concerned parties agree otherwise.

3- The arbitration center shall be responsible for establishing regulations governing and regulating the procedures to be followed before it, forming the members of the arbitral tribunal and their assistants, and the manner of their appointment and selection, including the rules for the establishment of the center and the issuance of judgments.

4- The arbitration clause shall be independent of the contract to which it is incorporated, and shall not be invalidated for any reason.



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In post-apartheid S Africa interracial couples stand out

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COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan woman cries during a burial service for a bomb blast victim in a cemetery in Colombo two days after a series of bomb attacks targeting churches and luxury hotels in Sri Lanka. — AFP

Islamic State influence outlives caliphate

Sri Lanka attacks show extremist ideology remains dangerously intact

PARIS: The devastating bomb attacks in Sri Lanka, claimed by Islamic State jihadists, show that the influence of the group's extremist ideology remains dangerously intact even after the collapse of its so-called caliphate in Iraq and Syria, experts say. Over 320 people were killed in a string of deadly suicide bomb blasts on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka targeting churches and luxury hotels. Colombo said it believes that the little-known Islamic extremist group National Thowheeth Jama'ath (NTJ) was behind the attacks.

But it has also suggested that a bigger international group helped plan the carnage as "retaliation" for shootings at two mosques in New Zealand last month that killed 50 people. Yesterday, a statement released by the Islamist State (IS) propaganda agency Amaq said the attackers were "fighters" from the terror network.

Zachary Abuza, professor at the National War College in Washington, said the Sri Lanka attacks were a warning of a new jihadist strategy following their military defeat in Iraq and Syria. "I would say that what we saw in Sri Lanka

is a new front being opened in the global jihadi insurgency," he told AFP. He said IS was still able to inspire attacks and give militants anywhere in the world a sense of "urgency". "Anyone can act in the Islamic State's name, and they will take credit for it," Abuza said.

'Compensate for losses'

Rohan Gunaratna, a security expert with the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore, told AFP he believed NTJ was indeed now linked to IS. "IS has created support groups around the world," he said, adding that some NTJ members were radicalized by the local group then joined IS. At the peak of its military success, IS claimed a string of attacks around the world, from the November 2015 coordinated attacks in Paris to the deadly rampage of a gunman at an Istanbul nightclub minutes into 2017.

In late March, Kurdish-dominated and US-backed forces flushed out IS fighters from their last bastion in

Syria in what was hailed as a final military defeat for the group after it lost its strongholds one-by-one in Syria and Iraq. But governments and analysts have always warned that the risk of attacks anywhere in the world remains just as high, be it from extremists who fought for IS in Syria and Iraq or those simply inspired by them. After the Sri Lanka bombings, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned that "radical Islamic terror remains a threat", saying the United States needs to stay "active and vigilant".

According to the SITE Intelligence Group, a known supporter of IS published on a social media channel pictures of three purported "commandos" involved in the Sri Lanka attacks standing with raised fingers against an IS flag. Jean-Pierre Filiu, professor at Sciences Po-Paris, said IS is now adopting what he dubbed a "glocal" strategy by staging local attacks anywhere in a bid to make a global impact. The jihadist group is "trying to compensate symbolically and in the media for the loss of its

strongholds in Syria and Iraq and instead relaunch a terrorist campaign on a planetary scale".

'Serious proposition'

Bruce Hoffmann, senior fellow for counterterrorism and homeland security at the Council on Foreign Relations, said such attacks require considerable expertise and logistical support at every stage — from recruitment to transport to the target sites. "A half-dozen simultaneous attacks is a serious proposition. It would be very unusual for a group that basically had no track record," he said. Little is known about the NTJ, which previously has only been linked to vandalising Buddhist statues. Ethnic and religious violence has plagued Sri Lanka for decades, with a 37-year conflict with Tamil rebels followed by an upswing in recent years in clashes between the Buddhist majority and Muslims. But it had not been seen by analysts as a potential crucible for Islamist extremist terror. Yet IS has made inroads in Asia, notably in Afghanistan, the Philippines and Indonesia. — AFP

Sri Lanka social media shutdown raises fears on free expression

WASHINGTON: Sri Lanka's decision to block social media following deadly suicide attacks highlights a growing distrust of online platforms, but critics said the move is likely to restrict the flow of important news and information as well as abusive content. The move comes amid growing frustration by governments around the world with internet platforms over the propagation of misinformation and incitements of violence. According to the digital rights group NetBlocks, Sri Lanka blocked Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Snapchat, Viber, WhatsApp and YouTube following the Easter bombings targeting churches and hotels.

Sri Lanka's move was the second time it has blocked social networks, following similar actions after an outbreak of violence in 2018. The decision highlights the troubled reputation of mostly American-owned social media companies, which several years ago had been seen as a force for freedom of information. "Governments around the world, including those who exploit social media and state media... have come to realize the risks associated with platforms such as WhatsApp," Jennifer Grygiel, a professor of communication at Syracuse University, said in an email.

"They are quick to take action now in the wake of terrorism to prevent rumors and social unrest, but the ease at which they are able to shut down platforms also unveils how

much power and control governments have over these companies and the need to protect the free press." According to NetBlocks, a digital rights and cyber security group, the shutdown in Sri Lanka may prove counterproductive by taking down sources of authentic information. "Nationwide internet restrictions accelerate the spread of disinformation during a crisis because sources of authentic information are left offline," NetBlocks said in a tweet.

"This allows third parties to exploit the situation for political gain and profit," Sri Lankan authorities' pledge to maintain the shutdown until its investigation is complete is troublesome, said Amy Lehr, director of the human rights initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. "We all have some sympathy when there is a terrorist attack, but what if it were a democracy protest in Iran?" Lehr asked. "Who decides what is an emergency?"

No more 'safety check'

By blocking Facebook, Sri Lanka also shut down the leading social network's "safety check" feature that enables users to communicate with friends and family after a disaster. "These attacks are horrific. And people need social media platforms to obtain accurate information & to contact loved ones," tweeted Allie Funk, a researcher with the human rights group Freedom House.

"The government's decision to restrict these apps is a dangerous one," Emma Llanso of the Center for Democracy & Technology, a digital rights group, said there are no easy solutions to misinformation on social media. "Blocking websites can fuel disinformation by leaving journalists and other credible sources of information with fewer avenues to reach people and to debunk falsehoods," she said.

"We need more nuanced solutions." Prior research has indicated that internet and social media blackouts may lead to more, not less, violence.

Stanford University researcher Jan Ryzdak said in a February 2019 paper based on findings from India that "shutdowns are found to be much more strongly associated with increases in violent collective action than with non-violent mobilization." Efforts to regulate social media have picked up since the mosque shootings last month in New Zealand livestreamed on Facebook and reposted on other apps. Facebook and others struggled to remove various versions of the video. The missteps of social media, however, have put governments on alert and sparked efforts to control information flows.

'Inevitable but unfortunate'

Misinformation is often seen during moments of crisis, including during last week's fire at the Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris. The ban in Sri Lanka "is the inevitable but unfortunate consequence of the platforms' inability to stop the online amplification of conspiracy and outrage," said Karen Kornbluh, a former White House policy director who now heads the Digital Innovation Democracy Initiative at the German Marshall Fund.

"This shows the false premise of the platforms' mantra that any change in their practices will squash free speech... if they continue to turbo-charge disinformation this will lead to less online free speech," Lehr said one of the challenges for social platforms using algorithmic feeds is how to prevent false and abusive content from going viral. "It's not always a matter of blocking hate speech but also de-amplifying it," she said. "I'd like to see us get to a place where a shutdown isn't necessary, but the social media platforms need to rebuild public trust." — AFP

50 feared dead in landslide at Myanmar mine

YANGON: More than 50 people were feared dead after a landslide in northern Myanmar engulfed jade miners while they were sleeping, local police said yesterday, the latest deadly accident in a notoriously dangerous industry. Dozens die each year in landslides caused by jade mining, a poorly regulated industry rife with corruption and sandwiched between the country's borders with China and India.

Local police described a freak accident in Kachin state on Monday night so big it created a huge "mud lake" that buried the miners as well as some 40 vehicles. "Fifty-four people are missing in the mud," a duty officer from Hpakant township police station told AFP, asking not to be named. "There's no way they (the missing) could have survived." Only two bodies had been recovered so far.

The Ministry of Information confirmed the accident and number of missing, adding that the area was mined by Myanmar Thura Gems and Shwe Nagar Koe Kaung companies. Myanmar Thura Gems director Hla Soe Oo told AFP by phone he was on his way to the site and had no further details. Local media shared images, unverified by AFP, that showed the walls of a mine stretching vertically a couple of hundred meters above a vast pool of mud, revealing only

the tops of two yellow excavation vehicles. Hundreds of onlookers gathered nearby, staring at the site and taking photos with their phones.

Prized in China

The open jade mines in Kachin's Hpakant township have turned the remote area into a vast moonscape-like terrain. Fatal landslides in the area are common with victims often from impoverished ethnic communities looking for scraps left behind by big firms. A major collapse in November 2015 left more than 100 dead. In July last year, the bodies of 23 landslide victims were recovered after a days-long search hampered by heavy monsoon rains.

The jade industry is largely driven by insatiable demand from neighboring China, where the translucent green gemstone has long been prized. Watchdog Global Witness estimated that the industry was worth some \$31 billion in 2014, although very little reaches state coffers. Northern Myanmar's abundant natural resources - including jade, timber, gold and amber - help finance both sides of a decades-long civil war between ethnic Kachin insurgents and the military.

The fight to control the mines and the revenues they bring frequently traps local civilians in the middle. A 17-year ceasefire broke down in 2011, and since then more than 100,000 people have been displaced by fighting - some of them multiple times. On coming to power in 2016, civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi promised to make the peace process with the country's myriad armed groups her top priority — a pledge that has yet to yield significant results. — AFP

International

China shows off new destroyer; President Xi views naval parade

China marks 70th anniversary of PLA navy with major parade

QINGDAO: China showed off the first of its new generation of guided missile destroyers yesterday as President Xi Jinping reviewed a major naval parade through mist and rain to mark 70 years since the founding of China's navy. Xi is overseeing a sweeping plan to refurbish the People's Liberation Army (PLA) by developing everything from stealth jets to aircraft carriers as China ramps up its presence in the disputed South China Sea and around self-ruled Taiwan, which has rattled nerves around the region and in Washington.

The navy has been a major beneficiary of the modernization, with China looking to project power far from its shores and protect its trading routes and citizens overseas. After boarding the destroyer the Xining, which was only commissioned two years ago, Xi watched as a flotilla of Chinese and foreign ships sailed past, in waters off the eastern port city of Qingdao. "Salute to you, comrades. Comrades, thanks for your hard work," Xi called out to the officers standing on deck as the ships sailed past, in images carried on state television. "Hail to you, chairman," they replied. "Serve the people."

China's first domestically produced aircraft carrier, which is still unnamed and undergoing sea trials, was not present, though the carrier the Liaoning was, the report said. The Liaoning, the country's first carrier, was bought second-hand from Ukraine in 1998 and refitted in China. State television also showed pictures of the Nanchang at the review, the first of a new fleet of 10,000-tonne destroyers, though details of that and other ships were hard to determine from the footage, due to the intermittent thick mist and rain.

China had said it would also show new nuclear sub-

marines, and state television did show submarines taking part in the display. Singapore-based regional security expert Collin Koh said that based on the available evidence, the larger submarine on show was a modified version of China's existing Jin-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines - a key part of its nuclear deterrent.

The navy has four Jin-class submarines, which are based in Hainan island in the south, and the Pentagon says it believes construction on a new generation of ballistic missile submarines will start in the 2020s. "It does appear that this is a modified version rather than an entirely new submarine, something which would have been a more significant development," said Koh, of Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

"Outside analysts still don't have a complete picture of the precise modifications." China's last major naval parade was last year in the South China Sea, also overseen by Xi. Yesterday's parade featured 32 Chinese vessels and 39 aircraft, as well as warships from 13 foreign countries including India, Japan, Vietnam and Australia. A total of 61 countries have sent delegations to the event, which includes a naval symposium today and tomorrow. For a special report on China's military click:

'Long for peace'

Earlier, meeting foreign naval officers at Qingdao's Olympic sailing centre, Xi said the navies of the world should work together to protect maritime peace and order. "The Chinese people love and long for peace, and will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development," Xi said, in remarks carried by the official Xinhua news agency.

"Everyone should respect each other, treat each other



QINGDAO: Soldiers stand on deck of the ambitious transport dock Yimen Shan of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy as it participates in a naval parade to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the founding of China's PLA Navy yesterday. —AFP

as equals, enhance mutual trust, strengthen maritime dialogue and exchanges, and deepen pragmatic cooperation between navies," he added. "There cannot be resorts to force or threats of force at the slightest pretext," Xi said. "All countries should adhere to equal consultations, improve crisis communication mechanisms, strengthen regional security cooperation, and promote the proper settlement of maritime-related disputes."

China has frequently had to rebuff concerns about

its military intentions, especially as its defence spending reaches new heights. Beijing says it has nothing to hide, and invited a small number of foreign media onboard a naval ship to watch the parade, including from Reuters. China's last naval battles were with Vietnam in the South China Sea in 1974 and 1988, though these were relatively minor skirmishes. Chinese ships have also participated in international anti-piracy patrols off Somalia since late 2008. —Reuters



China's military modernization rattles region

Life must go on for Libyans despite war on their doorstep

TRIPOLI: Despite the war on Tripoli's doorstep, residents are filling the salons and cafes in some quarters of the Libyan capital as they carry on as best they can. "Life has to go on. It will end when it ends," said Samira, who runs a hair and beauty salon in Tripoli's central Ben Achour neighborhood. Originally from neighboring Tunisia, Samira has been living in Libya for years and her salon is always packed with clients. "At least three or four brides come in each week to have their hair done and get ready for their big day," she said, as she prepared a palette of eyeshadows and brushes to start making up a young bride.

"That's as well as dozens of women who come for a haircut, to get a makeover, or skincare before a big event," she added. Tension has been high in Tripoli since military chief Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive on April 4, aimed at seizing the capital from the UN-backed unity government based there. The battle for control of the capital has so far left more than 260 dead and wounded more than 1,200 others, according to a toll from the World Health Organization.

Clashes have centered on the southern outskirts of the city, just 15 kilometers from the centre. Fighting intensified with a counter-attack launched by GNA force on Saturday,

when sustained rocket and shellfire could be heard in several districts and some witnesses reported air strikes. Tripoli residents fear that the battle could escalate into a wider conflict that would devastate the North African country, already rocked by years of instability and economic hardship since dictator Muammar Gaddafi was ousted in 2011.

But for now, the honking of car horns on the seafront is louder than the distant boom of rockets and gunfire. Schools and businesses in Tripoli remain open when they can, while residents of the Mediterranean city try to indulge in their favorite leisure activities.

"Libya is not just about television footage showing tanks and militiamen brandishing their guns or destroyed buildings," said schoolteacher Mariam Abdallah. "We are still having weddings, parties, school activities and sports events."

'Blood and violence'

On the seafront in the west of Tripoli, outdoor cafes are packed, especially towards the end of the day when residents like to unwind after a day's work. Many of the clients are students and young employees attracted by the offers of free wifi. Issam, a waiter at a cafe, said coffee shops and restaurants provide a "rare" form of leisure in Libya, a country that has "no cinemas, theatres or concert halls". So the "best places to meet (friends) and spend some good times are cafes and restaurants," he said. The Haftar offensive has also



TRIPOLI: Libyan children play near the port of Tripoli. Despite the war on Tripoli's doorstep, residents are filling the salons and cafes in some quarters of the Libyan capital as they carry on with life as best they can. —AFP

displaced more than 30,000 people, according to the United Nations.

But the number could be much higher, as many people who fled their homes and moved in with relatives in safer areas did not register with international organizations. "My daughter, her husband and their children came to shelter in our house because of the fighting, so the family has grown," said Faiza, as she shopped for some crockery and other supplies. "It is always nice to have something new in the kitchen," she said cheerfully as she checked out some bowls with a flowery motif.

Faiza said she needed to prepare ahead of the holy fasting month of

Ramadan, which begins in early May, during which Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, breaking at sunset for lavish family meals. "New things inspire me to create new dishes for the family," she added, her grandchildren running up and down the aisles of the supermarket. "It's hard to come up with different meals to break the (Ramadan) fast every evening for a month," she said. But not everyone was as cheerful as Faiza. "It is too late to speak of a political solution," said a man in his fifties who owns a grocery store in the seafront district of Gargareh. "The situation won't be resolved until we're drowning in blood and violence." —AFP

Algerian students take to streets in fresh protests

ALGIERS: Thousands of Algerian students marched through the capital calling for the overthrow of the "system" and trials for members of ousted president Abdelaziz Bouteflika's inner circle. The rallies came as state media reported that Algeria's richest man has been detained in jail after his arrest as part of a corruption probe and Sunday's arrest of four other business tycoons. Some have close links to Bouteflika's entourage.

Students chanting "out with the government" gathered outside the iconic post office in the heart of Algiers as they have every week since the Bouteflika stepped down on April 2 in the face of mass protests against his 20-year rule. The police dialled down the security presence at the site after deploying en masse last Tuesday to prevent protesters from reaching what has become the emblematic point of rallies since anti-government demonstrations first erupted in February. "Either it's us, or it's you,

Out with the government!" chanted students, many of them draped in Algeria's national flag.

Architecture and civil engineering students wearing white and yellow construction helmets held banners aloft reading "Let's build a new Algeria". Algerians are demanding a complete overhaul of the political system in the North African country, including the ouster of an interim government set up in the wake of Bouteflika's fall. They are demanding that regime stalwarts be excluded from any political transition in the country, where presidential elections are due to take place on July 4 according to acting president Abdelkader Bensalah.

"We demand the departure of the entire gang that inherited Bouteflika's reign, headed by Bensalah and (Prime Minister) Noureddine Bedoui," said Hamza, a third-year civil engineering student at the University of Blida south of the capital. "We want a new system that is committed to fighting the corruption that has plagued the country," said Hamid, a finance student in Algiers. Issad Rebrab, Algeria's richest man and chief executive of the country's biggest privately-owned conglomerate Cevital, was placed in detention overnight, the APS



ALGIERS: Algerian protesters flash the V for victory sign as they take part in an anti government demonstration in the capital Algiers yesterday. —AFP

news agency said. Late Sunday four brothers from the powerful Kouninef family with links to Said Bouteflika, the younger brother and former advisor of the president, were arrested, state television reported. The Kouninef family is hugely influential and the four brothers—Abdelkader, Reda,

Karim and Tarek—have dealings in everything from agribusiness to civil engineering. Business tycoon Rebrab, however, said last month he backed the protest movement but he has had tense relations with the Algerian authorities, which he accuses of blocking his investments in the country. —AFP

Yemen rebels can hit targets in Saudi, UAE: Chief

DUBAI: Yemen's rebel chief warned that the rebels could launch attacks against targets in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, who lead a military coalition against them. Abdulmalik Al-Houthi said the rebels were prepared to continue fighting the coalition in a four-year war that has pushed the country to the brink of famine. "We are ready on the ground and on the fronts," he said in a rare television interview broadcast by the Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV.

"We are ready for sacrifice. We are ready with men, money and weapons." Houthi said the rebels have the capabilities to reach "important and strategic" targets in Saudi Arabia and the UAE if there is an escalation of fighting in the key port city of Hodeida. "The missiles can reach Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai... vibrant and sensitive targets," he said.

The Iran-linked Houthi rebels have targeted Saudi border towns and the capital Riyadh with ballistic missiles and also claimed drone attacks on the airports of Abu Dhabi and Dubai during the course of the conflict. Saudi Arabia has said the missiles were all intercepted by its air force, with one civilian reported killed by falling shrapnel, while the UAE has denied the alleged drone attacks.

Saudi Arabia and its military allies joined the Yemeni government's war against the Houthis in March 2015, triggering what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Both sides to the conflict stand accused of acts that could amount to war crimes. —AFP

Stubbed out: Japanese university stops hiring smoking professors

TOKYO: A Japanese university has stopped hiring professors and teachers who light up, officials said yesterday, as the nation steps up an anti-smoking campaign ahead of the 2020 Olympics. Nagasaki University spokesman Yusuke Takakura told AFP they have "stopped hiring any teaching staff who smoke", although applicants who promise to kick the habit before taking up their post could still be offered employment. The university will also ban smoking entirely on campus from August, opening a clinic for those who cannot give up, said Takakura.

"We have reached a conclusion that smokers are not fit for the education sector," the spokesman said, adding that the university had sought legal advice and does not believe the policy contravenes discrimination laws. Local media said it was the first state-run university to introduce such a condition of employment and the move comes after Tokyo's city government passed strict new anti-smoking rules last year ahead of the 2020 Summer Games. Japan has long been an outlier in the developed world, considered a smoker's paradise where lighting up is allowed in many restaurants and bars.

Tokyo's new laws ban lighting up at restaurants in the capital, regardless of size. Restaurants can set up separate indoor smoking areas, but customers cannot eat or drink there. Smoking is also banned entirely on school premises from kindergartens to high schools, although space can be set aside outside university and hospital buildings. —AFP

International

Britain's Obama moment? What Harry and Meghan's baby says about race

Mixed ethnicity will be a historic first

LONDON: Prince Harry's wedding to Meghan Markle, an American actress of African-American heritage, was a historic moment for Britain's royal family. Some say the imminent birth of their baby is, if anything, even more significant. Due in the coming weeks, the baby will be seventh-in-line to the throne and, it is believed, the first person of mixed race in such a senior position in the history of British royalty. "I think this baby is going to be hugely important historically because it's going to break new ground," royal biographer Claudia Joseph said. "Whether it's a girl or a boy, it will be the first Afro-American baby to be born into the royal family."

With a black mother and white father, Meghan's ethnicity has never been far away from discussions about her relationship with Queen Elizabeth's grandson - scrutiny that has often been unwelcome. In late 2016 when he first announced they were dating, Harry issued a rare rebuke to the press, condemning the racial undertones of articles. One commentator had written how Meghan would bring "rich and exotic DNA" to the Windsors.

Michelle Ebanks, head of the company that publishes "Essence", a US magazine for African-American women, sees the positive. "Every time we can break a

barrier and be, as black people, somewhere we're not expected to be that is to be celebrated. "Because we should not be in a box. Not in a box, not outside a box - there is no box! So, to be royalty should be normal," Ebanks told Reuters. But Kehinde Andrews, a sociology professor at England's Birmingham City University who writes on race issues, is less sure that the royal baby indicates any improvement in racial equality.

"Unfortunately, because racism is so bad and so historic and so entrenched, we tend to look at things, any things," he said. "So any symbol that could possibly be good we tend to over-celebrate: Barack Obama becoming president, the film 'Black Panther' got people excited, anytime we have someone which ... looks like a similar progress - unfortunately we get carried away. "But I think when we sit back and actively analyse what's happened and what's changed we realize that this is nothing, means nothing at all."



New baby will be seventh-in-line to the throne

Black Princesses

For Ingrid Seward, editor of "Majesty" magazine, the new baby will be a small but important step in the royal family's evolution. "In order for the monarchy to survive it has to evolve and this is another way of it evolving and becoming more in tune with the multiracial society in which we now live." Royal biographer Robert Jobson said Meghan's ethnicity resonated with many young Britons.

"I was at the wedding reporting for American television and there were little black girls dressed up as princesses in their princesses dress with little tiaras," he said. "Now even though they would have been excited to be at a royal wedding or even talk about a princess, I don't think that those little girls would have ever dreamed that they could be part of this story." However, those like Jobson whose job it is to cover the royals on a daily basis have found themselves accused of racism on social media by supporters of Meghan, often for

reporting critical comments made about her by members of her own family.

Valentine Low, who covers the royal family for the Times of London, wrote in February that some US networks gave the impression that Britain's media was racist and sexist. "The problem is that in some quarters, particularly in the US, any negative coverage is seen as racist," he wrote. "Anything less than unqualified adulation comes under a barrage of abuse on social media." But some British journalists say Meghan has been treated differently from other members of the House of Windsor, citing a difference in attitude towards Kate, the wife of Harry's elder brother Prince William.

Broadcaster Afua Hirsch, author of "Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging", said ethnicity played a part. "I would like to see more honesty and introspection in journalists who have repeated some of these tropes about Meghan Markle, and a willingness to at least look at the fact that her treatment has been different," she said. Meghan herself has said she avoids newspapers and Twitter, but asked about the focus on her ethnicity when her engagement was announced, she said coverage had been "disheartening". "At the end of the day I'm really just proud of who I am and where I come from," she said. —Reuters

News in brief

Motorbike gunmen kill 10

KANO: Gunmen killed 10 people and abducted two women in northern Nigeria's Katsina state, police and residents said yesterday, the latest violence involving armed criminal gangs. They drove motorcycles into the village of Yar Santa Sherere on Sunday evening, shooting and torching vehicles and businesses. "The bodies of nine people were evacuated by a police team and residents after the attack," said Katsina state police spokesman Gambo Isa. He called the gunmen "criminals" and said police tried to pursue them. Local resident Sada Iro said another body was found shortly after, taking the death toll to 10. "The bandits also kidnapped two women during the attack, and burnt many shops and vehicles before leaving," Iro said. Katsina state, 350 kilometers north of Nigeria's capital Abuja, has seen a string of violent attacks in recent months. —AFP

S Africa mudslides kill 23

JOHANNESBURG: The number of dead from floods and mudslides that crushed homes in the South African port of Durban yesterday has risen to 23, authorities said. Among those killed were a six-month-old baby and a child aged around 10, they added. "Last night the weather conditions worsened significantly ... in various parts of the province, claiming at least 23 lives," Nomusa Dube-Ncube, a KwaZulu-Natal provincial minister said during a televised news conference. At least 32 people have been hospitalized. The victims were either crushed to death by mudslides or drowned in flood waters, Rescue Care spokesman Garrith Jamieson said. It was not known how many people were missing, but search and rescue operations combed the debris for those who might be trapped underneath. In addition to collapsed buildings and flooded roads, sewer lines were blocked and electricity pylons had toppled over. —AFP

10 missing as jeep crashes

LUBUMBASHI: Ten people, including eight student trainees, are feared dead after the jeep they were travelling in fell into a dam at the Nzilo hydropower station in southeast DR Congo, the plant's boss said yesterday. Around closing time Monday, the car transporting 11 workers careened out of control, left the road, and rolled several times in the ravine before falling into the dam, Henry Tchibanze, head of the hydroelectric plant said. "We have just rescued a survivor and recovered two bodies" from the water, said Adolphe Mwenzi of the Snel national electricity provider. The survivor "told us there were 11 people in the jeep" including three Snel workers and eight trainees, he said. The crash appears to have been caused by a front wheel of the jeep coming off, said Mwenzi. According to the Congolese press, the trainees were students from the ISTA technical university in Lubumbashi. —AFP

New IRA apologizes

BELFAST: The New IRA militant Irish nationalist group has apologized for the killing of journalist Lyra McKee - its first acknowledgement that one of its members was involved, the Irish News newspaper reported yesterday. The organization, which opposes Northern Ireland's 1998 peace deal, described McKee's death as tragic and offered "full and sincere apologies" to her partner, family and friends in a statement that the Irish News said it received on Monday night. The 29-year-old reporter was shot dead in Londonderry on Thursday as she watched Irish nationalist youths attack police following a raid. Police said McKee was hit when a gunman opened fire in the direction of officers. The group said it had sent volunteers to the area after the raid. —Reuters

In post-apartheid S Africa interracial couples stand out

JOHANNESBURG: Less than 40 years ago, Mpho Mojapelo and his wife Cheryl might have gone to jail. "We would be hiding our relationship, we would have had to live separately, or maybe leave the country," said Mojapelo, a black man married to a white woman in South Africa. "We are so fortunate to live in these times," he said. The 35-year-old married Cheryl in 2015. They had both "white" and "African" weddings after the payment of "lebola" (dowry) and a ritual sheep slaughter.

But they are an exception to the norm even 25 years after the end of apartheid white-rule when Nelson Mandela became the first black president, promising a "rainbow nation". "There is still not a lot of mixing in terms of relationships and interactions," said Mpho, who wears Doc Martens boots and sports several tattoos. "We stick out so much," he added with a smile. Over time the pair have become accustomed to being stared at - mostly because of "fascination" suggested Cheryl, 31, laughing along with her husband. But sometimes "there are still people behaving like they

are in their own bubble," said Mpho.

In one incident an elderly white couple in a restaurant in northern Limpopo province muttered "disgusting" in Afrikaans, the language of the original Dutch settlers' descendants. Cheryl said she was "shocked" while Mpho nodded. "It is going to take more than 25 years for things to change. We were in that stage of turmoil for so many years," said Mpho. From 1948 the white-dominated government formalized centuries of racial segregation. One of the first laws, adopted in 1949, banned "mixed marriages" between Europeans and non-Europeans.

'A social divide'

To be able to marry a person of a different race, applicants could ask to change their own race - bureaucratic surrealism permitted by law. The policy was scrapped in 1985, nine years before apartheid's end. Around that time, Mpho's family left the Soweto township, a hotbed of anti-apartheid activism, for Roodepoort, a white suburb 20 kilometers (12 miles) away.

Mpho said his new school "was an all new world I dived into". "In my primary school, there were only three black kids... That is when I saw I was different," he said. Cheryl grew up in Cape Town followed by Roodepoort and had an upbringing she described as "sheltered".

Alcohol shops in Mosul reopen after recapture from IS

MOSUL: Almost two years after Iraqi forces recaptured the city of Mosul from Islamic State (IS), small shops selling alcohol are reopening their doors and new ones are appearing. Customers purchase bottles or cans of liquor which are then placed in black plastic bags, or emptied out into nondescript plastic bottles. Mosul was home to two million people before being overrun in 2014 by IS, which proclaimed a "caliphate" stretching into neighboring Syria. It held Mosul for three years.

Under the militant group's strict rule, items such as alcohol and cigarettes were banned. Shops that sold alcohol were burned down and destroyed. Liquor store owner Nemat Hassan said IS burned his store down in the city. "There was more than \$40,000 worth of stock. They burned it," he said. Since the city was recaptured, some have

decided to return to what remains of their homes and rebuild their stores. Hassan reopened his shop and said he hasn't faced any problems.

"When we came back after Daesh (Islamic State), the security forces were controlling Mosul. There are no problems, thank God. There have been no threats by any groups, no problems in Mosul." Another liquor store owner, Adel Jindy, said many more stores are appearing in the neighborhood as more licenses are being granted. "Before there were four stores in Al Dawasah (neighborhood) now there are many licensed shops," he said. Business is generally good - the only time customers are afraid of coming in is after an attack or a car bomb. But once the initial panic fades, it's business as usual, said Jindy.

In Iraq members of the Yazidi and Christian religious minorities are allowed to have alcohol licenses. Alcohol is prohibited by Islam. Mosul has been the site of several bomb blasts in recent months. In an attack this March, a car packed with explosives blew up killing two people and wounding another 24 near Mosul University. Nearly

counted for what I believe in". The ardent European Union supporter once said she would "walk down Whitehall in my birthday suit to stop Brexit."

She now writes a weekly column in The Mail on Sunday, and was unveiled on a roster of candidates for Change UK at an event in Bristol in southwest England. Boris Johnson was a key figure helping swing the 2016 referendum vote in favor of Leave. He has criticized May's withdrawal deal struck with the EU for keeping Britain too closely tied to the bloc, putting him at odds with other members of his family. His brother Jo, also a Conservative politician, quit as a minister in November, believing May's deal would sever too many ties with the EU.

He has since backed calls for a second referendum on the issue. The power of Brexit to cut across family bonds - even if on the same side - was also evident earlier this month. Annunziata Rees-Mogg, brother of influential Conservative Brexititeer Jacob Rees-Mogg, announced she was leaving the party to stand as a candidate for Nigel



JOHANNESBURG: (Left to right) Cheryl (31), Camden (6 months) and Mpho Mojapelo (35) pose in their home in Johannesburg. —AFP

"A neighbor ran up to me, I was seven or eight, he said: 'Oh there is a black man coming, we need to hide, he is going to steal from us,'" she said. "I did not understand." The couple attended the same school, a few years apart, and met at a party thrown by mutual friends in the early 2000s.

"We got the same education, we can relate to each other because we grew up in similar environments," said Cheryl. "If

Mpho did grow up in Soweto his whole life and he did not speak English, would I still date him?" she asked, her eyes fixed behind glasses. "There is not a racial divide, there is a social divide." Researcher Haley McEwen at the Wits Centre for diversity studies said: "Couples who go out are given poor service, they are stared at, people don't take their relationship seriously like their families." —AFP



MOSUL: A man rides a motorcycle among devastated buildings in the old city of Mosul in northern Iraq. —AFP

two million Iraqis are still displaced by the fight against IS, according to a survey by REACH, a non-governmental organization.

Many say they are not ready to go home because of the destruction and lack of services. —Reuters



NEWCASTLE: Anti-Brexit activists fly EU flags as they take part in a demonstration on the River Tyne in Newcastle, northeast England, against the terms of the current Brexit deal being offered by Britain's prime minister. —AFP

Farage's new Brexit Party. Her brother tweeted that "Annunziata would be a brilliant prime minister but I hope as a

Tory". It was revealed she has been a member of the Conservatives since the age of five. —AFP

International

Women's temple ban debate rages in India flashpoint vote

Traditionalists outraged as women defy longstanding ban

PATHANAMTHITTA: Voters in a flashpoint constituency in southern India went to the polls yesterday after a campaign dominated by the fallout from the controversial decision to allow women to enter a Hindu temple. The district of Pathanamthitta in the state of Kerala includes the Sabarimala Hindu temple, where two women finally defied a longstanding ban on women of menstruating age last year.

Traditionalists were outraged and many women remain divided over the move, which has overshadowed the campaign with candidates staging election parades on the issue. Kanaka Durga and Bindu Ammini made history in December when police guided them into the hilltop shrine, after the Supreme Court ruled that the ban was unconstitutional. Days of pitched battles erupted between traditionalists and activists. The anger has not died down and core issues such as unemployment, health and education have been pushed aside during the campaign.

The whole country is expected to follow the result when it is announced on May 23 after India's marathon election. Two of the three main candidates in the election are men who support the ban, while the third is a woman who has tried to dodge the topic. Veena George, who is standing for the alliance of left wing parties that runs Kerala's state government cited an election commission advisory to avoid using the temple to get votes. "We need a revival of job opportunities, agriculture and infrastructure. Educated women need jobs," she told AFP on the last day of campaigning before the vote.

Protest symbol

India's main opposition Congress party has fielded

Anto Antony, who won the last two elections and has backed the traditionalists. The Bharatiya Janata Party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brandished its pro-Hindu credentials as it seeks to make an impact in a state where it has always struggled. The BJP has fielded K Surendran, who became the symbol of the massive temple protests across Kerala. He now faces more than 200 police cases related to violence during last year's Sabarimala protests.

"The Communists have an issue with our prayers and religion but they can't crush believers' rights," Modi told a rally in Kerala last week. "We won't tolerate any attack on a tradition that has lasted thousands of years," Modi added to wild cheers. Many women have backed the traditionalist cause. "Local men and women agree. There is only one issue in this election - our faith. And the court shouldn't have intervened," Lakshmi, who works at a local hospital, and only uses one name, told AFP. "I feel hurt as a Hindu when I see things going against our culture and tradition," added Bindu, a housewife.

"The temple has always been a place where women could not go. It is not acceptable to see people coming and fighting to enter now," she added. Tens of thousands of people, including many women, took part in street marches and protests in support of the ban. However, uncertainty remains over how many women will vote for their right to enter Sabarimala. "Women should be free to choose whether to enter or not. To me, women's safety, here and all over India, is the only issue that is important," said Ansa S, a medical student. — AFP



PATHANAMTHITTA: Indian supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), National Congress Party and Communist Party of India celebrate in front of each other during the final day of election campaigning in the city of Pathanamthitta, in the south Indian state of Kerala. — AFP

Myanmar's court rejects appeal of Reuters reporters

NAYPYIDAW: Myanmar's Supreme Court rejected the latest appeal yesterday by two Pulitzer-prize winning Reuters journalists who were jailed for seven years on charges linked to their reporting on the Rohingya crisis, as hopes now turn to a presidential pardon. Reporters Wa Lone, 33, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 29, have been behind bars since their arrest in December 2017 under the colonial-era Official Secrets Act. They were convicted of possessing classified documents relating to security operations in Rakhine during a brutal military crackdown against

Rohingya Muslims that forced some 740,000 to flee over the border into Bangladesh.

The initial ruling in September was upheld by the Yangon High Court in January. Yesterday, the reporters were not at the Supreme Court in the capital Naypyidaw to hear the ruling that once again went against them. Under Myanmar's judicial system, the Reuters journalists could take their appeal back to the Supreme Court judges twice more, but it is unclear whether they will try this option or if they will pin all their hopes on a pardon.

"Our appeal was rejected," Khin Maung Zaw told AFP. "They upheld the ruling of the lower court." He added that the reporters had indicated they did not want to continue with the legal process but a final decision had not yet been made. Both of the journalists' wives were at the Supreme Court for the ruling and spoke side-by-side to reporters afterwards. "I'm very upset by the Supreme Court's decision," said Chit Su Win, wife of Kyaw Soe Oo, visibly fighting back tears.

"We really hoped our husbands would be released but it hasn't happened." Supporters believe the pair were punished for investigating a massacre of 10 Rohingya in Myanmar's western Rakhine state in September 2017. The story earned the team the Pulitzer, one of the top honors in journalism. Myanmar's armed forces insist the brutal campaign in Rakhine was justified as a means to root out Rohingya militants. But soldiers involved in the massacre investigated by Reuters were jailed.

The case against the journalists has become a cause celebre for press freedom. Prominent rights attorney Amal Clooney joined the legal team, and Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo were featured on the cover of TIME magazine. But despite global outcry the two remain in Yangon's Insein prison. Rights groups and legal experts say the case against the Reuters reporters was riddled with irregularities. A whistleblowing police officer testified during their trial that his superior had ordered his team to trap the reporters in a sting — testimony the judge chose to ignore. — AFP

Second earthquake strikes as Philippines hunts for survivors

PORAC: Philippine rescuers raced yesterday to reach some two dozen people still feared buried under a building near Manila that collapsed a day earlier in a deadly earthquake, as a powerful second tremor hit the nation. The US Geological Survey put the second quake-on the central island of Samar-at 6.4 magnitude, stronger than the one that wrought significant damage Monday near the capital in the north.

The latest quake sent terrified locals fleeing into the streets, with the authorities reporting 10 injuries-mostly from falling objects and one person who panicked and injured a leg jumping off a building. "No one started crying, but of course some panicked because it was really strong," said Rey Estrobo, a supervisor at a hotel in Borongan town, near the epicenter. At the same time, the toll in Monday's quake rose to 16, with most of the fatalities in the worst-hit northern province of Pampanga, national disaster officials said.

More than 100 others were injured by falling rubble on Monday, including in Manila, according to police. However, initial reports indicated relatively minor destruction in Samar given the strength of Tuesday's quake, which could be down to differences in ground composition. "The damage is more pronounced if the houses and buildings are built on a foundation of soft soil," seismologist Myla Advincula told AFP, referring to Pampanga's soft sediment. "It enhances the shaking effect."

"We're thankful we avoided serious damage compared to Pampanga," regional civil defense chief Henry Torres said, adding damage in Samar was limited to road and building cracks, a collapsed church wall, and a



PORAC, Philippines: A church worker walks past rubble of the 18th century St Catherine of Alexandria after its bell tower was destroyed following a 6.3 magnitude earthquake that struck the town of Porac, pampanga province yesterday. — AFP

brief power outage. Scores of rescuers in the northern town of Porac spent yesterday using cranes and jackhammers to peel back the pancaked concrete structure of a four-storey market building where the Red Cross said 24 people were unaccounted for. "Every minute, every second is critical in this rescue," Cris Palcis, a volunteer rescue dog handler, told AFP. "Time is short for the people under the rubble so we have to be quick."

Pampanga Governor Lilia Pineda told journalists that rescuers could still hear at least one person trapped beneath the rubble, and were digging delicately to avoid accidentally crushing the survivor. Rogelio Pacelo was shopping with his wife and child when the market building collapsed around them, but incredibly they made it out, almost without a scratch. "I thought this only happens in movies. I thought that was the end of

the world, it's our end," he told journalists. "I looked for a way out." The quake also damaged several centuries-old churches which were crowded with worshippers in recent days as the majority-Catholic Philippines marked the Easter holiday. Porac-based Father Roland Moraleja said the 18th-century belfry of the Saint Catherine of Alexandria church collapsed in the quake. "It was the only part left from the old church," he told AFP. "The historical value is now gone, but we are hopeful that it will rise again." High-rise buildings in the capital swayed after the tremor struck Monday evening, leaving some with large cracks in their walls. Thousands of travelers were stranded after aviation authorities shut down the secondary Clark Airport, which is located on the site of the former US military installation that lies about an hour's drive north of the capital. — AFP

India's polarized politics: How two teenagers will vote after surviving riots

AHMEDABAD: On the night of February 28, 2002, two toddlers living in adjacent alleys were dragged out of a slum district in Ahmedabad in the western state of Gujarat that had been set ablaze by a mob in one of India's worst ever Hindu-Muslim riots. The attack in the Naroda Patiya area of the state's biggest city was among scores of clashes in which more than 800 Muslims and 255 Hindus were killed in the month-long violence in the home state of Narendra Modi. He had just become its chief minister and would rule there until becoming India's prime minister in 2014. Rights groups say about 2,000 people were killed, mostly Muslims, and including scores of children.

The toddlers who survived, a Muslim boy and a Hindu girl, were both one-year-olds at the time of the riots. Now, 17 years later, they are among an estimated 15 million first-time voters in a general election in which Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are seeking a second term on a platform that, critics say, marginalizes Muslims in favor of the nation's majority Hindus. Mohammad Rafiq and Pooja Jadhav, now both 18, met for

the first time during the Reuters interview. Jadhav hesitantly acknowledged Rafiq's presence but said they were too shy to talk. "I have many Muslim female friends but I don't talk to Muslim boys," she said in the presence of her mother. But despite the silence between them, they have a lot in common. Both are largely uneducated and work 10 hour-days in menial jobs to support their families, who fled with them from one-room homes on that fateful day. Both want to secure permanent employment but do not have the educational qualifications, and say they want to vote for a party that will resolve this problem.

They also want get married within their communities, move to better homes and forget the 2002 riots. But both grew up in a world of communal anger and are wary of people from the other religion. That is also reflected in their politics. "Even before I understood the word politics or elections, I was told that the BJP is an anti-Muslim political party," said Rafiq who works at a factory printing election flags with symbols of the BJP and the main opposition party, Congress.

'Rage' towards BJP

Rafiq's family-run furniture shop and house were looted by Hindu men during the riots. His father was hit in the leg by a police bullet as he was fleeing the slum and his mother suffered head injuries when terrified people stampeded. The family lived in a relief camp and later moved into a house situated next to Ahmedabad's biggest garbage collection site.

"My rage towards the BJP is part of my life story. I can forgive but I cannot forget," said Rafiq as he stood next to a huge black mound of garbage. "If Modi ever cared for Muslims he could come to see how we have learned to live with the stench

from the landfill. His disrespect for Muslims defines my political choice," said Rafiq, who said he will be voting for the Congress party at the polls in Gujarat on Tuesday.

The votes from a 39-day staggered election will be counted on May 23. Back in 2002, at least 97 people, mostly Muslims, living in Naroda Patiya were killed and 950 houses and shops were set on fire in less than 10 hours. Modi, the state's chief minister at the time, has faced allegations of allowing, or even encouraging, the Hindu attacks on Muslims, but he has vehemently denied the charges and a court-appointed investigation panel found no evidence to prosecute him.

The attacks were in retaliation for the death of at least 59 Hindus after a train carriage carrying hundreds of pilgrims caught fire following a scuffle between Hindus and Muslims at a railway station in Gujarat. Demarcation along religious lines has become pronounced in Ahmedabad since the riots. Hindus refused to sell houses to Muslims, forcing them to set up ghettos on the edges of the prosperous city. Rafiq's father sold the house in Naroda Patiya and used the money to start a metal trade business, and buy clothes and items for their new home, which was given to them by a Muslim charity organization. "We had a choice to go back and live in the house where my neighbors were killed or live near this garbage site. My father chose the garbage site," said Rafiq. Rafiq travelled with Reuters to his old home in Naroda Patiya for the first time in two years. He met his relatives and stood near the house now owned by Muslims not known to him. "The air is better here. There is no stench. I would have been happier if we lived here," said Rafiq.

News in brief

5 killed in Yemen fighting

DUBAI: Five people have been killed and dozens wounded in Yemen's third city of Ta'ez, Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said yesterday after clashes erupted between various pro-government factions. "Heavy fighting has once again resumed inside Ta'ez," a city just inland from the Red Sea port of Mokha, MSF wrote on Twitter. "MSF supported facilities have received some 91 wounded and recorded five deaths directly related to the fighting," since April 19, it added. The medical charity added the clashes are preventing patients from reaching an MSF supported hospital in the city - the only facility providing maternal healthcare to Ta'ez residents. The city is under siege by the Iran-backed Huthi rebels but controlled by pro-government forces, who are backed by a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. — AFP

Communist rebels kill six

MANILA: Communist guerillas killed six Philippine soldiers and wounded six others yesterday, the military said, in one of the deadliest recent attacks in the country's 50-year-old Maoist insurgency. Members of the New People's Army (NPA) detonated bombs in a pre-dawn ambush of soldiers marching through a mountainous area of central Samar island, triggering a four-hour firefight. "Our troops had received a report that NPA forces were extorting money from residents and so they went there to take action," said regional military spokesman Captain Reynaldo Aragones. Rebel casualties had not been determined, but Colonel Ramon Zagala confirmed the soldiers' deaths to AFP. The 4,000-strong NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has waged a guerrilla campaign that has killed up to 40,000 people since 1969. — AFP

Quebec Spring floods kill 1

OTTAWA: Spring flooding has killed one person and forced nearly 1,700 people from their homes in Canada's Quebec province, with waters expected to continue rising on Monday due to rising temperatures and more rain forecast for the coming days. Aerial photos showed entire neighborhoods submerged, with television news broadcasting video of residents frantically piling sandbags around their homes to hold back swollen rivers. An elderly woman died over the weekend after rising waters washed out the road she was driving on, according to media reports. The flooding has so far affected more than 4,000 properties across Quebec, according to the Urgence Quebec website, including homes in the Montreal suburb of Laval and Gatineau, part of the Ottawa capital region. — Reuters

Comforted by Modi

By contrast, Jadhav's family returned to their partially damaged house in Naroda Patiya after the riots to live among Muslim neighbors. "We had no choice. Muslim victims left this area and new Muslims came to live here. We are stuck," she said. Over a dozen members of 37 Hindu families in Naroda Patiya interviewed by Reuters said they want to live in a Hindu neighbourhood but they lack the financial resources to move. When Modi became prime minister in 2014, Jadhav said her mother, a widow, celebrated his victory. "Seeing her happy made me happy too. I have nothing against Muslims, but I like Modi," said Jadhav, who works as a domestic helper.

Jadhav says she is comforted by BJP rule, especially living among Muslims. But she declined to say who she will vote for. "We live in a country ruled by the BJP and Muslims know that they cannot behave badly with us. No one wants riots again," said Jadhav. She says she enjoys listening to Modi's speeches emphasizing his pro-Hindu brand of nationalism. "I have heard about the riots and since then I know Muslims and Hindus should not engage after a point. There has to be a boundary forever," she said.

The teenagers are both products of angry times. "Children read comic books, fairy tales but we have grown up listening about Hindu, Muslim riots. My vote will be my reaction to our painful past," said Rafiq as he scanned his mobile phone to play and sing the latest Bollywood hip hop song. "Our time will also come," he sang in the Hindi language and smiled at Jadhav. She hesitantly smiled back as she stood at door of her home. — Reuters

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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ESTABLISHED 1961

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Journalist murder marks upsurge in N Ireland unrest

The killing of a journalist in Londonderry marks the latest upsurge of violence in Northern Ireland - where fears are growing that a fragile and hard-won peace is increasingly at risk. Lyra McKee, 29, was shot dead during a riot as dissident republicans clashed Thursday with police in the province's second city - a historic flashpoint in the three decades of violence known as "The Troubles". The 1998 Good Friday Agreement largely ended the turbulence in Northern Ireland - mandating a withdrawal of British security forces and the disarming of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) paramilitary group.

But dissident republicans - seeking Northern Ireland's departure from the United Kingdom and integration into the Republic of Ireland through violent means - remain active. Police believe the New IRA splinter group is behind McKee's murder.

Volatile fringe

Among commentators there is a wide-held belief that the perpetrators are youngsters not old enough to remember "The Troubles", and are being manipulated by a radical older element. "There's a dangerous radicalisation of young people in Derry by those linked to and on the periphery of the New IRA," wrote The Irish Times newspaper's security correspondent Allison Morris. Police Service of Northern Ireland detective superintendent Jason Murphy, who is leading the probe into McKee's death, warned: "What we're seeing is a new breed of terrorist coming through the ranks."

Two men aged 18 and 19 were arrested Thursday but later released without charges. Police appealed again to the community for help in finding the killer. "I know there will be some people who know what happened but are scared to come forward but if you have information, no matter how small, please contact detectives," said Murphy, stressing that the information would be treated as "100 percent anonymous".

Brexit fuels the fire

McKee's murder follows a car bomb in Londonderry in January and a spate of letter bombs sent to British targets in March - both claimed by the New IRA. There is speculation that Brexit - which has raised the specter of a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland - is acting as an irritant to dissident republicans. Proposed divorce deals with the EU could see Northern Ireland more closely aligned to the Republic of Ireland or bound tighter in union with mainland Britain-raising competing loyalist and republican visions of the future.

Kieran McConagh, a lecturer in terrorism at the University of St Andrews in Scotland, said it was "hard to say" whether Brexit has played a "major role" in recent attacks, as such events have been consistent since the ceasefire. Since the British government began publishing security assessments in 2010, the threat of terrorism in Northern Ireland has remained at "severe" - denoting that an attack is considered "highly likely".

However, "Brexit hasn't been good for stability in Northern Ireland", McConagh told CBC. "It has made people more uncomfortable with the peace process in Northern Ireland, which is seen to be faltering at present. Politicians would do well to try and clarify some of the uncertainty... so that organisations like the New IRA and others don't fill that political vacuum." There are particular fears that a no-deal hard Brexit would see checks erected along the 500-km border, which would offer dissident militants a natural target.

Sea change

Following McKee's murder, police in the republican area of Londonderry where McKee was killed say they have experienced a "sea change" in previously-strained community attitudes towards officers. The Free Derry Corner landmark wall has been repainted to reflect the local community's revulsion. Underneath the sign "You are now entering free Derry", marking the start of a republican area, a message now reads: "Not in our name. R. I. P. Lyra."

In the wake of her murder, Northern Ireland's six main political parties - including rival unionists and republicans who have been unable to form a devolved government for more than two years - issued a rare joint statement. "It was a pointless and futile act to destroy the progress made over the last 20 years, which has the overwhelming support of people everywhere," it read. —AFP

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This photo taken on April 17, 2019 shows recycled paper at the Northern Adelaide Waste Management Authority's recycling site in Edinburgh, near Adelaide. —AFP

China ban throws global recycling into chaos

From grubby packaging engulfing small Southeast Asian communities to waste piling up in plants from the US to Australia, China's ban on accepting the world's used plastic has plunged global recycling into turmoil. For many years, China received the bulk of scrap plastic from around the world, processing much of it into a higher quality material that could be used by manufacturers. But at the start of 2018, it closed its doors to almost all foreign plastic waste, as well as many other recyclables, in a push to protect the local environment and air quality, leaving developed nations struggling to find places to send their waste.

"It was like an earthquake," Arnaud Brunet, director general of Brussels-based industry group The Bureau of International Recycling, told AFP. "China was the biggest market for recyclables. It created a major shock in the global market." Instead, plastic is being redirected in huge quantities to Southeast Asia, where Chinese recyclers have shifted en masse. With a large Chinese-speaking minority, Malaysia was a top choice for Chinese recyclers looking to relocate, and official data showed plastic imports tripled from 2016 levels to 870,000 tons last year.

In the small town of Jenjarom, not far from Kuala Lumpur, plastic processing plants suddenly appeared in large numbers, pumping out noxious fumes day and night. Huge mounds of plastic waste, dumped in the open, piled up as recyclers struggled to cope with the influx of packaging from everyday goods, such as foods and laundry detergents, from

as far afield as Germany, the United States, and Brazil.

Residents soon noticed the acrid stench over the town - the kind of odor that is usual in processing plastic, but environmental campaigners believe some of the fumes also come from the incineration of plastic waste that was too low quality to recycle. "People were attacked by toxic fumes, waking them up at night. Many were coughing a lot," local resident, Pua Lay Peng, told AFP. "I could not sleep, I could not rest, I always felt fatigued," the 47-year-old added.

Toxic fumes

Pua and other community members began investigating and by mid-2018 had located about 40 suspected processing plants, many of which appeared to be operating secretly and without proper permits. Initial complaints to authorities went nowhere but they kept up pressure, and eventually the government took action. Authorities started closing down illegal factories in Jenjarom, and announced a nationwide temporary freeze on plastic import permits. Thirty-three factories were closed down, although activists believe many have quietly moved elsewhere in the country. Residents say air quality has improved but some plastic dumps remain.

In Australia, Europe and the US, many of those collecting plastic and other recyclables were left scrambling to find new places to send it. They face higher costs to get it processed by recyclers at home and in some cases have resorted to sending it to landfill sites as the scrap has piled up too quickly.

"Twelve months on, we are still feeling the effects but we have not moved to the solutions yet," said Garth Lamb, president of industry body Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia.

Some have been quicker to adapt to the new environment, such as some local authority-run centers that collect recyclables in Adelaide, southern Australia. The centres used to send nearly everything - ranging from plastic to paper and glass - to China but now 80 percent is processed by local companies, with most of the rest shipped to India. "We moved quickly and looked to domestic markets," Adam Faulkner, chief executive of the Northern Adelaide Waste Management Authority, told AFP. "We've found that by supporting local manufacturers, we've been able to get back to pre-China ban prices," he added.

Consume less, produce less

In mainland China, imports of plastic waste have dropped from 600,000 tons per month in 2016 to about 30,000 a month in 2018, according to data cited by a new report from Greenpeace and environmental NGO Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives. Once bustling centers of recycling have been abandoned as firms shifted to Southeast Asia. On a visit to the southern town of Xingtian last year, Chen Liwen, founder of environmental NGO China Zero Waste Alliance, found the once-booming recycling industry had disappeared. —AFP

Falungong surviving underground in China

Sitting lotus-style on an apartment floor, two women quietly rotate their arms in front of them - a rare sight in China where public displays of Falungong meditation have all but disappeared. It is a shadow of the spiritual movement's heyday in China, where the group once boasted more than 70 million followers before it was outlawed in 1999, giving police carte blanche to persecute members. But 20 years on, the group has remained stubbornly persistent, even as practitioners in mainland China continue to face arrests and torture, according to rights groups.

Before the crackdown, Falungong members would congregate in parks in large numbers to practice "qigong" meditation. Now they do their slow movement exercises behind closed doors. "It doesn't matter how the Communist Party suppresses (Falungong), I don't think about it too much," one of the women, who requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the topic, told AFP. "I just do what I want to do," she said.

Falungong, which emphasizes moral teachings, was once encouraged by Chinese authorities to ease the burden on a creaky health system after it was unveiled in 1992 by Li Hongzhi, who emigrated to the US four years later. But after over 10,000 Falungong members surrounded Communist Party headquarters in central Beijing on April 25, 1999, to protest the detention of some of their members, the government leapt into action.

Then-president Jiang Zemin issued orders to eliminate the group, which was later declared an "evil cult" - a tactic to justify the repression, scholars say. Top officials "see Falungong, first and foremost, as an ideological and political threat", Maria Cheung, a University of Manitoba professor who has researched the movement, told AFP. The demonstration had been the biggest protest in Beijing since the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy sit-in in 1989.

'Flesh and blood'

Following the protest, Chinese authorities launched a special security bureau known as the "610 office" to suppress and monitor Falungong followers. Practitioners and rights groups have also reported death, torture, and abuse at labor camps. One woman from northern China recounted a traumatic period when her father was pressured by local authorities to beat his younger sister, who was a "very resolute practitioner of Falungong". He was "forced to break his



A man walks past anti-cult posters beside a sidewalk in Beijing yesterday. The posters have gone up in Beijing as it approaches the 20th anniversary of a mass protest by Falungong practitioners outside the Zhongnanhai leadership compound on April 25, 1999. —AFP

own flesh and blood, resulting in my aunt hating her own brother for many years," she told AFP, shuddering with tears.

David Ownby, a history professor at the University of Montreal who has studied Falungong, said cults emerge in China because the officially atheist state has successfully kept traditional religions weak. "That means that part of the market is open to groups that are not sanctioned," he said. "That is the basic paradox at the heart of the religion policy."

A Falungong follower in China, who joined in 2010, told AFP that her dissatisfaction with society and family life turned her towards the spiritual movement. "I thought that maybe a bit of (religious) faith would make me better," she said, adding that she had also been exposed to Buddhism. While Falungong survives underground in mainland China, it has swelled among the Chinese diaspora, as followers have fled overseas in search of asylum.

Falungong is practiced in over 70 countries, according to Falun Dafa Info Centre, the group's press office. The movement has also turned "hard-edged" over the years, said Ownby, with some academics reporting harassment for calling Falungong a sect or cult. Levi Browde, the center's executive director, said he believes if harassment has occurred, it is simply an effort by Falungong practitioners "to provide more information to the scholars".

More political stance

It is about "making sure we're not adding momentum to the wave of violence and death that engulfs the lives of Falungong practitioners throughout China", he said. The spiritual movement has also adopted a more political stance in some parts of the world. In Hong Kong, where Falungong activists hand out flyers and try to talk to people - especially mainland tourists - the movement has taken on a stridently anti-communist tone. One key slogan, seen on banners and blared through loudspeakers is: "The heavens will destroy the Chinese Communist Party". —AFP

It was time for Bashir to go, say residents of home village

Residents of deposed Sudanese president Omar Al-Bashir's home village are still coming to terms with his ouster, but most agree that the time had come for him to go. "I'm from his village and I did not benefit from his rule," said Mohamedali Abdel Hamid, a farmer from Hosh Bannaga dressed in a traditional Sudanese robe. The village, on the Nile some 170 km north of Khartoum, was Bashir's childhood home. He was born there on New Year's Day 1944. "Only his family relatives benefitted" from his rule, Hamid told an AFP correspondent who visited the village. "They have cars, farms and cows, but we did not benefit. I don't feel sad that he is gone."

In power for three decades, 75-year-old Bashir was ousted on April 11 by the army after months of protests against his iron-fisted rule. A career soldier, he swept to power in an Islamist-backed coup in 1989, toppling the elected government of prime minister Sadiq Al-Mahdi, who is now chief of Sudan's main opposition National Umma Party and part of the protest movement. One of Africa's longest-serving presidents, Bashir was renowned for his populist touch, insisting on being close to crowds and addressing them in colloquial Sudanese Arabic.

But his fate was sealed when the army bowed to the demands of tens of thousands of protesters in Khartoum and elsewhere, nearly four months into demonstrations sparked by a tripling of bread prices. The protests have not extended to Hosh Bannaga's sand strewn streets. But Naseer Ibrahim, another villager, was glad to see the back of Bashir. "Look at the condition of the village - even the school where he studied was rebuilt only last year after a child fell into a toilet," he said.

'30 years are enough'

Most homes in Hosh Bannaga are made from mud, but Bashir's family residence - an extended one-storey building with a courtyard - is one of the village's few well-built structures. Most



People are seen in the village of deposed Sudanese president Omar Al-Bashir, Hosh Bannaga, some 170 km north of the capital Khartoum, on April 21, 2019. —AFP

streets amount to sand tracks, while a single road connects the village to the highway leading to Khartoum. Hosh Bannaga has a hospital that provides medical aid to nearby villages, but part of it is still under construction. The village has a community center for women and children set up by Bashir's first wife, Fatima Khalid.

In the scorching heat of the afternoon, most people stay indoors. The village has a small market that sells locally grown vegetables. Located not far from Sudan's famed Meroe pyramids, archaeological relics have often been uncovered around Hosh Bannaga. Ibrahim, who said he is related to Bashir, stated that the longtime leader led a "normal life". "He ate what we all ate. When he used to come for social occasions, he sat with us and talked about his memories from the village," he said. Bashir "is not corrupt," Ibrahim contended, but as president was responsible for an entourage that was corrupt. "For this (reason) I believe that 30 years is enough" for him to have served in power, Ibrahim added.

'He deserved to go'

But there are some who were sad to see Bashir go, including Mahmud Issa. "Yes, there is an economic crisis and people are unable to get essential items, but it is because of the wars," Issa said. Bashir's presidency was marred by several conflicts, including a 1983 to 2005 war that left hundreds of thousands dead and culminated in secession by South Sudan in 2011. A separate deadly conflict also erupted in the western region of Darfur in 2003 when marginalized ethnic rebels took up arms against the Arab-dominated government. —AFP

Business

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SHANGHAI: Visitors walk past a Tesla Model 3 at the Shanghai Auto Show in Shanghai. — AFP

Tesla eyes self-driving 'robotaxis' by 2020

Musk expects regulator approval in 'some jurisdictions'

WASHINGTON: Tesla said Monday it is expecting to deploy self-driving "robotaxis" by 2020 as it unveiled its upgraded technology for driverless vehicles. Chief executive Elon Musk told an investor presentation he expected regulator approval in some jurisdictions for autonomous ride-hailing that could use some of the Teslas on the road if their owners agree to share the vehicles.

"I feel very confident in predicting autonomous robotaxis next year," Musk told the event, saying he expected the plan to operate on a model similar to that of Uber or Airbnb. He said Tesla would be adding a rideshare app and that owners who chose to participate in the network could benefit from that. "The fundamental utility of the vehicle increases by a factor of five" with a rideshare system, he

said. Musk commented on the robotaxi plan after the company unveiled computer hardware for "full self-driving" capabilities—part of its strategy to bring autonomous cars to the mainstream.

Tesla already enables partial autonomy for its cars, but the road to full autonomy faces considerable legal and regulatory hurdles. The chip announcement comes as Tesla races with Waymo, Uber and traditional automakers to bring autonomous vehicles to market.

Musk said its custom-designed chip for the vehicle, which he called the best available, was a significant milestone in self-driving.

"At first, it seems improbable—how could it be that Tesla, which has never designed a chip before, could design the

best chip in the world?" he said.

"But that is objectively what has occurred."

The new chip is being installed in all its vehicles, clearing the way to improve its software and "neural networks" that will effectively drive the autonomous vehicles.

"All Tesla cars being produced have all the hardware necessary... for full self-driving," Musk told the event. "All you need to do is improve the software."

Despite Tesla's claims, its electric vehicles are not using the standard definition of "level 4" autonomy that would handle all functions with a human on standby or "level 5" autonomy that would need no human.

Musk said he expected that with Tesla technology, drivers "would not need to touch the wheel" sometime early

next year and that he hoped for regulatory approvals in some areas later in 2020.

He maintained that Tesla's approach using data from its vehicles on the road was better than those of its rivals, which rely on simulations. "We have quite good simulation too, but it does not capture the long tail of things that happen in the real world," Musk said.

"The real world is really weird and messy."

Musk also argued that the neural network technology, based on artificial intelligence, was better than the Lidar systems used by rivals that are based on light pulses.

Musk said his space exploration firm SpaceX uses Lidar for some purposes but that "in cars it's pretty stupid, it's expensive and unnecessary." — AFP

China wins Belt and Road fans but criticism persists

BEIJING: President Xi Jinping will lead a hard sales push at a Beijing summit this week, to corral more countries into a global infrastructure project at the core of China's superpower ambitions and win over those who see a strategic threat. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) envisages massive investments in maritime, road and rail projects across 65 countries from Asia to Europe and Africa that collectively account for 30 percent of global GDP. If fully realized, it could shape the world economic and geopolitical landscape for decades to come. But its scope and ambition have divided Europe, while US officials have called it a "vanity project", and detractors have warned that it is laden with debt risks and opaque deals favoring Chinese firms and labor.

Despite the criticism, momentum appears to be on Xi's side, with leaders from 37 countries flocking to Beijing for the three-day summit beginning Thursday. It's the second such event, with an inaugural 2017 summit bringing 29 leaders together.

Italy breaks ranks

China added a key nation to its Belt and Road roster when Italy became the first G7 member to sign on to the project last month. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte will participate in the summit and Switzerland appears set to sign on with President Ueli Maurer flying to Beijing.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and other leaders from Europe, Asia and Africa will also attend, but major EU nations are sending ministers and the United States said it would not have a high-level delegation. Since Xi launched

Belt and Road in 2013, China has invested \$90 billion in projects while banks have provided between \$200 billion and \$300 billion in loans, according to Xiao Weiming, a Chinese government official overseeing Belt and Road.

Examples of debt trouble abound.

Sri Lanka turned over a deep-sea port to China for 99-years after it was unable to repay loans. Pakistan needs an international bailout. And Montenegro has had to make difficult choices after taking on crushing Chinese debt to pay a Chinese company to build a new highway.

It has also become an election issue in some countries. Chinese officials say the projects foster development in poor countries and Xiao dismissed "debt trap" warnings as repeating "the same old tune". Foreign Minister Wang Yi denied last week that the project was a "geopolitical tool", though he admitted that "jointly building the Belt and Road is a developing process, it won't happen overnight, and there will inevitably be some troubles."

Italy rolled out a red carpet for Xi Jinping in Rome last month and signed a memorandum of understanding on the Belt and Road, with Beijing planning to invest in Italian ports. The NATO member country's ascension drew consternation in Brussels and Washington, and even within the leadership of Rome's ruling coalition—Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini said Italy would be "no-one's colony".

Pushback

For China, the initiative is both a practical solution to economic issues at home and a way to expand its global influence—a key concern for Xi, who frequently trumpets the goal of a "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation". It "alleviates a lot of the built up excess industrial capacity that results from the Chinese economic model," said James Bowen of the Perth US-Asia Center.

"Chinese workers need jobs and China has materials that need to be exported and built out in other countries rather



BEIJING: Banners are displayed along a street ahead of the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing on Monday. — AFP

than in China." The World Bank estimates that Belt and Road funded infrastructure could marginally boost trade and officials there say it is offering funding in areas where it is sorely needed.

But the money comes as loans instead of aid, requiring countries to pay China back for the massive projects its companies and people build. Pushing back has proved a successful election issue in Asia, including in Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Malaysia, as the trademark infrastructure

push is used to whip up fears about eroding sovereignty.

In the Maldives, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih claimed victory last year on the back of an anti-corruption campaign targeting the opaque deals with Beijing and "China's colonialism". Opposition candidates in Sri Lanka and Malaysia similarly wielded the debt laden deals to victory.

The new Malaysian prime minister cancelled some and renegotiated a rail project cutting 30 percent off the price tag. — AFP

Business

KAMCO acquires HP Plaza Class-AA office campus in Houston, Texas

Acquisition could generate a net cash yield of 7.50% per annum

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced that it has purchased HP Plaza in CityPlace at Springwoods Village in partnership with Northridge Capital, a Washington D.C.-based real estate asset management firm. The acquisition will generate a net cash yield of 7.50 percent per annum across the target holding period. The state-of-the-art, Class-AA office campus is located in a newly-developed urban center in north Houston, Texas which is also home to ExxonMobil's 385-acre corporate campus.

Completed in November of 2018 and built to Class-AA standards, HP Plaza houses HP, Inc., which occupies 100 percent of the Premises pursuant to a long-term lease. The Property sits on 11.78-acres and features two buildings, totaling 378,402 rentable square feet.

The newly constructed Property is designed for sustainability and offers efficient, rectangular floor plates, structured parking at a ratio of 6.00 per 1,000, modern interior finishes with exposed ceilings and "office of the

future" open workspaces. The office campus provides top-tier tenant amenities including a full-service cafeteria and dining room with seating for up to 330 people, coffee shop and juice bar, fitness center with men's and women's locker rooms, a conference center with product showroom and multiple breakout rooms.

Mohammad Al-Othman, Senior Vice President and Head of the Alternative Investments Department at KAMCO, said, "We are excited to partner with Northridge Capital and HP, Inc. on this highly desirable asset located in what we believe will be the most dynamic mixed-use environment in Houston. We are especially thrilled that the property is 100 percent powered by renewable energy sources and is strategically located at the confluence of the I-45 and the Grand Parkway. This acquisition is in line with KAMCO's commitment towards scaling its real estate portfolio through diversified assets."

"Our partners focus on Class A properties with strong cash flows from credit tenants that are strategically located in dynamic markets well-positioned to capitalize

on future momentum and growth," said David Jackson, President of Northridge Capital. "While this asset certainly meets those criteria, we are especially excited to complete our first transaction with KAMCO Investment Company"

"HP Plaza checks the three boxes Northridge Capital looks for when pursuing single tenant opportunities: 1) strong credit quality and cash flows; 2) desirable underlying, functional real estate and 3) a dynamic suburban/urban location that will cater to the workforce of the future and serve as a recruiting tool for the tenant," said David Etemadi, Vice President of



Mohammad Al-Othman



Dave W Jackson



David Etemadi

Acquisitions for Northridge Capital. "We believe more and more Fortune 500 companies will choose to locate in these types of locations around the country in the "arms race" for the best human capital."

Italy's fiscal spat with EU might resume after debt exceeds forecasts

BRUSSELS: Public debt in Greece and Italy, the two most indebted countries in the eurozone, grew last year while the bloc as a whole saw its liabilities decrease, the European Union statistics office said yesterday.

Rome's growing debt, which is also higher than Brussels had predicted, is seen as further stretching EU fiscal rules that require countries with high debts to gradually bring them down. Italy, whose eurosceptic government adopted free-spending policies last year that have so far had little impact on growth, had debt equivalent to 132.2 percent of national output in 2018, up from 131.4 percent in the previous year, Eurostat said.

The European Commission, which monitors eurozone states' budgets, refrained in December from starting disciplinary steps against Italy over its growing debt.

It predicted then that Italian debt would be 131.1 percent of gross domestic product in 2018 — lower than Tuesday's data showed. The Commission has said it will reassess Rome's compliance with EU fiscal rules, including the requirement to cut debt, in June, taking into account the final debt data from Eurostat.

A spokeswoman for the EU executive declined to comment on the new figures released by Eurostat.

She said Brussels' new evaluation of Italy's position will also be based on fresh forecasts due in May of debt developments, and on Italy's report on its fiscal plans for the next three years which Rome had just submitted. Italy bucked the euro zone trend, as overall debt in the 19-country currency bloc fell to 85.1 percent of GDP last year from 87.1 percent in 2017, Eurostat said.

The bloc's aggregated budget deficit also dropped to 0.5 percent of GDP from 1.0 percent in 2017.

The fall coincided with Germany's reduction of its debt to 60.9 percent of GDP, from 64.5 percent in 2017. The bloc's largest economy also widened its public surplus to 1.7 percent of output from 1.0 percent in 2017. In Greece, debt climbed to 181.1 percent of GDP in 2018, the largest ratio in the euro zone. The increase from 176.2 percent in 2017 was mostly due to the last instalment of eurozone creditors' loans as part of the country's third bailout program which ended last summer.

The recent exit from the bailout program exempts Greece from the normal application of EU rules that require countries with public debt above the 60 percent of GDP threshold allowed by EU law to cut the excess by 5 percent a year. Cyprus, another of the bloc's most indebted countries, saw its debt rise to 102.5 percent of GDP from 95.8 percent. —Reuters

Top 6 innovations on Huawei P30 Pro decoded

KUWAIT: Huawei's recently unveiled its latest flagship smartphone, the Huawei P30 Pro. Dubbed the Supercamera Phone, it is packed full with the company's latest and greatest innovations. Here's what's new on the super powered flagship.

1. Optimized Snapchat Experience

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

2. Leica Quad Camera Setup

The Huawei P30 Pro packs a revolutionary Leica Quad Camera setup. This includes a 40MP main camera with the Huawei SuperSpectrum Sensor which brings in more light so taking pictures or shooting videos in the dark is not a challenge, a 20MP Ultra-Wide angle lens for both horizontal and vertical shooting, an 8MP telephoto SuperZoom lens and a 32MP front camera for shooting selfies with unparalleled quality.

The camera setup also includes the Huawei Time of Flight (ToF) camera that is designed to measure depth of field for beautiful portrait shots with blurred backgrounds and sharp foregrounds.

3. SuperZoom

Huawei's engineering marvels have come up with a way to embed a massive zoom lens into the ever-so thin body of the Huawei P30 Pro. This SuperZoom lens lets users enjoy a 5x optical zoom, 10x hybrid zoom and an unprecedented 50x digital zoom that can bring even the farthest objects up close.

4. Dual-View Video

Sometimes a single recording is just not enough and you might even miss some details. With the Huawei P30 Pro, this is not a problem anymore, thanks to Huawei Dual-View Video technology, which splits the screen in two and allows users to record a wide-angle shot and a close-up shot at the same time. While this



allows for better viewing angles while recording, it also gives users a more creative way of recording videos. For example, this feature can come in use when watching a football game, where users can have a wide-angle recording of the match, with a close-up of their favorite player.

5. Definitive Performance thanks to powerful hardware

Powering the Huawei P30 Pro is the Kirin 980 chipset, Huawei's most powerful smartphone chipset yet. One of the world's first commercial 7nm chipsets, the Kirin 980 packs 6.9 billion transistors, cutting-edge process technology, a revolutionary architecture and a Dual-NPU, all which contribute together to a more efficient performance. The Kirin 980 7nm process technology compared with the 10nm process, improves performance by 20 percent, power efficiency by 40 percent.

The Kirin 980 can quickly adapt to AI scenes such as face recognition, object recognition, object detection, image segmentation and intelligent translation. So whether it's dancing to a fast song or quickly running in front of the camera, the Kirin 980 can focus on the joints and lines of the human body in real time.

The Huawei P30 Pro also houses a new and improved In-Screen Fingerprint sensor. Fingerprint recognition is improved by taking advantage of the



ultra-wide 3p lens and a large aperture, which works in tandem to the pixel photosensitivity enhancing the Microlens. The new sensor also supports auto ring-tuning focus, further improving the autofocus accuracy by 35 percent ensuring every sensor on the device lands the most precise focus. Unlock speed is also improved by 30 percent thanks to the industry-leading multi-threaded dual-matching algorithm, which also uses a fluid unlock animation and hover sensing to improve user experience.

Keeping in mind users who require their phone at any point of the day, Huawei has worked towards developing the battery on the Huawei P30 Pro for extended use. The 4,200mAh battery can give users up to an entire day of intensive use and is complemented by the 40W Huawei SuperCharge which will give users approximately 70 percent in just 30 minutes. The phone also supports 15W Wireless Charging, and a unique Wireless Reverse Charge feature, allowing users to place their friend's phones or other devices including earphones and wearables on the Huawei P30 Pro to instantly start charging it, provided it supports the Qi wireless charging standard.

6. Night Shot

Night photography on smartphones has always been a challenge due to hardware and software limitations, often resulting in blurry or shaky shots. This will no longer be a challenge on the Huawei P30 Pro thanks to the Night Mode, which stabilizes pictures with the help of AI Image Stabilization and Optical Image Stabilization. The Huawei P30 Pro also takes advantage of the SuperSpectrum sensor which brings in more light and supports ISO levels up to 409,600. This makes it easier to take pictures and shoot videos even in dark conditions without having to compromise on details and clarity.

Harley-Davidson profit tops estimates as Trump weighs in

NEW YORK: Harley-Davidson Inc surged past expectations for first-quarter profit yesterday and drew a change of tack from US President Donald Trump, who vowed to protect the motorcycle maker from European tariffs, driving its shares up 3 percent.

Trump had previously criticized Harley for its plans to shift some US production overseas to avoid European Union duties imposed in retaliation for the tariffs the White House placed on imported steel and aluminum last year. But ahead of a speech on Saturday in Wisconsin, where Harley is based, the president said on Twitter that the bloc's treatment of the company had been "unfair" and vowed to reciprocate.

"The shares have rallied (we think) in anticipation of potential tariff relief ... we remain cautious in our outlook for the US motorcycle industry, and continue to rate the shares Hold," Stifel analyst Drew Crum said. The costs of Trump's trade wars have only added to the troubles of the

world's most iconic motorcycle brand, which has struggled to attract younger fans as its core customers won in the rebel heyday of the 1960s and 70s grow older.

Earlier this year, Harley said the retaliatory import duties imposed by the European Union on its bikes would cost the company between \$100 million and \$120 million in 2019.

EU tariffs on US-manufactured motorcycles, which increased from 6 to 31 percent from 6 percent last June, are set to rise to 56 percent in 2021. Similarly, China's tariffs on the bikes exported from the US have increased to 55 percent from 30 percent as a result of the trade war between the world's two biggest economies. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	305.000
Euro	345.110
Sterling Pound	398.480
Canadian dollar	229.240
Turkish lira	52.630
Swiss Franc	303.630
US Dollar Buying	303.800
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.729
Indian Rupees	4.379
Pakistani Rupees	2.187
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.743
Nepali Rupees	2.737
Singapore Dollar	225.760
Hongkong Dollar	38.875
Bangladesh Taka	3.603
Philippine Peso	5.893
Thai Baht	9.616
Malaysian ringgit	78.005
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.388
Qatari Riyal	83.826
Omani Riyal	792.723
Bahraini Dinar	810.420
UAE Dirham	83.095
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.850
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.726

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.225
Tunisian Dinar	105.170
Jordanian Dinar	430.670
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.033
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.344
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 WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.390155	0.404055
Czech Korune	0.005334	0.014634
Danish Krone	0.041851	0.046851
Euro	0.336250	0.349950
Georgian Lari	0.132204	0.132204
Hungarian 0.001150	0.001340	
Norwegian Krone	0.031812	0.037012
Romanian Leu	0.065393	0.082243
Russian ruble	0.004792	0.004792
Slovakia	0.009127	0.019127
Swedish Krona	0.028756	0.033756
Swiss Franc	0.294543	0.305543
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.210335	0.222335
New Zealand Dollar	0.198185	0.207685
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.222684	0.231684
US Dollars	0.300900	0.306200
US Dollars Mint	0.301400	0.306200
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003030	0.003831

Chinese Yuan	0.043986	0.047486
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037113	0.039863
Indian Rupee	0.003835	0.004607
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002649	0.002829
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070583	0.076583
Nepalese Rupee	0.002684	0.003024
Pakistan Rupee	0.001511	0.002281
Philippine Peso	0.005856	0.006156
Singapore Dollar	0.219957	0.229957
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001402	0.001982
Taiwan	0.010180	0.010360
Thai Baht	0.009231	0.009781
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.794448	0.810948
Egyptian Pound	0.017763	0.020363
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.425280	0.434280
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021257	0.025257
Omani Riyal	0.785890	0.791570
Qatar Riyal	0.079486	0.084426
Saudi Riyal	0.080247	0.081547
Syrian Pound	0.001293	0.001513
Tunisian Dinar	0.096943	0.104943
Turkish Lira	0.046199	0.057699
UAE Dirhams	0.081616	0.083316
Yemeni Riyal	0.000992	0.001072

Business

Lexus celebrates spectacular milestone

30th anniversary of the brand launched in 1989



KUWAIT: Lexus announced its 10 millionth vehicle sold, a landmark achievement after a strong 2018 year-end sales performance with Lexus achieving multiple best-ever sales goals around the globe. In addition, the brand that pioneered the world's first luxury self-charging hybrid vehicle in 2005, and offers the largest line-up of electrified models globally, surpassed the 1.45-million-unit mark in self-charging hybrid vehicles sold worldwide. Lexus hybrid vehicle sales jumped nearly 20 percent in 2018 from the prior year, a result that underscores the brand's heritage with, and commitment to, electrification.

The brand announced yesterday that 698,330 vehicles were sold worldwide during the 2018 calendar year, representing a 4.5 percent increase over calendar year 2017. A solid array of luxury utility vehicles such as the RX and NX, the LC and LS flagships, along with the all-new ES and the first-ever UX, combined to lead the global luxury lifestyle brand to its best-ever year of sales.

"Lexus continues to enjoy substantial growth around the world, expanding its footprint in emerging markets as well as reaffirming its strength in established ones. The brand's clear focus on amazing products and guest experiences provided by the finest dealers will support its global growth for years to come," said Lexus International

President, Yoshihiro Sawa. Lexus launched in 1989 with a flagship sedan and a guest experience that helped define the premium automotive industry. In 1998, Lexus introduced the luxury crossover category with the launch of the Lexus RX. The luxury hybrid sales leader, Lexus delivered the world's first luxury hybrid and has since sold over 1.45 million hybrid vehicles.

A global luxury automotive brand with an unwavering commitment to bold, uncompromising design, exceptional craftsmanship, and exhilarating performance, Lexus has developed its lineup to meet the needs of the next generation of global luxury guests and is currently available in over 90 countries worldwide.

Lexus associates/team members across the world are dedicated to crafting amazing experiences that are uniquely Lexus, and that excite and change the world. In Kuwait Lexus was voted best Service which reflects the strong commitment by Al-Sayer Lexus to offer only the best service consistent with Lexus strategy to offer an amazing experience to their customers.

Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer CEO said that "it is no surprise that the Lexus team continued to strive to offer best possible service in Kuwait. It is the one of our core strategies to ensure we offer a guest service that is con-



sistent with the hospitality that Kuwait's is famous for. The Al-Sayer board will continue to support the neces-

sary initiatives that will guarantee this high level of service to our customers".

Boeing seeks to exit crisis mode as it reports results

NEW YORK: Under growing scrutiny from investors and regulators, embattled US aerospace giant Boeing will have a chance this week to reset the narrative as it aims to pivot from two deadly crashes that have grounded a top-selling plane. The company will report earnings today for the first time since a deadly March 10 plane crash plunged the company into crisis-mode.

Then, on April 29, the company will face its shareholders at an annual meeting that includes challenges to the company on leadership structure and government lobbying disclosure. The events come as Boeing's 737 MAX remains grounded globally following March's Ethiopian Airlines crash. Together with the Lion Air crash of October, accidents involving 737 MAX aircraft have claimed 346 lives.

Analysts have been waiting for Boeing to formally seek certification from the Federal Aviation Administration for a technical fix to get the planes flying again, a key step and one critical to Boeing's bottom line. Boeing chief executive Dennis Muilenburg could announce progress on this front during an earnings conference call, said a person close to the matter.

Adding to Boeing's travails, The New York Times on Sunday published an expose claiming the company had left debris on 787 aircraft during manufacturing, potentially threatening safe operations, and printed allegations from former employees who said they had been punished for raising safety concerns.

In a note to employees, Boeing South Carolina Site Leader Brad Zaback denounced the article as a "skewed and inaccurate" picture of the 787 program, adding that "quality is the bedrock of who we are." But Scott Hamilton of the aviation consultancy Leeham Company said the 787 issues, coupled with Boeing's other woes, raised the possibility Boeing is facing systemic problems.

"There is no simple answer, nor is there a quick one," Hamilton told AFP in an email. "Boeing has to improve its quality control and it has to be transparent and detailed with airlines, lessors and regulators in the MAX fix."

Further profit hit?

Financial analysts have already slashed their 2019 profit forecasts after Boeing announced on April 5 it was cutting its monthly production of the 737 by about 20 percent. Lower plane deliveries directly affect revenues. But analysts will want to gauge whether to lower expectations further due to the hit from the production cut or because of other impacts, such as compensation to airlines that have been forced to ground their planes.

Other front-of-mind questions include whether the company expects more order cancellations and the seriousness of government probes, including a US criminal investigation. Analysts have varied in their assessments of the impact to Boeing's long-term prospects. Bank of America Merrill Lynch this month downgraded Boeing shares and slashed its profit forecast for the next four years, citing a "reputational loss" treats to long-term market share.

But Morningstar predicted Boeing would be able to lift 737 MAX production after moving past the current rough patch, concluding that "Boeing's ability to generate returns above its cost of capital will remain strong well into the next decade and most likely beyond."



BERLIN: Passengers embark on a Boeing 737-800 aircraft of low cost airline Ryanair at Schoenefeld airport near Berlin. — AFP

Shareholder rebuke?

This year's annual gathering comes at a vulnerable moment for the company. The yearly meeting can become a forum for venting shareholder fury at company missteps, as companies such as Wells Fargo and General Electric have discovered in recent years. Boeing also faces the risks of an embarrassing rebuke by investors if more than 50 percent side with a shareholder proposal for the company to make its chairman an independent director, a shift from the current structure in which CEO Muilenburg also serves as director.

Boeing has fought the proposal, even though it would give the board discretion on the timing to implement the idea, meaning it could be phased in for the next CEO after Muilenburg.

Institutional Shareholder Services, which opposed the same proposal last year, reversed its position and urged support from shareholders in light of the current problems.

"The company faces serious challenges in regaining the confidence of regulators, airlines, pilots and passengers worldwide," ISS said in a note to clients. "Any missteps in the process of remediating the issues and open questions that have led to the grounding of the 737 MAX, or any repeat of the problems in future aircraft programs, could have a devastating impact on the company's prospects, its brand and its reputation, for years."

ISS also backed a shareholder proposal to require Boeing to disclose its lobbying activities and trade association memberships. Supporters of the proposal have cited the crashes as sharpening the need for transparency.

"I think if the resolution receives the support we hope it receives will be part of the solution to the moment we're facing," said Robert Wotypka, corporate responsibility agent for the Province of Saint Joseph of the Capuchin Order, a shareholder. — AFP

US may follow China with Q1 GDP upside surprise

DUBLIN: A temporary government shutdown with no end in sight, rising trade conflicts and a global growth slowdown: the first quarter outlook for the US economy did not look promising at the turn of the year. But Friday's gross domestic product data for the first three months of 2019 could strengthen the case that while the current period of global expansion is in its late stages, some of the biggest contributors have yet to run out of steam.

After China's economy defied expectations that it would slow further in January-March, US growth is expected to be 2.1 percent in the same period, although the range of analysts' estimates was wider than usual at 1.0 to 2.9 percent. If the Atlanta Federal Reserve's GPNOW model, based on data already released, is to be believed, growth will come in almost at the top of that range and bang in between the 2.2 percent pace seen in Q4 2018 and July-September's brisk 3.4 percent.

"Despite all the prophecies of doom, the US economy did not collapse in the first quarter," said Commerzbank economist Christoph Balz. "On the contrary, next week's GDP figures are likely to show decent growth. In addition, companies have boosted investment, which argues against an imminent recession."

The Atlanta Fed raised its expectations after data last week showed domestic retail sales grew at their strongest pace in 1-1/2 years in March, the latest indication that

growth in the quarter bounced back quickly after the longest shuttering of federal agencies in US history ended on Jan. 25. While a surprise narrowing in February's US trade deficit also implied a much stronger pace of growth, weak manufacturing output—which resulted in the first quarterly drop in production since President Donald Trump's election—may explain the wide range in estimates.

The main wild card for Friday's release could be private inventories, according to a number of analysts, including Unicredit, whose 1.3 percent GDP forecast sits at the more pessimistic end of the range.

"After pronounced stockpiling in the second half of the year, our forecast assumes that inventories were a significant drag in Q1. The latest numbers suggest that the drag may occur only later," Unicredit analysts wrote in a note.

'Cause for hope'

The other key piece of data in a relatively quiet week is Germany's Ifo business climate index, the main sentiment reading for Europe's biggest economy, where the growth outlook has drifted in the opposite direction.

The German government cut its 2019 growth forecast for the second time in three months last week and now sees the economy growing just 0.5 percent as exporters struggle with weaker demand from abroad, trade tensions and uncertainty over Brexit.

Subsequent business surveys showed that while German manufacturing contracted for the fourth month in a row in April, buoyant services activity compensated. Wednesday's Ifo print may offer some slight additional relief. After a surprise rise in the March index to 99.6, analysts polled by Reuters see a further marginal improvement to 99.9, matching a brighter mood among German investors after last week's ZEW survey improved for a sixth month. — Reuters

P&G, Coca-Cola report higher profits

NEW YORK: Procter & Gamble and Coca-Cola reported higher quarterly profits yesterday, lifted by premium consumer items at Procter and new beverage offerings at Coca-Cola. P&G, whose brands include Bounty paper towel and Crest toothpaste, reported profits of \$2.7 billion in its fiscal third-quarter, up 9.3 percent from the year-ago period.

Revenues rose 1.1 percent to \$16.5 billion. P&G scored a solid five percent increase in "organic" sales, which strips out foreign exchange effects and divestitures. The company pointed to strength in higher-end cosmetics, toothpaste and detergent, among other items. This group of products includes "Tide Pods," which combine a traditional detergent with stain removers and brighteners.

P&G typically boosts prices when it introduces premium products, lifting profits. However, Chief Financial Officer Jon Moeller said the company was also focusing on better basic-level products in shaving and baby care, which have been weak spots at P&G in the recent period.

"We're doing very well at the high end, but we need to do better at the low end," Moeller said on a conference call with reporters. Coca-Cola, meanwhile, reported first-quarter profits of \$1.7 billion, up 22.7 percent.

Revenues climbed 5.2 percent to \$8.0 billion. Sparkling beverage volumes grew one percent, boosted by an especially strong performance by the recently-revamped Coca-Cola Zero Sugar, a diet cola. The soda giant also pointed to a successful launch of its Orange Vanilla Coke and Orange Vanilla Coke Zero Sugar. — AFP

Gulf Bank launches new Visa Business Signature Credit Card

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has launched the new Visa Business Signature Credit Card, which is designed to benefit both employers and employees. For employers, it offers greater protection against misuse reducing unnecessary exposure. Gulf Bank's latest business offering also aids in reducing front-end processes, with payments directly debited from Gulf Bank's Corporate Account.

Employees will also enjoy an unlimited number of benefits and features. Benefits range from unlimited complimentary access to over 1,000+ airport lounges, to full coverage travel insurance of up to \$500,000 for the whole family. They will also have access to 24/7 Visa concierge services, providing them with a large array of lifestyle and booking services, including hotel and flight reservations. In partnership with YQ, employees will also enjoy up to 25 percent off with a global network of specialist Airport meet and greet services, available at over 450 airports worldwide.

That, in addition to the instant discounts up to 20 percent at over 300 renowned restaurants and coffee shops in Kuwait, and instant discounts up to 25 percent at over 150 retail outlets in Kuwait across Travel & Entertainment, Health & Beauty and Lifestyle segments.

Ahmed Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communication, Gulf Bank, said: "Gulf Bank's latest offering is designed with both corporate and SME customers in mind, aimed at adding value to their banking experiences. The bank is committed to continuously providing services that enhance customer experience, and we are delighted to be announcing the launch of the new Visa Business Signature Credit Card."

Commenting on the launch, Marcello Baricordi, Visa's General Manager for MENA said: "We are delighted to partner with Gulf Bank to launch the new Visa Business Signature Credit Card that is designed to benefit both employers and their employees. This is an excellent example of how Visa solutions tailored to specific audiences can help improve customer satisfaction through seamless and secure payment experiences."



KUWAIT: Ahmed Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communication at Gulf Bank and Marcello Baricordi, Visa's General Manager for MENA

CBK to be present in Grand Avenue

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait will be available in the Grand Avenue from Thursday 25/4 until Saturday 27/4 in order to inform mall patrons about the features of Al-Najma Account and the draw program of this account, which the bank promoted through the advertisement "With Najma Account you Become A Millionaire and A Half."

The presence is to inform clients and Grand Avenue patrons that the opportunity is still there to open an account or increase their balance to enter the half annual draw for KD 500,000 and benefit from the innovative banking services of the bank. The deadline to enter the draw for the prize is May 1st, 2019.

Business



GAC Motor presents Mutawa Alkazi with 'Best Sales Performance,' 'Best Distributor' awards

Awards ceremony held by GAC Motor at an annual conference

KUWAIT: The Mutawa Alkazi Company, the exclusive agent of GAC Motor in Kuwait continues to succeed in its field, as it has been presented with two prestigious awards: Best Sales Performance and Best Distributor. The awards were given during an annual conference held by GAC Motor for distributors in China, under the theme "Together Stronger, Better Future," which brought together all its agents from around the world.

Winning such awards reflects the trust Mutawa Alkazi has earned from the GAC Group, while confirming its great success in enhancing the brand's presence in the Kuwaiti market and increasing the sales of vehicles that fit all customer segments.

The annual event organized by GAC comes as part of its commitment to strengthen ties with distributors, who are considered the focal point between GAC Motor and customers in the market. The event is held to reward record holders throughout the year who promote the pres-

ence of the brand and achieving the highest sales for all GAC models.

Mutawa Alkazi expressed its pride and gratitude in winning these awards from GAC Motor. The company added in a press statement that the awards reflect the success in keeping abreast of the brand's ambitions by enhancing its presence globally, while gaining customers' confidence due to its great line up of cars that cater to all segments.

Mutawa Alkazi reiterated its strategy of constantly unveiling new models of GAC Motor in Kuwait once unveiled in global markets. This is in efforts to meet customers' huge turnout on buying new models once available in the local market. Moreover, the company mentioned the lineup of GAC Motor vehicles available at showrooms in Kuwait, which include the GS4, GS7, GA4, GS8, GS3 and GA8 models. Furthermore, the company hopes that the number of vehicles in the lineup reaches up to 20.

Mutawa Alkazi's team is ready to answer

any queries regarding choosing the best car that meets customers' requirements, while giving the opportunity to test drive the vehicle of their choice.

Furthermore, the company explained that it provides customers with the best prices, services and benefits at its showrooms, most notably the 11-year warranty with open mileage, free traffic registration, maintenance and warranty, as well as free third-party insurance. Moreover, the company offers customers the best facilities for buying their vehicles in collaboration with several banks and financing companies in Kuwait.

The Mutawa Alkazi Company enjoys a history spanning more than 61 years spent on offering the best automotive technology in the world. Through a constructive partnership with the giant of China's automotive manufacturer, GAC Motor GAC is distinguished by its outstanding innovations, providing cars to suit all needs in accordance with the latest specifications



and conditions in terms of quality and advanced technology.

The company revealed that several promotions on GAC Motor cars are to be

unveiled soon, as part of their efforts to reward loyal customers in the Kuwaiti market to increase their appetite for GAC Motor vehicles.

Flydubai launches flights to Sochi in Russia

KUWAIT: Dubai-based flydubai yesterday has announced the start of flights to Sochi, Russia. Flights between Dubai and Sochi will operate twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays, starting from 07 June 2019. flydubai will be the first carrier to offer direct flights on this route from the UAE and the GCC.

Commenting on the occasion, Ghaith Al-Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer of flydubai, said: "Russia is an important market for flydubai and we are pleased to announce the new direct flights to Sochi which will support the growing flow of travel, trade and tourism between the two countries. We remain committed to opening up previously underserved markets and to providing more travel options to fly to Dubai and beyond through one of the world's busiest travel hubs."

Flydubai has been operating to the Russian market since 2010 and offers passengers from the UAE and the combined flydubai and Emirates network, easier access to Moscow and other major Russian cities like Yekaterinburg.

Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations and E-commerce at flydubai, added: "We are confident that our high quality and reliable service and the convenience of these direct flights, together with the recent changes in visa requirements for Russians and UAE nationals visiting both countries, will make this resort city located on Russia's Black Sea Coast a popular choice for passengers."

Sochi is one of the major touristic hubs in Russia located on the Black Sea, popular for its beaches, forests and Caucasus Mountains,



as well as for hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics and being home to some of the best facilities for winter sports. Earlier this year, authorities of the UAE and the Russian Federation announced a visa-free regime between the countries for the respective passport holders for the first 90 days upon the arrival.

Asiet Zhukova, Vice President of Tour Operator Group WOWSOCHI, said: "The new flydubai service offers travellers from the UAE and around the world a more convenient option to reach Sochi and get a chance to explore this year long popular destination in Russia. We are happy to be collaborating with flydubai to start the new service and we are sure this will contribute to the further growth of tourism flows to Sochi."

Business Class passengers enjoy a comfortable spacious seat, a choice of meals from an internationally-inspired menu, a generous checked baggage allowance and fast track through immigration and security. They also are offered a complimentary access to In-Flight Entertainment (IFE) system, offering

over 1,000 hours of entertainment and more than 150 films available in Russian on HD touchscreens. Passengers in Economy are offered comfortable RECARO seats and can purchase an extra-legroom seat and light snacks (or preorder hot meals prior to the flight) and access to In-Flight entertainment.

Emirates will codeshare on this route and for bookings under the codeshare Emirates passengers will receive complimentary meals and the Emirates checked baggage allowance on flights operated by flydubai in Business and Economy class. The partnership between flydubai and Emirates announced in 2017 has expanded to meet increasing demand as passengers realize the benefits, such as access to an expanded global network, the convenience of travelling on a single ticket with seamless point to point baggage handling, the alignment of the frequent flyer program and a smooth transfer during transit in Dubai. Flydubai operates flights to over 90 destinations in 47 countries, including popular routes among Russian travellers, such as Dubai (UAE), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Zanzibar (Tanzania).

Kajol Devgan opens new Joyalukkas showroom in A S Rao Nagar, Hyderabad

HYDERABAD: The world's favorite jeweller, Joyalukkas, with further expansion in India inaugurated their brand-new showroom in A S Rao Nagar, Hyderabad. The showroom was inaugurated on 17th April 2019 and Joyalukkas brand ambassador iconic Bollywood star Kajol Devgan inaugurated the showroom. Kajol also unveiled the much-awaited Akshaya Tritiya collections during her visit.

"Hyderabad is special for us. Our customers' support and patronage has encouraged us to expand our presence here," said Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group. Kajol Devgan, the Joyalukkas brand ambassador said, "I am extremely excited to be a part of Joyalukkas. I am not only honored to inaugurate the new showroom but also unveiled the auspicious Akshaya Tritiya collections. Other than this, I had the pleasure of meeting thousands of jewelry lovers who come for the grand opening."

The new showroom offer its customers the same world-class shopping jewelry experience expected from brand Joyalukkas. For diamond lovers, the new showroom has a dedicated floor for diamond jewelry, covering the latest in trend,

style and design. To celebrate the opening, Joyalukkas has a 'Free Sure Gifts' offer to reward every customer for their purchase.

Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group said "The brand-new showroom in A.S. Rao Nagar, Hyderabad is a step further to our vision 2020 of having 200 showrooms across the world. Our vision is to ornament the world and hence we are spreading our presence to make Joyalukkas accessible to every jewelry lover around the world. I cordially invite all the residents in and around A S Rao Nagar to visit our new showroom, explore our exclusive traditional Hyderabad jewelry collection and take advantage of our best in products, services and our 'Free Sure Gifts' offer."

During the inaugural 'Free Sure Gifts' offer period, customers will also be presented with free home appliances on every purchase. Customers can avail the exclusive celebratory offer across all showrooms in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Apart from the above offer, patrons can also enjoy free maintenance and a one-year free insurance on all jewelry purchased at Joyalukkas.



Hani Abdaljaber Zahrah wins KD 4,000 in Burgan Bank draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank yesterday announced Hani Abdaljaber Abdulwahed Zahrah as the winner of the Value Account KD 4,000 draw. The winner expressed his excitement of winning the cash prize of KD 4,000. Dedicated to offer the best in-class services, Burgan Bank's Value Account presents customers with exceptional features which were specifically designed to suit the needs of expatriates living in Kuwait. Account holders will be able to enjoy matchless benefits that include receiving a free credit card

for one year, application for a loan, in addition to a chance to enter the quarterly draw to win KD 4,000 as well as other discounts from selected merchant stores.

Burgan Bank will continue presenting exclusive services and draws with an aim of exceeding customers' expectations while offering them chances to win valuable cash prizes all year round. Opening a Value account is simple, interested Individuals with salaries starting from KD 150 and above are eligible to open a value account.

ABK makes mobile banking simpler with digital services on mobile app

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced the expansion of its mobile and online banking offering, with more digital services being made available on both platforms. This comes in line with ABK's commitment to continuously invest in technology, innovation and customer service under its 'Simpler Banking' strategy, and to improve the customer's digital experience.

The new services being added to the mobile app and online banking include: 'Global View' - a first-of-its-kind in Kuwait, the innovative Global View service enables customers to manage multiple ABK accounts through a single login point. 'ABKPay' - this service



allows customers to split bill payments or transfer money to their ABK account from other local bank accounts. By sharing a secure K-Net payment request via SMS, email, WhatsApp and other channels customers can receive money instantly.

'eServices' - customers can instantly open a savings account online without visiting a branch by using eServices. The mobile banking app also enables customers to check their

account balance, transfer local or international funds, make credit card payments and pay bills instantly for prepaid and postpaid mobile phone subscriptions from Ooredoo, Zain and VIVA, among other services. ABK is committed to making their clients digital banking experience simpler and more convenient, and with these enhancements to the mobile banking app, the Bank is enabling customers to access the services they want, remotely and securely.

What's On



Lebanese director Labki presents special screening of 'Capharnaum'

Lebanese Director Nadine Labki at the invitation of Loyac Academy of Performing Arts "LAPA" presented a special screening of her film "Capharnaum", which won the special officiating committee award at Cannes festival, and is nominated for the Oscar for best foreign film. The special screening took place yesterday, at 3.00 pm in the 360 hall, followed by a discussion with the director, press and fans. Lebanese Director Nadine Labki is one of the most notable Arab directors who excelled in the world cinema industry through a

carrier full of achievements through movies. The film 'Caramel' premiered at the Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival in 2007, which was a commercial success in the summer of that same year. In 2010, Labki directed and starred in her second feature film, Where Do We Go Now? The film humorously tackles a delicate subject about a village in which church and mosque stand side by side as women try to keep their blowhard men from starting a religious war. Her latest distinguished movie is 'Capharnaum'

is told in a flashback format, focusing on Zain's life and leading to his attempt to sue his parents for child neglect. Nadine Labki graduated from Saint Joseph University in Beirut with B Sc in Cinematic Sciences, and directed its graduation film (11 Pasteur St) in 1997, which won the best short film award during the Arab cinema celebration at the Arab world institution in Paris, and in 1998 she participated in an acting workshop at the Cours Florent French drama school in Paris.

GUST holds seminar to support Vision 2035

Gulf University for Science and Technology's (GUST) hosted a seminar on its campus on the subject of "Sustaining the competitive identity of Kuwait: The role of social media users". The main objective of the seminar, which was open to the public, was to present research conducted on Kuwait's competitive and digital identity, and how the image of Kuwait can be sustained globally through the contribution of the social media users and how to improve its digital image, all in line with the nation's vision for 2035.

The event, funded by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), featured three speakers, Dr Yasser Abdelrahim, Assistant Professor at the GUST Mass Communication & Media Department, Jose Filipe Torres, CEO of Bloom Consulting, a nation and city branding agency focusing on the digital approach, and Antonia Jolic, Instructor of Visual Communication at GUST, who spoke about the logos conceptualized and developed by GUST graphic design students supporting Kuwait's digital image.

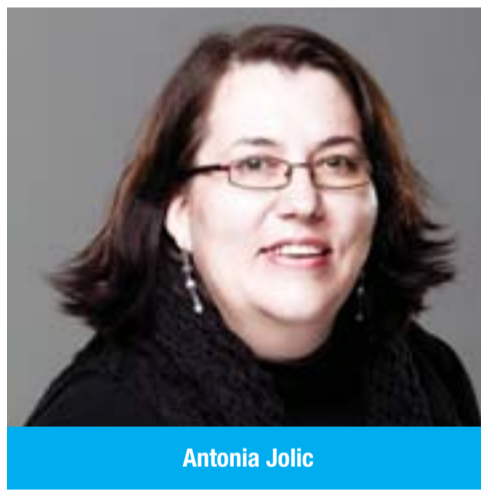
The seminar started with an introduction by Dr Yasser Abdelrahim about the concept of a competitive identity, which was followed by a presentation of the responses of social media users to the survey designed for the research. Jose Filipe Torres followed with his



Dr Yasser Abdelrahim



Jose Filipe Torres



Antonia Jolic

talk about the concept of having a digital identity, and presented the data Bloom Consulting gathered to examine the digital identity of Kuwait, and explain how the digital identity of Kuwait could be enhanced.

To end the event, Antonia Jolic spoke about her graphic design students' contribution to the digital image of Kuwait and the process they went through to design the logos, all of which fall in line with presenting Kuwait in a positive light with regards to its digital identity. With this, GUST is the first university in Kuwait that has produced a research project about the 'competitive and digital identity of Kuwait'. More so, it will also be the first university to highlight how the image of Kuwait can be globally sustained in collaboration with an international nation and city branding agency, like Bloom Consulting. With this, GUST maintains its position as a host to events that exemplify how academic research goes hand-in-hand with supporting

their annual vacation in Germany from now on and not just a few days before their actual trip in order to avoid any disappointments. At the moment, appointments at the application Centre VFS Global Kuwait can be obtained within 1-2 days - during the summer travel season waiting times for an appointment of one week or more can occur due to the high demand.

Last summer, the Visa Section of the German Embassy processed between 10,000 and 12,000 visas per month, but could not avoid the building up of waiting times due to the high number of last minute applicants. Please bear in mind that for Kuwaiti nationals a minimum of 3-5 working days is required from the moment your application arrives at the Embassy until you get back your stamped passport. For other nationalities, the procedure might take 10-12 days. However, in individual cases the processing can take up to two weeks for all nationalities. The visa clearance is a computerized process - the German Embassy has no influence on the processing time.

If you are a frequent traveler, then please attach copies of your previous Schengen visas to your application file in order to enable the Visa Team to check whether you might be eligible to a multiple entry visa with a longer validity period. In accordance with the Schengen Code, a Schengen visa for a short stay up to 90 days has to be applied for through the Embassy of the country which is your main destination. The main destination is understood to be the destination where the applicant intends to spend the longest time or where the main purpose of the intended journey is carried out. However, for your entry and departure you may cross any Schengen border to reach your destination with a visa issued by any Schengen Member State.

At the border of entry or during other controls you may have to show the visa but also provide additional documentation, for example information on your travel destination or that you have sufficient means to cover the stay and the return trip. It is therefore recommended that you carry with you copies of the documents which you presented when applying for the visa (e.g. hotel booking or letters of invitation, flight confirmations, travel health insurance or other documents stating the purpose of your stay).

A Schengen visa entitles the holder to a stay

the government of Kuwait efforts and enhance the visual position Kuwait has as part of the 2035 New Kuwait development plan.

not exceeding 90 days per a six-month period, even if the Schengen visa has been issued with a validity of one year or more. Customers sometimes find it difficult to calculate this period of stay. Therefore, you can find an electronic calculator on the homepage of the German Embassy under (www.kuwait.diplo.de/visa) to assist you with your travel planning.

Visa fees

Depending on the daily exchange rate, the processing fee for a Schengen visa is currently KWD 21 for adults, regardless of the visas validity period. VFS is adding a standard service charge of KWD 6 on top of the Embassy's processing fee and you can find all these amounts transparently documented on their homepage.

The validity of your Schengen Visa depends on the travel purpose, travel history and overall situation of each applicant. Every application will be considered individually based on the papers presented by the customer. Therefore, frequent travelers are welcome to add an explanatory letter to the application as well as proof of regular travel in the last years (e.g. copy of old visas and entry stamps or recommendations by business partners) and the Embassy's visa team will gladly take that information into consideration for the validity period of the visa.

Customs declaration

Anybody entering Germany from a non-European Union country carrying cash in a total amount of 10,000 euros or more is obliged to declare this amount of money to the competent German customs office in writing without being explicitly requested to do so. The purpose of the obligation to declare is to prevent the illegal movement of money across the external borders of the European Union in order to combat money laundering, the financing of terrorist organizations and criminal activities. The obligation to submit a declaration and the customs inspections are not intended to restrict the free movement of capital in any way. Travelers who intend to bring an amount of €10,000 or more per person to Germany can download the necessary cash declaration form at <http://www.zoll.de> prior to their trip and present the completed declaration form upon arrival to the German customs officers to facilitate entry procedures.

GIG marks Autism Awareness month

Gulf Insurance Group (GIG), one of the leading insurance service providers in the Middle East and North Africa, marked World Autism Awareness month by collaborating with the Kuwait Center for Autism. The event included a fun play day for autistic children, with gifts and activities such as arts and crafts at Kidstop, a center for arts and entertainment. The aim of the event is to raise awareness about the disorder, its prevalence and ways to manage it.

The Kuwait Center for Autism was established by Dr Samira Al Saad with

a mission to spread autism awareness and to put in place an accurate 'Educational Program' for children with autism (a lifelong disability). This includes improving their educational, societal and exceptional abilities while taking into consideration the individual differences, as well as supporting their vocational talents and the possibility of integration with society.

Gulf Insurance Group supports this cause to help the community understand the many different aspects of autism and what it really means for the children and their families. Khaled Al Sanousi, Group Senior Manager - Corporate Communications and Investor Relations at GIG said: "As an insurance company, we support health in many aspects. We are grateful to be able to be a part of the autistic children's lives and be able to make a difference. We see it as a great opportunity to give back to the community and make a real impact on their lives and."



German Embassy Kuwait explains tourist visa process

The travel season is about to begin and the German Embassy Kuwait welcomes all Kuwaiti and third country nationals who are choosing Germany as their summer destination 2019. In 2018, over 50,000 Schengen visa applications were processed by the German Embassy Kuwait. The majority of applicants consisted of Kuwaiti citizens and their families for holiday, leisure and medical visits. Also the expatriates in Kuwait show growing interest in Germany for holiday, trade fair and business visits, owed to the continuously expanding business relationships between Kuwaiti and German companies. In order to make your preparations and travel experience for this summer as convenient as possible, we have prepared the following information about the visa application procedure for you:

VFS Global Kuwait

After many years of good cooperation and services the service company has changed from the previous Al Qabas Assurex to VFS Global Kuwait since September 1, 2018 due to a public tender bid.

The new German Visa application Center VFS is now located on the 25th Floor of Arraya Tower in Kuwait City. All applicants are required to book a prior appointment through their website www.vfsglobal.com/germany/kuwait in order to allow for short waiting times and efficient customer service. VFS Global Kuwait is the only officially Visa Service Center appointed by us. Unfortunately, some private persons, businesses and agencies are claiming to render visa or messenger services to German Schengen customers, without being endorsed by the German Embassy. Please be aware of the prices and quality of service of such agencies since various complaints have been received about overpriced services and wrong visa information.

We would like to call upon all travelers to start filing their Schengen visa applications for

Health

Researchers calculate decades of 'scary' Greenland ice melting

Greenland's glaciers contribute to 13.7 mm rise in sea levels

WASHINGTON: Measuring melting ice is a fairly precise business in 2019 — thanks to satellites, weather stations and sophisticated climate models. By the 1990s and 2000s, scientists were able to make pretty good estimates, although work from previous decades was unreliable due to less advanced technology. Now, researchers have recalculated the amount of ice lost in Greenland since 1972, the year the first Landsat satellites entered orbit to regularly photograph the Danish territory.

"When you look at several decades, it is best to sit back in your chair before looking at the results, because it is a bit scary to see how fast it is changing," said French glaciologist Eric Rignot, of the University of California at Irvine. Rignot co-authored the study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS), with colleagues in California, Grenoble, Utrecht and Copenhagen. "It's also something that affects the four corners of Greenland, not just the warmer parts in the south," he said.

Ice melting six times faster
Glaciologists use three methods to measure ice

melting. Firstly, satellites measure altitude with a laser: if a glacier melts, the satellite picks up its reduced height.

A second technique involves measuring variations in gravity, as ice loss can be detected through a decrease in gravitational pull. This method has been available since 2002 using NASA satellites. Thirdly, scientists have developed so-called mass balance models, which compare mass accumulated (rain and snow) with mass lost (ice river discharges) to calculate what is left.

These models, confirmed with field measurements, have become very reliable since the 2000s, according to Rignot—boasting a five to seven percent margin of error, compared to 100 percent a few decades ago. The research team used these models to "go back in time" and reconstruct Greenland's ice levels in the 1970s and 1980s. The limited data available for this period—medium-quality satellite photos, aerial photos, ice cores and other observations—helped refine them.

"We added a little bit of history that did not exist," said Rignot. The results: during the 1970s, Greenland accumulated 47 gigatons of ice per year,

on average. Then, it lost an equivalent volume in the 1980s. The melting continued at that rate in the 1990s, before a sharp acceleration in the 2000s (187 Gt/year) and even more since 2010 (286 Gt/year). Ice is melting six times faster than in the 1980s, researchers estimate—and Greenland's glaciers alone have contributed to a 13.7 millimeter rise in sea levels since 1972, they believe.

"This is an excellent piece of work by a well-established research group using novel methods to extract more information from the available data", said Colin Summerhayes, of the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge.

As with a similar study carried out by the same team on Antarctica, the new study affords a longer term view of the rapid ice melt being observed in Greenland in recent years. "This new data better enables us to put recent, dramatic, changes to Greenland's contribution to global sea level rise into a longer-term context—the ice loss we've seen in the last eight years is as much as was lost in the preceding four decades," said Amber Leeson, a lecturer in Environmental Data Science at Lancaster University. —AFP



The Zachariae Glacier on Greenland's east coast is seen in a photograph taken by a NASA satellite.

CLINIC

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- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally Invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368
Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member .
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

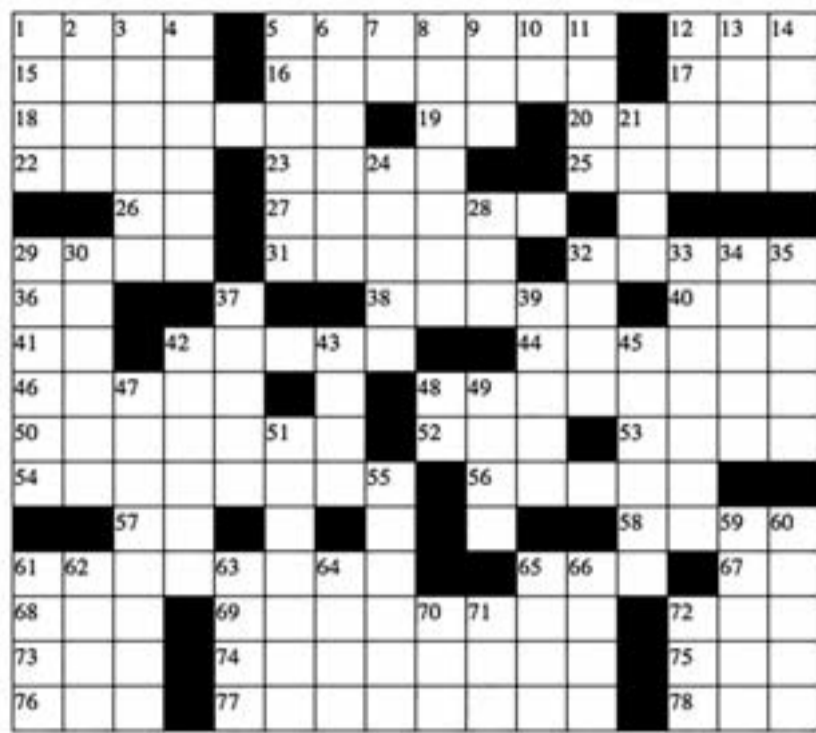
Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com **Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228**
Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

Stars

CROSSWORD 2191



ACROSS

1. Occurring widely (as to many people).
5. Engaged in as a pastime.
12. 10 grams.
15. (of persons) Highest in rank or authority or office.
16. The area for food preparation on a ship.
17. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
18. (Middle Eastern) Small croquette of mashed chick peas or fava beans seasoned with sesame seeds.
19. An honorary degree in science.
20. Lower in esteem.
22. In bed.
23. A sock with a separation for the big toe.
25. Indigo bush.
26. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
27. A port city in southwestern Iran.
29. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
31. Relating to or applicable to or concerned with the administration of a city or town or district rather than a larger area.
36. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
38. ('cease' is a noun only in the phrase 'without cease') End v I.
40. A room equipped with toilet facilities.
41. An associate degree in nursing.
44. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
46. A bowl-shaped vessel.
50. Genus of tropical American epiphytic orchids having striking axillary racemes of yellow to green spiderlike flowers with long slender sepals and warty lips.
52. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
53. Pathetically lacking in force or effectiveness.
54. A skullcap worn by religious Jews (especially at prayer).
56. A woman of refinement.
57. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
58. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
61. (trademark) A cobalt-base alloy with chromium and other metals.
67. The atomic weight of an element that has the same combining capacity as a given weight of another element.
68. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
69. Tending to soothe or tranquilize.
72. A master's degree in fine arts.
73. A hotel providing overnight lodging for travelers.
74. Important marine food fishes.
75. Extremely pleasing.
76. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
77. A person who escapes into a world of fantasy.
78. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
2. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
3. Whitish fibrous membrane (albuginea) that with the cornea forms the outer covering of the eyeball.

4. Protected from heat and light with shade or shadow.
5. Any organic compound formed by adding alcohol molecules to aldehyde molecules.
6. The capital and largest city of Equatorial Guinea on the island of Bioko in the Gulf of Guinea.
7. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
8. A family of birds of the order Coraciiformes.
9. (Greek mythology) The winged goddess of the dawn in ancient mythology.
10. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in north-west North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
11. Having been read.
12. Made of fir or pine.
13. A domed or vaulted recess or projection on a building especially the east end of a church.
14. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
21. German organist and contrapuntist (1685-1750).
24. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
28. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
30. A historical region of southwestern India on the west coast.
32. Small beads made from polished shells and formerly used as money by native Americans.
33. A state in the southeastern United States on the Gulf of Mexico.
34. Capital of the state of Oregon in the northwestern part of the state on the Willamette River.
35. Avoid or try to avoid, as of duties, questions and issues.
37. A province in north-central China.
39. A device (trade name Aqua-Lung) that lets divers breathe under water.
42. Depressing in character or appearance.
43. East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
45. When dried yields a hard substance used e.g. in golf balls.
47. The Italian region on the island of Sardinia.
48. A white trivalent metallic element.
49. Young sheep.
51. Inflammation of the ileum.
55. South American cavy.
59. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
60. Jordan's port.
62. The taste experience when a savoury condiment is taken into the mouth.
63. Being or occurring at an advanced period of time or after a usual or expected time.
64. A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
65. A caress with the lips.
66. Not fake or counterfeit.
70. An abnormally large amount of this fetoprotein in the fetus can signal an abnormality of the neural tube (as spina bifida or anencephaly).
71. Denoting a quantity consisting of 12 items or units.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

If you have time and the opportunity before going to work this morning, perhaps you should invest in a moment with your lover. Start the day off with some friendly exercise. You may need the distraction later. At work you find that you're very serious and want items to be done in what you consider a timely fashion. The only problem with that is others may not consider you the best judge of time. Aggravation with those who test you may not be tolerated lightly now. Ambition makes you less easy to get along with where scheduled events are required.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Ambition is something you're experiencing along with thinking about your age. And you should. It's your birthday but instead of celebrating gaily you're worried about making more money. That's okay but you need to enjoy your time on earth too. Let others give you birthday wishes and show their love. You're too strict on yourself now. You have a one-sided view of life and that's all you want to see. Anything else is purely trivial. Take time to enjoy loved ones tonight. Feel free to smile and relish today. These days only come along once a year.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Though you're all better and back to work now, you find that you're really not in the mood because you're unable to keep your mind solely dedicated to tedious work. Instead you'd rather connect with knowledgeable people who have good communication skills. That's part of work too, Gemini. This is a mental cycle that you've begun. You have to set yourself up for all the other niceties of life, so to speak. Get back into the swing of things while looking for good, practical, with a hint of non-conventional, ideas you can take further and help all involved. Be sure and get rest tonight with someone you love.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Being able to keep your mind on work comes easily today. As a matter of fact, any job you take whether personal or at work is breezed through like a hot knife through butter. You're that sharp. Cancer. You've been too strict on yourself but it's because you're watching life go by which means you're getting older. After the age of thirty the years seem to race by. Knowledge comes with age more often than not because you're living life. Think of it this way. You're gaining knowledge by having another birthday. Look forward to all that new brain power, Cancer. You're just getting better.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

After thinking about the issue since yesterday, your mind is on a hair trigger and could cause more trouble for you. You're not sure you want to make this right. You didn't start this, you think, but you're sure as heck not going to allow anyone else to push you. This isn't being diplomatic. Nostalgia makes it worse because of things that might have been. On top of that, you're thinking that you really want to be settled, have a happy home life and make someone else happy too. Getting what you want with another you love should be easy, you think, but it's not always that way.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You're thinking your life over again. That generally means you're getting ready to do something dramatic for change. It can also refer to the bit where you're getting older. Quit thinking about the older thing and start thinking about what and how you can lead your life in order to be happy and achieve your best. Stop beating yourself up. You have other people who have no confidence in themselves chomping at the bit to do that for you. Leave no openings for these people who aren't your friends.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a time to get people to listen to you which you can do easily. Make money now by showing people what they need as only you can. Business and financial opportunities abound. Stay up on current events. You have a special way of looking at these opportunities and making them yours. Others follow you because they know you have the knack for making money. Don't be too strict on yourself. It could cause you problems. Love the ones you're with, Libra. Relationships make you more creative in business.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be too serious and too strict on yourself today. You're looking life over to see what you like and don't like about your life's endeavors. You're pulling your energy in and are probably feeling the need to stay home alone or at least to wear black. Although you may have to work today, you're not in the mood to be overly enthusiastic or friendly towards work mates. Part of your day will be introverted behavior by you and the other part will be totally extroverted. You speak well with a crowd and make others listen. They want to be part of your world.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You're thinking about money, how much you make and how much you want to make. Ambition is at a high right now. Anything that doesn't involve the monetary subject isn't worth thinking about in your mind at the moment. Something may take your attention in another direction though. Sympathy could direct you to helping others which is part of your soul's education on earth, Sagittarius. Just be sure to remember that you matter too. You can't do enough for others if it takes away from your ability to take care of self. You have to eat to live.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You need someone you care for to acknowledge the good work you're doing on your life and especially the job. Introverted behavior has you wanting to spend more time with your lover without others intruding. Emotional relationships fill the void made by some of your more inner thoughts and gives rise to the strength you're known for, Capricorn. Your unique qualities seem to rise out of the mist for all to see especially at work. People seem to flock to you even though you only want the one you love close.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Problem solving has your intelligent mind working overtime now. It's like a puzzle you keep open all the time. Your sober orientation only serves to promote continuing to analyze your current situation, how you got there and how to stay on top. Ambition serves to make you want to work much harder without much break. Aquarius. Everyone needs time to rest. Make sure you take that time to recharge your mental and physical battery. Though time is passing, you've got all the time you need for your accomplishments. Enjoy your life.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

After having the day you did yesterday, you may feel shopping is the psychological approach to fixing your mood. The stars, however, are warning you not to go shopping now. You may spend too much and be sorry for it later. Your deepest feelings tell you that you know you need to be practical but the devil on your left shoulder is telling you that you need to spend some money now, Pisces. Let your feelings win this time. Later on you can enjoy some therapeutic shopping. Right now, get ready for better to come.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Cooking 1 - Word Search

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

BLEND
BOIL
BRAISE
BREAD
BROWN
CLARIFY
COAT
DICE

GLAZE
GRIND
JULIENNE
MINCE
POACH
PUREE
REDUCE
ROAST

SEASON
SHRED
SIMMER
STEW
STIR

Yesterday's Solution

Comedy Movies 4 - Solution

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

AIRPLANE
BEST IN SHOW
CADDYSHACK
CITY SLICKERS
DAVE
DUCK SOUP
EMMA
FARGO

HAIRSPRAY
HOLIDAY
HOME ALONE
ICE AGE
KINGPIN
LIAR LIAR
PRETTY WOMAN
SPLASH

THE JERK
THE TRAMP
TOMMY BOY
TRADING PLACES
WAYNES WORLD
WORKING GIRL
YES MAN

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2019



Members of the Mayo-Yoreme ethnic group celebrate Holy Week in their typical costumes dancing in San Miguel Zapotitlan, Sinaloa state, Mexico on April 19, 2019. — AFP

Pride and pique as Louboutin takes Pakistan chappal global

Famed for luxury red-soled stilettos, French shoe designer Christian Louboutin has taken inspiration for a new sandal from Pakistan's tribal frontier, sparking claims of cultural appropriation along with grins from grizzled Pakistani cobblers. A post on Louboutin's Instagram last month announcing the release of the shoe sparked a social media frenzy in Pakistan, with fans praising the latest homage to the country's rich artisan traditions and critics rolling their eyes. The "Imran"—a flamboyant sandal complete with metal studs along with splashes of orange and silver—is inspired by the country's traditional Peshawari chappal, according to the fashion house.

The chappal has long been a staple for ethnic Pashtuns—from ordinary labourers to the country's political elite—in Pakistan's northwest. The sandal is distinguished by its overlapping leather strips that cover the foot and has a small heel with a hardy rubber sole. Louboutin's version was named after famed Pakistani contemporary artist and friend of the designer, Imran Qureshi.

While most celebrated the shoe's debut, others jeered at the thought of paying designer prices—Louboutins often retail for upwards of \$500 — for the ubiquitous sandals, which can cost as little as \$5.50 in Pakistan. Some social media users also suggested that the European brand was the latest perpetrator of cultural appropriation. "Highly recommend asking your friend to rename it though, so that it doesn't become another culturally appropriated thing," wrote Instagram user Mehreenkhan under a post by Qureshi about the shoe.

Paying tribute

Louboutin later removed the Instagram announcement, saying the sandal was just the latest creation expressing his "love for embellishments from different cultures" and was sorry some people felt "offended". "My designs often pay tributes to artisanship, craftsmanship, traditions or various cultures," Louboutin said in a statement. "The world and its diversity has always been the core of my work." The chappal is no stranger to controversy. In 2014, British designer Paul Smith released a sandal that looked strikingly similar to the chappal with



A Pakistani shoe maker makes a pair of sandals outside a shop in Peshawar.

no initial mention of the Pakistani shoe, sparking fiery protests online and in the press in Pakistan.

Pakistani fashion designer Kamiar Rokni praised Louboutin's latest creation, saying claims of cultural appropriation were misplaced in this instance. "When you visit different parts of the world, you do get inspired... and that seeps into your design," said Rokni. "There's nothing wrong with somebody being inspired by the Peshawari chappal," he explained.

Durable and comfortable

Far from the shoe boutiques of Paris, chappal makers and wearers in Peshawar, the northwestern Pakistani city near the Afghan border, greeted the arrival of the "Imran" with bemusement, pride, and some confused shrugs. "I'm totally amazed," said Ghazan Khan—a self-proclaimed chappal fanatic who has bought more than 20 pairs of the sandals in recent years alone. "People are getting addicted to this kind of chappals, so it's good," he added, while suggesting that local designers deserved a cut of the profits from the "Imran". "[The chappal] is long-last-

ing and comfortable," said resident Abdul Rehman, adding that the sandal's ventilation helped keep the foot cool in the area's stifling heat. "I have been wearing chappals for all of my life and never used any other shoe," he added.

The shoe's popularity had been in decline for years, according to chappal makers in Peshawar, as the country's youth adopted more modern footwear tastes. The trend was only reversed with the political ascent of former World Cup cricketing captain Imran Khan and his fondness for the shoe, spotlighted as he led mass protests in 2014. Khan's adoption of the chappal was part and parcel of a makeover the former cricketer and playboy has embraced since retiring from the sport, taking on a pious image in Pakistan to accompany his crusading populist agenda. The ploy has largely succeeded, with Khan elected prime minister last year on promises to reign in corruption and cut back on excessive spending, while chappal sales have boomed as the youth seek to imitate the country's new, stylish leader.

"I made chappals for Imran Khan when he was holding the protests in Islamabad... that's why it has become famous and people overwhelmingly like them," explains Chacha Noor Din—the owner of a string of shoe stores in Peshawar — who counts the premier as a loyal customer and named a version of the shoe after him. And while the chappal's popularity continues to thrive in Peshawar and throughout the country's northwest, fans of the traditional sandal are less convinced by Louboutin's new take. "I will not wear this shoe because it's a ladies shoe," said Riaz-u-Din after looking at a picture of the "Imran" on a phone as he shopped for a pair of chappals. He insisted: "No one will wear it here in Peshawar." — AFP



Chacha Noor Din, the owner of a string of shoe stores, makes sandals at his shop in Peshawar. — AFP photos

Prince memoir to be released in October

Prince's unfinished memoir, "The Beautiful Ones," will be released in October, its publisher announced Monday—three years after the singer's sudden death in April 2016. The "Kid from Minneapolis," who died of an accidental fentanyl overdose aged 57, had announced a month before his death he would tell his story in his own words in a book originally set for release in 2017. Publisher Penguin Random House said the book—now to be released on October 29 — would contain previously unseen photos, scrapbooks and lyric sheets, as well as the memoir Prince had started to write.



"This work is not just a tribute to Prince, but an original and energizing literary work, full of Prince's ideas and vision, his voice and image, his undying gift to the world," Penguin Random House said of the book, which will be published by its imprint Spiegel and Brau. The memoir will also feature an introduction by Dan Piepenbring, who collaborated with Prince on the book in the months before he died.

Prince—one of the most influential but elusive figures in music—became an international sensation in the 1980s as he popularized the Minneapolis Sound of danceable funk, with 1984's "Purple Rain" often described as one of the greatest albums of all time. Born Prince Rogers Nelson, he became famous in his later career for eccentricities that included changing his name to an unpronounceable "love symbol," announcing his concerts at the last minute and refusing to let reporters take notes on-let alone record-encounters with him. — AFP

Lifestyle | Gossip



Crow re-releases Cash duet

Sheryl Crow has released a re-recorded version of her duet with the late Johnny Cash. The nine-time Grammy Award-winning artist originally released 'Redemption Day' with the late star on her self-titled 1996 album, but she has now unveiled a re-recorded version of the hit song as the lead single from her upcoming album, which is set for release this summer. 'Redemption Day' was penned after Sheryl visited Bosnia with then-First Lady Hillary Clinton, where she visited military bases, played for troops, and met with families. Speaking of the trip, she said: "I'd never been anywhere even close to a war-torn area. We had all these resources tied up in Bosnia, and I kept thinking about how and why do we choose where to get involved. Is it desire for control, greed for oil - what is it?" In 2003, one of Johnny Cash's sons-in-law played the track for the music icon, who then wanted to speak to her before getting involved in it himself. Sheryl added: "He asked a lot of questions about different lines and what I meant. He didn't want to put his voice to the song without being able to believe it heart and soul." Cash - who passed away in September 2003 - recorded the song and later released his own version on the posthumous album

'American VI: Ain't No Grave', in 2010. Sheryl performed the track on stage as a duet with a recording of Cash in 2014, which inspired her to approach his estate with the idea of re-recording a collaboration of their voices for her new project. Alongside the new recording, the music video for the song - which couples footage of Cash next to scenes of a young child watching history unfold - was projected around iconic locations in central London on Friday. Sheryl said of the video: "As a mom of two young kids, I see that our kids watch what we do on their behalf and how we shape their future. They're privy to everything visual, especially now, and there's no way to shield your child from the roughness of reality. If we could see the world through a child's eyes, we would make different decisions." And Sheryl hopes Cash's voice will "offer some hope". She said in a press release: "With what's happening in our nation now, and how dire things look, to have Johnny's voice offers some hope. Knowing how he felt about the song, I feel pretty certain that he would have some wisdom to impart about what's happening now and who we are becoming. I hope that wherever he is, he feels proud to be a part of it - I certainly feel his presence in the song."

BTS want to be 'sincere' in their music

BT S believe their connection to their fans comes from being "sincere". The K-pop idols - comprised of RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V, and Jungkook - have taken the world by storm in recent years and have amassed a mammoth fanbase, and the group now say their fans are so loyal to them because they're always open to "sharing their emotions". Jimin, 23, said: "I think we're able to quickly engage with our fans by being sincere with our feelings. We try to share our emotions with our fans." love listening to the "shouting and screaming" of their fans before they start a performance. Jungkook, 21, added: "Whenever we begin a performance, I take out my earpieces and listen to the shouting and screaming. It fills me with energy." Whilst the group's leader RM, 24, says listening to their fans' screams of support always makes their level of fame

seem surreal. Speaking to 'CBS This Morning', he said: "I suddenly think, like, am I really here? We have to practice the same choreography again and again, we have to keep the promise." Meanwhile, although the 'Fake Love' singers are garnering worldwide popularity, they've said they won't be releasing a track fully in English any time soon, as they don't want to change who they are just to gain more success in America and Europe. RM said: "A Hot 100 and a Grammy nomination, these are our goals. But they're just goals - we don't want to change our identity or our genuineness to get the number one." Like if we sing suddenly in full English, and change all these other things, then that's not BTS. We'll do everything, we'll try. But if we couldn't get number one or number five, that's OK."



The Jonas Brothers announce new album 'Happiness Begins'

The Jonas Brothers have announced their comeback album, 'Happiness Begins'. The sibling trio of Kevin, Joe and Nick Jonas have confirmed their new LP will be released on June 7 as Kevin admitted this is the album he is most "proud" of. Sharing the album artwork on Twitter, they simply captioned it: "#HappinessBegins June 7th ... So proud of this new record and we can't wait for you guys to have these songs!! (sic)" And in a post on his personal Twitter account, Kevin wrote: "#HappinessBegins June 7th ... After 7 years of not working together & finding ourselves we're back to give you our journey in album form. Out of all the albums we've done I'm most proud of this one. Wish you could have it now, but you'll just have to wait a little bit longer. (sic)" Nick and Joe also posted about their new LP on social media, with the younger sibling writing: "So excited to share that our new album #HappinessBegins will be out June 7th! (sic)" And Joe added in his own message: "Can't wait for you guys to hear this album! (sic)" Nick had previously confessed that "transparency was the key factor" in the Jonas Brothers reunion. He said: "I think the thing that was so great about this next chapter was that it really began with us getting to the healthiest place we could be as brothers and as family before we decided to work together at all, given that the way it ended before was not the best. "We just thought, let's dive in, let's really open up and pull this thing apart and see what would need to be different for this to work this time around for a healthier relationship. I think that honesty, that transparency, really was the key factor. And I built the foundation now to where those things that used to be hiccups before for us, are no longer a problem and we're able to really enjoy this ride and the reaction so far to the new music and everything that's going on has just been incredible."



Ugandan police detain popstar MP Bobi Wine

Ugandan police detained pop star-turned-MP Bobi Wine yesterday after shutting down one of his concerts and firing tear gas at his fans, the singer's wife and supporters said. "He has been arrested in Busabala, where he was to address the media on the cancellation of his concert by the police," Wine's wife Barbie Lungo Kyagulanyi told AFP, referring to a suburb in southern Kampala. Ugandan police spokesman Fred Enanga confirmed that officers "engaged him earlier and drove him away from Busabala" but would not say if he was formally arrested. Bobi Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, was scheduled to perform yesterday but the much-anticipated show was cancelled by police. His attempt to reach the venue on the shores of Lake Victoria, flanked by dozens of supporters, was blocked by police who fired tear gas and water cannon at his convoy. Before being detained, Wine posted on Twitter that police were trying to tow the singer's car away. "People teargassed, beaten. Many arrested. We shall overcome... Stand firm," he wrote. Later, a post on his Twitter account signed "admin" said the singer had been "violently arrested". Police said the concert was cancelled because inadequate safety measures were put in place. Wine is among the most prominent critics of Uganda's longtime President Yoweri Museveni, and authorities have repeatedly blocked him from performing publicly. Young Ugandans have recently been energized by the singer-MP, who has become a thorn in the side of the government through his songs about social justice.



Take That: We should've had lifetime achievement BRIT

Take That feel they should have received a lifetime achievement BRIT Award by now. Howard Donald - who is joined by Gary Barlow and Mark Owen in the Manchester band - has admitted he is bemused as to why US star Pink was honored with the Outstanding Contribution To Music gong at the ceremony in February. The 'Back For Good' hitmakers already have eight BRITs to their name, but the 50-year-old star thinks their dazzling 30-year career should be recognized by the biggest music awards ceremony in the UK, though his bandmate Mark, 47, doesn't think it will happen because former member Robbie Williams already won the prize in 2010. Howard told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column: "We're not going to get anything from the BRITs. We're not bloody Americans, we're Brits. It doesn't make sense to me. "There should have been some recognition for the 30 years, 100 per cent. You need to tell them." Mark added: "I mean, they gave it to Rob one year so maybe they think they can't give it to Take That again." Meanwhile, the 'Shine' hitmakers also confessed that they are "embarrassed" by their "crap" name. Mark admitted: "There have been times when we've been a bit embarrassed about our name. "We used to apologize when we introduced ourselves saying 'We're Take That' and thought we should be called something different." Gary agreed: "It's a little bit like The Pet Shop Boys-as a name you think it's stupid. "When you say the name Take That you do tend to think of us in a stadium or something, but it is a crap name." Take That - which also featured Jason Orange until his final departure in 2014 - are currently on their 'Greatest Hits Live Tour', and although they plan to take a long break to spend time with their families after the run, they will be back for the next "chapter" in a "few" years time. Howard said: "We're going to rest for a bit and not even think about any other tours or albums. "This is the end of Part Two and when we feel like it, we can come back and start talking again about where we want to go next, rather than having the pressure of coming straight out of a tour and thinking, 'Right come the middle of the year we've got to start writing another album and go over to LA and do this and do that.' "It's actually really nice, because we've all got big families and we want to spend time with them rather than saying 'We're only going to stay with them 'til August and then we've got to go over to LA and do another album.' "It's nice to say we know we've got another few years."



Kylie Minogue to debut new song at Glastonbury?

Kylie Minogue reportedly plans to debut a new song during her Sunday afternoon Legend's slot at Glastonbury. The 50-year-old Australian pop princess has reportedly been working with songwriter and producer to the stars Eg White - who contributed to her last album 'Golden' - and the pair have reportedly registered a track titled 'A Rose Is A Rose', which could get its debut when the 'Dancing' hitmaker plays the festival at Worthy Farm in Somerset this summer. An insider told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column: "Kylie's been writing and recording new music for a while and its likely fans will hear some of the material when she plays Glastonbury in June. "She's just registered a song called 'A Rose Is A Rose' which she wrote with producer EG White. "He worked with Kylie on her most recent album and has written songs for big-name artists including Adele and Celine Dion." Kylie was scheduled to hit the stage at the music extravaganza in 2004, but was forced to pull out a month before when she discovered that she had breast cancer. However, more than a decade on, the 'Spinning Around' hitmaker will finally get her chance to perform at the five-day festival on the Pyramid stage on June 30. She wrote on Instagram: "I'm so thrilled to announce that I'll be playing the 'Legend slot' on Sunday 30th June at @glastofest 2019. It will be 14 years since I



Billie Eilish gets Glastonbury stage upgrade

Billie Eilish has been promoted to a bigger stage at Glastonbury because she is so popular. The 17-year-old pop phenomenon - who only released her debut album 'When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?' last month - will no longer be performing on the John Peel Stage as planned, as the Worthy Farm festival's co-organizer Emily Eavis has revealed she is "much too big" and they are currently trying to work out a slot on The Other Stage. Emily - who curates the line-up with her father Michael Eavis - told Jo Whaley on BBC Radio 2: "We're currently moving her - she's on John Peel at the moment but she's much too big, really, for the slot. "It's happened so quickly for Billie Eilish. It's been such an amazing year. It really is going to be her summer. "We are trying to give her a bigger stage where we can get a larger audience in there. "So we are going to move her on to The Other Stage and we are just working out exactly where that's going to be." The 'Bury Your Friend' hitmaker - who recently became the youngest female artist to score a number one album with her debut studio effort - might have become a huge star overnight, but she recently admitted she "can't" stay famous forever. The 'My Strange Addiction' singer wants her career to be successful but admitted she's looking for a "weird balance" because she also dreams of having a quiet "life" away from public scrutiny. Speaking about chats she's had with her brother and collaborator, Finneas O'Connell, she said: "We can't have this be the rest of our lives. We were talking about it the other day, we're just like, 'I'm 17, dude. I can't have my life exactly like this forever, and he can't either. He's just become an adult. He just got a house. He has a girlfriend and wants a dog. You know what I'm saying?' "It's a weird balance, because I want to grow in my life, and grow up and have a life. But I already have my career."



was originally meant to appear there and so much has happened up to now. "I can't wait to see you all there to share the special show." Kylie - who released her 14th studio album 'Golden' last year - made no secret of the fact that she'd love to perform at Glastonbury, and previously admitted that it would be a very "emotional" show for her to do. She said at the time: "When I was supposed to do it I think I would have been the first solo female to headline in however many years it was, so I was really proud of that at that time. Obviously it didn't happen. "So yes, it would be amazing and very emotional to be standing there and doing what I didn't get to do all those years ago, for sure." Kylie does have some experience when it comes to entertaining the Glastonbury crowd though, as she appeared on stage with the Scissor Sisters back in 2010. The 'Love At First Sight' singer follows in the footsteps of the likes of the Bee Gees star Barry Gibb, Dolly Parton, Neil Diamond and Lionel Richie in performing the Legend slot.

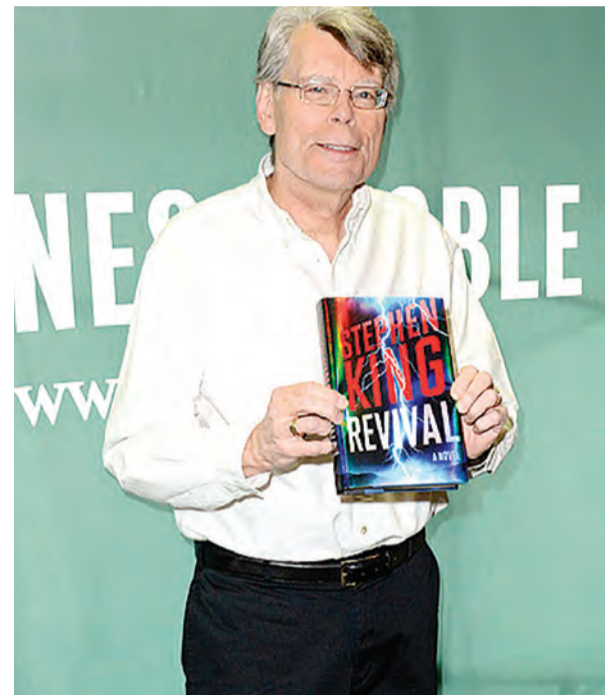
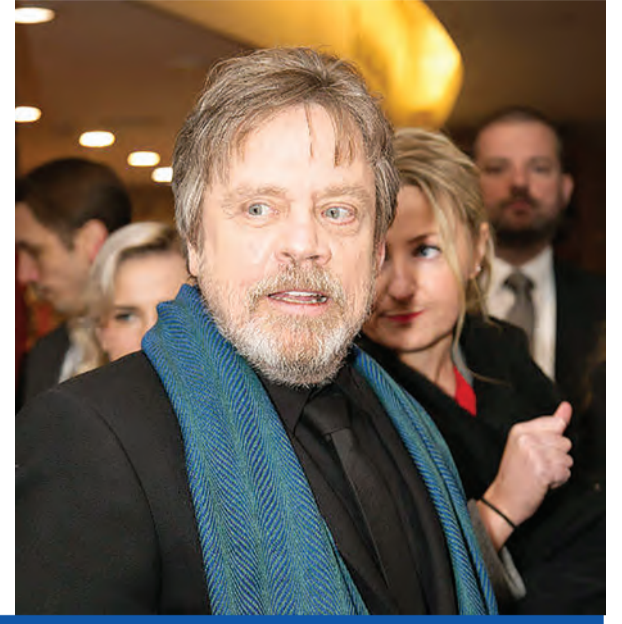
Lifestyle | Gossip

'CHILD'S PLAY' PRODUCER SAYS FILM HAS 'INTENSITY' AND 'GORE'

Child's Play' producer Seth Grahame-Smith had "big ambitions" for the film. The upcoming Orion Pictures revival of franchise - which will see Mark Hamill voice the iconic horror doll Chucky - promises "something different" to the original series and not only does it "really deliver" in the emotional stakes, there's also a lot of "intensity and gore". Speaking to CinemaBlend, the producer said: "We sort of lean into more of the AI/Kaslan story and hint at a Chucky that is driven by something different than he is in the original series, when he's Charles Lee Ray and he's

just a truly psychopathic killer in the body of a doll. "[Also, there is] the mother/son story, the emotional component of the movie, which I feel like the movie really delivers. "Then above all that, just the intensity, the gore, the fact that the movie is rated R, that it really does go there when it goes there. "I think the movie looks big, is much bigger than a lot of movies that are our size - very affordable movie, we are. But we had big ambitions. Those are, I'd say, the primary things we're going for." The forthcoming film will use the same plot as the original 1988 film - in which Chucky was voiced by Brad

Dourif - and star Aubrey Plaza, 34, as Karen Barclay a mother who unwittingly gives her son Andy (Gabriel Bateman) a toy doll that hides the soul of a serial killer. In the original film, Andy's mother gives him a talking Buddy doll, however, in the remake Buddy is an "Artificial Intelligence human companion" manufactured by the Kaslan Corp, the world's leading developer of interactive tech products for home and lifestyle.



Alex Ross Perry adapting King's Rest Stop

Alex Ross Perry is adapting Stephen King's short story 'Rest Stop' for the big screen. The 34-year-old indie filmmaker will be writing the screenplay for the iconic author's 2003 story, which was originally published in Esquire magazine and later featured in the horror writer's 2008 collection 'Just After Sunset'. The 'Her Smell' director will also helm the project, which follows author John Dykstra, who writes under the pen name Rick Hardin. The writer overhears a couple arguing in a rest stop bathroom and the sounds of domestic abuse - and although he is too timid to act, his tougher alter-ego Rick intervenes and attacks the man with a tire iron, sparking a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse. The latest of the legendary author's novels to be adapted for the big screen was the 1983 book 'Pet Sematary' which stars Jason Clarke as Dr. Louis Creed and Amy Seimetz as his wife Rachel. The story follows a family that discovers a mysterious graveyard in the woods behind their new home which has the ability to bring animals back to life. Jason, 49, previously admitted that he was "out of his mind" about certain scenes in the film - which has been directed by Kevin Kolsch - as they are not part of the book and he worried they could be "more wrong than right". When asked which scene he was most nervous about shooting, he said: "There are a couple of big sequences in there, there was a lot of pressure to try and find them and even in the fact that we didn't know what was the right version of them. "Then there's other scenes we shot and their not really in the book properly and we sort of are explaining what's going on which was terrifying. Because that's one of the big jumps in the film you can really lose the audience there you can make more wrong than right so I was out of my mind about those scenes."

Portman to narrate Dolphin Reef

Natalie Portman will narrate Disney's 'Dolphin Reef' movie. The 37-year-old actress is set to tell the story through the role of the narrator in the feature film, which is being created by a new Disney-branded film label called DisneyNature and will be shown on the company's upcoming direct-to-consumer streaming service, Disney+. According to The Hollywood Reporter, 'Dolphin Reef' is being directed by Keith Scholey and will follow a young Pacific bottlenose dolphin named Echo, who can't decide if it's time to grow up and take on new responsibilities, before realizing he can't resist the many adventures the ocean has to offer. Paul Baribault, vice president of DisneyNature, said in a statement: "DisneyNature takes audiences to spectacular and remote places to share remarkable wildlife stories captured by our award-winning film crews." 'Dolphin Reef' will join the line-up for streaming service Disney+, which is set to launch on November 12 as a family-friendly platform with an expansive library of Disney classics, including '101 Dalmatians', 'Bambi', 'Sleeping Beauty', 'Mary Poppins', and 'Fantasia'. The service will be home to 7,500 TV episodes and 500 movies, as well as original content such as 'The Mandalorian', 'High School Musical: The Musical: The Series' and the live-action remake of 'Lady and the Tramp'. The Hollywood Reporter also states Disney+ will feature movies and shows from Disney, Pixar, Marvel, Lucasfilm and National Geographic. For Natalie, the narration role comes as she's also set to appear on the service in her role as Padm  Amidala in the prequel trilogy of the 'Star Wars' franchise - which was created by Lucasfilm - and as Jane Foster in Marvel's 2011 movie 'Thor', and 2013 sequel 'Thor: The Dark World'.



Bad Boys for Life wraps up production

Bad Boys for Life' has wrapped production. The film's official Instagram account has shared a behind-the-scenes snap of Will Smith and co-star Martin Lawrence announcing that the long-awaited third installment of the much-loved buddy cop franchise has finished filming. The 'Bad Boys' Instagram page posted a photo of the pair sat on chairs in front of a fence holding up umbrellas with the caption: "That's a wrap. #BadBoysForLife 1.17.20 (sic)" Will and Martin are back as their respective alter egos Detectives Mike Lowry and Marcus Burnett, whom they first portrayed in 1995 film 'Bad Boys' and 2003 sequel 'Bad Boys II'. The all-star cast will also include the likes of DJ Khaled, Vanessa Hudgens, Alexander Ludwig, Charles Melton, Jacob Scipio, and Paola Nunez. Scipio is set

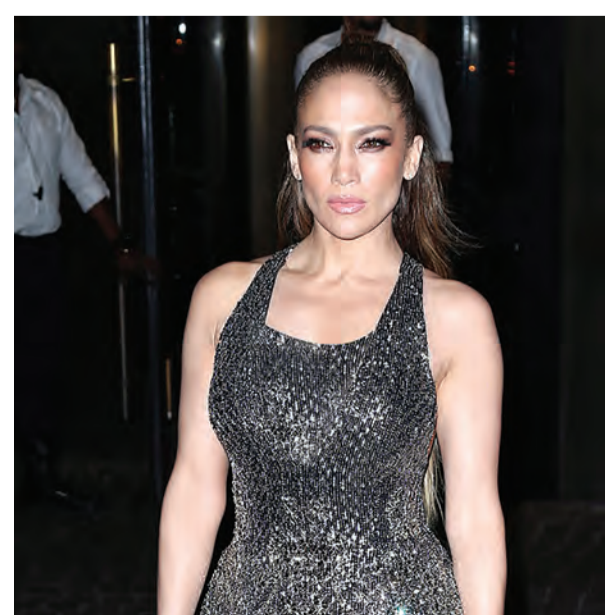
to portray the head of a drug cartel, Armando Armas, who is on a mission to take down Lowry. Nunez is play the Miami Police Department's elite AMMO team's newly recruited head, criminal psychologist Rite, who is also a former love interest of Lowry. A description of the synopsis reads: "The new installment centers on the Miami PD and its elite AMMO team's attempt to take down Armando Armas (Scipio), head of a drug cartel. "Armando is a cold-blooded killer with a vicious, taunting nature. "He is committed to the work of the cartel and is dispatched by his mother to kill Mike (Smith). (Paola) Nunez will take on the role of Rite, the tough and funny criminal psychologist who is the newly appointed head of AMMO and Mike's former girlfriend - and the one who got away."



Lopez and Wilson to play couple in Marry Me

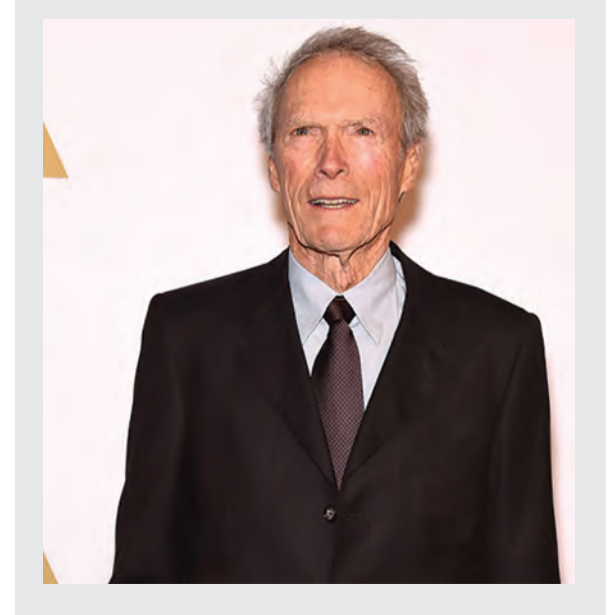
Jennifer Lopez and Owen Wilson are set to couple up in the new rom-com 'Marry Me'. The 49-year-old singer-and-actress is teaming up with STX Entertainment - the company behind the 'Medicine' singer's last film 'Second Act' - for the forthcoming flick, which has been compared to

'Notting Hill' and 'The Proposal'. Jennifer - who recently got engaged in real life to baseball star Alex Rodriguez - will play a pop star who marries a stranger (Owen) after finding out her fiance has cheated on her. The pair meet after the singer holds a 'marry me' sign at one of her concerts. STX chairman Adam Fogelson commented on 'Marry Me' star Owen's addition to the movie: "Owen is a hilarious and charismatic addition to this film, and the perfect person to play opposite Jen in a role that was quite literally made for her." It's not the first time Jennifer and Owen, 50, have starred alongside one another. The pair appeared in the 1997 horror 'Anaconda' together, along with the likes of Ice Cube and Jon Voight. Jennifer is also producing 'Marry Me' alongside Elaine Goldsmith Thomas and Benny Media. The trio also worked on last year's 'Second Act'. According to Variety, 'Marry Me' will begin filming in the autumn. Meanwhile, Jennifer previously admitted she is "quite particular" about the roles she takes on. She said: "I'm quite particular. I've been offered a couple of movies over the past couple of years but unless it's the right thing and I get the right types of opportunities, I'd rather create them. That's mine and [producing partner] Elaine Goldsmith-Thomas' mantra. We don't force things, but we don't wait around either ... If no one is giving us the stories that we want to tell, then we'll create them ourselves."



Eastwood to direct The Ballad Of Richard Jewell?

Clint Eastwood has reportedly held talks about directing 'The Ballad Of Richard Jewell'. The 88-year-old icon has been in negotiations with Disney/Fox about his potential involvement with the project, which focuses on the Olympic Park bombing during the 1996 Atlanta Games. The movie specifically centers on the story of a security guard whose life is transformed after the police leaked that he was a suspect in the incident, according to Deadline. Jewell - who found a suspicious backpack in the Olympic Park, before clearing the area and saving lives - quickly went from being considered a hero, to one of the most disliked people in the US. The script has been penned by Billy Ray, who previously wrote 2013's 'Captain Phillips'. Meanwhile, Clint previously insisted he doesn't have any intention to retire from the movie business, although he is planning to be more selective about his projects in the coming years. He explained: "Maybe I just don't want a certain volume of work, but, no, it hasn't lessened. I love what I do... "I'll probably keep on going. I feel good, but it depends on material. I probably wouldn't do something just because it was marginal - I have to kind of think it has some validity and has some relationship to today."



Damon Albarn: Music needs to be political



Damon Albarn says music "needs" to be political. The Blur and Gorillaz rocker has been known to inject political messages into his songs both in his groups and as a solo artist, and has said there's a need for music to have a strong message because "selfie music" isn't "sustainable". When asked about the influx of political songs in the wake of several recent political events, Damon said: "It needs to - it really, really needs to. The selfie music is not sustainable. Have I made a selfie tune? I probably tried to but my innate obtuse nature prevented me from doing it properly." Damon also spoke about his love of travelling, and said seeing the world is important as it allows people to "connect with the world" and become less "isolated in their own little bubble". Speaking on BBC 6 Music's 'The Leisure Society', he said: "[Travel is] really important and I honestly feel that we could definitely tone down the extremist views people seem to behold at the moment if they weren't so isolated in their own little bubble. "The internet has given this weird access to everyone to feel like they're informed and they connect with the world but they're not physically going to the places. If you physically see the bigger picture, not just the harsh edit of what something is, and you see the human side of what it actually is, you have such a different view." Meanwhile, the 'Parklife' hitmaker recently said he plans on disappearing from the pop scene "for a few years" to head to Africa to work on a new project. The 50-year-old singer said: I'm doing this really fascinating thing in west Africa based on the poem of Sundiata. "Sort of disappear from pop music and go a bit into new territory for a few years." —Bang Showbiz

Lifestyle | Movies



US actor Robert Downey Jr arrives for the World premiere of Marvel Studios' 'Avengers: Endgame' at the Los Angeles Convention Center on Monday in Los Angeles.



(From left) Actor Matt Damon, his wife Luciana Barroso, Samantha Hemsworth and her husband actor Luke Hemsworth.



Chris Hemsworth attends the world premiere of Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures "Avengers: Endgame". — AFP photos

Hollywood celebrates the finale of the 'Avengers' movies

Robert Downey Jr, Chris Hemsworth and other members of the Avengers superhero team on Monday celebrated the final chapter in a 22-movie saga that ranks as the movie industry's highest-grossing franchise of all time. At a lavish premiere in Los Angeles, hundreds of industry VIPs, cast members, fans and media watched the first showing of "Avengers: Endgame," the three-hour action spectacle that has been held tightly under wraps. The movie begins rolling out in theaters around the world today.

Downey Jr (Iron Man), Hemsworth (Thor), Scarlett Johansson (Black Widow), Chris Evans (Captain America) and others walked a purple carpet underneath a giant, spinning Avengers logo set up inside the Los Angeles Convention Center. A cavernous exhibit hall was turned into a movie theater with a large screen and stadium-style seating. "I'm excited that I'm finally going to get to see the movie," said Paul Rudd, who plays Ant-Man and, like other cast members, had not seen the finished film due to Marvel's secrecy around the project.

Rudd said he had been traveling the world to promote the movie and "trying to talk about it the best we can, and to do all of that without having seen the film is a strange experience. So now, to finally see the movie is great." Other A-list stars packed the premiere, including Chris Hemsworth's brother Liam and his wife Miley Cyrus, and Matt Damon, who had a cameo in 2017 film "Thor: Ragnarok."

"Endgame" concludes the story of the six original Avengers in Marvel's cinematic universe - Iron Man, Captain America, Black Widow, Hawkeye, Hulk and Thor. It picks up after last year's "Avengers: Infinity War" left fans hanging when many of the Marvel heroes seemed to turn to dust at the hand of the villain Thanos, played by Josh Brolin. In "Endgame," the surviving superheroes plot to kill Thanos and try to undo his damage. After the screening, the stars gathered on stage and hugged. Evans told the crowd that he "cried like six times" while watching the film. "I cried more than six times, Chris," Hemsworth said.

Mark Ruffalo, who plays the Hulk, said working on the films had been "the trip of a lifetime". The 21 previous movies from the Walt Disney Co-owned Marvel studio are the highest-grossing franchise in film history, generating more than \$18.6 billion at global box offices since 2007.

"Endgame" may set an opening weekend record in the domestic market, according to box office analysts. "Infinity War" holds the current record of \$257.7 million over its first three days in the United States and Canada. Initial reactions to "Endgame" were positive. Erik Davis, managing editor at Fandango, called the movie a "masterful epic." "If Infinity War is the brawn, Endgame is the brains. And wow, what an ending!" Davis wrote on Twitter. While "Endgame" wraps up the "Avengers" story, many Marvel characters will live on in future movies. Spider-Man, for example, returns to the big screen in July in "Spider-Man: Far from Home." A "Black Panther" sequel is also in the works. "There will be new beginnings," said Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige. "There will be new stories. There will be new ways of doing it, but for now the focus is on the endgame." — Reuters



Liam Hemsworth and Miley Cyrus.



Australian actor Chris Hemsworth and his wife Spanish actress Elsa Pataky.



US actress Scarlett Johansson and US actor Colin Jost.



US actor Chris Evans



US actress Brie Larson



US actress Danai Gurira



US actor Paul Rudd.

Paltrow jokes she's the 'grandma' of MCU

Gwyneth Paltrow feels like "the grandma" of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The 46-year-old actress - who has played the girlfriend of Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr), Pepper Potts, in the movie series since the first 'Iron Man' movie back in 2008 - joked that she and her co-star 54-year-old co-star are the "grandparents" of the franchise and insisted she had "no idea" the MCU would go on for as long as it has. Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight' at the 'Avengers: Endgame' world premiere in Los Angeles on Monday she said: "It's pretty cool, you know?"

"I think when we did [the first] 'Iron Man', Marvel had no idea what it would be, and this level of success it would have, and all the other movies that would come out of it, so it's pretty cool. "I mean yeah, we kind of feel like the parents or grandparents at this point, but it's pretty awesome."

'Avengers: Endgame' is set to wrap up phase three of the MCU and see an end to 21 films and 11 franchises taking place over the course of a decade and Gwyneth explained that although she would

"always" be willing to return to the MCU - she feels she's "off to other Marvel pastures" adding that "they don't tell me anything". She quipped: "I thought we were done? Look I would always [come back] if they needed me, but I think, you know, the movie is called Endgame. "I feel like maybe we're off to other Marvel pastures, I don't really know, they don't tell me anything. And all the scripts are redacted and everything, so it's a very secret process." — Bang Showbiz



US actress Gwyneth Paltrow

Ruffalo got 'dummy script' for Avengers: Endgame

Mark Ruffalo got a "dummy script" for 'Avengers: Endgame'. The 51-year-old actor - who plays Bruce Banner and his alter-ego The Hulk in the Marvel Cinematic Universe films - admitted that in order to avoid spoilers, directors Joe and Anthony Russo gave him a script with fake scenes in it so he didn't accidentally let any details of the highly-anticipated film slip. Speaking to Entertainment Tonight at the 'Avengers: Endgame' world premiere in Los Angeles on Monday he said: "I got a script, but it was a dummy. There were scenes in there that I thought we were shooting that nobody ever shot." Mark went on to insist that he's been "dying" to see the film - which will wrap up phase three of the MCU and see an end to 21 films and 11 franchises taking place over the course of a decade - because he held off seeing previews because he wanted to "experience" the screening in a full cinema.

"I've been dying to see it. We had a chance to see it yesterday, but I held off because I want to see it with an audience, I want to be in that experience with you

guys. Yeah, that's when it really means something." Anthony, 49, insisted that he and his brother Joe feel they're doing the cast a "favor" with the fake scripts by making it easier to keep secrets. He explained: "It's like doing them a favor, because it's hard to keep secrets, it's hard to keep your mouth closed. "We spend all day, every day, doing this for like, the past couple years. So it's hard not to talk about what you spend all your time doing. It's a little bit of a mercy we give them by not giving them too much information." — Bang Showbiz



US actor Mark Ruffalo

Kevin Feige 'got chills' when Avengers assembled for first time

Kevin Feige says he "got chills" when the Avengers assembled for the first time. 'Avengers: Endgame' is released Thursday and will wrap up 21 films and 11 franchises taking place over a decade, and will complete phase three of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The Marvel Studios President explained that he knew the franchise would be a success while making 2012's 'The Avengers' - when the movies heroes were brought together for the first time - and praised the film's director Joss Whedon for "pulling it off" and creating an "iconic moment" in cinema.

Speaking in a video for Rotten Tomatoes, he said: "That shot, the shot of all the Avengers assembling

for the first time, was so much spectacle, so many visual effects "It was filmed in an open air warehouse in New Mexico, not in New York. There was nothing but green screen behind them. "Hulk wasn't in the shot. Iron Man wasn't in the shot because they were CG and put in later, but it looked pretty cool and Joss had a great vision for it. "Cut too many months later, the visual effects are coming together, it's starting to look cool, Iron Man's now landing, Hulk's there." But the moment when I realized that this could be an iconic moment not just for the MCU, but for these kinds of films, was on the mix stage. — Bang Showbiz



(From left) Anthony Russo, Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige and Joe Russo.

Classifieds

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

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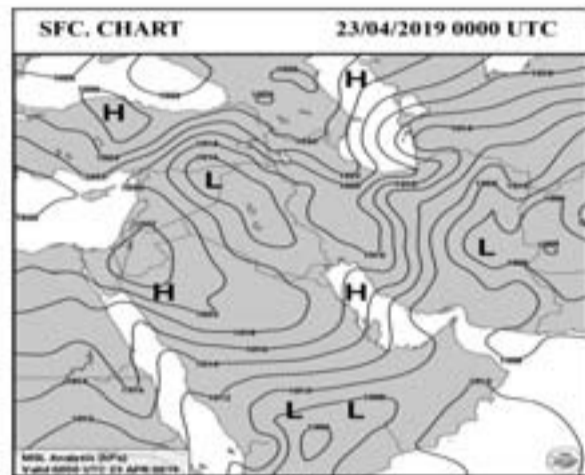
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Warm with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Cool with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING: No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	29 °C	19 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	28 °C	12 °C
ABDALY	28 °C	11 °C
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C
JAHRA	29 °C	14 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	27 °C	18 °C
SALMIYAH	29 °C	20 °C
AHMADI	27 °C	18 °C
NUWAISIB	27 °C	13 °C
WAFRA	28 °C	11 °C
SALMY	26 °C	11 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	04/24	Warm and rising dust over open areas	28 °C	16 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Thursday	04/25	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear	31 °C	16 °C	NW	15 - 42 km/h
Friday	04/26	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear	32 °C	18 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Saturday	04/27	Relatively hot and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered rain	32 °C	19 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:49
Sunrise	05:13
Zuhr	11:46
Asr	15:22
Sunset	18:19
Isha	19:41

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	25 °C
MIN. Temp.	18 °C
MAX. RH	53 %
MIN. RH	12 %
MAX. Wind	N 64 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UPO 2019/04/23 02:34 UTC V1.00 T2.4 2-1 ع ٤ ٤

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

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Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
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American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22087426
FlyDubai	22924455
Qatar Airways	22414400
KLM	22423888
Royal Jordanian	22425747
British Airways	22418064/5/6
Air France	22425635
Emirates	22430224
Air India	22921555
Air India EXPRESS	22456700
Sri Lanka Airlines	22438185/4
Egypt Air	22424444
Swiss Air	22421578
Saudia	22421516
Middle East Airlines	22426306
Lufthansa	22423073
PIA	22422493
Bangladesh Airlines	22421044
Indian Airlines	22452977/8
Oman Air	22456700
Turkish Airlines	22958787
Aeroflot	22453820/1
	22404838/9

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 24/4/2019				Departure Flights on Wednesday 24/4/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	212	Jeddah	13:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	RBG	213	Sohag	13:55
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	JZR	152	Mashhad	14:05
KAC	102	London	00:50	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	364	Colombo	14:35
ETH	3717	LGG	02:00	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:35
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	JZR	222	Riyadh	14:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KAC	618	Doha	14:50
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KAC	562	Amman	14:50
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:50
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	KAC	512	Mashhad	14:55
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	118	New York	15:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:10
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20
JZR	722	Alexandria	03:50	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
PIA	239	Sialkot	04:00	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	KAC	546	Cairo	15:50
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	SVA	504	Madinah	16:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FDB	051	Dubai	16:10
KAC	796	Madinah	04:25	JZR	732	Cairo	16:10
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:30	KAC	502	Beirut	16:15
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	SAW	705	Dammam	17:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	JZR	116	Doha	17:05
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	522	Al Najaf	17:10
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:45	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	154	Mashhad	05:50	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:35
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	JZR	124	Dubai	17:40
BAW	157	London	06:10	JZR	104	Bahrain	18:00
KAC	206	Lahore	06:15	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	302	Istanbul	18:20
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	RJA	640	Amman	19:05
KAC	358	Kochi	07:10	FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	KAC	744	Dammam	19:25
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	166	Rome	20:00
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KAC	104	London	20:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KNE	381	Taif	20:00
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:15	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	126	Dubai	20:20
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	620	Doha	20:30
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
IAW	157B	Al Najaf	10:00	RBG	217	Asyut	20:55
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10
JZR	216	Jeddah	10:55	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
JZR	708	Luxor	10:55	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	THY	764	Istanbul	21:30
UAE	2541	Dubai	11:00	KAC	616	Bahrain	21:40
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	KAC	564	Amman	21:50
AHY	119	Baku	12:05	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	JAV	621	Amman	22:15
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:20
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:30
CLX	7912	Luxembourg	12:45	SVA	502	Jeddah	22:45
IAW	157C	Al Najaf	12:55	JZR	128	Dubai	22:50
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	MSC	411	Asyut	23:15
				MSR	614	Cairo	23:30
				FDB	071	Dubai	23:35

Modi among tens of millions voting on 'Super Tuesday'

AHMEDABAD, India: Tens of millions of Indians, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, voted on India's "Super Tuesday" in the latest round of polls when the biggest number of seats are decided in the country's marathon election. Nearly 190 million voters were eligible to vote on 117 seats spread across 15 Indian states, stretching from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean, in the third of the seven phases of the mega polls. Heavy security has been put in place, with violent clashes erupting between rival groups in eastern India's West Bengal state, killing one political worker.

State election official Amit Yyoti Bhattaharya told AFP that a 30-year-old man was killed in the clashes near a polling booth in Murshidabad region. Two more people were injured elsewhere in the state in similar clashes. Suspected Maoists also detonated an improvised explosive device in neighboring Jharkhand state without causing any damage.

After casting his ballot in his home state of Gujarat, which he ruled for over a decade before leading his party to national power in 2014, Modi compared the experience of voting to the Hindu practice of cleansing sins by bathing in the Ganges river. "By voting, I feel the same

sense of purity that one gets by taking a bath at the Kumbh festival," he said. The nationalist leader, who is seeking a second term, met his 98-year-old mother and then waved to supporters from an open top car that took him to vote in Ahmedabad, Gujarat's main city. His rightwing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is considered the frontrunner in the vote but faces a significant challenge from regional parties and lead opposition Congress party of Rahul Gandhi. Modi has made national security and fighting terrorism his main campaign theme to blunt opposition attacks on his handling of the economy.

Many see the election as a referendum on his five-year rule - which has seen impressive economic growth but not the jobs that the BJP promised. Gujarat sends 26 lawmakers to the Indian parliament and the right-wing BJP won all of those seats in 2014. Modi voted in the constituency where his close associate Amit Shah, the BJP president and key powerbroker, is contesting his maiden election. Gandhi is standing in Wayanad in Kerala state, taking a risk as south India is considered a stronghold of regional parties. The opposition party leader says contesting Wayanad is a sign of his commitment to southern India. His opponents say it shows he fears defeat in his tradition-

al seat in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Under Indian election law, candidates can contest two seats, though they can only keep one if they win both. Gandhi is also on the ballot for Amethi in Uttar Pradesh.

An estimated 60 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot in the third round, according to election authorities, lower than the 70 percent participation in the poll's two previous phases this month. Authorities bolstered security in the restive Kashmir valley, where anti-India sentiment and armed militancy often overshadow polling. Roughly 10 percent of voters turned out in the Anantnag constituency, where polls were open on a truncated schedule for security reasons.

Election results are to be released on May 23 and analysts say Modi is likely to see a repeat of the BJP's 2014 performance, when the party won 282 seats. Modi has capitalized on nationalist fervor that followed India's air strikes on Pakistan in February in a dispute over Kashmir. India accused its neighbor of harboring a militant group that claimed a deadly suicide bombing in Kashmir. The fractured opposition, led by Congress, has sought to attack the government over employment, the economy and a debt crisis for Indian farmers. — AFP



AHMEDABAD: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi displays his ink-marked finger after casting his vote yesterday. — AFP

Egypt hosts summit on crises in Sudan, Libya

CAIRO: Egypt hosted African leaders for emergency talks yesterday on the upheavals in Sudan and Libya, as President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi warned against "a slide into chaos". Sisi called for a coherent regional response, as protesters in Khartoum keep up demands for a civilian government and Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar's forces bear down on Tripoli. The leaders in Cairo urged Sudan's military rulers, who took power after toppling longtime president Omar Al-Bashir, to implement "peaceful, organized and democratic transition measures" within three months, the Egyptian presidency said.

But they also agreed on "the need for more time" for a transition, urging the African Union to extend its end of April deadline for the ruling military council to hand power to civilians or face suspension from the bloc. An extension would

ease international pressure on the council to yield power. Sudan's army toppled Bashir on April 11, but protesters have continued to hold mass rallies and world powers have backed their calls for a swift transition to a non-military government - demands the council has so far resisted.

Addressing the Sudan meeting, Sisi called for "African solutions to African problems" and urged the country's political actors to "safeguard the state's institutions... in order to prevent a slide into chaos". Last month, he warned against the dangers created by protests, without explicitly naming Sudan or Algeria, where demonstrations have toppled another long-time leader, president Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

The Egyptian president also called on the international community to "shoulder the pressing economic burden" facing Sudan. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Sunday announced three billion dollars in financial aid for Khartoum. The AU suspended both Egypt and the Central African Republic in 2013 following coups in both countries. Both have since had their membership restored. It has echoed Sudanese



CAIRO: A handout picture shows Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (center) hosting African leaders for summit talks on the upheavals in Sudan and Libya yesterday. — AFP

protesters' demands, saying "a military-led transition would be completely contrary to the aspirations of the people of Sudan". Attending the Cairo talks were senior officials from across the continent, including South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

The summits in Cairo were the first to be convened by African leaders on the

crises in Sudan and Libya. The summit on Libya would focus on "relaunching a political process... (and) the elimination of terrorism", Egypt's presidency said. Strongman Haftar's self-styled Libyan National Army launched an offensive against Tripoli, the seat of the internationally recognized unity government, on April 4. — AFP

Malawi to pilot groundbreaking malaria vaccine

LILONGWE, Malawi: Malawi will yesterday spearhead large scale pilot tests for the world's most advanced experimental malaria vaccine in a bid to prevent the disease that kills hundreds of thousands across Africa each year. After more than three decades in development and almost \$1 billion in investment, the cutting-edge trial will be rolled out in Malawi's capital Lilongwe this week and then in Kenya and Ghana next week. It aims to immunize 120,000 children aged two years and under to assess the effectiveness of the pilot vaccine and whether the delivery process is feasible.

Four successive doses must be administered on a strict timetable for it to work. Trade-named Mosquirix, the drug has been developed by British pharmaceutical

giant GlaxoSmithKline in partnership with the PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative. It passed previous scientific testing - including five years of clinical trials on 15,000 people in seven countries - and was approved for the pilot program in 2015. Malaria episodes reduced by 40 percent in the trials.

Although the potential vaccine will not give full protection against the mosquito-borne disease, it is the furthest along in development and so far the most effective. Scientists say if it was rolled out on a large scale it could save hundreds of thousands of lives. The World Health Organization (WHO) believes that the new vaccine brings a key new tool beyond mosquito nets, insecticides and drugs in the battle against the disease. Malaria killed 435,000 people in 2017. The majority of them were children under five in Africa.

"Malaria can kill a child in less than 24 hours," said researcher Tsungangwe Mvalo, a paediatrician at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Project-Malawi in Lilongwe. "And even if the child survives, malaria can impact every organ, causing brain injury or even kidney issues. Prevention is better than treatment."

Malaria is spread to people through the bites of infect-



LILONGWE: Mothers wait for their sick babies to receive treatment at the beginning of the malaria vaccine implementation pilot program at Mitundu Community hospital yesterday. — AFP

ed female anopheles mosquitoes. WHO's latest report on malaria showed that the number of cases climbed to 219 million in 2017, two million higher than 2016. — AFP

Self-powered 'pacemaker for...'

Continued from Page 1

Now researchers in China and the United States believe they have successfully trialed a self-powered pacemaker in adult pigs - an animal remarkably physiologically similar to humans. The animals selected suffered from irregular heartbeat similar to human pacemaker patients. The team developed an implantable generator that sits on the surface of the heart and bends with each heartbeat, thereby generating electricity from kinetic energy.

"(The pacemaker) was fully implanted in adult pigs and all of the energy for cardiac pacing is reclaimed from the heart-beating energy of the same animal," Zhou Li, from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and lead study author, told AFP. When they powered up the

devices they found that the pigs' irregular heartbeat was corrected. Furthermore, the energy retained from every heartbeat turned out to be higher than the energy demands of most current pacemakers in humans, opening the door to someday giving patients a permanent power source for their implants.

"It could be an 'implant for life'," said Zhou. "This is our aim and the final goal of the scientific research in the field." The team stressed however that more work was needed to determine the long-term safety and durability of the devices before human versions could be developed. Zhou said the self-powering technology could also have a range of applications in areas such as self-charging devices and "smart" clothing.

Tim Chico, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and Honorary Consultant Cardiologist, University of Sheffield, who was not involved in the research, called the experiment "very encouraging". "This study was performed in pigs, whose hearts are the same size as humans, and so are often used to test devices or treatments before use in man," he said. The study was published in the journal Nature Communications. — AFP

over their passports to the hotel authorities, who reportedly put them in a bag. According to sources, the pilgrims were informed by the tour operator on April 9 that it had lost their passports. To their dismay, they were told to be prepared to travel to Jeddah to apply for new documents. Many pilgrims called their relatives in Kuwait and told them their passports were lost due to "gross negligence of the hotel staff". "We were shocked to learn that they had misplaced our passports," one of the pilgrims said.

Cheruthurthy said they were stressed and distraught since they learned about the loss, but many people were there to help them. "Indian associations like OICC Jeddah and KMCC Makkah took painstaking efforts in sending us back to Kuwait," he said. He also praised Indian Embassy officials in Jeddah who worked relentlessly for the pilgrims to get their new passports and travel documents.

MPs file to grill info minister...

Continued from Page 1

At the ministry, the grilling charges that the minister committed financial violations by squandering public funds, and claims irregularities in appointments and promotions. It also charges Jabri of committing wide ranging violations at the agricultural authority that includes unfair

IS claims Lanka blasts, releases...

Continued from Page 1

The one man who displayed his bearded face also appeared to be carrying an assault rifle.

Amaq later released a video of the eight fighters pledging allegiance to IS supreme Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi in Arabic, a black IS flag hanging in the background. The authenticity of the image and video could not be independently verified and the reason for the discrepancy in the reported number of attackers was not immediately clear. Sunday's bombings targeting churches and high-end hotels are among the deadliest such attacks worldwide since the 2001 strikes on the United States.

The Sri Lankan government yesterday blamed the little-known National Thowheeth Jama'ath (NTJ) Islamist group for the blasts, saying they were carried out in retaliation for last month's attacks on two mosques in New Zealand. The presidency cited intelligence saying "international terror groups" were back-

Kushner: Mideast plan after Ramadan

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner said yesterday he would present his long-awaited Middle East peace proposal around June and that it would include a "robust business plan" for the Palestinians. Kushner, speaking at a forum of Time magazine, said he had hoped to offer the proposal late last year but that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had called elections and still needs time to form a coalition.

"Once that's done we'll probably be in the middle of Ramadan, so we'll wait until after Ramadan and then we'll put our plan out," said Kushner, a senior advisor to Trump, referring to the Muslim fasting month which ends in early June. Kushner's plan has already been met with deep skepticism from the Palestinians, who say Trump cannot be an honest broker after he took the landmark step of recognizing bitterly disputed Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

But Kushner, whose own role has been questioned due to his longstanding family ties with Netanyahu, said he remained hopeful that his "unconventional approach" would bear fruit. "I think that if people focus on the old traditional talking points we will never make progress," he said. He declined to answer if the plan would include longstanding US support for a Palestinian state, after hints by the administration that it would not, but said it would include investment to boost the Palestinian economy.

"Our focus is really on the bottom up, which is how do you make the lives of the Palestinian people better, what can you resolve to allow these areas to become more investable?" he said. "We deal with all the core status issues because you have to do it, but we've also built a robust business plan for the whole region," he added.

'Compromises for both'

Kushner also said the plan would address Israel's concerns over security. "I think that what we do is something that allows for Israel to maintain security, but there will be tough compromises for both," he said. Netanyahu in his election campaign vowed to annex parts of the West Bank where Israeli settlers live, a prospect that would doom longstanding Palestinian hopes of a state. The Israeli leader said yesterday he plans to name a new settlement in the occupied Golan Heights after Trump in appreciation of his recognition of Israel's claim of sovereignty there. — AFP

distribution of state land parcels, obstructing investigation into alleged corruption at the authority and stripping the authority head of all his powers.

At the sports authority, the minister is accused of misusing his powers. The grilling also accuses the minister of failing to curb corruption and violations at all the three bodies under his supervision to the extent that remarks by the Audit Bureau about these bodies increased markedly after the minister took over. The grilling could end in a no-confidence vote against the minister, which if passed, would mean an automatic dismissal. Adasani hoped the minister meets the same fate as his two predecessors, who were forced to resign following grillings.

ing Sri Lankan extremists.

Police sources told AFP yesterday that two Muslim brothers - sons of a wealthy Colombo spice trader - were among the perpetrators of the attacks. They blew themselves up as guests queued for breakfast at the Shangri-La and Cinnamon Grand hotels in the capital, the source said. The pair were key members of the NTJ, which the government has previously blamed for defacing Buddhist statues, according to an investigation officer.

The IS statement yesterday said three fighters it named as Abu Obeidah, Abu Baraa and Abu Moukhtar were behind the attacks on the Shangri-La, Cinnamon Grand and Kingsbury hotels. Three other fighters it named as Abu Hamza, Abu Khalil and Abu Mohammad carried out attacks on churches in the cities of Colombo, Negombo, and Batticaloa, it said. The seventh fighter, Abu Abdullah, killed three police officers in an attack in a Colombo suburb, it said.

Yesterday's claim comes one month after a Kurdish-led Syrian force announced the fall of IS' self-declared "caliphate", after routing militants from their last holdout in east Syria with backing from a US-led coalition. The jihadists retain a global network of recruits and have claimed attacks in Iraq, Syria and beyond. On Sunday, IS claimed responsibility for an attack that killed 10 people in the Afghan capital Kabul the previous day. — AFP

Stranded umrah pilgrims back...

Continued from Page 1

The 52-member expatriate group, consisting of men, women and children, traveled to the kingdom on April 3 by bus from Kuwait on a weeklong package. The expats, all holding valid work visas in Kuwait, included 43 Indians, five Egyptians, three Bangladeshis and one Pakistani. Twenty-one of the pilgrims are from the Indian state of Kerala.

Arriving at their hotel in Makkah, the pilgrims handed

Sports

Harper tossed as New York Mets beat Philadelphia Phillies 5-1

Arenado notches hit number 1,000 as Rockies beat Nationals

NEW YORK: Jeff McNeil had two hits, including a solo home run, to lift the host New York Mets past the Philadelphia Phillies 5-1 on Monday in a game that saw Phillies right fielder Bryce Harper get ejected while arguing from the dugout. Mets starter Steven Matz (2-1) was effective, allowing three hits and one run in six innings. He struck out six and walked two. It was a completely different outcome from his last start against the Phillies in which he faced eight batters and failed to record an out on April 16. Rhys Hoskins ripped a solo homer for the Phillies. Cesar Hernandez had Philadelphia's only other two hits in the game, as the Phillies failed to support starter Jake Arrieta (3-2). The right-hander threw six-plus innings and gave up seven hits and four runs (three earned). He fanned seven and walked one. In a bizarre circumstance, Harper was tossed with two outs in the fourth. After a questionable called strike to Hernandez, plate umpire Mark Carlson motioned to the dugout and ejected Harper for arguing balls and strikes. Harper had reached base in all of his previous 21 games with the Phillies before going 0-for-2 with two strikeouts and being ejected.

YANKEES 4, ANGELS 3 (14 INNINGS)

Gio Urshela's two-out RBI single in the top of the 14th inning lifted New York to a win over Los Angeles in Anaheim, Calif. Angels reliever Luke Bard actually struck out the first three batters of the inning, but the first-Gleyber Torres-reached when strike three was in the dirt and got away from catcher Jonathan Lucroy. Lucroy retrieved the ball in time to get Torres at first, but his throw sailed over first baseman Albert Pujols' head for an error. Torres moved to second on a wild pitch and scored on Urshela's single. Bard (0-1) then struck out Kyle Higashioka to end the inning, his fourth strikeout of the inning. Jonathan Holder (1-0) pitched two scoreless innings to get the win.

A'S 6, RANGERS 1

Stephen Piscotty drove in three runs with a home run, a single and a sacrifice fly, and Chris Bassitt threw five shutout innings in his season debut as host Oakland eased past Texas. Bassitt (1-0), injured when hit in the knee by a line drive in an exhibition game in Japan, was brilliant in his first appearance this season, shutting out the Rangers on two hits over five innings. He walked four and struck out seven. Texas starter Mike Minor (2-2) went six innings, giving up four runs and four hits. He walked three and struck out four. Bassitt was pulled after 92 pitches, handing the ball off to A's relievers Ryan Dull, J.B. Wendelken, Joakim Soria and Fernando Rodney, who combined to limit Texas to one run and four hits over the last four innings.

ROCKIES 7, NATIONALS 5

Nolan Arenado homered and finished with three hits—including the 1,000th of his career—while Mark Reynolds and Raimel Tapia also went deep to lead Colorado past Washington in Denver. Trevor Story had two hits and Seungwhan Oh (1-0) pitched an inning of relief for the victory. Colorado has won seven of its past eight following an eight-game losing streak. Wade Davis pitched the ninth inning for his second save. Arenado's milestone hit came leading off the seventh inning, when he hit his fourth home run of the season off reliever Wander Suero (1-2) to make it 6-5. Brian Dozier homered, and Howie Kendrick drove in two for the Nationals.

CARDINALS 13, BREWERS 5

Dexter Fowler matched his career high with four hits, drove in four runs and scored three to help St. Louis throttle visiting Milwaukee in the opener of the three-game series. Paul Goldschmidt had three hits and three RBIs, and Jose Martinez, Paul DeJong and Matt Carpenter contributed two hits each for St. Louis, which blew the game open with seven runs in the seventh inning. Cardinals right-hander Jack Flaherty (2-1) made his third start of the season against the Brewers and delivered his longest outing, going six innings and giving up four runs and three hits, all homers. He struck out a season-high 10 and walked one. Milwaukee's Adrian Houser (0-1), making his first major league start, went four-plus innings and gave up five runs on nine hits.

TWINS 9, ASTROS 5

Jorge Polanco recorded his second four-hit game of the season, and he belted a two-run, two-out homer in the eighth inning to carry Minnesota to victory in the opener of a three-game series in Houston. The Twins, winners of five of their past six, scored two in the first and another run in the second—Jason Castro's first home run of the season leading off the frame—off Brad Peacock (2-1). Minnesota's Jake Odorizzi (2-2) limited the Astros to two runs on eight hits over 5 2/3 innings, striking out two without walking a batter. Houston trailed 7-1 before getting a solo homer from Michael Brantley in the sixth inning and a three-run blast from Carlos Correa in the seventh, but like Sunday night (when Houston rallied from a nine-run deficit and loaded the bases with two outs in the ninth inning before falling 11-10), the Astros couldn't complete the comeback.

RAYS 6, ROYALS 3

Tampa Bay hit for the cycle in the bottom of the



NEW YORK: Steven Matz #32 of the New York Mets pitches against the Philadelphia Phillies during their game at Citi Field in New York City. —AFP

seventh, scoring three runs to emerge with a win over visiting Kansas City. Mike Zunino hit a 425-foot, two-run home run to dead center for the key hit in the inning. Wilmer Font (1-0) recorded the final out of the seventh and picked up the victory for the Rays, who snapped a four-game losing streak. Emilio Pagan pitched the ninth to record up his first major league save. Brad Keller (2-2) took the loss for the Royals, who dropped their fourth in a row. He had not surrendered more than three earned runs in any of his first five starts, but he gave up five runs on seven hits in 6 1/3 innings.

DIAMONDBACKS 12, PIRATES 4

David Peralta smacked a three-run triple and Christian Walker added a two-run homer during a seven-run seventh inning as Arizona clobbered host Pittsburgh. Pirates starter Joe Musgrove, who had allowed two earned runs this season, was charged with three runs and five hits in six-plus innings. He struck out five and walked two. Kyle Crick (0-1) took the loss after giving up four runs in two-thirds of an inning.

Eduardo Escobar homered and drove in three runs, and John Ryan Murphy added three hits for Arizona, which has won six of its past eight games. Diamondbacks starter Zack Godley gave up four runs and seven hits in four innings, but Matt Andriese (3-1) got the win with two scoreless innings of relief.

WHITE SOX 12, ORIOLES 2

Jose Abreu hit his 150th career home run and drove in five runs while James McCann hit a homer and had four RBIs as Chicago scored a season high in runs to win at Baltimore. Orioles starter David Hess (1-4) kept the White Sox quiet in the first four innings, but homers have troubled him this season, and it happened again in this game. With the game scoreless, Tim Anderson started the fifth with a double and Nicky Delmonico walked. McCann then crushed a three-run shot to left-center—the eighth surrendered by Hess. Manny Banuelos made his first start this season for Chicago—his first major league start since September 2015 — and scattered five hits in four shutout innings. Jace Fry (1-0) got the victory in relief. — Reuters



Seventh Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup

KUWAIT: The 7th Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup came to Kuwait on 21st April 2019 and is the world's biggest corporate golf tournament. The airline prides itself on the quality of its products and services, from the freshest seasonal ingredients used in onboard catering to the Stopover Service in Istanbul and bonuses like free transport of sports equipment including golf clubs.

Now in its seventh year, the Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup continues to deliver the highest quality as players, all invited by the airline, will once again play at some of the finest courses in the world.

The event at Sahara Golf Club was one of 103 tournaments in this year's record-breaking Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup - with the victors competing in the Grand Finals in Turkey later this year.

From a global total of 103, those that win will go through to the Grand Finals and have the chance to play in the Turkish Airlines Open pro-am where previously winners have teed it up alongside the likes of Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy.

Aryan Vedant won the competition with 43 points but is too young to advance to

the Grand Finals. Sang Hong Park was runner-up, going on to represent Kuwait in the Grand Finals. Sheik Khaleh was third.

The Nearest the Pin competition was won by Deepak Malhotra for the men and M. O. Cha for the women. Ahmed Al Bader won the lowest gross score with 72.

"We warmly thank all of our guests who made the Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup here in Kuwait a huge success," said Mohammed Baltu, General Manager for Turkish Airlines Kuwait. "Once again, it was a thrilling tournament in the TAWGC series, congratulations to our finalist, Sang Hong Park. We wish him the best of luck in Turkey." All Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup finalists will fly to Turkey in the luxury of Turkish Airlines' Business Class. Events such as the Turkish Airlines Open and TAWGC have made Turkish Airlines' support essential to Antalya being recognized as an international premium destination for golfers with outstanding facilities.

Turkish Airlines continues its unparalleled and ambitious growth throughout its network of 306 destinations in 124 countries, with a 10 per cent increase in passenger numbers, from 68 million in 2017 to 75



million in 2018, the best year on record. The newly-opened Istanbul Airport hub will facilitate the growth of Turkey's aviation sector as global aviation shifts eastwards, with Istanbul at the centre. The megaproject will be launched in four phases with the final phase set to be complete

in 2028 including six runways, four terminals and 233 aircraft parking positions, with the capacity to serve up to 200 million passengers a year with 500+ check in desks and 225,000 employees. The Turkish Airlines World Golf Cup is supported by National Car Rental.

Berger says Hamilton is now on a par with ex-team mate Senna

LONDON: Gerhard Berger has always rated former team mate Ayrton Senna in a league of his own but he says Lewis Hamilton now ranks alongside the late Brazilian Formula One champion in his estimation.

Speaking ahead of the 25th anniversary of Senna's death at Imola on May 1, Berger told reporters his friend still led as a personality and the legend that surrounds him. In purely sporting terms, however, the similarities were clear.

"Everybody asks me 'How do you see this driver against Ayrton?' and I always, in all the years, say 'I don't see anybody near to Ayrton,'" explained the Austrian, who partnered Senna at McLaren from 1990-92. "But Lewis is (now) the first driver I put on the same level as Ayrton." Berger, who won 10 races for Benetton, McLaren and Ferrari between 1986 and 1997 and now runs the DTM (German Touring Car) series, said statistics were only one way of measuring greatness. "I go more by feeling and watching, and for me—and there were great champions like Nelson (Piquet), like Niki (Lauda), like (Alain) Prost, like Michael (Schumacher) - there has always been one above: Ayrton," he said.

"And now Lewis I see in the same league." Hamilton has five championships, one with McLaren in 2008 and four with Mercedes in the last five seasons. He is leading the championship into this weekend's Azerbaijan Grand Prix. The 34-year-old Briton holds several records, including most pole positions (84), and his 75 wins are second only to seven times champion Schumacher's career haul of 91. Senna won three championships with McLaren and held the record for poles (65) before Hamilton. The Brazilian won 41 races and would surely have gone on to many more had he not died at the age of 34. "The comparison? I see still Ayrton winning the game because in the end Ayrton was such a charming guy and a personality. And obviously if someone loses his life and stays with us in the way of a legend, it's always something special," said Berger.

"But I try to see it from a performance point and from a performance point, Lewis is going from one pole position to the next one and Lewis is going from one race win to the next one. Just like Ayrton did."

Berger said Hamilton was "outstandingly fast", made fewer mistakes than rivals and knew when to be patient. "It looks like he's just running the game in such a good way that he's unbeatable at the moment," said the Austrian. "Yes he's in the best car and best engine, but he also is the best. By far the best man at the moment."

He said Hamilton had a good chance of breaking Schumacher's records. "I would like to protect Michael's success because such a tragedy, it's so sad to see these things," Berger added, referring to the 2013 ski accident that left the German with severe head injuries.

"But when you put this all out (aside) for a moment, then Lewis Hamilton is a very special driver in all the time I watched and have been in Formula One." — Reuters

Japan needs Sunwolves replacement to compete globally: Jones

TOKYO: Japan need to find a replacement for competing in Super Rugby following Sunwolves' expulsion if they are to become a major rugby power, former coach Eddie Jones has said. The Sunwolves, Japan's representatives in Super Rugby, have been by the competition's governing body SANZAAR in March that they would be removed from the competition from 2020.

Jones, who now coaches England, lamented the decision and said the Japan Rugby Football Union should start looking for alternative competitions. "If Japan wants to be a top 10 country in the world, which they do, they need their players to be prepared," Jones told Kyodo news

agency yesterday. "The purpose of the Sunwolves was to give opportunities for young Japanese players to prepare for test rugby," said Jones. "What Japan was missing was that opportunity for younger players to go from a good domestic Top League into a higher level of competition without being exposed to test level, and the Sunwolves provided that opportunity. 'It hasn't worked out for them and I think it is a massive opportunity missed.'"

Japan, who host the 2019 World Cup beginning on Sept. 20, have made huge strides since their famous victory over South Africa at the 2015 Rugby World Cup under Jones. They have recorded comfortable wins over Italy

(2018) and Tonga (2017), and managed a draw with France in Paris (2017). The Brave Blossoms also pushed Jones' England when the two sides met at Twickenham in November before the home side prevailed 35-15.

Jones believes much of this improvement is down to competing in Super Rugby. "Absolutely, 100 percent," said Jones. "They were physically in a different condition because they have to and they believe they can win now, which is massively different from the side I first inherited."

The Sunwolves currently sit bottom of Super Rugby's Australian Conference with two wins from nine matches played. — Reuters

Sports

World Cup discard Pant hits 78 to help Delhi take IPL top spot

Turner earns unwanted T20 record with five straight ducks

JAIPUR: Rishabh Pant said the thought of missing out on World Cup selection was on his mind as he hit a match-winning 78 to lead Delhi Capitals to the top of the Indian Premier League table. The 21-year-old Pant, who was not picked in the preliminary 15-man Indian squad for the 50-over showpiece event in England and Wales, helped Delhi outplay Rajasthan Royals by six wickets in Jaipur.

He smashed six fours and four sixes including the winning hit over the fence during his 36-ball unbeaten knock as Delhi achieved their target of 192 in 19.2 overs. "Feels really good to make your team win a crucial match," Pant said after receiving the man of the match award.

Dinesh Karthik was preferred as second wicket keeper in the Indian squad, but Pant said he had tried to concentrate on Monday's match. "I won't lie that the thought wasn't running through my mind, but I just focus on my process and that's what I was doing," said Pant. Pant, who is often accused of throwing away his wicket, built crucial partnerships, including an 84-run third-wicket stand with Prithvi Shaw, who made 42. Indian opener Shikhar Dhawan laid the platform for Delhi's comfortable chase as he hit 54 off 27 deliveries.

Earlier, Ajinkya Rahane struck an unbeaten 105 off 63 balls days after being replaced as Rajasthan captain by Australia's Steve Smith to guide his team to 191 for six. Smith, who made 50 off 32 balls, struck his second successive half-century after taking over the leadership role on Saturday. His knock on the weekend came in a winning cause.

Rahane and Smith put on 130 runs for the second wicket after Sanju Samson fell for nought in the second

over of the innings. "We probably didn't finish off with the bat as well as we could have. I thought (Chris) Morris and (Kagiso) Rabada executed well in the back-end," said Smith.

"(For Delhi) Shikhar played a magnificent knock, and Rishabh is a powerful young man, and he plays the ball in strange spots." Meanwhile the IPL announced Monday that the final of the world's most popular T20 league will be played on May 12 in Hyderabad.

The first qualifier is scheduled on May 7 followed by the eliminator the next day and the second qualifier on May 10.

Meanwhile, Australia's Ashton Turner has notched up five ducks in-a-row in Twenty20 cricket-including three in the Indian Premier League-entering the record books for the dubious distinction.

Turner, who missed out on Australia's World Cup squad announced last week, extended his horrific run for his IPL side Rajasthan Royals after getting out for nought to Delhi Capitals paceman Ishant Sharma on Monday. It was the 26-year-old's third consecutive golden duck-meaning out first ball-since being picked by Rajasthan for \$72,000 in the December auctions. The tall right-handed batsman was caught at extra cover after being deceived on a slower delivery by Sharma in a match that Rajasthan lost by six wickets.

Turner was trapped lbw by Mumbai Indians fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah in his team's previous game on Sunday. He fell to Kings XI Punjab leg-spinner Murugan Ashwin on his IPL debut last week after mistiming a hit to long off.

His two previous ducks came in the first T20 against India in Visakhapatnam in late February and for the



JAIPUR: Delhi Capitals cricketer Rishabh Pant plays a shot during the 2019 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Rajasthan Royals and Delhi Capitals at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur. — AFP

Perth Scorchers against Adelaide Strikers in the Big Bash League on February 9.

The middle-order batsman rose to prominence with

his match-winning 84 in a one-day international against India in March, and was lauded for his finishing prowess. — AFP

Lisbon Lions' captain McNeill dies aged 79

LONDON: Former Celtic captain Billy McNeill, the skipper of the 'Lisbon Lions' side that became the first British team to win the European Cup in 1967, has died aged 79, his family announced yesterday.

McNeill, who spent the whole of his playing career with the Glasgow giants, also went on to manage Celtic. Paying tribute to McNeill, current Celtic manager Neil Lennon told the club's website: "This is such sad news and I want to send thoughts and prayers to Liz (McNeill's widow) and all the family from myself and all the backroom staff here at the club.

"Billy was a brilliant Celtic player, and a great manager, and as a player and a fan myself, it was always a great experience whenever I would meet him and chat to him." McNeill had suffered from dementia for a number of years and a statement issued by his children said: "It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our father Billy McNeill.

"He passed away late last night (Monday, April 22) surrounded by his family and loved ones. He suffered from dementia for a number of years and fought bravely to the end, showing the strength and fortitude he always has done throughout his life." McNeill joined Celtic from junior side Blantyre Victoria in 1957 and the defender went on to make a club record 822 appear-

ances for the Hoops over 18 seasons.

He also won 29 caps for Scotland. But it was arguably as the captain of the Celtic side that overcame the notoriously defensive Inter Milan 2-1 in the 1967 final of the European Cup—"the trophy with the big ears" as he called it—in Lisbon that he will be best remembered. McNeill was at the heart of a brilliantly successful Celtic side assembled mainly from players in and around the Glasgow area by celebrated manager Jock Stein that dominated Scottish football in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

That team won nine league titles in a row, seven Scottish Cups and six League Cups. McNeill retired as a player in 1975 and then had spells in management with two other Scottish sides in Clyde and Aberdeen.

He returned to Celtic for two stints as manager, from 1978-83, and 1987-91 with spells at English sides Manchester City and Aston Villa in between. McNeill later became a Celtic ambassador and in 2015 a statue of him holding the European Cup aloft was unveiled outside Parkhe His fellow Lisbon Lion Bertie Auld said yesterday that even as a teenager McNeill had made a major impact on his team-mates. "I was there when the boss (Stein) signed Billy at 17 years of age and even then he had tremendous presence about him," Auld told Britain's Press Association.

"I remember in Lisbon, him carrying the ball out onto the park in Portugal. His chest was out and his head was back. He knew we would win and that filtered through the rest of us. He was never arrogant or egotistical. He just believed in himself and the rest of us." Alex Ferguson may be best known for his hugely successful time as manager of Manchester United, but he had first-hand experience of McNeill's quality as a



MONACO: In this file photo taken on August 29, 2013 Scottish former football player Billy McNeill arrives with the Champions League trophy during the UEFA 2013/2014 Champions League group stage draw in Monaco. — AFP

player when taking part in Old Firm derbies as a Rangers striker.

"He was a giant in Scottish football, a man with an incredible presence," Ferguson, who succeeded McNeill as manager of Aberdeen, told Celtic's website. "He was also a truly good man and will be a loss to everyone who knew him. Farewell Cesar (sic)," he added, using McNeill's nickname. — AFP

Osaka 'dodged bullet' in Stuttgart as rival Halep pulls out

STUTTGART: World number one Naomi Osaka said yesterday she had "dodged a bullet" after Simona Halep, her main pursuer in the WTA rankings, pulled out of this week's tournament in Stuttgart.

Japanese rising star Osaka, 21, launches her clay season in Stuttgart this week, and her hopes of holding on to her spot at the top of the rankings were given a boost when world number two Halep withdrew with a hip injury earlier yesterday.

"She was getting really close," said Osaka, who is less than 200 points ahead of Halep in the WTA rankings. "I feel like I dodged a bullet there." Osaka said that winning was not everything in Stuttgart, where she last played as a qualifier in 2017.

"I don't want to overhype myself and say, 'I will win the tournament'," she insisted. "I just want to have fun and experience the German crowd, because last time I was here, I was kind of a nobody."

She is definitely no longer a 'nobody', having won back-to-back Grand Slam titles in the United States and Australia since September. However, she admitted finding it difficult to adjust to her newfound global fame. "It is something that happened really quickly. In the beginning it was tough for me, because I put a lot of pressure on myself," she said. "I feel like there is certain things, I should be doing, that I am not doing right now." Osaka has not won a title since her Australian Open triumph in January, suffering early exits at three recent WTA tournaments. She was reluctant to speak about her split with her German coach Sascha Bajin earlier this year.

"I feel like I get in trouble for answering questions like this. There were irreconcilable differences," she said. Osaka said she hoped to get more used to playing on clay ahead of the French Open next month.

"I feel, that on every surface of the season I do have a lot more experience than on clay." "The bounces are different and you have to swing for the ball. For me it is a little bit difficult, because I can't hit as flat."



Naomi Osaka

Osaka is expected to play her first game on Thursday, where she faces a potential clash with Taiwan's Hsieh Su-wei, who beat her in Miami last month. Reigning Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber, meanwhile, has recovered from illness in time to launch her clay season on home soil as she eyes a career Grand Slam in Paris this year.

Kerber has won every major except the French Open since 2016, but she has never got past the quarter-finals at Roland Garros. "You know clay and me, you know the story," she told reporters with a smile on Monday.

"It's a tough challenge (to win all four Grand Slam tournaments), but I will not put too much pressure on my side." "Right now, I will focus on the tournaments ahead, and then when I'm in Paris, I will think about the Paris situation."

Kerber missed out on Germany's Fed Cup play-off win over Latvia last week after she picked up an illness earlier this month, but said on Tuesday that she had returned to full strength.

Halep's absence has given the German a little more breathing space. Instead of playing a first-round match against Donna Vekic today, Kerber gets a bye to the second round, where she faces a potential clash with compatriot Andrea Petkovic. — AFP

Stars edge Predators to advance, Hurricanes force game seven

LOS ANGELES: Defenseman John Klingberg scored with less than three minutes remaining in overtime as the Dallas Stars advanced to the second round of the NHL playoffs with a 2-1 win over the Nashville Predators on Monday.

The Stars are the third wild card team to knock off a division winner in the NHL playoffs this season and that trend could continue on Wednesday if the Carolina Hurricanes beat the reigning Stanley Cup champions Washington Capitals in game seven. Russian forward Alexander Radulov fired a sharp pass to Klingberg, who made no mistake by wristing a shot over the glove of Nashville netminder Pekka Rinne to give Dallas a 4-2 series victory. The Stars captured a playoff series on home ice for the first time since 2008.

Blake Comeau scored his first goal of the series and goaltender Ben Bishop stopped 47 shots for the Stars, who will face the St. Louis Blues in the second round. Bishop broke into the NHL with the Blues back in 2008-09 and played parts of two seasons for them.

The Blues eliminated Winnipeg in six games during their first-round series. Austin Watson scored a goal and Rinne finished with 49 saves for the Predators, who failed on all four power-play opportunities to finish 0-for-15 with the man advantage in the series.

Elsewhere, the Hurricanes bounced back from a game five beatdown to rally and defeat the Capitals 5-2, forcing game seven in their first-round series. Jordan Staal and Dougie Hamilton each had a goal and an assist as the Hurricanes scored three third-period goals to stay alive in the first round Eastern Conference best-of-seven series.

Defenseman Brett Pesce said Carolina is starting to figure out the formula needed to upset the reigning NHL champs, after the Capitals had put the Hurricanes on the brink of elimination by dominating game five 6-0.

"We have been underdogs all year," said Pesce, an American who assisted on Justin Williams' third-period goal. "We didn't give them much time and space. We don't give up. We are going to be ready for it (game seven). We have so much resilience in this group. It showed tonight."

Williams scored the insurance goal on Monday just seconds after the Capitals had a potential tying goal disallowed. Canadian forward Warren Foegele and Teuvo Teravainen also scored, Hamilton added the empty-netter and Czech goaltender Petr Mrazek made 23 saves to extend their first post-season appearance in 10 years by at least one more game.

Capitals superstar Alex Ovechkin became unglued at the end of the game and took a two-handed swing with his stick at Carolina's Saku Maenalanen which earned the Russian an ejection from the game.

Game seven is today in Washington. The winner will play the well-rested New York Islanders in the second round. — AFP

Leaders Zenit looking to end four-year title drought

MOSCOW: Premier League table-toppers Zenit St Petersburg are looking to tighten their grip on the domestic title today when they play hosts to lowly Dynamo Moscow. Zenit, in the hunt for their first domestic title in four years, are hoping to consolidate their eight-point lead over second-placed reigning champions Lokomotiv Moscow.

Krasnodar, who suffered a 3-2 home defeat at the hands of Zenit last week, sit third, one point further back. Though Dynamo have been in a battle all season to avoid relegation, Zenit manager Sergei Semak warned his men not to take the 12th-placed strugglers lightly.

"We need to prepare for the next match in all seriousness as Dynamo defeated us in our last league meeting in October. We need to play at our best if we want to avoid point loss," he said.

Semak also expressed hope that Artem Dzyuba, who netted twice in Krasnodar to end his 1369-minute scoring drought in the Premier League, will be equally deadly today. Lokomotiv meanwhile desperately need to win in Rostov to keep alive their slim hopes of retaining the title.

Lokomotiv's Yury Syomin said he was happy with his team's performance in the 1-1 derby draw with CSKA last week adding however he was upset with the result. "We've played well and dominated the major part of the match with CSKA," he said. "But CSKA are one of Russia's top clubs. They've beat Real Madrid twice in the Champions League this season. "I expect my men will show the same quality football in Rostov. We have no right to lose points any more if we want to stay in the title race." Despite the weekend defeat Krasnodar have a one-point lead over fourth-placed CSKA Moscow in their race for a place in next season's Champions League.—AFP

Sports

Chelsea up to fourth after frustrating Burnley draw

Chelsea climb one point above fifth placed Arsenal

LONDON: Chelsea accused Burnley of time-wasting and playing "anti-football" after Blues boss Maurizio Sarri was sent off before a touchline skirmish marred their frustrating 2-2 draw on Monday.

Sarri's side fell behind to Jeff Hendrick's fine finish before N'Golo Kante equalised moments later. In a frantic opening 24 minutes at Stamford Bridge, Gonzalo Higuain put Chelsea ahead, only for Burnley's Ashley Barnes to punish more dismal defending from the Blues.

Without a win in their last two league games, Chelsea will take only slender comfort from climbing one point above fifth placed Arsenal into fourth place, level on points with third placed Tottenham. Chelsea would have gone third with a victory, but instead they have now played a game more than top four rivals Tottenham, Arsenal and Manchester United, who are three points behind in sixth.

It was a missed opportunity after defeats for Tottenham, Arsenal and United at the weekend and Chelsea were booed off at full-time. In a fitting coda to a damaging evening, Sarri was sent to the stands for protesting in the final seconds before several members of the Blues bench were involved in a tetchy touchline clash with their Burnley counterparts.

Sarri's assistant Gianfranco Zola said his boss was so "emotional" after the game that he couldn't fulfil his media duties. "He was very upset because he has heard not good words towards him from the Burnley bench. The only reason he walked over there was to get our players to go into position, he was trying to help the ref," Zola said.

Zola took a swipe at Burnley's perceived gamesmanship, which included Claret's keeper Tom Heaton being booked in the first half for time-wasting. "We are unhappy. There was too much time wasting. Five minutes injury time wasn't enough to compensate. We

couldn't build important rhythm," Zola moaned.

"We expected it to be a tough game. We didn't expect so much time wasting. We expected (referee) Kevin Friend to give more extra time. That's why we're very unhappy." Chelsea defender David Luiz went even further in his criticism of Burnley.

"It's anti-football. Wasting time all the time, especially when you have the ball. Their players went to the floor and stopped the game," he said. Now Arsenal can replace Chelsea in fourth if they avoid defeat at Wolves today. "We need to improve but we're in a good way. We care, as we showed today," Zola said. Adding to Sarri's problems, he was hit by first half injuries to France midfielder Kante and England winger Callum Hudson-Odoi.

"It doesn't look very good unfortunately," Zola said of Hudson-Odoi. "It's a problem with his Achilles tendon." Brushing off the bench-clearing clash, Burnley boss Sean Dyche said: "By the time I turned round there was something going off in the tunnel.

"I don't know what you can call it now. Handbags? Manbags? Bumbags?"

Chelsea were stunned in the eighth minute when Hendrick's rocket put Burnley ahead. It was a poor goal for Chelsea to concede as Cesar Azpilicueta could only head a Burnley corner to the edge of the area, where Hendrick was left unmarked to volley a superb dipping strike past Kepa Arrizabalaga.

Eden Hazard's majestic assist helped Chelsea draw level four minutes later, underlining why the club are so keen to keep their talisman out of Real Madrid's clutches. Cutting in from the left, Hazard twisted and turned so rapidly that Burnley defender Matt Lowton fell flat on his backside as the Belgian picked out Kante for a powerful shot that flashed past Heaton from 10 yards out.

Pushing forward with pace and precision, Chelsea



LONDON: Chelsea's Argentinian striker Gonzalo Higuain (C) celebrates after scoring their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Burnley at Stamford Bridge in London. — AFP

went in front two minutes later when Higuain turned smartly to pick out Azpilicueta. The Chelsea defender executed a deft back-heel to Higuain, who continued his run and crashed a brilliant finish into the roof of the net from an acute angle.

But Burnley punished more poor defending to equalise in the 24th minute. With Chelsea slow to react to a Burnley free-kick, Ben Mee's header was glanced on by Chris Wood and the unmarked Barnes apply the finishing touch with a close-range volley. —AFP

Solskjaer confident he's right man for United revival mission

MANCHESTER: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer insisted yesterday he is the right man to take Manchester United forward despite an alarming loss of form that has left them in danger of missing out on a place in next season's Champions League.

After a magnificent start as United caretaker manager following Jose Mourinho's sacking, Solskjaer has seen his side suffer an equally dramatic slump, losing six of their last eight games in all competitions.

During that run, United have exited the FA Cup, Champions League and dropped to sixth in the Premier League table with their form hitting a low point in the woeful 4-0 defeat at Everton on Sunday.

Questions are now being asked about whether United acted too hastily in making his appointment permanent last month—although Solskjaer himself insists that is not the case. "Well I would like to say yes but it's not down to me to say that," he said.

"I'm confident in my team and myself. I'll be ready to take this challenge on. I know it's a big challenge and that's why, when I came in here, I said I'm going to enjoy every single second. I don't like losing but it's a challenge all the managers at this club have had.

"When you go through bad results, you've got to be confident enough to say this is the way we're going to do it and plan ahead." Solskjaer's lack of managerial experience at the very highest level of the game, especially in the transfer market, have raised questions over his suitability to return United to the top of the football ladder.

But he was adamant his coaching and recruitment abilities make him the right man for that task, saying: "I would like to think so, yes. I like all these boys, I love them because they're great lads. But I've got to make decisions and manage for the club, I'm managing the club and helping the players but I manage for the club.

Solskjaer's task does not get any easier, with a derby meeting against treble-chasing Manchester City looming for his side at Old Trafford today. The United manager revealed he called his players in for a clear-the-air



LIVERPOOL: Manchester United's Norwegian manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (C) reacts after the final whistle in the English Premier League football match between Everton and Manchester United at Goodison Park in Liverpool. — AFP

meeting after the debacle at Goodison Park—a result which means his club have leaked 48 goals, their worst defensive record in a league season in 40 years.

"That (the derby) is the best game we could ask for, with the players hurt as they definitely were," Solskjaer said. "We had a meeting after the game and all the players were definitely, definitely disappointed but really, really hurt by that performance and the City game is the perfect one.

"There is no hiding place on the pitch and the fans will back you if you give that effort.

"We've got to be ready for the press, for their pressing, so we've got to defend well, got to be ready for their aggression, they will snap at your heels and kick you, there will be fouls, absolutely no doubt about it

wrote in The Times.

"So it seems crazy that, in 2019, I feel the need to write a piece in a newspaper calling for radical changes to the game that I love. "But I do because the racism problem in football is so bad, runs so deep and is nowhere near being sorted."

He added: "You will all have read about the various high-profile racist incidents in recent months: the abuse I received playing for Manchester City away to Chelsea; the booing that the black England players were subjected to in Montenegro; the nastiness that Moise Kean of Juventus endured in Italy and the endless insults thrown at players on social media.

"But that is sadly just the tip of the iceberg. Up and down the game, across the world, black and Asian players, fans and coaches are subjected to racism. Every day, from park football to the Champions League.

"In my opinion, the people who run the game are doing nowhere near enough to solve the problem. And that's not good enough."

Sterling said punishment for racist abuse should start with an automatic nine-point deduction for clubs and three games behind closed doors rather than the current system of fines, which he said were an insufficient deterrent.

"It sounds harsh, but which fan will risk racist behaviour if it might relegate their team or ruin their title bid? "Small fines do no damage to clubs and countries, but one group of people who do have the money to make them take notice are sponsors. The next time

and when you watch those games they commit so many players forward."

After the Everton defeat, Solskjaer warned that many of his under-achieving players will not survive at United although, when pressed 48 hours later, he refused to expand on the personnel he had in mind.

"Of course, you learn about players and now is not the time to talk about making wholesale changes in a squad that's been doing so great—only City and Liverpool have taken more points than us in the last 18 games and that's it," he said.

"We were where we were when we came in, really gave it a go, and you can see loads of Man United standards, the DNA in these players. You have to get players in and some players will go out." — AFP

that a club or governing body fails to act appropriately against racism, I would love to see that company pull its money out and make a moral stand. "I don't know how long it will take for things to change but we have to start now. I don't want the next generation of black players to have to put up with this evil." — AFP

Defence the key to Arsenal's top-four bid

LONDON: Unai Emery is faced with a defensive dilemma that could make or break Arsenal's hopes of a top-four finish to their Premier League campaign.

The Gunners travel to Wolves today having missed a chance on tightening their grip on a top four finish ahead of at least two of Tottenham, Chelsea and Manchester United undermined by a 3-2 defeat at home to Crystal Palace on Sunday.

Arsenal were extremely poor defensively that day. Two goals were from badly-defended set-pieces while the other was the result of an extraordinary individual error by Shkodran Mustafi. Gunners manager Emery had opted to rest a number of players after a win at Napoli the previous week that had seen north London side Arsenal into the last four of the Europa League.

Now, after that plan backfired, the Spaniard must decide whether to keep the three-man back line that allows Mesut Ozil to flourish in an advanced midfield position behind Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Alexandre Lacazette, or play safe with a traditional back four.

Arsenal won 1-0 at Watford in their most recent away day outing with a back four and switched to one at half-time against Palace. It would be no surprise, therefore, if Nacho Monreal came back on the left of the defence and Ainsley Maitland-Niles, who came off the bench at the break on Sunday, was restored to the right.

Emery's biggest headache though is to decide if the veteran Laurent Koscielny can carry on playing at a time when Mustafi cannot be relied on. Sunday was not the first time Mustafi's errors had been costly—an attempt to shield the ball from Wilfried Zaha merely allowed the Palace forward a free run on goal—yet no Gunner in any position has been picked more in the Premier League this season than the Germany international.

Fortunately, Sokratis Papastathopoulos has served a two-game ban and is expected to go straight back in the team.

The inexperienced Konstantinos Mavropanos is another option and started against Watford and Palace but was substituted before the hour mark against the former and lasted just 45 minutes in last weekend's match with the Eagles.

"I have the confidence in our way and I want to be positive because this season we have been working and fighting to be in this key moment with the possibility to be in the top four, and we are," Emery said after the Palace loss.

"We are also in the semi-final of the Europa League and we can be proud of all the season. "Today we can be frustrated, but tomorrow stand up and be ready for the game today against Wolves knowing it is going to be very difficult but it is in our hands." — AFP

Sterling calls for nine-point racism penalty

LONDON: Raheem Sterling has called for clubs whose fans racially abuse players to be hit with a nine-point penalty, saying current punishments meant the issue was "nowhere near being sorted" by football authorities.

The Manchester City forward has become increasingly outspoken on racism in football, having received abuse on the pitch while playing for both his club and on England duty.

Recently, he cupped his hands to his ears in response to derogatory chants from Montenegro fans while playing for England last month. Now Sterling has become one of the signatories to a manifesto published in yesterday's edition of Britain's The Times newspaper calling for more black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people in positions of power within football, more severe punishments for racist abuse and greater action by social media organisations, sponsors and traditional media.

"When I was a boy growing up in London, going to school and playing football, I didn't know what racist abuse was because I never suffered any," Sterling

Live		Matches on TV	
		(Local Timings)	
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
Wolverhampton Wanderers v Arsenal	beIN SPORTS	21:45	
Manchester United v Manchester City	beIN SPORTS	22:00	
ITALIAN CUP			
AC Milan v SS Lazio	beIN SPORTS	21:45	
GERMAN DFB POKAL			
Werder Bremen v Bayern Munich	beIN SPORTS	21:45	

25 Harper tossed as New York Mets beat Philadelphia Phillies 5-1



26 Lisbon Lions' captain McNeill dies aged 79



27 Chelsea up to fourth after frustrating Burnley draw



KUWAIT: The victorious Kuwait Sports Club holding HH the Amir trophy after beating Al-Qadisiya in the finals yesterday. — KUNA

Kuwait SC bag 14th Amir Cup

KUWAIT: Kuwait SC defeated Al-Qadisiya 2-0 yesterday in the final showdown of the 57th version of His Highness the Amir Football Cup, thus securing their 14th trophy.

Fahad Al-Hajeri scored both goals as early as at minutes 5 and 25. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the sponsor of the competi-

tion, attended the game which was held at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

Following the match, His Highness the Amir presented the cup to captain of Kuwait SC team Hussein Hakim, the first place medals to the winners and the second place medals to Al-Qadisiya players. Khaitan and Burgan players co-chaired the third place medals. — KUNA

Bucks sweep Pistons to advance

LOS ANGELES: The Milwaukee Bucks wiped away 18 years of frustration on Monday by beating the Detroit Pistons 127-104 to complete a four-game sweep of their first round Eastern Conference playoff series.

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 41 points as the Bucks reached the second round of the postseason for the first time since the 2000-01 season when they made it all the way to the NBA semi-finals. Top-seeded Milwaukee cruised through the first three games and after a slow start in game four, they took control late and won by a comfortable 23 points.

"I think it's important that we take a second tonight. Enjoy it," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "It's a good night for Milwaukee. It's a good night for the Bucks." Breaking their streak of eight straight playoff exits so quickly means Milwaukee has more time to prepare for their next opponent—the Boston Celtics, who are coming off a sweep of Indiana.

The Bucks matched their regular season dominance over the Pistons, winning all four games. They had met in the postseason four times with the Pistons winning them all. Antetokounmpo had a quiet night in game three with just 14 points but he had all his weapons at his disposal in the close-out game.

"I remember our first playoff series (in 2015)," Antetokounmpo said. "Chicago, the last game, game six, they beat us by 50 or something insane. But where we were and where we are right now, it's been an unbelievable journey." Milwaukee finished the third quarter with a

17-3 run, taking a 10-point lead into the fourth after the Pistons had led much of the way. The Blake Griffin-led Pistons set an NBA record with their 14th consecutive playoff loss, a losing skid that began in 2008.

Milwaukee was also the second team in playoff history to sweep their first round series by at least 15 points in each game, joining the 1980 Celtics. Last year, the Bucks lost to the Celtics in a seven-game series. This year's second round series will have some new faces. Milwaukee has Brook Lopez as a starter and added veterans George Hill and Nikola Mirotic. Gordon Hayward and Kyrie Irving were out with injuries for the Celtics last year.

Elsewhere, Donovan Mitchell scored 19 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter as the Utah Jazz staved off elimination in game four with a 107-91 victory over the Houston Rockets. "It's not over," Mitchell said. "We have another one, and another one, and another one."

Jaë Crowder added 23 points, Ricky Rubio tallied 18 points and 11 assists and Derrick Favors finished with 12 points and 11 rebounds for Utah, who trail three games to one. Utah outscored Houston 31-12 in the fourth quarter to set up game five today.

Mitchell said they now realize what they have been doing wrong and what it is going to take to win the series. "We all been struggling with our shots all series," said Mitchell. "We didn't play hard at the beginning. The last two games we played harder."

"There is no way we were going to go out like that. We figured out what we have to do. The best thing for us is to continue to play team basketball." James Harden scored 30 points to lead Houston. Chris Paul added 23 points, eight rebounds and seven assists. Eric Gordon tallied 16 points. The Rockets shot a dismal 17 of 46 from three-point range. — AFP

Title, top four and pride at stake in Manchester derby

MANCHESTER: Even by the rarified atmosphere of Manchester derbies, there will seldom have been so much on the line for both sides of the city when Manchester United host Manchester City today. For City, the Premier League title is at stake with Pep Guardiola's men needing to win their remaining four matches to be sure of becoming the first side since United a decade ago to retain the title.

Those days of dominance are long gone for the Red Devils with just a place in the top four and Champions League qualification their target. However, United also have to restore some sense of pride after a 4-0 thrashing at Everton on Sunday.

Defeat at Goodison Park was United's sixth in eighth games, a run that has seen them crash out of the Champions League and FA Cup, as well as slip back down to sixth in the Premier League. But with Tottenham, Arsenal and Chelsea also faltering, they remain just three points off the top four.

The momentum and feel good factor built up by Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's first few months in charge has gone. Now the Norwegian, only hired on a permanent basis last month, has to show he has the ability to arrest the slump even before a major restructure of his squad takes place in the summer.

Solskjaer questioned the work rate and desire of some of his players on Sunday, making it clear that big changes are needed. However, he is clinging to the hope that those he currently has to call on will be shocked into a short-term response.

"Against City at Old Trafford today, that's the biggest incentive we can have," said Solskjaer after

the Everton embarrassment. "Old Trafford at home, in front of our fantastic fans, they were unbelievable again and they never ever moaned at our players, which they could have, but they've been supportive and I'm sure they will be tonight." Yet, there is a dilemma even for United fans keen to halt City's rise. Should City fail to win at Old Trafford, Liverpool—historically United's fiercest rivals—will be just three games away from a first league title in 29 years.

Liverpool have already set their highest ever points tally in the Premier League era of 88 to lead City by two points. However, Guardiola's men have a game in hand and should they move top once more with a win today, would just need to see off Burnley, Leicester and Brighton to guarantee the title.

"With this Liverpool side, our side we know if we lose what happens," warned Guardiola. City's quest for a quadruple of trophies fell short by the finest of margins as they lost on away goals to Tottenham in the quarter-finals of the Champions League last week.

However, they can still claim an unprecedented domestic treble by winning the league and FA Cup over the next month to go with their League Cup win in February. "I love my team being there," added Guardiola.

"I am not going to criticise them because we are out (of the Champions League). I see every day what we have done over the past two seasons, they show me character every three days. "I have good players, but they have to do it. And when people expect them to do it, it's harder to do it. That's why we push them but they respond really well. I love my team."

City gained a small measure of revenge on Spurs with a 1-0 league win on Saturday, but victory came at a cost with Kevin de Bruyne unlikely to play again this season due to a hamstring injury. — AFP