



4 EPA details widespread environmental violations



22 Invasion of influencers as Pak launches tourism push



28 Asian champions Kashima stunned, Lopes fires Jeonbuk towards last 16



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Proposal aims to force expats to leave Kuwait to claim indemnity

Constitutional court rejects petitions against elections • MP wants citizenship issue investigated

Amir praises role of teachers in society



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends a ceremony to honor distinguished teachers and schools yesterday. In his speech, the Amir praised teachers' high status in the society and expressed appreciation for the role they play in raising generations and developing education and knowledge. — KUNA (See Page 3)

By A Saleh and B Izzak

KUWAIT: Informed sources said the government told the National Assembly it has agreed to hold a government-parliamentary meeting to decide on a legislative plan to deal with the population structure and issue several executive measures on iqama trafficking and Kuwaitization. The sources added that the two authorities are on agreement on a proposal that an expat must provide a document proving that they are leaving the country to receive their indemnity if they are terminated or resign from their jobs in the public or private sector.

The plan also envisaged stopping granting licenses for some professions and dealing with some communities whose numbers have grown too much. The sources said it was agreed to hold the meeting during the month of Ramadan, and it will include agreeing on the plan and the legislations it requires to be eventually presented to the

National Assembly.

The sources said the issue of imposing fees and taxes will not be discussed because it could affect citizens, and this is rejected by the parliament, adding that MPs demanded a strong government stand towards the residency (iqama) trade, which is the basis of the imbalance in the population structure. They said MPs and the government could decide on the process of correcting the population structure before the end of this year, starting with stopping employment of expats in government bodies on an ad hoc basis.

The sources said the ministries are full of hundreds of expats who are employed in this manner, which creates inflated employment in ministries and hinders the employment of Kuwaitis, especially in administrative jobs. They said the coming period will witness intervention by the Civil Service Commission and the Audit Bureau

Continued on Page 24

News in brief

Emirati wakes up after 27 years in coma

DUBAI: An Emirati woman opened her eyes and regained consciousness after spending 27 years in a coma induced by a serious brain injury, her family said yesterday. Munira Omar was 32 when she was injured in a road traffic accident in 1991 after picking up her son Omar from school in the city of Al-Ain. Omar survived - and lived to see his mother awake again decades later in a hospital bed in Germany. She woke up in May, but her family chose to keep the news under wraps out of respect for her privacy. Now 60, Munira is in a stable condition and is now home in the UAE, after being enrolled in a physical rehabilitation program, with her family nearby, according to Omar, now 32. — AFP

Saudis release maids on death row

JAKARTA: Two Indonesian domestic workers sentenced to death for practicing witchcraft against their employers' families in Saudi Arabia returned home yesterday after their sentences were commuted, Indonesia's foreign ministry said. Sumartini and Warnah arrived in Jakarta after serving more than 10 years in a Saudi prison. Lulu Muhammad Iqbal, a senior official at the ministry, told AFP. Sumartini was accused of making the 17-year-old son of her employer vanish by using black magic, although he was later found alive. Warnah, meanwhile, was accused of casting a spell against her employer's first wife that made her suffer from mysterious illnesses, Indonesian media reported. — AFP

Iran FM warns US over Hormuz

NEW YORK: Iran's foreign minister yesterday warned the United States of unspecified "consequences" if it tried to seal off to Tehran the Strait of Hormuz, the strategic passage into the oil-rich Gulf. President Donald Trump's administration has been ramping up pressure on the clerical state, this week vowing to stop all oil exports from Iran by sanctioning any countries that defy its order.

"We believe Iran will continue to sell its oil, we will continue to find buyers for our oil and we will continue to use the Strait of Hormuz as a safe transit passage for

the sale of our oil," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said at the Asia Society in New York, where he was participating in a UN session. "But if the United States takes the crazy measure of trying to prevent us from doing that, then it should be prepared for the consequences," he said.

The United States, which is closely allied with Arab states in the Gulf, has had years of small-scale naval confrontations with Iran, which has occasionally threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, the chokepoint through which 20 percent of the world's oil flows. "It is in our vital national security interest to keep the Persian Gulf open, to keep the Strait of Hormuz open. We have done that in the past and we will continue to do that in the future," Zarif said.

Continued on Page 24

Lanka Muslims fear backlash after bombings

COLOMBO: Mohamed Hasan has barely left his home in Colombo since a string of deadly blasts hit Sri Lanka on Sunday, afraid he could be attacked because he is Muslim. He has a job at a printing press, but the 41-year-old's family have begged him to stay home. "They are worried that if I go out, will I be able to come back alive?" he told AFP outside the Jumma mosque in Dematagoda, where he had ventured briefly to pray.

More than 350 people were killed in the carnage unleashed by the Easter attacks against churches and hotels, which have been claimed by the Islamic State group. The deaths have horrified Sri Lankans and been condemned by Muslim groups, but many in the community have been left feeling vulnerable. Zareena Begum,



COLOMBO: Members of the Sri Lankan Muslim community gather outside a mosque after prayers on Tuesday. — AFP

60, said she had barely slept since the weekend. "I know people are angry at Muslims," she said in tears outside the mosque. "Infants being carried in the arms of their mothers were killed. I never imagined such hatred being there in the hearts of these people (who attacked). Hatred must not sow more hatred."

Continued on Page 24

WHO: One-hour max screen time daily for under-5s

GENEVA: Young children should not spend more than an hour a day watching television and videos or playing computer games and infants less than one year old should not be exposed to electronic screens at all, the World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday. The United Nations agency, issuing its first such guidelines, said under-fives should also be physically active and get adequate sleep to help develop good lifelong habits and prevent obesity and other diseases in later life. "What we are cautioning on is over-use of those electronic screen times with young children," WHO expert Dr Fiona Bull told a news briefing.

In its guidelines to member states, the WHO said children between one and four years old should spend at least three hours in a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day. Infants under one should interact in floor-based play and avoid all screens, it said. Being inactive is fueling a rise in the numbers of obese or overweight people worldwide, the WHO said. Excessive weight can lead to premature death from heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and some forms of cancer. "Preventing these deaths needs to start in very early life," Bull said.

One in three adults today are overweight or obese, and one in four adults does not do enough physical activity, she said. "In this age group of under 5s, it is currently 40 million children around the world (who) are overweight. Of that (figure) 50 percent are in Africa and the southeast Asia region," Bull said. That translates into 5.9 percent of children globally.

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Local



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Commander of US Central Command Marine Corps Gen Kenneth F McKenzie Jr. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



Chief-of-Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khedhr meets with Italian Chief of the Defense Staff Lt Gen Enzo Vecciarelli.

Amir meets senior officials, Commander of US Central Command Marine Corps

Kuwaiti top brass meets Italian, US senior officials

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Amir also received Acting Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the visiting Commander of US Central Command Marine Corps Gen Kenneth F McKenzie Jr.

Later yesterday, Chief-of-Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khedhr held a meeting with Gen Kenneth F McKenzie Jr, during

which they discussed a number of issues of common interest. According to a statement by Defense Ministry, the two sides also addressed most important issues concerning bilateral military cooperation and ways to improve them.

Meanwhile, Lt Gen Khedhr discussed means for military cooperation with Italian Chief of the Defense Staff Lt Gen Enzo Vecciarelli. The talks addressed issues of mutual importance in relation to military aspects, as well as means to boost them, Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations at the Ministry said in a statement. — KUNA



Chief-of-Staff of Kuwait's Armed Forces Lt Gen Mohammad Al-Khedhr meets with the visiting Commander of US Central Command Marine Corps Gen Kenneth F McKenzie Jr.

Fourth Edition of Fikra Program comes to successful conclusion



KUWAIT: The fourth edition of the Fikra Program, held under the patronage of Khaled Al-Roudan, Minister of Commerce and Industry, came to a close on April 22, 2019. The closing ceremony was held at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center and saw the 15 entrepreneurial participants present their business ideas.

Throughout the fourth edition of the program, participants completed a number of training programs over the course of four months, followed by a period of mentoring. Gold sponsors of this year's program, Gulf Bank provided training sessions designed to equip participants with the tools and knowledge required to bring their ideas to life.

Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communication, Gulf Bank, said: "As a Gold Sponsor of the 4th edition of Fikra Program, Gulf Bank is proud to congratulate this year's participants on their

success. The potential and drive that they have exhibited throughout the program, is testament to Kuwait's youth and we are committed to supporting them in their business aspirations. We look forward to seeing their ideas grow and develop into successful businesses in the market and wish them luck and success."

Launched in 2015 as a corporate social responsibility program, Fikra Program is an intensive entrepreneurship training program open to aspiring entrepreneurs with creative business ideas. The program provides one-to-one mentorship for guidance and support



Ahmad Al-Amir

as well as business training, through a number of workshops and field trips.

Fikra Program's three previous editions combined witnessed over 550 applications, 45 business ideas, 57 training sessions and 76 trained entrepreneurs. Following the third edition of Fikra Program which ended in May 2018, over 40 percent of the participating entrepreneurs have successfully established their businesses and are now fully operational.

Fikra Program is under the kind patronage of Khaled Al-Roudan, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and supported by Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, The National Fund for SME Development, Al-Hamra Real Estate Company, Gulf Bank, Markaz Financial Center, KFAS (Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences) and KUWAIT-NET, and Grand Cinemas. Fikra Program is organized and managed by Cubical Services Business Incubator.

KAMCO sponsors AUK's 15th Annual Career Fair

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, participated in the American University of Kuwait's (AUK) 15th Annual Career Fair as a gold sponsor. KAMCO regularly participates in the annual event hosted by AUK that serves as an additional platform for students to network and seek employment opportunities with a variety of local companies.

At the event, KAMCO representatives from the Human Resources Department greeted students and alumni who were seeking career advice, internship programs and job opportunities. On an annual basis, KAMCO offers exclusive internship programs for college students and recent graduates. The programs include on the job training in addition to a learning curve that is structured to add significant value to each intern's existing talent and intelligence.

Reem Al-Refai, Senior Vice President and Head of the Human Resources Department at KAMCO, said, "We would like to thank the organizers for putting together such an event that serves as a key tool to bridge the gap between employers and young job seekers. Over the years we have witnessed positive effects on employment outcomes and interacted with many talented individuals. Aside from job opportunities, we believe



KUWAIT: AUK president hands KAMCO's HR management a sponsorship trophy.

that students attending the event can obtain valuable interview and job search experience from our seasoned professionals."

Refai noted that the department supports educational and youth empowerment initiatives that positively impact the community. These initiatives are in line with KAMCO's ongoing commitment to support local schools and universities in providing valuable career advice and guidance that will help inspire the future generations. "With the various platforms available today, employers can begin to guide students at a young age to follow their aspirations and get a better understanding of the opportunities available in the market. Given that, we will continue to participate in events that empower the youth and allow them to make more informed decisions about their desired career paths," added Refai.

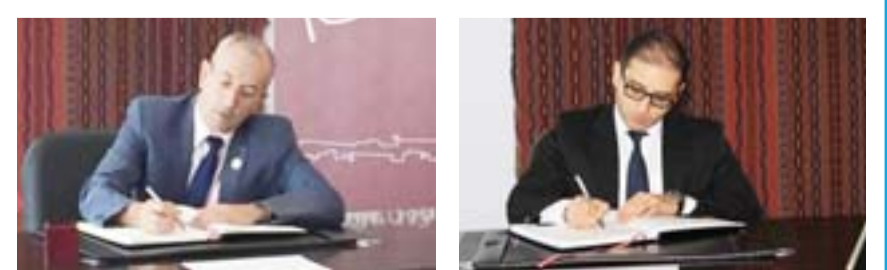
Kuwaiti, Italian navies mull closer cooperation

ROME: Means of developing military cooperation featured high on Tuesday between Commander of the Kuwait Navy Rear Admiral Khaled Al-Kandari and Chief of Staff of the Italian Navy Admiral Valter Girardelli. The talks, held at the Italian Navy's headquarters in Rome, gathered a Kuwaiti Navy delegation and senior Italian officials as well as Charge d'Affaires of Kuwait Embassy Sami Al-Zamanan and acting military attache Khaled Al-Laho. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the deep-rooted and fruitful ties between both countries, and the development of cooperation at various levels, mainly sharing experiences, capacity development, rehabilitation, training and others. Such talks come within the framework of bilateral and international military cooperation in the face of regional challenges. The Kuwaiti delegation includes Commodore Hazzaa Al-Atai and Captain Talal Al-Ghareeb, were briefed on modernization strategies of the Italian navy



ROME: Commander of the Kuwait Navy Rear Admiral Khaled Al-Kandari and Chief of Staff of the Italian Navy Admiral Valter Girardelli. — KUNA

forces based on the latest military technologies and integrated management. Girardelli made a presentation on missions of the Italian Navy that include safeguarding ports, and combating terrorism and smuggling as well as others. Al-Kandari and the delegation's members met with Italian Ministry of Defense's Secretary General and National Armaments Director Lt Gen Nicolo Falsaperna. Meanwhile, Zamanan stressed the importance of the visit, which reflects horizons and fields of fruitful cooperation as well as bonds of friendship and the depths of distinguished bilateral ties. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Ambassador of Peru to Kuwait Francisco Rivarola received condolences recently at the embassy's building for the death of former constitutional president of Peru Alan Garcia. Ambassadors of several countries in Kuwait approached the embassy and signed the condolence book. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

Local

Amir praises teachers' role in raising generations, developing education

Sheikh Sabah attends, patronizes teacher-honoring ceremony



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and senior officials pose with the honored teachers for a group photo. — Amiri Diwan photos

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended and patronized yesterday a ceremony to honor distinguished teachers and schools, marking World Teachers' Day. His Highness the Amir was warmly welcomed at the ceremony by Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi and the ceremony organizers. The ceremony was also attended by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and senior state officials. The ceremony began with the National Anthem followed by Quranic recitation and the speech of His Highness the Amir.

High status

His Highness the Amir in his speech praised teachers' high status in the society and expressed appreciation for the role they play in raising generations and developing education and knowledge. His Highness the Amir said teachers shoulder a great responsibility for the educational process, hailing their dedication and fruitful message for youth and national development. His Highness the Amir stressed the teacher's critical role especially in light of growing negative phenomena, mainly social media, that negatively affects youth these

“ Teachers shoulder a great responsibility ”

days, which requires more efforts to guide young people in the right direction. His Highness hoped that more attention would be given to education quality and output, which should match the requirements of the labor market. His Highness the Amir expressed confidence in the ability of teachers to overcome all obstacles to develop the educational process and arm children with knowledge and principles of Islamic religion.

Honoring of the nation

Addressing the event, Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi

thanked His Highness the Amir for patronizing and attending the celebration. He believed that the honoring of distinguished teachers during the World Teachers' Day is, in fact, deemed honoring of the nation, given that no country could develop without education. He added that it is no strange that developed countries appreciate and honor teachers, noting that the job of teacher, unlike previously thought, now attracts many Kuwaiti young people thanks to the care and support of the political leadership. He noted that the Ministry of Education, with all its institutions and agencies, is keen to provide teachers with all necessary potential in order to ensure a successful educational process.

Afterwards, Dhawia Al-Osaimi, in a speech on behalf of the awarded teachers, said the event came in appreciation of the teachers' great efforts and successes in the educational domain. She said that hopes are pinned on the teacher to ensure a bright future for generations to come and to allow them to capitalize on their long experience and high capabilities. She added that His Highness the Amir attaches much attention to the teacher out of belief that he is the key to genuine development and progress. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah delivers a speech at the ceremony. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets the audience.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and senior officials attend the ceremony.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a memento during the event.



Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi speaks during the event.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets an honored teacher.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets teachers honored during the ceremony.

Local

Sustainable peace in Syria only possible if criminals are prosecuted, Kuwait says

Kuwait reiterates UNSC unity against sexual violence in conflict

NEW YORK: Unless justice is served and crime perpetrators prosecuted, a sustainable and inclusive peace could not be achieved in Syria, Kuwait said. The remark was made by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi late Tuesday, during a UN General Assembly session on international, impartial and independent mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for the most serious crimes under international law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. It is more commonly referred to as 'the Mechanism,' or 'IIM.'

"As the crisis enters its ninth year, the absence of accountability for those who committed crimes in Syria since March 2011 continues," he pointed out. He further said that some of those heinous acts could live up to the status of "war crimes," or "crimes against humanity," including the ones of alleged use of internationally-banned chemical weapons. Kuwait, out of its global and moral beliefs, had adopted the establishment of IIM, even voluntarily contributing to the Mechanism's financial budget, Otaibi noted. The only solution to the Syrian crisis could only be a peaceful one, based on the execution of UNSC resolution 2254 and the Geneva II Conference on Syria 2012, he concluded. The IIM is neither a prosecutor's office nor a court, but collects and analyses information and evidence of international crimes committed in Syria to assist criminal proceedings in national, regional or international courts or tribunals

that have or may in the future have jurisdiction over these crimes.

Sexual violence

Separately, Kuwait said it is significant for the international community in general, and the UN Security Council (UNSC) in particular, to remain united in tackling sexual violence in conflict, Kuwait's permanent representative at the UN said. "Undoubtedly, our principles are one and the same in view of condemning all forms of sexual violence, particularly those committed during conflicts," Otaibi said during a UN Security Council session on sexual violence in conflict. He called on the international community to seek together to put an end to sexual violence during conflicts and ensure justice to victims in a way that should observe the social and cultural considerations of all member states. He regretted that although the UNSC had adopted 10 years ago its Resolution 1820 stating that sexual violence in conflicts poses a threat to international peace and security and requires a serious international response, sexual violence cases have been growing.

Such crimes are mostly used as intimidation tools and war tactics to target specific communities on the basis of their ethnic, religious or political orientations with a view to forcing them to leave their homes and seizing their properties, he lamented. The Kuwaiti diplomat cited the forced displacement of Rohingya minority as a resonant paradigm in this regard, saying that forced displacement exposes victims, mainly

women and girls, to sexual violence and human trafficking. Sexual violence crimes, in some flashpoints, are used by extremist groups, including the so-called Islamic State, as elements of political and terrorist economy, he pointed out. He emphasized that sexual violence in conflicts could be curtailed by means of bringing all those involved to accountability in line with local and international laws. He added that the UN Security Council has its own tools to fight sexual violence during conflicts, suggesting that it should reinforce peacekeeping and political missions targeting women empowerment during and following conflicts.

Sustainable peace

Bringing the criminals to justice is an integral part of sustainable peace since sexual violence affects the psychological and physical situations of victims, together with the whole society, Otaibi noted. He added that it is the responsibility of the States to provide protection to civilians during conflicts and to bring those involved in sexual violence to accountability. The UN Security Council has called upon warring parties around the globe to implement concrete commitments to fight what many speakers described as the heinous, barbaric and all-too-often silent phenomenon of sexual violence during conflict.

Adopting resolution 2467 (2019) by a vote of 13 in favor to none against, with 2 abstentions (China, Russian Federation), during a wide-ranging debate on the prevention and implications of sexual violence, the



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a UN General Assembly session late Tuesday. —KUNA

Council reiterated its demand for the complete cessation of all acts of sexual violence by all parties to armed conflict. The Council reiterated its deep concern that - despite its repeated condemnation of violence against women and children in situations of armed conflict, including sexual violence - the phenomenon continues to occur, often with impunity, and in some situations has become systematic and widespread, or reached appalling levels of brutality. —KUNA

Foreign Ministry following up murdered citizen's case in Egypt

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday stressed the ministry's keenness to follow up the case of Kuwaiti citizen Khaled Al-Raish, who was murdered in Egypt. Jarallah made his remarks to reporters after a meeting with the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, which discussed several regional and international issues as well. He said that among the topics discussed was the ministry's efforts regarding Raish's case, adding that one of his relatives attended the meeting.



Khaled Al-Jarallah

Moreover, the meeting tackled the ministry's role in following up on states of citizens abroad, he said, "especially what was raised recently on the circumstances in Khartoum." Jarallah described the meeting as "very useful," as he listened to views and recommendations of the committee chair and members on those issues. Last March, Jarallah announced the intention of Kuwait to send an integrated security delegation to participate in the ongoing investigations into the heinous killing of Raish in Cairo, Egypt, in order to figure out circumstances and details of the incident, especially relating to the forensic report. —KUNA

Injuries as ambulance involve in accident on Fahaheel Expressway

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: An ambulance responding to a call collided with a vehicle on Fahaheel Expressway near Jabriya. The accident led to the ambulance flipping over, and left two technicians on board injured. Five injuries were reported - two paramedics were admitted to the ICU, while three civilians suffered bruises and are in stable condition.

Deportation

An interior ministry statement responded to a video showing two Arabs moving around with air rifles in Abu Halifa. The statement added that a decision was made to administratively deport the two for the general interest.

KNG Undersecretary discusses cooperation with Jordanian official

KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Lt Gen Hashim Al-Rifaie and Inspector General of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army Ghazi Al-Muqalbel discussed yesterday several issues of mutual interest. Rifaie conveyed greetings of KNG Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, as well as KNG Deputy Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to the visiting delegation, KNG said in a statement. Rifaie stressed importance of this visit to cement academic and military cooperation between the two sides, the statement noted. This is also part of KNG's strategic 2020 plan that includes ambitious goals to upgrade the role of KNG and enhance its efficiency as well as keep up with best military institutions of both brotherly and friendly countries, Rifaie pointed out, according to the statement. —KUNA

Govt facilities involved in environmental violations

KUWAIT: The Environment Public Authority (EPA) revealed that some government facilities and factories violate environmental laws by polluting the land and sea. A recent EPA report mentioned that inspection teams recorded more than 132 environment violations in the first quarter of 2019 due to the lack of compliance with safety and security conditions, in addition to pouring oil in the non-designated drains.

The authority's teams will reportedly send cases of 'grave violations' to the public prosecution committed by the Shuwaikh power and water desalination plant, which is operated by the Ministry of Electricity and Water, due to environmental violations and discharging water to the sea through the rain drainage network, as well as a rise in chlorine concentration in water leaving the station.

Meanwhile, the report said that violations were also detected in some Shuaiba and Sulaibiya factories, as 35 violations were recorded against factories that had unlicensed storage, in addition to not complying with security and safety standards. It added that 22 violations were recorded by industrial areas and commercial stores in Shuwaikh for linking their waste drainage illegally with the sewer drainage, as the facilities got rid of various liquid wastes in the sewer network of the ministry of public works without receiving approvals from concerned

authorities, along with not complying with engineering and environmental rules required for some activities, besides allowing smoking in non-smoking areas.

It added that there are 29 violations by restaurant and cafes in several areas of the country due to non-completion of necessary licensing procedures from the authority, having smoking and shisha activities in them, in addition to not having oil separation strainers. Nature was not spared from violations too, as environment teams recorded a contractor in Jaber Al-Ahmad residential housing project using an artesian well without a license from the concerned authority, in addition to having a desalination station without approval.

The Touristic Enterprises Company also had a violation - an encroachment on the sea environment, as one of its centers cleaned and removed oils that leaked into the soil and sea, in addition to recording 10 violations against beachgoers for throwing trash in public places.

There was also a violation against a school and a contracting company for removing trees and plants without coordination with concerned authorities, which is considered as harming vegetation. There were also several violations for overgrazing in Jahra and Ahmadi, and violations by more than 10 boats that conducted fishing activities inside Kuwait Bay.

Other statistics by EPA revealed that it received 275 complaints online divided over 10 items, most importantly 90 violations for smoking in public places. Director General of EPA Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad said EPA has control over the environmental situation in the country, and factories that do not comply with environmental regulations are being issued citations or sent to the public prosecution. He said EPA is planning projects to deal with rainwater drains in Kuwait Bay and installing temporary stations to deal with pollution in some residential areas. —Al-Qabas



KUWAIT: The ambulance is seen after the accident.



The ambulance pictured shortly after the accident took place.

Nurse attacked

The nursing society strongly condemned the beating of a nurse at the maternity hospital by a Jordanian man, adding that it will take all legal action against the attacker. The society said attacks against nurses must be met by strict punishments, especially since such acts have been

repeated, and demanded a legislation to protect healthcare professionals, especially nurses, from such incidents. The society said the beaten nurse - who is 18 weeks pregnant - attempted to warn the suspect that non-patients are not allowed to enter the x-ray area and that his wife is being taken care of, but he refused to comply and beat the nurse.

Six insurance companies suspended

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Commerce and Industry Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan issued six decisions to suspend the licenses of six insurance companies for three months or until the violation is removed, whichever is earlier. The companies are: Ain Takaful, Aman Takaful, Ghazal Takaful, Dar Al-Salem Takaful, Kuwait-Qatar Takaful and Ilaf Takaful. The decisions stipulated that insurance policies issued by the said companies before the suspension remain valid, while the companies will continue payments and compensations due on them. Meanwhile, informed sources said some companies that were threatened to be suspended by the commerce and industry ministry rectified their status, while others where on sound grounds.



Khaled Al-Roudhan

KD 17 million in dues

The communications ministry said it has collected KD 17 million in ministry dues. It said most of the debt was accumulated on active and inactive phones for years. The ministry said it formed a committee to collect debt due to the ministry, whether from ministry employees, companies or individuals. It said the committee worked in coordination with concerned ministries such as the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Public Authority for Civil Information, Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Justice Ministry to obtain subscribers' data who did not pay their subscription fees. The ministry said debts recorded on disconnected lines will remain until they are paid in full, even if tens of years pass.

Airport projects

Minister of Public Works and State Minister for Housing Affairs Jenan Bushehri decided to move the contracts and agreements of airport projects to the mega projects sector. The decision retained senior specialist engineer Faisal Al-Ustath as engineer of contracts and agreements of the airport project (Terminal 2). The decision stipulated that all procedures, correspondence and transactions of the said projects should be directly between the contract engineer and assistant undersecretary for the mega projects sector Hussam Al-Tahouh.



KUWAIT: Undersecretary of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Lt Gen Hashim Al-Rifaie presents a memento to Inspector General of the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army Ghazi Al-Muqalbel. —KUNA

Local

IFJ concludes 'Reporting on Forced Labor and Fair Recruitment' workshop

Participants exchanged experiences of covering stories on forced labor

By Nawara Fattahova and Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A two-day workshop on 'Reporting on Forced Labor and Fair Recruitment,' organized by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in cooperation with the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Kuwait Journalist Association (KJA), concluded yesterday. Participating reporters from various local dailies appreciated the valuable information they received at the workshop. They also exchanged experiences of covering stories on forced labor, in addition to suggestions on improving their work.

Kevin Burden, trainer at IFJ, media consultant and former head of training at the BBC for media development, spoke about various stories on forced labor from different countries. He mentioned some stories that changed the miserable situation of poor workers, such as the young fishermen working in a Far East country who were not allowed to leave the ship and some of them even died there.

He also gave examples of other instances of forced labor in some African countries, where even children are involved. He referred to popular electronic brands that use materials that are only available in Africa, but the consumer doesn't know about this, in addition to many other stories about migrant workers from various countries including some Arab countries.

Burden also highlighted the fact that reporters should be protecting victims, their sources of information and themselves as well. "We want to get stronger and tell people what's happening to change the bad situation. But on the other hand, we don't want to harm the victim or lose the reporter," he said, as reporters are the eyes and ears of the public and can trigger changes in the society.

Burden said within the bounds of credible and reputable journalism is the responsibility to provide factual information to the public. "We are not here to satisfy the state or any entities or individuals - we are here to report the truth, why it happens, where it happens, when and how it happens; and be able to explain the context of the event in an orderly manner. We are here to inform the public and state the facts - period," he said. He said it is also in the greater interest of the reading public to receive the best and most credible information.

Burden tackled issues related to challenges of being a reporter in the Middle East, particularly Kuwait. He asked participants to identify all the challenges of being a reporter in an environment like Kuwait. First on the

list was the challenge on how to convince proprietors to publish stories related to advertisers. Such pressure can be resolved if the journalist knows how to persuade owners that what they have written is for the better interest of the newspaper, because a journalist's primary role and purpose is to report the truth. "Persuade the

owners that at the end of the day, it's about their reputation," Burden said.

On pressure applied by politicians, he reminded about the importance of speaking the truth to those in power. Journalists should provide factual information and be able to stand with it. "If the source wants to protect their identity, our duty is to deliver what you agreed upon. A journalist's duty is to protect their sources and if you promised to do so, you really have to. You can't even post pixelated photos because the danger is that they can be reused and will eventually reveal the source's true identity. So, it will tarnish your reputation as a journalist and that of the institution," Burden said.

keenness on being an active participant in the various local and regional projects that contribute to shouldering and advancing national economy, being a leading national company in the Kuwaiti private sector. The event offered many opportunities for exchanging experiences across local and regional levels in specialized areas related to electrical and electronic engineering. Zain took part in the event by participating in a panel discussion, where the company showcased its leading experience in various technical areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, innovative solutions for smart cities, and more.

The 10th Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers - Kuwait Branch (IEEE) GCC Conference and Exhibition, the 2nd Student Forum, and the Women in Engineering (WiE) Forum mainly aimed at offering the opportunity for exchanging experiences in the latest and most advanced technologies around the world in multiple specialized fields. Such fields included clean and alternative energy, nanotechnology, electrical and AC services networks in new residential areas, green and smart buildings, cyber security, using advanced technology in medical and social fields, and more.

Zain's support to this event comes in line with its core objectives that aim at shouldering the advancement of the community as a whole on all levels, where the company reaffirms the principal of partnership through similar efforts with the aim of contributing to the further progress of national economy.

“ Reporters are the public's eyes and ears ”



KUWAIT: The participants in a group photo.



Kuwait Times' reporter Nawara Fattahova is honored.



Kuwait Times' reporter Ben Garcia is honored.

Zain sponsors 10th IEEE Conference and Exhibition

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its silver sponsorship of the 10th Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers - Kuwait Branch (IEEE) GCC Conference and Exhibition, the 2nd Student Forum, and the Women in Engineering (WiE) Forum. The event was held at the Regency Hotel under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Zain took part in the event's opening ceremony, which witnessed the attendance of the representative of His Highness the Prime Minister Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Dr Jenan Boushehri, Honorary President of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers - Kuwait Branch (IEEE) Abdulrahman Al-Ghunaim, Zain Kuwait's Chief Corporate Communications and Relations Officer Waleed Al-Khashti, as well as many officials, students, and professionals from various engineering and technical fields.

Zain's support to this event came in line with its



KUWAIT: Officials at Zain's booth.

EU-GCC trade exchanges in goods stable in 2018

BRUSSELS: European Union's (EU) trade in goods with the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in 2018 amounted to EUR 144.1 billion (\$161.5 billion), nearly the same as 2017. EU-GCC total trade in goods in 2017 amounted to EUR 143.7 billion (\$161.1 billion). EU exports to the GCC declined to EUR 91.26 billion (\$102.3 billion) in 2018 from EUR 99.8 billion (\$111.9 billion) in 2017. EU imports from the GCC went up accounting for EUR 52.8 billion (\$59.2 billion) in 2018 from EUR 43.8 billion (\$49.1 billion) in 2017, according to figures released by Eurostat, the EU's statistical agency.

EU imports from Oman in 2018 amounted to EUR 749.8 million (\$840.7 million), from Qatar EUR 7.2 billion (\$8.0 billion), from Bahrain EUR 143.8 million (\$161.2 million), from Kuwait EUR 3.2 billion (\$3.5 billion), from Saudi Arabia EUR 30.5 billion (\$34.1 billion) and from the United Arab Emirates EUR 11.0 billion (\$12.3 billion). However, EU exports to Oman totaled EUR 4.5 billion (\$5.0 billion), to Qatar EUR 10.6 billion (\$11.8 billion), to Bahrain EUR 2.1 billion (\$2.3 billion), to Kuwait EUR 5.6 billion (\$6.2 billion), to Saudi Arabia EUR 30.4 billion (\$34.0 billion) and to United Arab Emirates EUR 37.8 billion (\$42.3 billion).

EU imports from GCC countries are mainly mineral fuels, mining products and chemicals, whilst EU exports to GCC are mainly industrial products, such as power generation plants, railway locomotives, aircrafts as well as machinery and transport equipment. The EU was the first trading partner for the GCC in 2018 accounting for 14.6 percent of its total trade, followed by China (12.2 percent), Japan (8.5 percent) and India (8.4 percent). —KUNA

ALLEA MHWONA
Arrested for luring kids online.

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A Wonderful World



Heavy rains kill over 50 people in South Africa

Sleepless nights for Indonesia's election 'losers'

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NEGOMBO: Relatives carry coffins of bomb blast victims for a burial ceremony at a cemetery in Negombo yesterday, three days after a series of suicide attacks targeting churches and luxury hotels in Sri Lanka. — AFP

Sri Lanka admits 'major' lapse

Easter attacks death toll mounts to 350

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's government yesterday acknowledged "major" lapses over its failure to prevent the horrific Easter attacks that killed more than 350 people, despite prior intelligence warnings. Recriminations have flown since Islamist suicide bombers blew themselves up in packed churches and luxury hotels on Sunday, in attacks claimed by the Islamic State group. Overnight, security forces using newly granted powers under the country's state of emergency arrested 18 more suspects in connection with the attack, as the toll rose to 359.

Police have so far arrested 58 people, all Sri Lankans, and security remains heavy, with bomb squads carrying out several controlled explosions of suspect packages yesterday. But the government faces anger over revelations that specific warnings about an attack went ignored. Sri Lanka's police chief issued a warning on April 11 that suicide bombings against "prominent churches" by the local Islamist group National Thowheeth Jama'ath (NTJ) were possible, citing information from a foreign intelligence agency.

CNN reported that Indian intelligence services had passed on "unusually specific" information in the weeks before the attacks, some of it from an IS suspect in their custody. But that information was not shared with the prime minister or other top ministers, the government says. "It was a major lapse in the sharing of information,"

deputy defense minister Ruwan Wijewardene conceded at a press conference yesterday. "The government has to take responsibility."

Chilling footage

President Maithripala Sirisena, who is also defense and law and order minister, pledged Tuesday to make "major changes in the leadership of the security forces in the next 24 hours". "The restructuring of the security forces and the police will be completed within a week," he said. He also called an "all party conference" with the country's political parties for today, and will meet with religious leaders too. New details emerged about some of the bombers yesterday, with Wijewardene saying one had studied in Britain and then did post-graduate studies in Australia before returning to Sri Lanka.

"Most of them are well-educated and come from middle, upper-middle class families, so they are financially quite independent and their families are quite stable financially, that is a worrying factor in this," the minister

added. And chilling CCTV footage emerged showing one of the attackers calmly patting a child on the head and shoulder moments before he walked into the packed St Sebastian's church and detonated his bomb.

A US FBI team is now in Sri Lanka, Wijewardene said, and Britain, Australia and the United Arab Emirates have all offered intelligence help. Experts say the bombings bear many of the hallmarks of IS attacks, and the government has suggested local militants could not have acted alone. But it has not yet officially confirmed any IS role in the blasts against three churches packed with Easter worshippers and three high-end hotels.

A desperate search was under way for other suspects linked to the blasts, including the head of the local Islamist group believed to have played a key role in the attacks. The government has said the NTJ group was behind the attack, perhaps with international help, and its leader Zahran Hashim remains unaccounted for. He appears to be among eight people seen in a video released by IS on Tuesday, leading seven others in a pledge of allegiance to IS chief Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. It was not yet clear

whether Hashim was among the suicide attackers or had escaped after the blasts.

Multiple attackers

Government officials have said they cannot rule out further attacks while suspects remain at large. In all, nine people are believed to have blown themselves up in Sunday, either during attacks or when police attempted to arrest them. Sri Lankan police sources have told AFP that two Muslim brothers, sons of a wealthy Colombo spice trader, blew themselves up at the Shangri-La and the Cinnamon Grand hotels. Their father is now one of the 58 in custody.

The Kingsbury hotel in the capital was the last one hit. A fourth planned attack on a hotel failed, authorities said. The would-be attacker was followed back to a Colombo lodge, where he blew himself up, killing two people. Sources close to the investigation said two more people—a man and a woman—blew themselves up at another location as security forces launched a raid. Those blasts killed three police. Work was continuing to identify foreign victims in the blasts. A Danish billionaire lost three of his children in the attacks, a spokesman for his company said. Eight Britons, 10 Indians, four Americans and nationals from Turkey, Australia, Japan and Portugal were also reported killed. The United Nations said at least 45 children, Sri Lankans and foreigners, were among the dead. — AFP



Chilling CCTV footage shows one attacker

France holds first 'Armenia genocide' remembrance day

PARIS: France held its first "national day of commemoration of the Armenian genocide" yesterday, provoking an angry reaction from Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Troops from the Ottoman Empire - which preceded modern-day Turkey - were responsible for massacres and forced deportations of Armenians from 1915, but Turkey has always denied that the killings amounted to genocide. France was the first major European country to recognize the massacres as genocide in 2001 and Macron announced the national day of remembrance in February this year, saying that his country "knows how to look history in the face."

That drew a furious response from Erdogan at the time - he called Macron a "political novice" - and the Turkish leader denounced the commemoration day again yesterday in a televised speech. "If we look at those trying to give lessons on human rights or democracy to Turkey on the Armenian question and the fight against terrorism, we see that they all have a bloody past," he said. Relations between France and Turkey are tense, particularly due to differences over the future of Syria and the role of Kurdish fighters there, but the two countries are allies in NATO and economic partners.

Erdogan has accused France of being responsible for the genocide in Rwanda in



YEREVAN: People take part in a torchlight procession as they mark the anniversary of the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by Ottoman forces. — AFP

1994, where the current government accuses Paris of being complicit in the atrocities committed by the majority Hutu community on minority Tutsis. France has always denied the allegations and Macron announced the creation of a panel of historians and researchers earlier this month which will be tasked with investigating France's role. The 41-year-old French leader also announced an annual day of commemoration for the Rwanda genocide in which an estimated 800,000 people are thought to have died.

Armenians commemorate the massacres of their people on April 24 - the day in 1915 when thousands of Armenian intellectuals suspected of harboring nationalist sentiment and being hostile to Ottoman rule were rounded up. French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe is to lead the commemorations in

France yesterday by giving a speech and laying flowers at a Monument for the Armenian Genocide erected on the northern bank of the river Seine in April 2003.

"We should find a way to tell them we are not blaming Turkey for that (the massacres). We are blaming the Turkish government in 1915," French MP Jacques Marilossian, a member of Macron's Republic on the Move party, told the France 24 channel. When World War I broke out in 1914, Armenia - which for most of its history has been occupied by foreign powers - was divided between the Ottoman and Russian Empires. Armenians say up to 1.5 million of their mostly Christian kin were killed between 1915 and 1917 by Turkish forces, and have long sought international recognition that this was genocide. — AFP

For Sri Lankan grave digger, a grim parade

COLOMBO: Piyasri Gunasena rarely digs more than one grave a day at the Madampitiya cemetery in Sri Lanka's capital. On Tuesday, two days after the deadly Easter bomb attacks, he had dug 10 by mid-afternoon. "This has been the busiest time - even during the war, it wasn't so busy - only the odd funeral for a soldier," he said, referring to the country's bloody and decades-long Tamil insurgency. On an average day at the Colombo cemetery, Gunasena cuts the grass, checks the condition of the graves, and if needed, digs a fresh burial site. But after Islamists carried out a string of attacks on Sunday that killed more than 320 people, the coffins have not stopped coming.

"Police have not released all the remains yet but I think we will be busy for a while," he said as he dug his tenth grave of the day. Gunasena has found it harrowing, despite his decades of experience. Among the victims whose grave he dug Tuesday was an 11-month baby boy, and he said he had struggled to steady his hands as he worked. "Every time I dig a grave for a child I think of my own granddaughter and I feel like crying," the 48-year-old told AFP, as sweat soaked his grimy t-shirt and tattered shorts.

'Haunting wailing'

Attending the funerals breaks his

heart, he said. "When I see people weep, I feel very upset - the sound of their wailing is haunting, it doesn't leave me." A Buddhist who frequents temples and churches, Gunasena said he prays regularly "to clear my mind". "In the last two days though I have been praying more than usual - several times a day - begging God not to allow such a thing to happen again." The lush and usually peaceful cemetery has seen a steady stream of mourners arriving to bury loved ones since the blasts ripped through hotels and churches where members of the country's Christian minority were marking Easter.

On Tuesday afternoon, hundreds of people were gathered to say goodbye to the young Gomez family. The entire family - 33-year-old Berlington Joseph Gomez, his wife and their three little boys, aged nine, six and less than a year old - were killed in the attack on Colombo's St Anthony's Shrine. As a group of priests led the prayer service, family members wept and the crowd sang Christian hymns, before gently lowering the coffins - including the tiny one holding the remains of baby Avon - into the ground.

'We are all connected'

Berlington Gomez's father struggled to hold back tears as he recounted plans for his grandchild Avon's first birthday, which would have fallen on 5th May. "We were planning to baptise him on that day," he said. Priests sprinkled holy water on the coffins and then half a dozen men, including Gunasena, worked furiously under the blazing sun to pile soil into the graves. — AFP

International

Egyptians back constitutional changes extending Sisi's rule

88.83 percent vote 'yes' in referendum

CAIRO: Egyptian voters have overwhelmingly backed constitutional changes that could see President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's rule extended to 2030, the electoral board said. National Election Authority head Lashin Ibrahim told a Cairo press conference that 88.83 percent voted "yes" in a referendum on the amendments, with 11.17 percent voting "no". The three-day vote took place "in a democratic climate powered by freedom," he added. Sisi took to Twitter shortly after the results were announced to thank his fellow citizens "who dazzled the world with their awareness of the challenges facing" Egypt.

Around 27 million votes were cast in the Arab world's most populous country, with a turnout rate of 44.33 percent. Rights groups have criticized the conditions surrounding the rushed vote, including the suppression of those opposing the sweeping changes that consolidate Sisi's power. Egypt's parliament, stacked with Sisi loyalists, voted in favor of the amendments last week, giving voters just days to digest the changes to 20 articles. Other controversial amendments include boosting Sisi's control over the judiciary and giving the military even greater influence in Egyptian political life.



Riding a populist wave after militarily overthrowing Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in July 2013, Sisi cruised to a presidential victory in 2014 and was re-elected with more than 97 percent of the vote in 2018. "What is coming is extremely bad...it gives the message that I am your God and no one will come near the throne as long as I'm in power," said veteran Cairo University political scientist Hassan Nafaa. "How can a constitution be changed to tailor-fit one person?" he asked. Domestically and internationally, Sisi has presented himself as a bulwark against terrorism and a rock of political stability amid a region in turmoil.

'So much power'
"These constitutional amendments empower the executive and military at the expense of a weakened judiciary and legislature" said Sadany of TIMEP.

President thanks his fellow citizens

"Doing so eats away at the separation of powers, it deteriorates the rule of law, and it silences spaces for independent dissent," she explained.

Under Sisi, authorities have silenced all forms of political opposition in a sweeping crackdown on Islamists as well as secular and liberal activists. Rights groups have consistently criticized these heavy-handed tactics. Human Rights Watch's deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa, Michael Page, called the amendments "a shameless attempt to entrench the military's power over civilian rule" and said the referendum "took place in such an unfree and unfair environment that its results can have no pretense to legitimacy."

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Mustapha Kamel al-Sayyid, a professor of political science at the American University of Cairo, said the amendments set a dangerous precedent for future rulers beyond the tenure of 64-year-old Sisi. "This (raft of amendments) is unprecedented in the (modern) history of Egypt," he said. The constitutional package strengthens "the hand of one individual over everyone else... it will be very difficult to go back on because who will give up so much power?" Sayyid added. — AFP



SAQIYAT AL MANQADI: Egyptian voters flash the victory sign during a referendum on constitutional amendments, at a school in Saqiyat Al-Manqadi village in the northern Nile delta province of Menoufia. — AFP

Lebanon urged to end kafala system, abuse of workers

BEIRUT: Amnesty International yesterday urged Lebanon to end what it described as an "inherently abusive" migration sponsorship system governing the lives of tens of thousands of foreigners working in private homes. Domestic workers in Lebanon are excluded from the labor law, and instead obtain legal residency through their employers' sponsorship under the so-called "kafala" system.

But activists say this leaves the maids, nannies and carers at the mercy of their employers and unable to leave without their permission, including in numerous documented cases of abuse.

"Amnesty International is calling on the Lebanese authorities to end the kafala system and extend labor protections to migrant domestic workers," the London-based rights group said. "The Lebanese parliament should amend the labour law to include domestic workers under its protection," including to allow them to join unions, the group said. Lebanon hosts more than 250,000 registered domestic workers from countries in Africa and Asia, the vast majority of them women.

In a report released yesterday titled "Their house is my prison", Amnesty surveyed 32 domestic workers employed mostly in and around Beirut, revealing "alarming patterns of abuse". Among them, 10 women said they were not allowed to leave their employer's house, with some saying they were locked in. Twenty-seven said their employers had confiscated their passports. Many worked overtime, 14 were not allowed a single day off each week, and several had their monthly salaries revoked or decreased, despite it being a breach of their contracts. — AFP

Over 260 killed as Libya rivals battle

TRIPOLI: At least 264 people have been killed and over 1,200 wounded in weeks of fighting on the outskirts of Libya's capital, the World Health Organization said, as African leaders called for an immediate ceasefire. The WHO used Twitter to urge "a temporary cessation of hostilities, and for all parties to respect humanitarian law". Eastern-based strongman Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive on the capital on April 4, as his self-styled Libyan National Army pledged "to purge the west of terrorists and mercenaries".



AIN ZARA, Libya: Forces loyal to the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA) take aim during clashes with forces loyal to strongman Khalifa Haftar south of the capital Tripoli's suburb of Ain Zara. — AFP

Forces loyal to the internationally recognized Government of National Accord (GNA), based in Tripoli, launched a counter-attack at the weekend. The fighting has since eased somewhat as both sides appeared to be preparing for the next phase of the battle, but intermittent explosions and gunfire have continued including a huge blast near Tripoli. Fighting in Tripoli's southern suburbs has so far displaced at least 35,000 people, UN humanitarian coordinator for Libya Maria do Valle Ribeiro said Monday.

"Displacement is continuing at an increasing rate every day," she said, warning that the figures were a conservative estimate. The two sides have reached a near stalemate since armed groups backing the GNA launched their counter-attack

on Saturday. An AFP team on the ground at the weekend confirmed that GNA-aligned fighters had pushed the frontline back several kilometers in the southern district of Ain Zara, around a dozen kilometers south of the city centre.

'Civilians trapped'
Another frontline is a little further southwest, around the districts of al-Swani and Qasr ben-Ghachir, around 30 kilometers from Tripoli, on a key road between the capital and the old international airport. The International Organization for Migration's Libya office voiced concern Tuesday over "unacceptable and extremely worrying developments" at a detention centre for migrants in Qasr ben-Ghachir. "Defenseless migrants were reportedly subject to random shooting

and several of them were seriously injured" it said on Twitter. GNA forces spokesman Mustafa al-Mejji said Tuesday most fronts were "calm" and that pro-GNA troops had been ordered to consolidate positions around the airport.

Later in the afternoon, they faced heavy fire as they tried to maintain a forward position on a security checkpoint less than 20 kilometers from Gharyan, on a key road south of Tripoli. In a statement, they said they had seized strategic positions "cutting the road between Gharyan and Haftar's forces in the outer districts of Tripoli". Early in the evening, the city was rocked by an enormous blast which the GNA said was caused by an LNA airstrike targeting pro-unity government forces on Tripoli's western outskirts. — AFP

'Water is life': Rainfall revives Iraq's historic marshlands

CHIBAYISH MARSHES: This time last year, most of Iraq's historic marshlands were dry, desiccated by upstream damming and a chronic lack of rainfall. Now, local farmers are counting their blessings after unexpected heavy rainfall at the end of 2018 caused the dams to overflow by early January and water came gushing back to the wetlands in southeastern Iraq. For Yunus Khalil, a farmer raising water buffalo in the central marsh, the lack of water meant he had to sell most of his herd at a loss last year.

"We were terrified the water wouldn't come back," Khalil said. "It would've been the end for us." The marshes, thought to be the biblical Garden of Eden and named a UNESCO world heritage site in 2016, are

experiencing their highest water levels since they were reclaimed in 2003, said Jassim al-Asadi, southern director of local NGO Nature Iraq and a native of the marshlands, which stretch to the Iran border.

"God knows how much we suffered last year," Khalil said. "He protected us." Saddam Hussein accused the area's inhabitants, the Marsh Arabs, of treachery during the 1980-1988 war with Iran and later drained the marshes - which before then had stretched across more than 3,700 square miles (9,583 sq km) - to flush out rebels. Many residents fled, but after Saddam's overthrow in 2003, parts of the marshland were re-flooded and around 250,000 Marsh Arabs have cautiously trickled back.

Many had moved to farmland in nearby provinces, or went to live in exile in Iran. Their years away brought a change to the vibrant local culture, residents say, and more conservative norms, particularly regarding the role of women who have long worked alongside men in the marshes. "You used to hear women singing as they pushed their boats through the marshes at dawn," said Taher Mehsin, a fisherman in his late 60s. "Now, some of the men won't let their women out of the house." — Reuters

ALILA MHIWONA
Charged with online procurement of a minor.

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International

Democrats want truth but are split on Trump's impeachment

Presidential hopefuls call for impeachment proceedings

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's approval rating has slid since release of the Russia investigation report, but instead of emerging bolstered in the 2020 presidential race, Democrats are torn over triggering impeachment proceedings that risk muddling their electoral message. While special counsel Robert Mueller's report released last week stopped short of reaching a judgment on whether Trump committed crimes, many Democrats say it detailed extensive presidential wrongdoing that highlights his lack of fitness for office.

And it essentially invites the House of Representatives, led by opposition Democrats, to initiate impeachment proceedings to determine whether Trump obstructed justice. But will lawmakers take that explosive political step, as some 2020 presidential hopefuls have said they should, or will they heed the advice of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi who has been pumping the brakes on impeachment talk? The debate has pitted Democrats against one another at a time when the party might be better served by unifying ahead of a battle against Trump for the presidency in 2020.

"I see no good outcome for the Democrats from impeachment," Christopher Artterton, a political professor emeritus at George Washington University said. "That turns Trump into a victim... and I think that not only energizes his base but it's attractive to the group of 20 percent that are basically in the middle and undecided so far about their presidential vote." More Americans oppose rather than support impeaching Trump.

Just 34 percent back the process compared with 48 percent opposed, according to a Morning Consult poll. The survey also shows Trump's job approval rating dropping five points following release of Mueller's report, to 39 percent of voters against 57 percent who disapprove, the lowest-ever rating of his presidency.

Several Democrats, buoyed by Trump's sinking popularity and how the scandals brought to light by Mueller could hurt his re-election chances, have cautioned Congress against obsessing over Trump's impeachment instead of judging the president on his first term and addressing significant issues like health care. "I worry that works to Trump's advantage" if the focus is on impeachment, said candidate Bernie Sanders.

But in the wake of Mueller's findings, at least five of the 20 Democratic presidential hopefuls, including senators Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris, have publicly called for impeachment proceedings. Warren argued that the question should not be whether the process creates partisan advantage, but whether it meets the constitutional bar of high crimes and misdemeanors. "This is not about politics. This is about principle," she said.

Party is eager to reap the benefits of Mueller report



'Finding the truth'
That Warren and Sanders, two of the party's progressive messengers, are on opposite sides of the divide crystallizes the impeachment dilemma facing Democrats. Clearly the party is eager to reap the benefits of the Mueller report's damning revelations, including Trump calling then-White House counsel Don McGahn in 2017 to direct him to order Mueller's firing, a move critics have described as textbook obstruction of justice.

One argument against ouster suggests that even if the House votes to impeach Trump, the Senate's Republican majority would acquit, a result that would unify the Trump's party and embolden a sitting president who could tout his immunity to political scandal. Trump's arch foe Pelosi told her caucus Monday that she wants to move forward with ongoing congressional investigations, and not rush to impeachment. "We all firmly agree that we should proceed down a



MARYLAND: US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump board Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland yesterday. They are traveling to Atlanta, Georgia, to speak at the Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit. —AFP

path of finding the truth," Pelosi wrote Monday in a letter to colleagues.

"It is also important to know that the facts regarding holding the President accountable can be gained outside of impeachment hearings," she added. On cue, House Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler announced he was subpoenaing McGahn to testify in their investigation into whether Trump obstructed justice. "Pelosi will try to drag this out on a low simmer through 2020," tweeted Ross Garber, a veteran impeachment lawyer. "She wants to focus on key elections issues and not on what the House Dems are doing

or not doing about impeachment."

Pelosi may also be looking to history as a guide. Her party would recall the backlash suffered by Republicans who sought to oust president Bill Clinton in 1998. Among the Democratic presidential hopefuls who has not publicly weighed in on the current impeachment debate is Joe Biden. The former vice president is the Democratic frontrunner despite not formally entering the race. Biden is expected to announce his candidacy today in an online video, according to US media - and he will likely be forced to quickly wade into the debate. —AFP

News in brief

'Shocking' Saudi executions

GENEVA: The UN rights chief yesterday condemned the mass executions carried out by Saudi Arabia this week, stressing that those convicted were likely not afforded credible criminal trials. The men were executed on Tuesday after being convicted of terrorism, according to the official Saudi Press Agency. "I strongly condemn these shocking mass executions across six cities in Saudi Arabia yesterday in spite of grave concerns raised about these cases," the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, said in a statement. The rights office restated its concern over the "lack of due process and fair trial guarantees (and) allegations that confessions were obtained through torture." "It is particularly abhorrent that at least three of those killed were minors at the time of their sentencing," Bachelet added. —AFP

'15 dead' in northwest Syria

JISR AL-SHUGHUR: A powerful explosion yesterday killed 15 people including more than a dozen civilians in jihadist-held northwest Syria, a war monitor said, as rescuers searched for people trapped under the rubble. An AFP reporter at the scene saw a building of at least four storeys that had collapsed in the town of Jisr al-Shughur in Idlib, a region controlled by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate. One opposite had partially caved in while surrounding buildings appeared on the verge of collapse. A civil defense worker eased himself under a massive slab of fallen concrete to search for victims, as three colleagues crouched by his side to help. Thirteen civilians were among those killed in the blast, the cause of which was not immediately clear, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group. —AFP

4 killed in Burkina attack

OUAGADOUGOU: Armed gunmen stopped a bus traveling in northern Burkina Faso and shot dead four passengers, local sources said yesterday, with jihadists suspected of staging the attack. Passengers had their IDs checked before the shooting took place, a local authority told AFP, after the bus was intercepted in the village of Liki on Tuesday. "The four people killed were from the same ethnic community," while the others were not harmed, the source said. "It was probably members of armed terrorist groups that are active in the region," the source added. Burkina Faso, a former French colony, has seen a surge in attacks blamed on radical Islamist groups - mainly the Ansaroul Islam group and the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM) - in the last four years. —AFP

Syrian presidency Instagram

DAMASCUS: The Syrian presidency said its Instagram account has been blocked, one week after the photo-sharing website shut down the accounts of several Iranian Revolutionary Guards because of US sanctions. A statement released on the presidency's other social media channels said the move came without "prior warning or a logical justification". YouTube had previously blocked the presidency's channel several times, it said. The "deliberate" decision to close-down official government channels and accounts on social media networks is part of a "growing siege" that has been imposed on Syria since the start of the country's war in 2011, the presidency said. It said it believed further measures may follow as part of a so-called "soft war" being waged on the country, now that "the military conflict is receding". —AFP

UN backs weakened resolution on sexual violence in conflicts

UNITED NATIONS: Nobel Peace Prize laureates Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege has called for justice for victims of sexual violence in conflict zones, as the UN Security Council approved a watered-down resolution largely stripped of substance by the United States and Russia. The vote on the German-drafted resolution was held after intense last minute negotiations and additional changes in wording. Thirteen countries voted in favor while Russia and China abstained. Both those countries said they opposed sexual violence in conflicts, but denounced "lax interpretations" in the text and a "manipulated" struggle to create new UN structures and "override" mandates already approved.

France vehemently criticized the United States for threatening to use its veto over a reference in the text to reproductive rights, seen by Washington as an encouragement of abortion. Speaking before the vote, Murad and Mukwege decried the inter-

national community's failure to act. "Not a single person has been charged for sexual slavery," said Murad, speaking at the United Nations about massacres of her Yazidi community by the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria.

"The hopes of an entire generation have been destroyed," the Iraqi human rights activist added, speaking of the "collective failure" of the international community to intervene. "We give speeches at the UN but no real measures have been taken (in terms of obtaining justice) and nothing has been done." Mukwege, a Congolese doctor who like Murad was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018, asked: "What is the international community waiting for to give justice for the victims?"

He also called for the establishment of national and international courts to try the perpetrators of sexual violence in conflicts. Amal Clooney, the star human rights lawyer who represents Murad and other Yazidi victims, denounced the weak international response. She accused the United States and Russia of opposing a judicial system to hold the perpetrators of these crimes to account, as has been done for past horrors committed in Bosnia, Cambodia, Sierra Leone and Rwanda or at the Nuremberg trials.

Over 50 killed in South Africa after heavy rains

DURBAN: Rescue workers were digging through collapsed buildings along South Africa's eastern coast, where more than 50 people were killed when heavy rain caused flooding and mudslides, authorities said yesterday. Hundreds have been displaced, mainly in the port city of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal province. Flooding also killed at least three people in Eastern Cape province, state broadcaster SABC said yesterday.

Victor da Silva, a resident in the coastal town of Amanzimtoti, said his family managed to evacuate before the floods destroyed their home and cars. "On Monday, the water was just crazy. And yesterday morning I got here, everything was fine, my garage was still here, the other part of the house was still here, and it just couldn't stop raining," Da Silva said. "And then an hour and half later, everything poof

(vanished) because the rain just hasn't stopped.

Johan Fourie told eNCA television that he escaped his home in Amanzimtoti just before part of it collapsed. "I nearly lost my life, and my neighbor, I believe, is in hospital," Fourie said. The region had been hit by heavy rains for days, but authorities did not foresee the downpour late on Monday, said Lennox Mabaso, a spokesman for the provincial Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs department.

"As a result, there was flooding and some structures were undermined and collapsed on people," Mabaso said. Some people were swept away by the water, he said. Multiple dwellings collapsed in the mudslides, said Robert McKenzie, a KwaZulu-Natal Emergency Medical Services spokesman. South African Weather Service forecaster Edward Engelbrecht said the heavy rainfall occurs "from time to time, especially during this time of the year."

He said the rain should start to clear by today. President Cyril Ramaphosa visited affected communities in KwaZulu-Natal and is scheduled to go to the Eastern Cape in the next few days. "This is partly what

US court hears politically charged census case

WASHINGTON: A sharply divided US Supreme Court heard arguments on Tuesday in a case about the 2020 census that could have high-stakes implications for

the future balance of political power in the United States. At the heart of the case is a bid by the administration of Republican President Donald Trump to ask respondents of the 2020 census whether they are US citizens. Opponents of the citizenship question say this could potentially curtail Democratic representation in Congress since most non-citizens reside in states with Democratic majorities.

If non-citizens avoid census-takers for fear of running afoul of the immigration



NEW YORK: (Left to right) Human rights lawyer Amal Clooney (left) speaks as Iraqi human rights activist Nadia Murad Basse Taha and Nobel Peace Prize winner Denis Mukwege look on during a United Nations Security Council meeting at UN headquarters. —AFP

'It's scandalous'

"If we don't act now, it will be too late," Clooney said, pointing to the thousands of Islamic State group militants currently being held. "I agree that we are facing an epidemic of sexual violence. And I believe that justice is the antidote." The German text initially sought to establish a formal working group, set

up a mechanism to help bring to justice those responsible and develop victims' protection by giving formal recognition to their sexual and reproductive rights. China, Russia and the United States opposed the mechanism, the working group was scrapped and Washington threatened a veto if the text spoke of reproductive rights. —AFP



DURBAN: People abandon their homes at an informal settlement of BottleBrush, south of Durban, after torrential rains and flash floods destroyed their homes yesterday. —AFP

climate change is about, that it just hits when we least expect it," he said, adding that funds would be provided by the government to assist those hit by the floods.

authorities, states where they live could lose federal funding and seats in the House of Representatives. House seats are allocated on the basis of the census and the data also play a major role in how more than \$675 billion in federal funds is spent. The US Constitution mandates a census every 10 years with congressional representation apportioned based on the "whole numbers of persons in each state."

Trump, who has made stopping illegal immigration a hallmark of his presidency,

Last week, 13 people were killed during an Easter service in KwaZulu-Natal when a church wall collapsed after days of heavy rains and strong winds. —Reuters

has said that without the citizenship question the census "would be meaningless and a waste" of billions of dollars. The five conservative justices on the nine-member Supreme Court - two of whom were appointed by Trump - appeared to be receptive on Tuesday to the administration's arguments. The four liberal justices were skeptical, raising questions about the administration's motivations and citing studies that showed a citizenship question would lead to undercounting. —AFP

International

Undeterred by Khashoggi murder, global executives return to Saudi

Riyadh working hard to recover from Khashoggi uproar

RIYADH: Global finance chiefs who boycotted a Saudi investment summit last year following the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi returned to Riyadh this week as the Gulf kingdom gets business back on track. Dozens of Western politicians and business executives pulled out of Saudi Arabia's showcase summit in October amid global uproar over Khashoggi's killing at the hands of Saudi agents inside the kingdom's Istanbul consulate three weeks earlier.

A Saudi court has charged 11 suspects in a secretive trial and Western allies imposed sanctions on individuals. But Riyadh still faces criticism with some Western governments saying Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered the murder. Saudi authorities have denied any connection to the country's de facto ruler. Big investors in Saudi Arabia appear to be focused on potential deals in the largest Arab economy and the world's top oil exporter as it opens up under a transformation drive led by Prince Mohammed.

HSBC CEO John Flint and Blackrock CEO Larry Fink, who had stayed away from last year's event, joined panels at the two-day financial forum that began on Wednesday, as did co-president of JPMorgan Chase & Co, Daniel Pinto. "This is an economy that we have a lot of confi-

dence in, I think the future is bright," Flint told the gathering. "We are excited about the role that we can continue to play here." Fink told another panel: "The changes here in the kingdom in the last two years are pretty amazing."

The CEO of the London Stock Exchange, who had pulled out of last year's event, is also scheduled to speak at the financial conference. Also slated to attend is the chairman of Japan's Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Inc, whose CEO decided to abstain from the October summit. Riyadh has been trying for months to refocus attention on its reforms, sending a senior delegation to the World Economic Forum in Davos and unveiling an industrial plan to attract hundreds of billions of dollars in investments in January.

The summit is taking place days after Saudi security forces thwarted an attack on a state security building in central Riyadh province, which authorities blamed on Islamic State. On Tuesday Saudi Arabia announced it had

executed 37 people in connection with terrorism crimes, the majority of whom were Shiite Muslims. Amnesty International criticized the executions as a "gruesome indication of how the death penalty is being used as a political tool to crush dissent" in the kingdom.

Asked how Saudi Arabia was addressing national security issues, Finance Minister Mohammed al-Jadaan told the audience the Gulf region is "one of the safest worldwide". "These incidents will happen," he said of the Riyadh province attack. "We are working with the world to make sure that we combat the financing of terrorism... and we work very closely with the West and the regional

forces to make sure that we intercept and fight terrorism."

Market confidence

Earlier this month, state oil giant Saudi Aramco received more than \$100 billion in orders for its first international bond issue, a record breaking vote of mar-

ket confidence. Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih told the forum that Aramco would be active in debt markets and that the \$12 billion it raised in its debut bond issue was "only the beginning".

The Saudi stock market has also seen an upsurge in foreign fund flows since the start of 2019 as the market enters global emerging market benchmarks. The index is up nearly 18 percent year-to-date, one of the best performing markets in the region. The domestic financial sector is seeing a relative uptick in activity this year, fuelled by an economic recovery from higher oil prices and government-led spending on big projects. Jadaan told the forum that the ministry is launching a 12.5 billion riyal (\$3.33 billion) initiative to support private sector growth in the kingdom.

While some foreign investors are pushing ahead, other firms continue to keep Saudi Arabia at arm's length, fearing a potential backlash at home over Khashoggi's murder, the Yemen war and Riyadh's detention of women's rights activists. Virgin Group last year suspended talks with the kingdom's Public Investment Fund (PIF) over a planned \$1 billion investment. Hollywood talent agency Endeavor and PIF "parted ways" after talks on the fund investing \$400 million, a source familiar with the matter has said. — Reuters



Executives pulled out of Oct summit

US, Afghan forces kill more civilians than insurgents

KABUL: Afghan civilians are for the first time being killed in greater numbers by US and pro-government forces than by the Taliban and other insurgent groups, a UN report released yesterday revealed. The bloody milestone comes as the US steps up its air campaign in Afghanistan while pushing for a peace deal with the Taliban, who now control or influence more parts of the country than at any time since they were ousted in 2001.

During the first three months of 2019, international and pro-government forces were responsible for the deaths of 305 civilians, whereas insurgent groups killed 227 people, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a quarterly report. The majority of the deaths resulted from US air strikes or from search operations on the ground, primarily conducted by US-backed Afghan forces, some of which UNAMA said "appear to act with impunity".

"UNAMA urges both the Afghan national security forces and international military forces to conduct investigations into allegations of civilian casualties, to publish the results of their findings, and to provide compensation to victims as appropriate," the report states. UNAMA started compiling civilian casualty data in 2009 amid deteriorating security conditions in Afghanistan. It is the first tally since records began that shows pro-govern-

ment forces have killed more civilians than insurgents have, though insurgents were responsible for more than twice as many injuries as were pro-government forces.

Colonel Dave Butler, spokesman for US Forces-Afghanistan, said the US military holds itself "to the highest standards of accuracy and accountability" and that it strives for precision in all its operations. "We reserve the right of self-defense of our forces as well as the Afghan Security Forces," Butler said in a statement. "The best way to end the suffering of non-combatants is to end the fighting through an agreed-upon reduction in violence on all sides."

'Shocking number'

In 2017, the US military started quickening its operational tempo after President Donald Trump loosened restrictions and made it easier for American forces to bomb Taliban positions. According to US Air Force Central Command, the US dropped 7,362 bombs in Afghanistan in 2018, the highest number since at least 2010, and up from 4,361 in 2017. While other nations may contribute logistical or technical support, it is US aircraft that conduct most strikes. Afghanistan's fledgling air force is also flying more sorties.

The US has sent huge B-52 bombers on runs over the country and benefited from an increase in aerial hardware as operations against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria tapered off. UNAMA's report did, however, also find that civilian casualties dropped 23 percent compared with the first three months of 2018. In all, UNAMA documented 1,773 casualties in the last quarter: 581 deaths and 1,192 injured - the lowest first-quarter toll since 2013. —AFP



KABUL: Afghan security personnel stand guard near the Afghan communication ministry in central Kabul. — AFP

Sleepless nights for Indonesia's election 'losers'

CIREBON, Indonesia: Political hopeful Yayat Abdurahman bet that he would be a winner among some 245,000 candidates in Indonesia's huge election last week, but his dreams of public office are fading fast as the votes get tallied. So the stressed-out candidate checked into an Islamic healing centre where a cleric prayed for his future and doused him in flower-infused water as part of traditional cleansing ritual. "At the beginning I was optimistic and feeling confident," he said. "I thought 'I have to win, I have to get the most votes'. But now I'm feeling more doubtful." If Abdurahman loses when the world's third-biggest democracy publishes official results next month, he won't be alone.

More than 200,000 candidates in Muslim majority Indonesia's biggest-ever election will miss their goal, leaving many with no job and often huge campaign debts. "They are stressed out, they can't sleep," said Ujang Busthomi, head of the Islamic healing centre in West Java's Cirebon city, where Abdurahman joined some half a dozen candidates admitted for post-election treatment. "They have run out of money and don't know how they'll pay off their debts," he added.

Wounded political warriors

Hospitals nationwide have been gearing up for an expected influx of post-poll patients seeking treatment for stress, depression and other maladies - an election-time staple in the Southeast Asian archipelago. Among them is a psychiatric hospital in Makassar on Sulawesi island that did a pre-election renovation to make way



CIREBON: Political hopeful Yayat Abdurahman (left) being doused with water as part of a traditional cleansing ritual by a cleric at an Islamic healing centre in Cirebon. — AFP

for wounded election warriors. "In the last legislative elections there were candidates put in hospital because they had psychiatric disorders or depression after they failed to get elected," said Dadi hospital director Arman Bausat. "Every time there's an election, some candidates get hospitalized." —AFP

Police to allow transgender recruits in Pakistan province

KARACHI: Transgender people in Pakistan's Sindh province will be able to serve as regular duty police officers, the police chief said, adding it was time to offer more opportunities to a group relegated to menial jobs in government. After years of sometimes brutal persecution, transgender Pakistanis gained recognition in 2009 when the Supreme Court granted them special status with rights equal to other citizens.

While discrimination still persists, the move to allow transgender police recruits would be a significant step for the community, activists say. "We will make them part of Sindh police," Syed Kaleem Imam, Inspector General of the Sindh police told Reuters in Karachi, the

capital of Sindh province. "They are good God-gifted people. Citizens like us. We should stand by them," said Imam, who as a junior officer became aware of the discrimination against the community. As in neighboring India and Bangladesh, transgender Pakistanis have faced widespread discrimination for decades. Many live in secluded communities, earning a living as dancers or forced into sex work or begging. A 2017 census counted 10,418 transgender people in the country of 207 million, but rights group Charity Trans Action Pakistan estimates there are at least 500,000.

'Trans-friendly'

In a major step forward in 2009, the Supreme Court ruled that transgender people could receive national identity cards as a "third sex" and in 2017, the government issued its first passport with a transgender category. While some transgender people have achieved celebrity as news anchors or fashion models, entry into the police force would be a major development for the community. — Reuters

Analysis

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Remote Alaskan village divided over oil drilling

The sun had yet to rise in the remote Arctic in north-eastern Alaska but tourists in search of polar bears were already boarding small boats setting off from a frozen beach. Bears have become a popular attraction for visitors to Kaktovik, a 250-person Native Alaskan village surrounded by the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), the US' largest wildlife park covering 19.6 million acres. This has generated steady work for indigenous Inupiaq hunters-turned-guides who ferry tourists around the waters of this island town while keeping a safe distance from polar bears, whose playful appearance belies their dangerous nature.

For the bears' growing presence in Kaktovik during an increasingly long ice-free season is a cause for alarm with local residents blaming climate change - and this has fuelled a growing dispute over oil drilling in the largely unscathed area. "The polar bears are in abundance here on the shore because their habitat has gone away - because the world is burning too much fossil fuel," guide Robert Thompson told the Thomson Reuters Foundation after a day of polar bear guiding. The link between fossil fuels and a warming Arctic is the key reason Thompson opposes oil drilling in a 1.5 million acre coastal plain of the ANWR known as the 1002 area - but change is afoot with Washington rolling back protections. Thompson is on one side of a bitter fight that has divided this remote village and sparked debate over who are the true custodians of Native Alaskan land.

Lease sales

In 1968, the largest proven oil reserve in US history was discovered about 175 km west of Kaktovik in Prudhoe Bay on Alaska's North Slope. With the completion of the Trans Alaska Pipeline in 1977, the region became a key energy source. In 1971, the US government passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which paid nearly \$1 billion at that time to Native Alaskans and transferred about 44 million acres of public land to indigenous-controlled corporations.

The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), whose shareholders are the Inupiaq people of the North Slope, owns surface and subsurface rights to millions of acres in the Arctic, and leases land for oil and gas exploration. With the Kaktovik Inupiaq Corporation, the two indigenous companies own 92,000 acres of surface and subsurface rights in ANWR which contains some of North America's wildest territory.

Within the refuge borders, there are no roads, established trails, or buildings of any type, and no cell phone service, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service. "This is a true wilderness refuge," the Arctic park's website states. In the 1980s oil major Chevron drilled the only exploratory well in ANWR, the most significant step toward petroleum development in a decades-long debate about whether oil could be drilled safely in the refuge, without affecting wildlife.

That debate took a new turn in December 2017 when Congress passed a tax-overhaul bill with a provision mandating two oil lease sales in the 1002 area, each offering at least 400,000 acres, within seven years. Environmental and Native groups criticized the Department of the Interior (DoI) for moving too swiftly on readying a lease sale for later this year, saying more time was needed to consult with tribes and other locals. Last December, the US Army Corps of Engineers released a draft environmental impact statement outlining four possible scenarios for oil drilling. In February, the DoI's Bureau of Land Management held public meetings in several Alaskan cities and villages, including Kaktovik, as well as in Washington, DC, the nation's capital. Both steps are part of the standard procedure to move ahead with selling an oil lease, said Kara Moriarty, president of the Alaska Oil and Gas Association, furthering her hopes that drilling will proceed under the Trump administration.

"According to the schedule released by the Department of Interior, they plan to issue a final environmental impact statement later this summer or early fall," Moriarty said in emailed comments. "At this point, they haven't missed that deadline so we have no reason to believe that a lease sale will not occur."

Representation

A 2016 poll conducted by the village found residents equally split over oil drilling in ANWR. "You'll have people who hate your guts because you're saying no," Kaktovik Mayor Nora Jane Burns told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from the village office. Burns grew up supporting oil development but has changed her mind over the years. "The main concern is the animals," she said. The Gwich'in Athabaskan people of Alaska and Canada, who live and hunt in the southern part of ANWR, oppose oil development because it threatens the caribou herd that is central to their diet and culture. Burns said most Inupiaq support for oil drilling came from larger settlements away from Kaktovik, like the North Slope's largest city, Utqiagvik, where the ASRC is headquartered. "On the western side, they all want development. They want it here on our land because they want to preserve their own hunting grounds," Burns said. "We always like to represent ourselves but they represent us - but they don't live here." —Reuters

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North Korean leader Kim Jong Un walks upon arrival at the railway station in the far-eastern Russian port of Vladivostok yesterday. —AFP

Putin-Kim summit sends message to US

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is set to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin for the first time this week at a symbolic summit hoping to project himself as a serious world player but likely to come away without the relief he seeks from crushing sanctions. After his second summit with US President Donald Trump ended without an agreement two months ago, Kim's meeting with Putin serves as a reminder to Washington that he has other options in the region backing his leadership.

But while Kim is likely to seek more assistance from one of his country's two main backers, Russia will be limited in what it can provide and the summit will focus more on demonstrating camaraderie than new investment or aid, analysts said. "When Kim meets Putin, he is going to ask for economic assistance and unilateral sanctions relaxation. Moscow is unlikely to grant his wishes," said Artyom Lukin, a professor at Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok.

That school's campus is seen to be the summit venue, according to South Korean media which reported the presence of Kim's top aides there making preparations for the event. "Being a veto-holding UN Security Council member, Moscow can hardly afford to undermine its authority even for the sake of friendship with Kim," Lukin said.

Sanctions relief

While Russia says it fully enforces the sanctions that it voted to impose, it has joined China in calling for loosening punishment for North Korea in recognition of steps taken in limiting its weapons testing.

Hashim: Radical linked to Sri Lanka blasts

For years, Sri Lanka's Muslim community warned authorities about a firebrand cleric. Now it seems Zahran Hashim may have played a key role in one of the worst attacks in the country's history. A video released by the Islamic State group after it claimed responsibility for bombs that killed 359 people, appears to prominently feature Hashim. The round-faced cleric is the only one of the eight figures whose face is uncovered.

Dressed in a black tunic and headscarf, and carrying a rifle, Hashim is seen in the IS video leading seven people in a pledge of allegiance to the group's chief Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. The other seven all wear the same black tunics but their faces are obscured by black-and-white chequered scarves. Sri Lanka's government has accused Hashim indirectly, saying the Islamist group he was believed to lead - the National Thowheeth Jama'ath - carried out the attacks.

Hashim was identified, albeit with his name misspelled as Hashmi, by police as heading NTJ. The IS video was the first concrete evidence of the apparently central role played by Hashim in the Easter attacks.

'A loner'

Hashim was a virtual unknown before the onslaught - even inside Sri Lanka. He had attracted several thousand followers on social media sites, including YouTube and Facebook, where he posted incendiary sermons. In one, the cleric with an unkempt black beard, delivers an extremist diatribe against non-Muslims, with a crudely photoshopped backdrop of flags in flames. Hilmy Ahamed, vice-president of the Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, said he had gone to local authorities with concerns about Hashim three years ago.

"This person was a loner and he had radicalized young people in the guise of conducting Koran classes," he told AFP. "But nobody thought these people were capable of carrying out an attack of such

magnitude," Ahamed said Hashim, who has also gone by the names Mohamed Zahran and Moulavi Hashim, was around 40 years old and from the east coast region of Batticaloa. The only one of the attacks on Sunday to hit outside of the Colombo area was at the Zion Church in Batticaloa.

Dead or alive?

"Zahran belonged to an average Muslim middle-class family. He was a drop-out," said Ahamed, adding that the cleric had studied at an Islamic college in Kattankudy, a Muslim-majority city in eastern Sri Lanka. He was considered a menace by the local Muslim community and caused trouble at Kattankudy's Thowheeth mosque. "The mosque saw continuous conflict with the traditional mosque goes. Once Zahran took a sword out to kill people belonging to the traditional Muslim mosque," Ahamed said.

Local media said Hashim formed the NTJ in Kattankudy in 2014. There was still confusion Wednesday about whether that group, or a splinter organization, carried out the Easter attack. "There has been a group that has split from the main body," of the NTJ, Deputy Defense Minister Ruwan Wijewardene said. "We believe that the leader of this group has also committed suicide in one of the attacks," he added, refusing to confirm if he was referring to Hashim or someone else.

Sri Lankan officials are still investigating to what degree IS may have helped the attackers, but Ahamed said Hashim was known by the community to have international ties. "All his videos have been uploaded from India. He uses boats of smugglers to travel back and forth from southern India," he said. "I don't know if he is dead or alive," added Ahamed.

And neither do police, who want to know if Hashim was among the suicide bombers. Yesterday they were carrying out DNA tests on the bodies of some of the bombers, particularly one who set off explosives at the Shangri-La hotel. "The biggest concern is Zahran," said an officer close to the investigation. "Anyone who can help us trace him will be doing everyone a huge favour," the official added. "We have not been able to account for him yet." —AFP

"Steps by the DPRK towards gradual disarmament should be followed by the easing of sanctions," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at a Security Council meeting late last year, using the initials of the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Washington has accused Russia of "cheating" on sanctions and said it has evidence of "consistent and wide-ranging Russian violations". In February, Reuters reported a Russian tanker violated international trade sanctions by transferring fuel to a North Korean vessel at sea at least four times between Oct 2017 and May 2018. One Russian lawmaker told Interfax news agency last week that North Korea had asked Moscow to allow its laborers to continue to work in Russia despite sanctions requiring their expulsion by the end of this year.

"One particularly sore area for Kim is the issue of North Korean laborers working in Russia," said Anthony Rinna, a specialist in Korea-Russia relations at Sino-NK, a website that analyses the region. "Kim will probably be seeking some wiggle-room from Russia, although Moscow will be hard-pressed to accommodate Kim given its desire to portray a responsible image in the world."

The United States has said it believed Pyongyang was earning more than \$500 million a year from nearly 100,000 workers abroad, including 30,000 in Russia. According to unpublished reports by Moscow to the United Nations Security Council, Russia sent home nearly two-thirds of its North Korean workers during 2018. The report, reviewed by Reuters, said in 2018 the

number of North Koreans with work permits in Russia fell to about 11,500.

Long ties

Russia-North Korea relations withered after the Soviet demise, with the loss of support from Moscow often cited as one factor that led to a 1990s famine that killed hundreds of thousands of North Koreans. Kim Jong Un's father, Kim Jong Il, worked to renew ties after Putin first became president in 1999. He visited Russia three times before his sudden death in 2011. Russia could agree on some limited projects like a vehicle bridge connecting the two countries across the Tumangang River, or provide more humanitarian aid, Lukin said. Earlier this year, Russia sent more than 2,000 tons of wheat to North Korea through the World Food Program. Russian lawmakers have suggested Moscow could send as much as 50,000 tons of wheat to North Korea.

According to the United Nations, Russia has continued to sell significant amounts of oil to North Korea, though still officially under sanctions caps. North Korea's state media said in March officials met in Moscow to sign an agreement "to boost high-level contact and exchange in the political field (and) actively promote cooperation in the fields of economy and humanitarianism". While Moscow is unlikely to risk its authority at the United Nations by overtly breaching sanctions, Putin could promise not to support any additional sanctions, Lukin said. "Kim can expect a friendly reception here and probably some chance of getting political and economic support from Putin." —Reuters

Ghosh's wife puts her head above parapet

Not so long ago, Carole Ghosh was posing on the red carpet with her tycoon husband Carlos in front of the world's media, seemingly without a care. Now she is criss-crossing the world, spearheading an emotional media and political campaign for her detained partner, even as she finds herself increasingly dragged into his legal woes. The elegant 52-year-old with long blonde hair has become a passionate spokeswoman for her husband, loudly proclaiming his innocence as he languishes in a Japanese detention centre, battling multiple allegations of financial misconduct.

She has appealed to French President Emmanuel Macron to intervene during talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, saying France should not "abandon" someone who as head of partially state-owned Renault "loyally served his country". She has also reached out to the White House ahead of Abe's talks with US President Donald Trump, saying Japan's "hostage justice" was designed to break her husband's spirit and force him into signing a confession. In a tearful interview with US media, Carole said her 65-year-old husband is in poor health, exacerbated by what she described as "mental abuse" in his detention center.

'Nothing to hide'

Carole was not with her husband on November 19 when he was dramatically arrested onboard his private jet at a Tokyo airport and was shocked to learn the news thousands of kilometres away. She was prevented from seeing her husband during his initial detention and kept largely mum about his case. But she was ever-present after he was released on bail on March 6, setting up home in a relatively modest apartment in central Tokyo.

"During the month he was free, they tried to live normally, go for walks, eat good meals," said a Tokyo-based friend of the couple, despite the phalanx of photographers camped outside their residence - to Carole's visible annoyance at times. The respite was brief and Carlos was rearrested

at dawn on April 4 to answer further allegations - an event that "traumatized" her, according to her friend.

She has described that morning in several media interviews, claiming that prosecutors scored every inch of their 50-square-metre apartment, searched her, took her passport and even accompanied her into the bathroom. "It was a huge trial, among the worst moments of her life," said the couple's French lawyer, Francois Zimeray, who praised her for her "dignity" under pressure.

Using another passport, she immediately fled Japan for France but returned a few days later to face questioning and to show "she had nothing to hide". Her friend told AFP: "She has decided to fight for her husband because she loves him and she believes in his innocence. She won't leave him because she knows that for him, his defence is the biggest challenge of his life."

'Beauty Yachts'

Born in 1966 in Beirut, Carole Ghosh, nee Nahas, has spent most of her life in the US. She holds American nationality along with her three children from a first marriage. A highly educated businesswoman in her own right, she founded a company selling luxury kaftans at the end of the 2000s and is also involved in charitable and cultural circles. She met Carlos and the couple fell quickly in love, she providing a calming influence on the impulsive tycoon, according to one friend.

They were married in 2016 at the gilded Versailles Palace near Paris in a lavish ceremony that has since caught the attention of authorities amid questions over how the bash was funded. As the legal noose tightens around her husband, she has increasingly found herself a person of interest to authorities. According to sources close to the case, she is named as president of a company used to buy a luxury yacht that prosecutors suspect was purchased partly with funds allegedly diverted from Nissan.

Authorities have questioned her over this British Virgin Isles-registered company "Beauty Yachts" but she has not been formally charged and denies any wrongdoing. Nevertheless, she has been unable to shake off the Japanese investigators who reportedly suspect her of contacting some of the protagonists in the case to get their stories straight. "It's wrong," said Carlos Ghosh's lead lawyer Junichiro Hironaka when asked about the media reports. —AFP

Business

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Ooredoo Kuwait reports revenue of KD 154 million for Q1 2019

Customer base increased by 6% to exceed 27 million

KUWAIT: National Mobile Telecommunications Company K.S.C.P "Ooredoo Kuwait" announced yesterday its financial results for the quarter ended 31 March 2019:

Financial highlights

- Consolidated customer base increased by 6 percent to 27.4 million in Q1 2019, compared to 25.8 million in Q1 2018.
- Maldives recorded good growth in revenue and Tunisia increased revenue in local currency terms. However, revenues in KD were impacted by a 24.1 percent depreciation of the Tunisian Dinar. Consequently, consolidated revenue decreased by 12 percent to KD 154.2 million for Q1 2019, compared to KD 174.6 million for the same period in 2018.



Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani

- EBITDA increased by 6 percent for Q1 2019 to KD 58.6 million, compared to KD 55.3 million for the same period in 2018, supported by the implementation of IFRS 16, a new accounting standard and operational efficiencies.
- Net profit attributable to NMTC was KD 8.8 million for Q1 2019, compared to KD 9.2 million for the same period in 2018. The decrease was mainly caused by a lower Algerian contribution due to a weak economic environment, currency devaluation and price competition.
- The consolidated earnings per share was 17.6 fils for Q1 2019, compared to 18.3 fils per share earned for the same period last year.

Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani, Chairman of the Board of Directors commented: "Ooredoo Kuwait (NMTC) had a reasonable start to the year posting a 6 percent increase in EBITDA to KD 58.6 million and a net profit of KD 8.8 million during the first quarter of 2019. This is a result of our renewed focus on cost optimization as part of our broader digital transformation strategy. The EBITDA increase was also supported by the implementation of IFRS 16, a new accounting standard.



Our top line results remain under pressure as we navigate the unique challenge in each of our territories against a backdrop of a globally evolving telecommunications industry and unfavourable Foreign Exchange rates. We reported revenues of KD 154.2 million for the Q1 2019 compared with KD 174.6 million for the same quarter last year.

At the center of everything we do is our vision to enrich the digital lives of our customers, which means staying abreast of the latest trends in the telecom sector and adapting our offering to meet the evolving needs of our customers. Our success in this regard is reflected by the 6 percent increase in our group customer base, compared to the same quarter last year, to 27.4 million at the end of Q1 2019.

Financially, we reported a good set of results with most of our operations reporting an increase in EBITDA. However, a weak economic environment and price competition in Algeria contributed to the decrease in group net profit during the period.

In Kuwait, we made significant strides towards improving our margin, resulting in a 48 percent increase in EBITDA during the quarter as compared to the same period last year. This was largely driven by a reduction in handset sale as well as improved efficiencies and cost optimizations.

In Tunisia, we increased our customer base by 7 percent confirming our position as the Number 1 mobile telecom player. In Algeria we made good progress in preparing for a data centric future, by increasing the coverage of our 4G network, and increasing our subscriber base by 4 percent.

In Palestine we performed exceptionally well, with EBITDA increasing 71 percent as compared to the same period last year. Growth in Palestine was supported by a 7 percent increase in our customer base and various cost optimization initiatives. Maldives performed well, with a 9 percent increase in EBITDA and a healthy customer base of 462,000 customers, up by 5 percent compared to last year."

Review of operations

The Group's operational performance can be summarized as follows:

Financial Highlights:

	Quarterly Analysis		
	Q1 2019	Q1 2018	% change
Consolidated Revenue (KWD m)	154.2	174.6	-12%
EBITDA (KWD m)	58.6	55.3	6%
EBITDA margin (%)	38%	32%	-
Net Profit attributable to NMTC (KWD m)	8.8	9.2	-4%
Consolidated Customers (m)	27.4	25.8	6%



Ooredoo - Kuwait

Ooredoo's customer base in Kuwait increased to 2.5 million in Q1 2019, up by 13 percent compared to Q1 2018. Revenues for Q1 2019 were KD 56.1 million, compared to KD 65.5 million in Q1 2018. EBITDA was strong, increasing to KD 17.5 million in Q1 2019, compared to KD 11.8 million for Q1 2018. The increase of 48 percent reflected good operational efficiencies across the business as well as a positive impact of the new IFRS 16 accounting standard.

Ooredoo - Tunisia

Ooredoo's customer base in Tunisia increased 7 percent to reach 9.1 million customers in Q1 2019, compared to the same period in 2018. The Tunisian Dinar depreciated by 24.1 percent year on year, leading to a decrease in revenues from KD 31.9 million in Q1 2018 to KD 27.4 million in Q1 2019. In local currency terms, revenues were up by 6.7 per-

cent. EBITDA was KD 11.8 million in Q1 2019 compared to KD 11.9 million in Q1 2018.

Ooredoo - Algeria

Customer base in Algeria increased by 4 percent to 14.0 million in Q1 2019, compared to Q1 2018. Business in Algeria was negatively impacted by the devaluation of the Algerian Dinar, weak economic environment and price competition. Revenues also decreased to KD 53.7 million in Q1 2019, compared to KD 60.4 million in Q1 2018. EBITDA was KD 21.7 million in Q1 2019, down from KD 25.2 million in Q1 2018. Algerian Dinar depreciated by 2.9 percent year on year.

Ooredoo - Palestine

Customer base in Palestine increased by 7 percent to reach 1.3 million customers in Q1 2019. Revenue slightly decreased to KD 7.0 million in Q1 2019, compared to KD 7.1 million in Q1 2018. EBITDA was strong, increasing to KD 1.9 million in Q1 2019 compared to KD 1.1 million in Q1 2018, up 71 percent compared to the previous year.

Ooredoo - Maldives

Ooredoo Maldives reported a 3 percent increase in revenues to KD 10.0 million in Q1 2019, compared to KD 9.6 million in Q1 2018. EBITDA for Q1 2019 was KD 5.7 million, an increase of 9 percent compared to KD 5.2 million for the same period in 2018. Ooredoo Maldives now serves a total of 462k customers.

No plan now to boost oil output as Iran waivers end: Al-Falih

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has no immediate plans to raise oil output after the United States ends sanctions waivers for buyers of Iranian crude, energy minister Khalid Al-Falih said yesterday.

"(Global) inventories are continuing to rise despite what's happening in Venezuela and tightening sanctions on Iran," Falih told a finance conference in Riyadh. "So I don't see the need to do anything immediately." His comment came amid speculation that the kingdom, the world's top crude exporter, could boost output to plug the gap left by the removal of Iranian crude. The White House said on Monday it would end the practice of granting exemptions from unilateral US sanctions on Tehran, as it seeks to "bring Iran's oil exports to zero".

Eight countries including China, India and Turkey had been given temporary waivers by the US when it reimposed sanctions on Iran last year. The end of the exemptions sparked fears of supply shortages, pushing prices to near six-month highs. President Donald Trump tweeted however that his close ally Saudi Arabia would "more than make up" for any resulting supply shortage.

Falih said that while the kingdom had no immediate

plans to boost output, Riyadh was committed to balancing the oil market. "We will not leave our customers scrambling for oil," he said.

Countries looking to replace Iranian crude "know which number to dial," he added. Washington's move came as Saudi Arabia slashes production as part of a concerted push to boost oil prices.

In March, the OPEC kingpin cut its oil production to its lowest level in two years, according to the Paris-based International Energy Agency. Brent crude prices rose from \$50 a barrel in December to above \$71 this month.

Nigerian Oil Minister Emmanuel Kachikwu and the president of Saudi Aramco have discussed investment options in the mid and downstream sector. Nigeria's petroleum ministry said yesterday in a tweet. Aramco is expanding downstream operations such as refining and petrochemicals production as part of its drive to become the world's largest integrated energy firm.

Nigeria imports the bulk of its petrol, despite being Africa's biggest crude oil producer, due to its dilapidated refineries. Last month, Nigeria's state oil company said it was in talks with different consortiums to revamp its refineries and save billions of dollars on fuel imports.

Kachikwu is on an official visit to Saudi Arabia. Nigeria's petroleum ministry, on its Twitter feed, said Kachikwu and Aramco officials including its president discussed "areas of shared investment interests and existing viable investment options in the midstream and downstream sector". In another tweet, it said Kachikwu held talks with Saudi Arabia's energy minister to "cement the budding interest to support Nigeria's infrastructure development in the oil sector". — Agencies



RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih speaks at the Financial Sector Conference held in Riyadh yesterday. The event is organized by the government bodies overseeing the implementation of the Financial Sector Development Program, which are the ministry of finance, the Kingdom's Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) and the Capital Market Authority (CMA). — AFP

Business

Digital innovation reshaping trade finance landscape: HSBC

Summit discusses digital revolution and its impact on businesses



KUWAIT: Digital revolution and its impact on businesses in the region was the topic of discussion at the Digital Innovation Summit organized by HSBC Kuwait for its corporate and wholesale clients on Tuesday.

In his opening remarks, Roger Winfield, Chief Executive Officer, HSBC Kuwait said: "The digital revolution has changed the way we live and work. It is impacting how people and businesses pay for services and it is shifting supply chain economics especially in

trade and receivables finance. E-Commerce, social media, cloud technology, Artificial Intelligence and other digital innovations are completely reshaping the business landscape." HSBC's leaders, external experts and clients exchanged ideas and views on digital innovation and how it is transforming next generation treasury, driving efficiencies in cash management, revolutionizing customer experience and reforming trade.

"HSBC's mission is to be where the growth is, connecting customers to opportunities. Our origins in the Middle East date back to 1889 when railways and the emergence of telegraphic communications were driving economic development in the region. We are here in the 21st Century, supporting digitally-driven economic transformation agendas that give life to new markets, new cities and new economic ecosystems. Our heritage and long-term commitment to the region provides a unique perspective to help our customers thrive amid

change in the digital era."

"We have made significant progress across a number of digital initiatives spanning trade finance, payments, channels, account management and security to make our clients' experience of banking with us even better," Winfield added.

In June 2018, HSBC announced an ambition to invest \$15-17 billion in growth and technology globally over three years.

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"We have made significant progress across a number of digital initiatives spanning trade finance, payments, channels, account management and security to make our clients' experience of banking with us even better," Winfield added.

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Top US officials to hold trade talks in China next week

WASHINGTON: US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will travel to Beijing for trade talks beginning on April 30, the White House said in a statement on Tuesday.

It said Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, who will lead the Beijing talks for China, will also travel to Washington for more discussions starting on May 8. "The subjects of next week's discussions will cover trade issues including intellectual property, forced technology transfer, non-tariff barriers, agriculture, services, purchases, and enforcement," the White House said.

Beijing and Washington are seeking a deal to end a bitter trade war marked by tit-for-tat tariffs that have cost the world's two largest economies billions of dollars, disrupted supply chains and rattled financial markets. Earlier on Tuesday, Larry Kudlow, director of the White House National Economic Council, said the United States and China were making progress in the talks and he was "cautiously optimistic" about the prospects for striking a deal.

"We're not there yet, but we've made a heck of a lot of progress," Kudlow, speaking in a luncheon at the National Press Club, said in response to questions from reporters.

"We've come further and deeper, broader, larger-scale than anything in the history of US-China trade." "We've gotten closer and we're still working on the issues, so-called structural issues, technology transfers," Kudlow added. "Ownership enforcement is absolutely crucial. Lowering barriers to buy and sell agriculture and industrial commodities. It's all on the table." —Reuters

Crisis-hit Nissan issues fresh profit warning

TOKYO: Nissan issued a profit warning yesterday, deepening the woes of the Japanese car giant as it seeks to recover from the shock of former boss Carlos Ghosn's arrest. The firm downgraded its projection for net profit in the fiscal year to March 2019 from 410 billion yen (\$3.7 billion) to 319 billion yen, the second cut in its forecast in recent months.

Nissan appeared to acknowledge the recent difficulties surrounding the Ghosn affair, which has cast questions over the company's own corporate governance. It cited as a reason for the downgrade "the adverse operating environment facing the company during the fourth quarter, and the impact of recent corporate issues on sales."

Another reason was given as "additional expenses arising from the implementation of a warranty extension campaign covering certain vehicles sold in the US market."

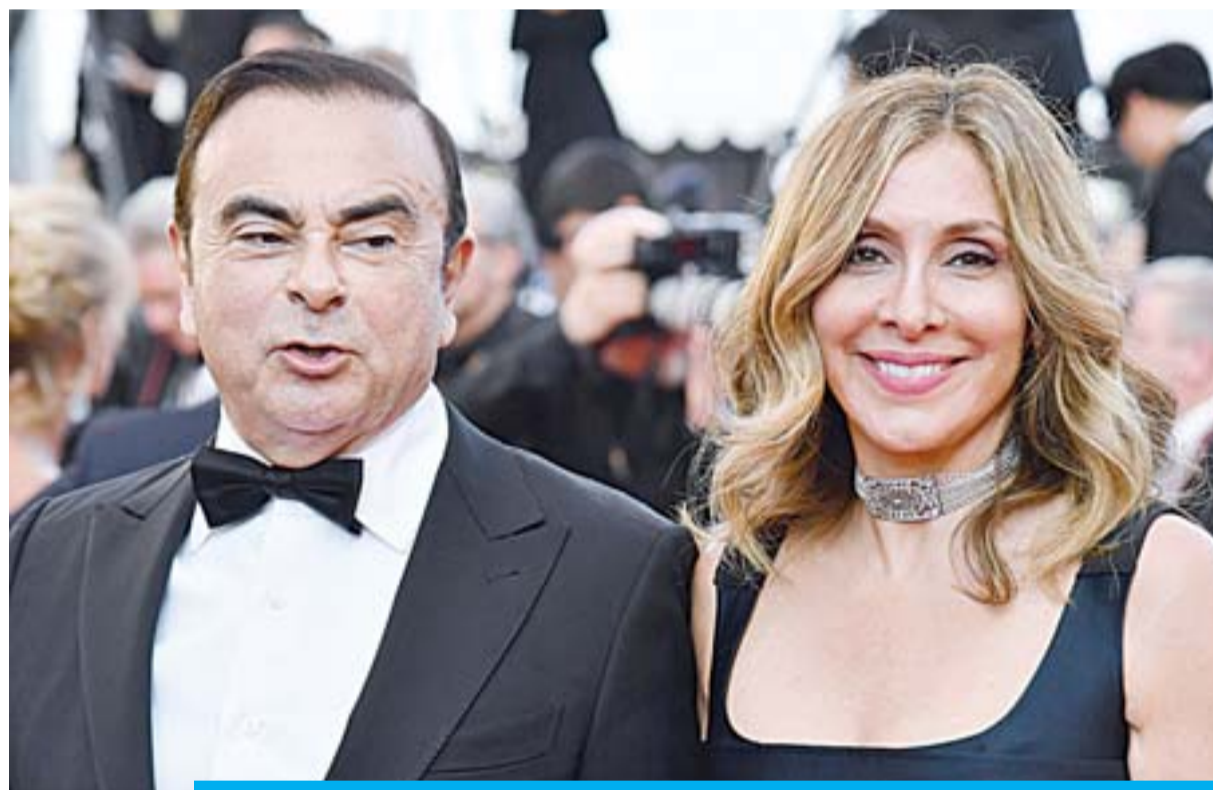
Chief Financial Officer Hiroshi Karube said the "executive misconduct in Japan" had had an impact on "potential new clients." He added that the company was suffering in America where the market was "not growing and recovering as we expected."

"We overstretched in recent years and the impact of that is big," said Karube.

The profit warning came as ex-chairman Ghosn awaits his fate after prosecutors hit him with a fourth set of charges over alleged financial misconduct. Authorities suspect he syphoned off around \$5 million for his personal use from money transferred from Nissan to a dealership in Oman.

Ghosn denies that charge and also insists he is innocent of all allegations against him. His lawyers have filed for bail which the Tokyo District Court is considering. In February, Nissan already slashed its full-year forecast, as it revealed that nine-month net profit had dropped 45 percent—a decline the firm blamed on rising raw material costs and foreign exchange difficulties.

It was forced to downgrade its net profit forecast for the fiscal year to March to 410 billion yen, compared to 500 billion yen earlier.



In this file photo taken on May 11, 2018, Renault CEO Carlos Ghosn (left) and his wife Carole Ghosn pose as they arrive at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. —AFP

'Backstabbing'

The results came as Nissan and its partners Renault and Mitsubishi Motors are seeking to turn the page on Ghosn's arrest for financial misconduct, which has exposed a rift in the three-way tie-up.

In a complicated management structure, Renault — 15-percent of which is held by the French state — owns a 43-percent stake in Nissan. French President Emmanuel Macron and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Tuesday pledged their backing for the alliance, despite the strains caused by Ghosn's arrest. The two leaders "reaffirmed their attachment to the Renault-Nissan alliance which is going to celebrate its 20th anniversary and is a major symbol of industrial cooperation between France and Japan," according to a statement.

Ghosn was ousted as head of Nissan and Mitsubishi Motors almost immediately after his arrest

and later resigned as chairman and CEO of Renault. The tycoon says the allegations against him are part of a plot by some "backstabbing" Nissan executives concerned about a closer relationship between the two firms. The other reason for this "plot" was the "deterioration in Nissan's performance for two years," he charged in a video message recorded before he was dramatically rearrested earlier this month.

Before his sudden downfall, Ghosn was hailed as a titan of the auto sector who had saved Nissan from the brink of bankruptcy by forging an unlikely alliance with Renault, the French stalwart he also headed. Critics said he was unwise to try to forge an alliance between two companies headquartered some 11,000 kilometers apart. But Ghosn slashed costs and revived Nissan's fortunes, earning him praise as a rare success story for a foreign corporate boss in Japan. —AFP

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	0.388725	0.402625	
Czech Korune	0.005311	0.014611	
Danish Krone	0.041848	0.046848	
Euro	0.335338	0.349038	
Georgian Lari	0.112288	0.112288	
Hungarian 0.000978	0.001168		
Norwegian Krone	0.031783	0.036983	
Romanian Leu	0.055111	0.071961	
Russian ruble	0.004767	0.004767	
Slovakia	0.009127	0.019127	
Swedish Krona	0.028662	0.033662	
Swiss Franc	0.293464	0.304464	
Australasia			
Australian Dollar	0.208753	0.220753	
New Zealand Dollar	0.196877	0.206377	
America			
Canadian Dollar	0.222736	0.231735	
US Dollars	0.300900	0.306200	
US Dollars Mint	0.301400	0.306200	
Asia			
Bangladesh Taka	0.003030	0.003831	
Chinese Yuan	0.043918	0.047416	
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036788	0.039538	
Indian Rupee	0.003835	0.004607	
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023	
Japanese Yen	0.002640	0.002820	
Korean Won	0.000256	0.000271	
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070583	0.076583	
Nepalese Rupee	0.002684	0.003024	
Pakistan Rupee	0.001511	0.002281	
Philippine Peso	0.005833	0.006133	
Singapore Dollar	0.219402	0.229402	
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001402	0.001982	
Taiwan	0.009764	0.009944	
Thai Baht	0.009223	0.009773	
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	0.000152	0.000252	
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021257	0.024257	
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	0.097114	0.105114	
Turkish Lira	0.046106	0.057606	
UAE Dirhams	0.081616	0.083316	
Yemeni Riyal	0.000992	0.001072	

Business

Mawasem Wings Travel & Tours to launch Turkey's Onur Air in Kuwait

Airline's entry represents a qualitative leap forward for Kuwait aviation market



KUWAIT: (From left to right) The Executive Manager of Mawasem and the Regional Director of Onur Air in Kuwait Ahmed Al-Safadi, Executive Chairman of Mawasem Wings Travel & Tours Yousuf Al-Kandari and the representative of Onur Air Tuna Tunca during the press conference. — Photos Yasser Al-Zayyat



By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Mawasem Wings Travel & Tours held a press conference yesterday at Sheraton Hotel to announce the launch of Turkey's Onur Air services in Kuwait. The airline will be represented by Mawasem as its regional manager in Kuwait.

Yousuf Al-Kandari, Executive Chairman of Mawasem Wings Travel & Tours, announced the company's long-term strategic partnership with Onur Air, adding that the airline's entry into Kuwait represents a qualitative leap forward for the domestic air transport market and complements the concept of integrated aviation services, which will meet the growing market needs.

He said the company will start its work in Kuwait in two phases. The first phase will start with one destination through the operation of the Kuwait-Istanbul-Kuwait route on June 4, as the company seeks to be a competitive option for citizens and residents to travel to Turkey during the summer season. Kandari pointed out the strategic plan of the company will include in the second phase to prepare for direct flights to other destinations inside Turkey, headed by Antalya and Trabzon, in response to citizens and residents' needs of direct flights to those destinations.

During her speech, Ambassador of Turkey to Kuwait Ayse Hilal Sayan Koytak praised the bilateral relations between Turkey and Kuwait, which have invested in cultural and historical ties in strengthening their bonds of friendship. "I am happy to see the development of this relation-

ship between the two countries under the leadership of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. And I congratulate the two companies on this partnership, which we hope through six flights a week and with our efforts to be the two most attractive destinations for tourists," she said.

Talking about the Turkish tourism industry, she said around 255,000 Kuwaitis visited Turkey in 2017 and the number increased to about 300,000 in 2018. "Turkey is now the world's sixth most favored tourist destination. More than 40 million tourists visited Turkey in 2018. More than 100 million passengers traveled to or from Istanbul in 2018. And with the new airport, Turkey has become the most important transit hub for airlines between the North, South, East and West," she added.

Executive Manager of Mawasem and the Regional Director of Onur Air in Kuwait Ahmed Al-Safadi said the partnership aims to introduce a new concept of travel in Kuwait. It is based on enriching customer experience by providing a convenient and competitive flight that meets the expectations of customers and allows the option to travel to Turkey comfortably. The company also provides inflight services including meals and entertainment on an Airbus A330 aircraft, with a capacity of 350 passengers.

He added the company also responds to the requirements of passengers in terms of baggage allowance, as each passenger can carry two bags weighing 23 kilos each with a total of 46 kilos and 7 kg in hand baggage, bringing the



total weight allowed per passenger to 53 kg. Safadi pointed out that the company will operate six flights a week in June to Istanbul, while considering increasing the number of flights to seven per week in July.

He concluded that the company will allocate the seventh flight to another destination in Turkey according to the needs of the market, where the company seeks to cov-

er an area that does not have a direct flight from Kuwait. The representative of Onur Air Tuna Tunca highlighted the company's history since its inception in 1992 to reach 100 million passengers in 2018. He noted that the company received several awards including the Airbus Premium Operator Award in 2005 and the Best in Social Media Award in 2016.

Record-breaking Wall Street fails to spark global rally

LONDON: Europe's main stock markets wobbled yesterday as a record-breaking Wall Street session failed to spark a major global rally. Bullish earnings and economic data catapulted New York's S&P 500 and tech-heavy Nasdaq indices to all-time peaks overnight, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average also came close.

Sentiment brightened as a string of better-than-forecast results from the likes of Coca-Cola, Twitter and Lockheed Martin added to a raft of other recent reports that suggest the US economy—the world's biggest—is in rude health.

Yet Wall Street's "feelgood factor" failed to translate into significant gains elsewhere, dealers said, while oil prices retreated further from the 2019 highs hit at the start of the week.

'Feelgood factor' fades

"While this was a good batch of results, it's not yet clear whether it's an outlier or a sign of what's to come," Oanda analyst Craig Erlam told AFP in London. "The boost has only been seen domestically and even here, the feelgood factor has already faded as we head into the open. I think we need more evidence that the better results are more widespread before the ripple effect spreads beyond the United States."

US markets have been boosted after the Federal Reserve last month hinted that it will not raise rates again this year, having signalled as recently as September that it expected to raise rates three times.

"Investor confidence has seemingly returned and done so in style, thanks primarily to the US Federal Reserve's policy U-turn," noted investment director Russ Mould at stockbroker AJ Bell.

In Europe, London stocks dipped amid ongoing Brexit uncertainty, while Paris flatlined.

Frankfurt however leapt 0.9 percent, aided by soaring first-quarter revenues and profits for German software and cloud computing giant SAP. Asian markets mostly rose but investors refrained from firing a full-on rally. "Although investors might have hoped that record highs in the US would prompt gains in the rest of the world, the current lack of correlation across global markets means that there is less read-across than usual," Interactive Investor analyst Rebecca O'Keefe told AFP.

"Suggestions that leaders within China's ruling party will focus on economic reforms and will hold back on unnecessary stimulus is dampening market sentiment in Asia." On oil markets, both main contracts were in retreat after hitting six-month highs on the back of news that Washington would end a waiver for several countries from US sanctions on Iran. Prices had already been surging thanks to hopes for the China-US talks and for an output cap by OPEC and Russia. Unrest in Libya and Venezuela has further propped up prices. — Reuters



In this file photo, a Boeing 737 MAX 9 test plane is pictured at Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington. — AFP

Boeing puts cost of 737 MAX crisis at \$1bn

NEW YORK: Boeing said yesterday that its 737 MAX crisis had cost \$1 billion in the first quarter as it withdrew its 2019 profit forecast on continued uncertainty about when the grounded jets will fly again after two deadly crashes. The US aerospace giant also cited spending on the software fix and related training, according to an earnings presentation released yesterday that listed the \$1 billion in 737 program costs.

The results are the first since the company entered crisis mode with the March 10 crash of an Ethiopian Airlines jet, which along with an October Lion Air crash claimed 346 lives.

Shares rallied in early trading, reflecting relief that damage from the 737 MAX crisis thus far was not worse.

The US aerospace giant reported \$2.1 billion in profits, down 13.2 percent from same period a year ago due in part to the \$1 billion hit from the 737 program.

Revenues dipped 2.0 percent to \$22.9 billion. Boeing also pulled its full-year profit forecast, citing "uncertainty of the timing and conditions surrounding return to service of the 737 MAX fleet."

Regulators ordered the global grounding of the plane shortly after the second crash, a move that has also forced the company to halt new deliveries of its most-ordered plane, denting revenues.

Analysts in recent weeks had trimmed their forecast for Boeing earnings in light of the crisis but will scrutinize yesterday's results to see whether they need to lower expectations further.

In addition to the \$1 billion in 737 program costs, Boeing said it had booked charges associated with a software fix to the jet's anti-stall system that is thought to have been a factor in both accidents.

Numerous probes

The company announced earlier this month it was cutting monthly production of the 737 by about 20 percent. Boeing said it is "making steady progress" on the software fix and has conducted more than 135 test flights as it works with global regulators and airlines.

"Across the company, we are focused on safety, returning the 737 MAX to service and earning and re-earning the trust and confidence of customers, regulators and the flying public," Chief Executive Dennis Muilenburg said in a statement.

Muilenburg is expected to be questioned on an analyst conference call later for details on the company's interactions with the US Federal Aviation Administration on the software fix. As of Tuesday night, the company still had not submitted a request to the agency, a source said.

The company is hoping to win regulatory approval by the end of May for its fix and to have the planes cleared to fly in July, according to a source familiar with the situation. Other key questions concern any compensation payments to airlines that have been forced to cut flights because of the 747 MAX grounding or that have not received new planes they were expecting.

The company also faces numerous government probes, including a criminal investigation involving the US Department of Justice. Despite the crisis, many analysts are optimistic about Boeing's long-term prospects, given robust global aerospace demand.

They expect Boeing will be successful in finding a fix to the 737 MAX's problems that enables the plane to return to service and continue to command the interest of airlines. However, some caution that Boeing's reputation has taken a hit from the crisis that could deteriorate further with any additional missteps. Boeing shares were up one percent at \$377.60 in mid-morning trading. A note from Cowen & Company said the results were "better than feared."

"Overall, these earnings paint a picture of a company with strong fundamental demand going about its business and not in any danger of a liquidity or financial crisis," said CFRA Research Jim Corridore.

"We see Boeing making progress towards a 737-MAX resumption of service this summer." — AFP

Struggling industry saps German business morale as trade woes bite

BERLIN/MUNICH: German business morale deteriorated in April, bucking expectations for a small improvement, as trade tensions hurt the industrial engine of Europe's largest economy, leaving domestic demand to support slowing growth.

The Munich-based Ifo economic institute said yesterday its business climate index fell to 99.2 in April from an upwardly revised 99.7 in March, the first rise after six straight declines. The consensus forecast for a rise to 99.9. "March's gentle optimism regarding the coming months has evaporated," Ifo President Clemens Fuest said in a statement. "The German economy continues to lose steam."

Ifo sub-indices on current conditions and expectations fell in April. Last week, Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said that Berlin expected gross domestic product to grow by 0.5 percent this year after an expansion of 1.4 percent in 2018.

The government had already cut its 2019 forecast in January to 1.0 percent growth from 1.8 percent previously. Long the euro zone's economic powerhouse, Germany is in its 10th year of expansion, but only narrowly avoided recession last year. German exporters are struggling with weaker demand from abroad, trade tensions triggered by US President Donald Trump and business uncertainty caused by Britain's planned departure from the European Union.

"Pessimism is increasing," Ifo economist Klaus Wohlrabe told Reuters. "The industrial sector is dragging down the German economy." Late last month, German lighting company Osram cut its forecast for the fiscal year 2019, citing market weakness in the automotive industry, general lighting and mobile devices as well as a broader economic slowdown.

A delay to Brexit, which leaders from the remaining 27 EU countries granted Britain earlier this month, did not buoy German business morale. "The uncertainty has receded slightly, but is still very high," Wohlrabe added. In a fresh development in the trade difficulties unnerving German businesses, Trump said on Tuesday European tariffs facing motorcycle manufacturer Harley Davidson Inc were "unfair" and vowed to reciprocate.

The difficult trade environment means that Germany's vibrant domestic demand, helped by record-high employment, inflation-busting pay increases and low borrowing costs, is expected to be the sole driver of growth this year and next.

Germany's HDE retail association yesterday confirmed its forecast that sales would rise 2 percent this year, marking a 10th straight year of growth. "The domestic economy remains a pillar of support," said Ifo's Wohlrabe. However, the HDE added that although it did not yet have a forecast for 2020 sales, it expected the industrial slowdown to affect retailers. — Reuters

Business

KFH's profits resulted from revenue items of core activities: Al-Roshood

KFH subsidiaries contribute 39.1% to net operating income

KUWAIT: Abdulwahab Al-Roshood, Group Chief Treasury Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH) said that the Q1 profits mainly resulted from revenue items of the core banking activities. Total finance income grew 9.5 percent to KD 228.4 million in Q1 compared to the same period of 2018. The total operating revenues rose 7.1 percent to KD 196.8 million in Q1 2019 compared to the same period of last year.

He added that the exit of investments in the first quarter of 2019 totaled KD 23.7 million, resulting in KD 9.9 million profits compared to KD 1.5 million in the first quarter of 2018. KFH focuses on exiting its non- strategic investments to build high-quality assets and enhance

capital adequacy ratio.

Al-Roshood explained that the Group's Non-performing financings declined to 1.88 percent as per CBK calculations compared to 1.99 percent at the end of 2018. The coverage of non-performing financings reached 488.24 percent at KFH-Kuwait, and 258.02 percent for the Group at the end of Q1 2019.

Commenting on KFH financial results in TV interviews, Al-Roshood said that KFH's subsidiaries contribution forms about 39.1 percent of the net operating income, reflecting the Group's efficiency.

He affirmed that KFH managed, according to planned scenarios, to overcome the challenges in Turkey, noting that all financial

indicators of KFH-Turkey were good and above the minimum regulatory requirements. Al-Roshood added: "In spite of Turkish lira depreciation, KFH is achieving strong and continuous growth rates on all levels including the financing portfolio, gross assets and profits. Thanks to the expansion of financing activities in Turkey and the diversified portfolio of KFH-Turkey, KFH succeeded in building high-quality assets. This reflected positively on the stability, diversity and balance of the portfolio in the face of the recent fluctuations and their impact on the value of the Lira. It also helped build strong buffers against any possible negative effects."

Regarding the possible exit plan from

KFH-Malaysia, Al-Roshood said: "It is a possible choice because of the hard-competitive environment in Malaysia given the glut of banks and the regulations which allow the conventional and Islamic banks to work under one umbrella. KFH is committed to pure Islamic banking as opposed to the dual giant banks operating there."

KFH reported net profit of KD 51.6 million for the first quarter of 2019 for KFH shareholders compared to KD 44 million for the same period last year i.e. an increase of 17.4 percent.

Earnings per share for the first quarter of 2019 reached 7.50 fils, compared to 6.39 fils for the same period last year i.e. an increase of 17.4 percent.



Abdulwahab Al-Roshood

X-Cite unveils new Huawei P30 smartphone series

KUWAIT: Joining hands with Huawei Consumer Business Group Kuwait (CBG), X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, Kuwait's largest electronic retailer, hosted the much anticipated sales event for tech-lovers where fans and customers experienced the newly released Huawei P30 Series. The special event for Huawei's most advanced smartphones camera to date was held outside X-cite's showroom at Al-Rai on April 12 at 6 PM and demonstrated yet another step towards an innovatively connected world.

The Huawei P30 Series' official release in Kuwait gave consumers the opportunity to elevate their social media experience through the Snapchat video enhancement, and to cement memories with the quality of the living eyes through its Leica X Camera. Beyond capturing moments as the human eyes do, the P30 series takes it up a notch with the element of innovative technology through its dual video, night shot, and zoom. To top it all off, the P30 Series' battery will last you throughout the day and will rise back to full charge with its SuperCharge battery capabilities in less than just one hour.

Addressing the attendees in the pre-booked event, Jason Jiang, General Manager of Huawei Consumer Business Group, said: "Today, we are extremely pleased to be delivering more innovative technology to the world and particularly to Kuwait through our

collaboration with X-cite, to not only build a connected world, but have the world cherish quality captured memories."

X-cite's sales event organized in partnership with Huawei gave consumers an experience to remember, in which they've seen how technology advances one step at a time, creating an innovatively connected world through the Huawei P30 Series, set to change people's expectations of smartphone's photography.



Jason Jiang



Older workers helped fuel US growth; Can it last?

MILWAUKEE, Wisconsin: As a record-breaking economic expansion nears the decade mark, people like Marty Groth may determine whether it is forced into a lower gear.

Not long ago, the 60-year-old Groth found himself out of a job and considered retiring on a pension built over a career of maintaining computer servers and printers.

Instead, he returned to school to update his computer skills and will soon join a Wisconsin labor force that is decidedly short of workers. "I could retire now if I wanted," Groth said. "But I am thinking, I like working."

Over the last three years, around 3 million Americans over 55 joined or rejoined the workforce, federal data show. The addition of these older workers not only contributed to economic growth, experts say, but helped stop a national decline in the share of adults working or looking for work.

The trend may have run its course. After adding 5 million new and returning workers of all ages from 2016 to 2018, the US labor force shrank during the first three months of this year.

From healthcare to manufacturing, companies in places like Wisconsin are taking longer to hire as they struggle to find workers: some have delayed projects, others have become more willing to hire ex-convicts and less experienced workers bypassed when labor markets were looser, local officials say.

Blue-collar workers are putting in more hours, data show, while overall labor productivity is increasing. Nationally, wages are rising. The upshot, according to policymakers, business executives and labor experts interviewed by Reuters, is that the labor market may be nearing its limits.

Over a long enough period, labor shortages can spark investment and raise productivity as companies retool. They can also improve opportunities for minorities with unemployment rates higher than those for whites.

But in the short run they pose a drag. "Any employer, if they are willing to raise wages enough, at some point will get all the workers they need," said Gad Levanon, chief economist at the Conference Board and author of a recent report on labor market constraints. "But it is coming at a higher cost... Projects that were profitable in a lower wage environment are not profitable anymore."

Dealing with it 'day in and day out'

The corridor connecting Chicago to Milwaukee is a testament to the long-running economic expansion. This is not the Wisconsin of pastures and dairy farms, but a landscape brimming with fulfillment centers and factories. A new interstate lane will allow autonomous trucks to deliver supplies for a high-tech plant being built by China's Foxconn.

But the combination of low unemployment and an older population puts Wisconsin at the leading edge of where the country's workforce as a whole is heading.

It is also a political battleground state, meaning the health of its economy will likely have consequences for the 2020 presidential election. Democrats will hold their convention in Milwaukee next summer.

Wages in Wisconsin rose 5 percent in 2018, compared to around 3 percent nation-

ally, and the unemployment rate hit a record low 2.9 percent for several months in 2018 and again in February.

As chief economist at the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Dennis Winters keeps close tabs on the state's hiring. The labor shortage, he says, "is real, and people are trying to deal with it day in and day out." Sarah Condella, senior vice president for human resources at Exact Sciences Corp, is among them. She joined the Madison-based company in 2012 when it employed 50 people and oversaw its growth to roughly 2,000 workers as doctors expanded use of its colorectal cancer test.

Along the way, Exact Sciences lifted starting pay to \$15 an hour, roughly double the state's minimum wage. It added perks like bus passes and flexible shifts and has plans for food service at its expanding campus.

Still, it has more than 400 vacancies, and the time to hire entry-level workers has grown from fewer than 30 days to around 45. Finding them requires radio ads, billboards and other tools not typical for a life sciences company.

It is a story repeated across Wisconsin. Banking officials say deals are being delayed because supply chains are clogged and service companies booked, nipping the financial sector's potential.

Half of respondents to a survey by the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce trade group cited labor shortage as the top issue facing companies and the state, ahead of healthcare and regulation. A majority said they planned to increase wages at least 3 percent as they add headcount this year.

Coupled with productivity, the number of people working is the core reason economies expand, and the expected slow growth of the labor force a main reason why Federal Reserve officials and others expect the US economy will cool. — Reuters

Rasameel Investment launches new wealth management platform Sphere

KUWAIT: Rasameel, a top-tier Sharia-compliant investment company in Kuwait, has an industry-leading track-record of structuring investment products for their clients: they offer trusted, innovative, and secure sharia-compliant investment solutions.

Recently, Rasameel has recognized a change in their client expectations and has also noticed that clients are now looking for investment companies that can offer them a complete wealth management service platform. To address their clients' needs, Rasameel has assembled a team of experts to offer clients a new, service-based, total wealth management solution. Leading the team is John Paryniuk, a former employee with the largest A+ Wealth Management Group at the Royal Bank of Canada.

Samir Abdulmohsen Al-Gharaballi, CEO of Rasameel, believes that "Mr. Paryniuk's experience reinforces our firm's ability to deliver to Kuwait institutions, as well as UHNW clients, a Multi-Asset, Multi-Style, Multi-Manager solution."

"We believe that our Wealth Managers need to know who the right expert, or specialist, in various disciplines is, as well as how to best address their client's complex problems," he continued.

Furthermore, Al-Gharaballi emphasized that Paryniuk enhances "our overall expertise as assemblers of competencies and we are happy to have him as part of our team." In order to get a better idea of what exactly Rasameel's new SPHERE Wealth Management Service platform, is Paryniuk offered answers to some of our specific questions.

Paryniuk what exactly is Sphere?

First and foremost, Sphere is not a product, but rather, a service that we offer our clients. Offering clients single-asset solutions no longer meets the needs of our sophisticated client base. They expect more. Sphere encompasses a holistic approach to portfolio management. Essentially, Sphere is a three-step process.

The first step is for our managers to sit down with our client, whether it is an institution or ultra-high net-worth individual and have a conversation regarding what the client's goals are. This is the most important part of the entire process, having the client define the objective we need to achieve. Once our client defines their objective, the second step is to find the best solution for that objective. Let's say that our client has the objective of growing his or her net-worth 4-6 percent per year after they have paid all Zakat and fees. To build this solution our team utilizes a platform of pre-determined best-in-class fund managers, Sukuk, ETFs, and cash equivalents. This platform of un-biased third-party solutions is the result of the screens established by the client, the Asset Management team at Rasameel, and the advice from our third-party experts. Once we have defined a solution for our client's objective we enter the third step of the process, which is to provide an on-going systematic review of the solutions in our client's portfolio.

What exactly do you mean by on-going systematic review?

Good question and thanks for asking. Our Asset Management Team and our third-party experts have done a fantastic job of screening the universe of products available and have created a platform of best-in-class solutions across multiple asset classes. The problem is that just because a solution is best-in-class today, does not mean that it will be the best-in-class tomorrow.

We create a watch-list of potential



John Paryniuk

solutions that are close to passing our screens, and if in the future they meet our screening criteria, and are outperforming a comparable product on our platform, we remove the underperformer from the platform and substitute in the new product. This ensures that our Wealth Managers always have the best-in-class solutions for our clients to choose from.

You said that the most important step in Sphere is the first step where you and your client work together to define an objective. What if I have an objective already and investments in place for that objective?

Another good question. One thing to remember is that an objective should be specific and up-to-date. A client's objective should not just be "I want to make a lot of money." Also, the solution you originally had may no longer be reflective and needs to be re-balanced. Part of the first step in this process is to conduct a client snap-shot, which is a series of questions our Wealth Managers ask their clients. This snap-shot will accurately and ultimately help the client define their objective. For example, an institution's current objective might be to achieve an annualized rate of return of eight percent, a very broad statement. After reviewing the client snap-shot questionnaire, our wealth manager may suggest the objective should be to grow their portfolio at two percent more than inflation, or it should be based on a spending policy where the portfolio grows in-line with cash out-flows.

Also, let's say that after the client snap-shot we find out that the client's current asset portfolio is not the best solution and needs to be re-balanced. Under this new platform our client knows they will only see top-tier solutions for the re-balancing.

Who do you feel can benefit from Sphere?

Regarding institutions, the Sphere service platform really shines. It never hurts to add another level of professionalism to your team. An institution will not only add 50 professionals to their team if they choose to utilize the Sphere platform, but they will also benefit from our best-in-class screened product solutions. When it comes to individuals, this comprehensive platform will benefit those who have just liquidated assets or received a large sum of money and need a plan put together, lack the time to manage their capital, wish to organize their complex financial affairs, want to remove the emotions and guesswork from investing, or simply want to know what the best product options available today are.

In summary, Paryniuk emphasized that he is "proud to be part of a Sharia-compliant Kuwait investment company that offers independent, unbiased advice on third-party solutions for their clients. With Sphere, we will collaborate with our clients to help define their objective, then work side-by-side with them on selecting the best-in-class multi-asset solutions to meet their objective." "I strongly believe the Kuwait investment community is going to eagerly welcome Sphere with open arms," he concluded.

What's On



Chairman Faisal Bader Al Sayer



CEO Mubarak Naser Al Sayer



Al Sayer holds Annual Employee Convention 2019

Al Sayer Holding, one of the leading conglomerates in the region recently held its annual employee convention to honor the Group divisions across its non-trading and trading business units delivering outstanding customer service, including Mohamed Naser Al Sayer for Toyota and Lexus Sales Service and Parts Division, Bahrah Trading Company for HINO, Bobcat, Doosan heavy equipment, Al Sayer Engineering for Motul Oil, Yokohama tires, Cofran oil and Nexa Auto Paint, Al Sayer Medical Company, Car rental, Insurance, Litmus Advertising, KAFF for animal feed, Al Dhow for IT services and Tristar overseas trading division.

The event was attended by Faisal Bader Al Sayer Chairman, Mubarak Naser Al Sayer CEO representing Board of Directors along with Top Management Team, Managers and 3000+ employees of the Group. Awards were distributed to 24 top performing teams of Net Promoter Score and Best Facility presentation. Special awards were also pre-

sented to two winners of Innovative ideas contest inspired by Group Corporate Excellence values of do more with less.

According to Faisal Bader Al Sayer "This is the new era of customer engagement! We need a new mind set, a new approach of dealing with our customers in terms of what we offer them and the way we treat them. "Start Your Impossible" - This is the new mind set we as a group want to adopt for the future: Every one of us should start asking himself "how can we push the limits to serve our customer even better."

"Our market is under rapid changes. Nearly every day there we can read about how new technology is changing the automotive market. Toyota is no longer a car company but a mobility company. Not only the product is changing, but maybe even more important customers' expectations on us are changing. Being a customer focused company, we need to ensure we remain leading when it comes to understanding our customers' demands and how we in the best possible way deliver solu-



tions that quite frankly amaze them!" commented Mubarak Naser Al Sayer.

Al Sayer's heritage is built on one simple promise: to provide the best products paired

with an outstanding customer experience. The aim is not only to satisfy customers, but also to promote excitement in the work place, create possibilities to grow and devel-

op one strong team. Group Management thanked and appreciated the team work to tackle numerous challenges without losing focus on customers.

Symphony Style Kuwait provides new offer for summer meetings

Symphony Style Kuwait, a Radisson Collection Hotel, provides businesses with a complimentary pass to five delegates for every KD 20 paid in its iconic meeting areas. The Summer offer, which is valid until May 30, for bookings between May 1 and August 31, 2019, is designed for businesses to experience fully equipped space that fits every occasion with all the essentials and more.

The savvy 18 meeting rooms commanding sweeping panoramas of the bay with built-in screens and projectors are designed with utmost attention to detail that would ensure catering to the needs of modern business in terms of function, and a visually arresting atmosphere. Each floor of the meeting rooms is centered around its own breakout area,



with a sophisticated expression that integrates the business spaces, serving a rich array of snacks and refreshments throughout the day. The Executive Boardroom is intriguing in aesthetic and functionality alike, with its atmospheric sea view, built-in screen, projector and video conferencing facilities.

The meeting settings are enhanced by authentic local touches, with consideration for environmental sustainability through Carbon

Free Meetings, and every professional partner's membership is rewarded with valuable points for every booking at the Radisson Hotel Group brands. "The exceptional is an outstanding location for any business to hold a productive meeting in which business is not only productive, but enjoyable with a thoughtful atmospheric setting," expressed General Manager, Peter Schuler as he explained the Summer Meetings Bookings Offer.



Commercial Bank of Kuwait extended support to the capital governorate to sponsor the closing ceremony of activities and programs for guides in the capital education zone. This comes within the bank's program in the field of social responsibility. Meanwhile, Capital Governor Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid lauded the role of CBK in serving the society and being involved in the comprehensive social responsibility.

ICAI Kuwait Chapter organizes first overseas tour



The Kuwait Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India organized its first international overseas tour from March 22 to March 26, 2019 to Georgia. The tour was organized by Almulla Travels along with their local partner in Georgia, Wonderland Tours. Around 35 members including many senior members joined the tour along with their family. The itinerary covered popular destina-

tions such as Gudauri, Kakheti, Uplistsikhe town and Tbilisi. The tour was organized under the leadership of CA Noel Cheria, Chairman with the support of CA Sai Devata, CA Deepak Bindal and CA Aditya Dhanuka. It was a very fun filled and memorable trip and all the members thoroughly enjoyed the tour. There was active participation from all members and their family which made the tour even merrier.



A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between Loyac Establishment and Loyac Academy of performing Arts (LAPA) and Dasman Bilingual School at the establishment's premise at the Qibliya School in the presence of Loyac's President Fareah Al-Saqqaq and Dasman School's CEO Adel Al-Sane.

Health

Illegal logging in Brazil turns Amazon into a powder keg

Arara warriors gear up with bows, arrows to protect land

ALTAMIRA, Brazil: A rifle resting on his shoulder, Tatji Arara looks despondent as he steps over the trunks of huge trees felled by timber traffickers in the heart of Brazil's Amazon rainforest, now the scene of numerous land conflicts. "Every day, we find new trees cut down. I've never seen anything like this," laments the 41-year-old, a leader of the Arara indigenous people in the northern state of Para. He says illegal logging on Arara lands—an area equivalent to 264,000 football fields—has intensified since President Jair Bolsonaro came to power in January.

Bolsonaro, a far-right champion of agribusiness, vowed during last year's election campaign that he would not give up "one centimeter more" of land to indigenous communities in Brazil, home to around 60 percent of the Amazon rainforest. According to Para-based conservation group Imazon, deforestation in the Amazon increased 54 percent in January—the first month Bolsonaro was in office—as compared with a year earlier. Some 37 percent of the devastated areas are in Para. The Arara territory, where around 300 indigenous live, has been

under government protection since 1991. But there are fears that could change under Bolsonaro, a climate change skeptic. "Bolsonaro is poisoning the spirit of the people. Lots of people think he will take our land, but we won't let him," says Tatji Arara, wearing shorts and a team shirt for Flamengo, one of Brazil's most popular football clubs. "If the illegal extraction of wood continues, our warriors will take up their bows and arrows. There could be deaths," he warns.

In a letter to the local federal prosecutor's office in February, the Arara said tribal elders were considering "getting justice for themselves," including evoking an ancestral ritual of making a traditional flute "with the skulls of the invaders." Hundreds of representatives of indigenous groups will convene in the nation's capital Brasilia for three days started yesterday for their annual lobbying mission to defend their land rights.

Brazen looting

The Arara lands are technically part of the municipality of Altamira, the largest in Brazil in

terms of surface area—bigger than Portugal—and home to about 110,000 people. Before illegal logging ramped up, local indigenous communities had already suffered—in the name of modernization. The construction of the Belo Monte hydroelectric mega-dam project on the Xingu River, which is due to be finished this year and will be one of the biggest in the world, displaced dozens and disrupted the ecosystem.

It was also in Altamira that Brazil's military regime began constructing the Trans-Amazonian Highway in the 1970s—it eventually left a scar of more than 4,000 kilometers across the Amazon. A plaque commemorating the highway's inauguration stands beside a veritable monument to the current problem of deforestation: the huge stump of a Brazil nut tree, one of the biggest in the Amazon and a key source of income for the Arara. Tatji Arara points out the burned wreckage of a truck used to carry timber that was set on fire in February by scores of indigenous people. Just off the red-dirt highway, loggers have bored their way into the rainforest using heavy machinery. —AFP



ALTAMIRA, Brazil: Arara indigenous chief Tatji Arara, 41, patrols with a rifle in the Arara indigenous land, in Para state, Brazil. — AFP

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- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

- ◆ Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
- ◆ Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC
American Board Certified in General Surgery
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendicectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider
General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com **Tel: 1886677**

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ 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

مستشفى دار الشفا
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tele:1802 555

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
Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

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

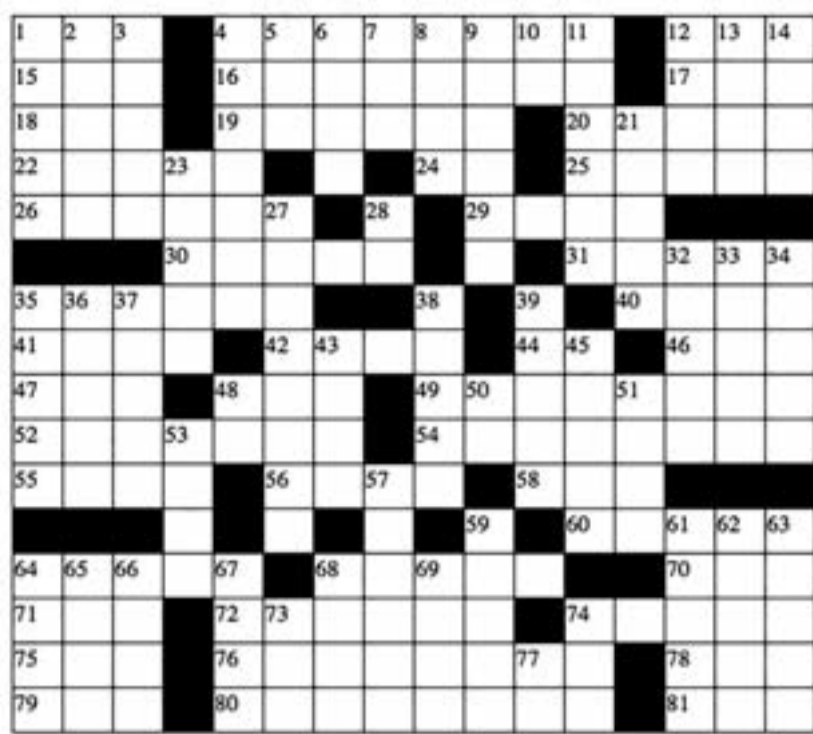
Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ 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 2192



ACROSS

- (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir known for his beauty and skill with bow and skis.
- Local anemia in a given body part sometimes resulting from vasoconstriction or thrombosis or embolism.
- A preparation (usually made of sweetened chicle) for chewing.
- The facility where wild animals are housed for exhibition.
- Outstanding United States athlete (1914-1956).
- Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.
- A lizard of the family Agamidae.
- Norse chieftan who became the first duke of Normandy (860-931).
- An association of nations dedicated to economic and political cooperation in southeast Asia.
- Military action involving the use of electromagnetic energy to determine or exploit or reduce or prevent hostile use of the electromagnetic spectrum.
- A genus of Pyralidae.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- An active and efficient cause.
- Greek mythology.
- Type genus of the Otaridae.
- The taste experience when a savoury condiment is taken into the mouth.
- The eleventh month of the Hindu calendar.
- (computer science) A standardized language for the descriptive markup of documents.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- A close friend who accompanies his buddies in their activities.
- Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
- Having few if any teeth.
- A bag used for carrying money and small personal items or accessories (especially by women).
- Molding in the form of a ring.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- The last (12th) month of the year.
- A young pig.
- English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
- A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
- The cry made by sheep.
- A new embodiment of a familiar idea.
- A slippery or viscous liquid or liquefiable substance not miscible with water.
- Of or relating to Jamaica (the island or the country) or to its inhabitants.
- How long something has existed.
- An inflammatory complication of leprosy that results in painful skin lesions on the arms and legs and face.
- Any plant of the genus Acanthus having large spiny leaves and spikes or white or purplish flowers.
- (Irish) The sea personified.

DOWN

- A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
- Any of various perennial South American plants of the genus *Loasa* having stinging hairs and showy white or yellow or reddish-orange flowers.
- Italian film actress (born in 1934).
- The god who fathered the islands and gods of Japan with his sister Izanami.
- A shape that sags.
- A boy or man.
- Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
- A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
- Equally distant from the extremes.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- A bin that holds rubbish until it is collected.
- Having desirable or positive qualities especially those suitable for a thing specified.
- (Norse mythology) One of the Aesir known for his beauty and skill with bow and skis.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- The capital of Morocco.
- The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
- A view of the sea.
- A New England state.
- Proceeding from or ordered by or subject to a pope or the papacy regarded as the successor of the Apostles.
- Related on the mother's side.
- Metal or plastic sheath over the end of a shoelace or ribbon.
- A member of the Mongolian people of central Asia who invaded Russia in the 13th century.
- A yellow pungent volatile oil (trade name Agene) formerly used for bleaching and aging flour.
- Fleshy spore-bearing inner mass of e.g. a puffball or stinkhorn.
- Rise or heave upward under the influence of a natural force, as on a wave.
- Mentally or physically infirm with age.
- A mountain range in South America running 5000 miles along the Pacific coast.
- A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- A school teaching mechanical and industrial arts and the applied sciences.
- An informal term for a father.
- A native or inhabitant of Crete.
- Wood of a larch tree.
- Viscera and trimmings of a butchered animal often considered inedible by humans.
- A river in northern Italy that flows southeast into the Adriatic Sea.
- A bureaucrat who levies taxes.
- (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
- A telephone connection.
- Type genus of the Marjidae.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- Anything that serves as an enticement.
- British informal term.
- The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
- A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

The good news is you'll be able to get your point across to those at work. The bad news is that it will take you time to compile your hard-fought-for ideas today. You've got the plans. It's just putting them into action or at least getting someone to listen that's the bother. Loved ones seem to be closer though and that makes you feel much better. Aries. Having pets and family close make your day brighter. Be glad you have people who love you. Show them that same love. Bring home a pizza or your favorite meal.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You'd like to be out and about today but since you're probably working, you'll turn your workplace into one big celebration. While you're at it though, you'll make sure that you introduce work into every conversation. Your ambition is showing but really that's a good thing. Taurus. Work and play can be one in the same thing. You want to be with someone who makes you feel good. Your lover will provide all of that stimulation you need later on today. Enjoy this great day.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

First, don't let others upset you today. Someone will want to strongly discuss something you feel you lack right now. Keep your confidence up and go right on with your business. With that said, you need to be able to discuss with others items you feel are in need of service. This could be either home or work but work has your attention. Your thoughts are quite intense at this time. Gemini those thought's intensity make you feel you need to share them, if for nothing else but for the discussion. Another night of good rest would be good for your soul.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Friends make you feel better about yourself. Be sure and be around people who lift your spirits and also who tell you when they think you're wrong. That's the true definition of friend. Since you've been thinking of another birthday approaching, you're thinking about being in the same ho-hum drama of day-to-day life. In other words, you want a change. Who better to discuss it with than a trusted friend? You have compassion for others but you forget about yourself. Cancer. Allow your friend to help you now. Discuss this openly. Love means a lot. Perhaps you're thinking of a new pet too.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Be careful not to exacerbate the argument you've been in for the last few days. Love isn't easy and the two of you have been at odds. Today, if you keep your cool, you may have the opportunity to set this mess straight. Don't tell, talk. Both of you find each other wonderful or at least did at one time. Allow you both to take a breather and think what's best for you, Leo. You've got a way of speaking now that could soothe the savage beast. Get busy.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

First, don't let others upset you today. Someone will want to strongly discuss something you feel you lack right now. Keep your confidence up and go right on with your business. With that said, you need to be able to discuss with others items you feel are in need of service. This could be either home or work but work has your attention. Your thoughts are quite intense at this time. Gemini those thought's intensity make you feel you need to share them, if for nothing else but for the discussion. Another night of good rest would be good for your soul.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Here's to unity again. Your home, work and relationships take the same type responsibility to maintain. That's why you, love the one's you're with. Having friends and lovers be part of your work surroundings only helps you all make more financially. Cutting the cost and slimming budgets amongst friends make for good bed fellows as long as you're not cut throat. Internal changes are streaming their way through your consciousness making you take a good look at your life. Nothing superfluous is left on the table when you're through making changes to your demeanor. Libra. It's a full-on business vibration you're dealing with now.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You have strong desires now on each life's front from work to sex. What's good is everything is right for you to achieve all you want now. Work should be easier than usual or at least allow you to get done what you need. Your love life should find you either in love or finding love. Either way, it's a good time had by all. Romance is a big part of your day. Social gatherings make you happier. You're apt to bring family and friends together for a mid-week party just so you can enjoy them more.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Everything around you gets your undivided attention today without making you feel scattered at all. You've got a drive for learning and really not just conventional learning but actually taking the subject apart and then putting it back together again. This is all to learn what it's made of and how to help should the need occur. Sagittarius. Watch out that you're not considered too domineering by those around you. Your learning actions today do help in the masterminding of your own future life and is needed for the implementation. Good going intelligent one.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may be getting compliments from a friend you haven't known too long. Perhaps he or she is work related. Kudo's on your ability is one thing which you get but to also get accolades on your personal space as well. That makes you beam. If it can't make you money, you generally don't worry as much about how it looks other than organization. This seems to make you smile. The use of the words, "I understand," bring you joy today. Capricorn. Just knowing someone else really comprehends what it's like to be you is music to your ears.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You know the value of honesty in life. You may be forced to explain that to someone for whom you care. The run in on honesty reminds you of how much you value above board and straight forward living. Be sure to teach younger family members your values too. Remember though that no one knows what it feels like until he or she walks a mile in the shoes of the person you're judging. However, don't let down your own value systems to make another feel better for their choice. You're feeling nostalgic, want security and love of family and friends. This feeling gives you a sense of emotional warmth that makes you glow and it shows.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Foggy thinking puts a lot of pressure on you today. You always want to do your best but this, you think, is ridiculous. Your only redemption from this may be that you have another Zodiac Sign in your moon or ascendant bringing you some relief. There is a planet helping as much as possible too here which though you have fog helps you with a quick wit. Thank goodness for this help. Otherwise your day could be considered a washout. Pisces. The good thing is others don't seem to notice your impairment at all. Many call on you for your help.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Cooking 2 - Word Search

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

BASTE
BEAT
BLANCH
BROIL
CAMELIZE
CHOP
CREAM
CUBE

FLAKE
FLUTE
GRATE
GRILL
MARINATE
MIX
PARE
PEEL

SCORE
STEAM
STEEP
STRAIN
WHIP

Yesterday's Solution

Cooking 1 - Solution

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
L W N E M N E R T C B S B O I D 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 M 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

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

Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2019



Models present creations by Bobstore during the Sao Paulo Fashion Week in Sao Paulo, Brazil on April 23, 2019. — AFP

UAE'S SHARJAH NAMED 2019 WORLD BOOK CAPITAL

The UAE city of Sharjah took up the mantle as UNESCO's World Book Capital for 2019 late Tuesday, launching a series of cultural programs aimed at both locals and expatriates. "Sharjah aims to become a true torch for science and knowledge," said Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, ruler of the city and its eponymous emirate, at a ceremony joining more than 500 artists. Sharjah was named this year's World Book Capital by the UN's cultural agency under the recommendation of The International Publishers Associations (IPA) and The International Federation of Library Association and Institutions (IFLA).

"Sharjah has been selected by these esteemed pillars as recognition of the city's continuous efforts in promoting books and literacy," said a joint statement released by the three organizations. "Known as the City of Books, it has fast established itself as the source for the region's growing publishing sector, and has become the hub for most book related events and organizations in the UAE." The annual program kicked off Tuesday, which marked World Book Day, with an evening celebration that included dance

and song. A string of conferences, exhibits and book fairs are set to take place throughout the year, according to the official website.

The city of Sharjah is the capital of an emirate by the same name, one of seven that make up the United Arab Emirates. The neighboring emirate of Dubai is the cultural center of the UAE, with year-round museum exhibits and regular book fairs. — AFP



These handout pictures released by Sharjah World book 2019 shows the opening ceremony of the UNESCO's World Book Capital for 2019, in Sharjah. — AFP photos

Hoda Barakat wins Arab Booker for 'The Night Mail'

Lebanese author Hoda Barakat has won the Booker international prize for Arabic fiction for her novel "The Night Mail". She will receive \$50,000 (44,600 euros) and the five other authors who reached the final short-list will each receive \$10,000, the organizers revealed late Tuesday. Conceived in Abu Dhabi in 2007, the prize is supported by the Booker Prize Foundation in London and financed by Abu Dhabi's Department of Culture and

Tourism. Born in Beirut, Hoda Barakat lives in Paris and has published several novels including "The Stone of Laughter" and "My Master and My Lover".

"The Night Mail" is her sixth novel and has been translated into French. Alongside the prize money, funds will also be provided for translating the book into English. The novel consists of a series of letters by individuals "facing social misery and their own demons", according to publisher Actes

Sud. Abu Dhabi, capital of the emirate of the same name, has become an increasingly significant cultural hub. The city hosts the Louvre Abu Dhabi—the first museum to take the name "Louvre" outside France—which houses nearly 600 works in a futuristic building designed by French architect Jean Nouvel. — AFP

Lebanese author Hoda Barakat.



RIDE SHARE LEAD SINGLE FUTURE LOVE FROM NEW ALBUM

Ride have released the lead single 'Future Love' from their forthcoming album 'This Is Not A Safe Place'. Former Oasis bassist Andy Bell's indie shoegazing band - also comprised of Mark Gardener, Laurence 'Loz' Colbert and Steve Queralt - will drop their follow-up to 2017's 'Weather Diaries' on August 16. On the upbeat summertime anthem, Andy sings: "Skies are blue / And I can't do anything / And the days seem so long / Now you've got me going / Yeah, you've got me going." A press release states that the track

is: "steeped in the heady haze of the start of a relationship, when anything seems possible, and one that's sure to strike a chord as the shimmering start of the summer comes into view." The 'Vapour Trail' group recorded the new material with regular producer Erol Alkan. Andy, 48, joined Oasis as the bass player in 2000 along with guitarist Gem Archer following the departure of original members Paul 'Bonehead' Arthurs and Paul 'Guigsy' McGuigan, and remained in the band until Noel Gallagher quit in August 2009 following a huge backstage bust-up

with his brother and the band's frontman Liam Gallagher. Liam, Andy and Gem formed new group Beady Eye with drummer Chris Sharrock in the wake of the 'Supersonic' rockers' demise but after releasing two albums, 'Different Gear, Still Speeding' and 'BE', they disbanded in October 2014, prompting Andy to reform Ride. 'This Is Not A Safe Place' is released on indie label Wichita Recordings.



Welch thrilled to get second chance on Game of Thrones

Florence Welch felt lucky to be given a second chance to perform a song for 'Game of Thrones' after rejecting an offer to record a track for the HBO series during her "wild years". At the end of episode two of Season 8, 'A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms', her band Florence + the Machine perform the haunting ballad 'Jenny of Oldstones' over the end credits, a song about a doomed woman who had an affair with Prince Duncan Targaryen. It will be the last song to be played by a contemporary artist over the end credits as the program comes to an end. However, Florence had been approached by the fantasy drama's creators David Benioff and D.B. Weiss to provide her distinct vocals to a track for the end credits of 'The Rains of Castamere' in Season 2 but she declined the offer. The 'Shake It Out' hitmaker admits she can't remember ever being asked to contribute a song to the show because the offer came when she was going through her hard partying phase. Speaking about her snub to The New York Times, she said: "I think that was during my quote-unquote wild years. If I'm being super honest, there are a lot of things that are a bit blurry. I wasn't as ... involved, or, shall we say, as focused as I am now ... I'm glad that they came back to me. I feel really touched to be on the last season, to be the last singer. And I'm grateful that I get to be a bit more present for it, to celebrate the ending of 'Game of Thrones' in a clear place." The song 'Jenny of Oldstones' also featured in the episode itself, performed by Podrick (Daniel Portman) after Tyrion Lannister (Peter Dinklage) asks someone to sing ahead of the imminent Battle of Winterfell and it seemingly predicts the dark fate awaiting many of the characters. Florence, 32, had no idea what the song was about or how it would be used because Benioff and Weiss were so secretive about the plot, although they did send her a simple melody as the basis of the track. She said: "To be honest, they keep such a tight ship on 'Game of Thrones', they didn't tell us what the visual would be. We weren't told what's going to happen in the episode. We weren't even told what the episode is called. It was all so top secret, so cloak-and-dagger!" Discussing how she might have changed the track - which was co-written by Thomas Bartlett, who worked with Florence on the fourth Florence + the Machine album 'High as Hope' - if she had been given the script beforehand, she added: "I would have been like, 'We need fanfares, and you're going to have to get a dragon on here somehow.' I might have - as I can do sometimes - overblown it. So I'm glad I didn't know then, but I'm glad to know now."



FKA Twigs to release new single this week

FKA Twigs released a new single yesterday. The 31-year-old singer last released solo work in the form of 2016's stand-alone single 'Good to Love', which came a year after her last EP 'M3LL155X', but almost three years later she's announced she's making her long-awaited comeback with a brand new single called 'Cellophane', which was released yesterday at 7:30pm in the UK. In a message posted to her Twitter account on Tuesday night, she wrote: "throughout my life I've practiced my way to being the best I could be, it didn't work this time. I had to tear down every process I'd ever relied on, go deeper, rebuild, start again. 'cellophane is coming, tomorrow 7:30pm bst / 11:30am pacific / 2:30pm eastern (sic)" 'M3LL155X' came as Twigs' third EP after her debut releases 'EP1' and 'EP2' in 2012 and 2013 respectively, and followed her debut studio album, 'LPI', which was released in 2014 and was nominated for that year's Mercury Music Prize. Despite her sporadic releases, the 'Two Weeks' hitmaker has embarked on various collaborative projects throughout the years, including working on last year's 'F**k Sleep' with A\$AP Rocky. Earlier this year, the star - who is known for her unique sound, which has been described as "genre-bending" - took to social media to retweet several messages from her fans asking when she would be releasing new music, though at the time she did not give any of them an answer. As of the time of writing, it's unknown whether Twigs' new single will be another stand-alone release, or if it will form part of another EP, or full album.



Sir Elton John wanted Rocketman to be 'as honest as possible'

Sir Elton John wanted 'Rocketman' to be as "honest as possible" about his life. The music icon insisted that the upcoming biopic be totally accurate and show every candid detail of his life as he admits the "the lows were very low and the highs were very high". Speaking in a new teaser for the film released by Paramount on Tuesday he said: "It had to be as honest as possible, the lows were very low, and the highs were very high and that's how I wanted the film to be." Elton, 72, is played by Taron Egerton in the movie and the 29-year-old actor has said portraying the 'Crocodile Rock' singer has "been the greatest joy of my professional life". The 'Kingsman: The Secret Service' star also said: "It's amazing that this working class kid is now one of the biggest icons in the world." 'Rocketman' director Dexter Fletcher added that the movie - which depicts Elton's rise to fame in the 1970s - was able to use "fantasy and imagination" to tell the star's story. Fletcher said: "Because of the nature of who Elton is the storytelling allowed for us to totally indulge in our fantasy and imagination." Elton's husband David Furnish, who is an executive producer on the film, went on to explain that his partner's love of music "pulled him out of a very unhappy childhood, and that opened a door to an infinite amount of possibilities". The film - which also stars Richard Madden as Elton's manager John Reid - is set to be released in the UK on May 22 and in the US on May 31.



Billie Eilish slams trolls who don't get her jokes



Billie Eilish got rid of Twitter because she got fed up with trolls who couldn't handle her jokes. The 'My Strange Addiction' singer has opened up about how she was once branded "crazy and toxic" for making a quip on the social media site, and how it's impossible to say something "horrible" in a tongue-in-cheek way without someone getting "offended" these days. According to the Daily Star newspaper, she said: "The internet has been saying some dumb s***, not I'm like: 'I'm keeping this to myself as you don't deserve my funny a**.' "I make one joke and it's like, 'She's crazy, she's toxic, a horrible person, rot in hell, you're problematic' - damn I made a joke, it's just funny, calm down. "I literally deleted Twitter because of that. I made the funniest joke and people dragged me for like months because of that." The 'Bury Your Friend' hitmaker is a massive fan of the US sitcom 'The Office', but she doesn't think it would be able to be made today. She said: "Comedy is just being horrible and it's hilarious, that's why 'The Office' is so funny, but dude if 'The Office' are

out today people would be so offended." Meanwhile, Billie was recently upgraded 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-organiser 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 - said: "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."



Hook to play Division albums in full at 40th anniversary gigs

Peter Hook is set to play Joy Division's albums 'Unknown Pleasures' and 'Closer' in full at two 40th anniversary shows. The iconic band's bassist will play the seminal records, which were released in 1979 and 1980 respectively, at London's O2 Academy Brixton on May 15, 2020, and Manchester's O2 Apollo on May 16, 2020, where he will be backed by his band Peter Hook & The Light. The 63-year-old musician will also perform songs by his former band New Order at the 'An Evening with Peter Hook & The Light - Joy Division: A Celebration' shows. He shared on Twitter: "Delighted to announce 2 very special 40th anniversary live performances of 'Unknown Pleasures' & 'Closer' for May 2020 at @O2academybrix & @O2ApolloManc. Both shows will also feature an opening set of New Order material. Tickets go on sale this Friday 26th April at 10am. (sic)" As well as celebrating the albums reaching the milestone, the money made from ticket sales will be donated to CALM and the Epilepsy Society, in honor of late Joy Division frontman Ian Curtis - who tragically took his own life in May 1980, aged just 23. Hook has dedicated his time to spreading awareness of mental health issues in men - suicide is the biggest killer of men under the age of 40 - and has been working with CALM, who spread awareness of the subject and encourage men to speak out, for some time. Speaking about his charity work, he said previously: "The treatment has changed and society has changed, I do feel that people are more empathetic and open to education in those things. We're looking at mental health in a positive way now so that people don't have to go through what he went through. A bunch of idiots like us can even be educated. We were unaware of what Ian was going through. That, as an old bloke, is the most shocking aspect of it - how unprepared and uneducated we as his friends were. Any education and any communication about things like this towards avoiding what happened to Ian is the most important thing. The hardest thing in the world is knowing what people are going through. I'm an alcoholic and a drug addict, and coming to terms with something like that helps you understand it more." Tickets for the shows go on sale tomorrow (26.04.19) at 10am.

Bieber 'most inspired' on the beach

Haley Bieber feels "most inspired" when she's on the beach. The 22-year-old model is constantly jetting off to shoot in various locations around the globe and says that although there are many countries that influence her beauty looks and style, she feels "very beautiful" while soaking up the sun. In an interview with America's Glamour magazine, she said: "When I'm shooting in Europe, or I'm on set in Paris, London, or Milan, or when I'm doing fashion shows, I get a lot of make-up inspiration that way. "But with beauty in general, I feel the most inspired when I'm on a beach. I feel very beautiful in that environment". Haley - who is married to singer Justin Bieber - went on to share her top beauty tips and insisted it's all about highlighter when she creates her make-up look. She said: "Learning exactly where to place highlighter-like the right spot on your nose, a little on your cupid's bow, on your cheekbones but not too low. It's all about watching how it hits the light. "I'm a big highlighter fan. I also love tricks like using blush on your lips, lipstick on your cheeks, or lip gloss on your eyelids. It actually makes a big difference." The blonde beauty added that she feels it's "bulls**t" that all cosmetics are healthy to use on your body. She said: "Something that I know for a fact is bulls**t is that using any make-up on your face is fine. Or that using anything you bought at the store is OK for your body or your skin. If it's not a healthy product, it's usually bad for you."



Lifestyle | Gossip



Kate Beckinsale to star in Jolt

Kate Beckinsale is set to star in action-comedy 'Jolt'. The 45-year-old British actress will star in the female-driven film for Millennium Media helmed by Tanya Wexler and written by Scott Wascha. The 'Widow' star will play a homicidal security guard named Lindy who controls her murderous urges using an electrode-lined vest which shocks her back to normalcy - however when her boyfriend is murdered she goes on a revenge-fuelled rampage to find the killer while the police pursue her as their chief suspect. Sherryll Clark and Millennium Media's David Bernardi and Les Weldon will as producers while Avi Lerner, Trevor Short, Boaz Davidson, Jeffrey Greenstein and Jonathan Yungler of Millennium Media are all on board as executive producers. 'Jolt' marks Millennium Media's first project with a woman as the lead, female director and female producer and shooting on the picture is scheduled to begin on July in the UK. In a statement, Wexler said: "'Jolt' is a kick-ass and painfully funny script. When I saw that Kate Beckinsale was attached to play the lead, I jumped at the opportunity to make the movie. "This is the movie for right now - a revenge-action film for every woman (and man) who wants to turn their inner 'Thelma & Louise' up to 11." Millennium Media's Greenstein added: "'Jolt' is just that: a shock to the system, and this film promises to be a wicked cocktail of action, humor and style. I believe that this is the start to a fun franchise, and I am eager to see our director Tanya Wexler and star Kate Beckinsale bring this badass character and story to life. And it's great to team up again with our friend and talented producer Sherryll Clark."



Olivia Culpo used to over-exfoliate skin

Olivia Culpo used to over-exfoliate her skin and get breakouts. The 26-year-old model has opened up about her evening ritual and admitted that she used to suffer from spots on one side of her cheek until A-list skincare guru Dr. Barbara Sturm advised her to stop scrubbing her face "daily". She said: "[I use] the Dr. Barbara Sturm Enzyme Cleanser [\$75] which is my favourite. She recommended this for me because I was getting these breakouts on one side of my cheek. I told her I was using these products with bees and trying to exfoliate every single day and she noticed that I was actually over-exfoliating. It's really fun too, it's lightweight because it's powder. "See? There's more make-up. That's why I do this and the wipe, because I want to be sure I get everything off, especially before bed." And the brunette beauty swears by coconut oil and Neutrogena towelettes to help get rid of her make-up before bed and "hydrate" her complexion. She told US Harper's Bazaar's 'Go To Bed With Me' series: "I start my night time routine with one of my favourite products, these are Neutrogena Make-Up Remover towelettes [\$8.99], you can wash your face and then use these wipes and you'll be surprised with how much more comes off, and it also hydrates the skin which I love. "If I ever need a little extra love for my eye make-up, I use a wipe and dip it in coconut oil, it works so well to get any stubborn mascara, or anything you're really trying to get off." Olivia also swears by La Mer and rich face masks to give her skin an extra boost because she suffers from breakouts when she is "dehydrated". She continued: "I'm going to use a very hydrating Skin Design [\$105] balm mask, it's extremely hydrating, in addition I use the La Mer renewal oil. "I find that when I'm breaking out, contrary to popular belief it's not because my skin is super oily, it's because my skin is really dehydrated. So my pores are acting up and they're not cooperating with life, airplanes, and lack of sleep."

Ben Affleck to direct and star in Ghost Army

Ben Affleck is set to star in and direct 'Ghost Army'. The 46-year-old actor will tackle the upcoming true World War II tale - which is based on the book 'The Ghost Army of World War II' by Rick Beyer and Elizabeth Sayles - as both the director and the lead star. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the project is in development at Universal Pictures, and has a script penned by 'True Detective' creator Nic Pizzolatto, who updated the work from an earlier draft by 'Shazam!' writer Henry Gayden. 'Ghost Army' is set to tell the story of a squadron of American soldiers who were picked for their creativity and ingenuity to be fashioned into the ultimate masters of deception. The squadron used blow-up tanks, fake radio transmissions, and noise machines to trick German forces into thinking armies were in certain positions, and the real-life soldiers have been credited with saving countless

lives thanks to their clever tricks. Ben is also set to produce the flick through his Pearl Street Films banner, alongside Andrew Lazar, who will work through Mad Chance Productions. Pearl Street Films' Madison Ainley will executive produce, while executive VP production Mark Sourian will oversee the project for Universal. For Ben, the project comes after he recently starred in Netflix's action thriller 'Triple Frontier', and is also working on a basketball drama titled 'Torrance'. As a director, he last helmed 'Live By Night' in 2016, and before that he took on 2012's 'Argo' as the director and the lead star, which bagged him a Best Picture gong at the Oscars. The new role also comes as he's stepped down from his run as the iconic superhero Batman, after previously being tipped to direct and star in the 2021 standalone movie.



Leonardo DiCaprio in talks for Guillermo del Toro's next film

Leonardo DiCaprio is in talks to star in Guillermo del Toro's new film 'Nightmare Alley'. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the 44-year-old actor is being eyed for the lead role in remake of the 1947 flick, which starred Tyrone Power as "a corrupt con-man who teams up with a female psychiatrist to trick people into giving them money". The movie - del Toro's follow-up to the Oscar-winning 'The Shape of Water' - is based on the novel of the same name by William Lindsay Gresham. The 54-year-old filmmaker has penned the script alongside Kim Morgan and the project is being produced and funded by del Toro and J. Miles Dale of TSG Entertainment, whilst Fox Searchlight's own distribution rights. The movie, which begins filming in autumn, comes after DiCaprio filmed Quentin Tarantino's Manson family murder pic 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood', which also stars Margot Robbie and



Brad Pitt, and is due out in July. The 'Catch Me If You Can' star hasn't been seen on the big screen since 2015's 'The Revenant'. Meanwhile, it was recently confirmed that DiCaprio's live-action version of 'Akira' is to be filmed in California. The film, based on the Manga series written and illustrated by Katsuhiro Otama, will soon begin shooting in the US state after scoring \$18.5 million in tax credits under the California Film Commission's Film & TV Tax Credit Program 2.0. The shoot is scheduled to take place over 71 days and, according to Deadline, will employ more than 200 "below-the-line" crew and more than 5,000 employees. 'Thor: Ragnarok' director Taika Waititi remains attached to helm the film, which takes place in Tokyo in the year 2060 and follows Tetsuo and his best friend Kaneda after Tetsuo's government experiment-boosted psychic powers threaten both of their lives. The movie is one of 18 other films that will receive the tax benefits under the condition filming takes place in California and the picture will be produced by DiCaprio's Appian Way Productions that he founded in 2004 alongside Andrew Lazar.

Brie Larson thanks Prada for custom gown

Brie Larson has thanked Prada for creating the custom gown she wore to the Time 100 gala in New York on Tuesday night. The 29-year-old actress was recently named one of the magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World for 2019, alongside the likes Ariana Grande, Emilia Clarke and Lady Gaga, and the star stepped out in a strapless emerald green dress by the prestigious Italian label to celebrate the swanky evening. She captioned a photo of her in the dress: "Thank you @prada for the custom gown to mark the occasion #Time100 (sic)" Brie's stunning look came together with the help of her longstanding stylist Samantha McMillen, who thanked the star for standing up for women throughout her film career. Samantha wrote on Instagram: "Brie x Prada for the #Time100gala this evening in NYC. Thank you @Prada for this beautiful custom creation. Congratulations @bri Larson Thank you for standing up for all of us! #bri Larson #captainmarvel #carol danvers #prada (sic)" Other fashionable attendees at the event included Taylor Swift, who stepped out wearing a floor-length pastel J Mendel gown with puffed sleeves. Julianne Moore teamed up with the Duchess of Sussex's wedding dress designer, Clare Waight Keller, to wear a Givenchy feathered monochrome look, while Naomi Campbell donned a liquid-gold Valentino gown. Brie's Marvel co-star Tessa Thompson, 35, penned a tribute to the actress in Time magazine to celebrate her



influential honoree title. She wrote: "Brie Larson is a warrior on- and offscreen. When she's not shattering records and stereotypes as Captain Marvel in Marvel Studios' first female-led superhero movie-which has made more than \$1 billion at the global box office - she's fighting fiercely for gender equality, inclusivity and an end to sexual harassment in the workplace."

Schwarzenegger uses eco-friendly skincare products

Katherine Schwarzenegger thinks using economically-friendly skincare products is "truly amazing". The 29-year-old author - who is engaged to 'Avengers: Endgame' star Chris Pratt - celebrated Earth Day on Monday by opening up about her non-toxic daily routine, explaining she uses plant-based line Biossance to keep her complexion looking flawless and help the "environment". She told People magazine: "We want this planet to be happy and healthy for generations to come, and that starts with us and being mindful of our effect on the earth. "[There are] ways to be more eco-conscious with the products that I use and how important that is not only for the earth but also for our bodies. "I love [that the Biossance] skincare line is not only better for the environment but it's also better for me and my skin. "Knowing I'm using something that's free of harsh chemicals, is non-toxic and that I can actually see results with, is truly amazing." And Katherine credits her younger sister Christina, 27, for making her an "eco-conscious person" so she can make better choices for herself and the environment. She added: "Her passion around being an eco-conscious person has definitely had a positive effect on me and has made me more aware of steps I can take to be more eco-friendly. She is always educating me and my family about more ways we can do



a better job being environmentally friendly." The brunette beauty has also asked her fans to "take baby steps" to help the planet for future generations. She continued: "I think people, including myself, find it intimidating when people talk about it in a certain way and share all the crazy statistics about how much bad we do in our everyday life for the planet, but there's so much good we can do starting at the very little things. You can take baby steps!"

Williams fashion line has to be 'highest quality' for Duchess Meghan

Serena Williams says her fashion line has to be of the "highest quality" for Meghan, Duchess of Sussex. The 37-year-old tennis star has been friends with the former actress - who was known as Meghan Markle before marrying Prince Harry last year - for several years and the sportswoman claims her standards threshold is for the garments to be "fit for a royal princess" after the royal was spotted in the S by Serena boss blazer back in October during her royal tour of Australia. She said: "Listen, if we're giving our stuff to Meghan, it has to be the highest quality that we can get. So, that's what I tell our team internally: 'We have to make sure it's super high quality that, you know, is fit for a royal princess!' "I've been trying for years and years to do something in fashion. I've been doing this for so long and it's never hit. It's so easy when you're so successful at something else to just do that and keep being amazingly successful at it. But that's not the story I wanted to tell. And I always felt like if I didn't at least do it one more time, a 100% with my backing, that I would always have some sort of regret." Serena has "always loved fashion" and recalled when her mother, Oracene Price, would make clothes from patterns she found in

Vogue magazine. She told the Business of Fashion: "I've always loved fashion. I remember when I was a kid, my mom used to make all our outfits. Back then, they had Vogue patterns. I would always see her pinning them and making all our clothes. And she taught us how to sew early on. So, I used to sew clothes for my dolls out of old socks and I would cut them up and make little outfits out of them." The 23-time Grand Slam champ - who studied fashion at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale in Florida from 2000 to 2003 - also confessed that her own fashionista training came in handy when she swapped pattern making for her professional tennis career. She added: "I remember one time playing a tournament and, after I won, I put on a skirt to take a picture and my skirt broke. Everyone in the locker room was like, 'Oh, the seamstress left.' And I'm like, 'Well, did she leave her stuff?' And they were like, 'Yeah,' so I said, 'I'll get it.' "Yeah, it was just a simple stitch, you know, I could have hand-sewn it too," she says gamely. "And everyone's jaws were on the floor!" — Bang Showbiz



Lifestyle | Features



In this picture Canadian 'social media influencer' Rosie Gabrielle (left), 32, attends the Pakistan Tourism Summit next to Atif Khan (right), Pakistani provincial minister for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for tourism, culture, sports and Youth, in Islamabad.



A Pakistani man takes a selfie with Canadian "social media influencer" Rosie Gabrielle (center), 32, as she arrives to attend the Pakistan Tourism Summit in Islamabad.



This handout picture released by Canadian tourist Rosie Gabrielle shows her posing on her motorbike during a trip in the southwestern Balochistan province in Pakistan.— AFP photos

Influencer invasion as Pakistan launches tourism push

They are young, Western, and full of praise for Pakistan: Travel influencers have moved in on the "land of the pure", but critics warn their rose-tinted filters are irresponsible and sell an inaccurate picture of the conservative, militancy-scarred country. As security improves, cricketer-turned-prime-minister Imran Khan is keen to promote the nation's tourism potential, with the government claiming it has eased visa restrictions for many foreign visitors. The push has resulted in an influx of foreign travel bloggers extolling the virtues of its mountains and beaches, as well as its rich heritage and history, from ancient Indus civilizations to Buddhist shrines and Islamic monuments.

"Pakistan, it was the trip of a lifetime," food and travel YouTuber Mark Wiens told his four million sub-

scribers. Polish blogger Eva zu Beck informed her followers it could "become the number one tourist destination in the world", while Canadian social media influencer Rosie Gabrielle said she wanted her stories to "tell the truth" about the country. But there are concerns influencer content does not reflect the major challenges, from infrastructure to extremism, that Pakistan is facing as it embraces modern tourism.

Zu Beck, whose clip was even shared by officials, cites government commerce initiative Emerging Pakistan, as well as Pakistan International Airlines as partners she's worked with, while Wiens credits tourism expo Pakistan Travel Mart for "making the amazing trip happen". Gabrielle says her 3,500 kilometer motorcycle trip across the nation was facilitated by a Pakistani association in Oman.

Alternative vision of Pakistan

Once seen as an essential stop on the hippie trail, visitor numbers have slumped since the 1970s when the country first underwent sweeping Islamisation then descended into a bloody battle with militancy. Deadly attacks still occur but security concerns are easing, so authorities and businesses are keen to shake the perception it is a hostile and dangerous place. They are enthusiastic that so-called social media "influencer" advertising, which generally provides glossy snapshots rather than in-depth investigation, can present an alternative vision of Pakistan to a new generation of young and adventurous travellers.

"People believe them," says Pakistan Travel Mart CEO Ali Hamdani, who helped set up Wiens trip, adding that bloggers' impressions are regarded as "authentic". Yet Pakistanis and seasoned foreign travellers warn such posts on social media do not paint a full and honest picture of Pakistan. Tourism infrastructure is severely underdeveloped, there are opaque government restrictions on places foreigners can visit, and travellers are often harassed—whether by men bothering women in a patriarchal society; or suspicious intelligence officials detaining curious sightseers or insisting on security escorts.

"All this 'Everything is wonderful in Pakistan' is just irresponsible," reveals June, an indignant 51-year-old Briton who declined to give her last name, she had been harassed by a police officer during a visit to the northwestern Swat valley. Influencers are shielded from many issues that ordinary visitors face, adds Zara Zaman, an attendee at a recent tourism summit in Islamabad. "All of these travellers are also travelling with crews and are protected by more powerful people," she argues.

Hamdani, for example, acted as a driver for both Wiens and another influencer, Trevor James, during their visits, smoothing out any issues. Zu Beck and Gabrielle, were able to visit the southwestern province of Balochistan—famed for its spectacular scenery, but also for violent insurgencies, which means few foreigners are able to visit without the blessing of intelligence agencies.

'Post-colonial hangover'

What influencers publish "doesn't represent the real experience," warns Alexandra Reynolds, an American blogger on her fifth trip to Pakistan, adding that there is a risk that less experienced travellers will be misled by such content and potentially end up in trouble. "In a time when Pakistan's international reputation is so fragile, it is not something that should be risked," the 27-year-old explains, revealing that she too experienced harassment



Canadian tourist Rosie Gabrielle poses for photographs as she arrives in the coastal region of Gwadar during her motorcycle trip.

from security forces during a previous trip. Another tourist Sebastiaan, 30, says he was detained for 14 hours and questioned by suspicious government agents in the southern city of Mithi last September.

There is also frustration from Pakistanis that Western bloggers have been feted by authorities, while locals with better cultural understanding—especially of sensitive issues such as gender or blasphemy—are sidelined. "It kinds of makes me angry to have white people represent us. We are not completely done with our post-colonial hangover," says Zaman. At the tourism summit a group of the Western bloggers were widely photographed meeting Imran Khan, with no local travel influencers in sight, prompting a backlash on social media. Despite concerns, the bloggers remain enthusiastic. Zu Beck, 27, has gained a huge following in Pakistan, where a local phone company has sponsored some of her videos. She insists: "My job is not to love Pakistan. My job is to make content. But I love Pakistan."— AFP



Canadian 'social media influencer' Rosie Gabrielle, 32, looks on as she attends the Pakistan Tourism Summit in Islamabad.

Dutch tulip forecast: Brilliant, with a chance of tourists

As spring flower fields around the Netherlands burst into bloom, painting the countryside with dazzling swathes of red, white, and blue, a modern day tulip bubble may be forming: tourists. More than a million foreign sightseers are expected to visit this country of 17 million people on Easter weekend, a record, the Dutch Tourism Bureau said on Thursday. Director Jos Vranken said he expects them to spend 300 million euros—a boon for the national economy. Many are attracted to the country's museums and other cultural offerings, but in April, the flower fields and Keukenhof flower show in Lisse top many "must see" lists.

While flower lovers and the photographs they share

on social media are free advertising for the country's tourism, cut flower and bulb industries, it isn't all a bed of roses. "That has a downside," Vranken said. "Farmers are having increasing damage to their fields from tourists taking photos." Foreign and Dutch tourists alike have learned to use "Flower Radar" websites to identify where fields are in bloom, especially in the main bulb-growing center known as the "Bollenstreek" along the coast between Haarlem and Leiden.

Do not tiptoe through the tulips

Signs and barricades—now printed in Chinese and English—saying "Enjoy the Flowers, Respect Our Pride" have gone up at the edge of many fields. They illustrate

the concept that taking photos at the edge of a field is okay, but actually walking among the flowers to take pictures ruins them. Meanwhile, farmers in less-promoted areas of the country sense an opportunity. In Creil, northwest of Amsterdam, one enterprising group has set up a "Tulip Experience" complete with designated selfie area, hundreds of tulip varieties on display, helicopter tours, food and drinks, and bouncy castles for kids.— Reuters



Classifieds

Thursday, April 25, 2019

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DAY: Wednesday 24/04/2019 Valid From 7 AM To 7 PM

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Relatively hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate freshening at times over costal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 24/04/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	29 °C	20 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	29 °C	16 °C			
ABDALY	30 °C	13 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	30 °C	17 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	27 °C	18 °C			
SALMIYAH	25 °C	20 °C			
AHMADI	24 °C	20 °C			
NUWASIB	28 °C	15 °C			
WAFRA	31 °C	13 °C			
SALMY	29 °C	11 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	04/25	Relatively hot and some high clouds will appear	30 °C	16 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 40 km/h
Friday	04/26	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear	32 °C	17 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 32 km/h
Saturday	04/27	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will increase gradually with a chance for scattered rain later	32 °C	17 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 40 km/h
Sunday	04/28	Relatively hot and cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thunders at times	30 °C	19 °C	NW-NE	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES		RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
Fajr	03:48	MAX. Temp.	29 °C
Sunrise	05:11	MIN. Temp.	12 °C
Zuhr	11:46	MAX. RH	51 %
Asr	15:22	MIN. RH	10 %
Sunset	18:20	MAX. Wind	NW 50 km/h
Isha	19:42	TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HRS.	0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. UPO 2019/04/24 02:46 UTC V1.00 T2.4 2-1/ع-ع-ع

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME
 By this did, I undersigned Farash Kayum Ahmed (new name) S/o Kayum Ahmed, previously called Farash (old name) S/o Kayum Ahmed, resident near chuna bhatti, rajtalab, banswara (raj.) solemnly declare.
 (C 5517) 25-4-2019

Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
	22087426
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700
Oman Air	22958787
Turkish Airlines	22453820/1
Aeroflot	22404838/9

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

Arrival Flights on Thursday 25/4/2019				Departure Flights on Thursday 25/4/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	212	Jeddah	13:45
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	14:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	FDB	5059	Dubai	14:15
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:15
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15
JZR	734	Cairo	01:35	KAC	792	Madinah	14:40
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	JZR	222	Riyadh	14:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:45
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	618	Doha	14:50
PGT	828	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	562	Amman	14:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	118	New York	15:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:30	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:35	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:10
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	546	Cairo	15:50
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05
JZR	724	Alexandria	03:30	FDB	051	Dubai	16:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	JZR	732	Cairo	16:10
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	502	Beirut	16:15
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	FEQ	241	Alexandria	16:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FDB	8065	Dubai	16:55
MSR	0516	Cairo	04:25	SAW	705	Damascus	17:00
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:30	JZR	116	Doha	17:05
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:35
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	JZR	124	Dubai	17:40
KAC	362	Colombo	06:05	JZR	104	Bahrain	18:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	JZR	612	Tbilisi	18:15
JZR	112	Doha	06:35	JZR	302	Istanbul	18:20
KAC	106	London	06:40	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	704	Asyut	18:45
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	RJA	640	Amman	19:05
IRA	601	Tehran	06:50	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:00	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20
JZR	402	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	744	Dammam	19:25
QTR	8511	Doha	07:05	NIA	161	Cairo	19:30
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:40
JZR	714	Sohag	07:20	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	KNE	381	Taif	20:00
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	FDB	057	Dubai	20:05
KAC	352	Kochi	08:05	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:05	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:10
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
JZR	702	Asyut	08:25	JZR	126	Dubai	20:20
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	RBG	213	Sohag	20:30
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KAC	620	Doha	20:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	174	Munich	20:30
FDB	5055	Dubai	09:20	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:10
IRA	675	Lar	09:55	UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ALK	229	Colombo	21:15
JZR	410	Delhi	10:30	KAC	168	Paris	21:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	THY	764	Istanbul	21:30
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	676	Dubai	21:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	164	MXP	21:40
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:50
JZR	716	Sohag	12:10	KAC	564	Amman	21:55
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:20
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	RBG	555	Alexandria	22:30
IRA	667	Esfahan	13:00	JZR	128	Dubai	22:50
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	GEC	8456	Frankfurt	22:55
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	BBC	043	Dhaka	23:00
				MSC	501	Alexandria	23:10
				MSC	415	Sohag	23:15
				MSR	614	Cairo	23:30

North Korea's Kim in Russia for first summit with Putin

VLADIVOSTOK: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said he was looking forward to his first talks with President Vladimir Putin as he arrived in Russia yesterday seeking support in Pyongyang's nuclear deadlock with the United States. Kim's armored train rolled in to the Tsarist-era station in Russia's Pacific port city of Vladivostok, where the summit will take place today. Wearing a long black coat and fedora, Kim stepped out onto a red carpet on the station platform before making his way outside to be received by an honor guard and military band. His limousine drove off after the welcoming ceremony, bodyguards in suits running alongside.

The talks, only confirmed at the last minute, will be Kim's first face-to-face meeting with another head of state since negotiations with US President Donald Trump in Hanoi collapsed in February. "I hope this visit will be successful and useful," Kim told Russian television in the border town of Khasan, where women in folk costumes welcomed him with bread and salt in a traditional greeting. "I hope that during the talks... I will be able to have concrete discussions on resolving situations on the Korean Peninsula and on the development of our bilateral relationship," Kim said. Putin was due to arrive in Vladivostok today, then fly on after the talks for another summit in Beijing.

Island venue

Russian and North Korean flags were flying on lamp posts on Vladivostok's Russky island, where the summit is expected to take place at a university campus. The island is connected to the rest of Vladivostok by a bridge built in 2012 that crosses a harbor used for commercial and naval ships. Kim plans to stay on in Vladivostok on Friday for a series of cultural events, including a ballet and a visit to the city's aquarium, Russian media reported.

The talks follow repeated invitations from Putin since Kim embarked on a series of diplomatic overtures last year. Since March 2018, the formerly reclusive North Korean leader has held four meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping, three with South Korea's Moon Jae-in, two with Trump and one with Vietnam's president. Analysts say he is now looking for wider international support in his standoff with Washington, while Moscow is keen to inject itself into another global flashpoint. In Hanoi, the cash-strapped North demanded immediate relief from the sanctions imposed on it over its banned nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. But the talks broke down in disagreement over what Pyongyang was prepared to give up in return. North Korea last week launched a blistering attack on US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, insisting he be removed from the negotiations just hours after announcing it had carried out a new weapons test.

Moscow has already called for the sanctions to be eased, while the US has accused it of trying to help Pyongyang evade some of the measures - accusations Russia denies. Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov told a briefing on Tuesday: "The focus will be on a political and diplomatic solution to the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula." "Russia intends to help consolidate positive trends in every way," he said, but added that no joint statement or signing of agreements was planned.

Moscow was a crucial backer of Pyongyang for decades and their ties go back to the founding of North Korea, when the Soviet Union installed Kim's grandfather Kim Il Sung as leader. The Soviet Union reduced funding to the North as it began to seek reconciliation with Seoul in the 1980s, but Pyongyang was hit hard by its demise in 1991. Soon after his first election as Russian president, Putin sought to normalize relations



KHASAN, Russia: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un disembarks from his private armored train at a station in this Russian border town yesterday. —AFP

and met Kim Jong Il - the current leader's father and predecessor - three times. The first of those meetings was in Pyongyang in 2000, when Putin became the first Russian leader to visit the North.

China has since cemented its role as the isolated North's most important ally, its largest trading partner and crucial fuel supplier, and analysts say Kim could be looking to balance Beijing's influence. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said yesterday that Beijing was happy to see talks between its "friendly neighbors". "We believe this will contribute... to

peace and stability on the peninsula and in the region," Geng said, noting that China and Russia "have always maintained close communication and coordination" on the issue. While ties between Russia and North Korea have remained cordial, the last meeting between their leaders came in 2011, when Kim Jong Il told then-president Dmitry Medvedev that he was prepared to renounce nuclear testing. His son has since overseen by far the country's most powerful blast to date, and the launch of missiles capable of reaching the entire US mainland. —AFP

Ghana eyes world record in medical drone service

ACCRA: Ghana launched a fleet of drones yesterday to carry medical supplies to remote areas, with President Nana Akufo-Addo declaring it would become the "world's largest drone delivery service". The craft are part of an ambitious plan to leapfrog problems of medical access in a country with poor roads. "No one in Ghana should die because they can't access the medicine they need in an emergency," Akufo-Addo said in a statement to mark the launch. "That's why Ghana is launching the world's largest drone delivery service," Akufo-Addo said. "It represents a major step towards giving everyone in this country universal access to lifesaving medicine."

The drones have been flying test runs with blood and vaccines, but the project was officially inaugurated yesterday at the main drone base in Omenako, 70 km north of Accra. Omenako is the first of four distribution centres which, when fully operational, will each have 30 drones serving 500 clinics within an 80-km radius. Operator Zipline, a US-based company, said the three other sites should be up and running by the end of 2019. The drones are planned to ferry 150 different medicines, blood, and vaccines to more than 2,000 clinics serving over 12 million people - roughly 40 percent of the population.

Bumpy roads

Zipline first began delivering blood and medicine in East Africa in 2016, deploying drones in Rwanda, a country dubbed the "land of a thousand hills" where access to many villages by road is difficult. Now the company is expanding on the other side of the continent. "Millions of people across the world - in both developed and developing countries - die each year because they can't get the medicine they need when they need it," said Zipline boss Keller Rinaudo. For Ghana, a country of nearly 30 million people scattered across a land area about the size of former colonial ruler Britain, poor roads and a lack of ambulances are major challenges to health care access.



Staff members prepare a drone for the delivery of medical supplies at the drone delivery service base run by operator Zipline on Tuesday in Omenako, 70 km north of Accra. —AFP

Drones, not dependent on bumpy roads that can take hours to navigate, offer a way to get medical supplies to clinics before a patient bleeds to death, for example. "We are a developing country," said Douglas Adu-Fokuo, a spokesman for the Ghana Health Service, noting that almost a third of maternal deaths are due to blood loss - easily preventable with a transfusion provided supplies are available. "We can't achieve everything in one go," he added. "We have to start somewhere."

Parachute drops

The four-year contract to Zipline has a hefty price tag of \$12.5 million. But the company says the cost is "on par with the current cost of delivery, which is usually a car, truck or motorcycle", yet faster and more reliable. Medics can order blood or medicine by sending a message by mobile phone. Each battery-powered flying machine has a delivery distance of 80 km, speeding at 100 km an hour and carry up to 1.7 kg.

Each drop can bring three units of blood, with deliveries made by parachute. The drones are stoked at their depot to ensure that vaccines and supplies are kept cold, cutting the need for expensive cold-chain storage systems in remote areas. Once the program is up and running, plasma deliveries can be made for the first time to Ghana's most remote northern areas. The journey by road was too long, and the expiry date of plasma too short, to make this possible until now. —AFP

studies, many from Australia, Canada, South Africa and the United States.

"Sedentary behaviors, whether riding motorized transport rather than walking or cycling, sitting at a desk in school, watching TV or playing inactive screen-based games are increasingly prevalent and associated with poor health outcomes," the WHO said. Chronic insufficient sleep in children has been associated with increased excessive fat accumulation as measured by body mass index (BMI), it said. Shorter sleep duration has been associated with more TV viewing and time spent playing computer games, it added. — Reuters

In other Assembly business, the financial and economic affairs committee yesterday postponed the approval of the insurance law, giving the ministry of commerce and industry time to provide details about the number of insurance companies and their field of specialization. Head of the committee MP Salah Khorshid said the draft law comprises 71 articles and that it will be approved on Sunday.

MP Safa Al-Hashem yesterday criticized the government over the alleged fake citizenship issue, claiming that the government "is scared of lawmakers who do not want to open this file". She vowed that she will press to open the files of 62,000 Kuwaitis who allegedly obtained citizenship through illegal means. Hashem's comments come two days after several MPs demanded that a special debate is held to hear the government position on this highly-controversial issue. The request came after only eight lawmakers supported a proposal to form a committee to investigate forged citizenships amid stiff opposition by tribal lawmakers. MP Thamer Al-Suwait said opening this issue is an attempt to divide the society.

India feels brushed aside by Trump

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump may count Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi among his international allies, but New Delhi is smarting over unexpected US decisions it sees as ignoring the interests of an increasingly close partner. The Trump administration this week said it would start to sanction countries that do not comply with its orders to stop buying oil from Iran, demanding that eight governments - including India and China - end all imports when six-month waivers run out next week.

The move, which triggered a hike in global oil prices that could disproportionately hit poorer Indians, came just as Modi was campaigning for a new mandate in ongoing, multi-phase elections. The Iran diktat followed Trump's announcement in March that India, along with Turkey, would no longer enjoy a preferential trading status for a wide range of manufactured goods. Trump, who has rocky relations with the leaders of numerous Western allies, has publicly highlighted his bond with Modi, a Hindu nationalist who shares the US president's hawkish

stance on radical Islamism.

India's main opposition Congress party quickly seized on the Iran sanctions to attack Modi. Its spokesman Randeep Singh Surjewala tweeted that the Indian leader is "sitting as a mute spectator over the country's oil needs and security". Trump, while popular among much of the Hindu right, has also drawn resentment in India over viral reports that he mimics Modi's accent in private - a far cry from the reverential treatment US presidents since Bill Clinton have shown Indian leaders.

An Indian official, speaking on condition of anonymity, described New Delhi as "surprised and disappointed" by the decision on Iran, saying the Trump administration had sent a message in March that India's cuts in imports were sufficient to be granted a fresh waiver. "We thought that, as a major defense and strategic partner, the United States would take into consideration our concerns," the official said.

Trump is seeking to eliminate Iran's top source of revenue in a bid to curb the clerical regime's regional clout, including its backing of Shiite militants. India is the world's third-largest oil importer. The official said the South Asian nation has cut Iranian oil from 17 to five percent of its total crude imports and had also ended oil purchases from Venezuela, succumbing to US pressure as Trump tries to oust leftist President Nicolas Maduro. "We did this not because we agree with the US, but because we are strategic partners," he said. —AFP

Lanka Muslims fear backlash...

Continued from Page 1

Wearing a black dress and white headscarf, Begum added: "We have been huddled at our homes. We are scared about going out."

Sri Lanka's population of 21 million is a patchwork of ethnicities and religions, dominated by the Sinhalese Buddhist majority. Muslims account for 10 percent of the population and are the second-largest minority after Hindus. Around seven percent of Sri Lankans are Christians. Ethnic and religious tensions abound in the country, which suffered through a decades-long Tamil insurgency and more recently has seen outbreaks of sectarian violence.

Muslims have been on the receiving end of sporadic violence and hate attacks since the civil war ended in 2009. Hardline Buddhist monks have led campaigns against the community, and in 2013 and 2018, Muslim businesses came under attack. Rumors were even spread that Sinhalese could become sterile if they wore underwear bought from Muslim shops, and that food

sold by Muslims would cause infertility.

In the wake of the attacks, Sri Lankan leaders including Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe have urged calm and solidarity. "The vast majority of Muslims condemn this and they are as angry as the Tamils and the Sinhalese about what happened," he said Tuesday, calling for unity. But at the Jumma mosque there was an atmosphere of anxiety, and several worshippers said they hoped police would "take care of every citizen in such critical times".

Hilmy Ahamed, vice-president of the influential Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, said the community was braced for a backlash, with emotions running high. "Hundreds of people are being buried (so) there is going to be an emotional outburst and some of it could be justifiable," said Ahamed. "We have asked the government... to ensure security is maintained. This (attack) has not been carried out by the Muslim community but by some fringe elements."

In fact, Ahamed and other Muslim leaders said they had warned Sri Lankan authorities years earlier about the leader of the National Thowheeth Jama'ath, a group the government says is its key suspect in the attacks. The group's leader, Zahran Hashim, was well known to Muslim leaders as an extremist. "This person was a loner and he had radicalized young people in the guise of conducting Quran classes," Ahamed said. — AFP

WHO: One-hour max screen time...

Continued from Page 1

Early childhood is a period of rapid physical and cognitive development during which habits are formed and family lifestyle routines are adaptable, said the WHO guidelines, drawn from evidence in hundreds of

Proposal aims to force expats to...

Continued from Page 1

in accounting for ad hoc appointments and limiting them to extreme needs only, and this will lead to terminating scores of expats, especially since ministries are suffering from inflated spending on salaries.

Meanwhile, the constitutional court yesterday rejected two petitions against the election law and the recently concluded by-election, which means that they have been found to be in line with the constitution. The two petitions were filed by Yousef Al-Mahaish, who was a candidate in the March 16 by-elections. He contested the by-election that elected two MPs was illegal and also challenged the validity of the 1962 elections law, because it does not have any designation for the prime minister.

Iran FM warns US over Hormuz...

Continued from Page 1

"But the United States should know that when they enter the Strait of Hormuz, they have to talk to those protecting the Strait of Hormuz - and that is the Iranian Revolutionary Guards," he said. The Trump administration recently branded the Revolutionary Guards a terrorist group, the first time the United States has made the far-reaching designation against a unit of a foreign government, as it demands that Iran curtail support for militant movements in the region.

The elite force, whose mission is to protect the regime, is in charge of the naval defense of the Strait of Hormuz and also has an array of other interests, including businesses. Zarif said Trump was being pushed by what he mockingly called "the B Team" - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed and John Bolton, the US leader's hawkish national security advisor.

"The B Team wants the United States to take crazy measures, and it won't be the first time the US has taken adventurous measures plotted for it by others," he said. When asked if the US pressure campaign on Tehran was aimed at sparking further negotiations or regime change, Zarif said: "The B Team wants regime change at the very least. It is not a crisis yet, but it is a dangerous situation. Accidents ... are possible. I wouldn't discount the B Team plotting an accident anywhere in the region, particularly as we get closer to the election. We are not there yet."

Zarif suggested possible cooperation with the United States to bring stability to Iraq and Afghanistan, a priority for both Tehran and Washington. He also said he was willing to swap British-Iranian aid worker Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, who has been detained in Iran since 2016, for an Iranian woman detained in Australia for the past three years on a US extradition request.

"I feel sorry for them, and I have done my best to help," Zarif said of Zaghari-Ratcliffe. "But nobody talks about this lady in Australia who gave birth to a child in prison... I put this offering on the table publicly now - exchange them." Zarif then went on to say that Iran had told the U.S. administration six months ago that it was open to a prisoner swap deal, but had not yet received a response. — Agencies

Sports

Cubs power past Dodgers, Cards nip Brewers despite Shaw's two homers

Six-run inning sends Athletics past Rangers

CHICAGO: Anthony Rizzo and Javier Baez each homered, Jose Quintana registered his third straight quality start, and the Chicago Cubs coasted to a 7-2 win over the visiting Los Angeles Dodgers on Tuesday night. Willson Contreras added a three-run double for Chicago, which won for the sixth time in seven games. Quintana (3-1) held the Dodgers to two runs on four hits in seven innings. The left-hander walked two and struck out seven, and he pushed his streak to 16 scoreless innings over two-plus starts before he allowed a run in the third. Justin Turner and Chris Taylor drove in one run apiece for the Dodgers, who have lost two of three since posting a six-game winning streak. Los Angeles starter Kenta Maeda (3-2) surrendered six runs on seven hits in four innings.

METS 9, PHILLIES 0

Zack Wheeler did it all for host New York, striking out 11 over seven scoreless innings and also hitting a home run and driving in three runs during a win over Philadelphia. Wheeler (2-2) allowed five hits and walked none in his best start of the season. He struck out seven in a row between the second and fourth innings. At the plate, Wheeler snapped a scoreless tie with a two-run double off opposing starter Zach Eflin (2-3) in the second inning. In the fourth, Wheeler extended the Mets' lead to 4-0 by homering on the first pitch he saw from Eflin.

CARDINALS 4, BREWERS 3

Yadier Molina had three hits and two RBIs to help host St. Louis earn a win against Milwaukee, which got two solo home runs from Travis Shaw. Paul DeJong led off the eighth inning with a solo home run off Milwaukee reliever Alex Wilson (1-1) to break a 2-2 tie. After a one-out Jose Martinez walk, Molina hit an RBI double to make it 4-2. Cardinals right-hander Daniel Ponce de Leon was called up from Triple-A Memphis to start in place of Michael Wacha (knee) and went five innings, allowing one run and two hits with seven strikeouts and three walks.

YANKEES 7, ANGELS 5

Luke Voit hit two home runs, and Brett Gardner finished a home run short of the cycle as New York beat Los Angeles in Anaheim, Calif., the fifth straight win for the Yankees and the eighth loss in nine games for the Angels. Gardner, who went 4-for-5, came to the plate in the eighth inning needing that home run to become just the fifth Yankee in the last 70 years to hit for the cycle (Mickey Mantle, Bobby Murcer, Tony Fernandez and Melky Cabrera). Gardner hit a line drive to right field, where Kole Calhoun made a diving attempt. Calhoun was able to snag the ball on a short-hop, holding Gardner to a single and perhaps preventing him from attempting to make history with an inside-the-park homer to complete the cycle.

RAYS 5, ROYALS 2

Host Tampa Bay chased Kansas City starter Homer Bailey four batters-and four runs-into the second inning, and the Rays extended their winning streak over Kansas City to 10 games. The Rays have the best record in baseball at 16-8, while the Royals, who lost for the fifth straight time, have the worst record at 7-17. It was just the fourth time this season, however, that the Royals did not hold a lead at some point in the game. Jalen Beeks (1-0) picked up the win with a season-high 4 2/3 innings. He gave up just two hits

and struck out seven while giving up two hits and no runs. Emilio Pagan, who picked up his first major league save Monday, recorded his second save with a scoreless ninth. Bailey (2-2) took the loss.

DIAMONDBACKS 2, PIRATES 1

Jarrod Dyson went 2-for-3 with a walk and avoided a tag at home for the go-ahead run in the sixth inning Monday as Arizona topped host Pittsburgh. Arizona is 6-2 on its road trip, which includes two more games against the Pirates. The Diamondbacks have won eight straight games at Pittsburgh. Overall, Arizona has won seven of nine. The Diamondbacks, who spotted Pittsburgh a 1-0 lead, came back from a deficit to beat the Pirates for the second night in a row. Pittsburgh has lost three straight for the first time this year.

ATHLETICS 11, RANGERS 5

Josh Phegley and Marcus Semien each had two-run doubles in a six-run fourth inning, sending host Oakland past Texas. Stephen Piscotty had a triple and three singles as part of a 14-hit Oakland attack that eased the burden on pitcher Frankie Montas (4-1), who won his third straight start. Piscotty scored three times. The teams traded single runs in each of the first two innings before the A's broke a 2-2 tie by sending 11 batters to the plate in the fourth, the first nine against Lance Lynn (2-2). The Rangers starter allowed eight runs on nine hits in 3 1/3 innings.

PADRES 6, MARINERS 3

Franmil Reyes drove in three runs with a pair of homers, and Austin Hedges ricocheted a two-run homer off the glove of Seattle center fielder Mallex Smith as host San Diego won the opener of a two-game series. The loss was only the third for Seattle in 14 road games this season and marked the first time this year that the Mariners failed to score at least five runs in a road game. Reyes capped a three-run San Diego second inning with a two-run, 402-foot shot to left-center off Mariners starter Erik Swanson (0-2). He capped the second multi-homer game of his career with a two-out shot to left-center to give the Padres a 4-2 lead in the sixth.

GIANTS 7, BLUE JAYS 6

Joe Panik, Evan Longoria, Brandon Belt and Pablo Sandoval hit home runs as San Francisco found some offense while opening a brief two-game interleague series at Toronto. Kevin Pillar added an RBI single in his return to Toronto, helping the Giants put together consecutive victories on the road for the first time this season. Pillar was traded from the Blue Jays to the Giants on April 2. Toronto made things interesting in the eighth inning when Rowdy Tellez hit his first career grand slam to bring the Blue Jays within a run, but the Giants' bullpen closed out the victory.

TIGERS 7, RED SOX 4 (GAME 1)

Josh Harrison hit a go-ahead two-run double in the eighth, Matthew Boyd pitched seven solid innings, and Detroit downed host Boston in the first game of a day-night doubleheader. Boyd (2-1) allowed three runs on three hits. Ronny Rodriguez had three hits, including a homer, two runs and two RBIs for Detroit. Grayson Greiner also homered and drove in two runs. Xander Bogaerts hit a pair of solo homers for Boston. Mookie Betts drove in the Red Sox's two other runs.



CHICAGO: Javier Baez #9 of the Chicago Cubs dives in to score a run in the 1st inning against the Los Angeles Dodgers at Wrigley Field in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

Tigers 4, Red Sox 2 (Game 2)

Brandon Dixon had three hits, including a three-run double, and Spencer Turnbull walked a tightrope over five innings to earn his first major league win as Detroit wrapped up a doubleheader sweep at Boston. The Tigers won for the fourth time in five games since a five-game losing streak. Turnbull (1-2) went five scoreless innings, working around three hits, four walks and two hit batters. The Red Sox got on the board on a Xander Bogaerts RBI single in the seventh, and rookie Michael Chavis blasted a pitch over the Green Monster in left for his first career home run to lead off the eighth and make it 3-2.

MARLINS 3, INDIANS 1

Pablo Lopez allowed one run on two hits in 6 1/3 innings as Miami defeated host Cleveland. Jorge Alfaro belted his team-high fourth homer to lead off the fifth inning, and Curtis Granderson added an RBI double for the Marlins, who have won three of their last four games on the heels of losing 13 of 15. Cleveland starter Carlos Carrasco left after four innings with left knee discomfort. Carrasco was covering first base in the fourth when he was injured following an awkward dive for an off-target throw from Carlos Santana.

NATIONALS 6, ROCKIES 3

Victor Robles hit a three-run double in the third inning, and Patrick Corbin made another quality start as Washington beat Colorado in Denver. The Nationals got two big but painful insurance runs in the top of the ninth when Juan Soto, after fouling a 3-1 pitch off his right leg, walked with the bases loaded to make it 5-3. Howie Kendrick was then hit by a pitch from reliever DJ Johnson to make it 6-3. Corbin (2-0), who allowed just two hits in his last start, gave up three runs (two earned) on five hits in six innings. He struck out six and walked one. Corbin has made five quality starts in a row.

ASTROS 10, TWINS 4

Alex Bregman followed a two-run single in the fifth inning with a sacrifice fly in the seventh that sparked host Houston to a comeback win over Minnesota. The Astros snapped a three-game losing skid behind Bregman, Tyler White (2-for-2 with a walk and two runs), and left-hander Wade Miley, who retired 17 of the final 18 batters he faced following a rocky first inning. Houston trailed 3-0 four batters into the game. Bregman capped the Astros' three-run fifth inning with a two-out single to left field off Twins right-hander Michael Pineda, driving home White and George Springer (2-for-3 with two walks, two runs and two RBIs) and pushing Houston to a 4-3 lead.

REDS 7, BRAVES 6

Home runs by Yasiel Puig and Tucker Barnhart helped jolt life into the sleepy Cincinnati lineup in a win over visiting Atlanta. The seven runs were the second most scored this season by the Reds-last in the National League in hitting-and their biggest offensive outburst since they scored 14 against the Marlins on April 9. Puig was 2-for-4 with a homer, a run and three RBIs. The Reds have won four of their past five. Atlanta's Freddie Freeman, who had a hit, has reached base in all 22 games to start the season. It's the longest season-opening on-base streak for Freeman and 15 short of the franchise record set by Eddie Mathews in 1961. However, Freeman grounded out with a runner on third to end the game.

ORIOLES 9, WHITE SOX 1

Chris Davis, Dwight Smith Jr., Joey Rickard and Renato Nunez hit homers for host Baltimore in an easy win over Chicago. The long balls, all off Chicago starter Ivan Nova (0-3), produced eight of Baltimore's nine runs. Andrew Cashner (4-1) gave the Orioles one of their best efforts from a starter this season. The right-hander surrendered just one run on five hits in seven innings, striking out five with one walk. — Reuters

Mercedes' Bottas out for Baku revenge

BAKU: Valtteri Bottas has a score to settle as he heads into Sunday's Formula One Azerbaijan Grand Prix determined to make up for a lost win and regain the championship lead from Mercedes team mate Lewis Hamilton.

The Finn was leading around the streets of Baku last year when a puncture three laps from the end handed victory to Hamilton instead. The Briton went on to win 10 more races on his way to a fifth title while Bottas ended the season demoralised and with zero wins.

The 29-year-old has come back from the winter stronger and looking more of a match for his team mate, even if Hamilton has returned to the top of the standings after chalking up his second win of the season in China on April 14.

"For sure I would prefer to still be leading but that's the situation now and if I keep performing well I can turn it around," said Bottas, who trails Hamilton by six points with 18 races remaining.

"So that's going to be the goal for Baku," added the Finn, who was on pole in China but dropped behind Hamilton at the start. Mercedes head into Sunday's race, the fourth since Azerbaijan joined the calendar in 2016, as favourites after three one-two finishes-the strongest start to a campaign since Williams in 1992.

They have also won two of the three races in Azerbaijan, even if it has not been a particularly happy hunting ground for Hamilton. Last year's victory was his first podium appearance there.

MEAGRE HAUL

Nothing can be taken for granted at a circuit that has served up some thrillers in the past, mixing ultra-long straights and tight corners with no margin for error. Like Bottas, Ferrari will also be hoping to make a statement.

Already 57 points behind Mercedes in the overall standings, the pre-season favourites have a meagre haul of two third-place finishes from the first three races and cannot afford to lose any more ground.

New recruit Charles Leclerc, smarting from



Valtteri Bottas

being ordered to move over for four times champion Sebastian Vettel in China and denied a maiden Formula One win by engine trouble in Bahrain, will be especially fired up. The circuit holds a special emotional significance for the Monegasque, who won a 2017 Formula Two race from pole position in Baku only days after the death of his father.

"Baku is a demanding track, but I can't wait," said the 21-year-old, who also scored his first Formula One points there last year with sixth place for Sauber. "I simply love it and I've always performed very well there."

The unpredictability of the race means there's always a chance for an unexpected podium finisher. Since the 2016 race, Baku is the only grand prix on the calendar that has seen a driver outside of the top-three teams finish on the podium.

Mexican Sergio Perez, with two third places for Force India-now Racing Point-is the only driver to have stood on the podium more than once in Baku. "It's a big show," said Max Verstappen who will pounce on any opportunity to snatch a win for Honda-powered Red Bull. "And hopefully this year's race will make for a good story." — Reuters

RA's Johnson backs hard-line stance against Folau

MELBOURNE: Wallabies' Director of Rugby Scott Johnson has backed the hard-line stance taken by Rugby Australia (RA) over Israel Folau's controversial social media posts and called for the sport to embrace inclusiveness.

Folau, a fundamentalist Christian, faces having his Wallabies contract torn up after posting comments that gay people were destined for "hell" if they did not "repent". Johnson, who helped former Wales skipper Gareth Thomas come to terms with his sexuality more than a decade ago, said Wallabies fullback Folau would have the opportunity to put his case forward at a Code of Conduct hearing with RA on May 4.

"I want to make it really clear - I'm very supportive of where Rugby Australia is in this stance," Johnson told reporters in Sydney yesterday. "What I will say ... is we want a game that includes everyone. I've had kids that have come out of addiction issues and I was also very, very privileged and honoured to be ... the person that Gareth Thomas needed to talk to about his sexuality."

Johnson formed a tight bond with Thomas at Wales, where he was an assistant coach for a number of years and a caretaker in the head role for a few tests in 2006. Thomas came out in 2009, two years after playing the last of his 103 tests, but confided in Johnson that he was gay after a 29-29 draw with Australia in Cardiff in 2006.

Although working for the Wallabies as an assistant coach at the time, Johnson remained with the Wales camp to help Thomas talk to his team mates and coaches about it. "I was coaching the opposition and I got called into the change room because he only wanted to talk to me," Johnson recalled yesterday. "I spent the next 24 hours off-site in the opposition's hotel talking to his team mates because he couldn't, nor his coaching staff and his management."

"It goes beyond rugby. This is human relationship. I had a kid that I absolutely loved to coach, I loved what he stood for (but was) troubled." Thomas later revealed in interviews that he had contemplated suicide as he wrestled with his sexuality and Johnson said rugby had helped the Welshman out of a "dark period".

"You don't coach just to win trophies, you coach to make people better and that's why I'm in the sport and I'm passionate about it," he added. — Reuters

Sports

Sharks make Knights pay for penalty, clinch series in OT

Bruins clinch series with 5-1 win over Maple Leafs

SAN JOSE: Barclay Goodrow scored with 1:41 remaining in overtime and the host San Jose Sharks, who scored four goals on a five-minute power play midway through the third period, rallied to pull out a 5-4 victory in Game 7 and wrap up their first-round Western Conference playoff series over the Vegas Golden Knights on Tuesday night.

Goodrow came in from the right circle and got around defenseman Brayden McNabb and then beat Marc-Andre Fleury on his blocker side for the game-winner. San Jose, which overcame a 3-1 deficit for the first time in franchise history, will play the Colorado Avalanche, who eliminated the Pacific Division champion Calgary Flames in five games, in the Western Conference semifinals.

Logan Couture scored two goals, Kevin Labanc had a goal and three assists for the first four-point game of his career, and Tomas Hertl had a goal and an assist for San Jose. Martin Jones, coming in off a Game 6 victory where he set a franchise record with 58 saves, stopped 34 shots. Jonathan Marchessault, Max Pacioretty, William Karlsson and Cody Eakin scored goals and Mark Stone and Reilly Smith had two assists apiece for Vegas. Fleury finished with 43 saves while falling to 3-4 in his career in Game 7's. Vegas, behind goals by Karlsson, Eakin and Pacioretty, appeared to have the game firmly in control until Eakin's penalty at the 9:13 mark of the third period.

Eakin was given a five-minute major and game misconduct for a crosscheck on Joe Pavelski at the end of a faceoff that sent Pavelski pin-wheeling and ended with Pavelski smashing his head off the ice. A wobbly and bleeding Pavelski had to be helped off the ice by several players.

Couture scored just seven seconds into the penalty to cut it to 3-1, and Hertl made it 3-2 just 49 seconds later with a deflection of an Erik Karlsson shot. Couture tied it 2 1/2 minutes later with his sixth goal of the playoffs, and Labanc then gave San Jose a 4-3 lead 28 seconds

later with a wrist shot from the left circle that beat Fleury on his blocker side. It marked the first time in the series that there was a lead change and capped a span of four goals in 4:01 by the Sharks, the eighth-fastest four goals by one team in any playoff game. The four power play goals in one period also tied an NHL record.

Vegas pulled Fleury for an extra attacker with 1:59 remaining and then tied it with Marchessault's goal with 47 seconds to go off a pass from Smith to send the game into overtime. It was the fourth straight game that Marchessault had scored a goal.

In Boston, Sean Kuraly and Joakim Nordstrom each had a goal and an assist, and the Boston Bruins defeated the visiting Toronto Maple Leafs 5-1 on Tuesday night in the seventh and deciding game of their first-round playoff series. Marcus Johansson, Charlie Coyle and Patrice Bergeron also scored for the Bruins, and goaltender Tuukka Rask made 32 saves. Coyle and Bergeron scored into an empty net.

The Bruins will next play the Columbus Blue Jackets in the Eastern Conference semifinals. The Blue Jackets swept the Presidents' Trophy-winning Tampa Bay Lightning in the first round.

It was the second consecutive year that Boston beat Toronto in the seventh game of a first-round playoff series. John Tavares scored for the Maple Leafs and goalie Frederik Andersen made 27 saves.

The Bruins scored twice in the first period to take control of the game early, though both goalies were tested early in the game. Andersen thwarted a wrap-around attempt by David Pastrnak, while Rask alertly covered Mitch Marner's shot on his own rebound.

Nordstrom scored at 14:29 of the first period when he shot from a sharp angle to the right of the goal and the puck squeezed between Andersen and the goalpost. The sequence started when the Bruins intercepted the Maple Leafs' attempted long outlet pass. Matt Grzelcyk and Kuraly earned the assists.



SAN JOSE: Martin Jones #31 of the San Jose Sharks makes a glove save in the third period against the Vegas Golden Knights in Game Seven of the Western Conference First Round during the 2019 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at SAP Center in San Jose, California. — AFP

Johansson put Boston ahead 2-0 at 17:46 of the first after Toronto defenseman Jake Gardiner lost the puck behind the net. Johansson whirled to the front and shot from the right circle. Toronto led 12-11 in shots on goal after the first period. Tavares cut the lead to 2-1 at 3:54 of the second with a quick release from the right circle after Tyler Ennis won the puck at the boards. The Maple Leafs failed to take advantage of the first power play of the game when Boston defenseman Brandon

Carlo was called for cross checking at 8:22, though Toronto held a 25-19 edge in shots after two periods.

Kuraly restored Boston's two-goal margin at 2:40 of the third period when he split the defense and shot from the left circle. Toronto was again unsuccessful on the power play when Boston was called for too many men on the ice at 5:19 of the third. Coyle scored into an empty net at 17:26 of the third. Bergeron added another empty-net goal at 19:59. — Reuters

Guardiola hits back at Solskjaer's tactical fouling jibe

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola has slammed suggestions from Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer that Manchester City are guilty of "tactical" fouling in an attempt to stop rivals from counter-attacking. Solskjaer, talking before the crucial Manchester derby between the sides at Old Trafford yesterday, made reference to City's supposed habit of fouling high up the field to stop opponents hitting them on the break if Guardiola's players are out of position.

But City boss Guardiola did not take kindly to that analysis and appeared to accuse Solskjaer of trying to influence referee Andre Marriner, who will take charge of the derby.

"That's the reason why, of course," said Guardiola when asked if he was concerned Solskjaer's comments might be intended to influence the referee. "I know exactly what I said to my players from day one to the last day. 'So when a player wants to attack, we have to

be honest and, of course, there is contact, there are fouls. 'But when it happens and you arrive late, that is why there are referees-to make yellow cards or red cards or whatever they decide, but never have I prepared a game (to do it)."

"I prepare the game to do our own game, that is what I want, knowing of course the opponent, but I never said I'm going to do that to punish them or cancel them, making fouls. Never."

Solskjaer is not the first United manager to make a similar claim about City in the Guardiola era—his predecessor Jose Mourinho having made an identical observation before a derby meeting last season.

But the bare statistics tend not to support Solskjaer's claims as figures show United have collected 64 yellow cards this season, compared with City's 38, with four reds for United, in contrast to their rivals' solitary dismissal. In terms of fouls, United have committed 201, considerably more than City's 172, and Guardiola's outraged reaction appeared to support such a reading of the situation. "I never prepare a game in 10 seasons as a manager thinking about these kind of things. Never," he said.

"The players can talk about it better than me about that—the players I had at Barcelona, Bayern Munich and here—one of the targets is about the counter attacks for the opponents making fouls, never have I said to one

player to make fouls to avoid something.

"Football sometimes you do that, because football, the actions is quick, fast. 'But I'm concerned about many other things to beat them than these kind of things so I don't know. 'Maybe tomorrow in the press conference after the game you can ask him again about that.'" Guardiola, however, is wary of the threat posed by United to City's Premier League title ambitions.

City are two points behind leaders Liverpool and the Manchester derby represents their vital game in hand. The Spaniard knows United's under-performing stars could suddenly hit form as Solskjaer's team battle to finish in the top four after a disappointing recent run.

But the fact that Guardiola likened such a potential upset to Burnley's achievement in drawing at Chelsea on Monday spoke of the extent to which United have ceased to be a viable challenger to City's superiority.

"Well the tension is there, it's necessary to complete these kind of games," he said. "I think everyone knows what we are playing for, we have to focus on the target and what we have to do. 'For me, United remains an incredible team, of course, the last 20 or 25 years always there. The past three or four, that can happen in terms of a long history."

"For one specific game, they would be dangerous. I know in the beginning how strong they'll be in terms of intensity and we'll have to handle it." — AFP

Foreign stars begin IPL exodus as WCup duty calls

NEW DELHI: England's Jonny Bairstow is leading an exodus of foreign stars from the Indian Premier League as the looming World Cup draws top names away for international duty. Bairstow was out for a duck in his final innings of the season for Sunrisers Hyderabad on Tuesday after being a key player for the franchise with 445 runs in 10 matches in the high-octane Twenty20 competition.

Hyderabad's batting powerhouse David Warner is also in line to leave the IPL in the next week to team up with his Australia teammates before the 50-over global showpiece in England and Wales, starting on May 30. The world's most popular Twenty20 league ends on May 12, leaving most of the eight teams to rely on their benches as they race toward the playoffs. Senior sports journalist Ayaz Memon believes the glitzy IPL will lose some of its sheen as a result. "It will have a pretty big impact," Memon told AFP.

"If you look at players like David Warner, Jonny Bairstow, and even some of the West Indies stars like an Andre Russell, it's going to take away a lot of the lustre and the star value."

Warner, who leads the IPL batting chart with 574 runs, will be irreplaceable for Hyderabad who have relied on the opener to set up big totals.

The left handed-right handed batting combination of Warner and Bairstow has provided a series of blazing starts, including a record IPL opening stand of 185. "But this something that was anticipated and all franchises have back-ups in place. It gives a chance to some of the Indian talent to come in and shine," said Memon.

Hyderabad vice-captain Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who led the side in place of regular skipper Kane Williamson on Tuesday, said the team was prepared for the exit of their foreign imports. "There is no doubt that these guys have done really well but I won't say (we are) upset. We have got guys who can replace him (Bairstow)," said Kumar.

"But the way he performed, we will miss him." The 2008 champions Rajasthan will be one of the worst affected sides, having already lost Jos Buttler for the birth of his first child. Royals teammates Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer are expected to join England's preliminary World Cup squad later this week while Australia's Steve Smith, like Warner, is due at an Australia squad training camp next week in Brisbane.

"We did know that we are going to be losing players. We have got nice replacements," said Rajasthan coach Paddy Upton. "We have got Oshane Thomas waiting in the wings should Jofra Archer go."

"If Smith were to go, and Stokes, then we have Ashton Turner. We are quite comfortable that we are not going to be left with big gaping holes, certainly with the foreign internationals," the South African added. South Africa are also recalling their stars. "Quinton de Kock and (Kagiso) Rabada—both playing for Delhi Capitals—are guys who are doing extremely well and will be missed," said Memon.

Royal Challengers Bangalore will be hit when England all-rounder Moeen Ali leaves, while Chennai Super Kings will lose South Africa's leg-spinner Imran Tahir. Kolkata Knight Riders, whose campaign started strongly but has stuttered of late, may struggle to make the playoffs if standout performer Russell heads home to the Caribbean. — AFP

Dhoni to rest before World Cup if back trouble worsens

NEW DELHI: India's Mahendra Singh Dhoni will not hesitate to take time off before World Cup if his niggling back problem worsens during the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL), the stumper-batsman has said.

Chennai Super Kings skipper Dhoni missed last week's defeat by Sunrisers Hyderabad due to a back spasm and the 37-year-old is unwilling to risk a serious injury that could rule him out of the World Cup starting in England and Wales on May 30.

"It's holding up, it's not showing signs of getting worse. With the World Cup coming up, I have to keep in mind that I can't really get injured," Dhoni said of his injury after Chennai's six-wicket victory over Hyderabad on Tuesday.

"There's a bit of stiffness. There was a bit of spasm at the start of the tournament but there's no spasm as of now. I'm used to playing international cricket with some kind of pain. 'If you wait to be 100 percent before you play a game maybe you'd have to wait five years before you play the next game. It's something I can afford to do. If it gets worse, I'll definitely take some time off."

Dhoni has played 341 one-day internationals, scoring 10,500 runs at an average of just under 51, and his glove-work makes him the first-choice wicket-keeper in the limited-overs format.

India's 2011 World Cup winning captain has scored over 300 runs in nine ODIs this year, with four half-centuries, including three in a row during the tour of Australia. The IPL ends on May 12. India begin their World Cup campaign against South Africa in Southampton on June 5. — Reuters



CHENNAI: Chennai Super Kings cricketer Harbajan Singh (R) and Mahendra Singh Dhoni (C) celebrate the wicket of Sunrisers Hyderabad's David Warner (L) during the 2019 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Chennai Super Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. — AFP

Chelsea manager Sarri charged with misconduct

LONDON: Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association following his late dismissal in Monday's 2-2 draw with Burnley.

The 60-year-old Italian has until Friday to answer to the charge. Sarri's assistant Gianfranco Zola claimed after the match that the decision to send his compatriot to the stands was unfair as he "was just trying to tell our players to get in position".

"Maurizio Sarri has been charged

with misconduct in relation to his behaviour in the 94th minute of Monday's (22/04/2019) Premier League fixture between Chelsea and Burnley," read an FA statement.

"The Chelsea manager has until 18:00 (1700 GMT) on Friday (26/04/2019) to provide a response." Sarri's expulsion comes as pressure mounts on him to deliver Champions League football for next season. His compatriot Antonio Conte was sacked after failing to do so last season.

Chelsea occupy the fourth and final qualifying place but the two dropped points at home against lowly Burnley could prove costly. They are only a point better off than Arsenal, who can leapfrog them if they get at least a draw at Wolves.

Sarri's last resort may come in winning the Europa League-Chelsea play German outfit Eintracht Frankfurt in the semi-finals—with Arsenal as potential opponents in the final should the Gunners beat Valencia. — AFP

Sports

Messi rested as win over Alaves edges Barca closer to the title

Real Madrid, play their game in hand against Getafe today

BARCELONA: Barcelona will win La Liga if Atletico Madrid lose to Valencia after a 2-0 victory over Alaves gave them a 12-point lead at the top of the table.

Lionel Messi started on the bench at Mendizorroza on Tuesday in a move that made clear just how comfortable Barca are in this title race, its conclusion surely now only a matter of when rather than if.

Should Atletico avoid defeat to Valencia at the Wanda Metropolitano, the Catalans will still be crowned champions on Saturday at the Camp Nou with a victory over Levante. They could even have it wrapped up before kick-off on Saturday if Atletico fail to take at least four points from Valencia and Real Valladolid, the latter whom they face a few hours earlier on Saturday.

"It's an incredibly valuable win," coach Ernesto Valverde said. "In the end however much as people say the league is won, it has to be achieved on the field. "We are at the gates now, needing three points more with four games ahead. It is an immense joy to be in this position after so many months of work."

Real Madrid, who play their game in hand against Getafe today, sit 16 points adrift in third. Alaves stay eighth, their hopes of a Europa League spot fading fast. Messi came on as a substitute in the 61st minute shortly after his team had scored twice, Carles Alena guiding one into the corner before Luis Suarez, in Messi's absence, took and dispatched a penalty.

Valverde leaving out his captain and star player, presumably with an eye on next week's Champions League semi-final against Liverpool, was a luxury Barcelona have earned and can afford. Liverpool, still jostling with Manchester City in the Premier League, are unlikely to feel the same sort of confidence when they face Huddersfield on Friday.

"The idea at half-time was to play Leo because the

result was not clear," Valverde said. "But regarding the Golden Boot and that sort of thing, we are only focused on what we have to do to win.

"Leo has a lot of individual challenges ahead but today it was time to rest." Other players were preserved too. Jordi Alba, Clement Lenglet and Arthur Melo all began on the bench, allowing Samuel Umtiti more minutes as he recovers from a knee injury, while the struggling Philippe Coutinho started in a front three with Ousmane Dembele and Suarez.

Alena, the 21-year-old Spaniard, scored his second La Liga goal and showed again why many believe he could be a key figure for Barcelona in the years to come.

CONSISTENT SUAREZ

Suarez's goal, meanwhile, was his 21st in the league and marks the fourth consecutive season in which he has passed the 20 mark for Barca.

He might have scored earlier but shot straight at Fernando Pacheco when sent clear in the opening stages, while Coutinho followed up but his rebound was blocked. Sergi Roberto fired over from inside the area but it was his run down the right that created Alena's opener in the 54th minute.

After a neat exchange with Arturo Vidal, Sergi played inside, through the legs of Suarez and to the feet of Alena. He controlled and placed the ball coolly into the corner. Six minutes later, and one before the introduction of Messi, Suarez doubled the lead from the spot. Umtiti bundled in on the line and as VAR checked him for offside, Alaves' Tomas Pina was shown to have handballed moments before, Suarez made no mistake.

Messi hit the woodwork, his shot well saved by Pacheco, and Coutinho drove wide late on. Two was enough for the win and, possibly, the title. — AFP



VITORIA: Barcelona's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez scores a penalty during the Spanish league football match between Deportivo Alaves and FC Barcelona at the Mendizorroza stadium in Vitoria. — AFP

La Liga to be Real's number one priority next season: Zidane

MADRID: Zinedine Zidane said yesterday La Liga will be Real Madrid's top priority next season after they were mathematically ruled out of the title race with five games left. Barcelona's victory over Alaves confirmed that Madrid cannot be crowned champions given they sit 16 points behind the Catalans with only 15 still to play for.

Despite incredible success in the Champions League, it means Madrid have now won the Spanish title only once in seven years while Barca are on the cusp of securing their fourth in the last five, and eighth in 11.

"For us next year, the league must be our number one priority," Zidane said. "It's the longest competition, it's the one that cannot be missed and I'm going to put that in the heads of my players."

"It will be our bread and butter for sure, without devaluing the rest, because we try to fight on all fronts at this club, but our bread and butter will be La Liga." Barcelona's 26th league title will be confirmed on



Zinedine Zidane

Wednesday night if Atletico Madrid are beaten at home to Valencia. If Atletico avoid defeat, Barca can wrap it up with a win at home to Levante on Saturday.

"We have 33 titles," Zidane said. "Barca are doing well, I will admit when a rival is doing well, but in history, Real Madrid has more league titles. "But they have been doing better lately and we need to change the dynamic."

Madrid are likely to be busy this summer, with Gareth Bale heading a long list of players who could depart while

Chelsea's Eden Hazard is among those expected to arrive. "Even if we always work together with the club, the coach has a say in relation to players and the profiles of players he wants," Zidane said.

"There has not been much recruitment during the last two or three years. This year there will certainly be a little more." Thibaut Courtois has shaken off a thigh injury and is available to face fourth-placed Getafe on Thursday, meaning Zidane must again decide between the Belgian and Keylor Navas.

Zidane was loyal to Navas during his first stint in charge and has said again that next season there will be no debate about his first-choice goalkeeper. "What I would like to do I won't say," Zidane said. "I would like a lot of things but sometimes they are not done, sometimes the opposite even. "But this is not the time to talk about this today. Thibaut is available and so is Keylor."

Zidane said Vinicius Junior is not yet ready despite returning to training after almost two months out with an ankle ligament injury. "He won't get any minutes tomorrow, he has to work again," Zidane said. "We have to give him time."

Getafe's remarkable bid for Champions League qualification has them sitting two points ahead of both Valencia and Sevilla. They beat Sevilla 3-0 at home on Sunday. — AFP

FA welcomes players' anti-racism manifesto

LONDON: A manifesto signed by England star Raheem Sterling and fellow footballers to combat racism in the sport received a positive response from English football's governing body yesterday. However, the Football Association (FA) recommended that if players are racially abused and want to walk off the pitch in protest—as some have intimidated they will do in the future—they leave it to the referee and do not take the decision unilaterally.

Sterling, the victim of several instances of racial abuse this season, said teams whose fans racially abused players should be docked nine points in the manifesto published in Tuesday's edition of The Times. It also called 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.

The FA responded with a lengthy statement on Wednesday saying they agreed "completely with the manifesto's statement that players have a fundamental right to a workplace free from discriminatory abuse".

"Currently there is a protocol for players to follow if they hear discriminatory abuse which is designed to both protect the player and also to ensure that the matter can be investigated immediately and the appropriate steps taken," it said. "This can include the referee stopping the game and allowing the players to leave the field of play. "We would encourage the protocol to be used rather than a player or players walking off as we believe that this is the best way to remove the burden from players."

DIRECT LIABILITY

The FA also agreed there should be "radical change at the top" in terms of BAME coaches, employees and leaders. "We have set ourselves the target to reach 16 per cent BAME employees by 2021 (from 13 per cent) and 11 per cent in leadership positions (from 5 per cent)." In terms of representation on their own board, the FA said it met Sport England's code for sports governance with regard to women (30% of the board) but there was no similar recommendation for BAME representatives. "The FA's Board is attended by The FA's inclusion advisory board chair, Paul Elliott, and also has Rupinder Bains as a Board Director; but we would welcome specific targets for BAME representation across sport and the game."

The FA said its chairman Greg Clarke had succeeded in getting UEFA to agree to review its approach to discrimination and would help study new options. Clarke's action followed the racial abuse directed at Sterling and Danny Rose in particular during the Euro 2020 qualifier in Montenegro in March.

The FA claimed that much of what was in the manifesto regarding punishment of clubs whose fans chant racist slogans has been implemented for a while. "Since 2013 there has been direct liability for discriminatory behaviour in relation to mass chanting," it said. "The manifesto also asks for clubs and countries to be put into 'special measures' in the case of repeat offenders. "The FA works to create action plans with clubs for any offences, not just repeat offences." — AFP

Long breaks fastest goal record as Gray snatches late point for Watford

WATFORD: Southampton striker Shane Long scored the fastest goal in Premier League history on Tuesday after netting just 7.69 seconds into his side's 1-1 draw at Watford, who snatched a point thanks to Andre Gray's late equaliser.

Long's record-breaking goal came immediately after the kick-off when he blocked a clearance from Watford defender Craig Cathcart, allowing the Republic of Ireland international to dink a cool finish over Ben Foster.

The 32-year-old's effort surpassed the previous fastest Premier League goal, scored by Tottenham defender Ledley King in 9.9 seconds against Bradford in December 2000. "It's a record, is it?" Long told Sky Sports News with a grin after the game. "Straight from the kick-off we wanted to put them under pressure. 99 times out of a hundred you block it and it doesn't work but this time it did."

Long's historic goal, just his fourth this season, didn't prove to be the winner at Vicarage Road after Gray's 90th minute equaliser for the FA Cup finalists but nonetheless moved them six points from the relegation zone with three matches remaining.

"It's nice to have a record like that, but it would have been nicer if it was the winning goal," Long added. King was watching Tottenham's game against Brighton on Tuesday when he discovered that his 19-year record had been broken.

After King's goal, the next fastest strike in Premier League history was scored by Alan Shearer after 10.52 seconds for Newcastle against Manchester City in 2003. Christian Eriksen scored after 10.54 seconds for Tottenham against Manchester United last season.

The strains of Elton John's 'Rocket Man' had barely finished booming over the loudspeakers when Long gave Southampton lift-off.

The goal actually came from Watford's kick-off as Roberto Pereyra played the ball from the centre-circle back to Cathcart some 40 yards from his own goal.

As the centre-back attempted to clear up field, Long charged it down and raced through before lifting in his landmark goal.

The Saints could have scored more with Nathan Redmond and Ryan Bertrand both hitting the woodwork. Redmond was also denied by a good save from Foster and Long headed two other presentable chances off target.

Watford dominated after the break and Abdoulaye Doucoure attempted to convert a cross from Kiko Femenia but could only bundle the ball into Angus Gunn's arms.

Christian Kabasele felt he should have been awarded a penalty after a shove by Long in the area, but referee Mike Dean thought otherwise.

Southampton could not hang on and Gray swept home from close range to lift Watford up to seventh and keep Hasenhuttl's men looking over their shoulders a little longer. — AFP



WATFORD: Southampton's Polish defender Jan Bednarek (L) vies with Watford's French midfielder Abdoulaye Doucoure during the English Premier League football match between Watford and Southampton at Vicarage Road Stadium in Watford, north of London. The match ended in a draw at 1-1. — AFP

Etoile defeat Hilal with 10 men to reach semi-finals

JOHANNESBURG: Etoile Sahel of Tunisia reached the CAF Confederation Cup semi-finals on Tuesday thanks to a 2-1 win over Al Hilal of Sudan despite playing the entire second half with 10 men.

Striker Karim Aribi was red-carded in first half stoppage-time soon after cancelling the lead Waleed Bakhet gave Hilal in the Egyptian city of Suez.

Although numerically disadvantaged, the Tunisian contained the Sudanese after half-time until Wajidi

Kechrida scored the quarter-final second leg winner 10 minutes from time. Etoile won the tie 5-2 on aggregate having established a 3-1 lead in Mediterranean resort Sousse 15 days ago and will face Zamalek of Egypt over two legs for a place in the final.

The return match, originally scheduled for Omdurman on April 14, was delayed and moved to Egypt amid security concerns after the overthrow of Sudanese dictator Omar al-Bashir.

Bakhet became the leading Confederation Cup scorer this season with seven goals when he put Hilal ahead on 30 minutes.

But the lead lasted just six minutes before Aribi levelled for Etoile, who won the competition which is the African equivalent of the UEFA Europa League in 2006 and 2015. The closest Hilal came to lifting the Confederation Cup was in 2012 when they lost a semi-final against Djoliba of Mali on penalties. — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE	
Sevilla FC v Rayo Vallecano	20:30
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
Real Sociedad v Villarreal	21:30
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Getafe v Real Madrid	22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
ITALIAN CUP	
Atalanta v ACF Fiorentina	21:45
beIN SPORTS	

25 Mercedes' Bottas out for Baku revenge



26 Dhoni to rest before World Cup if back trouble worsens



27 Messi rested as win over Alaves edges Barca closer to the title



PORTLAND: Maurice Harkless #4 of the Portland Trail Blazers dunks the ball against the Oklahoma City Thunder during Game Five Round One of the 2019 NBA Playoffs at the Moda Center in Portland, Oregon. — AFP

Blazers KO Thunder on Lillard's 50 pts

Raptors eliminate Magic with Game 5 rout

PORTLAND: Damian Lillard capped a 50-point game by sinking a long 3-pointer as time expired to give the Portland Trail Blazers a 118-115 victory over the visiting Oklahoma City Thunder on Tuesday night and a five-game series win. Lillard set a franchise single-game playoff scoring record as the third-seeded Trail Blazers clinched the first-round Western Conference playoff series despite trailing by 15 points with 7:45 to play. They will next play the winner of the Denver-San Antonio series. Paul George scored 36 points for the Thunder, and Russell Westbrook collected 29 points, 14 assists and 11 rebounds. An 8-0 Blazers run tied the game at 113-113 with 57.1 seconds to play, and the two teams traded baskets after that. Then, after a Westbrook miss with less than 20 seconds to play, the Blazers rebounded and got it to Lillard, who hit the series-clinching bomb at the buzzer.

76ERS 122, NETS 100

Joel Embiid collected 23 points and 13 rebounds as Philadelphia cruised to a wire-to-wire victory over visiting Brooklyn to win their first-round series in five games. The 76ers advanced to the conference semifinals for the second straight season. They next will face the second-seeded Toronto Raptors in the first post-season meeting between the teams since the 2001 East semifinals, a series the 76ers won in seven en route to their most recent NBA Finals appearance. Philadelphia posted its third double-digit win of the series, but unlike the wins in Games 2 and 3, when the 76ers pulled away after halftime, the dominating tone was established early. Embiid scored 10 points as the 76ers scored the game's first 14 points. The Nets went 0-for-8 on the first 14 possessions before scoring, and the 76ers held a

25-3 lead late in the first and a 32-15 edge after the opening quarter.

RAPTORS 115, MAGIC 96

Kyle Lowry scored Toronto's first nine points as part of a game-opening, 12-1 flurry to propel the Raptors to a blowout win over visiting Orlando and a 4-1 win in an Eastern Conference first-round playoff series. With a chance to wrap up the best-of-seven set at home, the Raptors wasted no time taking charge.

Lowry hit four field goals—including a 3-pointer—in his early burst, and Kawhi Leonard added a three-point play as Toronto went up by 11 before the game was three minutes old. Leonard finished with 27 points and Pascal Siakam scored 24 for the Raptors, who had never previously won four straight games in the same playoff

series. D.J. Augustin scored a team-high 15 points for the Magic.

NUGGETS 108, SPURS 90

Jamal Murray had 23 points and seven assists, and host Denver beat San Antonio in Game 5 of a Western Conference playoff series—the only series of the four played Tuesday night not to end. The Nuggets lead the series 3-2 heading into Game 6 at San Antonio on Thursday night. Game 7, if necessary, would be played Saturday in Denver. Nikola Jokic amassed 16 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists, Will Barton scored 17 points off the bench, and Gary Harris had 15 points for Denver. LaMarcus Aldridge had 17 points and 10 rebounds, and DeMar DeRozan also scored 17 for the Spurs, who lost a second game in a row. — Reuters

Asian champions Kashima stunned, Lopes fires Jeonbuk towards last 16

SEOUL: Reigning Asian champions Kashima Antlers slumped to a shock 1-0 home defeat by Gyeongnam FC yesterday on a great night for South Korean sides against Japanese opposition the AFC Champions League.

Kashima looked a shadow of the side that became Asian champions last year as they relinquished control in Group E to Shandong Luneng, who won 1-0 at Johor Darul Tazim via Graziano Pelle's first-half goal to go top on eight points.

Fellow Koreans Jeonbuk Motors stand on the verge of the last 16 after a man-of-the-match performance from Ricardo Lopes gave them a 2-1 win against Urawa Red Diamonds

in Group G. Lopes opened the scoring in the 12th minute, capitalising on a defensive error to lash an unstoppable right-foot rocket into the bottom corner. The Brazilian then turned provider just after half-time, crossing from the left for giant striker Kim Shin-wook to head home at the near post.

A missed clearance by captain Hong Jeong-ho allowed Shinzo Koroki to pull one back against the run of play in the 58th minute, but Jeonbuk survived a nervy finale to take all three points in the top-of-the-table clash.

Jeonbuk now need just one win from their last two matches to guarantee a place in the knockout phase. Urawa's defeat enabled Beijing Guoan to move into second, two points behind Jeonbuk, as Brazilian international Renato Augusto scored a penalty and made the second goal in a deserved 2-0 win over Thailand's Buriram United.

In wet and cold conditions in Beijing, the Chinese Super League leaders dominated but Buriram held out until the 55th minute when Thai international Sasalak Haiprakhon handled in the box and Augusto stepped up to ram home.

DEADLY PELLE

Beijing, who have started the league season with six straight wins, sealed all three points when the 31-year-old Augusto picked out Ba Dun to head in from close range. Two weeks ago, the 2018 AFC Champions League winners Kashima had needed two stoppage-time goals to claim a 3-2 victory over Gyeongnam after having been 2-0 down and reduced to 10 men.

But there was no repeat of those heroics as Gyeongnam gave themselves a qualification lifeline when Takahiro Kunimoto latched onto Jordan Mutch's deep cross in the 63rd minute.

Gyeongnam remain third in Group E with two games to play, two points behind Kashima, who have seven, and three adrift of Shandong, their next opponents. Shandong's Pelle, this season's leading AFC Champions League scorer, continued his deadly form in front of goal as he bagged his sixth in four matches to give the Chinese side a hard-fought victory against the Malaysian champions.

The former Southampton and Italy poacher bundled home from inside the six-yard box in the 22nd minute after Song Long's cross had created confusion in the Johor defence. — AFP



KASHIMA: Gyeongnam's forward Kim Seung-Jun (C) controls the ball in front of Kashima's midfielder Kento Misao (R) during the AFC Champions League Group E football match between Kashima Antlers and Gyeongnam FC of South Korea at the Kashima Stadium in Kashima, Ibaraki prefecture yesterday. — AFP