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Iran seizes third foreign ship in Gulf in less than a month

US struggles to build willing coalition amid Hormuz tensions

TEHRAN: Iran has seized a foreign tanker in the Gulf, state media said yesterday, in what would be the third such seizure in a month amid heightened tensions with its foe the United States. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps "seized this ship around Farsi Island which was carrying around 700,000 litres of smuggled fuel", said a Guards statement quoted by the official news agency IRNA. Seven foreign crew were arrested in the operation carried out on Wednesday night, said Fars news agency, which is considered close to the Guards.

Tensions between arch-enemies Iran and the US have soared this year after Washington stepped up its campaign of "maximum pressure" against Tehran. Ships have been attacked, drones downed and oil tankers seized since May, a year after the United States withdrew from a landmark nuclear deal between Iran and world powers and began reimposing biting sanctions against the country. At the height of the crisis, US President Donald Trump called off air strikes against Iran at the last minute in June after the Islamic republic's forces shot down a US drone.

The seizure of the latest tanker would be the third by Iran in less than a month in Gulf waters - a conduit for much of the world's crude oil. On July 18, the Guards said they had detained the Panama-flagged for MT Riah for alleged fuel smuggling. And a day later, they announced they had impounded the British-flagged Stena Impero in the Strait of Hormuz for breaking

"international maritime rules". The identity of the latest vessel seized and the nationality of its crew had not yet been revealed yesterday. But British officials later said all British-flagged vessels had been accounted for, and that there was no suggestion that any British nationals among the crew.

The Guards said their boats had been patrolling the Gulf to control traffic and detect illicit trade when they seized the tanker. "The ship was transferred to Bushehr and its smuggled fuel was handed over" to the authorities in coordination with judicial authorities, said a statement. Fars quoted Brigadier General Ramezan Zirahi, a commander of the Guards who carried out the seizure, as saying the tanker had been en route to deliver fuel to Gulf Arab states.

The reports came after an Iranian general said the chances of a conflict breaking out in the Gulf region had decreased. "At first glance, it may seem that the situation in the Persian Gulf is heading towards a military conflict but when studying the situation more deeply, we see that chances for such a conflict become less probable," said Brigadier General Ahmadreza Pourdastan. "All countries which have interests in the region are by no means willing to see a new crisis in the Middle East," he said, quoted by Mehr news agency. "The military capabilities of our armed forces are to such an extent that the enemies don't dare go for a military option against us."

Continued on Page 24



An image grab taken from the Islamic Republic of Iran News Network (IRINN) state television channel yesterday reportedly shows a view of a foreign tanker seized by Iran in the Gulf. — AFP

Trump faces heat as US mourns two mass shootings

EL PASO: The United States was in mourning yesterday for victims of two mass shootings that killed 29 people in less than 24 hours as debate raged over whether President Donald Trump's rhetoric was partly to blame for surging gun violence. The rampages turned innocent snippets of everyday life into nightmares of bloodshed: 20 people shot dead while shopping at a crowded Walmart in El Paso, Texas on Saturday morning, and nine more outside a bar in a popular nightlife dis-

trict in Dayton, Ohio just 13 hours later.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah cabled Trump, expressing heartfelt condolences. The Amir wished the wounded quick recovery, affirming Kuwait's strong condemnation of this criminal act that targeted innocent lives, in contradiction of human tenets and values. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the US president.

In Texas another 26 people were wounded, and 27 in Ohio. In Dayton, the shooter, armed with a long gun, was killed by police in less than a minute. They just happened to be nearby and prevented a casualty toll that could have been many times greater, local officials said. Still, in those few seconds the shooter managed

to mow down dozens of people. "You could see the bodies actually start to fall and we knew it was bigger than just even a shootout," Anthony Reynolds, who was outside the Dayton bar when the shooting started, told NBC News.

Reynolds described the shooter as a white man dressed all in black, with his face covered and armed with an assault rifle. Police later named the gunman as a 24-year-old white man called Connor Betts and said that his sister was among those killed. In Texas, a suspect surrendered shortly after the massacre and was described in media reports as a 21-year-old white man named Patrick Crusius who was believed to have posted online a manifesto denouncing a "Hispanic invasion" of Texas. El Paso, on the border with Mexico, is majority Latino.

Continued on Page 24



EL PASO: This CCTV image shows a gunman identified as Patrick Crusius, 21, as he enters the Cielo Vista Walmart store on Saturday. — AFP

News in brief

File opening fees scrapped

KUWAIT: Health Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Private Medical Services Dr Fatima Al-Najjar said fees for opening patient files in all private clinics have been cancelled. She said that those who violate this decision will face legal action. — A Saleh

Health insurance online only

KUWAIT: The interior and health ministries have adopted the automation of health insurance services, so the paper receipt of health insurance has been cancelled and payments should be made online for all iqama types through the www.moh.gov.kw link. Holders of article 20 residence permits can pay online through the health ministry site or at service centers (until Nov 1, 2019) by K-Net. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Utility tariff 'cheats' targeted

KUWAIT: Informed sources said the ministry of electricity and water will review lists of tenants in commercial and investment areas after noticing that expats live in flats that are registered in the names of Kuwaitis to avoid paying higher power and water bills, as Kuwaitis are still subjected to the previous lower tariffs. — A Saleh

Kuwait bourse Gulf's best this year

KUWAIT: Kuwait's stock exchange has surpassed all others in the Gulf region since the start of the year, with gains worth 20.4 percent, according to a local asset management and investment firm. Boursa Kuwait's Main Market Index rose by 4.9 percent, while the Premier Market Index gained 5.8 percent last month, said a report by Kuwait Financial Center (Markaz). — KUNA

Sudan protest leaders, junta sign key deal

KHARTOUM: Sudan's ruling generals and protest leaders signed a hard-won constitutional declaration yesterday, paving the way for a transition to civilian rule after more than seven months of demonstrations and violence. Under the agreement, signed at a ceremony in the capital Khartoum, a joint civilian-military ruling body will oversee the formation of a civilian government and parliament to govern for a three-year transition period.

The declaration was the result of fraught negotiations between the leaders of mass protests, which erupted last

December against the three-decade rule of president Omar Al-Bashir, and the generals who ousted him in April. It builds on a July 17 power-sharing deal between the two sides. Protest movement leader Ahmed Rabie and the deputy head of the ruling military council General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo signed the declaration at a ceremony attended by African Union and Ethiopian mediators.

"We turned a tough page of Sudan's history by signing this agreement," Daglo, who flashed a victory sign after making a short speech, told reporters. The signing was met by applause in the hall as representatives from both sides shook hands. Members of the protest umbrella group, the Alliance for Freedom and Change, broke into tears as they exchanged hugs.

Continued on Page 24



KHARTOUM: General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo (right), Sudan's deputy head of the Transitional Military Council, and protest leader Ahmed Rabie shake hands after signing the constitutional declaration at a ceremony attended by African Union and Ethiopian mediators yesterday. — AFP

French inventor crosses Channel on hoverboard

SANGATTE, France: A French daredevil who spent years developing a jet-powered hoverboard zoomed across the English Channel yesterday, fulfilling his quest after pulling off a tricky refuelling maneuver that cut short his first attempt 10 days ago. Franky Zapata blasted off on his "flyboard" from Sangatte on the northern coast of France at 8:17 am (0617 GMT) for the 35-km trip to St Margaret's Bay in Dover. Escorted by three helicopters, he soared across the

water in the early morning light and landed 22 minutes later in the picturesque bay, to the applause of dozens of onlookers and journalists.

"I'm feeling good. I'm feeling happy, I'm feeling lucky. This is just an amazing moment for me," Zapata told AFP after landing. He said the indicators in the visor of his helmet showed he raced over the busy shipping lane at a speed of 160-170 km/h, doing zigzags as he neared the coast to try to ease the fatigue in his legs. Minutes after descending from the metal platform where he landed his craft, Zapata broke down in tears of emotion while talking on the phone to his 10-year-old son, who could be heard saying, "Dad, you're the best!"

Continued on Page 24



DOVER, United Kingdom: Screen grab from a video shows Franky Zapata on his jet-powered "flyboard" as he arrives at St Margaret's Bay after flying across the 35-km Channel yesterday. — AFP

Amir, Crown Prince receive top officials at Bayan Palace

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Kuwaiti team competes in Americas' Down syndrome tourney

NEW YORK: Kuwait's national mental disabilities team (Down syndrome) is taking part in the International Down Syndrome Championships of the Americas, held in Mexico from the 4th to 11th of August. The Kuwaiti team is the first Arab team for intellectual disabilities participating in the international championship. Chairwoman of Al-Tomoooh Sport Club for Intellectual Disabilities of Kuwait Rehab Burusly said yesterday. The team will take part in swimming and athletics, she said, adding that they had finished a training camp to prepare for the tournament in London. Meanwhile, the chairwoman noted that the



NEW YORK: Kuwait's national mental disabilities team (Down syndrome) arrives in Mexico to take part in the International Down Syndrome Championships of the Americas. — KUNA

club aims to allow mentally challenged athletes to play a vital role in society and be part of the country's sustainable development plan. Tomoooh club was established in

March 2018 by the Public Authority for Sport. The club had participated in the regional Special Olympics in 2018 and the international in 2019. — KUNA

Training program to promote media's role in Kuwaiti society



KUWAIT: University students attend the training program. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: KUNA's Deputy Director-General for the Editorial Sector and Editor-in-Chief Saad Al-Ali stressed the importance of the media's role in guiding the society, promoting the development process in the country, and boosting constructive dialogue among young people. Ali's statement came during the launching of KUNA's sixth internship program to train 23 university students to develop their journalistic skills. The program will last until September 5th. The program encourages practical application of journalism and media, Ali added. It also aims to break the student's psychological barrier, encouraging them to join the labor market after graduation, he said.

Meanwhile, KUNA's Deputy Editor-in-

Chief for Economic Affairs Hanan Al-Qaisi said that the training programs organized by the agency are part of the state's development plan to invest in youth. Qaisi, who is also the general coordinator of the internship program, said that traditional media outlets are currently facing many challenges, including the speed of communication and dissemination of information through the means of social media that swept the world. The trainees will learn during the program the basics of writing news stories and journalism, she added. This is the sixth consecutive program organized by KUNA for university students during summer. It includes theoretical and practical training on various journalism disciplines. — KUNA



KUNA's Deputy Director-General for the Editorial Sector and Editor-in-Chief Saad Al-Ali speaks during the training program.

Bahraini Crown Prince hails Kuwait's support

MANAMA: Bahraini Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa yesterday hailed Kuwait's supportive stances to Bahrain. This came in a meeting with Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Kuwait to Bahrain

Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah to mark the end of his services in the Kingdom. The Bahraini Crown Prince underlined strong ties between the two brotherly countries under the leadership of Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and his brother, Kuwait's Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. He also extended thanks to the Kuwaiti Ambassador for his service in enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries and wished him every success in his future endeavors. Meanwhile, Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah expressed gratitude for the support he had during his tenure, wishing the Kingdom of Bahrain and its citizens prosperity and advancement. — KUNA



MANAMA: Bahraini Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa meets with Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Kuwait to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Al-Sabah. — KUNA

Mexican ambassador extends Eid greetings

KUWAIT: The Embassy of Mexico to the State of Kuwait released the following press release yesterday in which Ambassador Miguel Angel Isidro extended Eid Al-Adha greetings:

"Ambassador of Mexico to Kuwait Miguel Angel Isidro has the honor to extend his sincere felicitation and best wishes to His Highness the Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness the Crown Prince, His Highness the Prime Minister, the Government and the people of Kuwait, on the occasion of the advent of Eid Al-Adha, wishing the friendly people of Kuwait further prosperity and stabi-



Mexican Ambassador Miguel Angel Isidro

ty. The past years have witnessed continuous enhancement of bilateral cooperation and exchanges in various fields between the State of Kuwait and Mexico. The transformation in the bilateral relationship over time has mirrored the remarkable growth and prosperity in both countries and the Ambassador trusts that these bilateral relations will witness further development for the benefit of both friendly nations."

Local

Home alone child rescued outside third-floor apartment window

Traffic offenders leave cop injured after beating

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Firemen rescued a child who was left unattended at an apartment in Mangaf, and became stuck after climbing out of his room's window. Fahaheel firemen rushed to the scene after receiving a report about a child who was stuck outside the window of a third-floor apartment. Firemen broke open the front door and the room door, then rescued the child who was in good health. The parents are being summoned by police to be questioned on child negligence charges.



Man dead in gas leak incident

Policeman injured
Two Kuwaiti men in violation of the traffic law attacked a patrolman while being arrested. One of them is wanted on a civil case and the other had suspicious material. The policeman sustained head injuries and was taken to hospital, while the two suspects were placed under arrest.

Swimmer drowned
A Kuwaiti drowned while swimming in a pool in a Kabd farm. Al-Rai reported yesterday. Police and paramedics responded to a call and the body was recovered by the coroner. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to determine the circumstances behind the incident.

Gas leak death
A Turkish man died in a gas cylinder leak, while

his two roommates suffered from suffocation and were admitted to Adan Hospital, one in critical condition. Paramedics responded to a call and rushed the affected to hospital, but one lost his life, another was admitted to the ICU, and the third was in stable condition. A security source said that the three were cooking when a gas leak took place and filled the place.

Drug possession
Kuwait customs officers stopped three passengers who attempted to smuggle in psychoactive drugs, hashish and marijuana, in three separate cases. In the first case, an inspector found 1,480 illicit tablets with a woman, who was arrested and sent to concerned authorities. Meanwhile, an inspector suspected another woman and found hashish and sweets laced with drugs, and a third passenger had marijuana on him.

Bribery charges
Head of implementation at Jahra court sent a Kuwaiti and a doorkeeper to the police station, charged with bribery, Al-Rai reported yesterday. A source said the citizen had a transaction he wanted to process, and went to a person he thought will help him. The source said after the agreement, he paid the doorkeeper hoping the transaction will be completed, but officials found out the papers had been handed illegally and informed their senior, so action was



KUWAIT: A picture released by Kuwait Fire Service Directorate shows the room from which the child climbed out before being rescued.

taken against the culprits.

Bus fire
An American military bus with 11 persons on board caught fire, which was put out without injuries. The incident took place on Sixth Ring Road, reported Al-Rai.

Threatening to harm
A policeman accused a woman in her 20s of threatening to harm him and insulting him while on duty, then driving off. Al-Anbaa daily reported

yesterday. A police source said the policeman said while he was on patrol in the chalets area, he pulled over a woman for violating the traffic law. When he asked for her papers, she said, "Don't you know who I am? I will discharge you from service," then drove off. Separately, a Kuwaiti was placed on the wanted list after refusing to go to an Ahmadi police station for questioning over threatening to murder. A citizen in his 70s accused his son of threatening to kill him because he refused to give him money. The father said his son earns well and does not need more money.

Govt denies recommending to dissolve parliament



Tareq Al-Mezrem

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Government Spokesman Tareq Al-Mezrem has dismissed as "baseless" a press report about a ministerial committee's recommendation for dissolving the National Assembly. The report published by a local newspaper with a yesterday headline reading 'Ministerial Report Recommends Parliament Dissolution' is baseless and totally untrue, Mezrem asserted in a press statement. None of the Cabinet's ministerial committees has even compiled a report on this issue, he made it clear. Mezrem also emphasized that the relation between the executive and legislative powers are based on cooperation and respect of the separation of powers' principle. The govern-

ment is seizing the opportunity of the parliament recession to prepare its legislative agenda for the upcoming legislative term as per His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's statement in the last parliamentary session, he said. Mezrem urged media and press to pursue accuracy and to double check their information with official sources before publishing it. — KUNA

Unions call for Wednesday, Thursday off

By Meshaal Al-Eenzi

KUWAIT: Head of Kuwait Government Workers' Trade Union Hussein Al-Azmi urged His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah to issue a decision to make Wednesday and

Thursday following the Eid Al-Adha holidays as rest days for all state workers, because they fall between the Eid holiday and the weekend.

Separately, Director General of Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi said the municipality will not be lax towards removing all construction violations, including building makeshift rooms on roofs and increasing the area allowed. He said what was discovered by inspectors distorts the view in Kuwait City and there will be no hesitation in implementing the law and removing all these violations.

Kuwait delivers aid to refugees in Bosnia

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) has distributed aid to refugees and immigrants in Bosnia Herzegovina in collaboration with the Bosnian Red Crescent. The head of the society expedition, Jassem Qambar, said in a press statement that a field team

handed over 5,000 food parcels, detergents, clothes and hot meals to the refugees and immigrants in several regions, including northeastern region of Tolisa, Sedra, southern city of Mostar and Boriza. There are, currently, some 5,000 immigrants, mostly from Pakistan, Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, settled in the country, according to official statistics. These foreigners, namely children, women and elderly, are in dire need for support. Qambar praised cooperation of the Kuwaiti Embassy and the Bosnian Red Crescent for delivering the relief supplies to those truly in need for help. — KUNA



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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Aerial view of Kuwait City during sunset. — Photo by Nadim Nawaz (KUNA)

Zain hosts KON Program students at ZINC in partnership with LOYAC

Company supports program for 2nd year running

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, hosted a workshop for the students participating in the KON Social Entrepreneurship Program at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh. The program, brought to Kuwait in collaboration with Babson College in Boston, comes as part of Zain's strategic partnership with LOYAC, a non-profit organization that aims at developing youth's talents and skills.

Zain's support to KON for the second year running comes as part of its strategic partnership with LOYAC, which continues this year for over 15 consecutive years. The partnership comes in line with the company's Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility Strategy, which centers around the development of the Education and Youth sectors, especially in regards to nurturing and developing entrepreneurial skills within the youth.

Zain hosted 64 KON students at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh. The students formed 14 different teams each with their own bright idea and took part in a workshop facilitated by Khalid Al-Amiri, founder of Li3ib project and an entrepreneur of the fourth Zain Great Idea accelerator program. The workshop covered tech startup acceleration and the secrets of pitching new tech startups, as well as many other experiences that benefited the students in their entrepreneurship journey.

KON, one of LOYAC's latest youth development programs, trains youth (12-16 years) in the area of Social Entrepreneurship throughout six weeks at the American University in Kuwait. The program is brought to Kuwait in collaboration with Babson College in Boston, considered the most prestigious entrepreneurship college in the United States and the number one institution in the world for entrepreneurship education.

This year, Zain's support to LOYAC extends to various educational programs that cater to developing the youth's skills and talents, including KON Social Entrepreneurship Program, LOYAC AC Milan Soccer School, and more.

Through its strategic partnership with LOYAC, Zain also trains hundreds of students as part of the LOYAC Summer Internship Program. The students take part in



KUWAIT: KON students at Zain's Innovation Center ZINC.

completing tasks, learning new skills, and go through professional training in the real business world at various departments and divisions within the company. Zain also offers the students financial rewards in recognition of their efforts and as an encouragement to their dedication.

Zain is proud to be one of the strategic partners of LOYAC since its inception, especially that it is considered one of the most prominent national programs that

cater to the youth and offers them a healthy and empowering environment to develop their skills and talents in an educational, fun, and social atmosphere.

Zain believes in the development of the communities in which it operates, and it is a very important part of the company's overall success. The company considers education as a core element in the community development process, and it will continue to support it to

contribute to the further progress of the country's youth. Since its inception in 2002, LOYAC has grown to be the first choice of the youth in Kuwait when it comes to innovative and high quality educational programs. LOYAC runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and to help them find their sense of purpose by extending themselves to others.

NBK sponsors LOYAC's trip to China

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is sponsoring a trip for LOYAC's students to China. This sponsorship reflects NBK's commitment to its Corporate Social Responsibility as well as the vital role it plays in supporting students, youths and self-building initiatives in Kuwait.

The initiative goes with NBK's support to LOYAC's annual activities and events including the international and cultural trips. A group of 12 volunteers age 14-18 from different backgrounds are participating in this trip which is designed to build the leadership skills in their personality and enrich the cultural exchange.

This nine-day trip includes a group of social initiatives, interacting with different cultures and volunteering. During this trip, participants will be introduced to China's different cultures and learn Chinese

daily life routine. NBK always strives to empower Kuwaiti youth to realize their potentials, build their personalities and motivates their ambition. This trip with LOYAC comes in line with the bank's strategy to invest in youth and develop their capabilities.

China will be the first trip this year sponsored by NBK with LOYAC, followed by Cambodia. NBK looks forward to experience the inspiring trip, living with the local families, hanging out with the youth, contributing to the community and exploring the treasures of its cities.

Throughout the program, Loyacers will be engaging in stimulating discussions about various aspects of each society to gain a deeper understanding of what makes our cultures unique and beautiful. In addition, the program includes cultural exchange, visiting The Panda Center, Mont Qingcheng, the Great Mosque in Xi'an, the famed Terraotta Warriors, The Great Wall of China and doing community service.

LOYAC is a nonprofit organization that runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and help them find their sense of purpose by extending themselves to others.



Local

Money supply at \$128 billion, up 2% in June: Kuwait Central Bank

Private sector deposits climbed to KD 34.5 billion in June



The Central Bank of Kuwait.

KUWAIT: Money supply (M2) rose two percent in June on monthly basis recording KD 38.9 billion (\$128 billion), the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said yesterday. The CBK economic research department reported that deposits in the Kuwaiti Dinar by the private sector in local banks climbed, in June, to KD 34.5 billion (\$113.8 billion). Those of foreign currencies climbed 9.1 percent reaching KD 2.5 billion (\$8.2 billion), where this sector overall deposits amounted to KD 37 billion (\$122 billion). Local banks' claims on the CBK in the Kuwaiti Dinar, represented by the CBK bonds, settled at KD 2.9 billion (\$9.5 billion). Local banks' total assets increased by 1.1 percent, reaching \$68 billion (\$224 billion). Net foreign (currencies) assets in the domestic banks climbed 5.5 percent to KD 7.7 billion (\$25.4 billion), while time



Local banks' assets up by 1.1%

deposits with the CBK dropped by nine percent, reaching KD 1.4 billion (\$4.6 billion). Residents' private sector deposits rose in June by 0.8 percent, as compared to the May level, posting KD 37.8 billion (\$124.7 billion). Meanwhile, average interest rates on treasury bonds of one-year maturity settled at 3.25 percent. Financing of Kuwaiti imports dropped in June by one percent reaching KD 313 million (\$1 billion). In the meantime, the average US Dollar rate against the Kuwaiti Dinar dropped in June by 0.1 percent, posting 303.5 per US Dollar. Value of assets at the central bank dropped 3.6 percent reaching KD 10.9 billion (\$35.9 billion). Assets in foreign currencies at the CBK dropped four percent posting KD 10.6 billion (\$34.9 billion). — KUNA

Kuwaitis invited to teach Arabic at a US university

KUWAIT: The Embassy of the United States in Kuwait is announcing an exciting opportunity for Kuwaiti nationals to teach Arabic at a US university through the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) Program. The Embassy is accepting applications until September 1, 2019. The FLTA Program is a nine-month, non-degree program for early career English teachers or recent graduates in journalism and media or American or English literature. It is fully funded by the Department of State, and provides the opportunity for participants to teach Arabic to students at a university in the United States as a Teaching Assistant for one academic year. Participants in this program are able to refine their teaching skills, increase their English language proficiency, and expand their knowledge of the society and culture of the United States. At the same

time, successful candidates help strengthen Arabic instruction at US colleges and universities. Fluency in English is mandatory, demonstrated by a score of at least 79-80 for TOEFL iBT or 6.0 for IELTS. Ideal candidates for the program have a desire to meet people and become a part of their host community by participating in community events and campus activities. Fulbright FLTA participants are creative and self-reliant team players, who are able to maintain excellent relationships with faculty, staff, and students. A complete application package includes: An online application through <https://apply.iie.org/FLTA2020>. Original academic transcripts with certified English translations. A graduation certificate. Three letters of reference. A TOEFL or IELTS score report. The US Embassy will cover the costs of taking the TOEFL iBT Test for a limited number of applicants. Short-listed applicants will be contacted by the Embassy for interviews. Successful candidates will be notified starting April 2020. Program dates are September 2020-June 2021.

Kuwait Airport ready for Eid Al-Adha travels

KUWAIT: The Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGCA) announced yesterday its readiness to serve passengers at Kuwait international airports during Eid Al-Adha holiday. Up to 3,713 flights would be organized during this period, DGCA General Director Yousuf Al-Fozan said. He also revealed a plan to 'distribute' the passengers to the four terminals after shifting Kuwait Airways passengers to Terminal 4 (T4) and those of Al-Jazeera Airways to Terminal 5 (T5). Special teams have been formed to oversee operations at the air facilities and ensure that the passengers get the required services, he added. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait International Airport's terminal jam-packed with travelers in this file photo.

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International

MONDAY, AUGUST 5, 2019



Growing panic in Kashmir as India, Pakistan bicker

Murder of Mexican journalist marks third killing in one week

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FREETOWN: The Kofi Jallof secret society portraying four devils dancing during an Araba dance performance in Freetown. The devils seen are from left to right Baykey (white), Faerie (red), Gargoda (yellow) and Labalaba (gray). — AFP

Secret societies mark bodies and minds

Bondo, Poro 'still play leading role in social, political life' in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN: Wearing a fading Mickey Mouse T-shirt, her knees hugged to her chest, eight-year-old Musu Kamara sits in a corrugated shack in Sierra Leone's capital waiting for her initiation into a secret society. Kamara will leave for two weeks in the bush with a sisterhood called Bondo. There, she and other girls will learn ritual dances and chants and how to confront spirits as the group is groomed for adulthood and tribal duties.

And Kamara will also have to endure female genital mutilation. For youngsters in Sierra Leone, the end of the school year often means passing through initiation into a Bondo or, for boys, an all-male group called a Poro. The ceremonies have deep roots and are jealously guarded in many villages, where they are defended as a vital moment in life.

But many of the children who take part in them will be scarred, physically as well as mentally. Boys, whose retreats can last months, may be sliced on the back with razors to leave the "mark of the teeth" of a spirit that swallows them. Girls face "cutting": the removal of their clitoris, a practice found in other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia - and increasingly reviled.

Social status

Secret societies have an entrenched role in tribal and political life in Sierra Leone, as in other parts of West Africa. Membership confers social status and respect, even opening doors to tribal chief posts and government jobs. Joe Alie, a professor of African studies at the University of Sierra Leone, said more than 90 percent of the country's population was involved in ancestral and secret rites.

Bondo and Poro societies "still play a leading role in the social, religious and political life" of communities, he said. But President Julius Maada Bio's government faces a delicate balancing act over how to manage these influential organizations and their traditions. The pain of ritual, especially female genital mutilation - FGM - is increasingly under attack. Even Bio's wife, Fatima, was caught up in the debate early this year.

She provoked a huge backlash after publicly declaring she was not against FGM, which practitioners call circumcision. The first lady later said she had been misunderstood and that she condemned the forcible excision of girls aged under 18. Yambundu Oile, who has initiated thousands of girls like Kamara, said "cutting" was only part of the initiation. "It is not only to circumcise them, we

also teach them to be a woman, to cook, to respect the elders," she said. "After the initiation, they return to their community to continue their education until their marriage."

Under pressure

The societies are under pressure after a string of kidnappings and even deaths, forcing the government to temporarily ban them. Now rituals cannot be imposed on minors without their consent, and any discrimination for non-membership of a secret society is prohibited. But analysts see little impact. "The challenge is to eliminate female genital mutilation, but not the Bondo culture," which plays an important role in society, says Rugiatu Turay, a former minister who supports a ban on FGM. "We have more Bondo sites than schools in Sierra Leone... But it's hard to convince people to reform their practices because politicians fund circumcision ceremonies to win votes."

Despite this, the outcry against FGM is leading to change. "I want none of my daughters to undergo genital mutilation, which leaves a mark for life," says Mabinty Bangura, who endured FGM 20 years ago - a ceremony whose pain, she said, "never seemed to end." "One woman covers your mouth, another is holding you by the chest and two others by the legs," she said. "Then they spread your legs, remove the whole clitoris and apply a tissue impregnated with medicinal herbs."

No-FGM rituals

In the northern regions of Tonkolili and Port Loko, a new type of ritual is emerging in which girls are initiated by the Sowe - the head of a female secret society - but are not "cut." It is the initiative of a Swiss aid worker, Michele Moreau, who in 2010 became the first European to join a Bondo, taking the name of Shema Roko. "Twenty-five Soweis have vowed before leaders to stop the circumcisions. They replaced their red scarves with yellow ones, creating the 'Yellow Bondo'," said Moreau, whose association supports the schooling and health of young girls. Since then, around 700 girls have been initiated in Tonkolili without undergoing FGM. Some applaud the initiative as a way of enrolling secret societies into the fight to stamp out mutilation. Others, though, oppose it as disrespectful. "I hope that circumcision continues, but with the consent of the girls," said Sento Kamara, a Bondo member. "It is part of our culture and our tradition." — AFP

Deadliest mass shootings in US

WASHINGTON: Nine people were killed by a gunman in a mass shooting in the US state of Ohio early yesterday, hours after a shooting in Texas killed 20. Here are some of the other deadliest recent mass shootings in the United States:

Vegas concert: 58 killed

From his hotel, a 64-year-old retired accountant shoots down on a crowd attending an outdoor country music concert on October 1, 2017, killing 58 people and wounding around 550 before committing suicide. It is the worst mass shooting in modern US history.

Florida club: 49 killed

A heavily armed gunman opens fire inside a gay nightclub in the city of Orlando on June 12, 2016, killing 49 people. The attacker is killed in a shootout with police. He pledges allegiance to the Islamic State group, which later claims responsibility.

Sandy Hook: 26 killed

A 20-year-old man with a history of mental health issues kills his mother in Newtown, Connecticut, in December 2012 before blasting his way into Sandy Hook Elementary School and shooting dead 20 six- and seven-year old children and six adults. He commits suicide.

Texas church: 25 killed

A 26-year-old man who was court-martialed while in the Air Force shoots dead 25 worshippers during Sunday services and wounds at least 20 others at a Baptist church in the small rural community of Sutherland Springs outside San Antonio, Texas, on November 5, 2017. The shooter flees and is later found dead in his car with a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Florida high school: 17 dead

A 19-year-old former student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School who was expelled for disciplinary reasons returns to the school in Parkland, Florida, and opens fire on February 14, 2018, killing 14 students and three adult staff members. The gunman's trial is expected to begin in January 2020.

California office party: 14 dead

A radicalized Muslim couple storm a Christmas office party at a social services center in San Bernardino in December 2015 and gun down 14 people, wounding 22 others. They are shot dead by police.

Virginia Beach: 12 dead

A disgruntled engineer shoots dead 12 at a municipal building in this coastal city on May 31, 2019. The 40-year-old had worked for the public works department in Virginia Beach for about 15 years before carrying out the rampage at his workplace. He died in a gunfight with police.

California bar: 12 dead

On November 7, 2018, a 28-year-old US Marine Corps combat veteran opens fire in a crowded country music bar in California, killing 12 people. The assailant, a troubled former machine gunner who served a tour in Afghanistan, dies of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Colorado cinema: 12 dead

A young man wearing body armor opens fire in a movie theater showing a late-night premiere of a Batman film in Aurora, Colorado in July 2012. Twelve people are killed and 70 wounded. He is sentenced to life in prison.

Synagogue in Pittsburgh: 11 dead

On October 27, 2018, a 46-year-old gunman bursts into the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh during Shabbat services, killing eleven people. He reportedly yells "All Jews must die!" during the attack. He is indicted on 29 counts, some of which carry the death penalty.

High school in Santa Fe: 10 dead

A 17-year-old student armed with a shotgun and a revolver opens fire just as classes are starting at his school in Santa Fe, Texas, on May 18, 2018, killing ten people including eight students. The student, who authorities say used weapons legally owned by his father, is taken into custody on murder charges. — AFP

International

More than 100 million hit by Indonesian power blackout

Jakarta transit system evacuated, some traffic lights out

JAKARTA: Indonesia's state power company PLN estimated yesterday it would take several hours to restore power to Jakarta after a major blackout, blaming technical issues for cutting power to tens of millions of people in the capital and surrounding provinces. The power outage spread across areas that are home to more than 100 million people and appeared to have affected most areas of the capital, prompting the use of generators in some offices, malls and apartments.

"Hopefully for the Jakarta system, if everything goes to plan and the generating system is reliable, smooth supply should return in approximately three hours," Sripeni Intan Cahyani, acting chief executive of PT Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN), told a news conference. Cahyani said electricity customers in the provinces of West Java and Banten should get power back within four to five hours.

She blamed faulty transmission circuits on Ungaran to Pemalang power line in Central Java for causing voltage drops that hit power networks in Jakarta as well as West Java and Banten provinces. "We will investigate to find the root causes and analyse them in detail. We will appoint an independent party to investigate," said Cahyani, who only took up her post on Friday. Another PLN official said two out of three circuits had gone down triggering "cascading voltage" that caused outages as the west system collapsed.

Earlier yesterday, the mass rapid transit (MRT) system in Jakarta had to evacuate passengers from trains after the power outage that began just before noon local time. The city of Jakarta is the centre for government and business in Indonesia and is home to

more than 10 million people, with around three times that many people living in the surrounding towns. The capital does suffer periodic blackouts, but usually short-lived and confined to certain areas.

Airport, hospitals operating

Operations at Jakarta's international airport remained normal using back-up generators, its operator said via Twitter. Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan also said via Twitter that public hospitals were operating as usual, relying on generators. But at train stations, hundreds of passengers were left stranded after commuter lines stopped working. "The train stopped all of sudden, we had to wait for a long time," said Ella Wasila, a passenger near Sudirman station in downtown Jakarta. "There were so many babies in the coach, they were crying, and people were shouting 'open the door'." The power outage also disrupted some cellular phone networks and provider Telkomsel said it was com-

PLN, State power company blames technical issues

piling an inventory of the number of devices affected by the power cut. The blackout also caused traffic lights to go out in some areas of the capital, creating traffic jams. Wiwik Widayanti, chief executive of the Jakarta regional train service, said more than 800,000 people used the network per day at a weekend, so buses would be used to transport stranded passengers. Indonesian Consumers Foundation (YLKI) said the blackout could discourage investment in Southeast Asia's biggest economy and urged the government to increase PLN's capacity.

"Power outages, especially in the Greater Jakarta area, are not only detrimental for residential con-



JAKARTA: People cross a road despite the traffic lights not working due to an electricity outage in Jakarta yesterday. Tens of millions of people on Indonesia's heavily populated Java Island were affected by a widespread electricity outage on August 4 after disruptions at several power plants, the state utility PLN said. —AFP

sumers but also to the business sector," Tulus Abadi, an executive at the foundation, said in a statement. Ordinary Indonesians also took to Twitter to express their frustration. A Twitter user with the handle

@henrydjunaedi said in a post: "I'm a cashless guy, this is nightmare ... So far I can only find one working ATM in a 10 km radius. Restaurants and markets are closing or not accepting card payments." —Reuters

Ceasefire gives wary Syrians in Idlib respite

IDLIB: Shopkeepers and residents in Syria's Idlib city have found relief from air strikes but remain wary after a ceasefire halted fierce government bombing against the rebel foothold. For three months, an army offensive backed by Russia has killed at least 400 people in northwest Syria and uprooted more than 440,000, the United Nations says.

Since Damascus declared a ceasefire on Thursday night, its warplanes have not mounted air strikes, though the combatants are still shelling each other. Idlib lies in the last major chunk of territory rebels hold after facing defeat across much of Syria at the hands of Damascus with its allies Russia and Iran. At the weekend, the streets of Idlib city buzzed with cars and people. Some stopped by market stalls to look at clothes, while others lined up at kiosks to buy juice.

"Before, there was panic. Every time the warning sirens rang, the market became empty right away," Mhamad al-Omar, who sells cold drinks said. "Now that there's a bit of calm, there's traffic today Praise God...People are tired." Air strikes have hit schools, hospitals, mar-

kets and bakeries in the latest assault, UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said last week. Damascus, which denies striking civilians in the eight-year-old war, says it has been responding to militant attacks.

"The ceasefire is good for everyone. But we don't know what's waiting for us," said Munaf Daher, a college student in Idlib. "We hope it will be good and people will keep coming back to their homes, this is the biggest joy." Hasan Abdelalal, a local aid worker who was displaced from his city of Aleppo in 2016, said people had started returning after weeks of living in olive groves near the Turkish border.

"But we don't know what will happen under the table," he added. Other residents also said they remained cautious after a series of truce deals or Russian-Turkish talks that have failed to end the fighting. Under its deals with Moscow, Ankara has forces stationed on the ground in the Idlib region at a dozen military positions. Rebel factions have agreed to the latest ceasefire while reserving the right to respond to attacks.

Syrian state media said on Thursday the ceasefire would depend on militants fulfilling a Russian-Turkish deal that tried last year to create an Idlib buffer zone. The terms include jihadists and heavy weapons leaving the zone. The dominant force in Idlib is the jihadist



KHAN SHAYKHUN: An aerial view shows destroyed buildings in the town of Khan Shaykhun in the southern countryside of Idlib. —AFP

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) - formerly the Nusra Front - though Turkey-backed rebels also operate there. HTS has rejected conditions of the 2018 "de-escalation deal" such as relinquishing its weapons. Its leader Abu Mohammad al-Jolani was cited on Saturday night as saying his fighters would not withdraw from that zone.

In recent years, the population of the northwest - which UN estimates put at 3

million - has ballooned with civilians and rebels whose hometowns went back under state rule. Ahmed Hmeidi, who owns a vegetable shop, said the ceasefire would at least let people enjoy the upcoming Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday. "People had been scared of the bombing on the markets the most, the massacres," he said. "Now there is some safety, one percent safety, people are coming out, seeing each other." —Reuters

'They're demonic': The deaf victims of pedophile priests speak out

MENDOZA: Ezequiel Villalonga spent most of his life at the Provolo Institute in Mendoza, a Catholic school for deaf children. But now the 18-year-old, who is deaf and mute, has lost all faith in the Church. He and his classmates claim they are victims of the pedophile priests who ran the institution, part of a sweeping scandal that has shaken Argentina. Pope Francis's home country.

"I think that everything in the Church is fake. Everything they made us read, recite, the way (they said) people should live," he said in sign language, just before the start of the priests' trial on Monday. "I think they lie and that they're demonic," he added. Ezequiel only learned sign language as an adult, because despite the Institute's specialized mission, the school situated in the Andean foothills didn't teach him how to speak.

He was only seven months old when his mother realized he was deaf. When Ezequiel was four, she sent him to the Provolo, which was founded in 1995, 621 miles west of Buenos Aires. Until Ezequiel was 16, when the scandal finally broke, he spent his days inside the massive building with a green roof. Once inside its red brick walls, he was only allowed to go home on weekends. "Life there was terrible. We didn't learn anything, we couldn't speak to each other because we didn't know sign language," he said.

"We would write without knowing what it said, and when we asked other classmates, no one understood anything," he added, speaking at the headquarters for the NGO Xumek (which means "sun" in the indigenous Huarpe language), which provided him with a lawyer.

His testimony, and those of some 20 other victims, are at the center of a trial for the priests Nicola Corradi, 83, and Horacio Corbacho, 59, as well as the school's former gardener Armando Gomez, 49. "I want them all to go to jail. Corbacho, Corradi and Gomez, so that we can resolve this," said Ezequiel.

Corradi came to Argentina in 1970 from the original Provolo Institute in Verona - which has also been shaken by a pedophilia scandal in recent years - to run the Provolo in La Plata. In 1998, he transferred just 42 miles north to Mendoza, where he worked as the head of the Institute until his arrest in November 2016. Former altar boy Jorge Bordon, now 50, was sentenced last year to 10 years in prison as part of the sweeping affair, after admitting to abusing five victims himself. Fifteen others also stand accused and will be judged over the course of two other trials.

'How could they?'

Paola Gonzalez broke down when recalling the moment she learned that her daughter Milagros, now 16 years old, had been abused while attending the Institute. Before the scandal, the free school had been considered quite prestigious. "You should have seen her little body when she went into (the Provolo). She was so small," said Gonzalez, sitting in her house in Mendoza. "I don't understand, I can't imagine such evil. How could they do so much harm to such a fragile creature?" she demanded. When the first victim testimonies became public, Gonzalez asked her daughter if she had been abused at the Provolo. "She was sitting right there," said the cleaning woman, indicating the spot where her daughter "mimed that they had unbuttoned her (clothes) and pulled down her pants." "Then she looked down again," recalled Gonzalez, who says she has since turned her "pain into fighting." "It's a huge victory that there's a trial," she added. "There aren't enough words to empathize with the horror they've lived through and that has hurt them so much," said Monsignor Alberto Bochaty, the auxiliary bishop for La Plata.

"We must ask forgiveness and try to heal as best



MENDOZA: Argentinean Milagros, 16, victim of sexual abuse, hangs wet clothes at her house of the San Martin neighborhood, in Mendoza, Argentina. —AFP

we can, without hatred." In July 2017, Pope Francis appointed Bochaty as the Apostolic Commissioner to look into the Company of Mary, the group that runs the Provolo institutes. "When I was appointed, the first thing I did was try to approach the victims and ask them for forgiveness, and they sent me packing," said Bochaty. "Until today, I haven't been able to do it," he said, adding he is "very happy that the trial has begun." —AFP

Money row sparks jihadist infighting

KANO: A dispute over money within a Nigerian jihadist faction affiliated to the Islamic State group has spiraled into clashes that has killed "scores" of fighters, sources said. The infighting - which erupted into gun battles on July 26 - has exposed divisions inside the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) group, three sources with deep knowledge of the faction's internal workings told AFP.

The disagreement centered on sharing income mainly generated by taxing cattle herders and fishermen in areas the jihadists control around Lake Chad, said the sources, who asked not to be identified for safety reasons. The fighting broke out in the village of Blantougou in Niger before spilling over the border into Nigeria.

It pitted those loyal to tax chief Umar Leni against two other factions, the sources said. "There was heavy fighting between the three factions which left scores from all sides killed," one of the sources said. "They could not agree on a sharing formula after six days of disagreement and resorted to fighting," he said. Leni escaped the fighting unscathed and was believed to have fled to Mali with the group's stash, according to the sources.

The infighting is just the latest to hit the factious jihadist insurgency that has torn apart northeastern Nigeria and crossed into neighboring countries over the past decade. ISWAP broke away from Boko Haram in 2016 in part due to its rejection of indiscriminate attacks on civilians. Last year the group witnessed a reported takeover by more hardline fighters who sidelined its leader and executed his deputy. The IS-affiliate has since July 2018 ratcheted up a campaign of attacks against military targets.

Military sources told AFP that 25 soldiers from an international force and at least 40 jihadists were killed in fighting Monday near the town of Baga on Lake Chad. A military source in the region told AFP they were "closely monitoring" the reported clashes within the jihadist group. ISWAP has sought to fill the void left by the collapse of government authority in the areas it controls by offering basic medical service and providing security, sources and analysts say. It imposes taxes on cattle herders and charges fishermen for permission to access Lake Chad, sources said. —AFP



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International

Russian opposition plans new protests despite 1,000 arrests

Activists demand free election in Moscow

MOSCOW: Russia's anti-Kremlin opposition said it was planning a nationwide protest next weekend despite police forcibly detaining over 1,000 people on Saturday for attending what they said was an illegal march in Moscow to demand free elections. Saturday's protest, conceived by opposition activists as a peaceful walk to protest against the exclusion of their candidates from a Moscow election next month, was systematically and sometimes violently dispersed by police.

OVD-Info, an independent monitoring group, said yesterday that police had detained 1,001 people on Saturday, up from its earlier estimate of just over 800 people. Many but not all of those detained were later released by police, but OVD-Info said 19 were kept in custody overnight. It said some of those detained had their phones confiscated and had been denied access to a lawyer. Russian investigators had initiated a criminal case against one man, accusing him of injuring a police officer, the TASS news agency reported.

Faced with a wave of summer protests, authorities have opened criminal proceedings for what they term mass civil unrest, an offence punishable with up to 15 years in jail. Although they have rejected protesters' complaints, they have said they'll allow protests in Moscow on Saturday and Sunday next weekend, albeit in a location away from the city centre which the opposition has rejected in the past.

But Leonid Volkov, an ally of jailed anti-Kremlin opposition politician Alexei Navalny, said late on Saturday that Navalny's political movement planned to organize another of its own protests on Aug. 10 which he said would be nationwide. He said protesters would demand that jailed activists be released, that opposi-

tion candidates be allowed to run in the Moscow election, and that the mayor of Moscow and other top officials resign.

"This is a matter of human dignity, about the right to choose and express your opinion," Volkov wrote on Twitter. "Muscovites have had their elections stolen, are being arrested by the thousand, hundreds are being beaten and dozens jailed. Therefore we'll have to prove our existence on the streets of our cities." He said the opposition did not plan to ask Moscow officials for permission to protest but would do so in other cities.

Activists say the Russian constitution allows them to freely protest. But authorities say they need to agree the timing and location in advance, something that was not done ahead of Saturday's protest. The focus of protesters' anger is a prohibition on a number of opposition-minded candidates, some of whom are allies of Navalny, from taking part in a September election for Moscow's city legislature. That vote, though local, is seen as a dry run for a national parliamentary election in 2021.

Authorities say opposition candidates failed to collect enough genuine signatures to register and say the election will be competitive. The excluded candidates say that is a lie and insist on taking part in a contest they believe they could win. Navalny and at least seven of his allies are currently in jail for breaking protest laws. The ruling United Russia party dominates the national parliament and Navalny and his allies are starved of media air-time.

President Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin have not commented on the standoff with the opposition, but Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin, a Putin ally, has



MOSCOW: Servicemen of the Russian National Guard are seen during an unsanctioned rally urging fair elections in downtown Moscow. —AFP

condemned the protests as cynically orchestrated mass disorder. At well over 60 percent, Putin's approval rating is still high compared with many other world leaders, but is lower than it used to be due

to discontent over years of falling incomes. Last year the 66-year-old former KGB intelligence officer won a landslide re-election and a new six-year term until 2024. —Reuters

News in brief

Quake hits northeast Japan

TOKYO: A strong 6.3-magnitude earthquake struck in the Pacific off Fukushima, northeastern Japan yesterday, but there was no tsunami threat, US and Japanese authorities said. The quake jolted large areas in the region at 7:23 pm with its epicenter located 54 kilometers east of Namie, eastern Fukushima, according to the US Geological Survey said. The quake was also felt in Tokyo. The Japan Meteorological Agency said there were no worries about tsunami damage. The weather agency issued an emergency warning when the quake hit, but there was no immediate report of injuries or damage. Shinkansen bullet train services were temporarily suspended in the region, public broadcaster NHK said. No abnormality was detected at nuclear plants in the region, including the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, NHK said. —AFP

15 drug traffickers escape

BAGHDAD: Iraq's interior ministry announced several top policemen had been fired after 15 suspected members of a drug trafficking network escaped on Saturday from a police station in the capital. "The defendants first insulted the police, then beat them and managed to escape" from the police station in eastern Baghdad, near the Shiite bastion of Sadr city, a security services official told AFP, on condition of anonymity. Baghdad's police chief and the heads of the Al-Russafa police department in the capital's east and the station where the suspects pulled off their escape were fired, the interior ministry said in a statement. Prison security is a critical issue in Iraq, where escapes are not uncommon, whether by violence or bribery. Iraq is the 12th most corrupt country in the world, according to Transparency International, and experts have pointed to high levels of corruption in its prisons. —AFP

Syria first lady 'totally' cancer free

BEIRUT: The wife of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad said in an interview aired late Saturday that she was "totally" free of breast cancer after a year of treatment. "My journey has ended... I totally conquered cancer," said Asma Al-Assad, sporting a stylish short haircut and a long white dress, in an interview broadcast on state television. The Syrian presidency announced last August that the 44-year-old first lady had begun treatment for breast cancer. Since then, photos of her, thin and wearing a headscarf, have regularly been shared on the Syrian presidency's social media accounts. In January, she underwent an operation at a military hospital in Damascus, according to the presidency. In the interview, she described the "physical exhaustion" and other effects stemming from her treatment. She praised the support she received from her children, her parents and her "life partner". —AFP

Maldives police arrest ex-vice president

NEW DELHI/MALE: Maldives police on Saturday said they had arrested former vice-president Ahmed Adeb and were bringing him to the capital Male after he was refused entry to India. Adeb, who was sentenced to 15 years in jail in 2016 for allegedly plotting to assassinate the Maldives' then-president Abdulla Yameen, was detained early on Thursday in the southern Indian city of Thoothukudi after arriving illegally by tugboat. "We would like to confirm that Ahmed Adeb Abdul Ghafoor of H. Saamaraa has been arrested and is being transported to Male under our custody," Maldives police said in a Twitter post. An Indian port official in Thoothukudi said Adeb had been sent back to the Maldives late on Friday on a boat escorted by a coast guard vessel. —Reuters

Fentanyl - US deadliest drug

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has repeatedly hit out at China for failing to curb the export of illegal fentanyl to the United States. The powerful painkiller is the primary synthetic opioid available in the US, a class of drug that was responsible for almost 32,000 overdose deaths last year. But why is fentanyl's threat growing, and can Beijing help America cure its addiction to its deadliest drug?

What is fentanyl?

Fentanyl was first developed in 1959 and introduced to the US market in the 1960s as an intravenous anesthetic. A hundred times more potent than morphine, it is used to manage severe pain, for example among cancer patients or those receiving end-of-life care. But it is also produced illegally and trafficked into the US - primarily from China and Mexico - in the form of powder or tablets, and sometimes gets mixed with heroin and cocaine.

Why is it spreading?

A report published in December by

researchers at University of California San Francisco found that fentanyl use has surged in recent years because of heroin and prescription pill shortages, and because it was cheaper for drug wholesalers to produce than heroin. "Very little drug slang has developed to describe fentanyl, which lends support to the notion that this is not a demand-driven epidemic," said Sarah Mars, a UCSF researcher.

Users are often unaware the products they are consuming contain the drug, and a key market is people who turn to counterfeit medicines for cost reasons. "Traffickers are exploiting high consumer demand for illicit prescription painkillers, tranquilizers, and sedatives by producing inexpensive counterfeits containing fentanyl," said a report by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). In 2016, counterfeit prescription painkiller Norco, which actually contained fentanyl, was responsible for at least 14 deaths in California.

How deadly is it?

Fentanyl can be lethal in a dose of as little as two milligrams, equivalent to a few grains of sand. But it is not just deadly to users and can threaten anyone who intercepts it such as postal workers, law enforcement officers, first respon-

according to free-speech advocacy group Article 19.

A reporter in Guerrero state who also served as a municipal official was shot and killed on Friday, while earlier last week, a reporter who covered the police in the same state was found dead in the trunk of a vehicle with signs he had been shot and tortured. Murders in Mexico jumped in the first half of the year to the highest on record, according to official data. The spiraling violence underscores the challenges President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has faced since taking office in December with a vow to reduce violence in the country ravaged by notorious drug cartels.

Ruiz had reported death threats in October and November of 2018, said Ana Laura Perez, president of Veracruz's commission to protect journalists (CEAPP), in an interview with Veracruz news outlet XEU Noticias. She added that Ruiz had been shot and killed at his home in a municipality near Xalapa. Veracruz's governor, Cuatlahuac Garcia, said on Friday evening that efforts had already begun to find the people responsible for Ruiz's death.

Murder of Mexican journalist marks third killing in one week

MEXICO CITY: Mexican officials said on Saturday they would investigate the murder of a journalist in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz who was the third reporter to be killed in a week in Mexico as the country grapples with a record murder rate. Jorge Ruiz Vazquez, a reporter at the Grafico de Xalapa newspaper in Veracruz's capital, died in spite of procedures in place to protect him, the state prosecutor's office said.

"The prosecutor will investigate why protection measures granted to the victim and his family, which were active, were not enforced," the entity said in a statement. Ruiz's death brings the murder toll of Mexican journalists this year to at least eight compared with nine last year.

Democrat O'Rourke accuses Trump of stoking racism

EL PASO: Democratic presidential hopeful Beto O'Rourke accused President Donald Trump Saturday of inciting hatred after a mass shooting in his Texas hometown that police are investigating as a possible hate crime. Speaking to reporters outside a hospital in El Paso where he was visiting victims of the shooting, O'Rourke said Trump had proven himself a racist with his recent attacks on four ethnic minority congresswomen and his past branding of Mexicans as rapists.

"He is a racist and he stokes racism in this country. And it does not just offend our sensibilities, it fundamentally changes the character of this country and it leads to violence," said O'Rourke, who represented El Paso in the US

Congress until recently. "We've had a rise in hate crimes every single one of the last three years during an administration where you have a president who's called Mexicans rapists and criminals." O'Rourke was responding to questions about a manifesto purportedly written by the gunman which railed against the Hispanic "invasion" of Texas which borders Mexico. More than 80 percent of El Paso's population is Hispanic, according to US census figures. Asked if any of the contents of the manifesto should "fall at the feet" of Trump, O'Rourke replied: "Yes."

"There are still details that we are waiting on but I'm just following the lead that I've heard from the El Paso police department where they say there are strong indications that this shooter wrote that manifesto and that this was inspired by his hatred of people here in this community." A suspect being questioned by police over the shooting has not been named by the authorities, although US media have identified him as Patrick Crusius, a 21-year-old who lives on the outskirts of Dallas, Texas. —AFP

ders and even sniffer dogs, according to the DEA. In 2015, New Jersey law enforcement officers carrying out a narcotics field test on what turned out to be fentanyl experienced shortness of breath, dizziness and respiratory distress, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Where does it come from?

Powdered fentanyl can be bought on the dark web or even business trading sites like Weiku.com, according to Roger Bate, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute who published a report on the drug this week. A kilo sourced from China can be purchased in the US for as little as \$1700, which is then used to create up to a million pills that when sold for \$10 to \$20 each generate millions in revenue, according to the DEA.

Bate's report found that poorly policed free trade zones in places like Singapore and Dubai help bring the products into the US market. Mexican gangs also play a large role in producing and distributing the drug, with precursor chemicals first smuggled into Mexico via the southwest US. Some illicit fentanyl products are also brought into the US via Canada, which until 2017 did not allow authorities to open the contents of

mail weighing less than 30 grams.

Can China help?

Trump issued his latest missive at China over its alleged inaction Thursday, tweeting: "My friend President Xi said that he would stop the sale of Fentanyl to the United States - this never happened, and many Americans continue to die!" China has in fact already made some efforts to crack down on suppliers, leading to transshipment via Vietnam, said Bate, but it could apply much more pressure to major players in its chemical industry that would yield some results.

But he warned action by Beijing could be limited because the government may not be fully aware of the activities of the tens of thousands of smaller chemical producers operating throughout the country. What's more, even if its efforts prove successful, other countries with manufacturing capacity like Russia or India could step in as new suppliers.

"It's quite difficult for a few guys in the garage to make, but not difficult for legitimate chemical plants to make," Bate said. He advocates instead for measures to fund drug and mental health programs so that fewer people become addicted, and greater availability of the drug naloxone to treat those who have overdosed. —AFP



VERACRUZ: A bullet hole is seen at a grocery store, property of late journalist Celestino Ruiz, where he was killed in Actopan, Veracruz, Mexico. —AFP

"We condemn the cowardly murder of a reporter from a local outlet, Jorge Ruiz," he said on Twitter. "His killing will not go unpunished." —Reuters



2019 Democratic presidential hopeful for Beto O'Rourke

International

Growing panic in Kashmir as India, Pakistan bicker over border clashes

Pakistan calls for Trump mediation on Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Fears of an impending curfew in the disputed region of Kashmir ratcheted up tensions yesterday, as nuclear rivals India and Pakistan traded accusations of military clashes at the de facto border. Kashmir has surged back into the spotlight in recent days, just months after a deadly militant attack on an Indian paramilitary convoy claimed by a Pakistan-based group sparked cross-border airstrikes. The nuclear-armed rivals have controlled parts of the Himalayan region since the end of British colonial rule in the subcontinent in 1947.

The recent spate of tensions started last weekend after New Delhi deployed at least 10,000 troops, with media reports of a further 25,000 ordered to the region. The government has introduced other security measures - including a call to stock up food and fuel - over terror threat claims. The measures have sparked growing panic among residents with long queues outside petrol stations, food stores and cash machines. Most petrol stations have reportedly run dry. Authorities could impose an indefinite curfew on residents, a police official said.

Locals said they saw large numbers of paramilitary personnel arriving at police stations and unloading sleeping bags outside government facilities. Meanwhile, India and Pakistan have traded tit-for-tat accusations of attacks across the Line of Control, the de facto border dividing Kashmir. The Indian army said yesterday it had foiled an attempt by a Pakistani team of army regulars and militants to cross the Line of Control, killing "five to seven" attackers.

Pakistan denied the claims, describing them as "baseless" as it accused India of using cluster bombs against civilians, killing two people - including a four-year-old boy - and critically injuring 11 others. New Delhi has denied the charge. Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday accused India of taking "new aggressive actions", saying it could "blow up into a regional crisis". He called for a meeting of the country's national security committee to review the situation in Kashmir.

Fear grips locals

Kashmir is a popular tourist destination for foreigners

and Indians, who visit the picturesque valley in their tens of thousands every year. But tourists and students have been scrambling to leave since the government said they should depart "immediately", amid new intelligence about "terror threats" to a major Hindu pilgrimage in the region. While the Indian military and the state government have highlighted the security risk, Kashmiri and opposition politicians in New Delhi are concerned the extra troops were deployed for other reasons.

Since mid-2018, Indian Kashmir has been under Delhi's direct rule after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party withdrew support for its local partner and dissolved the local government. There are fears Modi's Hindu nationalist government could carry out a threat to scrap the region's special status under the constitution. Local political leaders warn that cancelling constitutionally guaranteed rights - which mean only state domiciles can buy land in the region - could spark unrest in the Muslim-majority state.

Media reports said Modi's close aide, Home Minister Amit Shah, was meeting with top officials and was reportedly planning a trip to the region. Kashmir governor Satya Pal Malik hinted Delhi was planning to discuss a Kashmir-related matter in parliament today, according to Indian media. Rebel groups have for decades fought against Indian soldiers deployed in the part of Kashmir controlled by New Delhi, seeking the territory's merger with Pakistan or outright independence.

Trump's mediation

Tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir have the potential to blow up into a regional crisis and it is the right time for US President Donald Trump to mediate, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said yesterday. Khan's comments come a day after Pakistan accused India of using illegal cluster bombs, killing two civilians and wounding 11, in the disputed Kashmir region. India denied it had used such weapons.

"President Trump offered to mediate on Kashmir. This



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan (left) chairs the National Security Committee meeting in Islamabad. Fears of an impending curfew in the disputed region of Kashmir ratcheted up tensions yesterday, as nuclear rivals India and Pakistan traded accusations of military clashes at the de facto border. — AFP

is the time to do so as situation deteriorates there and along the LOC (line of control) with new aggressive actions being taken by Indian occupation forces." Khan said on Twitter, referring to the heavily militarized de facto border that divides the two parts of Kashmir between India and Pakistan. "This has the potential to blow up into a regional crisis," Khan said.

India's foreign affairs ministry and the White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Khan's remarks. In July, Trump told reporters that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked him during a meeting in Japan if he would like to be a mediator on Kashmir. India denied Modi ever asked for any mediation. — Agencies

Khmer Rouge's chief ideologist, 'Brother Number Two', dies

PHNOM PENH: Nuon Chea, the chief ideologist and 'Brother Number Two' of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, whose brutal rule in the 1970s led to the deaths of some 2 million people, died yesterday at the age of 93, a court spokesman said. A UN-backed court found Chea guilty of genocide and sentenced him to life in prison last year, almost four decades after the Maoist regime which over-saw Cambodia's "Killing Fields" was overthrown.

Chea was among a small clique - led by 'Brother Number One', Pol Pot - of mostly French-educated communists who rose to lead a bloody revolution against a US-backed government after their country was engulfed by the Vietnam War. The extremist ideology of the 1975-79 regime sought to turn Cambodia back to "year zero" in its quest for a peasant utopia.

Between 1.7 and 2.2 million people, almost a quarter of the Southeast Asian country's population, died during its four year rule, of starvation, torture, exhaustion or disease in labor camps or bludgeoned to death during mass executions. "We can confirm that defendant Nuon Chea, 93, passed away this evening on 4 August 2019 at Khmer Soviet Friendship hospital," Neth Pheaktra, spokesman at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), said.

"Nuon Chea's family has been informed." Of the Khmer Rouge's leaders only former President Khieu Samphan and Kaing Guek Eav, also known as Comrade Duch, are serv-



PAILIN: In this file photo taken, Khmer Rouge leader Nuon Chea (left), known as 'Brother Number Two', is seen with his wife during an exclusive interview at his house in Pailin town near the Thai border, some 375 km north west of Phnom Penh. — AFP

ing life sentences after being convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity. Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea

were found guilty of crimes against humanity in the first phase of the complex UN trial and sentenced to life in prison in 2014. A separate trial last year found Chea guilty of genocide. Pol Pot died in 1998 at the age of 73.

'Smash to bits'

Unlike others in Pol Pot's inner circle, Nuon Chea did not study in Paris, and instead read law at Bangkok's prestigious Thammasat University, where he became a member of the Thai Communist Party. He was appointed Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, the name the Khmer Rouge used for Cambodia, in 1960, a position that put him in charge of party and state security and Phnom Penh's notorious S-21 interrogation and torture centre at the capital's Tuol Sleng high school.

Those carrying out the brutal beatings at S-21 were instructed to "smash to bits" traitors and counter-revolutionaries. Under the chaotic Khmer Rouge ideology, furthered by Chea, that could mean anyone from school teachers to children, to pregnant women and to "intellectuals" identified as such if they were wearing spectacles. On Jan 5, 1979, two days before the Vietnamese army overran Phnom Penh, Nuon Chea ordered S-21 head Duch to kill all remaining prisoners. Court spokesman Pheaktra did not say how Chea died, but added that he had been in hospital since early July.

Youk Chhang, director of Documentation Center of Cambodia, an organization which provided thousands of documents as evidence to the UN-backed court which prosecuted the Khmer Rouge, said Nuon Chea had escaped his life sentence by dying. "He was born just like the rest of us, but became driven by power and prejudice against his own people," Youk said. "He can escape justice from the court of law but he can't escape his punishment from God." — Reuters

US and Taleban push for peace in day 2 of talks

DOHA: The US and the Taleban were thrashing out elements of a deal to bring a close to Afghanistan's 18-year conflict at the second day of renewed talks in Doha yesterday. The US, which invaded Afghanistan and toppled the Taleban in 2001, wants to withdraw thousands of troops and turn the page on its longest ever war. But it would first seek assurances from the insurgents that they will renounce Al-Qaeda and stop other militants like the Islamic State group using the country as a haven. The talks, now in their eighth round, began on Saturday with no end date issued publicly.

A Taleban source told AFP efforts had been made to organize a direct meeting between US envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad and Taleban co-founder Mullah Baradar, who heads the movement's political wing. The men have met previously, as recently as May. A coalition led by Washington ousted the Taleban in late 2001 accusing it of harboring Al-Qaeda jihadists who claimed the September 11 attacks against the US that killed almost 3,000 people.

But despite a rapid conclusion to the conventional phase of the war, the Taleban have proved formidable insurgents, bogging down US troops for years. Washington is hoping to strike a peace deal with the Taleban by September 1 - ahead of Afghan polls due the same month, and US presidential elections due in 2020. US President Donald Trump told reporters at the White House on Friday that "we've made a lot of progress. We're talking".

"We are pursuing a peace agreement not a withdrawal agreement, a peace agreement that enables withdrawal," Khalilzad tweeted on Friday as he arrived in Doha after talks with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad. "Our presence in Afghanistan is conditions-based, and any withdrawal will be conditions-based." In another sign of progress, the Afghan government has formed a negotiating team for separate peace talks with the Taleban that diplomats hope could be held as early as later this month.

'Negotiations will be tough'

The Washington Post reported Thursday that an initial deal to end the war would see the US force in Afghanistan reduced to as low as 8,000 from the current level of around 14,000. In exchange, the Taleban would abide by a ceasefire, renounce Al-Qaeda, and talk to the Kabul administration.

"After 19 years, President Trump has made it very clear that his desire is that we develop a diplomatic resolution that permits us to reduce the resources that are located there... while simultaneously ensuring that Afghanistan never again becomes a platform where a terrorist can strike the United States," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Sunday during a visit to Sydney. An Afghan official hinted last week that the government of President Ashraf Ghani was preparing for direct talks with the Taleban, the details of which have yet to be announced. "We have no preconditions to begin talks, but the peace agreement is not without conditions," Ghani wrote in Pashto on his Facebook page on Friday ahead of the talks.

"We want a republic government not an emirate," he said, a challenge to the Taleban which has insisted on reverting to the "Islamic Emirate" name Afghanistan bore under its rule. "The negotiations will be tough, and the Taleban should know that no Afghan is inferior in religion or courage to them." The thorny issues of power-sharing with the Taleban, the role of regional powers including Pakistan and India, and the fate of Ghani's administration also remain unresolved.

The latest US-Taleban encounter follows last month's talks between influential Afghans and the Taleban which agreed a "roadmap for peace" - but stopped short of calling for a ceasefire. — AFP

Afghanistan's Taleban movement and wars

KABUL: The Taleban governed Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, imposing strict Islamic sharia law before being ousted and launching an insurgency. Here is some background:

Religious students

The Taleban originated among young Afghans who studied in Sunni Muslim schools called madrassas in Pakistan after fleeing Afghanistan during the 1979-1989 Soviet occupation. They are named from talib, the Arabic word for student. In the early 1990s, with Afghanistan in the chaos and corruption of civil war, Taleban grouped in the southern province of Kandahar under the leadership of one-eyed warrior-cleric Mullah Omar. Omar, who led them until his death in 2013, was from the area, a stronghold of the powerful Pashtun ethnic group from which come most Taleban fighters. Haibatullah Akhundzada is now the insurgents' top leader, while Taleban co-founder Mullah Baradar heads the political wing.

Dramatic rise to power

Promising to restore order and justice, the Taleban rose dramatically. They drew substantial support from Pakistan and initially had the tacit approval of the United States. In October 1994 they seized the southern capital of Kandahar, almost without a fight. Equipped with tanks, heavy weapons and the cash to buy the support of local commanders, they steadily moved north, before capturing the capital on September 27, 1996. President Burhanuddin Rabbani had already fled. Taleban dragged former communist president Mohammed Najibullah from the United Nations office where he had been sheltering and hanged him on a public street.

Regime of terror

The Taleban government imposed the strictest interpretations of sharia, establishing religious police for the suppression of "vice". Music, television and pastimes such as kite-flying were banned. Girls schools were closed; women were prevented from working and forced to wear an all-covering burkha in public. Taleban courts handed out extreme punishments including chopping off the hands of thieves, public executions and stoning to death women

accused of adultery. By 1998 they had control of 80 percent of the country but were only recognized as the legal government by Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. In March 2001 they blew up 1,500-year-old giant statues of the Buddha in the central Bamiyan valley, considered anti-Islamic. Mullah Omar was based mostly in Kandahar where he lived in a house reportedly built for him by the chief of the Al-Qaeda jihadist group, Saudi billionaire Osama bin Laden. The Taleban allowed Afghanistan to become a sanctuary for Al-Qaeda, which set up training camps.

Taleban toppled

The September 11, 2001 attacks that killed 3,000 people in New York and Washington were immediately blamed on Al-Qaeda. Accusing the Taleban of refusing to hand over Bin Laden, the United States and its allies launched air strikes on Afghanistan in October. By early December the Taleban government had fallen, its leaders fleeing to their strongholds in the south and east or back across the border into Pakistan's tribal zone.

Bloody insurgency

At first written off as a spent force, the Taleban rebuilt and re-emerged to lead an insurgency against the new Western-backed government. Making heavy use of improvised bombings and suicide attacks, they labeled as "crusaders" the tens of thousands of foreign troops who deployed into the country as part of a US-dominated NATO force. But the NATO combat mission in December 2014 ended and the bulk of Western forces withdrew. In July 2015 Pakistan hosted the first direct talks between Afghan and Taleban leaders, with support from China and the US, but they collapsed after Mullah Omar's death was revealed.

The rival Islamic State jihadist group emerged in Afghanistan in 2015, launching its own series of devastating attacks, mainly on Kabul. A UN tally found that 2018 was the deadliest year on record for Afghans, with at least 3,804 civilian deaths caused by the war - including 927 children. Direct talks between the US and the Taleban started last year, with the effort led since September by US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, a previous ambassador to Afghanistan. — AFP



KABUL: Afghan security personnel investigate a damage bus carrying employees of Khurshid TV, at the site of a sticky bomb blast in Kabul. At least two people were killed when a bus carrying employees of an Afghan television station was bombed in Kabul yesterday. — AFP

Analysis

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How shadow banking crisis sent India auto sector into a tailspin

Sudhir Gharpure and his sales team sat chatting at a big Maruti Suzuki dealership on the outskirts of Mumbai some two hours after its doors were opened on a recent Saturday morning - not a single customer was in sight. "There used to be close to 15-20 bookings each day, but now we're down to 3-5 on good days," said Gharpure, the general manager at the dealership. Gharpure's experience is not an isolated one. Across India dealerships are being pushed out of business and the Indian auto sector is going through its biggest slump in nearly two decades. Passenger vehicle sales fell for eight straight months until June, and in May sales dropped 20.55 percent - the sharpest recorded fall in 18 years.

Preliminary data indicates passenger vehicle sales may have plunged as much as 30 percent in July. The slump in India, along with a simultaneous slide in Chinese auto sales, is a blow for automakers wrestling with higher costs driven by more stringent emission norms and a push to develop electric cars. Unlike in China, where the plunge in cars sales has been caused largely by new emissions rules, India has seen a mix of factors that have combined to erode demand for automobiles.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2016 ban on high-value bank notes, higher tax rates under a new goods and services tax regime, a boom of ride-sharing firms such as Uber and Ola, and a weak rural economy have all played a role. But many dealers and automakers agree it is a deepening liquidity crunch among India's shadow banks that has been the biggest single factor in an auto sales collapse, which some fear may lead to more than a million job losses.

Non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), or shadow banks, have dramatically slashed lending following the collapse of one of the biggest, IL&FS, in late 2018. IL&FS, or Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Ltd, was a behemoth in shadow banking and its defaults and unravelling, amid fraud allegations, have dried up funding for rivals and led to a surge in their borrowing costs. Non-bank or shadow banking firms generate credit outside traditional lenders, by means such as collective investment vehicles, broker-dealers or funds that invest in bonds and money markets.

In India, NBFCs have in recent years helped fund nearly 55-60 percent of commercial vehicles both new and used, 30 percent of passenger cars and nearly 65 percent of the two-wheelers in the country, according to rating agency ICRA. To aggravate matters, the stress in the autos market has also prompted banks to begin trimming their exposure to the sector. "The car doesn't sell, it's the finance that sells," said R Vijayaraghavan, a senior marketing consultant at the same Mumbai dealership. "Today the finance is not selling, so the cars are not selling."

Problems amplified

Some 286 dealerships have shut down in the last 18 months across India as rising costs for inventory management have made businesses unviable, according to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA), a lobby group of auto dealers. "The slowdown in the (NBFC) sector has dragged down vehicle sales growth," said A M Karthik, financial sector head at ICRA. "Now the auto slowdown is becoming more visible as the liquidity squeeze continues."

Automakers including Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors, and Mahindra & Mahindra are feeling the heat and have either cut production or temporarily closed plants to correct mounting stocks. According to FADA data, passenger vehicle inventories now stand at 50-60 days up from around 45 days earlier, while those of two-wheelers are even higher at 80-90 days. For commercial vehicles, inventory levels range between 45 and 50 days. "We are asking dealers to maintain an inventory of 21 days, which is almost half of the current levels," said Ashish Kale, president of FADA.

At least four dealers from different brands said, however, there was little scope to reduce inventories as automakers were pushing them to buy stock despite there being no demand even with heavy discounting and other sops on offer. While 70-75 percent of car sales were previously financed in-house by NBFC or bank agents sitting at a dealership, that has fallen to about 50 percent, say dealers, as buyers struggle to qualify under more stringent lending norms put in place by lenders that are under pressure to shore up their books.

Moreover, as many NBFCs typically lent to less creditworthy clients, banks are reticent to rush in to fill the void, as they themselves struggle to cope with an existing pile of about \$150 billion in bad loans. "The banking sector is certainly one of the factors that has affected the growth of the industry," said R C Bhargava, chair of Maruti Suzuki, noting interest rates for car buyers have gone up in the last 12 months despite the central bank cutting rates. — Reuters

All articles appearing on this page are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein.



In this photo taken on May 22, 2019, Anna Burger and Earl Gohl walk in their "rewilded" garden, a type of garden aimed at restoring and protecting natural processes in Takoma Park, Maryland. — AFP

Back to the wild: 'Ungardening' takes root in US

Retired union organizer Anna Burger lives by a busy road just a minute's walk from a metro station in the US capital Washington, but every morning she wakes up to a birdsong symphony. Butterflies, squirrels and even the occasional deer also come to visit the tree-covered property that she has cultivated with a focus on native species that provide nesting space and nourishment for the local wildlife. Well-manicured grass lawns have long been associated with the American Dream, but a growing "rewilding" movement now seeks to reclaim yard space for nature.

"We knew that putting chemicals on grass to try to keep it green seemed to be a futile process that wasn't good for kids playing or for the environment," Burger told AFP. She and her husband bought the house in 1990 and "we've tried to make it friendly, making sure that we have water sources, making sure that there are food sources so these trees aren't the most colorful but have great berries." The couple's home is surrounded by several houses whose occupants take a more traditional approach toward their green space, but a stroll through the leafy Takoma Park neighborhood reveals many more where "ungardening" has taken root. Precise definitions of what this means vary, but the concept of meddling less and celebrating nature more was notably popularized in 1993 book "Noah's Garden" by Sara Stein, a Bible for the movement.

'My energy space'

A few blocks away from Burger's house, Jim Nichols, a

nurse consultant and massage therapist, shows off the "Certified Wildlife Habitat" sign he acquired from a local non-profit group after meeting requirements like feeding, nesting space and water supply. Nichols also eschews the use of pesticides in his yard, explaining: "We have a lot of insects and I try to work with the insects," adding that he is particularly proud of the honey bees that come to water. "It's my energy space. It's where I get energy and feed off the energy from my garden," he added.

Irving and Gail, retired public school teachers in their seventies from the same neighborhood, have a yard space filled with forest-like undergrowth and dozens of trees, attracting cardinals, blue jays and robins, but also plenty of mosquitoes. "People will come up and either love it or they think it's out of control," laughed Gail, declining to give her last name. That tension speaks to the conflicting views that have emerged about rewilding efforts, said Chris Swan, an ecologist at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. On the one hand is an opposition to "this American tradition of mowing a garden and having a lawn," in favor of letting nature take its course which in turn increases biodiversity of plants and animals, he said. But people think that often "looks messy, it looks unkempt." "I don't think people mind having something that looks like... a wild place or prairie, or a meadow but they don't like to see too tall. Anything over three feet (one meter) starts to make people uncomfortable," said Swan.

Rewilding inner cities

Looking beyond relatively affluent suburbs, Swan

argues that rewilding efforts can be even more transformative in the inner cities. From 2014-18, he oversaw an ambitious experiment in the city of Baltimore, about 48 km northeast of Washington, where decades of population decline have left around 17,000 vacant lots. Most of these lots had very poor quality soil and were overgrown with debris, but Swan and his colleagues showed they could turn eyesores into urban meadows by planting native species like purple coneflowers and black-eyed Susans that prospered beyond their expectations.

Though the project eventually ended, Swan says he remains excited by its potential, and not just in Baltimore. About 15 percent of the land in US cities is deemed vacant, an area roughly the size of Switzerland, according to the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service. "The quality of the habitat changes, it attracts wildlife, the birds go crazy. And in the spring, we see an increase in pollinators," Swan says of the urban meadow project.

Another species that prospers: Human beings. A study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences last year found an almost 30 percent drop in gun violence around re-greened vacant lots in the city of Philadelphia. Another 2018 paper in The Journal of the American Medical Association, that also looked at Philadelphia, found self-reported poor mental health dropped by more than 60 percent compared to a control group. "And so being near those spaces actually contributes to community wellbeing," concluded Swan. — AFP

Behind the MAX crisis: Lax regulator, top-down culture

Even before the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines crashes claimed 346 lives, Boeing flight tests had revealed problems similar to those encountered by pilots on the ill-fated 737 MAX flights. Company officials learned that its MCAS anti-stall system - which is at the center of both accidents - activated within minutes of takeoff, repeatedly pushing the nose of the aircraft down even when the plane was operating in normal conditions at lower speed. This discovery, recounted to AFP by two former Boeing engineers who spoke on the condition of anonymity, suggested that mastering the MCAS was important for safely flying the MAX.

The MCAS should have been closely vetted by regulators, and procedures for operating the system should have been included in plane manuals and highlighted during pilot training. But none of that happened. Before the Lion Air disaster in October, the MCAS was not even named in the official documents given to pilots. In the earliest documents submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration, Boeing said the MCAS would only activate under abnormal conditions, such as a sudden turn at great speed.

Boeing later amended its documents to say MCAS could be activated at lower speeds, but maintained throughout that there were no significant safety changes compared with earlier models. FAA representatives were



In this file photo taken on March 28, 2019, Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 MAX aircraft are parked on the tarmac after being grounded at the Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville, California. — AFP

present during a test flight when an MCAS problem occurred, according to a regulatory source, but approved the MAX without independently studying or testing the flight system. Instead, regulators deferred on key aspects of certification to Boeing, allowed under a congressionally-mandated program begun in 2005 while the FAA faced budget pressure. In essence, Boeing chose the engineers who would inspect its planes in a process rubber-stamped by the agency.

Not grounded after 1st crash

The FAA had assessed the MAX as safe, and the plane lacked the degree of alterations from its predecessor, the NG, that would require significant additional

pilot training. Yet the MCAS, short for the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System, was added to the MAX, a more fuel-efficient model with a heavier engine and different aerodynamics. But following the Lion Air crash on October 28, 2018, the FAA acknowledged it lacked full understanding of the MCAS, a government source told AFP. The agency did not realize it could be difficult for a pilot to regain control of the plane once MCAS was activated.

Instead of grounding the plane, the FAA on Nov 7 issued an "emergency" airworthiness order for MAX operators, calling for new procedures for pilots encountering the problem with MCAS. The agency also directed Boeing to correct the MCAS problem, while planes continued to fly, and that effort was still underway when the Ethiopian flight crashed five months later. "The 737 MAX certification program involved 110,000 hours of work on the part of FAA personnel, including flying or supporting 297 test flights," an agency spokesman said. But amid renewed public scrutiny, including into the relationship between the FAA and Boeing, the timeline for returning the MAX to the skies remains cloudy. Boeing has threatened to halt production of the plane, putting thousands of jobs at risk while numerous probes investigate the MAX certification.

Boeing was under pressure when it began developing the MAX in 2011. Airbus had sprinted ahead of Boeing in the race for new single-aisle planes, a lucrative market, with its A320 Neo, while Boeing was hitting hurdles with other ventures, including the 787, which was running behind schedule. "They wanted us to control costs," said an engineer, who described tensions between technical and managerial staff. "Everything was designed to stop an ability to communicate concerns upward," said another engineer. — Reuters

Mandalay gets hi-tech makeover, sparks 'spy' fears

Once a seat of kings, the city of Mandalay in northern Myanmar has seen turbulent chapters in its 162-year history - the fall of Burma's last royal dynasty and decades of colonial rule. Now, officials are attempting to transform the former royal capital into Myanmar's first "smart city". In a country where officials still largely labor with pen and ink, surrounded by stacks of moldering papers, authorities in Mandalay are tapping social media and new technologies such as artificial intelligence software and drones to revamp a lethargic bureaucracy.

Under the secretive military junta that ruled Myanmar until 2011, people in the country's second largest city rarely had any contact with those who governed them. Now, they talk to the mayor on Facebook and pay for services with QR codes, something not available in Myanmar's commercial capital, Yangon. Authorities track garbage disposal with GPS and control traffic flows with remote sensors. "It is very good that we can communicate

with the mayor like this," said 55-year-old taxi driver Kyi Thein. "Before, we could only see their motorcades."

Formerly dominated by military-linked men and regarded as a hotbed of graft and mismanagement, the city's first municipal government with an overwhelmingly civilian background has driven the plan, which is part of a regional initiative. The pace of change has won plaudits in regional media and from overseas Myanmar nationals - the mayor was given the Citizen of Burma award by a US diaspora organization in May - underscoring opportunities for Myanmar as the country emerges from half a century of isolation into a world dominated by rapidly evolving technology.

But some of the attempts to push through change have met with resistance, not only from corners of the creaky bureaucracy, but from activists concerned that smart technology, deployed without regulating legislation, could allow authorities to more closely surveil them.

'Livable city'

In April 2018, Singapore, then the chair of the Association of South East Asian Nations, proposed the creation of a network of 26 "smart cities" that would harness technology to tackle some of the challenges created as the region's once mostly rural population converges in cities. Three Myanmar cities were chosen, but it is in Mandalay, in the centre of the country, where authorities

have done most to embrace the proposal. Locals there say issues are myriad. The tap water is not drinkable. Congestion is increasing as the number of vehicles has skyrocketed since the liberalization of imports in 2012. The roads are potholed and pavements littered with trash. Many credit mayor Ye Lwin, a former eye surgeon turned politician and the first appointed to the post by a civilian government after elections in 2015, with overseeing a turn-around over the past two years. He responds to gripes on his Facebook page daily, tagging subordinates and issuing directives. He declined an interview request by Reuters, referring questions to officials in his office.

"Our goal is to create a city which doesn't damage the environment, is livable for people, with a good economy and friendly environment," said Ye Myat Thu, an IT expert who created Myanmar's most popular Burmese-language font and now works alongside the mayor in the Mandalay City Development Committee. "We get there using technology."

Although the Asian Development Bank gave money for an upgrade to the waste management system, most of the reforms have been funded by taxation, Ye Myat Thu said. Authorities undertook a digital survey of the city, using 3D images shot by drones and data obtained by municipal officers roaming the city with GPS devices that they say has given them a better picture of the households and businesses that should be paying property tax. — Reuters

Business

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SAN JOSE: Apple's vice president of technology Kevin Lynch speaks during the keynote address during Apple's Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC) in San Jose, California. — AFP

Apple eyes reinvention as iPhone sales fall

Gadgets and services could help tech giant weather slumping smartphone market

WASHINGTON: With its latest financial results, Apple is showing it can move beyond the iPhone with gadgets and services that can help the California tech giant weather the slumping smartphone market. In the just-ended quarter, Apple took in less than half its revenue from the iPhone, the longtime cash and profit driver for the company, representing a milestone for the company.

Apple managed to grow its overall revenues, albeit by a modest one percent, to \$53.8 billion, even as iPhone revenues plunged nearly 12 percent in the April-June period. The company delivered strong growth from digital content and services that include its Apple Pay and Apple Music, along with wearables and accessories like the Apple Watch and Air Pods.

Apple is preparing to launch its branded credit card in August that ties into its digital wallet, as well as its own streaming television service to compete with Netflix and others, with at least \$1 billion invested in original content. The results show Apple is lessening its dependence on the iPhone, analysts said.

"As the smartphone market matures Apple can no longer rely on iPhones alone to power the company forward," said Avi Greengart of the consultancy Techponential. "Apple has been signaling for a while that its plan was to diversify into services and we've seen from the latest results that this strategy is working quite well."

Apple's roadmap

Apple's update should allay investor concerns that the company's growth could be hobbled by a sputtering smartphone market, said a research note from Gene Munster and Will Thompson of the equity firm Loup Ventures. "We believe the Street is systematically undervaluing Apple's ecosystem by focusing on hardware sales instead of revenue and earnings growth plus optionality," Munster and Thompson wrote. "We believe this quarter's results and the roadmap for the next two years will prove to be a turning point for investors to begin valuing Apple with a more appropriate multiple."

Challenges ahead

But some analysts warn that Apple still faces challenges as rivals chip away at the smartphone market, in

which the iPhone's share is less than 12 percent. Daniel Newman of Futurum Research said it was "an impressively unimpressive quarter" for Apple highlighted by weak iPhone sales.

"I believe the iPhone success is a double-edged sword for Apple, because it has become such a dependency for the company to achieve its growth targets, yet the market is clearly showing a stabilizing or even shrinking demand," Newman said in a research note.

Newman said Apple has no other product as lucrative as the iPhone and has failed to gain traction in low-income countries. "I believe Apple is floundering a bit more than people want to believe," Newman said.

"The company's strategy seems to be lacking vision. Apple's growth is coming from accessories and services, rather than iPhones and iPads. While diversification is a step forward, the company will need more of it, and fast."

Richard Windsor of the research firm Radio Free Mobile said Apple "is still a one-product company" because its ecosystem revolves around the iPhone. "I still think that ending its dependence on the iPhone is a

very distant dream meaning Apple will continue to live and die with the success of this product," Windsor said in a blog post.

While Apple is showing gains in these new services, Windsor said Apple's trajectory remains somewhat murky. "If the Apple iPhone suddenly loses its mojo then these businesses which are being dressed up as iPhone independent are also likely to crater."

Greengart said the fears are overblown, pointing out that Apple has a large and loyal base of iPhone users which allows the company to sell more accessories and services. "They're keeping their existing customers and there's still more switching to iPhone than away from iPhone," he said. Greengart said Apple has the potential to lead in mobile augmented and virtual reality, health and wellness services through its smartwatch, which has been dominating the segment.

"Satisfaction with the Apple Watch is very high," the analyst said. "If you want a smartwatch and you have an iPhone the Apple Watch is compelling, and once you have the Apple Watch, you're not going to switch to Android." —AFP

For Airbus, capitalizing on Boeing's woes is challenging

NEW YORK: With its main rival hobbled by the worldwide grounding of a top-selling jet, Europe's Airbus could seem poised to emerge as the undisputed global aerospace leader. Airbus has overtaken the American giant Boeing in some key benchmarks in 2019. And the company is now better positioned to move quickly on a new jet product.

Meanwhile, the American company is mired in efforts to get its crisis-stricken 737 MAX planes back in the sky after two deadly crashes. Still, experts say the Toulouse, France-based aviation giant faces production constraints that likely limit its ability to grab more market share.

"Airbus is a winner only at the margins," said Richard Aboulafia, a longtime industry

analyst at the Teal Group, an aerospace market analysis firm. To be sure, Boeing's suspension of deliveries of its top-selling plane has added luster to Airbus's solid and unscathed results.

Moreover, as the MAX grounding has dragged on since March, key airline customers are becoming increasingly blunt in expressing frustration. Airbus delivered 389 planes through the end of June, an increase of 28 percent. During the same period, Boeing deliveries fell 37 percent to 239. It was the first time since 2011 that Airbus overtook its US rival in plane deliveries, which is when the bulk of revenues are generated, effectively rendering Airbus the world's largest aircraft maker.

Airbus also has had net orders of 88 planes in 2019, compared with Boeing, which has seen a decline of 119. At the Paris Air Show in June, Airbus announced orders for 383 planes worth \$44 billion, about \$10 billion more than Boeing's take from the show. Still, a consolation prize for the US company was a letter of intent by British Airways parent IAG to buy 200 new 737 MAX planes, a vote of confidence in the aircraft. Airbus is primed to move more quickly with commercializing a new mid-distance plane, launching the A321XLR in

Paris this year, a single-aisle plane with greater range and passenger capacity of 240. Boeing also has had a plan under development for a competing jet, but the timeframe has been pushed back because of the MAX.

No major Boeing cancellations

But since the MAX crisis, Boeing has seen "no major cancellations of orders," said Aboulafia. The Saudi budget carrier Flyadeal reversed a plan to purchase MAX planes but the deal had been provisional, aviation experts said. Still, some plane contracts allow airlines to cancel the agreement without charge six months after a grounding. That means late September could be a telling juncture.

"That's when we'll know whether Airbus really has benefited from this tragedy," said Michel Merluzeau, an expert at Air Insight Research, an analysis firm and consultancy. But even if airlines did want to shift to Airbus, they might have doubts about the European company's ability to deliver higher output.

Ramping up production in aerospace is a capital-intensive process that involves around five years of planning, Merluzeau said. "I'm not sure Airbus's supply chain can



PARIS: In this file photo taken on June 18, 2019 view of the Airbus static display during the International Paris Air Show at Le Bourget Airport, near Paris. — AFP

sustain another increase in production," Aboulafia said. "It will require additional investments, and we are talking about millions of dollars."

Airbus has struggled to keep up with some of its production targets due to diffi-

culties at engine makers Pratt & Whitney and CFM International, a joint-venture of General Electric and Safran. Airbus has said it expects output of MAX rivals under its A320 line to reach 60 per month in 2019 and 63 per month next year. —AFP

Business

Ooredoo Kuwait's revenue grew 48% to KD 114.1 million in H1 2019: Al-Thani

Subscribers reach 2.5 million, an increase of 6%

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait made distinguished and tangible achievements that contributed significantly to strengthening the company's pioneering standard, and increased revenues by 48 percent during the first half of the current year. The subscribers of Ooredoo Kuwait rose to 2.5 million, an increase of 6 percent. Revenues of the first half of the year totaled KD 114.1 million.

These financial results come at a time the company is witnessing notable and continued growth at all levels, as the company continued to maintain its market share and status in the Kuwait market. It also succeeded in boosting its clients' confidence, be it at the individual level or companies' sector. It also was keen to maintaining the strength of its relations with its partners in Kuwait and abroad, in order to present the best and more innovations in the communications and information technology sector, which is the most dynamic and competitive sector in the region and the world.

Young Leadership

Ooredoo Kuwait's executive management, for the past five years until today, was able to achieve continued development and steady progress with the youthful leadership of Chief Executive Officer Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Thani, who since taking over in June 2014, was able along with his team of heads of sectors and employees' efforts to make a long stride in the company's notable advancement, and maintain its development and pioneering status in the market.

Power and Growth

About the financial performance of Kuwait in the first half of this year, Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Thani said the strength of financial and operational performance for the first half of this year is only a continuation of the strength of our financial performance in 2018, which is a confirmation of the success of the strategy that was adopted to develop the company.

Sheikh Mohammad said: "Good financial results are the result of our continued and renewed focus on improving cost-efficiency as part of our broader strategy as a domain for digital transformation, as the application of IFRS 16 standard, which is a new accounting standard in supporting income increase before calculating profits, taxes, etc, which had a positive effect on our operations.

"Achievements the company made during the first half of this year reflect the steady steps and long-term strategic planning, which proved that we at Ooredoo went beyond the boundaries of communications, as our profits and expansion of our client network is the best proof of the success of the vision and strategy that was adopted by the company since the start of the year, and will continue until the hoped for results until yearend.

"We, with all what we are doing, draw our inspiration from our vision that aims at enriching the digital experience of our clients with all what requires. We are following up the most modern trends in the mobile communications sector and adapt our services to meet the constantly changing needs of our clients.

"The company is committed to leading the march of development and innovation and strengthening its status in Kuwait through continuing our efforts that are related to building the digital transformation system that relies on providing innovative and developed services and products to serve clients - both individuals



Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Thani

and companies - in addition to expanding the portfolio of our services and developing our network, especially after the successful launch of the 5G network this year."

Continued Achievements

Following are Ooredoo Kuwait's achievements and most notable successes that were the main reason in progressing with steady steps since the start of the current year until now: The company began the year by announcing it received global approval of payment cards standards ISO 27001:2013 - PCI - DSS 3.2.1, to be the first company that received this accreditation in Kuwait. This is considered the most important certifi-



cate and most modern at the level of banking standards presented by the credit cards union, and is concerned with the security and secrecy of client data.

Fifth Generation

That was followed by the company's celebration along with its clients of the first 5G call that took place at the start of this year between Ooredoo Kuwait and Ooredoo Qatar, at a time when the company was preparing for the commercial launch of the network in July. It puts forward and is still presenting products and 5G services to its customers.

Ana

As a culmination of its distinguished efforts in the march of digital transformation in the communications sector, Ooredoo Kuwait launched the first bundle of its kind in Kuwait - Ana - which was officially announced by CEO Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Thani during the Mobile International Conference in Barcelona in February. Through this bundle, the client can design his subscription according to what is suitable for him, from selecting the number to the monthly bundle, Internet capacity and others through the use of the company app.

Digital Services

The company's MyOoredoo application is still the most used by clients, and considered the best among 10 free applications in Kuwait, with more than 1.5 million

earnings, its highest forward earnings valuation since 2004, according to Refinitiv data. Netflix's forward earnings valuation has dipped to 66 from 82 in early July, before its disappointing quarterly report.

Smaller players CBS and sister company Viacom have also built advertising-supported and subscription video services to compete with Netflix, and they are providing original content to other distributors.

Beyond streaming, investors watching Disney's report on Tuesday will focus on its recent run of box office hits, including "The Lion King," which has increased Disney's lead position at the US box office. Disney owns the five-highest grossing movies of 2019, led by "Avengers: Endgame" and "Captain Marvel."

"The Netflix disappointment and the big Disney box office numbers underscore the importance of intellectual property, of ownership of content," said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Cresset Wealth Advisors in Chicago. Even though Netflix makes many of its own shows, it still relies on other producers, he said. Netflix is losing its two most-watched shows in the United States - "Friends" and "The Office" - to upcoming rival services from AT&T Inc and NBC Universal in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

Viacom and CBS, both controlled by the Redstone family's National Amusements Inc, have worked out a management structure that would see Viacom Chief Executive Officer Robert Bakish leading the combined company if a merger deal is reached, sources familiar with the matter said on Friday, removing a major roadblock in talks to recombine the corporations.

In addition to looking for potential confirmation of that deal when CBS and Viacom report their results on Thursday, investors will focus on growth in CBS's All Access and Showtime streaming services. Viacom could also give details about its strategy to sell programming to video streaming services, including its Paramount Television unit's "Jack Ryan" TV series, based on the character created by author Tom Clancy, which premiered last year on Amazon Prime.

Long viewed as stodgy stocks for dividend-oriented investors, the telecom services sector was renamed communication services last September and supercharged with internet heavyweights Alphabet Inc, Facebook, Netflix and Twitter Inc, along with videogame makers. It was the biggest shakeup of the Global Industry Classification Standard, or GICS, since it was created in 1999. It has gained 5 percent since then, while the S&P 500 is unchanged over the same period. — Reuters



downloads so far. It provides clients with easy subscription to company services and monthly bills. Clients can get the membership of the largest rewards program in Kuwait - Nojoom - which more than half a million subscribers have joined. Ooredoo was proud to announce a partnership with Kuwait Airways last month, as members of the Nojoom program can exchange their points with free miles from KAC's Al-Waha Club.

The company's eShop continues to provide and present exclusive promotions and bundles to customers. The company also offers the shopping feature through its Facebook account, as customers can shop through the company's Ooredoo Kuwait account and get the most recent products and services. The company continues to present distinguished bundles including Shamel and Shamel Home as well as the roaming Ooredoo Passport and My Country, along with others. Since the start of the year till now, the Ooredoo Business sector is witnessing steady growth and pioneering in providing the best digital solutions and exclusive bundles for companies, B2B and small and medium businesses.

Partnership

Ooredoo's partnership continues with the major makers of smart systems in the world, including Samsung and Huawei, as it celebrated with both the launch of the most modern smartphones for its customers with competitive and distinguished bundles. It launched in March the most modern Samsung 810 phones, and in July the first Huawei phone in Kuwait that works with the 5G network.

The closest to its customers

Through its branch network in Kuwait and approved distributors, the company continues to present the best and reaches all customers, no matter where they are. In continuation of its partnership with Gait Apple Premium Reseller at The Avenues, the company presented exclusive promotions to its customers, and will

continue presenting the best and expand its branch network in Kuwait's new areas. It continues to present products and exclusive services designed for "elite" customers, who are given special attention.

Ever since the takeover of the pioneering network provider in Kuwait FastTelco, it seeks to present the best fiber services in Kuwait. The company, in cooperation with Blink, organized the largest contest for electronic gamers at its headquarters, which was attended by thousands of participants over two days.

CEO Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah Al-Thani and a number of company leaders visited HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah this year, and the new Kuwait 2035 vision was the core of talks. It was confirmed that Ooredoo will continue participating in development and the march of digital transformation in the country.

The company's efforts continued this year in the field of participation and sponsoring several activities that reflect the company's strategy related to supporting small business, youth, sports and entertainment and others, and the most notable of them were: Morooj market for small businesses, Gulf West marathon and participating in Jaber Cultural Center activities, particularly the Thriller show for three days, with unprecedented attendance.

And out of our pioneering role in voluntary activities, and as part of our annual Ramadan tradition, we launched a full program of humanitarian activities throughout the month of Ramadan titled "Ramadan brings us closer and God will gather us" to coincide with the launch of the fifth edition of the company's voluntary program "We help and assist", which succeeded in attracting hundreds of youth during the past years.

As per custom every year, the company began the holy month by presenting iftar meals daily in a tent across the company's main headquarters. Ooredoo Kuwait continues the march of success and provides the best for its customers and enriches their digital life - always.

Wall Street Week Ahead

Disney report to shine spotlight on streaming war

SAN FRANCISCO: Quarterly reports next week from Walt Disney Co, CBS and Viacom will likely highlight increasing competition in video streaming and could spark volatility in the so-called communication services sector, which has outperformed since it was overhauled last year.

The S&P 500 communication services index has increased 20 percent so far in 2019, beating the S&P 500's 17 percent gain and all but two of 11 sectors - technology and real estate. That strong performance is in large part thanks to a recovery by Facebook Inc, as investors bet that the world's largest social network will keep growing, even as it faces regulatory hurdles.

June-quarter results from Disney, CBS Corp and Viacom Inc will keep investors fixated on a rising wave of competition in video streaming against market leader Netflix Inc. All those companies fall within the communication services sector. Netflix's stock has sunk 14 percent since it reported on July 17 that it unexpectedly lost US subscribers in the second quarter, rattling investors already worried about the upcoming launch of Disney's streaming service.

Disney's family-friendly Disney+, set to launch on Nov 12 with a slate of new and classic TV shows and movies, is viewed as the most dangerous threat to Netflix. Disney's shares hit a record high on Monday and have surged 28 percent this year. "There is an analysis that has been going on among investors, looking at the number of subscribers Netflix has and the growth that Disney's service could put up in the next three or four years, and the huge disparity in the two companies' valuations," said Chuck Carlson, chief executive officer at Horizon Investment Services in Hammond, Indiana.

The recent increase in Disney's shares and decline in Netflix's shows that investors expect Disney to significantly dent Netflix's leadership in streaming, Carlson said. Disney's stock is trading at 22 times expected

Is Boeing too big to fail?

NEW YORK: The grounding of the 737 MAX for more than four months after two deadly accidents has tarnished Boeing's reputation, but it still has the confidence of US policymakers. This is despite the fact that one of the MAX flight systems, the MCAS, has been cited in both accidents.

Is this an indication that the American aerospace giant is too big to fail? President Donald Trump, whose mantra is "America first," certainly criticized Boeing early in his administration over the presidential plane, Air Force One, but he has been largely silent about the recent woes.

The wave of negative press about the flaws that caused the deaths of 346 people did not prompt legislators to summon Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg before Congress to inflict on him the kind of humiliation Wall Street bankers were subject to following the global financial crisis.

"Boeing is one of the engines of the US economy, it's way too big and too important for the United States," said Michel Merluzeau, an expert at Air Insight Research.

Political ties

If American politicians were to attack the manufacturer, they would be shooting themselves in the foot, Merluzeau said, because "there are many jobs involved, a very, very numerous supply chain and it cannot be replaced with Facebook or Google that don't produce anything tangible." Founded 103 years ago, Boeing employs more than 150,000 people around the world, the vast majority in the United States.

In addition to direct jobs, its subcontractors-like General Electric (GE), United Technologies and Spirit Aerosystems-are large US industrial employers. The location of Boeing plants resembles a political campaign map, with facilities in Republican strongholds like Alabama, South Carolina and Texas, and Democratic areas like California and Washington, as well as states that helped Trump win the election: Pennsylvania and Arizona.

And Muilenburg has shown political savvy in his picks for the company's board of directors, naming Nikki Haley, former governor of South Carolina and



TOKYO: In this file photo, Boeing chairman James McNerney gestures as he presents a lecture during the 17th Nikkei Global Management Forum titled "Resilient Leadership - Making the Next Leap Forward" in Tokyo on November 11, 2015. — AFP

Trump's former ambassador to the United Nations, and Caroline Kennedy, ally of former president Barack Obama and daughter of former president John F. Kennedy.

Air Force One

Boeing is a dominant player not just in civilian aircraft but in the defense and space industries, and is a major supplier to the Pentagon. The company produced the famous B-17 and B-29 bombers of World War II and the B-52 used the Vietnam War. Today it produces a variety of aircraft including the F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jet, Apache attack helicopters, the B-1 bomber and combat drones.

It also is part of SpaceX, which will manage travel to the International Space Station.

And Boeing manufactures the presidential plane, the iconic Air Force One. But Boeing also "can be used as a strategic tool," said Arthur Wheaton, a professor at Cornell University in New York.

Chinese purchases of Boeing aircraft are part of trade negotiations with Beijing, according to a source, since that can be a fast way to reduce the US trade deficit. US civilian aircraft exports fell 12 percent to \$20.4 billion in May, due to the MAX crisis, which affected the GDP, according to government data. — AFP

Business

KFH-Bahrain launches secure and simple mobile banking application KFHB Online

Part of bank's digital transformation strategy

KUWAIT: In line with its digitization drive, Kuwait Finance House-Bahrain "KFH-Bahrain" has announced the launch of its new mobile banking application, which aims to provide existing customers with all the features and conveniences of online banking. The mobile application is compatible with both the iOS and Android platforms.

The easy-to-use mobile banking application "KFHB Online" allows customers to conduct all their various banking transactions tailored to their needs, including viewing statements, transferring funds, as well as bill and card payments, widgets

and manage their bank accounts anywhere any-time, and much more. The mobile application includes ease of access features like fingerprint and facial recognition functions for all applicable smartphones, which provides maximum protection and security. The application is free of charge, developed with customers' dynamic lifestyle in mind to be fully customizable and easy-to-use.

"Launching our new mobile Banking application reiterates our efforts to further develop and improve our products and services to meet the expectations of our customers. In developing the

mobile application, we have ensured that the new features meet customers' needs to provide them with a safe and secure banking experience. Currently offered in English and Arabic, the new versions are expected to be released in other languages with more features," said Abdulrahman Alkhan, Head of Cards & eChannels.

The release of "KFHB Online" follows on the success of "KFH Jazeel Banking", the bank's Fintech banking platform, whereby the bank pushes the boundaries of innovation to provide various digital solutions to cater for new and existing customers.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic financial products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and customer service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 504 branches, including KFH-Turkey, to offer services for the bank's customers in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, and the UAE.



Abdulrahman Alkhan

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

1. Satish Kumar Tandon
2. Hasina Mohammad Omar
3. Bader Mohammad Ahmad Al-Humaidi
4. Ameenah Hasan Yaseen Al-Amir
5. Ruhaifah Kulaib Shafi Farhan

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Flydubai expands East with the launch of flights to Krabi and Yangon

DUBAI: Dubai-based flydubai yesterday announced the launch of flights to Krabi in Thailand and Yangon in Myanmar, expanding its network to Southeast Asia. The new daily flights are code shared with Emirates and will operate from Terminal 3 at Dubai International (DXB) starting from 10 December 2019. Krabi International Airport (KBV) serves as a gateway to Krabi province in southern Thailand and neighboring regions like Malaysia and Singapore. With the launch of the daily service, which is operated via a stop in Yangon in Myanmar, flydubai becomes the first UAE national carrier to offer flights to Krabi. The new direct flights to Yangon International Airport (RGN) will also give passengers easier access to the largest city and commercial center of Myanmar.

Commenting on the launch of the two new routes, Ghaith Al-Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer at flydubai said: "We are proud to see the flydubai network expand further east today with the launch of flights to Krabi and Yangon. Over the past 10 years we have remained committed to opening up underserved markets, enabling millions of passengers to travel with more ease from as far as Helsinki in the west to Krabi in the east via Dubai's aviation hub.

The innovative partnership with Emirates, which has been in place since 2017, goes beyond code-sharing and includes integrated network collaboration with coordinated scheduling. Earlier this year, flydubai inaugurated its operations to Naples, complementing the existing Emirates network in Italy. Similarly, the new flights to Krabi will give passengers more options to fly to Thailand which is already accessible from the UAE with flights to Bangkok and Phuket with Emirates.

Sudhir Sreedharan, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations (UAE, GCC, Subcontinent and Africa) at flydubai, said: "The launch of the new routes will further support the trade links between the UAE, Myanmar and Thailand. We are confident that flydubai's daily flights will be popular for passengers not only travelling from the UAE but also from the GCC and those connecting from Europe and the USA on the Emirates network."

Krabi is a popular holiday destination for beach goers and adventures alike. While limestone cliffs, dense mangrove forests and the famous Phi Phi Island will amaze nature enthusiasts, Krabi also offers activities like diving, hiking or exploring the Huay Toh Waterfall in Phanom Bencha National Park.

As the largest city in Myanmar, Yangon is known for its fascinating mix of colonial architecture, and a modern high-rise skyline, combined with traditional pagodas. One of Yangon's most famous landmarks is the Shwedagon Paya, a gold shimmering pagoda complex, which is one of Buddhism's most sacred sites.

Flydubai flights FZ 1585/FZ1586 will



Krabi, Thailand



Yangon, Myanmar

operate daily between Terminal 3, Dubai International (DXB), via Yangon International Airport (RGN) and Krabi International Airport (KBV).

VIVA announces special Hajj offer for postpaid customers

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced the special Hajj offer for postpaid customers only, during the pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia, starting 2 until 16 August 2019, allowing them to enjoy free unlimited internet, by sending HI to 102. In addition, VIVA announced another offer for both postpaid and prepaid customers, for KD 12, that grants them unlimited data, SMS and calls to Kuwait and inside KSA, by sending H to 102, on the Saudi network STC. Hajj package aims to ease the pilgrims' journey to Makkah by helping them stay in touch with their families and loved ones as soon as they arrive. VIVA is a leader in the telecom arena in Kuwait, thus it is keen to provide the pilgrims peace of mind during the season of Hajj by launching this special package.



Summer offer: Huawei P30 Pro launched with 128GB new edition

KUWAIT: As you head out for summer fun, an excellent phone rids you of any worries. A decent storage lets you download all those big games you ever wanted to have, take more photos and videos, or download books and store them in your phone for when you travel to the beach or simply when you relax by the pool while on summer holidays. But how much storage in your phone is enough? Well, we have got some good news for you. Huawei is rolling out the Huawei P30 Pro, the flagship champion and the winner of "Best Photo Smartphone" title by TIPA Awards 2019 among other accolades from renowned global media organizations, with a 128GB new edition.

Huawei Summer Offer not only includes Huawei P30 Pro Breathing Crystal with 128GB storage, but also Huawei P30 Pro Aurora Blue, Breathing Crystal and Black with 256GB and Huawei P30 Pro Amber Sunrise with 512GB storage options to suit customers' various capacity requirements.

The idea of having more storage is thoughtful to be able to take more photos and videos, stream and download your favorite songs and movies, keep your big work documents, spreadsheets and presentations. It is also more than enough to have all your mobile apps that require a sizeable space.

On top of the good storage, Huawei P30 Pro is equipped with Leica Quad Camera and the revolutionary SuperSpectrum which lets 40 percent more light into the sensor so you get crisp and highly detailed pictures even at night and the Superzoom with never-seen-before

zooming capabilities in mobile phone industry - 5x optical zoom, 10x hybrid zoom and 50x digital zoom. Let alone the brand new dual-view mode to record two videos of one scene at the same time: a wide angle and a close-up you decide its magnification level.

At the core of this device is Kirin 980, Huawei's most advanced chipset yet. Huawei's latest custom operating system EMUI 9.1 is installed on this device. In addition to solid performance there is abundance of power, this phone has a massive 4,200mAh battery, one of the biggest in the market, and the new generation Huawei 40W SuperCharge to top up 70% of your handset in just 30 minutes.

Huawei Summer Sale offer starts 1st August until 10th August 2019. Huawei P30 Pro Breathing Crystal with the 128GB new edition will be priced at KD 209.9 and Huawei P30 Pro Aurora Blue, Breathing Crystal and Black 256GB at KD 239.90. Both products come with free Huawei 40W SuperCharge Power Bank, Huawei Wireless Charger, Huawei 40W Car Charger and Huawei VIP card. The recently-launched Amber Sunrise color summer sale offer comes at KD 299.9 with similar package as of other series.



Taken by Ken Geiger on Huawei P30 Pro!



Seven best practices for securing the public cloud

By Harish Chib

The simplicity and cost-effectiveness of the public cloud have led more and more organizations to take advantage of Amazon Web Services (AWS), Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud Platform (GCP). You can spin up a new instance in minutes, scale resources up and down whenever you need while only paying for what you use, and avoid high upfront hardware costs.

While the public cloud solves many traditional IT resourcing challenges, it does introduce new headaches. The rapid growth of



cloud usage has resulted in a fractured distribution of data, with workloads spread across disparate instances and, for some organizations, platforms. As a result, keeping track of the data, workloads, and architecture changes in those environments to keep everything secure is often a highly challenging task.

Public cloud providers are responsible for the security of the cloud (the physical datacenters, and the separation of customer environments and data). However, the responsibility for securing the workloads and data placed in the cloud lies firmly with the customer. Just as organizations need to secure the data stored in their on-premises networks, so they need to secure their cloud environment. Misunderstandings around this distribution of ownership is widespread and the resulting security gaps have made cloud-based workloads the new pot of gold for today's savvy hackers.

Seven steps to securing the public cloud

The secret to effective cybersecurity in the cloud is improving your overall security posture: ensuring your architecture is secure and configured correctly, that you have the necessary visibility into your architecture, and importantly, into who is accessing it.

Step 1: Learn your responsibilities

This may sound obvious, but security is handled a little differently in the cloud. Public cloud providers such as Amazon Web

Services, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud Platform run a shared responsibility model - meaning they ensure the security of the cloud, while you are responsible for anything you place in the cloud.

Step 2: Plan for multi-cloud

Multi-cloud is no longer a nice-to-have strategy. Rather, it's become a must-have strategy. There are many reasons why you may want to use multiple clouds, such as availability, improved agility, or functionality. When planning your security strategy start with the assumption that you'll run multi-cloud - if not now, at some point in the future. In this way you can future-proof your approach.

Step 3: See everything

If you can't see it, you can't secure it. That's why one of the biggest requirements to getting your security posture right is getting accurate visibility of all your cloud-based infrastructure, configuration settings, API calls, and user access.

Step 4: Integrate compliance into daily processes

The dynamic nature of the public cloud means that continuous monitoring is the only way to ensure compliance with many regulations. The best way to achieve this is to integrate compliance into daily activities, with real-time snapshots of your network topology and real-time alerts to any changes.

Step 5: Automate your security controls

Cybercriminals increasingly take advantage of automation in their attacks. Stay ahead of the hackers by automating your defenses, including remediation of vulnerabilities and anomaly reporting.

Step 6: Secure ALL your environments (including dev and QA)

You need a solution that can secure your all environments (production, development, and QA) both reactively and proactively.

Step 7: Apply your on-premises security learning

On-premises security is the result of decades of experience and research. Use prewalls and server protection to secure your cloud assets against infection and data loss, and keep your endpoint and email security up to date on your devices to prevent unauthorized access to cloud accounts.

Moving from traditional to cloud-based workloads offers huge opportunities for organizations of all sizes. Yet securing the public cloud is imperative if you are to protect your infrastructure and organization from cyberattacks. By following the seven steps you can maximize the security of your public clouds, while also simplifying management and compliance reporting.

Note: Harish Chib is Vice President - Middle East & Africa of Sophos explains the seven most important steps in securing the public cloud that every organization can follow.

What's On



LOYAC with Zain hosts KON program students at ZINC

LOYAC in partnership with Zain hosted a workshop for the students participating in the KON Social Entrepreneurship Program at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh. The program, brought to Kuwait in collaboration with Babson College in Boston, comes as part of Zain's strategic partnership with LOYAC. The program hosted 64 KON students at the Zain Innovation Center (ZINC) in the company's main headquarters in Shuwaikh. The students formed 14 different teams each with their own bright idea and took part in

a workshop facilitated by Khalid Al Amiri, founder of Li3ib project and an entrepreneur of the fourth Zain Great Idea accelerator program. The workshop covered tech startup acceleration and the secrets of pitching new tech startups, as well as many other experiences that benefited the students in their entrepreneurship journey. KON, one of LOYAC's latest youth development programs, trains youth (12-16 years) in the area of social entrepreneurship throughout six weeks at the American University in Kuwait (AUK). The program is brought to

Kuwait in collaboration with Babson College in Boston, considered the most prestigious entrepreneurship college in the United States and the number one institution in the world for entrepreneurship education. Since its inception in 2002, LOYAC has grown to be the first choice of the youth in Kuwait when it comes to innovative and high quality educational programs. LOYAC runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and to help them find their sense of purpose by extending themselves to others.



Celebrate Eid at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa

Share the gift of togetherness this Eid Al-Adha at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa. Indulge in an enticing culinary fare at the Eid Brunch Extravaganza - a delectable dining experience, promising a joyous celebration for all guests to make the most of the festivities. The warm and welcoming family-friendly property has unveiled an array of exceptional offerings for guests to spend precious moments together and create cherished memories during this special time of year.

Treat yourself to culinary delights as Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa unveils its three-day brunch extravaganza at Garden Cafe where diners can enjoy a diverse feast that includes a wide variety of traditional and international dishes with live cooking stations, and a special buffet for kids. As a family destination, children are always in focus and can enjoy extensive entertainment with the distinctively designed kids' activities.

Visitors whose taste palettes crave for unique and diverse cuisines can enjoy a gourmet dinner at the award-winning Salt restaurant, voted the Most Romantic Atmosphere as well as the Luxury Seafood restaurant at the World Luxury Travel Awards. Alternatively, relax and revel in an unrivalled selection of Summer Coolers at Mint restaurant.

Indulge in the ultra-luxurious facilities at the property that stands for opulence and comfort, by boarding in the spacious rooms. Visitors can look forward to incredible GCC Summer room and dining rates. The attractive promotion includes complimentary buffet breakfast along with a wide range of other benefits including complimentary high-speed WI-FI access, complimentary access to the Talise Fitness health club and swimming pools.



Georges Akar, Director of Sales & Marketing, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa, said, "Eid is a joyous occasion for the entire family. We are delighted to share these exclusive offers to our customers whilst sharing in their celebrations. We look forward to the three days of Eid al-Adha and wish everyone a wonderful and blessed Eid. We are sure our exceptional brunch will appeal to every family member's senses and preferences and invite guests to experience a unique stay at our hotel."

After brunch, rejuvenate and re-energize at the renowned award winning Talise Spa with the ultimate Summer Escape Experience and gift vouchers for loved ones during this special occasion. Begin your spa journey with some warm tea while a therapist guides you through the treatment to reveal your smoothest and most natural skin glow while soothing your mind, body and soul.

As the company is expanding its online and digital services, it is now offering free life insurance coverage worth KD 5000 valid for one year for its online customers. A customer who does ten transactions online within twelve months is automatically insured for the next one year. There is no additional paperwork or premium to be paid by the customer for the coverage. As soon as the customer completes the 10th transaction the policy gets issued automatically in the next month.

Thereafter, when a policy expires after a year, the system verifies whether the customer has done ten or more transactions in the preceding twelve months, and if so, issues a new policy again valid for the next twelve months. The policy covers accidental death. The customer can identify in the app one or more beneficiary account(s) as the nominated account(s) into which the proceeds of the claim could be credited by Al Mulla Exchange on approval by the Insurance Company.

The claim amount/benefit will be transferred to the nominee after completion of the necessary documentation. The policy covers customers up to the age of 64 years and the customer can manage the policy from Al Mulla Exchange app directly. With the introduction of this policy, customers covered under this policy would not be covered under the short term policy of KD 1000 for 30 days which is applicable to other customers.

Al Mulla Exchange offers free life insurance to its online customers

Al Mulla Exchange, the leading money exchange and transfer company in Kuwait, announced that it will extend free life insurance to loyal customers who use the Al Mulla Exchange smart phone app or online portal for their money transfers. The life insurance coverage is worth KD 5000. Al Mulla Exchange has been a leader in the money remittance market in Kuwait.

In its quest to provide the best services to its customers, it always sought new ways and innovative solutions to bring unmatched benefits to its customers. It utilized new technologies to connect with remitting partners across the globe, providing exemplary services. Al Mulla Exchange was the first exchange company to offer free SMS feedback to instant credit in accounts, to launch the remittance app, and to offer dynamic pricing to customer.

Grand Hyper opens 60th store in Mangaf

Grand Hyper, the retail wing of Regency group has announced the opening of their 60th outlet as a part of their aggressive expansion in the GCC region. Grand currently has 17 outlets in Kuwait and Mangaf Hypermarket is set to be the 18th store. Situated on a single basement floor in an area spanning around 20,000 sq ft, the store will celebrate a grand opening on Tuesday, August 6, 2019 at 4:30 pm.

Grand Hypermarket has a strong reputation and trust in Kuwait market as a brand for providing the customers with a wide range of products including food stuffs, world-class electronic appliances, home appliances, footwear, health and beauty items and fashion wears and accessories from leading European designers among others. Perishable goods, farm produces and meat are shipped by air on a daily basis to ensure they are available fresh to the end users. These are procured from internationally-recognized farms to ensure world-class standards.

Making high quality products affordable for the everyday consumer is what sets Grand Hypermarket apart from the rest. On the date announcement of new outlet, Subhan, Executive Director said, "It gives us immense joy to announce a yet another milestone achievement of Grand Hyper. Kuwait has always been the favorite country for the group and the group has big plans of expansion just for this country." Ayyoob Kachery, Regional Director said, "Now with 18 stores covering all major locations in Kuwait, Grand hyper has become a household name serving 70,000 customers daily in Kuwait. The equal acceptance by both Kuwaiti nationals and expats has inspired Group to further expand its reach in Kuwait."

Mohammed Suneer, Chief Executive officer - Kuwait region said, "The success of Grand Hypermarket lies in making sure to pass on the benefit that we gain through large-scale procurement of products to our customers. The group has its own sourcing centers in Europe, Turkey, China, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka, eliminating the middle men from the entire supply chain. This ensures that best quality products reach customers in minimum time at the lowest prices."

The promoters conveyed their sincere gratitude and

best wishes to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, generous Kuwaiti public and business friendly systems. His Highness the Amir's wise leadership has steered Kuwait to self-sufficient and investor-friendly destination, one of many reasons for promoters to favor Kuwait over other GCC countries.

Rahil Bassim, Chief Operating Officer said, "Mangaf is a large residential area predominantly occupied by large number of expats including Egyptians, Indians and Pakistanis apart from Kuwaitis. They normally travel to Grand Fahaeel for their shopping needs which being the closest hypermarket to Mangaf. Now with a new hypermarket in Mangaf, customers in the locality will find it very convenient besides new customers in the area will also find it delightful to have Grand in their vicinity."



Explaining the group's strategy in retailing, Thehaseer Ali, General Manager, Kuwait, said, "In order to achieve our mission of reaching every customer, we aim to spread our outlets in all the major areas of Kuwait and serve the Kuwait population with the right mix of products at the most competitive prices possible. In fact, we are planning to open more outlets in this country as well as other GCC nations and other markets." The press meet was attended by HE Sheikh Dawood Dawood Salman Al-Sabah, Chief Patron, Kuwait, Ayyoob Kachery, Regional Director, Kuwait; Subhan, Executive Director, Regency Group Dubai; Mohammed Suneer, Chief Executive Officer, Kuwait; Rahil Bassim K, Chief Operating Officer- Kuwait; Thehaseer Ali, General Manager, Kuwait and Sanin Mannil, Business Development Manager, Kuwait.



Albanian mussels suffocate as global warming takes toll

Harvests significantly dropped over last three decades



BUTRINT, Albania: Violet Mihasi, 50, collects mussels on a floating platform in a mussel farm in Butrint Lake, south Albania. — AFP photos

BUTRINT, Albania: Violet Mihasi doesn't hide her concern while working on her barge on a salt lagoon in the southern tip of Albania, her mussels clinging to ropes dangled in the water. The mussel farmer fears another poor harvest this year of the particularly fleshy mussel, dubbed the "Queen of Butrint", which is suffocating as temperatures rise. The warmer waters of the Butrint Lagoon on the Ionian coast, not far from the Greek border, also encourage parasites that starve the once thriving bivalves of oxygen.

To rid the mussels of the microorganisms, the farmers pull the ropes out of the water, allowing them to "breathe" on the surface for two days before plunging them back in, Mihasi says. Nevertheless, harvests have still significantly dropped over the last three decades. In 1990, some 6,000 tons of mussels were pulled from the barges, according to agriculture ministry figures. Nowadays, in a good year, the haul for the lagoon's around 60 mussel farmers is barely half that.

And last year, it dropped to 2,000 tons, when water temperatures were stuck at more than 25 degrees Celsius. Half of the young mussels, known as spat, which were immersed on the ropes at the start of the summer, died in 2018. In the three previous years, the devastation was even worse, at closer to 90 percent, one of the Butrint mussel

farmers told AFP. The deadly temperature threshold has already been reached this summer, although July storms brought some relief. "When the heatwave suffocates the mussels... everything is lost," says Mihasi, in her fifties, with a sun-weathered face.

A question of survival

After the mussels mature on the ropes, they are hoisted up with old rusty winches. For Mihasi's hard work under a blazing sun-warded off by an old parasol and often eased by a strong wind—the mother of two earns slightly less than 500 euros a month, about 100 euros above the average for Albania. But her income all depends on the success of the year's haul and she and other producers worry about the future amid dire warnings by experts.

Roland Kristo, deputy agriculture minister and a biologist, told AFP that the fall in the mussel population was "a direct consequence of global warming, which deteriorates the quality of the water and reduces the solubility of the oxygen" vital for the mussels. For Edmond Panariti, a toxicologist from the capital, Tirana, global warming now threatens the "very survival" of the Butrint mussel.

"The rise in water temperatures in recent years has aggravated the problems for the ecosystem," he told AFP.

It's not the first setback for the producers. The Butrint mussel farmers remain under a 1994 European Union export ban over distribution problems, but they still find ready customers among Albania's markets and restaurateurs.

Defenseless

A single prolonged heatwave can be fatal for the spat. "For the past three or four years, more than half of the annual production has been destroyed in a few days," said Alket Shabani, a 27-year-old worker on a mussel boat. If the mercury continues to rise this summer, "everything will be over," he said. His 67-year-old boss Hysni Mane, who also runs a seafood restaurant, noted that the mussels are defenseless against the heat: "They cannot move to find another cooler place."

The problems are exacerbated, he said, by an upset in the exchange of seawater with that of the lagoon and nearby cooler freshwater sources, as well as rising sea levels and precipitation regimes, which he blamed on global warming. On this summer's hottest days, temperatures reached nearly 30 degrees Celsius on the surface, penetrating as much as two and a half meters into the water, said Kristo, the deputy agriculture minister. Panariti added: "Even a water temperature of 24 to 25 degrees C is fatal

for the mussels because they struggle to survive and reproduce under the stress."

Oxygenize the lagoon

Anila Shallari, a geographer at Paul Valery University in Montpellier, France, said: "Microorganisms that degrade organic substances become very active and consume all the available oxygen." The authorities have vowed to tackle the problem but are constrained by a lack of resources in the poor Balkan country. To cool the lagoon's water and help "oxygenize" it, engineers would have to dredge the channel linking it to the sea. They must also increase the flow of cold water from the Bistrica river—slowed by two small hydropower plants upstream—into the lagoon. In April, they opened the dams' floodgates but this was only a temporary solution, mussel farmers say. The government is also fighting the EU ban so that exports—more lucrative than domestic sales—can resume. Albanian restaurants pay one to two euros for a kilo of mussels, but if they are smuggled to nearby Greece they can fetch up to seven euros a kilo, said mussel farmer Roland Hysi. But, as temperatures threaten the mussels trying to survive in the lagoon's depths, there is little the farmers can do but anxiously keep checking the daily weather forecasts. — AFP

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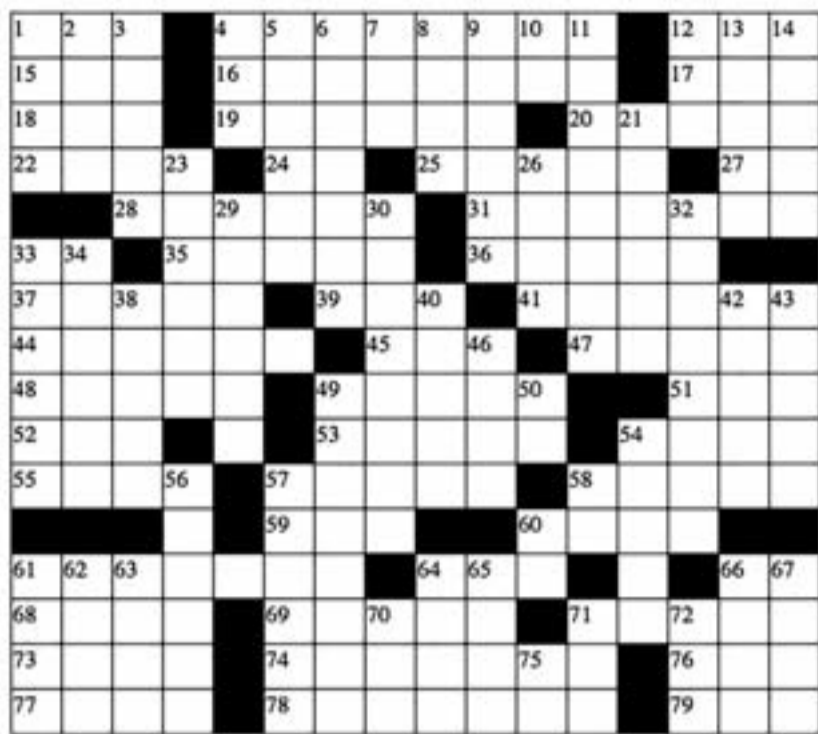
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Stars

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ACROSS

1. A unit of conductance equal to the reciprocal of an ohm.
 4. Youthful appearance in an old person.
 12. Czechoslovakian religious reformer who anticipated the Reformation.
 15. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
 16. A compound of sulphur and some other element that is more electropositive.
 17. Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydrizid) used to treat tuberculosis.
 18. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
 19. Relating to the blood vessels or blood.
 20. Type genus of the Gavidae.
 22. By bad luck.
 24. A class of proteins produced in lymph tissue in vertebrates and that function as antibodies in the immune response.
 25. (botany) Divided into two lobes.
 27. A public promotion of some product or service.
 28. Some point in the air.
 31. A divided skirt.
 33. A radioactive transuranic element.
 35. A Portuguese province on the south coast of China and two islands in the South China Sea.
 36. Isolated from others.
 37. American author of inspirational adventure stories for boys.
 39. System of measurement based on centimeters and grams and seconds.
 41. Situated at an apex.
 44. A succession of notes forming a distinctive sequence.
 45. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
 47. A device (trade name Aqua-Lung) that lets divers breathe under water.
 48. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
 51. The force of workers available.
 52. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
 53. Having or covered with hair.
 55. The sediment from fermentation of an alcoholic beverage.
 59. A transuranic element.
 61. The area of a baseball field that is enclosed by 3 bases and home plate.
 68. (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
 69. An ancient city in Asia Minor that was the site of the Trojan War.
 73. (usually followed by 'to') Having the necessary means or skill or know-how or authority to do something.
 74. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
 76. Belonging to or on behalf of a specified person (especially yourself).
 77. Remove from office.
 78. A bitter yellow powder used to treat skin diseases.
 79. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
- DOWN**
1. The arch of bone beneath the eye that forms the prominence of the cheek.
 2. Heal or recover.
 3. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
 4. The residue that remains when something is burned.
 5. Hard greenish-brown wood of the lignum vitae tree and other trees of the genus Guaiacum.
 6. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
 7. Rate of revolution of a motor.
 8. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
 9. A white or colorless vitreous insoluble solid (SiO₂).
 10. A state in the Rocky Mountains.
 11. Goat grass.
 12. The virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).
 13. A member of the Uniat Church.
 14. Relative darkness caused by light rays being intercepted by an opaque body.
 21. A verse line with a dactyl followed by a spondee or trochee.
 23. (Old Testament) The 2nd son of Jacob and one of the 12 patriarchs of Israel.
 26. A family of languages of the Fula people of west Africa in the sub-Saharan regions from Senegal to Chad.
 29. A native of ancient Troy.
 30. Pastry made with a cream cheese dough and different fillings (as raisins and walnuts and cinnamon or chocolate and walnut and apricot preserves).
 32. A famous chief of the Shawnee who tried to unite Indian tribes against the increasing white settlement (1768-1813).
 34. Feed, care for, and rear young birds for flight.
 38. A tract of land with few or no trees in the middle of a wooded area.
 40. Seeming unaffected by pleasure or pain.
 42. At right angles to the length of a ship or airplane.
 43. United States photographer remembered for her portraits of rural workers during the Depression (1895-1965).
 46. A sensation (as of a cold breeze or bright light) that precedes the onset of certain disorders such as a migraine attack or epileptic seizure.
 49. United States writer of detective thrillers featuring the character of Philip Marlowe (1888-1959).
 50. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
 54. A system of solmization using the solfa syllables.
 56. Small and compactly built upright piano.
 57. Eurasian perennial bulbous herbs.
 58. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
 60. A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
 62. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
 63. A fractional monetary unit in Bahrain and Iraq and Jordan and Kuwait and Southern Yemen and Yemen.
 64. Stiff coarse fiber from the outer husk of a coconut.
 65. Beyond what is natural.
 66. A metal piece (usually a disc) used as money v l.
 67. A former copper coin of Pakistan.
 70. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
 71. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
 72. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
 75. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Wisdom rather than knowledge is what counts most in your life to you now. You have been down troubled roads and turned each stumbling block into a stepping stone. You have lived and learned and may have an opportunity to share this wisdom with a troubled friend. Don't get discouraged if your advice is overlooked. Remember, no one could have changed your mind about some of the mistakes you made. Realize others too, may have to experience trouble to learn the lessons that are to be learned in their lives. You are a good friend and a good person. You may find today you are shown appreciation and gratitude for who you are to others.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may encounter an unusual amount of stress today. Counter it by taking time for yourself to do what you enjoy most. Paint, write, or escape with a good book. Yoga or meditation may even be something you should consider making a part of your daily routine. Be careful not to shut yourself off from those who care about you. Their support is important. Do not try to conquer every problem on your own.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Teamwork is strongly indicated, but those you work with aren't fond of your day dreamy mood today. Your required tasks pull you into a most productive cycle and you overcome any obstacles you may encounter. You could have a secret you're having trouble keeping; consider the consequences of sharing this. Someone - a younger person - could demand that you decide today when you're just not ready; this could lead to some difficulties. You have an understanding heart when it comes to a friend in need. Sticking to your guns in a sticky situation could prove to be your best bet.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Are you getting mixed signals? That's not unusual. Feelings are complicated, and what one wants from you may change daily, or even hourly. Don't hesitate to ask for clarification. Feelings are abstract. Actions are concrete. Find out what you need to do. Take action and do not look back. Keep your eyes on the prize.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today is a day you have been longing for. You need an escape. Let your hair down and head for wide open spaces. Take a ride in a convertible. Just get outside and breathe in the fresh air. You crave a sense of freedom. Decide exactly what you want out of life and make it happen. This is a great time to make clear decisions about your future.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You will make a new acquaintance today. Don't assume the person is insignificant. There may be connections or influence here that will lead to opportunities for you. Or, it may be that this is the very person you need in your life right now. Be accessible. Make it clear that you are open to what the person has to offer. You may find sharing your feelings openly with others, helps them open up to you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may find that anything unusual and different catches your eye today. Your wild side is rearing its head. A new outfit, a new hairstyle, or an outing to somewhere you have never been will help satisfy what you are craving. Live a little. Others may be caught off guard by your high energy and the way you seem to express yourself today. You be you! This day will be spent with a smile on your face and an usually high amount of confidence. Live out loud.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may be feeling drawn and even turned on by that which is taboo. Sex, power, and the pursuit of wealth are beginning to be a driving force behind your emotions. You are fascinated by people. What makes the do the things they do? What makes them tick? You desire a fresh start in your life and major changes. You know this may only be accomplished by turning your back on all you believed and starting over with an open mind and a new outlook on life in general.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today is a great day to just go with the flow. Go ahead and take advantage of opportunities that present themselves to you. Don't be surprised if taking a chance brings great reward. You may feel extra close to a loved one today. This may be the day you learn to truly learn to love and an appreciate yourself for who you have become and where you are in life. You have been feeling a that need to be needed and appreciated and today may just be the day you receive that reward you have been longing for.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Let your hair down and take a drive. A horseback ride would be even better. Turn the music up loud and throw your cares out of the window. Find an escape and route to peace. Enjoy this day and all it brings. Spoil yourself. You may find you are more materialistic than usual. A shopping trip is in order to satisfy this need. Head to the mall and go for it! You work hard and deserve to be free from want.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Close relationships take on more emotional depth, power and importance in your world now. You feel as if you are needed and cared for. When these two feelings are missing you automatically have a feeling of uneasiness come over you. You were not made to be alone. Expressing your desires and vulnerability, helps draw your special someone closer to you. You may find the more you allow yourself to open up the closer you two become.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are being noticed in the workplace. It may become very obvious to your superiors at work that you are talented beyond the title you hold. You may find that you are in line for a promotion or you will be assigned a special project due to your leadership abilities. Everyone has their eye on you. From your personal life to your career, you are beginning to outshine those around you. You may find your analytical skills are in top shape and you are not only able to solve every problem you come across but may be finding satisfaction in spending your spare time solving puzzles or playing word games. You are in the mood to exercise your mind.

Wordsearch Puzzle

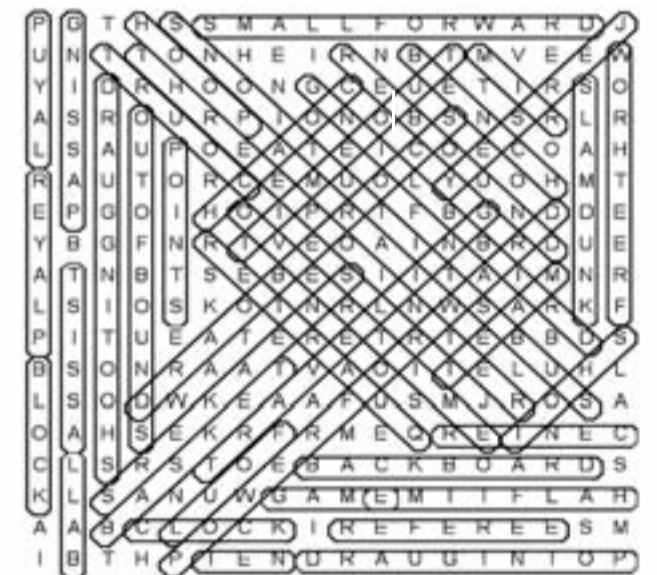
Beatles Songs 1

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



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

Yesterday's Solution



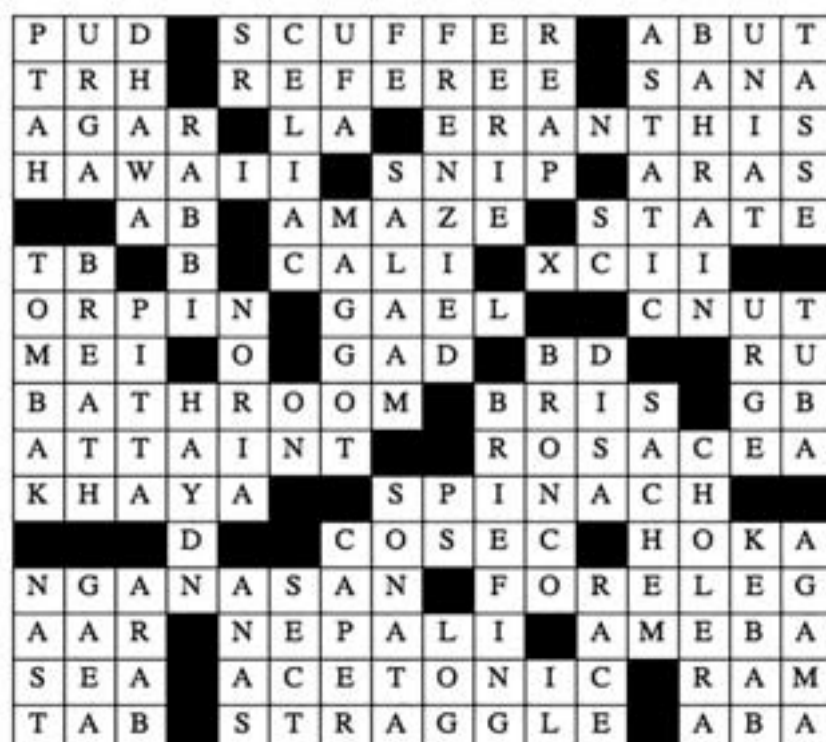
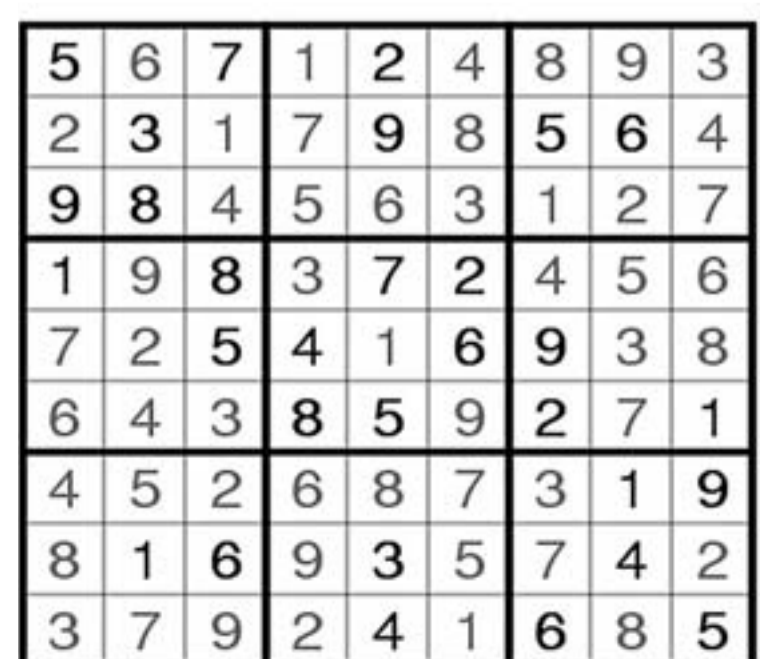
- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| ASSIST | FOUL | PASSING | SHOOTING |
| BACKBOARD | FREE THROW | PLAYER | GUARD |
| BALL | GAME | POINT GUARD | SHOT |
| BASKET | HALF-TIME | POINTS | SLAM DUNK |
| BENCH | HOOP | POWER FORWARD | SMALL FORWARD |
| BLOCK | JERSEY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

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

Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

MONDAY, AUGUST 5, 2019



Indonesian dancers perform with masks of Cirebon during a flashmob entitled "Tunjukkan Indonesiamu" or "Show your Indonesia" in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP

Egypt displays restoration of Tutankhamun gilded coffin

Egypt displayed yesterday the gilded coffin of Tutankhamun, under restoration for the first time since the boy king's tomb was discovered in 1922. The restoration process began in mid-July after the three-tiered coffin was transferred to the new Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo from the Valley of the Kings in Luxor, southern Egypt. "We are showing you a unique historical artefact, not just for Egypt but for the world," Antiquities Minister Khaled El-Enany told a press conference at the new museum, which overlooks the famed Giza Pyramids. The golden coffin of the boy king will be displayed along with other Tutankhamun artefacts towards the end of next year when Egypt's new mega-museum is opened to the public.

The restoration is expected to take around eight months. The outer gilded wood coffin stands at 2.23 meters (7.3 feet) and is decorated with a depiction of the boy king

holding the pharaonic symbols the flail and crook, according to the ministry. In the last century, the coffin has "developed cracks in its gilded layers of plaster, especially those of the lid and base". Famed British archaeologist Howard Carter discovered the tomb of the 18th dynasty king in Luxor in 1922. Yesterday's announcement comes after the controversy the Pharaoh courted in early July when a 3,000-year-old Tutankhamun artefact was sold in London for \$6 million. Furious Egyptian officials condemned the sale and asked the international police agency Interpol to trace the artefact which it deems looted. — AFP

An Egyptian archaeologist operates to restore the coffin of King Tutankhamun at the conservation center in the Grand Egyptian Museum.



This picture shows the gilded coffin of King Tutankhamun during a restoration process at the conservation center in the Grand Egyptian Museum. — AFP photos



This picture shows the 3,200-year-old pink-granite colossal statue of King Ramses II at the entrance of the Grand Egyptian Museum under construction in Giza on the southwestern outskirts of the capital Cairo.



An Egyptian archaeologist restores a piece of King Tutankhamun's collection at the conservation center in the Grand Egyptian Museum.



An Egyptian archaeologist operates to restore the coffin of King Tutankhamun at the conservation center in the Grand Egyptian Museum.



An Egyptian archaeologist restores the throne of King Tutankhamun.



An Egyptian archaeologist restores the throne of King Tutankhamun.

Lifestyle | Music & Movies



In this file photo (From left) Musicians Haig Papazian, Carl Gerges and Hamed Sinno of Mashrou' Leila pose for a picture in New York. — AFP photos



Demonstrators gather in support of Lebanese indie band Mashrou' Leila at Samir Kassir Square in downtown Beirut.

Dutch band cancels Lebanon gig in support of local group

A Dutch band said yesterday it had cancelled its gig at a top Lebanon festival in solidarity with a Lebanese group pulled from the event after threats over alleged offence to Christians. Within Temptation joined other activists in protest after festival organizers last week pulled Lebanese indie group Mashrou' Leila from the program over fears of "bloodshed". The Dutch symphonic-rock outfit had been set to play on Wednesday at the event in the Christian-majority seaside town of Byblos. "We have decided to cancel our show in Byblos in solidarity with Mashrou' Leila and in support of tolerance, freedom of speech and expression," they said in a statement on Facebook. They made the decision after learning the festival had withdrawn Mashrou' Leila from the program "due to security reasons after religious fanatics demanded their performance to be cancelled followed by violent threats",

they said. Lebanese clerics have accused Mashrou' Leila, whose singer is openly gay, of offending Christians in two of their songs titled "Idols" and "Djin". Critics on social media also threatened to attack the concert if the Lebanese band went ahead with the performance on August 9.

Yesterday, the festival's artistic director said he was saddened to have lost another band but did not regret last week's decision to cancel Mashrou' Leila. "The security of our artists and audience is our absolute priority," Naji Baz told AFP. "We have never before cancelled a performance... If we did it this time, albeit with an enraged heart, it's because we absolutely had to," he said. Mashrou' Leila has said it "sincerely regrets causing offence to anyone's beliefs" but denied that any of its songs were religiously offensive.

Rights groups have denounced an increase in restric-

tions on freedom of expression, while activists and fans have protested in the street and online. Religiously diverse Lebanon is one of the Middle East's more liberal countries, but its myriad of recognized sects still wield major influence over social and cultural affairs. Mashrou' Leila has often played in Lebanon since forming in 2008 while its members were still students at the American University of Beirut. But it has created waves in the religiously conservative Middle East. After a Mashrou' Leila concert in Egypt in 2017, at which members of the audience waved a rainbow flag, Egyptian authorities launched a crackdown on the country's LGBT community. Its concerts in Jordan were cancelled in 2016 and 2017. — AFP



Tori Kelly dreams of Pharrell collaboration

Tori Kelly would love to collaborate with Pharrell. The 'Should've Been Us' hitmaker dreams of working alongside the legendary music producer and rapper Kendrick Lamar as she thinks it would be exciting to see these two different genres be put together. She exclusively told BANG Showbiz: "I definitely love so many different styles of music. I'd love to collaborate with more people. Oh my gosh, that's so hard [to pick a top three]. That's hard. I don't know. I feel like Pharrell would be dope to work with. He's fun. Oh, and Kendrick Lamar. That'll be cool. I'll stick with those. They're both in the hip hop world. It's fun to experience as an artist. Like I said before, it's all about the chapter of life you're in." Tori felt it was important with her new album, 'Inspired By True Events', to let the songs "lead the way". Asked if it was hard to integrate gospel and pop into vulnerability, she shared: "It wasn't too difficult. I kind of just let the stories of these songs lead the way. The production we wanted to keep really simple, even though there are some gospel elements in some of the songs but I worked a lot with Jimmy Napes. He's an incredible producer and songwriter and he was really good at making me open up and be more vulnerable, kind of hand-holding me through this process of just sharing my emotions. We wanted the music to not get in the way of lyrics." And Tori credits Jimmy for allowing her to write songs about "uncomfortable" things. She added: "It felt like I got to a place after a year of writing just random songs, which I love, but there wasn't a theme yet. So when I came out here and worked with Jimmy there was a breaking point. There was a week where we come out here, we had 'Change Your Mind', 'Sorry Would Go A Long Way' and 'Before The Dawn' all in one week. Which is crazy, that's like out of 100 songs ... Even though some of those things were uncomfortable it was like 'I have to say these things' there's no way I can run from it and put out a different kind of album." Tori Kelly's new album, 'Inspired By True Events', is out on August 9.

Cabello bemoans the influence of social media

Camila Cabello thinks social media has created unrealistic beauty standards. The 22-year-old singer has posted a note on her Instagram Stories in response to people criticizing her body shape, saying that young girls are "growing up in an airbrushed world". She wrote on the platform: "Honestly first thing I felt was super insecure just IMAGINING what these pictures must look like, oh no! My cellulite! Oh no! I didn't suck in my stomach! "But then I was like... of course there are bad pictures, of course there are bad angles, my body's not made of rock, or all muscle, for that matter, but the saddest part of young girls growing up in an airbrushed world is they're seeking a perfection that's not real. (sic)" The brunette beauty explained that she was determined to speak up on behalf of young women around the world. She said: "I'm writing this for girls like my little sister who are growing up on social media. They're constantly seeing photo-shopped, edited pictures and thinking that's reality, and everyone's eyes get used to seeing airbrushed skin, an suddenly they think THAT'S the norm. ?!!! It isn't. It's fake. AND FAKE IS BECOMING THE NEW REAL. We have a completely unrealistic view of a woman's body. Girls, cellulite is normal, fat is normal. It's beautiful and natural. (sic)".



Kent's acting training improves her filmmaking skills

Jennifer Kent credits her "rigorous acting training" for making her a good filmmaker. The 'Nightingale' director underwent classic training when she was younger and it gave her "a real respect" for writing and allowed her to be more "rigorous" with her actors too. She said: "I think I had a very rigorous acting training, I had the best training as it was years spent devoted to the art of performance. I got to know the classics and all of the great writers and so you start to inhabit these incredibly complex characters. It gave me a real respect for writing and for story and for experience doing it and it makes me rigorous with my actors." And the 50-year-old actress turned filmmaker has been "attracted" to scary stories since she was a child. She added: "I wrote this story called 'Scottie and The Land of Terrible creatures' and my mum gave it to me when I was thinking, 'Am I ever going to make a film' and she handed it to me this book that I made when I was a kid and it's really the story of 'The Babadook' which is really bizarre. I've been attracted to scary stories since I was a kid, and one of the first films to hit me was Bambi, it was a dark film." Jennifer took the crafting of her new movie "very seriously". Speaking on Collider's horror podcast, 'The Witching Hour!', she said: "I think 'The Nightingale' is a war film so I had a commitment

Kevin Spacey makes first public appearance in 2 years in Rome

US actor Kevin Spacey, under investigation for sexual assault in the US and Britain, has made a public appearance in Rome, his first in two years, La Repubblica daily reported yesterday. The daily posted a video on its website showing Spacey, dressed in a suit and tie, reciting a poem outdoors before "a handful of spectators". The actor made his appearance near a Hellenistic bronze statue "Boxer at Rest", also known as the "Terme Boxer", at the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, La Repubblica said. The statue shows a sitting nude boxer. "It's his first public appearance in two years," it said. The work Spacey recited, in English, is by Gabriele Tinti, a contemporary Italian poet, in which he gives the statue a voice.



The Rome trip comes after prosecutors last month dropped sexual assault proceedings against Spacey following the collapse of the case over his alleged victim's refusal to testify. William Little had accused the 60-year-old filmstar of groping him in a bar on the upscale resort island of Nantucket in July 2016. Spacey has always insisted on his innocence of the charges. It is the latest chapter in Hollywood's reckoning over sexual assault and harassment, which has already seen television icon Bill Cosby jailed, with movie mogul Harvey Weinstein's trial set to begin in September.

Spacey is a two-time Oscar-winner-recognised for his supporting role in "The Usual Suspects" in 1996 and his lead role in "American Beauty" in 2000 — and considered one of the finest actors of his generation. He was dropped from the cast of Netflix's "House of Cards" and from a leading role in director Ridley Scott's "All the Money in the World," with Christopher Plummer brought in as a last-second replacement. In addition to the Nantucket case, two other investigations are underway in Los Angeles and London, where Spacey served as artistic director of the prestigious Old Vic theatre from 2004 to 2015. — AFP



that I made to telling that honestly and that involved a lot of research and for both films, love and kindness runs underneath everything that is going on. Especially with 'The Nightingale' I feel disturbed by the lack of empathy in our world and I see it vanishing and the importance of it so to get to that light you have to go through the darkness. It was very tough and I took it very seriously."

Kevin Hart turns sights towards Uptown Saturday Night remake

Kevin Hart is set to star in a remake of 'Uptown Saturday Night'. The 40-year-old comedian is poised to join forces with director Rick Famuyiwa to make a reworked version of the 1974 Sidney Poitier-directed comedy, according to The Hollywood Reporter. Kenya Barris has penned the most recent draft of the remake and he is also expected to co-produce the project. The original movie told the story of two friends who were robbed at a fancy nightclub. One of the items they had stolen was a winning lottery ticket and the duo spend the rest of the evening desperately trying to recover the ticket. Despite being one of Hollywood's most in-demand stars, Kevin previously claimed that fame isn't "real". The stand-up star conceded that fame can be easily "snatched from you". He explained: "This thing ain't real. It can be snatched from you. Look at how many stars they build up to beat down. "Look at Britney Spears when she was the hottest thing ever. Then Britney went through a meltdown and everybody is like 'Well we don't know about this chick here.' Then she got back again and everybody was like, 'We love you Britney!' It was like 'What?!' You're all over the place, people." "It's not like your life changes because of the level of success that you have. At the end of the day people are people. "If you come up to take a picture of me and I'm with my kids, I'm gonna politely tell you, 'Hey man, I appreciate your support, but I'm on daddy time right now.' As a person you should understand that." —Bang Showbiz





Photo shows snuff bottles painted by artists by hand at a shop in the center of Beijing.



Photo shows Chinese artist Wei Dongfang looking at a bottle painted from the inside at his workshop on Nanluoguxiang Street in the center of Beijing.



This picture shows Chinese artist Wei Dongfang drawing on a snuff bottle at his workshop on Nanluoguxiang Street in the center of Beijing. — AFP photos

‘Painted by ghosts’: Chinese bottle art revived by Peppa Pig



Photo shows a snuff bottle painted by artist Gu Qun at his home in Beijing.

Delicate designs painted on the inside of miniature Chinese snuff bottles by artists like Zhang Yuhua and her husband usually feature calligraphy, floral compositions and traditional rural scenes. But to keep alive the centuries-old art known as “guihuahu”, or “bottle painted by ghosts”, some painters are appealing to younger tastes with modern motifs—including the popular children’s character Peppa Pig. Concentrating hard as she holds a tiny paintbrush poked through the neck of a translucent glass bottle, Zhang traces ink across its interior, her steady hand leaving a perfect impression despite barely being able to see what she is doing.

The couple in their seventies have spent their lives practicing the craft, which began in Beijing in the 1800s, and now want to pass on their skill to the next generation. “For several years now we’ve looked for people to carry on the tradition,” Zhang’s husband Gu Qun told AFP. But with vast amounts of patience required to learn the intricate technique that takes years to master, it hasn’t been easy. “During an apprenticeship, which lasts at least three years, young people don’t have a stable income, and all this stops them from dedicating themselves to this job,” he said.

The bottles, which fit easily in the palm, were originally used to hold smokeless tobacco among Chinese high society in the 17th century, and only started to be painted for decoration many decades later. Today other “ghost” bottle painters, like Wei Dongfang, 48, are reviving the craft by adorning their works with more unusual designs inspired by popular culture. “I once painted a character from the cartoon Peppa Pig inside a bottle for a child



Photo shows artist Wei Dongfang showing a small bottle with the design of Peppa Pig at his workshop on Nanluoguxiang Street in the center of Beijing.

who visited my shop,” said Wei, who sells the ornaments from his shop in the Chinese capital, where prices range from 60 to 6,000 yuan (\$9 to \$870). After seeing the child’s delight at his creation, Wei made a few dozen more featuring the pink pig and her friends, which sold very quickly. “People are bored of old-fashioned images and motifs. To widen the scope of our art, we need to use new elements,” he added. — AFP



Photos show artist Zhang Yuhua painting a snuff bottle at her home in Beijing.



Photo shows the back of an inside-painted bottle titled “Along the River during the Qingming Festival” at the home of artists like Zhang Yuhua and her husband Gu Qun in Beijing.

The Longines Heritage Military - Kuwait Limited Edition

Longines presents a bronze version of The Longines Heritage Military, especially designed for Kuwait. Inspired by a military model from the 1940’s, The Longines Heritage Military - Kuwait Limited Edition is numbered and limited to 100 pieces. With its sober design and its diameter of 44 mm, this exclusive watch perfectly mirrors the refined aesthetics and spirit of the original timepiece.

The Longines Heritage Military - Kuwait Limited

Edition is the only piece in Longines’ current collections with a case made of bronze. Thanks to its characteristic color, this multi-faceted metal gives the watch a warm and unique style. Dynamic material, its surface oxidizes and forms a natural patina depending on how the watch is worn, making each piece unlike any other.

Fitted with the L615 automatic movement, this limited edition timepiece displays a grained dial of dark green, slightly graduated to set off its painted numerals in

Arabic language with their SuperLuminova coating. The Longines Heritage Military - Kuwait Limited Edition features a smooth bezel and box-form sapphire crystal, emphasizing the military style of the watch. This special watch dedicated to Kuwait comes with two leather straps, one green and one brown; both versions fasten with a brushed stainless steel buckle.



The 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the Republic of Korea and the State of Kuwait



Korean dancers performed recently on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the Republic of Korea and the State of Kuwait, at the Abdulhussain Abdulredha Theater in Kuwait City. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



PETS IN AMERICA NOW GET HUMAN TREATMENT

Even-year-old Bess waits patiently to be immersed in water just a little cooler than her body temperature. Her hydrotherapy session will last only 17 minutes but it does wonders for this arthritis sufferer. Bess is a cat. To ease her joint pain, the Maine Coon, a touch overweight at 21 pounds (10 kilograms), is taken every week to the Friendship Hospital for Animals, a veterinary clinic on a pleasant Washington street. Beyond traditional veterinary treatment, the clinic offers forms of care once reserved for humans, such as acupuncture and therapeutic ultrasound.

Pets are now increasingly seen as genuine family members, said Christine Klippen, one of the 63 veterinarians who are available at the clinic every day of the year. And this is particularly true for millennials, she said, who see themselves as moms and dads to their "fur babies." Given the higher incomes in the US capital, they often seek out the best pet care available. In the United States,

84.9 million households, or 68 percent, have a pet, according to Steve King, head of the American Pet Products Association.

"Millennials are the largest pet-owning demographic among all generations," he said, and have surpassed the postwar Baby Boom generation. Last year, consumer spending on pets hit a record \$72.6 billion and the APPA expects this will rise to \$75.4 billion in 2019. Health care spending is the fastest-rising category as pet owners learn about available treatments. "There's less pushback than there was," said Brant Hassell, a veterinarian practicing at the District Veterinary Hospital. "These dogs are a lot of people's first children," he said. "If I say, 'Oh, my goodness. This dog has a loose tooth,' they're just like, 'my baby!'"

Back at Friendship Hospital, Bess the cat walks on an underwater treadmill, the water up to her whiskers, the pace slow and regular as a metronome. But to keep up, Bella, a "senior" dog, needed a little extra motivation in the form of peanut butter. "We are more selective with food when they're overweight," said Janay Austin-Carlson, a rehabilitation practitioner. Walking in water creates greater resistance to movement, making exercise more effective. "One minute in here is much harder than one minute outside," she said.

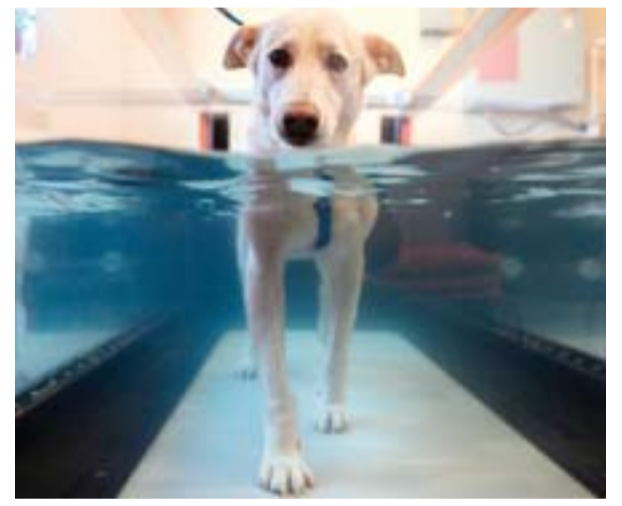
Given Washington's often oppressive summertime heat, where temperatures can easily hit 95 degrees Fahrenheit (35 degrees Celsius) and humidity rises to 70 percent, the animals can also exercise in relative comfort. "We can play with the speed, the water level," said Austin-Carlson. "All those things create different dynamics."

\$15,000 for dialysis

Bella's "mom," 45-year-old Freya Jackson, says hydrotherapy has been a godsend. "When she comes,

she's usually tired afterwards and needs a long nap. But the day after you can really see she could move around more freely," said Jackson. Still, Bella's fitness regime is not exactly free: A 20-minute hydrotherapy session runs to \$89 and comes after 15 minutes of laser therapy at \$65. And Bella has stuck to this weekly routine for a year. Jackson said having a healthy dog helps her own exercise habits and, given that she has no children, the expense fits her budget. "I'm investing in myself to stay fit and healthy and be able to run around," she said. "It is a part of my wellbeing."

Pet owners are generally healthier people, coping better with conditions such as autism, dementia and cardiovascular disease, according to studies funded by the Human Animal Bond Research Institute. Having a dog or cat in the house typically lowers blood pressure and children may suffer less frequently from allergies. Generally pets improve mental health, according to Klippen of the Friendship Hospital. "Because we view our pets in a more human way it is no longer meaningful enough for us to simply give them a biscuit," said King of the APPA. And some pet owners are ready to spare no expense: Dialysis can run between \$12,000 and \$15,000 while the price tag on orthopedic surgery ranges from \$5,000 to \$7,000. But humanizing pets can involve controversial or even dangerous health practices such as needlessly imposing grain or gluten free diets on animals. This simply does not suit their nutritional needs and can cause premature death, according to Klippen. In the meantime, US authorities say they have begun scrutinizing potential ties between such popular, newfangled diets and the prevalence of heart disease in dogs. — AFP



Bella walks in a hydrotherapy tank at the Friendship Hospital For Animals in Washington, DC. — AFP photos



Bess, suffering from arthritis, walks in a hydrotherapy tank at the Friendship Hospital For Animals.



Veterinary physician Dr Brant Hassell extracts teeth off of Frankie, a five-year-old Westie dog, while the dog is under anesthesia during a tooth extraction surgery.



Veterinary physician Dr Brant Hassell (left) looks on as Frankie, a five-year-old Westie dog, is under anesthesia during a tooth extraction surgery.



Acupuncture needles are seen on the body of Kevin, a one-year-old King Charles Spaniel dog.

Classifieds

Monday, August 5, 2019

Kuwait Times
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 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 04/08/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	48 °C	34 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	32 °C		
ABDALY	47 °C	31 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	48 °C	33 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	29 °C		
SALMIYAH	45 °C	34 °C		
AHMADI	44 °C	36 °C		
NUWASIB	46 °C	32 °C		
WAFRA	47 °C	30 °C		
SALMY	45 °C	29 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	08/05	Very hot	48 °C	33 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Tuesday	08/06	Very hot and rising dust over open areas and some high clouds will appear later on	47 °C	32 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	08/07	Very hot and rising dust	48 °C	34 °C	NW	20 - 50 km/h
Thursday	08/08	Very hot and rising dust specially over open areas	48 °C	33 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:42
Sunrise	05:10
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:30
Sunset	18:37
Isa	20:02

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	48 °C
MIN. Temp.	33 °C
MAX. RH	18 %
MIN. RH	06 %
MAX. Wind	NW 53 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SUSAN JOHN (given name) holder of Indian Passport S3697819 do hereby change my name to SUSAN JOHN (given name) JOHN (surname) for all purposes. I also undertake to effect the change in all my other public documents. (C 5664) 5-8-2019

EMERGENCY

112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

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

NOTICE
 July 31, 2019

Mr Gaurangkumar Nikunbhai Patel son of Mr. Patel Nikunbhai Soma bhai, Indian National resident of vachlu faliyu at Davalpura Tai Petlad Dist, Anand, Gujarat 388450 and Ms. Ronabel Guttan Castro, Daughter of Mr. Ronald Pinos Castro, Philippines national, resident of Bitag Grande Baggoo Cogayan, Philippines both presently residing in Kuwait, have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If you have any objection to the proposed marriage, you should file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rules within thirty days from the date of this letter. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (welfare2@indembkt.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22533315, 00965 - 22533125).

(Ramesh Bhatt) Second Secretary (Cons) and Marriage Officer. Embassy of India, Kuwait. Email: welfare2@indembkt.gov.in

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

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

Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 5/8/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 5/8/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	JZR	713	Sohag	00:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	MSC	412	Asyut	00:15
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
KAC	1799	Taif	00:35	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05
KAC	102	London	00:50	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	KAC	677	Dubai	01:40
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	KAC	773	Istanbul	01:50
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	JZR	111	Doha	02:10
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
THY	1464	Trabzon	01:50	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:50
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
PYA	2396	EVN	02:00	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	THY	769	Istanbul	03:50
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	101	Bahrain	04:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
THY	502	Lahore	02:55	QTR	1087	Doha	04:15
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	JZR	861	Istanbul	04:20
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	JZR	1735	Cairo	04:40
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:00
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	JZR	251	Amman	05:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	JZR	215	Jeddah	05:25
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	PYA	2397	THR	07:00
MNB	170	Bahrain	05:05	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	JZR	121	Dubai	07:15
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	113	Doha	07:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	BAW	156	London	07:40
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	KAC	173	Munich	07:55
JZR	702	Asyut	06:10	JZR	211	Jeddah	08:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	IGO	1767	Mumbai	08:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	KAC	181	Paris/NCE	08:10
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	KAC	193	Trabzon	08:10
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	JZR	151	Mashhad	08:15
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	RBG	214	Sohag	08:15
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	KAC	163	MXP	08:35
JZR	102	Bahrain	07:00	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	KAC	561	Amman	08:55
RBG	211	Luxor	07:25	KAC	157	Istanbul	08:55
FDB	889	Dubai	07:50	MSC	402	Alexandria	09:00
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	121	AGP	09:00
MSC	401	Alexandria	08:00	KAC	117	New York	09:05
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	QTR	1085	Doha	09:10
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	IRA	666	Esfahan	09:10
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	741	Dammam	09:40
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	731	Cairo	09:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	UAE	856	Dubai/Beirut	09:50
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	505	LCA/Beirut	09:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	09:55
JZR	252	Amman	10:20	JZR	301	Istanbul	09:55
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	OMA	642	Doha	10:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	101	London	10:05
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:40	KAC	795	Madinah	10:15
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	QTR	1071	Doha	10:30
JZR	216	Jeddah	10:55	FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	IGO	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	617	Doha	10:40
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	KAC	195	BJV	11:00
THY	1282	Trabzon	11:05	JZR	221	Riyadh	11:20
JZR	114	Doha	11:10	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20
IGO	1755	CNN	11:30	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	JZR	309	BJV	11:45
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	12:10	AXB	396	Kozhikode	11:50
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	THY	1283	Trabzon	12:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05



A Pakistani camel vendor arrives along with his camels at the animal market set up for Eid Al-Adha in Lahore yesterday. — AFP

French inventor crosses Channel...

Continued from Page 1

"I was almost at my limits - there was still enough fuel in my pack for another 10 km or so. Maybe I could have done five or six," Zapata said later at a press conference back in Sangatte. "People are passionate about this, everyone dreams about flying," he said, recalling his fascination with the hoverboard in the 1985 hit movie "Back to the Future", set in 2015. "And then 2015 came around, and there were still no hoverboards, so we said 'OK, we're going to do it'."

Zapata, a 40-year-old former jet-ski champion, made his first attempt on July 25, to coincide with the 110th anniversary of Louis Bleriot's historic first crossing of the Channel by plane. But he had to be fished from the water after failing to land on a boat to refuel - his backpack carries some 35 kg of kerosene, enough to keep him aloft for around 10 minutes. Asked if he considered himself Bleriot's successor, Zapata told BFM television: "It's not really comparable, he was one of the first men to fly. Let's just say that I achieved my dream."

This time the refuelling boat was bigger and had a larger landing area, and French navy vessels in the area kept an eye out in case of trouble. Zapata said he and his team had worked around to clock to repair the hoverboard and its five turbines after it was damaged from falling in the Channel waters 10 days ago.

Iran seizes third foreign ship in Gulf...

Continued from Page 1

The Persian Gulf is like a tinderbox and explosion of the first firecracker can lead to a huge disaster."

The US is also struggling to piece together an international coalition to protect cargo ships travelling through the Strait of Hormuz, with allies concerned about being dragged into conflict with Iran. Even as a series of ships have been seized in the narrow maritime thoroughfare-vital for the world's supply of crude - European countries have been reticent about a US plan to send in military escorts.

Yesterday, Australia became the latest ally seeming to give the plan a wide berth. Australian defense minister Linda Reynolds told the visiting US secretaries of state and defense that their "very serious" and "complex" request would be given "very serious consideration" - but stopped short of offering a full response. "We are deeply concerned by the heightened tensions in the region. And we strongly condemn the attacks on shipping in the Gulf of Oman," said Reynolds.

"But we will ultimately, as we always do, decide what is in our own sovereign interests," she told Mike Pompeo and the newly confirmed Pentagon chief Mark Esper who was on his maiden overseas trip. "And we'll certainly discuss this issue during our ministerial consultations, but again, no decision has yet been made."

Washington floated the idea of a naval coalition in June, after multiple attacks on ships in the Gulf, which the United States had blamed on Iran - but which Tehran denies. The plan was to have each country provide a military escort for their ships, with US military providing a security backstop, monitoring the zone of operations and providing command and control. Asked by a reporter about the lack of enthusiasm from Australia, Pompeo was characteristically combative and insisted he was "very confident that we will have a global coalition". "There's lots of conversations taking place, amongst all the countries, as with Australia," he said.

Esper, meanwhile, said the United States had gotten "various degrees of response", adding "I think there'll be

Zapata has been working on the hoverboard for the past three years, despite losing parts of two fingers during its maiden flight in his garage near Marseille, when they got sucked into the turbines. He already holds the Guinness World Record for the farthest hoverboard flight, a 2.2-km trip over the Mediterranean Sea in April 2016. No Guinness adjudicator was on hand for the latest Channel attempt, though a spokeswoman said he could still be awarded a new record if the trip meets its guidelines.

Zapata burst into the spotlight at this year's July 14 Bastille Day military parade in Paris, where he buzzed above a crowd of stunned onlookers that included French President Emmanuel Macron. His device has also captured the attention of the French defense ministry, which in December gave Zapata's company, Z-AIR, a \$1.3 million (\$1.4 million) development grant, in particular for improving the turbines. "It's not the return of the 'Avengers', it's a reality. Bravo Franky Zapata," Defense Minister Florence Parly tweeted after Zapata's feat.

Zapata eventually hopes to soar into the clouds at altitudes well above the 15 to 20 m currently - something that will require him to figure out how to carry a parachute, guidance equipment and possibly an oxygen tank. But he is aiming even higher: This year he hopes to unveil a 10-turbine flying car that would be easy enough for anyone to pilot, without requiring the physical strength and long hours of practice to master the flyboard. "We expect to have the authorizations for test flights in the coming days," he said back in Sangatte, adding that it would initially have a range of 100-120 km. "We're going to take a bit of holiday... and then the whole team will get back to work so it's ready on time." — AFP

some announcements coming out in the coming days". Referencing the prospect of European-only cooperation, Esper plaid down a bifurcation of effort. "I think the purpose remains the same whether it's an operation conducted under the United States command and control, or conducted by somebody else, a European partnership. "I think both fulfill the same purpose, a unity of effort with regard to ensuring freedom of navigation."

Paris, Berlin and London plan to coordinate and share information in the Gulf to reinforce maritime security, but without deploying additional assets, according to French Defense Minister Florence Parly. "We are trying to organize ourselves as Europeans, but one thing is certain: our actions will have only one objective, to lower current tensions and defend our interests," she said.

Germany has distanced itself from a military operation in the Strait of Hormuz, considering it could hinder European efforts to reach a diplomatic solution with Iran. German government spokeswoman Ulrike Demmer said last week said the focus should be on "diplomacy and de-escalation" amid a spike in tensions between the UK and Iran. Declaring the German government "reluctant" to get involved in the US plan she said that "participation in a US-led mission could complicate this issue, even as of course we share the goal of freedom of navigation." Britain has responded to the seizure of a UK tanker in June by announcing it would escort British-flagged ships and send a second warship to the region.

On the diplomatic front, officials in Iran said Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had been hit with US sanctions after turning down an invitation to meet Trump in Washington. The New Yorker magazine reported on Friday that Republican Senator Rand Paul met Zarif in the US on July 15 and had Trump's blessing when he extended an invitation to the Iranian minister to go to the White House. Officials in Iran confirmed the report and heaped scorn on the Trump administration for claiming to want dialogue with Iran while slapping sanctions on its top diplomat.

The sanctions announced on Wednesday are aimed at freezing any of Zarif's assets in the United States or controlled by US entities, as well as squeeze his ability to function as a globe-trotting diplomat. "For a government to constantly claim (to favor) negotiations and afterwards sanction the foreign minister... if this is not ridiculous, then what is it?" said foreign ministry spokesman Ali Rabiee. — Agencies

Sudan protest leaders, junta...

Continued from Page 1

Crowds of jubilant Sudanese gathered outside the hall, chanting "blood for blood, our government is civilian" and "revolution, revolution". In the Bahari district of north Khartoum, dozens were chanting "this country is ours and the government is civilian" as drivers honked their horns in celebration. In the city of Omdurman, hundreds were clapping, chanting and dancing to drum beats.

A formal signing with foreign dignitaries in attendance is to take place on Aug 17, another protest leader, Monzer Abu Al-Maali, told AFP. On the same day, Bashir is due to go on trial on corruption charges. The next day, the generals and protest leaders are to announce the composition of the new transitional civilian-majority ruling council, Abu Al-Maali said. "The prime minister will be named on August 20 and cabinet members on August 28," he said, adding that the sovereign council and cabinet would meet for the first time on Sept 1.

The talks had been repeatedly interrupted by deadly violence against demonstrators who have kept up rallies to press for civilian rule. Talks were suspended for weeks after men in military uniform broke up a long-running protest camp outside army headquarters in Khartoum on June 3, killing at least 127 people, according to doctors close to the protest movement. The movement has laid most of the blame on the powerful Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group, commanded by Daglo.

Protest leaders say the accord calls for an investiga-

tion into protest-related violence which, according to protest-linked doctors, has cost more than 250 lives since December. Under yesterday's deal, RSF paramilitaries are to be integrated into the army's chain of command. Omar Hussein, a protester waving the Sudanese flag outside the negotiations hall, was overjoyed by the signing. "Now we can tell the martyrs that their blood was not wasted," he said.

Ibtisam Al-Sanhouri, a legal affairs negotiator for the protest movement, said the constitutional declaration clears the way for a parliamentary system with a civilian prime minister. She said the protest movement would have 201 of 300 seats in parliament and the premier, to be confirmed by the new sovereign council. The document touches on a peace deal agreed with three armed groups last month in Addis Ababa, protest leader Babiker Faisal said. These groups had spent years fighting Bashir's government forces in the states of Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan. "A comprehensive peace conference is planned to take place within six months of the transitional period," he added.

Sudan's Arab neighbors hailed the long-awaited deal. Egypt said it was "a significant step on the right track", while the Saudi foreign ministry welcomed it as "a quantum leap that will transition Sudan to stability and security". In the United Arab Emirates, minister of state for foreign affairs Anwar Gargash said Sudan's transition to civilian rule "turns the page" on Bashir and his Islamist allies.

Yesterday, Ethiopian mediator Mahmoud Drir told reporters the deal would see Sudan removed from the United States' blacklist as a state sponsor of terrorism. The country has been on the State Department's list since 1993 over its alleged support of Islamist militants, a designation that has damaged the country's economy and severely impeded foreign investment. — AFP

Trump faces heat as US mourns...

Continued from Page 1

The manifesto posted shortly before the shooting started also praises the killing of 51 Muslims at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in March and the person who wrote it indicated they expected to die in the shooting. Prosecutors in Texas said they would seek the death penalty, and a federal official said that investigators are treating the El Paso shooting as a case of domestic terrorism. As the country stood aghast over its latest spasm of gun violence, Trump ordered flags flown at half-mast for five days.

At the Walmart, terrified shoppers covered in aisles or ran out of the store as gunfire echoed. Vanessa Saenz, a Walmart shopper, said the El Paso shooter was wearing a black T-shirt, cargo pants and ear protectors. She said it looked like he was "dancing". People near the shooter became cornered, and Saenz said she recalls him raising his rifle, aiming at them and shooting. "The one thing I'll never forget is the way he walked into Walmart, very confident. He was on a mission and that's when it hit me," Saenz told ABC News Radio.

These were the 250th and 251st mass shootings this year in the US, according to the Gun Violence Archive, an NGO. It defines mass shooting as an incident in which at least four people are wounded or killed in a shooting. The two shootings ended a particularly tragic week for gun violence in America: three people died in a shooting at a food festival last Sunday in California, and two more died Tuesday at a shooting in a Walmart in Mississippi.

On Twitter Trump described the El Paso attack as "an act of cowardice". Yesterday morning he tweeted again saying "God bless the people of El Paso Texas. God bless the people of Dayton, Ohio." But critics hit hard at Trump, saying his custom of speaking in derogatory terms about immigrants is pushing hatred of foreigners into the political mainstream and encouraging white supremacist think-

ing that encourages violence.

"To pretend that his administration and the hateful rhetoric it spreads doesn't play a role in the kind of violence that we saw yesterday in El Paso is ignorant at best and irresponsible at worst," said the Southern Poverty Law Center, a major civil rights group. It cited Trump actions like calling Mexican migrants rapists and drug dealers and doing nothing when a crowd at a Trump rally chanted "send her back" in reference to a Somali-born congresswoman.

The Republican mayor of El Paso seemed to discount any race element to the Texas shooting, saying the gunman was disturbed. "He was deranged, he was evil... Pure evil as far as I can characterize it," Dee Margo told Fox News. Trump's chief of staff, Nick Mulvaney, echoed this saying both shooters were sick people and "no politician is to blame for that". "This cancer, this difficulty that we face as a nation predates this administration by many, many years," Mulvaney told ABC News.

But Democratic presidential hopefuls said Trump bears some of the blame for violence like this. Beto O'Rourke, who lives in El Paso and used to represent Texas in Congress, said there is now an environment of open racism in the US. "And we see it from our commander-in-chief. He is encouraging this," O'Rourke told CNN. "He doesn't just tolerate it, he encourages it, calling immigrants rapists and criminals and seeking to ban all people of one religion. Folks are responding to this." US Senator Bernie Sanders also took Trump to task. "We must come together as a nation to reject this dangerous and growing culture of bigotry espoused by Trump and his allies," he said late on Saturday.

The White House cannot shirk its responsibility in shaping the public discourse, said Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana. "There's no question that white nationalism is condoned at the highest levels of our government," he told "Fox News Sunday". "He's spoken about immigrants as being invaders. He's given license for this toxic brew of white supremacy to fester more and more in this country, and we're seeing the results of that," presidential candidate Julian Castro, the former Democratic mayor of San Antonio, said on ABC's "This Week". — Agencies

Sports

Four Astros pitchers combine to no-hit visiting Mariners 9-0

HOUSTON: Four Houston Astros pitchers combined to no-hit the Seattle Mariners Saturday night in a 9-0 win in front of the home crowd, the second time the Mariners have been victims of a combined no-hitter this season. Aaron Sanchez made his debut with the Astros a memorable affair, twirling six innings. Right-handers Will Harris, Joe Biagini and Chris Devenski each worked an inning to complete the no-hitter, the 12th in franchise history. Houston improved to 11-1 against Seattle this season.

Sanchez (4-14) was winless over his previous 17 starts with the Toronto Blue Jays, who shipped him to Houston along with Biagini on Wednesday at the trade deadline. Sanchez walked two and recorded six strikeouts for his first win since April 27 against Oakland. Jose Altuve, Michael Brantley, Yordan Alvarez, Alex Bregman and Carlos Correa each posted multi-hit games for Houston.

YANKEES 9, RED SOX 2 (GAME 1)

DJ LeMahieu homered twice as New York battered Chris Sale again and cruised over visiting Boston in the opener of a day-night doubleheader. It was LeMahieu's third career multi-homer game and gave him a career-high 17 for the season. The Yankees beat Sale (5-11) for the fourth time this season, having scored 22 earned runs in 20 innings while hitting six homers off the left-hander. New York's Domingo German (14-2) won his fifth straight decision, allowing two runs on five hits in seven innings. He struck out seven and walked none and became the first Yankees starter to complete seven innings since CC Sabathia on July 6 against Tampa Bay.

YANKEES 6, RED SOX 4 (GAME 2)

Gleyber Torres homered in consecutive at-bats, and Mike Tauchman delivered the go-ahead two-run single as New York completed a doubleheader sweep over visiting Boston. In front of the largest paid crowd (48,101) of the season, the Yankees won their fourth straight and beat Boston for the 10th time in 14 meetings this season to move 13 1/5 games ahead of the third-place Red Sox in the AL East. The Yankees swept Boston in a doubleheader for the first time since Aug. 18, 2006, at Fenway Park. The Red Sox are on their longest losing streak — seven consecutive games — since July 2015, and their 54th loss matches their total from last season.

DIAMONDBACKS 18, NATIONALS 7

Eduardo Escobar had seven RBIs, and Arizona hit three home runs against Stephen Strasburg, ending his seven-start winning streak by smashing Washington in Phoenix. Strasburg (14-5) was staked to a 2-0 lead before he took the mound but then gave up a season-high nine runs. He gave up a season-high-tying nine hits — he also allowed nine vs. the D-backs on June 15 — striking out seven and walking two. Escobar hit a two-run home run in the first inning and crushed a three-run shot in the eighth off second baseman Brian Dozier, the second of two position players to pitch in the inning. Nick Ahmed and Jake Lamb also homered off Strasburg.

who is 11-2 in his past 14 starts, with both losses coming to Arizona.

CUBS 4, BREWERS 1

Albert Almora Jr. went 3-for-3, hit a tiebreaking solo home run and drove in two runs to carry Chicago over visiting Milwaukee. In his third game since being acquired from the Detroit Tigers, Nicholas Castellanos went 2-for-4 with a double and a run, and Javier Baez tripled and added an eighth-inning RBI single in the nine-hit effort by the Cubs. Chicago's All-Star catcher, Willson Contreras, left the game in the seventh inning after grabbing the back of his right leg while running up the line as he lined out to center. Manager Joe Maddon said Contreras suffered a right hamstring strain and will undergo an MRI exam on Monday.

TWINS 11, ROYALS 3

Nelson Cruz had his second three-home run game in 10 days and drove in five runs, while CJ Cron and Jorge Polanco also homered to power Minnesota over Kansas City in Minneapolis. The 39-year-old Cruz, who also hit three homers in a 10-3 victory at Chicago on July 25, moved past Johnny Bench into a tie with Graig Nettles for 62nd on the all-time home run list with his 390th of his career in the sixth inning off reliever Jorge Lopez, his third of the game and 30th of the season. The reigning American League Player of the Week now has 11 home runs and 23 RBIs in his last nine starts and has also homered in five consecutive games at Target Field. Minnesota extended its major league record with at least five home runs in a game to 10. The Twins lead the majors with 216 homers.

A'S 8, CARDINALS 3

Right-hander Mike Fiers ran his unbeaten streak to 16 games, and Chad Pinder broke open a tight contest with a pinch-hit, three-run home run, as Oakland thumped visiting St. Louis in the opener of a two-game inter-league series. Mark Canha had a two-run single, while Marcus Semien and Chris Herrmann scored twice apiece for the A's, who won their fifth straight against the Cardinals, including three in a row this season. Pitching with a lead from the second inning on, Fiers (10-3) checked the Cardinals on six hits over 5 2/3 innings. He allowed one run and one walk, striking out four. The 34-year-old improved to 8-0 in his last 16 starts overall and 5-0 in his last nine home outings.

BRAVES 5, REDS 4 (10 INNINGS)

Ronald Acuna Jr. yanked a single down the left field line to produce his first career walk-off and give Atlanta the victory over visiting Cincinnati. Acuna, who put the Braves ahead with a bases-loaded walk in the eighth inning, fell behind with two quick strikes against Reds reliever Robert Stephenson. After fouling off a pitch, Acuna slapped one past third baseman Eugenio Suarez to send Adam Duvall home with the winning run. The Braves improved to 10-3 in extra-inning games and evened the season series with the Reds at 3-3. The Reds



HOUSTON: Joe Biagini #29 of the Houston Astros pitches in the eighth inning against the Seattle Mariners at Minute Maid Park. — AFP

led the game in the ninth against closer Shane Greene, who was making his Atlanta debut. It was Greene's fourth blown save.

DODGERS 4, PADRES 1

Walker Buehler struck out 15 and delivered his second career complete game, Justin Turner hit a home run and Los Angeles beat visiting San Diego. Buehler (10-2) reached double digits in victories for the first time in his young career. It was also the fourth time he reached double digits in strikeouts this season, all since June 3. He has five career starts of at least 11 strikeouts. It was just the second time the Dodgers defeated the Padres in the last six times the teams have met. The Padres closed out the first half with a three-game winning streak at Dodger Stadium. The Padres are just 6-14 in the second half and have yet to win consecutive games since that run against the Dodgers.

GIANTS 6, ROCKIES 5

Scooter Gennett hit his first homer of the season. Buster Posey had a go-ahead pinch-hit double, and visiting San Francisco beat Colorado in Denver. Pablo Sandoval had three hits, Sam Coonrod (2-0) pitched one inning and Will Smith worked the ninth for his 27th save. Charlie Blackmon and Trevor Story homered, and Daniel Murphy had three hits for Colorado. Colorado rallied to take the lead but lost it in the eighth inning. With one out, reliever Carlos Estevez (1-2) walked pinch hitter Joe Panik, then gave up a line single to Austin Slater. Posey came on to pinch hit and lined a double to right to drive in two and give the Giants a 6-5 lead.

METS 7, PIRATES 5

Wilson Ramos hit a go-ahead homer in the eighth inning for two of his career-high six RBIs as visiting New York evened its series against Pittsburgh. Ramos also had a three-run double and an RBI single, and Jeff McNeil hit a solo homer for New York. Marcus Stroman got a no-decision in his Mets debut. He gave up three runs and seven hits in 4 1/3 innings, with three strikeouts and two walks. Starling Marte hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the ninth and had an RBI single for the Pirates. Pittsburgh starter Chris Archer missed in his 10th attempt at reaching four wins. He gave up one run and five hits in six innings, with six strikeouts and two walks.

PHILLIES 3, WHITE SOX 2

Bryce Harper and Rhys Hoskins hit back-to-back home runs in the fourth inning. Aaron Nola pitched seven strong innings and the bullpen held on to lift host Philadelphia over Chicago. Nick Pivetta pitched a perfect eighth before navigating trouble in the ninth, including shortstop Jean Segura's throwing error to open the inning and Yolmer Sanchez's RBI single later in the frame. Pivetta recovered to strike out pinch hitter Adam Engel with the tying run at third to notch his first career save. Nola (10-2) capped his night with a swinging strikeout of pinch hitter Matt Skole with the potential tying run at third. Nola struck out 10 while scattering one run, three hits and two walks. Chicago limited the Phillies to four hits, but the early damage against White Sox lefty Ross Detwiler (1-2) proved to be enough. — Reuters

Asian Schoolboy Boxing Championship 2019 opening ceremony

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah declared the Asian Schoolboy Boxing Championship 2019 Kuwait Open, at Kuwait Sports Club Saturday evening. The tournament is being hosted by Kuwait until the 9th of August and has 150 boxers from 21 countries participating.

The opening ceremony was attended by the President of Asian Boxing Federation Anas Al-Otaiba, Deputy Director General of Public Authority for Sports Dr Saqr Al-Mulla, KOC Secretary Hussein Al-Musallam, Chairman of Kuwait Boxing Federation Mohammad Mansi as well as heads of delegations. Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Sabah welcomed Kuwait's guests and wished them all the success, he also thanked the chairman of KBF and its members for their massive efforts to ensure success of the championship. He said Kuwait will host 4 to 5 continental and international championships during the next six months.

Meanwhile, Deputy Director General of PAS Dr Saqr Al-Mulla said he was happy with the participation of the continent in the first championship hosted by the country after the suspension was lifted. He said "Kuwait remains the cradle of these sports gatherings, and we are honored to support these championships that will act as our pathway to the return of international arenas." President of the Asian Federation Anas Al-Otaibi lauded the great efforts that were exerted by the Kuwait Federation and lauded the major hospitality the guests enjoyed.



Matches of day 1

The 37 kg category saw Philippine's Joshua Sorillo defeating Sri Lanka's Senuka Dulran Weerasinghe, and Jordan's Awos Mohammad defeating Kuwait's Jaber Al-Otaibi, and Tajekstan's Ruslan Gufurov defeating Syria's Qadous Alhassan and Uzbekistan's Mahmudov Hojiakbar defeating Palestine's Karam Saqqa.

In the 40kg category, Afghanistan's Mohammad Younus Amiri defeated Palestine's Ismail Ghaith, Sri Lanka's Ashan Shreemal Thalewela Gedara defeated Kuwait's Omar Al-Otaibi, Turkmenistan's Alisher Orzabayev defeated Philippine's Van Hendrichi Abig, Syria's Mohammad Ali defeated Jordan's Hamza Mallas, Uzbekistan's Abdulaziz Burkushev defeated Kazakhstan's Farrukh Tulaganov, India's Neeru defeated Iraq's Hussein Ali Al-Khazraj and Kazakh's Amir Seilkhan defeated Tajik's Alisher Saidov.

In the 46 kg category, Philippine's Lofranco Reymond defeated Iraq's Hussein Jassim, Tajik's Amirkhon Rustmov defeated Bahrain's Ali Bu Khalaf, Thailand's Phisit Paochanthuek defeated Sri Lanka's Kavindu Madushan, India's Nikhil defeated Iran's Adnan Gorgich.



Warriors agree with Green on four-year extension: Report

SAN FRANCISCO: Three-time NBA champion Draymond Green has agreed to a four-year maximum contract extension with the Golden State Warriors, linking him to the club until mid-2024, ESPN reported on Saturday. The 29-year-old power forward, an emotional leader as well as a versatile playmaker, was set to become a free agent next July but will stay with the Warriors, his agent, Rich Paul, told ESPN.

Green's remaining contract now goes for five years and pays \$118 million. Green provides inside power and rebounding that helps provide room for 3-point sharpshooters Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson to maximize their outside shooting skills. After helping the Warriors win the 2015 NBA crown, he combined with All-Star center Kevin Durant on a formidable Warriors' dynasty lineup that brought titles in 2017 and 2018 before Durant was hurt in the 2019 playoffs and Golden State lost the NBA Finals in June to the Toronto Raptors.

Green, the league's Defensive Player of the Year in 2017, has been on the NBA's All-Defensive first or second team for five consecutive seasons. Since his NBA debut in 2012, Green has a team-high 22 triple-doubles and the fifth-most in the NBA in that span. Along with guard D'Angelo Russell plus Curry and Thompson, Green gives the Warriors four NBA All-Stars under contract as they move into a new \$1 billion arena in San Francisco next season.

Thompson, who suffered a major left knee injury in the NBA Finals, signed a five-year maximum deal worth \$190 million in July. Russell was obtained in a trade deal that helped Durant wind up in Brooklyn and signed to a four-year contract worth \$117 million. Green has career averages of 9.1 points, 6.9 rebounds, 4.6 assists, 1.4 steals and 1.1 blocked shots a game in the regular season. In his 123 career playoff appearances, those figures all rise to 12.5 points, 9.3 rebounds, 6.1 assists, 1.6 steals and 1.5 blocks a game. — AFP

Sports

Hamilton denies Verstappen in thrilling Hungarian Grand Prix

It was Hamilton's record seventh win in Hungary

HUNGARY: Lewis Hamilton regained the momentum in the world championship with a memorable strategic victory yesterday when he overcame young rival Max Verstappen with three laps to go in a tense Hungarian Grand Prix. The 34-year-old defending five-time world champion started third on the grid in his Mercedes and, after stalking the 21-year-old Dutch tyro for most of a fascinating tactical contest swept into the lead on lap 67 of a stirring 70-lap contest.

It was Hamilton's record seventh win in Hungary, his eighth this year and the 81st of his career, wrecking Red Bull's hopes of turning Verstappen's maiden pole position into victory, and increased his lead in the title race to 62 points before the sport's European summer break. Verstappen, who led most of the race before his tyres faded, had no time to match Hamilton's tactics when the Briton made his second stop, came home 17.796 seconds behind in second and clocked a record race fastest lap for the Hungaroring after a late pit-stop.

Four-time champion Sebastian Vettel was third for Ferrari ahead of team-mate Charles Leclerc, Carlos Sainz of McLaren and Pierre Gasly in the second Red Bull. Kimi Raikkonen was seventh for Alfa Romeo ahead of Hamilton's Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas who had been forced into an early pit-stop after a first lap incident. British rookie Lando Norris was ninth in the second Mercedes and Alex Albon 10th for Toro Rosso. "What a drive, what a strategy," said Hamilton's race engineer Peter Bonnington. "Only you could make that work today."

Mercedes matched Red Bull's strategy until gambling with a late additional pit-stop that left Hamilton with 20 laps to make up a 20-second deficit on fresh tyres — a move that worked as Verstappen's tyres faded away. "They rolled the dice and it worked for them, unfortunately," Red Bull team boss Christian Horner told Verstappen. "But you drove your heart out."

'I'm losing grip'

A week after his forlorn error-riddled exit from last weekend's tumultuous German Grand Prix, won by Verstappen, Hamilton had bounced back in style. "It feels like a new win for us," he said. "I didn't know if I could do it and I am sorry I doubted our strategy — it was brilliant." A crestfallen Verstappen admitted: "We just weren't fast enough. I tried everything I could to keep the tyres alive, but I couldn't."

Hamilton had earned a 1,000-euro fine for Mercedes for speeding in the pit lane before the start on a hotter-than-expected afternoon with an air temperature of 26 degrees Celsius. Verstappen pulled clear with some aplomb as the two Mercedes' planned pincer movement failed. Bottas, from second, had a poor start, losing position to Hamilton who squeezed through at Turn Three.

The luckless Finn was then clipped by Leclerc's Ferrari and damaged his front wing. This cost him critical down-force as he tumbled through the field. This forced him to pit after six laps for a new nose and a set of hard-compound tyres. He re-joined in last place, 49 seconds adrift. The leading duo pulled away inexorably. By lap 11, Leclerc was adrift by nearly 11 seconds and it was clear that the inter-generational battle, between the old master and his potential successor, the Dutch young pretender, was the main, if not only, event.

Separated by two seconds, it seemed they were merely jabbing, or sparring and waiting for their moment of close engagement to arrive. Behind them, Bottas, whose future is in doubt, climbed to 14th while the Toro Rossos entertained with a wheel-to-wheel tussle. Hamilton trimmed the lead to 1.3 seconds and then dummied to pit on lap 22, but stayed out to avoid resuming amid the Ferraris. "I'm losing a lot of grip," Verstappen complained in a message he repeated rather testily.



BUDAPEST: (L-R) Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen, Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton and Ferrari's German driver Sebastian Vettel celebrate on the podium after the Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix at the Hungaroring circuit. —AFP

Hamilton pitted after 31 laps, stopped for four seconds and resumed second, 5.5 seconds behind. By lap 33, he had reduced it to 2.8. Vettel, in third, was 20 seconds adrift as the Englishman smashed the gap and attacked with venom. Verstappen and Red Bull appeared caught napping. Then, on lap 49, Hamilton

pitted again, taking mediums in 2.4 seconds. He re-joined second, 21 seconds adrift. Mercedes' tactic leaving Red Bull without time to respond. With 12 laps to go, the gap was 14 seconds as Hamilton set successive race lap records, slashing the Dutchman's lead on his way to victory. —AFP

Eager Nadal leads ATP Montreal field

MONTREAL: Defending champion Rafael Nadal heads the field for the ATP Montreal Masters that starts today with Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer opting out of the key US Open tuneup. With Djokovic and Federer putting a return to action on hold after their dramatic Wimbledon final, 33-year-old Nadal will be seeking to retain the title he earned last year in Toronto, when he beat rising star Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final.

The Greek is back, taking the fourth seeding behind a pair of fellow young guns in number two Dominic Thiem of Austria and Germany's Alexander Zverev, seeded third. Federer and Djokovic aren't scheduled to resurface until the Cincinnati Masters starts on August 12, giving them one tournament prior to the August 26 start of the US Open at Flushing Meadows, the final Grand Slam of the year. Federer has been training on hardcourt at home in Switzerland after falling to Djokovic in a dramatic five-set final at the All England Club three weeks ago, in which the Swiss great held two match points.

Djokovic has been pictured relaxing at various European beach resorts with his family prior to picking up the racquet once again. Nadal, meanwhile, is pacing himself after another season marred by injury, insisting despite the pleas and inducements of Cincinnati officials that he won't decide whether to play there until he sees how he feels after Montreal. "Depending on what happens in Montreal, I'll take a decision on Cincinnati," he said. "Cincinnati is still an option. But I want to arrive well prepared and ready for the US Open, the last major of the season."

Nadal could face a challenge in the second round after a bye, with a possible match against Australian Alex de Minaur — winner of the Atlanta title last weekend. Second seed Thiem has purposefully left it late for the hardcourts, preferring to stay as long as possible on European clay by entering both Hamburg and Kitzbuehel. Thiem, beaten by Nadal in the last two Roland Garros finals, has a special goal driving him when he lands in francophile Canada. —AFP

Gibson sacked as South African coach in major shake-up

JOHANNESBURG: Ottis Gibson and his entire South African coaching team and management staff have lost their jobs. Cricket South Africa (CSA) announced yesterday. The decision, taken during a board meeting last week, follows a disastrous South African World Cup campaign in which the Proteas finished seventh of the 10 teams. The clean-out comes shortly before a tour of India next month during which South Africa will play their first three Test matches in the new world Test championship.

In a statement, CSA said a football-style team manager would be appointed, who would take charge of all aspects of the national team, including the appointment of a coaching staff, the captain or captains and medical and administrative personnel. The team manager will report directly to a Director of Cricket, a new position. Former South African player Corrie van Zyl, currently in charge of cricket pathways at CSA, will be acting Director of Cricket until a full-time appointment is made. —AFP

Kyrgios ousts Tsitsipas to reach Washington final

WASHINGTON: Australia's Nick Kyrgios overcame a mid-match meltdown and his rival's shoe repair delays Saturday to defeat Greek top seed Stefanos Tsitsipas and reach the ATP Washington Open final. The 52nd-ranked Aussie hammered 19 aces, saved a match point and often played to the crowd in a dramatic and emotional 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (9/7) victory over Tsitsipas, whose broken shoes caused two third-set delays.

Tsitsipas, who becomes world number five today, fell behind a set and a break, took advantage of Kyrgios losing control with racquet slams and call complaints to force a third set, only to fall in the tie-breaker. "It was spiraling out of control at one point," Kyrgios said. "I've been in that spot before and it has gotten worse. I'm pretty proud at how I was able to drag it back from a dark place. I'm pretty proud of how I battled back and dug deep."

Kyrgios will play for the \$365,390 (328,851 euro) top prize against 10th-ranked Russian Daniil Medvedev, who eliminated German lucky loser Peter Gojowczyk 6-2, 6-2. The 24-year-old Aussie beat Medvedev this year in Rome in their only prior meeting. Kyrgios, who improved to 4-1 against top-10 rivals this year, seeks a sixth career ATP title and his first since Acapulco in March. "It's probably one

of the best tournament weeks of my life," Kyrgios said. Medvedev, 23, seeks his fifth ATP title after taking his most recent crown at Sofia in February. Italy's 62nd-ranked Camila Giorgi, a 2018 Wimbledon quarter-finalist seeking her third WTA title, and 79th-ranked American Jessica Pegula advanced to the women's final at the US Open tuneup tournament.

Kyrgios fire and apathy

Kyrgios excited the crowd throughout with such flamboyant moves as underhand serves, between the legs shots and leaping drop shots. Other times he would just swat away. "He was on fire in some moments," Tsitsipas said. "It felt like sometimes he didn't care at all. It's probably his plan to put you out of focus." Kyrgios admitted, "I've always been able to play high level tennis. I just need to be more consistent. I have to be mentally tougher."

It was the Greek star's first match against Kyrgios, who is of Greek and Malaysian heritage. Each man won 91 points, hit 58 of 91 first serves, won 48 of 58 first-serve points and 16-of-33 second serve points. "I'm an anti-stat guy," Kyrgios said. "I don't look at any of that stuff." Kyrgios broke in the third game and held from there to win the first set in 31 minutes, dropping only three points on his serve. "His serve was just unreal first set. I couldn't do anything with it," said Tsitsipas. "I haven't seen anything like it." Kyrgios broke again to open the second set but after a review call went against him double-faulted away a break, slamming his racquet and towels to the court in frustration.

An clings to small lead at Wyndham Championship

MIAMI: South Korea's An Byeong-hun had four birdies in firing a four-under par 66 on Saturday to maintain his one-shot lead heading into the final round of the US PGA Tour Wyndham Championship. An, chasing a first US PGA Tour title, notched his third straight bogey-free round on the par-70 Sedgefield Country Club course in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The 27-year-old from Seoul was pleased with that, but said it might not be enough to deliver his trophy breakthrough. "I'm still only one ahead. You never know what's going to happen," he said. "You can make a lot of birdies out here, so I definitely need to keep my foot on the pedal." Americans Webb Simpson and Brice Garnett shared second on 194. Simpson posting a five-under 65 that included six birdies and a bogey and Garnett a 66 that featured six birdies and two bogeys.

American Ryan Armour fired a 65 and was alone in fourth on 195. An, who has a European Tour title on his resume and three runner-up finishes on the US Tour,

said scrambling was the key to his third round — particularly a par save after an errant drive at 15. "That up and down was huge," said An, who had just rolled in a 51-foot birdie putt at the 14th when his driver off the tee at 15 sailed right. "It's nice to hold the lead," said An, who added his plan for Sunday was to "try to make as many birdies as I can and not make any silly mistakes."

Simpson is in contention in the tournament where he claimed his first title in 2011 and finished second last year. The North Carolina native is seeking a sixth US tour title and his first since the 2018 Players Championship. He was second last week at the WGC-St Jude Invitational in Memphis. "I had a chance to win there," Simpson said. "I played well down the stretch. It's one of those feelings that you're happy you played well and you had a hot finish at a good tournament, but you're first out of winning." "So it did create some more hunger to get back to the winner's circle."

It was a tough day for three-time major-winner Jordan Spieth, who went into the round four off the lead and ended up failing to make the 54-hole cut after a seven-over 77. Spieth's card featured three double bogeys and a bogey with no birdies. "It was just a bad day," said Spieth, who hit just four of 14 fairways and took 32 putts. "I don't know what's going on," admitted Spieth, who



WASHINGTON: Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece returns a shot from Jordan Thompson of Australia during Day 4 of the Citl Open at Rock Creek Tennis Center. —AFP

'Shoe-pocalypse' hits

Tsitsipas, who said he had a sore hamstring, suffered a broken left shoe for a fourth consecutive match, switching Adidas pairs on a changeover with Kyrgios up 2-1. A ballboy delivered a shoebox with the faulty footwear to Tsitsipas's father/coach, Apostolos Tsitsipas, in the stands. But it was Kyrgios, waiting through a delay that would last four minutes, who took the shoebox from the far corner of the court. "I just thought it would speed the process up," Kyrgios said. "By the way, Adidas sucks."

Kyrgios delivered it to a seated Tsitsipas, kneeling as he put the box

at his rival's feet, both of them smiling as the crowd roared with delight and laughter. "That was funny," Tsitsipas said. Sometimes you can't take anything serious. You have to go with the flow. You have to have the same channel and same fun as he is." Tsitsipas broke another left shoe and needed another shoe switch at the next changeover, Indian tennis legend Leander Paes later bringing his dad a new shoe later. Kyrgios led 5-1 in the tie-breaker, lost the next five points, then saved match point with a service winner. He finally won after two hours seven minutes on an overhead smash. —AFP



GREENSBORO: Byeong Hun An of South Korea hits a tee shot on the 12th hole during the third round of the Wyndham Championship at Sedgefield Country Club. —AFP

was hoping to improve his position in the playoff standings in the US tour's final regular-season event. Instead, he slid down the table and will need a

strong performance at the Northern Trust at Liberty National next week to stay alive in the three-tournament playoffs. —AFP

Sports

Sancho shines as Dortmund deny Bayern fourth straight Super Cup

Neuer: 'We gave Dortmund the match by making too many mistakes'

DORTMUND: England forward Jadon Sancho scored a goal and set-up another as Borussia Dortmund beat Bayern Munich 2-0 on Saturday to deny the German league and cup champions a fourth straight Super Cup title. Sancho, 19, fed Spain forward Paco Alcacer for Dortmund's opener just after the break before clinching the victory and his side's first trophy since 2017 with a clinical finish within the final half of play.

"We absolutely wanted to win this match, it was very difficult," said Dortmund coach Lucien Favre. "Bayern were very strong and had a lot of possession but we defended well and stayed very compact. We knew that we had to go on the counter-attack and we did that very well." Bayern, who pipped Favre's side to the Bundesliga title last season and lifted the German Cup, were without World Cup winning left-back and new signing Lucas Hernandez due to a knee problem.

Dortmund's big name summer arrivals of winger Thorgan Hazard and Julian Brandt, as well as defender Mats Hummels, returning the club after three seasons in Bavaria, were also ruled out due to injuries. Bayern captain Manuel Neuer said errors proved costly. "We gave Dortmund the match by making too many mistakes," Neuer said. "We made the mistakes all on our own, we gave them possession and that's why we conceded the goals."

Influential Sancho

The home side, who finished second in the league last season, had a good early chance. Portugal winger Raphael

Guerreiro broke down the left flank and cut-back to find captain Marco Reus inside the penalty box. Reus's effort was then well saved by Neuer after less than a minute of play. Neuer was in the action once again after a quarter of an hour as he rushed out of his box to close down Alcacer 30 meters from goal. Alcacer beat Neuer to the ball but his shot dribbled past the goal.

Bayern's best opportunity of the first half fell to Kingsley Coman 10 minutes later. He found himself unmarked in the box but his toe-poke shot was saved by Marwin Hitz low to the right. Bayern's inability to make the most of the ball in first 45 minutes came back to bite them almost immediately after the break. Sancho attacked down the left drawing four Bayern defenders with quick step-overs. The teenager fed striker Alcacer at the edge of the box who beat Neuer with a low shot for a 1-0 lead on 48 minutes.

Dortmund's lead was doubled with 22 minutes to go from a clinical counter-attack. Sancho was free once again on the right wing, he burst into the box beyond Bayern's back-four and nutmegged the experienced Neuer to make it 2-0. Influential Sancho left the field with 10 minutes to play after seeming to be hurt following an off-the-field challenge by Joshua Kimmich. Bayern coach Niko Kovac brought on Portugal midfielder Renato Sanches and France World Cup winner Benjamin Pavard late-on but they were unable to find the goals to retain the title and the early-season bragging rights. Bayern start the defense of their league title by hosting Hertha Berlin on Friday August 16 and Dortmund play Augsburg a day later. — AFP



DORTMUND: Dortmund players celebrate with the trophy after the German Supercup football match BVB Borussia Dortmund v FC Bayern Munich on August 3, 2019 at the Signal Iduna Park. — AFP

Rebuilding Man Utd face uncertain future

LONDON: Manchester United have missed out on the top four in four of the six seasons since Alex Ferguson stepped down and fans are coming to terms with their current status as Premier League also-rans. Here, AFP Sport looks at whether Ole Gunnar Solskjaer can make United contenders again for the first time since their last Premier League title in 2012-13 or whether they are facing another season of turmoil and pain.

What to expect

It is difficult to know what to expect from Solskjaer's United, who enjoyed a purple patch after the Norwegian replaced Jose Mourinho but slumped alarmingly towards the end of last season. At one stage they looked likely to finish in the top four but there was the suspicion they were getting the rub of the green and so it proved.

Their campaign ended with a whimper as they drew 1-1 at relegated Huddersfield and then were beaten 2-0 at home on the final day by Cardiff, who were also heading out of the Premier League. A gap of 32 points to champions Manchester City was embarrassing and many questioned whether the club had been too hasty in appointing the relatively inexperienced Solskjaer to the full-time manager's post.

United will not have Champions League football to paper over the cracks



CARDIFF: Manchester United's Norwegian manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (21) congratulates Manchester United's Brazilian midfielder Fred during the 2019 International Champions Cup football match between Manchester United and A C Milan at the Principality Stadium. — AFP

during the coming season, with Thursday nights in the Europa League ringed in the calendar instead. The club have had a positive pre-season but there are still lingering issues that need to be addressed — Paul Pogba's future is still in doubt and Solskjaer has to wrestle with the conundrum of an under-performing Alexis Sanchez.

United had problems at both ends of the pitch last season — scoring 30 goals fewer than City in the Premier League and conceding 54 goals, the most they

had conceded in a league season since 1978-79. The 20-time champions desperately need a positive start to rebuild confidence that they can challenge at the sharp end of the Premier League. Anything less and the knives could be out for Solskjaer.

New faces

After a leaky defense played a key role in United's struggles last season, Solskjaer made it clear he wanted Leicester's Harry Maguire to plug the

holes. The England centre-back is reportedly on the verge of becoming the world's most expensive defender, with United said to have agreed an £80 million fee to land Maguire.

But have they signed enough faces to boost a squad that looked short of class compared with Manchester City and Liverpool last season? Highly rated right-back Aaron Wan-Bissaka has joined from Crystal Palace, with Solskjaer describing the 21-year-old as "one of the best upcoming defenders in the Premier League". Winger Daniel James was bought from Championship club Swansea to add thrust on the flanks. United have also been linked with a swoop for Juventus forward Paulo Dybala, but the Argentine is said to be unsure about joining a team outside the Champions League. Romelu Lukaku could be on the way out of Old Trafford, with Juventus and Inter Milan both keen on the Belgium striker according to reports.

Key man

This is the season when Marcus Rashford will have to step up and show emphatically that he deserves to wear the number 10 shirt at Manchester United. Still only 21, Rashford scored 17 goals in 54 appearances last season for club and country but will have to boost those numbers if he is to be the undisputed leader of United's attack.

Rashford signed a new four-year deal to remain at Old Trafford last month, saying it was "a privilege" every time he wore the shirt. He has scored some sublime goals for the club but with a shortage of goal threat from elsewhere, Solskjaer will want to see him take his tally to 20-plus goals this season and become more of a poacher. — AFP

Everton sign forward Moise Kean from Juve

LONDON: Everton have signed teenage Italy striker Moise Kean from Juventus on a five-year deal. The Italian champions said the fee was an initial 27.5 million euros (\$31m, £25m) but could rise by a further 2.5 million euros if certain conditions were met. The 19-year-old Italy forward is Everton's fifth signing of the transfer window after midfielders Andre Gomes, Fabian Delph, Jean-Philippe Gbamin and goalkeeper Jonas Llossl.

Kean scored six goals in 13 appearances in helping Juventus claim last term's Serie A title, having made his club debut as a 16-year-old. He was subjected to racist abuse during Juventus's 2-0 win at Cagliari in April, holding his arms aloft after scoring. "I am very proud and honored to wear the Everton shirt — I will give my best to this team," said Kean. "I was convinced to sign because Everton is a club looking to the future and so am I." Everton manager Marco Silva said: "A striker was one of our priority signings this summer."

"Moise is strong, fast, with many good qualities as a striker and he is just 19 years old. He has talent and he is ready to work, ready to improve our squad and gives us different solutions." Everton, who finished eighth in the Premier League last season, open their new campaign away to Crystal Palace on Saturday.

Elsewhere, AC Milan yesterday announced the signing of French-born Algerian midfielder Ismael Bennacer, named player of the tournament at the recently concluded Africa Cup of Nations won by the North African side. Bennacer, who played for the French under-18 and -19 teams before switching allegiance to Algeria in 2016, joins the Milan club from fellow Serie A side Empoli on a five-year contract.

He has won 16 caps for Algeria, including seven at the Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt, where his team beat Senegal in the final. — AFP

Arsenal: Diminishing returns lead to reduced expectations

LONDON: Arsenal's failure to qualify for the Champions League for a third successive season, compounded by an underwhelming transfer window, has left the Gunners facing a turbulent campaign. Here, AFP Sport takes a closer look at the issues that will determine whether Unai Emery's side can turn the tide:

What to expect:

Arsenal's status as huge outsiders to win the Premier League title reflects how far they have fallen in recent years, but the more pertinent question is whether they have lost more ground in the fight to end their Champions League exile. Finishing in the top four proved beyond Emery in his first season at the Emirates Stadium, with a fatal late dip seeing them limp into fifth place, one point behind arch rivals Tottenham.

A humiliating 4-1 thrashing against Chelsea in the Europa League final erased their last hope of reaching the Champions League and triggered a summer of recriminations. It is now 15 years since Arsenal last won the Premier League and angry fans have taken to protesting against owner Stan Kroenke amid calls for "better leadership", threatening to make for a toxic atmosphere at the Emirates unless the Gunners get off to a fast start.

Kroenke's son Josh — a leading figure in Arsenal's boardroom — insists they will eventually challenge for major honours again and the club record £72 million signing of Lille winger Nicolas Pepe was a welcome statement of intent. But, with Aaron Ramsey moving onto Juventus and a leaky defence still not fixed, Emery still has his work cut out to lift the gloom.

New faces:

Without the lure of Champions League action to attract big names to north London, Emery had endured a difficult time in the transfer market until the Gunners persuaded Lille to accept their pay-in-installments offer for Pepe that reportedly spreads the cost of the deal over five years. Ivory Coast star Pepe has the pace and predatory instincts to form a formidable attacking trio



ANGERS: Arsenal team players react during the shootout session of the International friendly football match between Angers SCO and Arsenal FC, at the Raymond-Kopa Stadium. — AFP

with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Alexandre Lacazette.

Emery's most intriguing signing before that coup was Dani Ceballos, the Spanish midfielder who arrived on a season-long loan from Real Madrid. Ceballos, 22, struggled to make an impact at Real after initially being earmarked as a future star. The Gunners also brought in 18-year-old Brazilian forward Gabriel Martinelli for £6 million, a move that bore the stamp of Arsenal's new technical director Edu, who played for the club during their title-winning 'Invincibles' era.

Key man:

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang finished as the Premier League's joint top-scorer with 22 goals and the Gabon striker will have to maintain that prolific form if Arsenal

are to erase the bitter taste of last season's swoon. Aubameyang's flamboyant personality and potent combination of pace and predatory finishing make him one of Arsenal's few genuine stars.

But, despite 31 goals in all competitions, even the 30-year-old wasn't completely blameless, with some anonymous displays leaving strike partner Alexandre Lacazette isolated and persuading Emery to move him to the flanks at times. Aubameyang was even linked with a summer move to Manchester United amid reports Emery was willing to sacrifice the former Borussia Dortmund player if Arsenal were able to recoup the £56 million they spent to sign him in January 2018. For now, Aubameyang remains a fixture in Emery's team and getting the best out of him must be top of the manager's to-do list. — AFP

Benitez beware as Chinese clubs go on sacking spree

SHANGHAI: Rafael Benitez's arrival grabbed the headlines but Chinese Super League teams have sent the managerial merry-go-round into hyperspeed with five of the 16 clubs making changes in one month. CSL clubs appear to have lost their nerve as they enter the final third of the season with the championship and relegation fights too close to call.

The biggest shock came on Wednesday when Beijing Guoan axed the German Roger Schmidt and named Bruno Genesio as his replacement. The 52-year-old Schmidt can feel particularly aggrieved with Guoan third in the CSL, just four points off leaders Guangzhou Evergrande. The former Bayer Leverkusen coach inspired Guoan to FA Cup glory last season and the capital club began the season with a record 10 CSL victories in a row.

But Guoan moved ruthlessly to replace him with former Lyon manager Genesio following a third defeat in a row in all competitions. "Professional football is so cruel," correspondent Yuan Fang wrote in the respected Oriental Sports Daily on Friday. "High income is accompanied by high risks and high pressure." Yuan and other Chinese media said there had been murmurs of discontent with Schmidt's intense training methods, and a feeling that some players were underperforming.

Summing up the thinking at Guoan, Yuan wrote: "Changing coaches means a chance of winning the title, but if you don't change, the championship is gone." Genesio was given a contract until the end of the season, giving him 10 matches to reignite Beijing's title charge — or likely follow Schmidt out of the door. Schmidt's surprise dismissal is a reminder to Champions League winner Benitez that Chinese clubs will not hesitate to bring down the axe.

The Spaniard has, however, made a good start at Dalian Yifang, winning four of his six matches and taking them into mid-table safety. Benitez's predecessor Choi Kang-hee replaced Quique Sanchez Flores at Shanghai Shenhua, who under the former Walford manager found themselves in a relegation fight. — AFP

25 Asian Schoolboy Boxing Championship opening ceremony, fights from day 1

26 Hamilton denies Verstappen in thrilling Hungarian Grand Prix

27 Sancho shines as Dortmund deny Bayern fourth straight Super Cup



LONDON: Manchester City players celebrate during the presentation of the trophy after winning the English FA Community Shield football match between Manchester City and Liverpool at Wembley Stadium. —AFP

City draws first blood against Liverpool

Close contest sees City snatching Community Shield in a penalty shoot-out

LONDON: Manchester City fired the first shot in their battle for supremacy with rivals Liverpool on Sunday as they snatched the Community Shield with a 5-4 penalty shoot-out win after a 1-1 draw at Wembley. Raheem Sterling gave City a first half lead before Joel Matip grabbed a late equalizer for Liverpool in the annual curtain-raiser to the English top-flight season.

In the shoot-out, City keeper Claudio Bravo saved from Georginio Wijnaldum, with Gabriel Jesus driving in the winning kick after successful efforts from Ilkay Gundogan, Bernardo Silva, Phil Foden and Aleksandr Zinchenko. The jubilant celebrations from City's players and fans showed inflicting an early psychological blow on Liverpool was a moment to savor, regardless of the supposed warm-up status of the glamour friendly.

"An incredible final from both sides. We

had real good moments, but in the last 15 minutes we were exhausted and they had chances to win the game," Guardiola said. "It was a good test for both teams. It's nice for the players to realize what they will face this season. "At this level the difference is nothing, just one penalty. The first title of the season is ours."

With City installed as favorites to win the title for a third successive season and Liverpool expected to present the strongest challenge to Pep Guardiola's side, their meeting on the eve of the season was a window into what to expect this term. After pipping Liverpool to last season's Premier League title with 98 points to their rivals' 97, City went on to complete an unprecedented domestic treble by adding the FA Cup to the League Cup they won earlier in the campaign. But Jurgen Klopp's men didn't dwell

on that painful near-miss as they won the Champions League just weeks later.

On the evidence of this hard-fought contest, which featured both flashes of quality and signs of rustiness, there will little to separate the two teams as they go head-to-head for the major prizes once again over the next 10 months. Retaining the Community Shield trophy they won 12 months ago would improve City's belief that they can repeat last season's remarkable silverware haul, but Liverpool could take encouragement as well after they finished strongly enough to have won. The only dark cloud for City was an injury to Bayern Munich target Leroy Sane, who limped off in the 10th minute holding his right leg. City's victory was a well-timed riposte for Guardiola, who this week hit back at Klopp's claim that the champions live in a transfer "fantasy land".

City flex muscles

Guardiola gave a debut to Spain midfielder Rodri, who joined from Atletico Madrid for a club record £63 million (69 million euros) in the close-season. And the 23-year-old's composed passing and physical presence showed why City's financial muscles have been flexed again.

Sterling hadn't scored in his last 10 appearances against Liverpool in all competitions, but the England winger ended that drought in the 12th minute. Kyle Walker's high pass to the far post caught Liverpool appealing in vain for offside as Kevin De Bruyne headed on to David Silva. Silva flicked towards Sterling and his close-range effort was just strong enough to escape the grasp of Reds keeper Alisson Becker and trickle over the line.

Much improved after the interval, Liverpool were inches away from equalizing

when Virgil van Dijk's half-volley crashed down off the crossbar onto the goal line before City scrambled clear. Salah was by far Liverpool's most menacing player and he twisted away from the City defense before firing a fierce strike that cannoned off the outside of the post. Guardiola had his head in his hands in frustration when Sterling again ran clear on goal without scoring as his hesitant stumble allowed Alisson to save at his feet.

City paid for that miss when Liverpool deservedly equalised in the 77th minute. Van Dijk helping on Jordan Henderson's free-kick before substitute Matip headed in from close-range. Walker's incredible over-head-kick clearance then repelled what looked to be a late Salah winner, setting up City's shoot-out triumph that stood as the opening salvo in what looks set to be a season-long feud. —AFP

Marquez extends lead with 50th career race win at Czech MotoGP

BRNO: Honda's Marc Marquez claimed his 50th career race win with victory at the Czech MotoGP yesterday after the race had originally been delayed by 45 minutes due to rain. Spain's defending champion beat Ducati's Italian Andrea Dovizioso by 2.4sec to extend his advantage at the top of the riders' standings to 63 points with his sixth triumph of the season.

"I was really concentrating from the beginning because there was some wet patches on turn one but I decided to start and keep my rhythm," Marquez, 26, told broadcaster BT Sport. "I saw 'Dovi' was behind me and I kept pushing and pushing and pushing. "I am very happy, it was a crazy weekend," he added. Australian Jack Miller pipped Alex Rins to third spot for his second podium of the campaign in a race cut by one lap due to adverse weather conditions.

"This is definitely the better one (podium), it was

nice to fight at the end," Millar said. "I saw Rins' rear tyre was spinning so I just bided my time, waited and waited and he was really struggling," the 24-year-old added. Eight-time world champion Valentino Rossi was sixth and trails Marquez by 110 points in the overall standings. Rins had accused fellow countryman Marquez of having 'no respect' for other riders after coming together with the five-time world champion during Saturday's qualifying. Suzuki's Rins was angered by what he saw as Marquez altering his line and making contact with him during the second session of the day. His team had also filed a complaint against Marquez echoing their rider's comments but race organizers decide against taking further action.

Magic Marquez brothers

Earlier in the day, Marc's brother Alex also made the most of pole position to dominate the Moto2 to register his fifth win of the season. The Kalex rider, who was on hand to embrace Marc after his MotoGP win, now heads the Moto2 championship standings on 161 points, 33 clear of his Swiss teammate Thomas Luthi. Luthi had to retire from the race in Brno after a fall 16 laps from the end.

Marquez, 23, crossed the line more than three seconds up on Italy's Fabio Di Giannantonio with Enea Bastianini in third. In Moto3, Aron Canet won his second race of the season to retake the championship



BRNO: Repsol Honda Team's Spanish rider Marc Marquez (L), Mission Winnow Ducati's Italian rider Andrea Dovizioso and Suzuki Ecstar's Spanish rider Alex Rins compete during the Moto GP Czech Grand Prix. —AFP

lead. The Spanish KTM rider, who started sixth on the grid, heads the standings by three points from Honda's Lorenzo Dalla Porta, who finished second in this 10th

leg of the season. The 11th Grand Prix of the 19-race season takes place in Austria on August 11, a circuit where Marc Marquez has never won. —AFP