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Anti-graft body refers official to prosecution on bribery charges

Assembly rain panel insists probe exhaustive, denies shielding anyone

USA beat Netherlands to retain World Cup



LYON: USA's players celebrate with the trophy after the France 2019 Women's World Cup football final match between USA and the Netherlands yesterday at the Lyon Stadium. — AFP (See Page 28)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) referred yesterday an official - without disclosing his name, position, or the entity he worked for - to the public prosecution on the charge of accepting a bribe. Nazaha spokesman and assistant secretary Mohammad Bouzber said in a press release that this case is considered the first of its kind.

The authority said in a statement that it had received a complaint backed by documents against the official and conducted its own investigation, including interrogating the official. The statement said the official failed to justify the larger-than-usual funds that were deposited into his bank accounts and also failed to justify overspending in his government department. Nazaha affirmed that it will continue its work on fighting corruption by following leads and investigating suspicious and illicit acts.

Meanwhile, the head of the National Assembly committee to investigate damage from last year's heavy rains MP Adel Al-Damkhi yesterday defended the probe's report, saying it is complete and includes full details. Damkhi's comments were made after the report was criticized as lacking important information



that could be used to indict some companies and their owners.

MP Ahmad Al-Fadhl said yesterday that the report does not include important information provided by the Audit Bureau, which directly accused some companies by name. But Damkhi insisted that the report is not brief, did not ignore any facts and has held a number of senior officials responsible for the massive damage that impacted several residential areas in November.

The committee was formed by the Assembly after heavy torrential rains lashed several residential areas, especially Sabah Al-Ahmad, causing heavy damage and losses to property.

Continued on Page 24

Interior ministry eases dependent visa transfers

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Well-informed security sources said the interior ministry's residency affairs department has given the manpower authority the green light to immediately transfer expats' dependent residencies to work visas without checking with it. The sources explained that the new decision will help accelerate procedures by allowing transfers from article 22 to article 18 for expats reaching the age of 21, which will save the time that used to be wasted to complete the procedure.

Oman diplomat meets Assad in rare Syria visit

MUSCAT: Oman's top diplomat met yesterday with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad in Damascus, Muscat said, in the Gulf official's second visit to the war-ravaged country since conflict broke out in 2011. Assad met with Oman's state minister for foreign affairs Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah to discuss bilateral relations and regional security, the sultanate's foreign ministry said in a statement. It added that Abdullah also met with his Syrian counterpart, Walid Muallem.

Oman is one of the few Arab states to have maintained ties with Damascus over the past eight years. Syria was suspended from the Arab League in 2011 for its deadly crackdown on an uprising against Assad's

No travel ban for minor debts

KUWAIT: Judges at the justice ministry's verdict execution department rejected pleas by local companies to summon or impose travel bans on Kuwaitis indebted to them with small amounts ranging between KD 100 and 200, which had been causing them embarrassment at the airport for years. A well-informed source said the cancellation has been in effect for two weeks now, as judges believe that Kuwaitis will not flee the country to avoid paying such small amounts.

The sources added that local companies' representatives met the department inquiring about rejecting their travel ban requests and were told that the rejection was made on purely legal grounds, taking into consideration that travel bans and summon warrants are restrictive and exceptional measures that should not be overused to avoid violating individual freedoms without due cause. — Al-Qabas



DAMASCUS: Omani Foreign Minister Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah meets Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad yesterday. — AFP

rule, and fellow Arab countries, including Gulf powerhouse Saudi Arabia, have supported the opposition.

Oman's Sultan Qaboos adheres to a strict policy of non-interference in regional affairs,

Continued on Page 24

Fallout runs deep as Salah, Egypt flop at Cup of Nations

CAIRO: After his tale of redemption with Liverpool this season, Mohamed Salah was instead left in disbelief once more as Egypt crashed out of their own Africa Cup of Nations, an exit that triggered an immediate clear-out within the country's football association. While Salah helped lead his club to a sixth European Cup triumph in June, a year on from an injury forcing him out of the final, he was powerless to stop the Pharaohs suffering humiliation on the international stage for the second time in 12 months.

The forward arrived here full of promise - his mood and fitness in sharp contrast to this time last June

Continued on Page 24



CAIRO: Egypt's forward Mohamed Salah reacts during the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations round of 16 match between Egypt and South Africa at Cairo International Stadium on Saturday. — AFP (See Page 27)

CONDOLENCES

Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief,
management and staff convey their
deepest condolences to

Al-Awadhi Family

on the sad demise of
**Dr. Abdul Rahman
Al-Awadhi**

(KJA member and Hayatona
Magazine's editor-in-chief)

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on him

Amir wishes new Olympic committee success in serving Kuwaiti sports

Amir, Crown Prince meet new National Olympic Committee Chairman, members



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, National Olympic Committee (NOC) Chairman Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the committee's members. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, National Olympic Committee (NOC) Chairman Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the committee's members.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, National Olympic Committee (NOC) Chairman Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the committee's members.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri, who escorted National Olympic Committee (NOC) Chairman Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the committee's members on the occasion of winning elections of the committee's administrative council. His Highness the Amir congratulated them, wishing them success in serving Kuwaiti sports by providing the appropriate environment for athletes to accomplish achievements. Meanwhile, Minister Jabri expressed gratitude to His Highness the Amir for contributing in solving the sport crisis, lauding all efforts exerted as well, either on official or parliamentary levels. NOC Chairman Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, in a similar speech, congratulated the political leadership on lifting the ban off Kuwaiti sports, promising to

provide utmost support for Kuwaiti athletes. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Jabri, who escorted Chairman and Director General of the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Dr Humoud Fulaiteh Al-Shammeri, Vice Chairman Saqer Al-Mulla, NOC Chairman Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, and NOC members. The reception came on the occasion of lifting the ban off Kuwaiti sports by the IOC. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf congratulated the audience, lauding efforts of both the executive and legislative

branches, as well as all concerned bodies that contributed in such outcome. His Highness wished Kuwaiti sports more success and progress under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received Jabri and the senior Kuwaiti sport's delegation. During the reception, His Highness the Premier hailed His Highness the Amir's continued support to governmental and parliamentary plan to lift the suspension off Kuwaiti sport activities. His Highness stressed that

the government will spare no effort to support the sports and youth activities. He also praised the role played by government and parliamentary officials in the efforts exerted to achieve this decision. Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister and First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh. —KUNA

“ Provide environment for athletes to accomplish achievements ”



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Olympic Committee (NOC) Chairman Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri.



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.



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



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 Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.



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 First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Local

Ministry to retire 63 senior employees to create jobs for Kuwaiti jobseekers

6,013 Kuwaitis nominated for public sector jobs this year

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) recently referred 63 senior employees to retirement, said informed sources, noting that this is the second group of MoCI retirees after the minister previously referred 13 employees to retirement. Further, the sources said a new list of retirees will be announced soon, including a director, heads of sections and supervisors, in implementation of the Cabinet's decision of referring employees with at least 30 years in service to retirement to help create job opportunities for younger generations.

Meanwhile, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel said that the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has nominated 6,013 Kuwaitis for jobs in the public sector this year, adding that the total number of citizens nominated to work for the government since 1999 is 236,085. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry, Aqeel explained that 21,879 citizens were nominated for work last year compared to 20,615 in 2017 and 18,027 in 2016.

New weighing system

In other news, MoCI plans to introduce a new standard weighing system at shops around Kuwait in response to recent complaints about possible misconduct at various outlets. Informed sources said that the ministry is currently considering issuing 'revolutionary decisions' concerning weighing solid and liquid consumer goods at various outlets, noting that the new decision is likely to be made within two months by replacing the old manual inaccurate electronic scales with French weighing systems and mandating all outlets to use them by the beginning of 2020.

The French weighing system measures the size of products, said the sources, adding that it will be used with foodstuff,



The Civil Service Commission.

vegetables, meat, dairy products, gold, precious stones, oud and bakhour. The sources



Shops to adopt new standard weighing system

said specialized teams will be sent to various gas stations to check the pumps and

make sure they use the metric system and have new gauges. In addition, the sources said pints of sale that do not comply with the new decision would be graced for a period before subjecting them to strict penal measures.

Moreover, the sources said that in a bid to fight commercial fraud, MoCI inspection team will visit and inspect gold, diamond, precious stone, oud and bakhour outlets that use sensitive scales in response to some complaints that some salesmen point air conditioners to exposed sensitive scales, which places an additional pressure and adds 3-5 percent to the final price. "Sensitive scales must be put inside airtight glass boxes," explained the sources.

Truck driver hurt in Ghazali Road crash

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A half lorry driver was injured when his truck collided into a bus on Ghazali Road, said security sources, adding that the truck driver was trapped inside the wreckage. Firemen from Farwaniya rushed to the scene, where they managed to

free the driver and handed him over to paramedics, the sources added.

Meanwhile, a limited fire broke out yesterday in a storage area in a Fahaheel building, said security sources, noting that firemen from Fahaheel and Mangaf fire stations rushed to the scene, where they evacuated the entire building and managed to control the fire. Some tenants were rushed to hospital for treatment for smoke inhalation.

In a separate incident, a sailor was rushed to hospital for treatment from injuries he sustained when he fell from a high place inside the engine chamber of a ship docked at Shuaiba Port, said security sources, noting that Shuaiba marine fire brigade immediately rescued the sailor and sent him to hospital for treatment.



KUWAIT: The damaged half lorry seen after the accident on Ghazali Road.

Construction sites continue to defy work ban

KUWAIT: Kuwait Times continuous to monitor the implementation of a law banning outdoor work from June 1 to August 31. These photos show con-



struction work sites in Jabriya and Salmiya yesterday obviously defying the daily work ban period from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, ordered by Public Authority for Manpower (PAM). Most of these photos were taken between 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. According to the provisions of the private sector Labor Law No. 6/2010 and in compliance with international conventions, employers are ordered to stop work in open areas especially on the specific times mentioned by PAM. Yesterday's highest temperature recorded was 51 degrees Celsius in Kuwait. — Photos by Ben Garcia

CONDOLANCES

Chairman, Members of Board
and Members of
KUWAIT JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION (KJA)
& members of the entire journalists corps

announce the sad demise of
Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Awadhi

(Fellow journalist, KJA member and Hayatona Magazine's editor-in-chief)

who passed away on
Saturday, July 6, 2019

May Allah Almighty bestow His mercy on him



KUWAIT: Beautiful Islamic architecture inside Kuwait's Grand Mosque. — Photo by Ahmad Al-Fallakawi (KUNA)

Kuwait seeks better ties between regional bodies, UNSC: Diplomat

KUWAIT: Kuwait works on improving relations between regional organizations and the UN Security Council, the Arab Gulf country's envoy to the United Nations said, citing a session between Arab League and UNSC held in New York last month under Kuwait's presidency. Kuwait issued a statement by UNSC president aims at boosting relations between Arab League and the 15-member UNSC through once-a-year briefing by secretary general of the pan-Arab bloc to the Security Council, Permanent Representative Mansour Al-Otaibi said yesterday. The statement called for regular consultations between the two sides as well as setting up a UNSC office at the Cairo-based Arab League, Otaibi said in an interview.

Otaibi said arrangements were underway to organize a visit by UNSC members to the Arab League. He meanwhile said Kuwait supported UN efforts particularly in on humanitarian front, and noted Kuwait was among top donors to UN agencies. The humanitarian file, he said, was a top priority of Kuwait's foreign policy. He pointed out to around five million Syrian refugees and six million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Syria. Otaibi said Kuwait hosted three donor conferences to support the Syrian people, and participated in other conferences all aimed at alleviating suffering of Syrians. Kuwait pledged \$1.9 billion in all conferences, he said. Otaibi said Kuwait sought through its non-permanent UNSC membership to promote approach of mediation, solving conflicts via diplomacy, also known as preventive diplomacy, improving the way the Security Council operate by boosting transparency.

Missing persons

Asked about people missing in armed conflicts, Otaibi said this was a national cause and Kuwait was not the only country with missing citizens. More than 50,000 people are missing due to wars and conflicts, he said, prompting Kuwait to table UNSC resolution 2747 (2019) which aimed at strengthening protection of civilians in armed conflicts. This resolution, he explained, was one-of-a-kind legislative and legal tool over missing people. Attention to missing people usually happens after end of conflicts, he said. "The resolution means we deal with this issue throughout stages of conflicts not after they finish. Kuwait considers this issue a humanitarian cause which is a source of suffering of the international community," said Otaibi. The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and UNSC's five permanent members welcomed the draft resolution, he said, which encouraged Kuwait to table it.

On a related issue, Otaibi welcomed the efforts of the tripartite Commission, which had recently resulted in discovery of remains of people in southern Iraq "which we hope do belong to Kuwaiti citizens." Iraq's Defense Ministry said on July 1 it would hand over to Kuwaiti authorities samples of human remains that might belong to missing Kuwaiti citizens. The remains were found in two locations near Nuqrat Al-Salman area in southern Al-Muthanna Governorate, the ministry said in a statement. The ministry said the remains were exhumed and sent to



Mansour Al-Otaibi

laboratory in Baghdad to examine if they match DNA samples of families of missing Kuwaitis. On June 20, a joint statement by ICRC-affiliated Tripartite Commission announced recovery of the remains, offering hope for families of missing people from 1990-91 Gulf War. Kuwait and Iraq are the other Commission members.

Defending Arab causes

On Kuwait's UNSC membership, Otaibi said his country wanted to defend Arab causes like Palestine, Syrian and Yemeni crises. He said Kuwait and Sweden co-sponsored a resolution for a ceasefire in Eastern Ghouta, Syria, "but regrettably was not implemented." Another resolution sponsored by Kuwait to allow humanitarian aid delivery to around three million IDPs in Syria. Otaibi said Kuwait, Sweden, Netherlands and Cote

d'Ivoire sponsored a resolution about relation between hunger on one side, and peace and security on the other. On tension in the Arabian Gulf region following attacks on oil tankers, Otaibi said UNSC condemned these worrisome violations, which threatened international peace and security. Otaibi, who said an investigation was underway over the attacks, reaffirmed Kuwait's solidarity with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the wake of the assaults.

On Palestine, Otaibi called for implementation of relevant UNSC resolutions like halt of Jewish settlements, East Jerusalem being part of the Palestinian territories, and the two-state solution. "However, it is difficult to have a binding resolution against Israel because there are those who support it in the Security Council," he said. Otaibi commented on the recent visit by a delegation of the UNSC to Iraq, and said it aimed at extending support for Baghdad amidst security, economic, political and humanitarian challenges facing the Arab country. — KUNA

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Local

Zain Group launches 'WE ABLE' initiative, aiming to be Disability Inclusive by 2022

Brainchild of Vice-Chairman Bader Al-Kharafi, embracing Zain's highly impactful diversity



KUWAIT: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces the launch of its far-sighted Disability Inclusion initiative, WE ABLE, which is set to position Zain as being Disability Inclusive by 2022.

Supporting the program is Zain's entry as a signatory into the International Labor Organization (ILO) Global Business and Disability Network Charter, where as a member of the Network, Zain is committing to a group-wide plan. Zain's emphasis will be the development of an implementation plan that will act as a framework to guide the integration of people with disability into the company and include them in all facets of Zain's policies and culture.

According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), the unemployment rate in the MENA region for people with disabilities is as high as 86 percent for females and 66 percent for males. This high unemployment rate indicated to Zain's management the requirement to establish a clear framework to address the deficiency, while also highlighting the massive opportunity for the company to recruit people with disabilities to be part of Zain's 6,000 talented workforce.

WE ABLE is the brainchild of Zain Vice-Chairman and Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi, complementing the compa-

ny's Gender Diversity and Inclusion program. The immediate aim of the Disability Inclusion initiative is to achieve the following:

1. Increase the number of people who suffer with disabilities within the Zain workforce by 2022
2. Ensure all training programs are Disability Inclusive by 2022
3. Guarantee that accessibility across all Zain touch points are Disability Inclusive by 2022
4. Identify innovative and assistive technologies enabling more people with disabilities to join the company and succeed

Commenting on the new initiative, Bader Al-Kharafi said, "Zain's influential role in society means we must maintain our pioneering outlook with respect to creating positive change in the workplace and in all other areas of our activities. We are proud to stand as an example for other corporates to follow and the implementation of the WE ABLE initiative reflects our commitment to develop and implement a sustainable Disability Inclusion program. We believe it is high time that the contributions that people with disabilities are able to make in our workforces and in society in general be recognized, and we are pleased to have the opportunity to raise awareness in this

area through our words and more importantly through our actions." Kharafi continued, "Zain has decided to position the introduction and development of disability issues within the workplace as a priority task that is part of our Diversification & Inclusion vision, and we will work with organizations and partners who are experts in this field to further strengthen this new strategy."

Zain's Disability Inclusion program will adopt commitments 5, 6, 9 and 10 from the ILO Global Business and Disability Network Charter as detailed below:

5. Open up routes to economic empowerment and financial inclusion so that persons with disabilities can enjoy decent work and achieve financial independence. This will mean creating more and better jobs, providing social protection, ensuring the necessary skills training, making workplaces accessible and hiring people with disabilities.

6. Revolutionize the availability and affordability of appropriate assistive technology, including digital, which will enable persons with disabilities to fully participate and contribute to society.

9. Gather and use better data and evidence to understand and address the scale, and nature, of challenges faced by persons with disabilities, using tested tools

including the Washington Group Disability Question Sets.

10. Hold ourselves and others to account for the promises we have made here today. We agree that our individual commitments will be reviewed, assessed and published on a regular basis, with the results published online.

Maryam Saif, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at Zain Group said, "We have reflected on this issue of Disability Inclusion for some time and concluded that as an organization we need to further develop and promote this area in the workplace. We are delighted to launch this initiative that builds on Zain's Diversity and Inclusion achievements and activities."

Saif continued, "We have spent the first two quarters of this year preparing for our approach to Disability Inclusion in our region. With collective research, feedback and advice from people with disabilities and representative organizations, we are implementing our strategy, with an emphasis on the development of a framework that will guide the integration of people with disabilities into our company policies and culture." Many countries across the MENA region have minimum quotas on the percentage of employees with disabilities, and Zain is committed to fulfilling and exceeding current quotas as well as investing in the training and further development of affected individuals.

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Rattled nerves, minor damage from second major S California quake

Sri Lanka on alert as Buddhist hardliners hold meeting

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د سولې لپاره بين الافغاني کنفرانس

کنفرانس بين الافغاني برای صلح

Intra-Afghan Conference for Peace

۷-۸ يوليو ۲۰۱۹ / 7-8 July 2019

الدوحة - قطر

Doha - Qatar

DOHA: Markus Potzel, second left, Germany's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Mutlaq bin Majid al-Qahtani, second right, the special envoy of the Qatari Foreign Minister for Terrorism and Mediation in the Settlement of Disputes, attend the Intra Afghan Dialogue talks in the Qatari capital Doha. —AFP

At least 14 dead in Taliban blast

Afghan foes meet in bid to secure peace

KABUL: A Taliban attack on a government security compound in central Afghanistan yesterday killed at least 14 people and wounded more than 180, including scores of children, hours before a meeting in Qatar aimed at preparing the ground for peace talks. Islamist Taliban fighters detonated a car bomb in Ghazni city near an office of Afghanistan's main intelligence service, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), during yesterday morning's rush hour, officials said.

The Taliban claimed responsibility, saying in a statement dozens of NDS officers were killed or wounded. The attack took place as Taliban officials and a selected group of Afghan activists and civil society figures prepared to meet in Doha, casting a pall over talks intended to open the way for full peace negotiations in the future. "It is unfathomable to endanger children in this way and I strongly condemn this attack," US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, said in a tweet.

Health officials in Ghazni said 13 adults, including eight NDS members, and a child were killed. At least 60 children who were attending classes in a private school situated near the blast site were among the 180 people wounded. Doors and windows of the school were destroyed in the powerful explosion, the children suffered multiple injuries caused by flying shards of glass and broken pieces of wood. "The casualty fig-

ures may rise as this is not the last report of those injured in the powerful blast," said Zaher Shah Nekmal, a health director in Ghazni province.

The blast in a crowded area of Ghazni city was the latest in a wave of near-daily attacks by the Taliban, who now hold sway over about half of Afghanistan and continue to intensify attacks on Afghan forces despite increased U.S. efforts towards a peace agreement to end the 18-year war.

Intra-Afghan summit in Qatar

The Taliban, who have repeatedly refused to negotiate with the Western-backed government of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, agreed to join the intra-Afghan summit on the condition that those there would attend in a personal capacity. About 60 high-profile Afghan figures and activists were in Doha to meet the Taliban officials during the two-day conference, a meeting arranged by German and Qatari officials with the support of US negotiators.

Ghani condemned the Taliban bombing in Ghazni yesterday, and questioned their real intent as they hold talks in Qatar. "They stain their hands with the blood of innocent people in Afghanistan every day. They should know that it is not possible to gain privileges in peace talks by targeting civilians, especially children," he said in a statement. The intra-Afghan

talks follow the start of a seventh round of peace talks between US and Taliban negotiators in Doha last week, which Khalilzad described on Twitter on Saturday as the most productive session to date. The US-Taliban talks were put on hold while the intra-Afghan dialogue takes place.

He said substantive progress had been made on all four parts of a peace deal: counter-terrorism assurances, troop withdrawal, participation in intra-Afghan negotiations, and a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. Military conflict and attacks on civilians have intensified even as the diplomatic process gains momentum, triggering tremendous unease among some Afghans about the significance of holding peace talks with the Taliban.

Government officials in the southern provinces of Logar and Helmand said the Afghan forces had conducted several air strikes on Taliban hideouts in the last 36 hours, killing over 30 insurgents. The Taliban took responsibility for detonating a car bomb at the start of a lengthy gun fight outside a defense ministry compound in the capital, Kabul, last week. Six people were killed and more than 100 civilians, including 60 children, were wounded in that attack.

In western Ghor province, a landmine explosion killed seven children and wounded one on Saturday, officials said. The blast occurred when children



GHAZNI: A dead dog lays on the ground as Afghan security personnel arrive at the site of a car bomb attack that targeted an intelligence unit in Ghazni. —AFP

stepped accidentally walked over a landmine. The insurgents often place landmines to target Afghan security forces, but the lethal weapons also inflict casualties on civilians. According to the United Nations, 3,804 civilians-including more than 900 children-were killed in Afghanistan in 2018, with another 7,000 wounded. It was the deadliest year to date for civilians in Afghanistan's conflict. —Reuters

Heatwave adds to the woes of migrants stranded in Bosnia

BIHAC: Stranded in Bosnia, thousands of migrants face yet one more hurdle on their journey towards the European Union: the scorching summer heat in the Balkans. Under a leaden sky, Saleh Alhasan and his friends hurry to reach the shade of the woods after failing yet again to cross the border to Croatia, the last barrier on the long and tortuous road into the European Union.

"I tried more than 15 times... It has been 10 months that I try to pass. And I do not want to give up. I just want to see my son" born in Sweden, says the 33-year old Syrian architect. "I only saw him in a photo." His wife was among hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees who took the so-called Balkans route in 2015, before the EU borders closed for them.

On a dusty road, Saleh and his compan-

ions pass by red signs hanging on trees, warning that the field is mined: a legacy of the country's brutal 1992-1995 war. They stop at a stream to refresh themselves, exhausted after walking in temperatures exceeding 35 Celsius degrees.

The men no longer know where to rest. In Bihac and Velika Kladusa near the Croatian border, reception centers with a capacity for 3,500 run by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) are full. Saleh and his friends live in unhealthy squats. He wants to return to Sarajevo where, he says, "there are more options" for a fresh attempt to cross the border.

Tensions with locals

The flow of newcomers slowed during winter but has now resumed and "a hundred migrants arrive daily in the canton" of Bihac, says regional police spokesman Ale Siljdedic. "But recently far fewer people succeed in crossing the border. Croatia has considerably reinforced its police presence," he adds. According to Bosnia's security minister, more than 34,000 migrants from Asia and Africa have illegally entered the country since the beginning of 2018, 11,000 of them this year alone.

Some 8,000 are currently in Bosnia, according to European Commission estimates. This has caused tensions both among

migrants of different nationalities and with locals, who are also poor. Recently, hundreds of migrants occupied public spaces in the town of Bihac, which is home to some 65,000 people. With the help of the local Red Cross, the authorities in June set up a camp in Vucjak, an uninhabited zone a dozen kilometers from the border, to accommodate migrants who have not found a place in IOM centers. But according to the United Nations, the zone around this camp is also "very close" to minefields.

The jungle

The EU finances the IOM centers, but it has refused to provide funds for the Vucjak camp because "it is not a suitable location and presents a clear danger" for those staying there. Bihac mayor Suhret Fazlic says the problem is the facility is too close to the border. Nicolas Bizel, head of operations at the EU delegation in Bosnia told AFP that this was not the main issue. His concern was that it was too close to unexploded wartime mines and that there was also a risk of a methane explosion because the zone used to be a landfill site.

This camp became know as "The Jungle" by its occupants-like the one that sprang up in the northern French port city of Calais, before being torn down in 2016. Several hundred young men live there in deplorable



BIHAC: A migrant drinks water from a fountain, at camp the 'Vucjak' migrants and refugees camp, on the outskirts of the city of Bihac, in Northern Bosnia. —AFP

sanitary conditions, sleeping in tents without beds, without medical assistance, showers or toilets. Several barrels equipped with faucets provide minimal hygiene facilities. "It is too hot. We could not rest in the

tents," said Suleman Ashraf, a 29-year-old Pakistani trying to get to Spain to join his brother. The food that arrives twice a day is everything we have here. Some water as well and we survive with that." —AFP

International

Syrians, facing orders to demolish homes, fear fate in Lebanon

Lebanese politicians ramp up calls for Syrians to leave

ARSAL, Lebanon: Dima al-Kanj's house is now a pile of rubble and twisted metal. It was just a concrete hut near the Lebanese border, but she had spent five years trying to make it cozy for her children after fleeing the war in Syria. Then, under army orders, she had to smash it. "Every year, we fixed up one thing after another so that we could live in what you'd call a home," she said, standing in the room leveled to the ground in the remote Lebanese town of Arsal. "Now, there's nothing left."

Kanj is among thousands of Syrian refugees who will be left stranded by a government decision to dismantle "semi-permanent structures" in eastern Lebanon, aid agencies say. At least 15,000 children could become homeless. Lebanon is toughening enforcement of work and housing rules - some of which were ignored for years - on its more than 1 million Syrian refugees. Lebanese politicians have also ramped up their calls for the Syrians to leave.

The army demolished at least 20 refugee homes on Monday, seven global aid agencies said. In the makeshift Arsal camp where Kanj lives, home to 450 people, refugees said the army arrived at dawn with a small bulldozer taking down a few shelters. Soldiers came again two days later as a reminder that people must remove their concrete walls and metal roofs. Kanj, 30, has since paid men from a nearby camp to knock down her hut with jackhammers. She preferred to do it herself than face a forcible demolition.

She and her four small children are now crammed into their neighbor's hut across the dirt road with a dozen people. "We're all sitting inside the same room on top of each other with our stuff," she said. "We can't rent a place or leave or do anything at all." People at the camp said they would follow the rules but have found it hard to meet deadlines and

find money for equipment. They must also get rid of the rubble.

Some worry they will not manage to cobble together the permitted tents from wood and plastic sheeting, which would barely shield them from Arsal's harsh winter. The military first told them of the order some two months ago and has since allowed grace periods. The army has not commented on the demolitions, but a military source said the forces were executing a legal regulation. "Of course, we're scared of the future," Kanj said. "God knows what more decisions (authorities) will come up with next."

Start from scratch

Human Rights Watch described the shelter order as "one of many recent actions to crank up pressure on Syrian refugees to go back." These include more arrests, deportations, shop closures, curfews, evictions and other measures in the past months, it said on Friday. Some Lebanese officials have called the mainly Sunni refugees a threat to Lebanon, warning the concrete huts would lead to their lasting settlement.

It is a thorny topic in a country with a fragile sectarian political system where informal settlements of Palestinians have expanded after they came decades ago. Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil, the president's son-in-law, has pushed hard for Syrians to go home, insisting they should not wait for an elusive peace deal to end the war. Last month, he said town councils could get refugees to leave by "implementing the law and protecting public order".

But activists accuse his party and other politicians of fueling hostility towards refugees and blaming them for Lebanon's long-existing problems. Abou Firas, a Syrian refugee who oversees the same Arsal camp, said they would leave if they could. As fighting died



ARSAL: Syrian refugee kids play with toys inside a room at a makeshift Syrian refugee camp in the Lebanese border town of Arsal, Lebanon. —Reuters

down and Damascus reclaimed much of Syria, tens of thousands of refugees have returned, Lebanese authorities say.

Still, aid agencies say many have fears about going home, including reprisals, military conscription, loss of property, or fresh waves of violence. "There's a lot of

uncertainty about our fate," said Abou Firas, who must demolish his family's hut too. "We don't intend on permanently settling here." "This room becomes a part of you," he added. "You put effort into fixing it up ... and suddenly you find yourself having to start from scratch." —Reuters

Thousands march across Europe for Gay Pride

MADRID: Four hundred thousand people turned out on the streets of Madrid Saturday for a Gay Pride parade dedicated this year to pioneers of the LGBT+ cause, amid growing fears of fresh repression with the rise of the far-right in Europe. The marchers converged on the Spanish capital's main Atocha train station for the start of the festivities. The 400,000 figure was later given by police.

The slogan for this year's march was "History, struggle and memory" and participants marked 50 years since the Stonewall riots in New York in 1969 which were the foundation of the gay rights movement worldwide. Catholic Spain at the time was controlled by dictator General Francisco Franco and homosexual acts were illegal. Thousands of gay people were shipped off to rehabilitation centers or even jailed.

Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1978, three years after Franco's death, since when Spain has become one of the most LGBT-tolerant countries in the world, authorizing gay marriage and adoptions by gay couples in 2005. "I'm 53 years old and I have suffered," said Manuel Carmona, carrying a large rainbow flag for Saturday's march. "But those who are 63-years-old suffered more and those who are 73-years-old even more and I want us to recognize these people who have helped us," added Carmona, who has been attending the pride march for 30 years.

Resurgent homophobia

Madrid's city hall swung to the right in June after a conservative candidate was elected mayor with the support of newly-emerged far-right party Vox, in a move that has caused concern in Spain. Vox has said that the Madrid Gay Pride Parade should be moved to a park in the suburbs and opposes public subsidies for the event. "They do not want to understand that when we talk about LGBT rights, we are talking about human



MADRID: Members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community take part in the annual Pride parade in Madrid. —AFP

rights," said Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska, who is himself gay and took part in the march.

Activists say organized opposition against LGBT rights is growing across the continent, with populist politicians in Poland, Hungary and other European countries presenting gay rights as a threat to family values. Resurgent homophobia made the headlines in Britain recently after a lesbian couple became the high-profile victims of a homophobic attack after refusing to kiss for a gang of youths on a London night bus. The couple joined the annual Pride march through the heart of the British capital Saturday, which organizers said

drew hundreds of thousands.

In the Hungarian capital Budapest, marchers carried rainbow banners and flew balloons at a rally that passed from parliament through the city centre. Meanwhile, bishops in conservative, Catholic-majority Poland on Saturday denounced Swedish furniture giant Ikea for what they called "LGBT indoctrination" after an employee was sacked for refusing to take down a homophobic comment he had posted on the firm's internal website. The bishops congratulated the man who had quoted passages from the Old Testament in the post-on his "courage" in defending his faith in everyday life in an "exemplary" way. —AFP

Indonesia issues tsunami warning after 6.9 quake

JAKARTA: A strong, magnitude 6.9 earthquake struck off Indonesia yesterday, the US Geological Survey reported, triggering a tsunami warning and sending panicked residents fleeing from their homes. The quake struck at a depth of 24 kilometers and was centered in the Molucca Sea between north Sulawesi and north Maluku, according to the USGS. Indonesia's geophysics agency issued a tsunami warning for coastal communities nearby.

There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties, but residents in the city of Ternate in North Maluku province described the panic when the quake hit. "I was getting ready to sleep when the window started rattling," resident Budi Nurgianto told AFP. "It was very strong—I ran from my house and all my neighbors fled too." According to the USGS, considerable damage was possible in poorly built or badly designed structures.

Indonesia is one of the most disaster-hit nations on Earth due to its position straddling the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, where tectonic plates collide. It has been hit by a string of deadly quakes including a devastating 2004 tremor measuring 9.1 magnitude that struck off the coast of Sumatra and triggered a tsunami that killed 220,000 throughout the region, including 168,000 in Indonesia.

The Boxing Day disaster was the world's third biggest quake since 1900, and lifted the ocean floor in some places by 15 meters. Indonesia's Aceh province is the hardest hit area, but the tsunami affects coastal areas as far away as Africa. Last year, a 7.5-magnitude quake and a subsequent tsunami in Palu on Sulawesi island killed more than 2,200 with a thousand more declared missing.—AFP

Bouteflika's ex-party chief detained in Algeria

ALGIERS: The former head of ousted Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika's party was placed in provisional detention yesterday on allegations including "squandering public money", state television said. Djamel Ould Abbes is suspected of "squandering public funds, procuring a contract in violation of... regulations, abuse of office and forgery of public documents."

Ould Abbes, ex-chief of the National Liberation Front (FLN) and a former minister, was placed in pre-



ALGIERS: This picture taken on Saturday shows members of Algerian political parties, civil society representatives and national personalities gathering for a meeting dubbed the "National Forum for Dialogue" at a hall at the School of Hotel and Restaurant Management in the suburb of Ain Benian. —AFP

ventative detention by the Supreme Court's investigating magistrate, state TV added. Several prominent politicians and businessmen linked to Bouteflika have been detained or questioned in connection with corruption since the ailing president was forced to step down in the face of mass protests in early April.

Demonstrations have continued since then, as protesters demand that regime insiders leave office as a precursor to independent institutions being set up. Ould Abbes' alleged transgressions date to his time as Minister of National Solidarity. The public prosecutor launched proceedings against him after he voluntarily gave up his parliamentary immunity. Ould Abbes held a succession of posts after Bouteflika took power in 1999. From 2013, he was a member of the upper house of Algeria's parliament, the Council of the Nation, and he headed the ruling FLN party between 2016 and 2018. —AFP

Iraq launches new operation to secure desert near Syria border

BAGHDAD: Iraq's military announced a new operation yesterday to secure the vast western desert leading to the Syrian border, amid fears jihadist sleeper cells were using the area to regroup. The operation, dubbed "Will of Victory", began early yesterday morning and would push to clear the remote territory between the provinces of Salahaddin, Nineveh and Anbar, a statement by the military said.

Iraqi armed forces, paramilitary units of the Shiite-dominated Hashed al-Shaabi, tribal groups and US-led coalition warplanes were all taking part, according to the statement. Iraq formally declared victory against the Islamic State group in late 2017, a few months after ousting the jihadists from their seat of power Mosul, the capital of Nineveh province. The group lost their last sliver of territory in Syria—a small desert hamlet near the Iraqi border—in March.

But IS sleeper cells have managed to keep up hit-and-run attacks in desolate parts of Iraq, targeting government checkpoints, public infrastructure and local officials. Iraq's security forces have targeted IS in several coalition-backed operations in recent months, including in the rugged Hamrin region north of Baghdad. In May, they armed tribal forces in several dozen villages in Nineveh province to defend themselves against insurgent attacks.—AFP

Gas explosion at US mall injures 21

PLANTATION: A powerful explosion from a suspected gas leak ripped through a shopping mall in Florida on Saturday, injuring 21 people, the fire department said. The explosion sent debris flying across the parking lot of the Fountain Plaza shopping center, damaging an LA Fitness gym, numerous cars and blowing holes in neighboring buildings in the city of Plantation, about 50 kilometers north of Miami.

"We got our workout in, picked up the kids, walked out, got in the car, drove away and as we drove away everything exploded. It was a pretty crazy scene," said Jessi Walasheck, who witnessed the explosion. Deputy fire chief Joel Gordon told reporters two of the injured were in serious condition after the blast, one of whom had potentially life-threatening injuries.

"We found patients scattered all around the debris area," he said, but added the injuries generally "are not as severe as what we thought they would be." His department initially called it a gas explosion and Gordon said ruptured gas lines were found in the debris, but the cause of the blast has not been confirmed. No one has been reported missing. "As bad it was, it could have been a lot worse," he said. A major avenue running past the mall was shut down as a rescuer aided by a dog combed through the wreckage —AFP

Mexico’s new National Guard in face-off with migrants

New security force created to bring down record homicide rates

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico: A convoy of Mexican state and municipal police trucks roared along the US-Mexico border in Ciudad Juarez to confront cartel gunmen, past National Guardsmen patrolling the banks of the Rio Grande River for migrants trying to cross into the United States. “We should be with them, not here. We’re soldiers,” one of three guardsmen in a green camouflage uniform grumbled to himself within earshot of a Reuters reporter. He was frustrated that orders kept him from going to back up police in the shootout with gangsters.

The National Guard is a new security force that was created by Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador to bring down record homicide rates. But now it has been tasked with patrolling the border to placate President Donald Trump, who has demanded Mexico stem the flow of US-bound Central Americans that pass through the country or risk tariffs on Mexican goods. If the deployment of some 21,000 National Guard troops at Mexico’s northern and southern borders can reduce the flow of migrants, Lopez Obrador will have successfully kept Trump’s tariffs at bay and averted opening up another front in the global trade war.

But using almost a third of the National Guard’s total ranks for migration duties means fewer security forces to tackle one of Mexico’s most pressing issues, spiraling violence, which last year cost a record 33,000

lives. Those numbers continued surging in the first six months of Lopez Obrador’s term in office, which began in December. In Juarez, where drug cartel murders are especially acute, many people wish the troops were helping fight crime instead.

The city across the border from El Paso, Texas has long been synonymous with cartel warfare, which pushed the murder rate to 244 per 100,000 residents by March 2011, according to data compiled by Juarez-based advocacy group Mesa de Seguridad y Justicia. With help from civil society groups and businesses, the city made hard-won gains to restore security, and by late 2015 the murder rate had been cut to 21 per 100,000, the group says, citing numbers from the attorney general’s office it corroborates independently.

Now, crime is climbing back towards levels last seen in the darkest days of the drug war, with homicides growing fivefold in the last three years to 107 per 100,000. “Murders, kidnappings, extortion have taken a back seat so the Mexican army can patrol the border,” said Juan Hernan Ortiz, director of Citizens for Better Government, a watchdog organization in Juarez that keeps tabs on the local government. The Mexican government did not respond to requests for comment on the criticism.

The National Guard in Juarez, mostly made up of active-duty soldiers equipped with ballistic helmets, body armor and assault rifles, is

identifiable by small arm bands emblazoned with the letters GN, for the Spanish words for National Guard. “We have the army dressed up as the National Guard making sure migrants don’t reach the United States while the city is headed towards a much larger crisis of violence,” said Ortiz.

Shootout by the bridge

The police convoy that raced by the National Guardsmen was heading to free a 53-year-old American man kidnapped by members of the Assassin Artists cartel. A car chase through the streets of Juarez led to a shootout near the Zaragoza border bridge, said the attorney general’s office of Chihuahua state. The American was freed, four kidnappers were arrested, another was killed and two policemen were wounded.

Visibly vexed at not being able to take part in the rescue, the three guardsmen remained at their post on the lookout for migrants as one cop car after another, sirens blaring, zipped past them toward the scene of the gunfight. Along this stretch of frontier the Rio Grande River is parched dry. Reuters reporters saw a steady trickle of women, children and men walking along the US side of the riverbed, out of the guardsmen’s jurisdiction and into the United States, where waiting US Customs and Border Protection agents took them into custody.

Facing accusations the troops had been



MEXICO: Members of the Mexican National Guard are seen at the US and Mexico border to stop migrants from crossing into the United States, as seen from Anapra, in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. —Reuters

heavy-handed in their efforts to deter migrants from crossing the northern border, Lopez Obrador said on June 25 the National Guard does not have orders to detain migrants. The guardsmen themselves, who are posted in

groups at specific points along the border or patrol the frontier in military vehicles mounted with heavy weapons, say they do not detain migrants but are there to advise them not to cross into the United States. — Reuters

Migrants disembark in Italy after rescue boat defies ban

ROME: Dozens of shipwrecked migrants disembarked in Italy early yesterday after their rescue boat docked on the island of Lampedusa, the second vessel in a week to defy efforts to stop them by far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini. Some 41 people were finally allowed to step off migrant rescue charity Mediterranean’s Italian-flagged Alex, which arrived at the port on Saturday in an overnight operation that saw the ship temporarily seized by authorities.

The boat’s captain Tommaso Stella is being investigated for allegedly aiding illegal immigration, according to the Italian news agency Agi. It is the second vessel in just over a week to defy Salvini’s attempts to block Italian ports to rescue ships, as tensions increase over the international response to the migration crisis. A third boat that had also been waiting off Lampedusa, the German charity Sea-Eye’s vessel Alan Kurdi carrying 65 migrants, was sailing towards Malta on Sunday, even though it has not received permission to enter Maltese waters.

The charity said it could not “wait until the state of emergency prevails” in a message on Twitter. “Now it has to be proven whether the European governments stand by Italy’s attitude. Human lives are not a bargaining chip,” it added. Salvini last month issued a decree that would bring fines of up to 50,000 euros for the captain, owner and operator of a vessel “entering Italian territorial waters without authorization”.

After the Alex reached port, the populist deputy prime minister said that he would raise the maximum fine to one million euros. “I do not authorize any landing for those who couldn’t care less about Italian laws and help the people smugglers,” Salvini tweeted late Saturday. Mediterranean said it had sailed to “the only possible safe port for landing”, citing “intolerable hygiene conditions aboard” in a tweet Saturday.

Irresponsibility of European countries

Authorities on Lampedusa in late June seized a rescue ship belonging to German aid group Sea-Watch, which had forced its way into port with dozens of rescued migrants on board, and arrested its captain Carola Rackete. An Italian judge subsequently ordered her freed, saying she had been acting to save lives, a decision which sparked Salvini’s ire but may have encouraged the Alex crew. Two other investigations, on charges of helping people smugglers and resisting the authorities are still under way after Rackete forced her way past Italian customs vessels.

“The irresponsibility of European countries obliged me to do what I did,” Rackete said, in a message to the thousands of protesters who demonstrated in Germany on Saturday to support her. German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer wrote a letter to Salvini asking him to rethink his policy, sources close to the German government said. “We cannot be responsible for boats with people rescued from shipwrecks on board spending weeks on the Mediterranean because they can’t find a port,” Seehofer wrote.

Sea-Eye’s ship Alan Kurdi is carrying migrants who were rescued when they encountered difficulties off Libya. A spokesman for the Armed Forces of Malta said authorities were monitoring the ship on Sunday, stressing that the vessel had not been granted permission to enter Maltese waters. Libya, which has been wracked by chaos since the 2011 uprising that killed dictator Moamer Kadhafi, has long been a major transit route for migrants, especially from sub-Saharan Africa, desperate to reach Europe. On Tuesday night, 53 migrants were killed in an air strike on a detention centre in a Tripoli suburb. — AFP

Rattled nerves, minor damage from second major S California quake

RIDGECREST, United States: Southern California appeared to have avoided the worst on Saturday after it was rocked by a second powerful earthquake in as many days — a 7.1 magnitude tremor that revived fears of the so-called Big One the region has feared for decades. No fatalities or serious injuries have been reported from this second quake, the largest in Southern California in more than two decades. It hit Friday night in a remote and sparsely populated area around 150 miles northeast of Los Angeles, where it was also felt.

But the earth’s mighty twitch shook buildings, damaged roads and rattled people still jittery from a 6.4-magnitude earthquake in the same region on Thursday. “We’ve never seen anything like this, this is the biggest and most impactful quake that I’ve ever experienced,” said Victor Abdullatif, owner of a small supermarket in the Mojave desert town of Ridgecrest where the quake left wine bottles and other merchandise smashed on the floor in huge piles.

Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, a remote testing ground for military hardware, wrote on Facebook that due to the quake it was “not mission capable until further notice.” An official at China Lake had said after Thursday’s temblor that there was “substantial damage” to their facilities, including fires, water leaks and spills of hazardous materials. As the second big quake hit on Friday, two news presenters live on Los Angeles TV station KCBS looked distraught and gazed up repeatedly to see if anything was falling.

“We are experiencing very strong shaking. I think we need to get under the desk,” one presenter said, then did just that as the station cut to a commercial. Hardest-hit was the town of Trona east of Ridgecrest, where between 20 and 50 buildings were damaged and the Federal Emergency



RIDGECREST, United States: Surface ruptures and offsets caused by yesterday’s magnitude 7.1 earthquake are seen as the sun sets along State Route 178 between Ridgecrest and Trona California. — AFP

Management Agency had to truck in bottles of water as water lines had been cut, county supervisor Robert Lovingood said. California Governor Gavin Newsom said on Twitter that he had requested federal assistance for communities hit by the quake, and on Saturday flew to the area to inspect the damage. However there were already signs of recovery as both Trona and Ridgecrest saw electricity restored Saturday and the state highway connecting the towns was opened after “emergency temporary repairs” to earthquake-caused cracks, the California Department of Transportation said on Twitter.

The latest quake was 11 times stronger than the 6.4-magnitude “foreshock” the previous day, according to the United States Geological Survey. The two major quakes, along with multiple aftershocks, have revived fears of the



ATHENS: Greece’s opposition party New Democracy leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis leaves a polling booth before casting his vote during general elections at a polling station in Athens. —AFP

shouts were drowned out by New Democracy supporters calling their leader the new prime minister. “I hope that from tomorrow we will be able to breathe with relief. To take a deep breath. If Mitsotakis does what he promises,” Athinodoros, a 48-year-old self-employed worker voting in Athens told AFP.

Tsipras called the snap election in June after losing both European and local elections to Mitsotakis’ New Democracy in the space of two weeks. He has accused Mitsotakis—who was part of a 2012-2014 crisis government-of “disastrous” mismanagement that brought hundreds of thousands of job losses and business failures. Mitsotakis, who took over New Democracy three years ago, is a 51-year-old Harvard graduate and former McKinsey consultant.

He has pledged to create “better” jobs through growth, foreign investment and tax cuts and to “steamroll” obstacles to business. Tsipras, on the other hand, touts his party’s track record in reducing unemployment and raising the minimum wage for the first time since 2012. His government also rolled out a batch of last-minute tax cuts in May. But Tsipras has been widely criticized for campaigning as an anti-austerity crusader before eventually accepting a third EU bailout.

According to the latest polls, conducted for the Ant1 tv channel, New Democracy is expected to gain between 151 to 165 seats in the 300-seat parliament. Syriza meanwhile is forecast to fall from 144 seats to between 70 and 82. The biggest party picks the premier. — AFP

Greece votes in election expected to oust leftist Tsipras

ATHENS: Greek voters cast their ballots yesterday in the country’s first national election of the post-bailout era, with leftist Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’s Syriza party expected to be ousted by the conservative opposition. After nearly five years in power, Greece’s longest-serving crisis premier—as well as the youngest in more than a century—is battling to overcome a 10-point deficit in opinion polls amid widespread dissatisfaction after years of high taxation.

Polling stations opened at 07.00 am local time and will close at 07.00 pm. Exit polls are expected soon after and the first results should come in around 09.00 pm. With three new opinion polls predicting a clear victory for the conservative New Democracy party, Tsipras called for supporters to mobilize, hoping for a turn around. After voting in Kypseli, near the centre of Athens, with his supporters cheering, the premier called on young people “not to leave this crucial decision for their lives in the hands of others”.

With temperatures forecast to reach 39 degrees Celsius, all parties are concerned about the impact the heat will have on turnout. “What is at stake is too important for someone not to vote and instead go to the beach,” 36-year-old Aphrodite told AFP, as she cast her vote in the bohemian downtown neighborhood of Exarcheia.

“Greece is exiting ten years of crisis and the new government will have the heavy task to give a chance to the country to recover completely or to sink”, she added. Opinion polls have consistently forecast that New Democracy headed by Kyriakos Mitsotakis, a scion of a leading Greek political family, will win an absolute majority in Sunday’s legislative elections. “Today is a big celebration of democracy. Greek women and men hold the fate of this land in their hands,” Mitsotakis said after voting in an Athens suburb.

Battle for the premiership

Some members of a small far-left party protested outside the polling station where Mitsotakis voted, but their

Biden apologizes for comments defending segregationist senators

WASHINGTON: Former US Vice President Joe Biden, the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination in the 2020 presidential election, apologized on Saturday for comments supporting segregationist lawmakers that had been seized on by his opponents. A former Delaware senator who served under America’s first black president Barack Obama, Biden stirred controversy last month when he said he’d “got things done” with the late southern senators James Eastland and Herman Talmadge, both of whom supported racist policies.

Eastland “never called me ‘boy,’ he always called me ‘son,’” Biden had said in remarks that sparked condemnation from several of his competitors seeking the Democratic nomination to face Republican President Donald Trump in next year’s election. Biden had remained defiant and refused to apologize, but on Saturday reversed course. “Was I wrong a few weeks ago to somehow give the impression to people that I was praising those men who I successfully opposed, time and again? Well, yes, I was, and I regret it. And I’m sorry for any of the pain or misconception they may have caused anybody,” Biden said during a speech in South Carolina.

“Should that misstep define 50 years of my record for fighting for civil rights, racial justice in this country? I hope not,” he said. Though he still polls at the top of the crowded Democratic field, Biden saw his standing slip following his first debate appearance in which California Senator Kamala Harris confronted him over racial issues. She accused him of opposing the busing of black students to schools in white neighborhoods during the 1970s as part of desegregation efforts, a standout moment during the debates which stretched over two nights. Polls released following the debates showed growing support for Harris, the only black female in the race, while Biden’s fell. On Friday, Biden told CNN he was surprised by Harris’s attack, but said he wasn’t concerned because “the American people think they know me.” — AFP

International

Sri Lanka on alert as Buddhist hardliners hold meeting after Easter attacks

Muslims fear backlash from hard-liner Buddhist group

KANDY: Police lined the streets of the Sri Lankan highland town of Kandy yesterday and the army was on standby as hardline Buddhist monks gathered for their first big assembly since Easter attacks by Islamist militants on churches and luxury hotels. Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara, the influential head of the Buddhist nationalist group Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), has called for as many as 10,000 clergymen from across the country to attend the meet.

The group said the gathering will decide who to back in the presidential elections later this year in the Indian Ocean island nation where Buddhists make up about 70 percent of the population. The rest include ethnic Tamils, who are mostly Hindus, and Muslims. Dressed in orange, Gnanasara visited one of Buddhism's most sacred temples in Kandy on Sunday where a relic believed to be the Buddha's tooth is kept. Later in the day, the hardliner, who has faced allegations of inciting violence against Muslims, will address the gathering.

After visiting the temple, he told reporters they would take a "historical decision" to give leadership for the development and security of the Sinhalese. "Today, the Sinhala ethnicity, which has developed this country historically, has become very weak... There is no leader who holds responsibility for Sinhalese," he said adding some people were trying to sabotage the convention by spreading fears of possible riots.

Police and armed army officials lined the streets around the stadium, where the gathering will take place later on Sunday, and were also present outside other Buddhist temples in the town centre. "The army is assisting the police on security under the emergency law," military spokesman Sumith Atapattu said, adding soldiers were on alert should

trouble erupt. There has been increasing anti-Muslim violence in the country in recent weeks, blamed in part on Buddhist groups, in apparent reprisal for the April bombings claimed by Islamic State that killed more than 250 people.

Muslims have become fearful of a backlash, especially from hardline groups such as the BBS that are leading the campaign against Islamic extremism. Many shopkeepers and restaurant owners in Kandy said they planned to close their establishments on Sunday for fear of violence. M J M Faizal, a Muslim who set up the Expo Leather store in Kandy 20 years ago, said late on Saturday he never had a problem with his neighbors even if they belonged to different communities.

"We cannot predict anything because a lot of outsiders are coming to Kandy and we don't know what that means," said the 55-year-old, who said he has been losing business since the attacks in April. "We are not safe now, there is always tension about what might happen. If we could, we would move to another country," he said, adding that his wife and daughters now do not leave the house alone and are always accompanied by him or his brother.

Kandy was rocked by violence last year when mobs vandalized a mosque, homes and businesses. "The government is not doing enough for our security and safety," said 42-year-old Mohamed Rilwa, a Muslim businessman who owns the Fancy Point general store that remained closed on Sunday. "They see all of us the same way ... just because we are Muslims and we have Muslim names," he said, adding that he has lost 75 percent of his business since the attacks and worries for the safety of his wife and three children. Yatawaththe Dhammaloka, one of the organizers of the event, however, said, the objective was to



KANDY: Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara Thero, center, head of the hardline Buddhist Power Force, arrives with others at Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic before the Buddhist monks convention in Kandy, Sri Lanka. — Reuters

unite Sinhalese who were politically, economically and culturally divided. "We will only turn back after creating a

leader to the country and getting the power to Sinhalese. 'Trust us,' said the head of BBS, Gnanasara. — Reuters

Hong Kong protesters march on station to 'educate' Chinese mainlanders

HONG KONG: Tens of thousands of anti-government protesters rallied outside a controversial train station linking Hong Kong to the Chinese mainland yesterday, the latest mass show of anger as activists try to keep pressure on the city's pro-Beijing leaders. The rally was the first large-scale protest since last Monday's unprecedented storming of parliament by largely young, masked protesters—which plunged the international financial hub further into crisis.

Hong Kong has been rocked by a month of huge marches as well as a series of separate violent confrontations with police, sparked by a law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China. The bill has since been postponed in response to the intense backlash but that has done little to quell public anger, which has evolved into a wider movement calling for democratic reforms and a halt to sliding freedoms in the semi-autonomous city.

Organizers said some 230,000 people snaked their way through streets in the harbor-front district of Tsim Sha Tsui, an area popular with Chinese tourists. Police said 56,000 turned out at the protest's peak. The march was billed as an opportunity to explain to mainlanders in the city what their protest movement is about.

Inside China, where news and information are heavily censored, the Hong Kong protests have been portrayed as a primarily violent, foreign-funded plot to destabilize the motherland, not a mass popular movement over Beijing's increased shadow over the semi-autonomous hub. "We want to show tourists, including mainland China tourists what is happening in Hong Kong and we hope they can take this concept back to China," Eddison Ng, an 18-year-old demonstrator, told AFP.

Bluetooth and loud-hailers

Hong Kongers speak Cantonese but protesters were



HONG KONG: Protesters gather around an ambulance outside the West Kowloon railway station during a demonstration against a proposed extradition bill in Hong Kong. — AFP

using Bluetooth to send leaflets in Mandarin—the predominant language on the mainland—to nearby phones, hoping to spread the word to mainlanders by digital word of mouth. "Why are there still so many people coming out to protest now?" one man said in Mandarin through a loud-speaker. "Because the Hong Kong government didn't listen to our demands."

Many protest banners were written with the Simplified Chinese characters used on the mainland, not the Traditional Chinese system used in Hong Kong and Taiwan. And a lawmaker had to coach crowds how to chant "Students are not rioters" using the correct Mandarin pronunciation. Protesters are demanding the postponed extradition bill be scrapped entirely, an independent inquiry into police use of tear gas and rubber bul-

lets, amnesty for those arrested, and for the city's unelected leader Carrie Lam to step down.

Beijing has thrown its full support behind Lam, calling on Hong Kong police to pursue anyone involved in the parliament storming and other clashes. In an interview with the BBC on Sunday, China's ambassador to Britain said the extradition bill was needed to "plug loopholes" and that Beijing has "full confidence in the Hong Kong government". Yesterday's protest began on the waterfront—the first time a rally has taken place off the main island—and made its way to West Kowloon, a recently opened multi-billion-dollar station that links to China's high-speed rail network. Police placed the glass and steel structure in virtual lockdown and only those with previously purchased tickets were being allowed in. — AFP

Pakistani judge rejects opposition blackmail claims

LAHORE: A senior Pakistani judge yesterday denied being blackmailed into convicting ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for graft last year after the main opposition party showed secretly taped video that appeared to show him saying he was threatened over the case. Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party presented the video at a specially called news conference on Saturday, saying it proved that Sharif, currently serving a seven-year sentence for corruption, had been wrongfully convicted and should be released.

In the secretly shot video, judge Arshad Malik, a senior judge on the accountability court, is seen telling a man described by PML-N officials as a party sympathizer that unidentified individuals had confronted him with compromising video footage to pressure him into convicting. He appears to tell the man that "they called me to a place and put on a film on a TV and left the room. After three or four minutes later, they entered the room and said take it easy. After watching the movie, I thought of committing suicide."

Reuters has not been able to verify the authenticity of the video presented by the PML-N. In a statement issued through the accountability court, Malik said that his comments in the video were pieced together and presented out of context and he had never faced intimidation to rule against Sharif. "I want to make it clear that I was neither directly nor indirectly intimidated, nor was I influenced by greed," he said, adding that he had faced pressure from the former prime minister's allies not

to convict. "During the hearing of the cases against Nawaz Sharif and his family, I was repeatedly offered bribes by their representatives and also given threats of serious consequences if I did not cooperate." A PML-N spokeswoman said Malik did not deny the conversation recorded on tape had taken place and asked why, if he had faced pressure from Sharif's camp, he had not reported it previously. "Why did he not report to the Supreme Court supervisory judge about threats, bribes and blackmail?" she said in messaged comments.

The incident highlighted the increasingly feverish political atmosphere in Pakistan, where the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan swept to power last year vowing to root out and punish corruption by past governments. Since then, it has run into growing economic and political headwinds and was forced to turn to the International Monetary Fund for Pakistan's 13th bailout since the 1980s.

As the problems have mounted, opposition parties have stepped up attacks, accusing the government and its allies in the powerful military establishment of crushing dissent and orchestrating Sharif's removal from power and conviction. Maryam Nawaz, Nawaz Sharif's daughter and vice president of the PML-N, said the video showed the judge had been intimidated into passing the conviction against her father. "This evidence is enough to prove Nawaz Sharif is innocent and he should be released immediately," she said during Saturday's press conference. Nawaz Sharif is currently serving a seven year sentence for being unable to prove the source of income that had led to his ownership of a steel mill in Saudi Arabia. Under Pakistani law, this is taken to prove corruption. Pakistan information minister Fidoos Ashiq Awan called the video an attack on the entire judiciary by the PML-N and said a forensic audit of the video would be conducted. —Reuters

Bolsonaro defends child labor in Brazil, sparking outcry

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, no stranger to controversy, sparked a new brouhaha this week by repeatedly defending the practice of child labor. "I've been working since I was eight years old... and today I am what I am," the far-right leader said during his weekly live forum on Facebook. "Look, when a child of eight or nine years old works somewhere, many people denounce it as 'forced labor' or 'child labor,'" he said on Thursday. "But if that child smokes coca paste, nobody says anything."

"Work brings dignity to men and to women, no matter their age," he added. He then repeated the remarks over the following days, saying at an official event on Friday that, "I worked from the age of eight planting corn, picking bananas... while studying at the same time. "And today I am what I am. This is not demagoguery, it is the truth." On Saturday, he republished a 2017 AFP video showing Frank Giaccio, the 11-year-old owner of a lawn mowing business and admirer of US President Donald Trump, trimming the White House lawn. Bolsonaro added the words, "Work ennobles."

Not allowed

His comments provoked strongly critical reactions. "He is the best example to incite a child not to work—to keep him from growing up to become an adult like (Bolsonaro), with so much hatred and such incompetence," said Marcelo Freixo, a socialist politician. Meanwhile Brazil's media seized on a 2015 interview in which Bolsonaro's brother contradicted the head of state. "My father had his bohemian

style, but he never let one of his sons work, because he thought they had to study," Renato Bolsonaro told Crescer magazine.

Brazilian law prohibits children younger than 16 from working, except in the case of apprentices, who can begin work at 14. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), some 2.5 million children and adolescents aged five to 17 work in Brazil. "The argument that working would not hurt, or that it would be a viable alternative is exactly what we are fighting every day while striving to make society think differently," Patricia Sanfelici, who oversees the fight against child labor for Brazil's labor ministry, told news website UOL.

On Friday, Bolsonaro's minister for Human Rights, Family and Women, the former evangelical pastor Damares Alves, tried to put an end to the controversy. "Our generation worked from a very young age," she said. "I worked from a very young age. But this does not mean that we are going to decriminalize (child labor). "Let us be clear that for children to work is a violation of their rights, something that cannot be allowed."

Bolsonaro is not known for being politically correct. In 2011, he told Playboy magazine he would rather see his own son "die in an accident" than come out as gay. He has also said poor people are too ignorant to understand family planning. And as a congressman in late 2014, he said that a colleague was not "worth raping; she is very ugly." A judge ultimately ordered him to pay the woman \$2,500. — AFP

Bangladesh religious teacher arrested over child rapes

DHAKA: A religious school's head teacher has been arrested for allegedly raping two girls and sexually molesting another six children under his care, Bangladesh officials said yesterday. Abul Khair Belali, 33, is the second principal of a madrasa—a religious school—to be arrested this week for allegedly raping students. Belali, also an imam at a nearby mosque, was arrested Friday at the Kendua girls' madrasa after an 11-year-old student told her parents she had been raped by him, police chief Mohammad Rasheduzzaman said.

The school is also used as a dormitory by around 15 girls from the surrounding villages. "On Saturday, he admitted that he raped at least two girl children aged eight and 11 and sexually molested another six girl children," Rasheduzzaman told AFP. The incident sparked protests in Kendua, roughly 120 kilometres (75 miles) north of Dhaka, with hundreds of people marching through the main street demanding punishment for the head teacher.

It comes after police last week arrested another madrasa head over alleged child rape in Fatulla, and two high school teachers in the central industrial town of Narayanganj for allegedly raping 20 students. Rights groups raised concerns about the spike in the number of rape and sexual assaults in the Muslim-majority South Asian nation. The Manusher Jonno Foundation, a local rights group, published a report in April saying 433 children were raped last year. Most were aged between seven and 12, it said.

The arrests have also raised questions on the safety of students in Bangladesh's thousands of residential madrasas, where mostly poor pupils live under the care of their teachers. "We have noticed an alarming rise in sexual abuses of children, including the rapes of male children, in madrasas in recent years," Abdus Shahid, head of the Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum, a children rights group, told AFP.

He said "a culture of impunity" is partly to blame for the rise in sexual violence in the country, as only a few cases end in convictions. The latest arrests come months after Bangladesh was shaken by the murder of 19-year-old Nusrat Jahan Rafi, burned to death on the alleged orders of the madrasa head teacher after she refused to withdraw a sexual assault charge against him. — AFP

One killed, thousands displaced in Rohingya camp landslides

DHAKA: Monsoon-triggered landslides in Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh have killed one person and left more than 4,500 homeless, aid officials said yesterday. About 35 centimeters of rain fell in 72 hours before the landslides started Saturday in camps around Cox's Bazar that house more than 900,000 of the Muslim minority who fled Myanmar, the UN said.

Twenty-six landslides were reported in makeshift camps built on hills near the border with Myanmar. Trees there have been torn up to build huts and for firewood, leaving the terrain unstable. UN refugee agency official Areez Rahman said about 30 shanty camps have been affected by the storms. One woman in her 50s died after being hit by a wall that collapsed, he said. Nur Mohammad, a 40-year-old Rohingya in the main Kutupalong camp, said 12 relatives had fled their tarpaulin-clad huts on the hills to take shelter with him.

"My home is already overcrowded. I'm worried how I will feed all these people," he said. Officials said some 5,000 Rohingya on a strip of no man's land between Bangladesh and Myanmar had also been badly hit by the storms. "Children are suffering from diarrhoea and we don't have enough drinking water," camp leader Dil Mohammad said by phone. He said most of the camp was knee deep in water as Myanmar authorities had put a dam on a nearby river. — AFP

Analysis

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Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
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step to transition, but
challenges ahead

After months of political uncertainty, Sudan has taken its first step towards a democratic transition, but getting the ruling generals to deliver on a power-sharing accord with protesters remains a challenge. "The only path forward is a negotiated deal between the two sides," said Alan Boswell, senior analyst at the International Crisis Group think tank. Sudan's ruling military council and protest leaders reached the tentative deal in the early hours of Friday, agreeing to form a joint civilian-military governing body.

That body is to oversee the formation of a transitional civilian administration that will govern for three years - the main demand of demonstrators. The two agreed the ruling body would have a rotating presidency, a breakthrough following months of political impasse after the army in April ousted longtime ruler Omar al-Bashir on the back of a popular uprising. Tensions climaxed on June 3 when armed men in military fatigues stormed a longstanding protest camp in Khartoum, shooting and beating crowds of demonstrators in a predawn raid.

Dozens were killed, triggering international outrage, although the generals insisted they did not order the violent dispersal of protesters. The power-sharing deal comes after intense mediation by Ethiopia and African Union diplomats. "Any agreement is a positive step. The challenge will be actually getting the military council to do as it promised," Boswell told AFP.

On Saturday, the head of that council General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan vowed to "implement" the deal and to work "in close cooperation" with the protest leaders. The governing body will have a total of six civilians and five military representatives. The six civilians will include five from the umbrella protest movement, the Alliance for Freedom and Change. A general will head the ruling body during the first 21 months of the transition, followed by a civilian for the remaining 18 months, according to the framework agreement.

'Giant red flag'

Against the backdrop of the June 3 raid, experts doubt whether the military will keep its part of the deal. "The key question is whether the military or the security sector more widely will cooperate fully with civilian members of the board or is cooperation mere window dressing," said Andreas Krieg, assistant professor at King's College London. "It is the security sector's intent to accept civilian control that will determine whether Sudan can move to a fully civilian rule in the future."

Bashir, who came to power in an Islamist-backed coup in 1989, ruled Sudan with an iron fist thanks to the security apparatus, especially the feared National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) - accused by rights groups of trampling human rights and freedoms. Experts say the power-sharing accord is far from a long-term solution to the country's overall political crisis. One potential dispute is over the eventual formation of a transitional parliament. Friday's agreement postponed the creation of a 300-seat transitional legislature - 67 percent of which would be lawmakers from the protest movement - that had already been agreed in previous talks. "Failing to agree yet on the legislative body is a giant red flag. This risks becoming the new impasse," said Boswell. "Even in a best case scenario, Sudan will be navigating a very challenging transition for years to come."

'Huge responsibility'

Boswell said the protest movement "will almost certainly need to continue mobilizing its street power to pressure the military council to uphold its commitments". Prominent protest leader Babikir Faisal said that while the deal may not be a cure-all, an agreement with the generals was needed. "Given the overall tension, agreeing on a sovereign council and a government is a step forward," he told AFP. "The other choice would have been to take the path of confrontation."

The protest alliance says it is now in charge of appointing the new prime minister and a transitional government of technocrats. Faisal said the first priority of the new administration will be to offer a "relief program" aimed at tackling Sudan's economic crisis. "The economic situation is very difficult," he said. "This is one of the major challenges. This revolution was also triggered by the crisis of bread."

Protests first broke out after the government tripled the price of bread, but they swiftly escalated into nationwide rallies against Bashir's rule, culminating in his ouster on April 11. And while addressing economic concerns will be key, it will be just one of many challenges facing the protest leaders in their new role, said Khalid Tijani, editor of Sudan's economic weekly Elaf. "The government will be formed by the alliance, which means revolutionaries," Tijani said. "They have taken on a huge burden of responsibility, because any failure will be blamed on them ultimately." —AFP

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An Indian street vendor waits for customers to sell snacks in New Delhi on July 4, 2019. —AFP

Limitless water for Delhi haves, poor fight for drops

In this teeming capital city of more than 20 million people, a worsening drought is amplifying the vast inequality between India's rich and poor. The politicians, civil servants and corporate lobbyists who live in substantial houses and apartments in central Delhi pay very little to get limitless supplies of piped water - whether for their bathrooms, kitchens or to wash the car, dog, or spray a manicured lawn. They can do all that for as little as \$10-\$15 a month.

But step into one of the slum areas in the inner city, or a giant disorganized housing estate on the outskirts and there is a daily struggle to get and pay for very limited supplies of water, which is delivered by tanker rather than pipe. And the price is soaring as supplies are fast depleting. India's water crisis is far from even-handed - the elite in Delhi and most other parts of the country remain unaffected while the poor scramble for supplies every day. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official residence and those of his cabinet are in central Delhi, as are those of most lawmakers.

That may help to explain why it took until this week for Modi to call for a massive water conservation program, the first big initiative by the government despite years of warnings about dry reservoirs and depleted water tables, policy makers and water industry experts said. Telecom sales representative Amar Nath Shukla, who lives in a giant unauthorized housing sprawl on the south side of Delhi, says he is now paying 700 rupees for a small tanker to bring him, his wife and three school-age children 2,000 liters of water, their weekly quota.

A year ago, Shukla would buy two of the rusty, oval-shaped tankers a week for 500 rupees each but he cut back to one as the price climbed 40 percent. "Why should a densely populated settlement get so little of water and why should the sparsely-populated central district of New Delhi receive so much of extra supply?" asked Shukla.

More than 30 other residents Reuters spoke to in his Sangam Vihar district also complained about the quality of water. "Until last year I was drinking the water sold by a few local suppliers but then I fell ill and the doctor asked me to buy water bottles made by only big, reputed com-

panies," said Dilip Kumar Kamath, 46, waving a prescription which listed abdominal pain and stomach infection as his ailments.

Water gangs

Delhi's main government district and the army cantonment areas get about 375 liters of water per person per day but residents of Sangam Vihar on average receive only 40 liters for each resident per day. The water comes from boreholes and tankers under the jurisdiction of the Delhi water board, run by the city government. But residents say some of the boreholes have been taken over by private operators associated with criminal gangs and local politicians. These gangs also have a major role in providing private tankers, which are all illegal, making people liable to price gouging.

And all this when temperatures, and demand, are soaring. Delhi was the second driest it has been in 26 years in June, and recorded its highest ever temperature for the month at 48 degrees Celsius on June 10. Monsoon rains reached the capital on Thursday, more than a week later than usual, with only a light drizzle. Most private tanker operators in Delhi either illegally pump out fast depleting ground water or steal the water from government supplies, various government studies show.

In Delhi, nearly half of the supply from the Delhi water board either gets stolen with the connivance of lowly officials or simply seeps out via leaky pipes, several studies show. The board's 1,033 tanker fleet is well short of the city's requirements. Hundreds of private water tankers are operating this summer, though there are no official numbers.

Water wars

The water scarcity is even more acute in the Bhalswa Dairy locality of northwestern Delhi, more than 30 km from Sangam Vihar. The water from a couple of community taps and hand pumps are too toxic to use, forcing people to queue up for a government tanker that comes just once a day. As a result, fights frequently break out when people, mostly can-carrying women and children, sprint towards

the arriving tanker. Last year, at least three people were killed in scuffles that broke out over water in Delhi.

"Fights over water supplies have gone up since May and these fights now constitute almost 50% of our daily complaints," said a police official at the Bhalswa Dairy Police station, who declined to be named. Some tanker operators have also started selling bottled water, underlining concerns over the quality of water in their tanks and how costs for ordinary people can mount, said the police official.

Nearly 200,000 people living in the Bhalswa area are vulnerable to liver-related disease such as jaundice and hepatitis, said Kamlesh Bharti, president of non-governmental organization Kamakhya Lok Sewa Samiti, which works in the areas of health and education. The Bhalswa area is next to a big waste landfill, which has contaminated both surface and groundwater in the area. According to UK-based charity WaterAid, about 163 million people in India, roughly 12 percent of the population, do not have access to clean water close to their homes, the most of any country.

Almost all middle-class residents in the city have either water purifiers at home or they buy big cans of water from Bisleri, India's top bottled water brand, Coca-Cola Co or PepsiCo Inc. Bottled water suppliers reported a nearly three-fold jump in sales in India between 2012 and 2017, according to market research company Euromonitor. India's dependence on groundwater and the country's failure to replenish aquifers have exacerbated the crisis, said V K Madhavan chief executive of WaterAid.

Both individual households and myriad industries mostly use fresh water and the reuse and recycling of water "is almost an alien concept" in the country, Madhavan said. Still, Delhi authorities said the plan to build three dams in the upper reaches of the Yamuna river, which passes through the city, would help Delhi overcome the shortage. It will take 3-4 years to construct them, said S K Haldar, a top official of the Central Water Commission. But issues such as land acquisition, resettlement and environmental clearances could make such an aggressive timetable untenable, Madhavan said. —Reuters



In this photo taken on April 24, 2019, logging trucks carrying okoume wood leave the forest concession under sustainable management (CFAD) at the Owendo national park near Makokou. —AFP

Gabon's timber
industry reeling
after graft scandal

Tropical timber is piling up at Gabon's main port as the country's logging industry reels from a corruption scandal that brought down the vice president and ushered in a veteran environmentalist to oversee its forestry. Wood is big money in the central African nation, which is almost 80 percent covered by forests. The timber industry accounts for 17,000 jobs and 60 percent of non-oil related GDP. But at the port of Owendo on the Libreville peninsula, exports have stagnated for months and warehouses are overflowing.

The trouble began in late February, when customs officials discovered huge quantities of kevazingo, a precious and banned hardwood, in two Chinese-owned depots at Owendo. Nearly 5,000 cubic metres were seized, worth around \$8 million, some of it disguised in containers bearing the stamp of the forestry ministry. Several suspects were arrested, but the plot thickened in April, when 353 of the confiscated containers mysteriously disappeared from the port.

The ensuing scandal, dubbed kevazingogate, led to the government sacking the vice president, the forestry minister and several senior civil servants. The minister was replaced last month by British-born Lee White - an environmental campaigner who has lived for years in Gabon, battling to conserve its forests and wildlife.

Scandal hits exports

The scandal has "heavily affected people working in Gabon's timber industry, without differentiating between those who cheat and those who play by the rules," said Philippe Fievez, head of French timber company Rougier in Gabon, which has been present in the country since colonial times. He said the company had been able to export wood for just three of the first six months of the year and at the height of the crisis had had to temporarily lay off 400 of its 1,400 employees. "It's going to take us between six and nine months to return to normal."

After the stash of kevazingo, also called bubinga, was found in late February, the team responsible for checking cargo loaded onto ships at ports was suspended, accused of

complicity in a smuggling plot. The following month, timber exports ground to a halt. "A month later, the team was replaced, allowing exports to resume," said Fievez. But then the containers vanished in April, and several top executives were suspended and the fallout reached the highest reaches of power. Francoise Van de Ven, secretary-general of the forestry industry association UFIGA, said, "our companies have been unable to export since early May - we are talking about a considerable loss of profits". White, the new forestry minister, "immediately took on the case" after his appointment in mid-June and exports "have just resumed," she said. But the scandal has inflicted "significant" reputational damage, she admitted.

'Tarnished image'

Exports were also hit by a damning report issued by British NGO the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)

in March that pointed the finger at a Chinese group, Deja, which has widespread logging interests in the Congo Basin. The report laid out the apparent ease with which officials took bribes to cover up the fraudulent activities of some loggers, and within weeks of its release the government suspended Deja's license at two logging sites.

Benjamin Feng of the Chinese company KHL Forestry said that now "buyers have the impression there is a risk of purchasing illegal timber when buying wood from Gabon". "We have about 1,500 cubic metres of azobe wood ready to go to Europe, but my Dutch buyer is hesitating, asking me: 'What proves that your wood is legal?'" "I can prove it, I have all the papers, but the image has been tarnished," he said. Rougier's Fievez tried to look on the bright side. "At least the scandal had the merit of pointing out the bad practices of some loggers - now everyone plays by the same rules." —AFP

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NIAMEY, Niger: Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari signs an agreement ahead of the launching of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), during African Union summit in Niamey, Niger, yesterday. — Reuters

Game changer? African leaders launch free-trade zone

Potential for Africa's \$3.4tn economy is massive, but hurdles remain

NIAMEY: African leaders met yesterday to launch a continental free-trade zone that if successful would unite 1.3 billion people, create a \$3.4 trillion economic bloc and usher in a new era of development.

After four years of talks, an agreement to form a 55-nation trade bloc was reached in March, paving the way for yesterday's African Union summit in Niger where attendees were to unveil which nation would host the trade zone's headquarters, when trading would start and discuss how exactly it would work.

It is hoped that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) - the largest since the creation of the World Trade Organization in 1994 - will help unlock Africa's long-stymied economic potential by boosting intra-regional trade, strengthening supply chains and spreading expertise. "The eyes of the world are turned to Africa," Egyptian President and African Union Chairman Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said at the summit's opening ceremony. AfCFTA "will reinforce our negotiating position on the international stage. It will represent an important step."

Africa has much catching up to do: its intra-regional

trade accounted for just 17 percent of exports in 2017 versus 59 percent in Asia and 69 percent in Europe, and Africa has missed out on the economic booms that other trade blocs have experienced in recent decades. Economists say significant challenges remain, including poor road and rail links, large areas of unrest, excessive border bureaucracy and petty corruption that have held back growth and integration.

Members have committed to eliminate tariffs on most goods, which will increase trade in the region by 15-25 percent in the medium term, but this would double if these other issues were dealt with, according to International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates. The IMF in a May report described a free-trade zone as a potential "economic game changer" of the kind that has boosted growth in Europe and North America, but it added a note of caution. "Reducing tariffs alone is not sufficient," it said.

Divergent interests

Africa already has an alphabet soup of competing and overlapping trade zones - ECOWAS in the west, EAC in

the east, SADC in the south and COMESA in the east and south. But only the EAC, driven mainly by Kenya, has made significant progress towards a common market in goods and services.

These regional economic communities (REC) will continue to trade among themselves as they do now. The role of AfCFTA is to liberalize trade among those member states that are not currently in the same REC, said Trudi Hartzenberg, director at Tralac, a South Africa-based trade law organization.

The zone's potential clout received a boost on Tuesday when Nigeria, the largest economy in Africa, agreed to sign the agreement at the summit. Benin has also since agreed to join. Fifty-four of the continent's 55 states have signed up, but only 25 have ratified. One obstacle in negotiations will be the countries' conflicting motives. For undiversified but relatively developed economies like Nigeria, which relies heavily on oil exports, the benefits of membership will likely be smaller than others, said John Ashbourne, senior emerging markets economist at Capital Economics.

Nigerian officials have expressed concern that the

country could be flooded with low-priced goods, confounding efforts to encourage moribund local manufacturing and expand farming. In contrast, South Africa's manufacturers, which are among the most developed in Africa, could quickly expand outside their usual export markets and into West and North Africa, giving them an advantage over manufacturers from other countries, Ashbourne said.

The presidents of both countries are attending the summit. The vast difference in countries' economic heft is another complicating factor in negotiations. Nigeria, Egypt and South Africa account for over 50 percent of Africa's cumulative GDP, while its six sovereign island nations represent about 1 percent.

"It will be important to address those disparities to ensure that special and differential treatments for the least developed countries are adopted and successfully implemented," said Landry Signe, a fellow at the Brookings Institution's Africa Growth Initiative. Regulations governing rules of origin, removal of non-tariff barriers and the development of a payments and settlements system are expected to be unveiled at the summit. — Reuters

Turkish cenbank chief ousted for refusing rate cuts: Erdogan

ANKARA: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan sacked the central bank governor for refusing the government's repeated demands for rate cuts, Hurriyet newspaper yesterday quoted Erdogan as telling a meeting with his party's lawmakers. Governor Murat Cetinkaya, whose four-year term was due to run until 2020, was replaced by his deputy Murat Uysal, a presidential decree published early on Saturday in the official gazette showed.

"We told him repeatedly in economy meetings that he should cut rates. We told him that the rate cut would help inflation to fall. He didn't do what was necessary," Erdogan was quoted as saying.

The daily Hurriyet said Erdogan gave his explanation for sacking Cetinkaya, almost a year before his term was due to end, during a consultation meeting in Istanbul with the members of his ruling AK Party.

"We weren't on the same page," Erdogan added. No official reason was given for the sacking, but government

sources cited Erdogan's frustration that the bank has kept its benchmark interest rate at 24% since last September to support the ailing lira currency. In a written statement on Saturday, Uysal said he would independently implement monetary policy instruments focused on achieving and maintaining the primary objective of price stability.

Despite the new governor's assurance, critics say the move once again showed that Erdogan was in full control of the monetary policy, and that Turkey would witness a period of rapid rate cuts. "The sacking of the governor of the CBRT by presidential decree shows that Erdogan is in charge of monetary policy," said Wolfgang Piccoli, of the London-based political risk consultancy Teneo.

"The decision significantly undermines whatever credibility the CBRT had left. It also signals that overall institutional degradation continues unabated," he added. Under Turkey's new executive presidency, which came into effect last year, Erdogan does not need cabinet approval to change the central bank governor. A senior Turkish economist also said Erdogan's surprise dismissal of Cetinkaya could further undermine perceptions of the bank's independence.

"While the debate regarding the central bank's independence continues, removing Cetinkaya, who apparently resisted some measures, and replacing him through an unusual method will only fuel this debate," the senior economist told Reuters. "We will see how he can convince the markets for a rate cut at a time when the independence is increasingly doubtful." —Reuters

Saudi carrier flyadeal ditches Boeing MAX for Airbus

RIYADH: Saudi budget carrier flyadeal has withdrawn a provisional order for Boeing's grounded 737 MAX jets, the US plane maker said yesterday, as the airline confirmed a new order for Airbus A320 aircraft. "We understand that flyadeal will not finalize its commitment to the 737 MAX at this time given the airline's schedule requirements," a Boeing spokesman said. The carrier's provisional order was for "up to 50 MAXs—commitment for 30 and then options for 20 more", the Boeing spokesman added.

In a separate statement, flyadeal said it will operate an all-A320 fleet. "Flyadeal announces a significant growth to its fleet, with an order for 30 A320 NEO aircraft, and options for a further 20 A320 NEO family aircraft," the carrier said, adding that deliveries will begin in 2021.



"This is in response to continuing growth in passenger demand across domestic, regional and international routes." Boeing is under global scrutiny after crashes of 737 MAX planes operated by Ethiopian Airlines and Lion Air that claimed a total of 346 lives. The MAX was grounded globally after the Ethiopian Airlines crash in March and there is still no firm timetable for returning the planes to service. Boeing said Wednesday it would give \$100 million (89 million euros) to communities and families affected by the 737 MAX disasters. Flyadeal is a subsidiary of Saudi Arabian Airlines and flies to a range of domestic destinations across the kingdom. — AFP

Factory activities contract across globe as economic indicators fall

Markets relieved as Trump eases tariff threats

KUWAIT: Factory activities contracted across the globe in June after PMI indicators came in below the 50 threshold. A global manufacturing index produced by the IHS Markit and others fell to its lowest level in seven years at 49.4. Nations like the UK, China, South Korea, Mexico and Germany have witnessed their industrial sector contract. The EU manufacturing segment has also entered the negative terrain, while the US sector tumbled to a near 3-year low. Meanwhile, Japan's Tankan index for large manufacturers slipped to its lowest level since 2016, reflecting the slowdown in the key Asian export country. The picture is just as depressing in the single market, where the majority of manufacturers except for France reported dwindling output. It seems like negative effects caused from the trade war are spreading across most continents.

Moving to the bonds market, the free fall in major treasury yields across Europe was the focal attention in financial markets last week. The German 10-year bund yield hit another record low at -0.405 percent, falling below the ECB's deposit rate of -0.4 percent, while Italian government bond yields dropped to their lowest levels in at least a year. UK's 10-year gilt yield also plummeted to a low of 0.66 percent, below the BoE's policy rate of 0.75 percent. On the other hand, US treasury yields soared after the jobs report reached markets. Hence, the divergence between US and European yields facilitated the dollar's rally. The dollar index appreciated by 0.93 percent versus a basket of currencies last week.

Dollar rallies

The US Nonfarm payroll continues to be the stellar of the economy, while other economic figures disappoint to the downside. The American economy created 224,000 jobs in the preceding month from an unsatisfactory 72,000 seen in May. In spite of the decent jobs added in June, job growth averaged 172,000 for the first half of the year compared to an average of 223,000 seen last year. On the salaries front, wages remained in a constant state of 3.1 percent y/y and way below the 10-year high of 3.4 percent seen at the start of the year. The unemployment rate edged higher by 0.1 percent to 3.7 percent versus expectations of 3.6 percent. The resilience of the jobs market has somewhat counterbalanced worries about the relative health of the US economy such as softening activity in the manufacturing and services sector and below-target inflation. The greenback rallied after the release of the labor report from 96.846 to a 2.5-week high of 97.443 and the 10-year Treasury note yield jumped around 8.4 basis points to 2.033 percent. Although, markets still expect the US Federal Reserve to deliver a cut of 0.25 percent in July.

Weaker growth prospect

Data provided by the Institute of Supply Management (ISM) showed that US factory activity had stumbled to nearly a three-year low last month and was the third consecutive fall for the manufacturing segment. The index shed 0.4 points to 51.7 dragged down by inventories and prices paid, which are currently below the break even rate of 50. The inventories index fell to 49.1 from 50.1 and prices paid index fell to 47.9 from 53.2. Compared to a year ago, prices paid index was at 79.5. Unlike some of the regional manufacturing PMIs, the ISM manufacturing index evaded a fall below its breakeven rate of 50. Nonetheless, it is evident from the economic statistics that

the industry is in the center of a slump that is similar in severity to the previous downturn in 2015 and early 2016. The latest deceleration is prominent since the noticeable improvement in 2017 and early 2018. The downward trend in manufacturing is having some undesirable effects on other industries. For instance, industry data show that freight shipments were rising at a double-digit pace in the first half of 2018 but are now declining on a year-over-year basis.

Looking at tariffs, US President Donald Trump has suspended his tariff threats on China and Mexico. He agreed to hold more trade talks with China, rather than impose import taxes on \$300 billion of Chinese products. He also delayed 25 percent duty on all imports from Mexico, which he threatened to impose in May. Yet those threats still loom and are forcing many manufacturers to rethink their supply chains. Last Wednesday, the President turned his attention towards Europe. He accused Europe of being a currency manipulator. Moreover, the US and the EU have been entangled in a disagreement over aircraft subsidizations to Airbus (EU) and Boeing (US) for some 15 years. Last week the US administration intensified pressure on Europe by threatening to impose tariffs on \$4 billion of additional EU goods. It seems that the trade war rhetoric is still in play mode and may further pressure the manufacturing sector down the road.

As for the largest contributor to US GDP, the services industry cooled more than expected in June to its lowest level in nearly 2 years. The services index fell to 55.1 in June from 56.9 in May due to declines in new orders and employment. In regards to the sub-components, the new orders index declined to 55.8 from 58.6 and the employment index descended to 55.0 from 58.1. The sector employs more than 80 percent of the US workforce and is critical to the health of the economy. Even though the sector is still growing at a healthy rate, growth has tapered off this year. Tariffs have impacted manufacturers negatively and some of the weakness now appears to be spilling over into the service side of the economy. Consistency in weakening PMI data across sectors, below target inflation, slower global growth, inversion of the yield curve and a never ending trade war theme could pave the way for US monetary officials to lower the overnight interest rate. Federal funds futures contracts are indicating a 100 percent chance of a 25 basis point cut on July 31.

Britain's economic indicators feeble

For the past two readings the UK's manufacturing industry has been in a contractionary environment. The latest figure for the month of June revealed that the IHS Markit Manufacturing Index fell to 48, the frailest reading in more than 6 years. Across the sub-indices, there were sharp drops in output and new orders indices. Moreover, new export orders fell for the third month in a row. Business confidence also plummeted, falling to its third-lowest level since IHS Markit's records began. The manufacturing survey is in line with a quarterly poll released from the British Chambers of Commerce, which indicated that factory sales rose at the slowest pace in seven years between April and June. Despite the gloomy overall results, there was some hope in the PMI survey. Around 44 percent of firms projected higher output in one year's time, while only 14 percent expected a decrease.

As for the dominant sector in the UK, the services PMI

almost entered into negative terrain as the figure declined from 51 to 50.2. The near-stagnation of the services sector last month is one of the poorest performances seen over the past decade and comes on the heels of steep declines in both manufacturing and construction. The composite index that encompasses the construction and manufacturing sectors fell to 49.7 from 50.9, signaling a drop in overall private sector activity for the first time in nearly three years. Construction activity stumbled from 49.3 to 43.1, the frailest reading since 2009. The overall growth outlook implied by the PMIs is anemic due to the fact that there is a strong correlation between PMI and future growth prospects. According to IHS Market survey provider, the composite PMI seen in the second quarter points to a minus 0.1 percent quarterly contraction in GDP growth. GDP growth for the month of May came in at negative 0.4 percent m/m; hence a recession may just be around the corner. Weakening global growth, combined with acute uncertainty over Brexit, frail data out of the British economy and few signs of material inflationary pressure supports the case for the BoE to hold rates at their current levels.

In the FX sphere, the Sterling pound persists in a downward trajectory falling back towards the strong support level of 1.2500 and was the worst performer in the currencies market. The negative momentum witnessed in the pound was due to the most unsatisfactory run of data last week since 2011 and it marks a sharp turnaround after the UK economy expanded by 0.5 percent in Q1. The releases of the latest PMI surveys have indicated that the UK economy may have contracted in Q2 and fears of a no-deal Brexit outcome looming over the economy led the GBP to depreciate by 1.32 percent against the USD last week.

The euro followed the pounds route lower versus the USD in the past five trading session, undercut by growing expectations for a looser ECB policy. The appointment of Christine Lagarde to be the next ECB President has strengthened market expectations for a looser ECB policy. It helps to explain in part why the US dollar failed to weaken more in light of the dovish re-pricing of Fed policy expectations. The single currency lost 1.24 percent of its value to the dollar.

RBA delivers on its promise

The central bank of Australia (RBA) last week lowered the cash rate by 0.25 percent as expected to a new record low of 1.00 percent. This followed a cut from 1.50 percent to 1.25 percent on June 4, which was the first cash rate move in almost three years. The last time the Bank dropped its cash rate in two successive months was in 2012, in response to global concerns and the European financial crisis. The rate cut was widely anticipated and therefore it explains why the AUD/USD rose by around 40 basis points after the cut was delivered. The RBA stated that the "easing of monetary conditions will support employment growth and provide greater confidence that inflation will be consistent with the medium-term target". Furthermore, officials indicated they "will continue to monitor developments in the labor market closely and adjust monetary policy if needed to support sustainable growth in the economy". The introduction of "if needed" proposes that the central bank is in no rush to deliver an additional cut unless the economic stance proves frailter than projected. Nonetheless, the door remains open for further easing and the sharp drop in the cash rate by -0.50 percent suggests greater growth fears.

Yet the performance in shares of small-cap companies, which tend to be more domestically focused than their large-cap counterparts, belies such optimism. Though it has gained 16.6 percent for the year, the small-cap Russell 2000 index has underperformed the benchmark S&P 500 index, which has risen 19.5 percent. Whereas other indexes have marked new records, it remains 9.7 percent below its August 2018 high.

"Investors are becoming more and more fearful that the economy is in the late cycle, and small caps, rightly or wrongly, are viewed as a play on the US economy," said Lori Calvasina, head of US equity strategy at RBC Capital Markets in New York.

Furthermore, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York currently forecasts a 29.6 percent chance of a US recession in the next twelve months. The bank's model, based upon the spread between 10-year and three-month Treasury yields, has reliably predicted recessions once it has hit the 30 percent threshold, said Lisa Shalett,



China manufacturing

China's manufacturing sector came under further pressure in June after the manufacturing indicators disappointed to the downside. The NBS PMI index has been in negative territory for the past two months at 49.4, while the Caixin PMI index contracted for the second time this year also coming in at 49.4. Any reading below the 50 threshold suggests shrinkage in the aforementioned sector. In its latest report, Caixin said manufacturing production declined for the first time in five months with businesses pointing at trade tensions for the weaker sentiment. New orders dropped for the first time since January and export demand also softened.

On the political front, trade talks between the two largest economies are scheduled to resume after the positive outcome seen at the G20 summit. This could support business sentiment to some extent; however there is still a lot of lingering uncertainty as the core issues that prompted the trade war rhetoric are far from resolved. Overall, the manufacturing sector that accounts to 30 percent of China's GDP is contracting, the service sector is slightly slowing down, growth is relatively low compared to historical standards and resolving the trade dispute is nowhere to be seen. As such, policy makers in Beijing could further ease monetary and fiscal policies to support future growth to come.

Equities

All three major US equity indices soared to new record highs last week thanks to mounting expectations that the US central bank would take a more dovish turn as a raft of data provided more evidence of a slowing economy. In addition, the latest trade truce between the US and China also played a positive role. The Dow Jones and S&P 500 gained 2.28 percent and 2.24 percent respectively, in the past five trading sessions.

Commodities

Oil prices tumbled drastically in the previous week even as OPEC members extended the supply cuts by nine months until March 2020. It seems that the outlook for global economic growth outweighed supply cuts. The price of Brent crude oil was subdued immensely falling to \$62.19, the lowest level since February 11. Over the course of the week, Brent crude was 6 percent in the red.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30370
The USD/KWD opened at 0.30370 yesterday morning.

Wall Street Week Ahead

Buoyant US stocks at odds with downbeat market signals

NEW YORK: Even as record highs this week in the major US stock indexes telegraph confidence on Wall Street, caution abounds in other US markets, where falling bond yields and flailing small-cap stocks indicate investors are torn about where to place bets.

Hints from Federal Reserve policymakers that the central bank will cut interest rates have buoyed both US stocks and Treasuries. The S&P 500, the Dow Jones Industrial

Average and Nasdaq have all notched new highs this week, while yields on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note dropped below 2 percent to their lowest since late 2016. Rate cuts often occur in response to signs of emerging economic weakness, which is ultimately negative for equities. Yet lower interest rates are considered supportive of stock valuations by stimulating corporate earnings and capital spending as borrowing costs for companies fall. Such a conundrum was evident on Friday as stocks fell in response to stronger-than-expected US payrolls data, which dampened expectations of a Fed rate cut.

The conflicting signals have given a bid to stocks in defensive sectors such as real estate and consumer staples, yet investors say they are hesitant to abandon cyclical plays, in the event of Fed rate cuts and a trade truce between the United States and China. "Investors have got to be nuanced," said Andrew Milligan, head of global strategy at Aberdeen Standard Investments in Edinburgh, Scotland. "I wouldn't disagree

with being pro-cyclical or pro-yield." It will likely take several months of economic data - along with results from the corporate earnings season later this month - to clarify the picture, investors say. In contrast to Friday's upbeat employment report, data earlier this week showed US manufacturing and service activity in June declined to multi-year lows. Some are leaning toward an upbeat outlook. The late 2018 swoon in US stocks was an early harbinger of recent softness in economic data, so equity prices have already taken it into account, said Jim Paulsen, chief investment strategist at the Leuthold Group in Minneapolis. In his view, the S&P's new highs reflect investors' anticipation that the data will turn around with the support of easing monetary policy at the world's major central banks and US fiscal stimulus. "There's not as much downside as people portray," Paulsen said. "Every policy official in the world is trying to push up the markets and the economy, everywhere you look."

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.550
Euro	345.660
Sterling Pound	384.950
Canadian dollar	234.720
Turkish lira	55.880
Swiss Franc	310.450
US Dollar Buying	297.200
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.808
Indian Rupees	4.449
Pakistani Rupees	1.967
Srilankan Rupees	1.724
Nepali Rupees	2.779
Singapore Dollar	225.760
Hongkong Dollar	39.117
Bangladesh Taka	3.590
Philippine Peso	5.959
Thai Baht	9.980
Malaysian ringgit	77.890
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.268
Qatari Riyal	83.702
Omani Riyal	791.553
Bahraini Dinar	809.220
UAE Dirham	82.972
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.750
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.329

Yemen Rival/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	109.160
Jordanian Dinar	430.310
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.399

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.640
Canadian Dollar	231.025
Sterling Pound	386.455
Euro	346.375
Swiss Frank	298.070
Bahrain Dinar	807.490
UAE Dirhams	83.070
Qatari Riyals	84.310
Saudi Riyals	81.865
Jordanian Dinar	429.550
Sri Lankan Rupees	18.210
Indian Rupees	1.719
Pakistani Rupees	4.379
Bangladesh Taka	1.933
Philippines Peso	3.596
Cyprus pound	5.904
Japanese Yen	18.065
Syrian Pound	3.825
Nepalese Rupees	1.590
Malaysian Ringgit	2.739
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	74.225
Thai Bhat	44.515
	10.825

Turkish Lira	52.785
Singapore dollars	222.971

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.375743	0.389643
Czech Korune	0.005482	0.014782
Danish Krone	0.041963	0.046963
Euro	0.335682	0.349382
Georgian Lari	0.132109	0.132109
Hungarian 0.001148	0.001338	
Norwegian Krone	0.031642	0.036842
Romanian Leu	0.065272	0.082122
Russian ruble	0.004804	0.004804
Slovakia	0.009106	0.019106
Slovenia	0.028621	0.033621
Swedish Krona	0.301385	0.312385
Swiss Franc		
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.204999	0.216999
New Zealand Dollar	0.196364	0.205864
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.227924	0.236924
US Dollars	0.300450	0.305750
US Dollars Mint	0.300950	0.305750
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003009	0.003810
Chinese Yuan	0.042793	0.046293

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037055	0.039805
Indian Rupee	0.003859	0.004631
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002739	0.002919
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070200	0.076200
Nepalese Rupee	0.002679	0.003019
Pakistan Rupee	0.001371	0.002141
Philippine Peso	0.005869	0.006169
Singapore Dollar	0.219260	0.229260
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001353	0.001933
Taiwan	0.009928	0.010108
Thai Baht	0.009581	0.010131
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.801677	0.809727
Egyptian Pound	0.018646	0.022006
Iranian Rial	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.424644	0.433644
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021390	0.045390
Omani Riyal	0.785912	0.793803
Qatar Riyal	0.082996	0.083830
Saudi Riyal	0.080127	0.081427
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.102178	0.101178
Turkish Lira	0.047847	0.057692
UAE Dirhams	0.002285	0.003111
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

Business

In Yakutia, Russia digs for diamonds in permafrost

Region home to 11 mines of Alrosa group

MIRNY, Russia: Diamonds are forever, and so is the permanently frozen ground of Yakutia in north eastern Siberia, home to huge diamond deposits that ensure Russia's supremacy in world production of the luxury stone.

In the city of Mirny, the sun shines almost continuously during the region's white night season in early July, with temperatures exceeding 30 degrees Celsius. But the summer does not last long. Yakutia is known for having the coldest winters on the planet, which drag on for nine dark months. This region-rich in oil, gas and precious metals-is also home to eleven out of twelve mines belonging to Russia's Alrosa group, the world's largest producer of rough carats. The majority state- and local government-owned company employs most of Mirny's 35,000 inhabitants and contributes around 40 percent of the wider region's budget in taxes.

Alrosa, which has been criticized by some locals for alleged environmental damage including polluting water supplies, has a reputation for secrecy but is now making efforts to demonstrate some of its work. In Mirny, a gaping hole of massive depths-the abandoned mine "Mir"-stretches out into the city. It is more than a kilometer in diameter and 525 meters deep, or nearly two Eiffel towers placed end to end. Oleg Popov, the director of Mirny's diamond sorting center, shows off a billiard table covered in shiny stones. "There are 14,000 carats worth around \$9 million on this table," he said.

Explosions in -55 centigrade

"Each stone must be sorted by size," said

Irina Senyukova, leaning on stones in the nearby sorting room. To reach the next diamond deposits themselves, visitors board a 20-seater Antonov plane and head north, across the taiga, to Nakyn, where Alrosa operates two open pit mines and is planning for a third out in the wilderness.

The most productive mine, Botuobinskaya, is currently only 130 metres deep, but the company plans to dig down 580 meters. The operating mines will be exploitable until 2041, the company hopes. Inside the mines, the temperature drops to -55 degrees Celsius in winter, which requires an increased use of explosives to extract diamonds. "The climate has an impact on our machines, but they are adapted to the extreme conditions," said Mikhail Dyachenko, deputy chief of the mine, standing on the edge of the precipice and wearing a safety helmet.

"Man will adapt to anything, most of the miners are natives of the region. They know this climate well," he added. Trucks go down the mine slowly, spiralling down thin dirt roads dug into the rock. The descent can last up to an hour.

In each ton of ground, there are around 6.2 carats of diamonds. After sorting, the rough diamonds are transported on secret flights to be sold around the world.

Some are flown to polishing centers in Moscow and Smolensk, a city in Western Russia. The process takes place under heavy security, which was tightened further since a small gang of employees stole three million dollars worth of diamonds last month. The diamonds were later recovered.



MOSCOW: A diamond cutter inspects a diamond at Alrosa Diamond Cutting Division in Moscow. Russian Alrosa gets its diamonds in the permafrost abyssal holes dug with explosives in the permanently frozen ground of Yakutia, an isolated region in East Siberia. — AFP

Drinking water

Mirny was founded in the mid-1950s after the discovery of the first diamonds. Its first mine functioned until 2001, and it was closed down in 2017 after a flood killed eight people. Last year several dams built by the company broke and villages around Yakutia's Vilyuy River said they could no longer use it as a water source.

Russia's environment watchdog estimated the damage to the Vilyuy basin at 22.1 billion rubles (over \$330 million, 290 million



An employee stands on the edge of Nyurbinsky diamond mining pit of Nakyn diamond ore field, some 340 kms North-East from the town of Mirny. — AFP

euros) but said Alrosa would not be held accountable as the accident was caused by a natural disaster.

Separately, the company said in April it would provide 833 million rubles (\$13 million, 11.5 million euros) over five years for a program to improve the quality of drinking water in the river area. Miners are exclusively men, predominantly from the region but also from the rest of Russia. Planes or helicopters carry the miners to the sites, where they work

eleven hours a day for two weeks, then have a two week break.

"Local, indigenous communities lived here, and still live nearby-they are reindeer herders, but some of them go to the city to look for work," said Dmitry Averyanov, who drives trucks that survey the mines. As for the future, Alrosa is looking for ways to re-open Mirny's mine. Works are not due to start before 2024 and their cost is estimated at 73 million rubles. — AFP

US job growth surges, July rate cut expectations remain intact

WASHINGTON: US job growth rebounded strongly in June, with government payrolls surging, but persistent moderate wage gains and mounting evidence the economy was losing momentum could still encourage the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates this month.

The Labor Department's closely watched employment report on Friday suggested May's sharp slowdown in hiring was probably a fluke. Lack of concrete progress in resolving an acrimonious trade war between the United States and China, however, means the bar could be very high for the Fed not to lower borrowing costs at its July 30-31 policy meeting. But the strong pace of job gains reduced the chances of a half percentage point rate cut at the end of the month. The US central bank in June signaled it could ease monetary policy as early as this month citing low inflation and growing risks to the economy from an escalation in trade tensions between Washington and Beijing.

"We think the Fed is still on track for a 25 basis points cut given trade uncertainty and the steady downtrend in business sentiment," said Andrew Schneider, a US economist at BNP Paribas Securities in New York. "An insurance cut by definition means getting ahead of a downturn, and waiting for employment to roll likely means being too late to deliver one."

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 224,000 jobs last month as government employment rose by the most in 10 months, and construction and manufacturing hiring regained speed. The economy created only 72,000 jobs in May. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls rising 160,000 in June.

Job growth averaged 172,000 per month in the first half. Hiring has cooled

from an average of 223,000 jobs per month in 2018, in part as the economy runs out of workers. The pace, however, remains well above the roughly 100,000 needed to keep up with growth in the working age population. The economy, which has expanded a record 10 years, has shifted into lower gear as the stimulus from last year's massive tax cuts and increased government spending fizzles. The trade tensions are also dimming the economy's outlook by undercutting business confidence and leading to a downturn in equipment spending and manufacturing. Consumer spending is rising moderately and the housing market continues to struggle, while the trade deficit has widened again.

President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping last week agreed to a trade truce and a return to talks. Trump has said he is in "no hurry" to make a deal and on Wednesday accused China and Europe of "playing big currency manipulation game and pumping money into their system in order to compete with USA." Trump on Friday said the robust employment gains indicated the United States continued to do "really, really well" and "would be like a rocket ship," if the Fed lowered rates. US House of Representative Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat, welcomed the rebound in job growth, but said "hard-working Americans are still struggling under the Trump administration's disastrous special interest agenda."

The Atlanta Fed is forecasting gross domestic product rising at a 1.3 percent annualized rate in the April-June quarter. The economy grew at a 3.1 percent pace in the first quarter.

Average hourly earnings rose six cents or 0.2 percent in June after gaining 0.3 percent in May. That kept the annual increase in wages at 3.1 percent in June for a second straight month. The trend in wage growth has slowed from late last year when wages were rising at their fastest rate in a decade, pointing to moderate inflation. Interest rate futures fully priced in a month-end rate cut, but dialed back expectations for an easing of 50 basis points. The dollar rose against a basket of currencies, while US Treasury prices fell. Stocks on Wall Street slipped.



NEW YORK: People walk along a shopping street in lower Manhattan on Friday in New York City. According to the latest jobs report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, hiring picked up in June with 224,000 new jobs added to the US economy more than many economists had predicted. — AFP

Eyes on Powell testimony

Fed Chairman Jerome Powell's semi-annual testimony to the US Congress on the economy next week could shed light on the near-term outlook for monetary policy. The Fed in its semi-annual report to Congress on Friday repeated its pledge to "act as appropriate" to sustain economic growth. "There is no inflationary pressure coming from the labor side," said Sung Won Sohn, an economics professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

"It is hard to explain why wage gains are so slow in the current labor market." The unemployment rate rose one-tenth of a percentage point to 3.7 percent last month as 335,000 people entered the labor market, a sign of confidence in their prospects of getting a job. Some of the recent drop in the jobless rate had been because of people leaving the labor market.

The labor force participation rate, or the proportion of working-age Americans who have a job or are looking for one, rose to 62.9 percent last month from 62.8 percent in May.

A broader measure of unemployment, which includes people who want to work but have given up searching and those

working part-time because they cannot find full-time employment, rose to 7.2 percent in June from 7.1 percent in May. Hiring picked up across nearly all sectors in June, though retail payrolls contracted for a fifth straight month, shedding another 5,800 jobs on top of the 7,300 lost in May.

Manufacturing payrolls accelerated by 17,000 jobs after rising by 3,000 in May. The surge in hiring is despite the sector struggling with an inventory bulge - concentrated in the automotive industry - trade tensions, design troubles at plane-maker Boeing and slowing global growth. Construction employment rose by 21,000 jobs last month after gaining 5,000 in May. Government payrolls rebounded by 33,000, the most since August 2018, after shedding 11,000 jobs in May.

The surge in hiring was driven by local governments. But leisure and hospitality sector payrolls increased by a moderate 3,000 in June after rising 18,000 in the prior month. Professional and business services employment gained 51,000 jobs. There were increases in healthcare and transportation and warehousing employment. The average workweek was unchanged at 34.4 hours in June for a third straight month. — Reuters

Eastern Libya, US firm close to signing Libya port deal

TUNIS/BENGHAZI: Eastern Libyan authorities and US security firm Guidry Group plan to finalize an agreement to develop a major port in the east of the troubled oil producer, both sides said. Talks have been going on for about a year to build a port in Susah, which would mark a rare sign of investment in Libya. Most of the country has been in chaos since the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011.

"The Guidry Group and the State of Libya through the Sea Port Authority officially signed the concession agreement on May 13 for the development of a multi-purpose, deep sea port in Susah, Libya," the Guidry Group said in a statement to Reuters.

"Next steps for the project will involve establishing all the technical,

financial, operational and commercial requirements," the firm said. Salah Elhasi, head of the eastern port authority, said no final deal had been signed yet but 90 percent of work was done.

"We are in the final stage of the agreement. ...and are reviewing the agreement's details," he said.

Neither side gave details. In February, both had put the investment volume of the project at \$1.5 billion. A final signature would be a coup for the parallel government in charge of eastern Libya which has not gained international recognition. The UN-backed government sits in Tripoli in western Libya.

The Susah port is supposed to be the main entry port for goods into Libya as a sea depth of up to 40 meters (130 feet) would enable containers to load goods on smaller vessels headed for other cities.

Officials hope the port will create jobs in a country where most look to a bloated public sector or join armed groups. Since the negotiations started, tensions between the two governments have escalated as eastern Libyan forces led by Khalifa Haftar allied to the parallel government started a military campaign to seize Tripoli. — Reuters

Turkey's new central bank governor seen as interest rate dove

ANKARA: Turkey's new central bank governor Murat Uysal, who served as deputy governor for three years before the shock dismissal of his boss, is known as one of the more dovish members of the bank's interest rate setters. He has less than three weeks to prepare for the next rate-setting meeting, under pressure from President Tayyip Erdogan's calls for lower rates to kick-start an economy in recession.

A fall in inflation last month had added to expectations of a rate cut on July 25, but likely US sanctions over Turkey's purchase of Russian air defence systems, combined with investor jitters over Erdogan's sacking of the bank governor, could put the lira under renewed pressure and make it harder to cut rates.

Here is some background on Turkey's new central bank governor:

- Economists and bankers say Uysal has been one of the more dovish members of the Central Bank's Monetary Policy Committee, describing his views on interest rates as closer to the Turkish president than the previous governor. "We know that Uysal is more sympathetic about a rate cut than (former governor Murat) Cetinkaya, and that's why he has been appointed as the central bank governor," said a senior Turkish banker who predicted a significant rate cut.

- Uysal has worked in banking for two decades, holding several senior positions at the majority state-owned Halkbank and its subsidiaries. Bankers say he was respected for his trading in foreign exchange, government debt and derivatives.

"Uysal is on top of money and forex markets. He knows how to read the pulse of markets. He knows the mechanisms of banking and central banking," a senior Turkish official said.

However, some point to his relative inexperience of monetary policy. "He is not a proper economist, rather a banker," said one Turkish economist who asked not to be named. "My hunch is that his knowledge of monetary policy has been obtained through 'on the job training' as deputy governor."

- The Central Bank said on Saturday Uysal would fully communicate how the bank plans to attain "price stability and financial stability".

"He will prefer much more frequent communication with markets," the Turkish official said. "He will be able to explain himself and the central bank policies to the markets and the public effectively." Another economic source said Uysal's communication skills "will stand out", as he tackles market perceptions that he was appointed to do what the president wants, adding however: "It's no secret that he defends low rates".

- Uysal has a degree in economics and a masters' degree in banking. He earned his masters in Inflation Targeting in Turkey and in the World. He was born in 1971. — Reuters



Turkey's new central bank governor Murat Uysal

Oil giant Total's chief announces new unit to invest in forests

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, France: The head of French energy giant Total announced Saturday that the company would invest a hundred million dollars annually on a new forest preservation and reforestation project. "We want to set up a business unit to invest in projects that will preserve forests," chief executive Patrick Pouyanne told a meeting to discuss economic issues in Aix-en-Provence, in the south of France.

The company would spend \$100 million a year on the project, he said.

"The most effective way today to eliminate carbon, for less than \$10 a ton, is reforestation," he added.

"This is not philanthropy," he added. "It's about investing in the medium- and long-term. A project for the forests, it has to last a long time to be positive for the planet." Pouyanne was speaking just days after Total said it had begun producing

biofuel at a refinery in southern France, a project that has sparked an outcry from environmentalists and farmers over its plans to import palm oil.

The site at La Mede near Marseille is a former oil refinery which has been converted and is now one of the largest biorefineries in Europe. A study released on Thursday said that a massive campaign of reforestation could help battle climate change.

The study, carried out by ETH Zurich and published in Science, said a large-scale operation could capture two-thirds of man-made carbon emissions and reduce overall levels in the atmosphere to their lowest in almost a century. It found that the Earth can support 2.2 billion acres (900 million hectares) of trees that would sequester 205 billion tons of carbon. Some environmental campaigners have reacted cautiously to the research. "Yes, of course we need to plant as many trees as possible," wrote teenaged activist Greta Thunberg on Twitter Friday.

"Yes, of course we need to keep the existing trees standing and rewild and restore nature." "But there's absolutely no way around stopping our emissions of greenhouse gases and leaving the fossil fuels in the ground." — AFP

Business

Gulf Bank partners with MGRP to introduce Kafa'a program for people with disabilities

Program also offers a range of development services and employment opportunities

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is proud to introduce Kafa'a, a career development program tailored for people with disabilities, in partnership with the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP). In the first move of its kind in Kuwait and as part of the new program, Gulf Bank is also launching a career fair for those with disabilities, scheduled to take place this Wednesday at the MGRP building in Reqqa from 8 AM to 4 PM.

The Kafa'a program provides people with disabilities with multiple career, training and volunteering opportunities. The program's mission is to empower those with disabilities to achieve independence by providing them with free choice and equal opportunity. The program's vision is also in line with the vision of Kuwait 2035, and aims to provide a real-life model for the banking sector and other sectors

to implement principles of inclusiveness, diversity and integration and encompass all segments of Kuwaiti society.

The Kafa'a program consists of full-fledged career opportunities for people with disabilities, including more than 50 administrative job opportunities at Gulf Bank. Both full-time and part-time opportunities are included in an effort to suit the lifestyles and needs of potential applicants. Field training programs are also included, in which participants are trained on banking principles for three weeks through four-hour daily workshops, lectures and field assignments. Apprenticeship opportunities are also available for applicants, consisting of year-long training programs that focus on a particular banking field and combine intensive job training with theory-based classes. Accepted applicants to the apprenticeship program can

also earn a monthly salary while developing their professional and technical skills and acquiring real-life practical experience. In addition, applicants will be provided with the mentorship they need, working closely with current employees and those with previous experience. Applicants will also be fully briefed on the requirements of the banking market and prepared to take tests, in accordance with international guidelines, that aim to help them develop their personal and practical skills. Mentorship opportunities will also equip applicants with opportunities to work closely with, and be inspired by, the Bank's current success stories, especially among existing employees with disabilities. The program aims to pair those with disabilities with career opportunities that they can thrive in, helping them achieve their desired goals and overcome obstacles to

enable them to excel in the workplace.

Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Salma Al-Hajjaj, said: "Gulf Bank has always been a pioneer in supporting young talent, and is eager to be a part of forming a generation of diverse future leaders in Kuwait. We are proud to launch this career fair - the first of its kind in Kuwait - to support job applicants with disabilities, and are looking forward to giving these applicants an opportunity to not only succeed, but excel. We can't wait to meet with these shining personalities at the fair and to welcome them among their colleagues at Gulf Bank soon."

Gulf Bank is keen on promoting a message of inclusion when it comes to hiring. Today, Gulf Bank proudly employs people with disabilities among various branches, taking into account the unique needs of each individual.



Salma Al-Hajjaj

Limak Insaat Kuwait officially recognized by WEPs

KUWAIT: Limak Insaat Kuwait S.P.C. announced yesterday that the company is now officially recognized as a member of the Women's Empowerment Principles' (WEPs) group of companies committed to making a difference for women in the workplace, marketplace and community. Limak Insaat Kuwait S.P.C. was added to the global list of over 2,275 signatories after signing the CEO Statement of Support for the program on May 30, 2019. Established in 2017 through the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) under the Foreign Direct Investment Law, Limak Insaat Kuwait S.P.C. is an independent subsidiary of Limak Holding, one of the leading conglomerates in Turkey and the world. Limak strongly supports gender equality, economic empowerment and sustainability on a global level and Limak Investment has been a member of the WEPs' list of global companies since 2015.

Limak Investment Chairperson Ebru Ozdemir said: "We are pleased and honored to now have Limak Insaat Kuwait S.P.C. enlisted amongst other highly respected international companies in different sectors, working together to achieve the same goals. It encourages us to further extend our ongoing support for women and promote professional programs that enhance their capabilities. We look forward to inspiring more women and seeing them placed in leadership positions in the construction world, as well as in business, politics, diplomacy, and academia."

Established by UN Women and the UN Global Compact, WEPs work to advance gender equality and promote women's economic empowerment through seven principles offering guidance on how to empower women by encouraging firms of all sizes, in all countries, industries, and sectors, to take decisive action towards gender equality.

Limak is a strong and long-term advocate of the advancement of women in engineering and has played an active role in women empowerment by adding permanent value to society in the countries it operates. In Kuwait, the company has undertaken various initiatives in support of women including the establishment of the 'Kuwait's Engineer Girls' Program in May 2017 in partnership with Kuwait University and Turkey's Bogazici University. The project-based learning program aims to empower female students' leadership and management skills and help them envision their future careers in engineering. To date, there have been two generations of graduates consisting of 60 young female engineers, many of which have accepted job offers at Limak since completing the program.

The Kuwait program is modelled after a successful program launched by Limak in Turkey in 2015, the 'Engineer Girls of Turkey', where Limak has offered sustainable support to over 100 students at 30 different state universities across Turkey. The objective of these programs is to help the youth reach their professional career goals and transform them into capable and qualified individuals prepared to create a positive long-lasting impact in the world. Limak operates in over 17 countries with more than 66,000 employees and across various sectors, including tourism, cement, energy, infrastructure, airport management and operations, port management, food, and aviation.

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:

- Khairiyah Ibrahim Marafi
- Vaikunta Raja Chengiah Raja
- Abdulhadi Mohammad Sadeq Almousawi
- Mohammad Abdullah Ali
- Ahmad Adel Mohammad Ghuloum

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.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks which include Gulf Bank Algeria - AGB (Algeria), Bank of Baghdad - BOB (Iraq & Lebanon), Tunis International Bank - TIB (Tunisia), and fully owned Burgan Bank - Turkey, (collectively known as the "Burgan Bank Group"). Furthermore, Burgan Bank has a present in the UAE through its corporate office ("Burgan Financial Services Limited") which had helped the bank to participate in multiple financing opportunities in the UAE.

KFH-Bahrain introduces Sukuk and Lombard financing for customers

KUWAIT: In line with its strategy to provide customers with innovative wealth management solutions and services, Kuwait Finance House- Bahrain KFH-Bahrain's Wealth Management Department is expanding its variety of products and services offered to the bank's high net worth Individuals, said Abdul Razak Jawahery, Executive Manager of Private Banking and Wealth Management.

KFH-Bahrain Wealth Management also offers a range of Sukuk to its investors allowing them the opportunity to gain exposure to sharia-compliant fixed income. This will allow investors to diversify their portfolio while generating recurring income. This is further enhanced with the launch of an attractive Margin Finance scheme which significantly boosts investors' returns. Investors can now leverage their investment in liquid sovereign Sukuk which enables them to enhance their yields.

Recently, KFH-Bahrain Wealth Management announced the launch of Lombard Financing Facilities. This allows HNWI's to benefit from

short-term liquidity secured against their existing investments without the need to liquidate their portfolios. Clients can now obtain financing against their deposits or sukuk portfolio at attractive rates with comfortable payment terms. Clients with cash requirements or those who would like to pursue an investment opportunity no longer require terminating their deposits or liquidate their portfolio.

Jawahery, added, "Since the launch the Bank's Wealth Management Department over three years ago, we have strived to provide our clients with world-class services. We have been extremely successful in supporting our clients by providing them with the latest banking services and enabling them to meet their financial objectives. The introduction of Sukuk margin finance and Lombard Financing comes as part of the suite of flexible products and services developed by KFH-Bahrain to suit the various investment needs and demands of our clients".

Meanwhile, Rashid Alkhan, Head of Wealth Management said, "Lombard Financing is a market driven service offered by wealth managers globally. Our clients can now get access to short-term facilities with no interruption to their asset allocation and long-term investment strategy. They can get access to cash while continue to enjoy the capital appreciation and income potential of their securities. We continuously try to meet investors' needs, expectations and requirements while main-



Abdul Razak Jawahery



Rashid Alkhan

taining an excellent level of customer experience."

"The Bank is also committed to pioneering the growth and development of the local Islamic Finance sector by launching specialized products and services, which includes the offerings provided by KFH-Bahrain's Wealth Management Department," Alkhan added.

A full range of wealth management solutions are provided by KFH-Bahrain, inclusive of Current Accounts, Savings Accounts, Mudharaba Restricted and Unrestricted Accounts, Wakala Accounts, International Murabaha, and Sukuk that are flexible, diverse and can complement varying customer requirements to meet their individual objectives.

Gulf Air appoints first Bahraini female country manager

MANAMA: Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, has appointed Shams Al-Doseri as a Country Manager for its Addis Ababa station. This appointment makes Al-Doseri the first Bahraini female to run a Gulf Air station. With eight years of airline sales experience in Gulf Air's hub station in Bahrain, Al-Doseri was selected to represent Gulf Air in Ethiopia and manage the airline's office in its capital.

The airline operates flights to and from Addis Ababa in Ethiopia since 2011 and with this appointment, Al-Doseri will take on the challenge of further strengthening Gulf Air's growth in Africa. Al-Doseri has been part of the Gulf Air family for eight years, in which she started as a sales executive and then promoted to a sales manager before her recent appointment as country manager abroad.

"I am very proud and delighted to take this challenge and be the first Bahraini woman in Gulf Air to represent the

national carrier outside the Kingdom." Al-Doseri added at the announcement of her promotion, "This assignment is of a national nature to me as I will not only promote my airline but also promote my beloved country to the world by encouraging more passengers to fly Gulf Air to or via Bahrain."

Gulf Air is committed to invest in its Bahraini workforce and their career development and as such, it continues to provide opportunities for Bahraini nationals to take over senior positions in the company. Earlier this year Gulf Air welcomed the return of its Country Manager UK to its headquarter in Bahrain to take on the role of Senior Manager Sales managing the entire Europe and Asia Pacific regions. With 90 percent of employees that are based at the headquarters in Muharraq being Bahraini along with nearly 70 percent of its pilots, Gulf Air is a leader in the Bahrainization program in the Kingdom as it provides the opportunity for local talents and experienced personnel to work in its various areas of the airline's business.



Shams Al-Doseri

General Manager, Retail Banking at AUB said in a press release: AUB pays special attention to its customers; holders of different banking cards.

Sen added: In recognition to our valued customers, we will continue to provide them with more attractive offers, and we always strive to innovate new and appealing ways to make shopping more enjoyable and profitable for AUB credit / debit cardholders, adding that AUB promotional campaigns are one of the added value offered by the Bank to its customers this year.

Sen pointed out that this time to launch the campaign is selected successfully as it coincides with the summer and holidays season which usually sees a high shopping movement by customers, pushing the bank to enhance the cards benefits and rewards to encourage cardholders to use their banking cards in their shopping due to the benefits and added value they offer.



Bayt.com weekly report

3 personal branding practices you should be doing today

In today's digital and hyper-social world, branding is no longer associated only with products and services offered by companies. Branding has become an essential part for the success of any professional and is one of the most important strategies for securing a job. Here is a quick review by career experts at Bayt.com on the best methods to creating a powerful personal brand that can grab the attention of peers, employers and clients alike:

1. Build an online public profile

Having an online public profile is similar to having an online business card. It is your own personal brand that automatically grabs the attention of both employers and clients. It is essentially your window to the job market. With an online public profile, you are easily searchable on major engines and you can use your profile to connect with colleagues, employers and clients alike. Your connections can also endorse your skills or even write recommendations that will be visible on your profile. You can take it one step further, and share it on all forms of your social media.

2. Join the conversations on online communities/forums

Online communities/ forums is the easiest way to establish your presence in your field and to highlight your expertise in the community. You can answer questions that other professionals in the industry may have as well as ask any questions you may need answered by peers. Stand out by integrating keywords and intelligent responses into the existing conversations. They can help you expand your network online, include you in the top ranked professionals in your field, and make you an ideal candidate within your field. Through your discussions, you can also be endorsed by other experts and receive ranks and badges on your CV that prove your expertise.

3. Perfect your online CV

It can take less than 30 seconds for your CV to make or break your chances of landing the job. Employers are constantly on the lookout for candidates that match their needs, and regularly skim through thousands of CV's to find the requirements they're looking for. Integrating keywords into your online CV is extremely important to boost your job application, since a sophisticated algorithm takes your keywords into consideration before giving you a rank that is visible to employers. The higher your rank, the quicker an employer will view your CV.

What's On

CBK honors ‘Green Hands’ team

The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently honored the environmental ‘Green Hands’ voluntary team for joining the bank’s corporate communication team in distributing Sahour meals on construction and cleaning labor during Ramadan. The honoring ceremony was attended by CBK’s CEO, Elham Mahfouz and deputy director for corporate communication, Amani Al-Wer’a.

Speaking on the occasion, Mahfouz expressed gratitude to the green hands voluntary team for their effective participation and stressed the significance of voluntary work and social consolidation. On her part, Al-Wer’a said that CBK focuses on social occasions and takes part in boosting awareness and promoting the perception of voluntary and charity work activities. Head of the green hands team, Samia Al-Sa’eedan praised the role played by CBK in corporate social responsibility activities and in enhancing social responsibility concepts.



Al Sayer Holding organizes blood donation campaign

In partnership with Kuwait Central Blood Bank (CBB), Al Sayer Holding Corporate Excellence Department organized blood donation campaigns as part of Corporate Sustainability and Community Services at Four Locations: Al Sayer Headquarter KFTZI, Al-Rai Toyota Showroom, New Ardiya Delivery Center and Ahmadi Toyota Service Center. 300+ employees participated in this volunteer campaign, believing Donating Blood is the greatest gift to humanity.

According to Eng Nehad Al Haj Ali, DGM Corporate Excellence, “Donating blood is essential because maintaining an adequate blood supply in our community secures blood transfusions for patients. It gives donors a medical checkup at no cost as well as their satisfaction for helping someone in a desperate need of blood to save his life. It also has positive reflection on your health, it keeps the heart and liver healthy, manages your weight and adds to your longevity.”



Berry Spinach Salad with Spicy Maple Sunflower Seeds

Summertime salad featuring fresh raspberries, blueberries, spinach and goat cheese. Toss all that in homemade balsamic vinaigrette for the perfect summer side salad!

INGREDIENTS

Sunflower seeds:

- 1 cup sunflower seeds
- 1 1/2 teaspoons maple syrup
- Pinch salt
- Dash cayenne

Salad:

- 5 ounces baby spinach, roughly chopped
- 1 1/2 cups total raspberries, blueberries and/or chopped strawberries
- 1 cup crumbled goat cheese
- Balsamic vinaigrette:
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon maple syrup
- Salt and pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

To prepare the sunflower seeds, warm a small non-stick skillet over medium heat and add the sunflower seeds. Let the sunflower seeds warm up a bit, then pour in the maple syrup, a pinch of salt and a tiny dash of cayenne pepper, if desired. Toast the seeds while stirring constantly until most of the maple syrup has evaporated and the sunflower seeds are turning lightly golden on the edges, about 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer the seeds to a plate to cool.

In a serving bowl, combine the spinach, berries, crumbled goat cheese and sunflower seeds. In a small measuring cup or bowl, whisk together the vinaigrette ingredients until emulsified.



Just before serving, drizzle in enough vinaigrette to lightly coat the leaves (you might have leftover dressing) and gently toss (careful with those delicate raspberries!). Serve immediately.

Green Bean Salad with Toasted Almonds & Feta

This green bean salad is the best! Perfectly cooked green beans are tossed in a lemony dressing with toasted almonds, feta and basil.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 1 pound green beans, trimmed and cut into 2 to 3" long pieces
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt, divided
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 small-to-medium clove garlic
- Several twists of freshly ground black pepper
- Pinch of red pepper flakes
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese, divided
- 3 to 4 large basil leaves, torn or chopped, for garnish
- Lemon zest from about 1/2 lemon, for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

Start with a large skillet over medium heat. Add the almonds and cook, stirring frequently (careful, they burn quickly). After 3 minutes, reduce the heat to medium-low, and continue stirring until they are fragrant and turning golden on the edges, about 1 to 3 more minutes. Transfer the almonds to a bowl to cool.

Make sure the heat is set to medium-low and place the skillet back on the heat. Immediately add the green beans, water and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the beans are nearly tender, about 7 to 10 minutes. Remove the lid, raise heat to medium-high, and cook until the liquid evaporates, 2 to 5 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and set aside.

Meanwhile, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, mustard, garlic, black pepper, red pepper flakes and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt. Set aside.

Once the green beans are done cooking, whisk the olive oil mixture once more, then pour it into the skillet. Pour the almonds back into the skillet, and add about half of the feta, reserving the other half for garnish. Toss to combine, then taste and add more lemon juice or black pepper if necessary.

Transfer the green beans to a serving bowl or platter. Sprinkle the remaining feta and the torn basil leaves on top. Lightly grate some lemon zest on top, and serve promptly.



Health

Malaria surges back in crisis-struck Venezuela; health system collapses

'I have pain everywhere, fever'

EL TUCUCO: The sweltering heat of the Venezuelan forest makes no difference to Jose Gregorio, who trembles with a cold chill. "I have pain everywhere, fever," he stammers. Gregorio has the classic symptoms of malaria, a disease eradicated years ago among his Yukpa indigenous people, but it's back with a vengeance all across crisis-struck Venezuela. "He had sore joints and then started vomiting, and it's been four or five days since he's eaten anything," says his worried wife Marisol.

Their four-month-old baby babbles beside his father on the bed. "The baby and I also had malaria," says Marisol. "Before, that was not the case here, there was only chikungunya and dengue, malaria came back here last year." She doesn't bat an eyelid at the mention of either of the other mosquito-borne viruses, whose spread has been fueled by the collapse of Venezuela's health system.

"Here" is El Tucuco, a small village at the foot of the mountains that form the border with Colombia, a three-hour drive from Maracaibo in Venezuela's western Zulia state. With 3,700 people, El Tucuco is the Yukpas' "capital" and malaria is rapidly making its presence felt here as in the rest of Venezuela - a country that could once boast of being the first to have eradicated the disease in 1961.

'Pandemic'

There are no official statistics on malaria's reach into El Tucuco, nor on the number of deaths it causes. But from his consulting room at the Catholic Mission, Dr Carlos Polanco is seeing a developing crisis. "Out of 10 people who are tested for malaria in the village laboratory, four to five come out with a positive test. This is an alarming figure." Brother Nelson Sandoval, a Capuchin friar who presides over the mission, adds: "Before entering the order, I already knew this community and I had never seen a case of malaria. Today we are in the middle of a pandemic."

El Tucuco is affected by Plasmodium vivax, the most geographically widespread malarial species. The more lethal Plasmodium falciparum strain is prevalent in the Amazonian regions of southeastern Venezuela. According to Sandoval and Polanco, the reason for malaria's sudden virulence in El Tucuco is simple: once-regular fumigation missions by the Venezuelan government stopped. "And as the population of mosquitos increased, cases exploded," said Polanco. Added to this is the malnutrition that weakens resistance to the disease, a new phenomenon since the economic crisis took hold at the end of 2015. "Before, it was possible to vary one's diet, but with inflation the Yukpa cannot afford it,"

instead making do with what they can grow, like cassava and plantain, according to Polanco. Rosa, 67, knows all about malnutrition. Lying on the floor of her house, she is battling malaria for the third time. "The doctor weighed me yesterday - 37 kilograms. I was 83 kilos before." A report published in British medical journal The Lancet in February warned of an epidemic of malaria and dengue fever as a result of the continuing crisis in Venezuela.

Between 2016 and 2017 alone, the number of malaria cases in the nation jumped 70 per cent. "The situation is catastrophic," said Dr Huiades Urbina, secretary of the national Academy of Medicine. In 2018, "there were 600,000 cases of malaria and we, the scientific organizations, estimate that in 2019 we could reach a million cases" - one in every 30 people. But these figures are only estimates, "because the government conceals the statistics."

'Nobody answers us'

The malaria explosion has gone hand in hand with the worsening economic crisis. According to Nicolas Maduro's government, inflation reached a staggering 130,000 percent in 2018 and GDP halved between 2013 and 2018. In the oil-rich state of Zulia, service stations have been dry for more than a month. Electricity blackouts are commonplace and residents flee abroad in their

thousands. Despite a poster of late president Hugo Chavez at the entry to the clinic, there is little sign of government presence in El Tucuco. Dr Luisana Hernandez despairs of ever seeing any state help.

"Every day, everything is deteriorating a bit more," she says, exasperated. Refrigerators intended to keep vaccines cold do not work "because we have no gasoline to run the generator," and both the clinic's broken-down ambulances are gathering rust in the garden. "We've knocked on every door. But nobody answers us," said Hernandez. Without fuel to bring drugs from the city, without resources to prevent illnesses, eradicating malaria in an almost impossible task.

Brother Nelson does what he can, with help from the Catholic charity Caritas and the Pan American Health Organization. His mission distributes the antimalarial drugs chloroquine and primaquine to sick Yukpa people. Maria Jose Romero, 22, was able to benefit from treatment. "Repeated seizures are due to the fact that many people cannot follow the treatment," for lack of drugs, she said. Romero now lives across the border in Colombia, having fled Venezuela. She is visiting El Tucuco to see her family. Soon she will return to the other side of the mountain, on foot. "It's three days' walk," she says. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



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- Fellow of American College of Surgery
- Canadian Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
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Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo-Rectal Surgeon

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DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

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

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

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
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Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

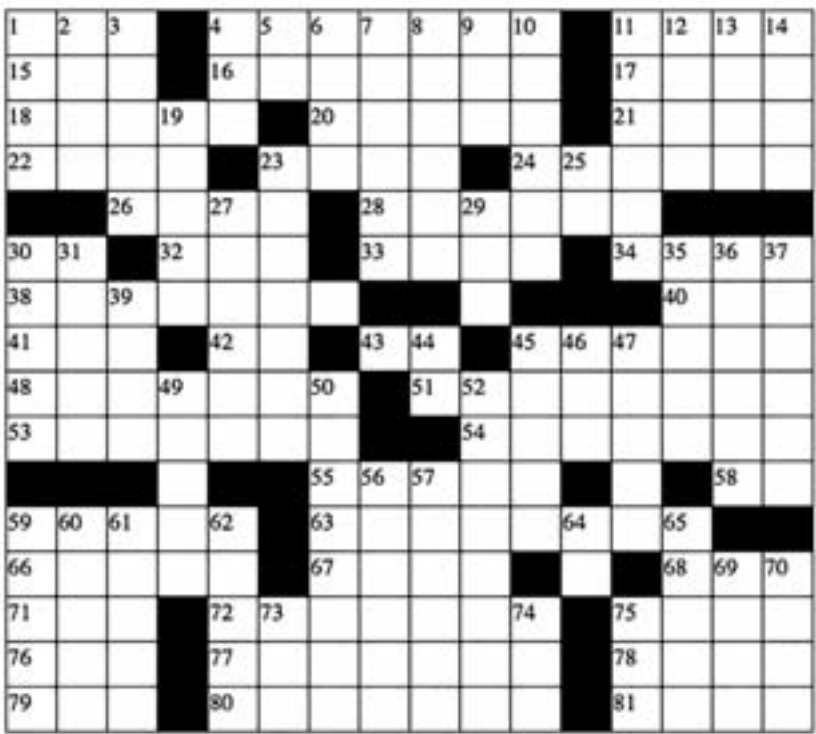
- Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- (IFSO) member .
- Faculty member of (BEST).
- Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

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

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Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Closer Center Mazaya Building

CROSSWORD 2251



ACROSS

- 1. 36th President of the United States.
- 4. All of the inhabitants of the earth.
- 11. In a murderous frenzy as if possessed by a demon.
- 15. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- 16. Being or passing over or across the sea.
- 17. Type genus of the Ranidae.
- 18. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
- 20. Cause to wither or parch from exposure to heat.
- 21. The twelfth month of the civil year.
- 22. Not only so, but.
- 24. A mountain in the central Himalayas on the border of Tibet and Nepal (27,890 feet high).
- 26. An informal term for a father.
- 28. Of or belonging to an aecium.
- 30. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- 32. The quantity contained in a keg.
- 33. The inner and longer of the two bones of the human forearm.
- 34. Norwegian mathematician (1802-1829).
- 38. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- 40. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- 41. (in golf) The standard number of strokes set for each hole on a golf course, or for the entire course.
- 42. The square of a body of any size of type.
- 43. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- 48. A studio especially for an artist or designer.
- 51. United States educator famous for writing a book about how to win friends and influence people (1888-1955).
- 53. Kit consisting of a complete outfit (clothing and accessories) for a new baby.
- 54. Timely convenience.
- 55. Made of wood of the aspen tree n.
- 58. A unit of weight equivalent to 1000 kilograms.
- 59. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- 63. By a small margin.
- 66. The capital of Morocco.
- 67. A category of things distinguished by some common characteristic or quality.
- 68. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
- 71. Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus Iva with small greenish flowers.
- 72. The style in which hair has been cut.
- 76. (Norse mythology) Wife of Thor and guardian of the home.
- 77. An ancient port on the Mediterranean.
- 78. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- 79. Take in solid food.
- 80. Herbs, shrubs and trees.
- 81. Tear down so as to make flat with the ground.

DOWN

- 1. A polite name for any woman.
- 2. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
- 3. A holy war by Muslims against unbelievers.
- 4. Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand.
- 5. The eleventh month of the civil year.
- 6. Type genus of the Nepidae.
- 7. An industrial city in southern Poland on the Vistula.
- 8. Jewish republic in southwestern Asia at eastern end of Mediterranean.
- 9. An acute inflammatory disease occurring in the intestines of premature infants.
- 10. Any of several plants of or developed from the species Dahlia pinnata having tuberous roots and showy rayed variously colored flower heads.
- 11. Small space in a tissue or part such as the area between veins on a leaf or an insect's wing.
- 12. A milkshake made with malt powder.
- 13. An onerous or difficult concern.
- 14. Informal terms for money.
- 19. Of a yellowish brown color similar to olive drab n.
- 23. A drug (trade name Tagamet) used to treat peptic ulcers by decreasing the secretion of stomach acid.
- 25. (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
- 27. The quality of being fraudulent.
- 29. The portion of the vertebrate nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord.
- 31. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
- 35. Water accumulated in the bilge of a ship.
- 36. Attempting to get personal recognition for yourself (especially by unacceptable means).
- 37. Up to the immediate present.
- 39. The nest of a squirrel.
- 44. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 45. The basic monetary unit in many countries.
- 46. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
- 47. United States tennis player (born in Czechoslovakia) who won several singles championships.
- 49. A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
- 50. Transfer somebody to a different position or location of work.
- 52. A device that controls amount of light admitted.
- 56. The scum formed by oxidation at the surface of molten metals.
- 57. A wrapped container.
- 60. Type genus of the Gavidae.
- 61. At or near or toward the stern of a ship or tail of an airplane.
- 62. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- 64. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
- 65. West Indian evergreen with medium to long leaves.
- 69. English illustrator of several of Dickens' novels (1815-1882).
- 70. Give over.
- 73. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- 74. Syndrome resulting from a serious acute (sometimes fatal) infection associated with the presence of staphylococcus.
- 75. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

In the future when you sit back and reminisce on some of the best times in your life, today will come to mind. Love and friendship comes naturally to you today. Your world is filled with both. Special times are to be spent with love ones today and lasting memories will be made. You may find an unbelievable opportunity will come your way. Lady luck is smiling at you today. This day will find you in the right place at the right time. It seems as if a financial matter is resolved with an unexpected cash flow. Accept gifts and good fortune with much gratitude today. Do not resist what was meant to be. Aries. Enjoy the smile you are unable to wipe off of your face.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

People are creatures of habit. You seem fascinated today by learning what makes people tick. Why do certain people act certain ways. You have asked yourself, "what in the world is wrong with people?" on more than one occasion today. This suddenly becomes a mission for you. You want to get to the root of the issues that make people close to you make the choices they have been making. Taking time to open up to others and have them open up to you may give you a much greater understanding of this problem. Keep an open mind and you may have great understanding of the differences you are seeing in people.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Sex, power, and money, are what you are drawn to today. Secrets and mysteries draw you in. All that is taboo is fascinating to you today. You have a desire to know what makes people tick. What makes people do the things they do? You start to realize what an impact your own past can have on your future. You are able to have some time to reflect and realize each stumbling block in your past has been successfully turned into stepping stones by you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This is a great time to stop and really think about how you feel about your life and yourself. This is a nice time for you. Your emotions and the feelings of those around you may be very clear to you now. A time of understanding and a time of love is what this day may bring. You may start to focus your energy on learning more about your peers. Learning what makes people tick is a turn on for you. People seem to fascinate you and you are curious and want to get to the root of who they really are. Secrets, drama, and all that is considered taboo, is where you find your focus has drifted.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

When speaking you may find others are captivated by what you have to say. You may find yourself bringing a group together with your words and ideas. Others may find they are swept away to the day and time you are speaking of. This is a true talent. This is a great day for job-related events. You may shine in your job. You could be offered a promotion coming your way. You may find you are asked to speak on behalf of your company or represent your company in some way. You are the voice others long to hear.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today you may feel as though you have hit a bump in the road. There may even be one person you feel is standing in your way. Aquarius, you will be able to be understanding and cut right through the smoke and mirrors to get to the root of the problem with this individual. You will be admired for your leadership skills. You may find yourself focusing on your sexual needs today. This may be an area you desire dominance and control. Virgo. Relationships are very important to you. You seem to see the beauty in all that surrounds you. Enjoy this day.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You know exactly what you want, and you know exactly how you plan on accomplishing your goals. Your mind is made up and you are more determined now than ever to make things happen. You may want to sit down with your journal and put these ideas on paper, this will help you keep your focus and limit the chance of any distraction. Your ambition is so intense at this time they you may find yourself dismissing all that does not play a direct role in your success. Put some of your focus on balance and making time for those closest to you. This will prevent resentment and conflict in the future.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Whether it is sexual, the desire for power, or the desire for wealth, these are all area that seem to turn you on and set you in motion today. You may find yourself in a very sensual mood at this time. Things seem to affect you on a much deeper level now. The mysterious, secretive, and even that which is taboo seem to call to you and draw you in. You may desire to learn people on a deeper level. You want to know them from the inside out. You may also desire to do some soul-searching of your own and learn yourself in the same manner.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Today you may feel as though you have hit a bump in the road. There may even be one person you feel is standing in your way. Aquarius, you will be able to be understanding and cut right through the smoke and mirrors to get to the root of the problem with this individual. You will be admired for your leadership skills. You may find yourself focusing on your sexual needs today. This may be an area you desire dominance and control. Sagittarius. Relationships are very important to you.



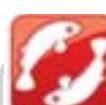
Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This is a time when lovers, children, and people and things dear to your heart take center stage. You have your priorities in order. You know where your bread is buttered. Without these things you may feel as if you would never know what happiness truly is. You find that those close to you shower you with affection and attention. It feels wonderful to be loved and needed. You may find that you are extremely sensitive to the needs of those close to you. In return you are receiving the nurturing and affection your heart has been desiring. Enjoy this wonderful time.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find that you not only have a greater appreciation for things of value but for value itself today. You may find this to be a period of great material gain. It is a time that material things have a great importance to you. You may find yourself in an unrealistic and dreamy mood. You seem to be at odds with your responsibilities. Your friends are used to a more disciplined side of you. You may find that do not like the way you are behaving. Do not be surprised if you find your friends avoiding you at this time. Aquarius. This may make you feel as if you do not have the support you need.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Every action has a consequence. You seem to be one that tends to have to learn this the hard way. This may be a time wiping the slate clean may be in order. Set your goals. Start over from scratch. If things do not work out the first time, roll up your sleeves and try again. Eventually you will accomplish your goals. Stay focused and determined, you may find great reward awaits you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

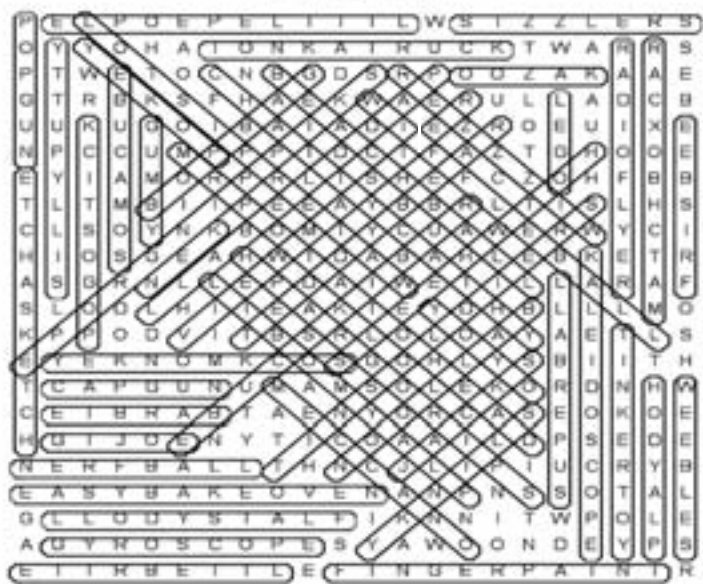
1950's Songs

Find and circle all of the 1950's song titles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional 1950's song.

RAVEON IARTYRETSYML I
DYTSIMHONKYTONKLEOL
OGNAJDANIHCRAESTNNE
NVLONELYTEARDROPSLY
NBEEYRMMBTLSQHGEHYE
ALTFOAODAEMBEKEJUOYL
SUOTIVDKNRLAMAI IUOD
NEONENYAEELIUTZTUD
OBYIGFKYRRSLETRMUKI
TETAITZEBEHUUNEAAASD
NRTVKAATHOFVROUENSHO
EREERERLUTFESYSNIOB
EYECQATSLIKYFAOILUA
THFDEUEYTSGCSTDSANB
XIHHRIRITYGACAI EHNDM
ILSWOULEAILLOMEBODA
SLRCLTTPATKDLAPOMOB
LIKEVOLEYBEYBYSYVGA
RIPITUPENIGHTTRAINL

- BLUEBERRY HILL
- BO DIDDLEY
- BYE BYE LOVE
- CRAZY ARMS
- DIANGO
- DONNA
- EVERYDAY
- HEARTBREAK HOTEL
- HONKY TONK
- HOUND DOG
- JAILHOUSE ROCK
- KANSAS CITY
- LA BAMB
- LOVELY TEARDROPS
- LONG TAIL SALLY
- MACK THE KNIFE
- MANNISH BOY
- MAYBELLENE
- MISTY
- MONA LISA
- MOVE IT
- MYSTERY TRAIN
- NIGHT TRAIN
- ONLY YOU
- PEGGY SUE
- RAVE ON
- RED HOT
- RIP IT UP
- RUMBLE
- SEARCHIN'
- SHOUT
- SIXTEEN TONS
- SPEEDO
- SUZIE Q
- TAKE FIVE
- TEQUILA
- TUTTI FRUTTI
- YAKETY YAK
- YOU SEND ME

Classic Toys



- BALLOON
- BARBIE
- BEACH BALL
- BOY BAG
- CAP GUN
- CHATTY CATHY
- EASY BAKE OVEN
- ETCH A SKETCH
- FINGER PAINT
- FLATSY DOLL
- FREBBIE
- G.I. JOE
- GUMBY
- GYROSCOPE
- HOT WHEELS
- JACKS
- KALEIDOSCOPE
- KATKO
- KEN
- LEGO
- LITTLE BRUTE
- LITTLE PEOPLE
- MATCHBOX CAR
- MECCANO
- MR. POTATO HEAD
- NERF BALL
- PADDOLE BALL
- PLAY-DOH
- PLAYMOBIL
- POGO STICK
- POKEY
- POP GUN
- RADIO FLYER
- RUBIK'S CUBE
- SILLY PUTTY
- SIZZLERS
- SKIPPING ROPE
- SLINKY
- SOCK MONKEY
- SOMA CUBE
- SPYROGRAPH
- SUPER BALL
- TEDDY BEAR
- TINKERTOY
- TIN SOLDIERS
- TONKA TRUCK
- VIEWMASTER
- WATER PISTOL
- WEEBLES
- WIFFLE BALL
- WIZZER
- YO-YO

The hidden message is: WHAT WAS WONDERFUL ABOUT CHILDHOOD IS THAT ANYTHING IN IT WAS A WONDER.

Daily Sudoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

MONDAY, JULY 8, 2019



Aerial view of a figure of Mexican artist and painter Frida Kahlo lying in bed taken on the inauguration day of the exhibition 'Los Colores de Frida' ('The Colours of Frida') in her honor, at Zocalo square in Mexico City. — AFP

Russian band performing in Alabama to protest 'ridiculous' abortion ban

The Russian collective Pussy Riot will perform in Alabama on Thursday, a sold-out concert to raise money for women's rights groups in light of the state's recent passage of a near-total ban on abortion. Proceeds from the Birmingham benefit will go to Planned Parenthood and the Yellowhammer Fund, a group that gives assistance to women seeking abortions at one of the southern US state's three clinics. In May, Alabama lawmakers triggered outrage after pushing through legislation making abortion a felony—even in cases of rape or incest, unless the mother's health is at risk—punishing doctors with up to 99 years in prison for providing the procedure.

"It is ridiculous to me that it's still a question in 2019 whether women can have an abortion," Pussy Riot co-founder Nadya Tolokonnikova told AFP ahead of the performance. "We want to come to Alabama and support women who are in quite a critical and vulnerable position right now," she said. "Many Americans, they believe that Russia is a patriarchal country—it's true in a lot of ways, but when it comes to abortion rights, it's not questionable." The Soviet Union in 1920 became the first state in the world to legalize abortion, though it was banned under Joseph Stalin for nearly two decades starting in 1936.



The all-girl punk band Pussy Riot (from left) Maria Alyokhina, Yekaterina Samutsevich and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova. — AFP

Nigeria's Nollywood film industry reels in foreign investors

Nigeria's film industry, dubbed Nollywood, has long kept viewers entertained with tales of romance and riches, and now foreign investors are increasingly looking for a part of the action. US giant Netflix, France's Canal+ and China's StarTimes are among those making moves in the globe's second most-prolific film industry, which churns out more than 2,500 films each year and is topped only by India's Bollywood. At an event in Nigeria's economic capital Lagos this week potential investors from France mingled with local directors and politicians as they heard about the possibilities on offer.

"The revenues from the box office rose by 36 percent between 2017 and 2018 from \$17.3 million to \$23.6 million," Chijioke Uwaegbute, an expert on the industry at PwC Nigeria, told those gathered. "Nowhere in the world will you see this kind of opportunities and growth." Traditionally, Nollywood films have been low-budget productions, often shot in just a couple of days at a cost of several thousand dollars and marred by poor sound and image quality.

Rampant piracy and the widespread circulation of unlicensed copies has eaten into profits and put off investors from increasing funding. But higher quality Nigerian-made films have in recent years been having far more impact at the box office in a nation with a potential market of almost 200 million people. The Wedding Party and its sequel Wedding Party 2 released by director Kemi Adetiba in 2016 and 2017 generated over \$2 million, beating out US



In this file photo a man passes by Nigerian movie billboards at a cinema in Lagos. — AFP photos

blockbusters for the first time. Following up on that success the comedy Chief Daddy by Niyi Akinmolayan brought in some \$600,000 last year.

The figures remain minuscule compared to the vast sums grossed by Hollywood hits, and the Oscars are a distant dream, but increasingly upper and middle class Nigerians who can afford the tickets seem willing to pay to go see local productions. And it is these films with higher production value that are attracting the investors from overseas.

'Real appetite'

Canal Olympia, a subsidiary of French media giant Vivendi, runs cinemas and entertainment venues across the continent and includes at least one Nollywood film in its programming each week. The group will next year open two cinemas in Nigeria, a country with only one screen per million people where power shortages and high land-costs have made such ventures complicated. "It is very important for us to be close to Nollywood," Simon Minkowski, development director at Canal Olympia, told AFP.

"But beyond just distribution, there is a real appetite to produce the content made by Africans in Africa," Laurent

Sicouri, head of acquisitions at Canal+, said he was in Lagos to "evaluate the production" of Nigerian cinema. The chain has already upped its interest in films from the country and offers Nollywood TV to its subscribers in Francophone Africa. While there is interest from Europe, most of the attention for directors and producers in Nigeria is focused on trying to attract Netflix.

The online entertainment provider has already acquired the rights to a string of Nollywood productions and in January released the first Netflix Nigerian original film, Lionheart by actor-director Genevieve Nnaji. Those involved in the industry are hoping that the influx of foreign interest will help push their output to a new level. But Serge Noukoue, founder of the Paris-based Nollywood Week film festival, warned that the industry needs to wise up to take full advantage. "Now that Nollywood is attracting investors the Nigerians have to learn to better protect their interests so that there is not just a pure exploitation of their content," he said. "At the moment, they sell to Netflix and that is the end of the story."—AFP



In this file photo a customer stands in front of a shelf full of Nollywood movies in a shop at Idumota market in Lagos.

Stevie Wonder announces will have kidney transplant

Stevie Wonder has revealed he will take a break from music to undergo a kidney transplant later this year. The legendary US singer-songwriter told a crowd in London on Saturday that he had a kidney donor lined up and that the procedure is planned for September. "I'm going to have surgery," Wonder said as he wrapped up a set at a music festival in Hyde Park. "I'm going to have a kidney

transplant in September of this year. "I have a donor, it's all good," he added.

The 69-year-old multi Grammy Award-winner added that he will perform a few more shows before taking a break ahead of the operation. "I want you to know, I came here to give you my love and thank you for your love," Wonder told the crowd to cheers. The Detroit Free Press this week reported that he is fight-

ing "a serious but manageable health issue", citing sources close to the Motown star. Wonder was born blind as Stevland Hardaway Judkins, in Saginaw, Michigan, in the United States in 1950. He is said to have learned to play piano, drums and harmonica by the age of nine and released his first album in 1961 under Detroit's famous Motown record label. — AFP



An anti-abortion movement does exist in Russia, with activists seizing on the country's declining population as reason for a ban, but according to Tolokonnikova it is only "insane, crazy freaks who claim that women don't have right to have an abortion" there. Though she feels "the US going backwards" the 29-year-old said she sees progress "because activism is blooming and the feminist movement is stronger than any time." "The feminist movement today is so strong that it will be able to overcome these obstacles," the Moscow-based activist said. "Those white, male dudes who are voting against abortion rights, they're part of the history. They're not really relevant." She sees legislation like that signed in Alabama as evidence of politicians who are "angry, and desperate, because they feel that their time (in power) is about to end."

Activism 'a mindset'

The anarchist Pussy Riot collective has gained international fame for its politically charged performances that see members don balaclavas and skewer everything from the Russian church to persecution of the country's gay community. In 2012, Tolokonnikova was among the members sentenced to two years in a prison colony for "hooliganism and religious hatred," for performing a song protesting Russian President Vladimir Putin. Despite her time in prison, Tolokonnikova says she will never give up activism: "It's a mindset. It's something you can't really escape. It's a part of me."

She became a young mother 11 years ago, an experience that gave her "more conviction" in her feminism. "Having a baby who is a girl definitely convinced me that I should try to make my country and the world a better place for my girl to live in," she said. "I'm still fighting laws of patriarchal ghosts." The ban in Alabama is set to go into effect November 15.

But the law—which was designed as a challenge to the landmark 1973 US Supreme Court ruling Roe v Wade, which made abortion legal nationwide in the US—may be blocked in court before then. "I'm looking forward to meeting inspiring people, who are surviving in an environment that is not particularly open to progressive people," Tolokonnikova said of her upcoming show.

"I like to go to places that are not super obvious to play in," she said. "I want to support those progressive people who decided to stay in a place like Alabama and make that state more progressive and more open-minded. If I can help just a little bit, I'd be really happy to." "That's the beauty of art, it can unite people with different views." — AFP



Madonna's reluctant records

Madonna made her three most recent albums “reluctantly”. The 60-year-old singer - who has Lourdes, 22, Rocco, 18, David, 13, Mercy, also 13, and six-year-old twins Estere and Stelle - has been planning to make a new movie but got “bored” with the process so found herself back in the recording studio. Asked how she suddenly finds herself with ideas and knows it's time to make an album, she told MOJO magazine: “Sometimes that happens. But it has definitely not happened in the last... three records. “Honestly, the last couple of albums, I've made them reluctantly. “Both times I was trying to do something else- get a film made. “That happened on this record too. I moved to Lisbon because I wanted my son [David] to be able to attend a soccer academy and then I was trying to raise money for a film and then I got bored waiting and then I ended up making a record. “So it just kind of happened. It wasn't like a burning thing that I had.” But when she does start working on new music, Madonna is “very focused”. She said: “Because time is so limited and precious, you do have to be laser-focused

and not waste any time. “Because you're juggling, you know? Taking care of six children and they live in three different countries and you're doing other jobs and taking care of other people. “And I do have other areas of interest and filmmaking is one of them. “I've been working for years on a screenplay and I've another script that I'm supposed to direct. “With this album, at first I was just playing around and experimenting and then I was officially making a record. “And when that happened, I did have to become very focused.” And the ‘Holiday’ hitmaker admitted some of her albums have come from a need to make a record. She said: “Other times, I did have lots of ideas stirring inside me and I did have a burning desire. “‘Ray of Light’ would be one. ‘Like A Prayer’. “But my life was simpler then. ‘Like A Prayer’ - I was married to Sean [Penn] and I had no children and my life was very simple. “‘Ray of Light’, I had my daughter, but again, I didn't have such a complicated life. Now my life is complicated.”

Aerosmith were surprised by Run-DMC song impact

Joe Perry thinks “divine intervention” brought Aerosmith and Run-DMC together. The ‘Crazy’ hitmakers saw their careers revived when they teamed up with the hip-hop group in 1986 on a new version of ‘Walk this Way’ but the guitarist admitted he had no idea just how big an impact the track would make. He said: “We really didn't realize the impact that song and that video made on people until we were touring in Europe and there were people who thought we were a new band. “They didn't know anything about the earlier days. We were fascinated by that. “When Rick Rubin sent us a couple of plane tickets to go to New York to record the song and then make the video a couple of months later, for us it was business as usual. “Obviously the song was a big hit, but we really didn't realize what the impact was. “Without it, we would have kept playing and going on, and it would have been us doing what we've always done. Who knows what we would have written later down the road, but there was some divine intervention there that put us in touch with Run-DMC. I'm really pleased that it happened.” While Aerosmith are currently on a break, Joe is busy with Hollywood Vampires, his group with Alice Cooper and Johnny Depp and admitted it wasn't much of a surprise when he started working with them because he's always working on new music. He told Kerrang! magazine: “I'm always writing, recording and messing around with different songs and ideas, just because it's something that I love to do whether they end up being something anyone gets to hear or not. “So, I've always got songs lying around and it really wasn't unusual for me to put a band together when I had a little time on my hands. “Hollywood Vampires isn't that different, apart from the guys are on a whole other level of tenacity from the guys that I usually play with to have a little fun.”



Jack White loves drumming

Jack White loves playing drums more than anything else he does. The 43-year-old musician has a number of positions in various different bands but he gets the most pleasure from being in The Dead Weather because he gets to play percussion. He said: “I'm the drummer in [The Dead Weather] so it's a totally different role for me. I get to be made fun of. Spat on. “I gotta say, out of everything that I do, I probably enjoy playing drums the most of anything, recording or playing, because I grew up thining I was only going to be a drummer so that's all I did my whole childhood and was all I cared about. “Guitar was sort of like, ‘Really? I'll play it if I have to.’ “That's why I became a songwriter when I worked in the upholstery shop with another drummer (Brian Muldoon, The Upholsterers bandmate). He only played drums so I had to play guitar. “So I enjoy drums the most, but that doesn't mean that's the thing I'm best at. What you enjoy is seldom what you're good at.” The ‘Steady As She Goes’ hitmaker keeps taking up new hobbies and has had so many that he can't even remember the pastimes he's had. He told Q magazine: “Week by week for me. “I have collections of things that I've forgotten about over the past decade. But carpentry has become my new thing recently.” But one pursuit Jack has never been good at is cooking. He admitted: “I cannot cook. I have no talent for that.”



Cheryl: I've got new material to launch an album

Cheryl has got new “material” ready ahead of a potential album launch. The 36-year-old pop star - who first found fame as part of Girls Aloud - has revealed she's recently been working on some new songs, though she remains undecided about a potential release schedule for her latest solo album. The brunette beauty - whose most-recent album, ‘Only Human’, was released back in 2014 - told BBC Radio 1's Life Hacks: “I've got material. “I just want to see how the singles land and if people are enjoying the music and maybe do some intimate gigs and stuff first.” Last month, Cheryl claimed that motherhood has made work more fun. The chart-topping singer - who gave birth to her son Bear, two, in 2017 - took a break from work for “head space” after the arrival of her tot, but Cheryl recently admitted she is thrilled to be back in the studio. She said: “It's actually more fun since I became a mother. You know you see me sometimes at work and I would be like, Dermot I can't. I can't go any longer. Now I'm like, ‘yeah let's go...’ “First of all I had a break which I needed and that was important for my head space more than anything and it's fun that I get to come into work and do the things I love for a career, but I also get to go home to the most precious part of my life.” Hear Cheryl on Radio 1's Life Hacks from 4pm Sunday.



Jaden Smith's album 'for the haters'

Jaden Smith's new album is “for the haters”. The 20-year-old star has just released his 17-track record ‘ERYS’ and he says he wants to dedicate it to all those people who ever doubted him. He told Rolling Stone magazine: “Sometimes I wish that I wasn't so emotional, but I'm glad that I showed the world that side, because it seemed like they liked that side. But you always have haters and you always have people that are going to doubt you and this album is really for my haters and that's why it's so aggressive.” The album features emo rap acts, trap, electronic, and punk rock and tells the story of a young man called ‘ERYS’. Jaden explained: “He lives in Los Angeles, but it's in a world where Los Angeles has almost been destroyed a little bit. You don't really know what happened, but it's like a dystopic Los Angeles. It's like The Warriors where everybody is running around, and it's this interconnected web of these young kids who run the city. Erys decides to be the leader and take over the city. He gains control of everyone by the means of fear almost. It doesn't end well for him, but that's kind of the end of the story.” And the record is also linked to his previous record ‘SYRE’. Jaden said: “When it's ‘I want to be by myself. I'm sad. I'm going to be in the Hills. I'm sad. I'm emotional and I can't do anything.’ That was ‘SYRE’. ‘ERYS’, which is ‘SYRE’ reversed, is the complete opposite. ‘ERYS’ is more so about the city. He's like “I like being in the city. He still likes pink and the sunset, but he cares so much more about the city and his homies and making sure he is the leader of the generation. That's what the metaphor for Los Angeles is for in the movie.”



Celine Dion's George Martin tribute

Celine Dion paid tribute to Sir George Martin at her London concert on Friday. The 51-year-old star kicked off the Barclaycard presents British Summer Time Festival in Hyde Park and used the gig to remember the English record producer - known as “the fifth Beatle” - who she worked with on her ‘Let's Talk About Love’ album. She said: “Many years ago, I had the honor and the privilege of working with the late great Sir George Martin, your very own Sir George Martin and he produced ‘The Reason’ for me. I wanted to mention his name before I sing this song because meeting with him and working with him, singing for him was more than a privilege, it was a true honor and I wanted to say a few words about him. So thank you so much.” And the star spoke about her involvement with 2018's ‘Deadpool 2’, when she recorded ‘Ashes’ for the soundtrack, although she joked that she originally hoped to star in it and win a Best Actress Oscar. She said: “Last year I was invited to participate in a very crazy movie called ‘Deadpool 2’, which was a huge success here in the UK. The man starring in this movie is an incredibly talented and funny actor by the name of Ryan Reynolds. At first I thought that he wanted me to star in the movie and I was imagining myself on red carpets and winning the Best Actress Oscar but of course I'm not an actor, I'm a singer. Although maybe soon, stay tuned. “So Ryan sent me a song he wanted me to record and when I listened to it, of course I accepted it. This is ‘Ashes’.” Celine ended her show with ‘My Heart Will Go On’ from ‘Titanic’ and John Lennon's ‘Imagine’. She said: “I want to end with this message of peace and harmony in the best way that I can. And if you want to sing it with me, I would love that very, very much.” Celine was supported by Josh Groban and Claire Richards.

Victoria Beckham: It took courage to reject Spice Girls reunion

Victoria Beckham thinks it took “courage” to reject the opportunity to reunite with the Spice Girls. The 45-year-old designer - who made her name as part of the chart-topping girl group - was offered the opportunity to join the band's much-hyped reunion tour, but Victoria declined the invite, instead opting to focus her attention on her family and her fashion business. Speaking to Vogue Germany magazine, Victoria shared: “It took me a lot of courage not to go on tour with the Spice Girls again, but to be the one who says, ‘You know, I'm not doing it because things feel different now than they used to.’ “I'd rather concentrate on my family and my company. “I'm 45 now and very happy to be the woman I am ... I'm not trying to change. I want to be the best version of myself. Before I turned 40, I wasn't that confident. I learned to listen to my gut feeling.” Meanwhile, Mel B - Victoria's former bandmate - previously admitted to being disappointed by the brunette beauty's decision to snub the reunion. She said: “I expected her to come and just say hi, at least. Not even on stage, just as an audience member supporting...” “I'm sure she has her reasons for not. I've already said, ‘Yeah, I was upset’, I still am a little bit. It is what it is and us girls we all support each other no matter what, but yeah it is disappointing. Wedding, Spice Girls show...” “No [it's not a rift]. We're all adults, we all have to respectfully get on with whatever. But it is a bit disappointing, let's put it that way.”



Kylie Minogue scores 7th number one album

Kylie Minogue has scored her seventh UK number one album with greatest hits record ‘Step Back in Time: The Definitive Collection’. The 51-year-old music icon released the album – which is her fourth greatest hits collection – on June 28, and on Friday it was revealed she has managed to top the UK album chart and earn her seventh trophy. Kylie was surprised with the news by her team, who created a “tunnel of love” for her to walk through, whilst chanting: “It’s the tunnel of love because you’re number one.” The ‘Spinning Around’ hitmaker joins the likes of Coldplay, Elton John, Barbra Streisand and Take That who all also have seven number one albums, and she is now the female artist with the second most number ones, beaten only by Madonna who has 12. Kylie’s album success follows her iconic performance on the The Pyramid stage at Glastonbury Festival over the weekend, where she played the coveted Legends slot

over 10 years after a cancer diagnosis stopped her from performing at the Worthy Farm music extravaganza. Before her performance, Kylie had admitted she was feeling “emotional” about appearing at the world famous event, but said she was expecting the festival to be a “big love fest”. The ‘I Should Be So Lucky’ singer said: “Its excitement, nerves, obviously it’s emotional because of my history and I was, as you’ve mentioned, supposed to play here in 2005. Drama ensued, to put it mildly. So the road to Glastonbury has been long and winding, with some unexpected bumps. Speed bumps! But I am just, as you said – it’s a big singa-long, that’s what I’m hoping for, just a big love fest you know. “And I guess, with 31 years’ worth of songs and what’s come to light with the greatest hits album is that it’s all of our histories.”



Dwayne Johnson proud to show Samoan culture

Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson was “excited and proud” to showcase Samoan culture in ‘Hobbs & Shaw’. The 47-year-old actor – who is half-Samoan – admitted the “culture aspect” was key for him in starring in the ‘Fast & Furious’ spin-off, in particular as much of the movie was shot in co-star Jason Statham’s native UK. Dwayne said: “The culture aspect was the most important thing for us, in addition to the chemistry. “It was a really awesome opportunity to showcase both of our cultures, but ultimately, whether it’s British or Samoan culture, there’s an anchoring to these cultures: regardless of what you look like and what your bank account is and what your color is – if you’re my family, I’ve got your back. “That is a story point I was really excited and proud to showcase Samoan culture – because in this movie, really, it’s the first time ever that Samoan culture has been exposed in a big tentpole movie like this, that is a global earpiece.” And Jason – who lives in Los Angeles with partner Rosie Huntington-Whiteley and their son Jack, two – loved showcasing all he loves about Britain in the film. He told Total Film magazine: “To be back home doing a big, fat movie in the UK, felt really good. “And we’re shooting down on the streets, outside the Leadenhall Building, I was there with a machine gun, outside the Lloyd’s building and jumping in the McLaren. “I get to embrace the British refinements. I’m rocking around in a 720S McLaren, British-made,



made in Surrey. “I’m wearing the old Saville Row suit and I’ve got my Budd shirt and my Cleverly shoes – all of my British attire. “We’re back in the UK, making a big American blockbuster. But most of the cast is British. They’re severely outnumbered. Rule Britannia.”

Renner would’ve rejected Thor role

Jeremy Renner doesn’t think he’s suited to playing a superhero like Thor. The 48-year-old actor – who plays Hawkeye in the Marvel Cinematic Universe – has insisted he could only ever play a relatable superhero, like Hawkeye, rather than the so-called God of Thunder. Speaking on the Life Is Short podcast, Jeremy recalled: “When they showed me my character ... it’s like, ‘Oh, that’s great, it’s just a guy with no superpower – he’s just got a high skill set.’ I can actually attach to that.” By contrast, Jeremy felt he couldn’t relate to the character of Thor, meaning he would have declined the role if it was offered to him by Marvel. He said: “I’d have passed on Thor all day long – not that I’d ever be cast in that – but like, that kind of thing I’d be like, ‘I don’t know how to do that, I’m sorry.’” Last year, meanwhile, it was revealed Jeremy missed out on a cameo role in ‘Mission: Impossible – Fallout’ because of his commitment to Marvel. The actor was originally lined up to appear in ‘Avengers: Infinity War’ and although he didn’t make the final cut, his relationship with the studio meant he was unable to commit to the ‘Mission: Impossible’ movie, according to director Christopher McQuarrie. He said: “Jeremy had his commitment to ‘Avengers’, which ironically they ended up not exercising, and we didn’t know what the [sixth ‘Mission’] movie was, so we couldn’t provide a schedule. We needed absolute freedom. “The unfortunate thing for Jeremy is that he got caught in this perfect storm of, one can’t use you and one doesn’t know how to, given the massive complications they had with ‘Avengers’.”



Arquette’s secret project

Patricia Arquette is directing a “top secret” movie. The ‘Boyhood’ actress has begun work on a mystery project, which will boast a “strong female cast” and tell a political tale. Asked if she’s considered directing a film, she said: “Yeah. I’m working on my first thing now. It’s still top secret. “We’re working on the draft and getting everyone together. “It’s going to be a strong female cast. “Not that it has to be that way but I think it’s a really interesting story. And it’s a political story.” The 51-year-old star has been urged to move behind the camera several times by other people she’s worked with. She told Total Film magazine: “A lot of crews have told me I should direct because I make a lot of suggestions. “And sometimes I’ve gotten frustrated, I think, where I might know a lot more about filmmaking than somebody more green. “And they’ll be taking a long time to do something, like, ‘Hey, why don’t we do this on this lens?’ or ‘Why don’t we go on sticks for this thing?’ or ‘Why don’t we go on a dolly?’ “So it’s just technical things, even, that I understand. “A lot of times, a crew will be like, ‘You need to be directing. Please start directing!’ “ Patricia thinks she’s learned a lot from all the directors she’s worked with in the past. She said: “I had such a paternal relationship with most of the main influential directors in my career, who obviously were men, other than Diane Keaton, pretty much. “Hopefully I’ll have learned something from each of them that I’ll be able to incorporate, because I think good directors have to be like linguists, and figure out what each actor needs.” — Bang Showbiz



Hanks’ Toy Story surprise



Tom Hanks was surprised to hear ‘Toy Story 4’ was in the works. The 62-year-old actor – who voices cowboy doll Woody in the iconic Pixar movie franchise – admits he was as shocked as some fans to hear there would be a fourth installment. Speaking to HeyUGuys, he said: “I had no idea where they would take this and in fact, when they said, hey there’ll be a fourth. I was like, ‘Are you sure? You really wanna take a stab at this?’ They no longer give you a script or they show you what the story is – they just talk to you. Maybe perhaps to talk themselves into it as well. They never really talk about what the point of it is going to be because they find that out along the way.” However, now Tom insists he “wouldn’t be surprised” if there ended up being a ‘Toy Story 5’. He said: “Well, no one is planning on it, but I wouldn’t be surprised if somewhere two-and-a-half years from now someone has this kernel of an idea that could become it. “None of the ‘Toy Story’ movies are in a schedule, they’re not in a pipeline. They don’t say, ‘on this date, we’ll start work on the next ‘Toy Story’ movie’. They wait until someone comes up with a Toy Story idea that is worthwhile pursuing. But I think it’s better that no one is anticipating that: I think there is a strength in saying, ‘this is as far as we’ve been able to go and we don’t see anything else coming after that’, because otherwise it ends up being some inorganic approach to something that has been very, very organic.”

Zendaya reveals Holland safety fears

Zendaya feared for Tom Holland’s safety whilst he was wearing his Spider-Man outfit. The 22-year-old actress – who stars alongside Tom in ‘Spider-Man: Far From Home’ – has admitted to worrying about the British actor’s health during their time on set. Speaking to MTV News, Zendaya explained: “Honestly, the stories I’ve heard about him having to wear that suit, like I do not ... “You know what I think about all the time that really scares me? Is like, when he wears that mask that you can’t just take off, ‘cause it’s all like one piece. “I get scared all the time like, what if he’s working so hard that he throws up? And then he can’t, he chokes! I think about it all the time! That’s really scary ... ‘cause I look at him like, ‘Please, I hope he never gets sick, oh my god!’” Meanwhile, Zendaya recently admitted she “got scared” when the battery-powered ‘Cinderella’ gown she wore to this year’s Met Gala “got really hot”. The actress – who walked the red carpet in the light-up Disney Princess-inspired dress – revealed she had to change into a different outfit shortly after getting inside because the batteries and wires underneath the gown started to heat up. She said: “The dress was like a science project. It was animatronic, and there were literally two people in the stands moving it with remote controls. I had no idea that it was going to heat up because there were so many batteries and wires in it. “It got really hot – like, I was a little bit scared – and I just said, ‘I should probably get this off before I roast....’”





All the prize winners pose during the closing ceremony of the 54th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF).

BULGARIAN-GREEK FILM WINS TOP PRIZE AT CZECH FESTIVAL

The Bulgarian-Greek film “The Father” won the top prize at the Karlovy Vary film festival in the Czech Republic on Saturday, the organizers said. Directed by Bulgarian directors Kristina Grozeva and Petar Valchanov, it tells the story of a man who has lost his wife and seeks to

get in touch with her with the help of a psychic, despite the protests of his son. The film won the Crystal Globe award. American actresses Julianne Moore and Patricia Clarkson were also honored for “outstanding contribution to world cinema” at the 54th edition of

the festival in the western Czech spa town of Karlovy Vary. The organizers of the festival, which started on June 28, said they had screened 177 films and sold 139,271 tickets this year, a little less than more than 140,000 in 2018. — AFP



US film actress Patricia Clarkson receives the Crystal Globe Award for the Outstanding Artistic Contribution to the World of Cinema.



US film actress Patricia Clarkson poses on the red carpet as she arrives for the closing of the 54th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF) in Karlovy Vary.-AFP photos



Bulgarian directors Kristina Grozeva and Petar Valchanov (right) pose with an unidentified child after they received the Grand Prix - Crystal Globe for Best Film for their film ‘The Father’ (Bashтата) during the closing ceremony of the 54th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF).

Stop, stop: Washington residents use go-go music to fight gentrification

Go-go music has been the rhythm of Washington for decades, but in recent weeks it has also become the improbable battle hymn of a movement pushing back against the capital city’s rapidly expanding gentrification. Guided by the music blasting out of a storefront speaker in Washington’s Shaw neighborhood, a young woman with long braids instinctively marks out a few dance moves on the sidewalk while waiting to cross the street. It’s an impromptu dance break at the intersection of two worlds: close to U Street—the “Black Broadway” of Washington, with its jazz clubs, chili dogs and traces of segregation-and a nearby burgeoning haven for hipster craft beer bars, electric scooters and condominium apartment buildings like The Shay.



Members of the go-go music band Body of Evidence (@bodyofevidence) perform during Summer Peace Jam 2019 at the Marvin Gaye Park in Washington, DC. — AFP

“Modern. Vibrant,” promises a massive poster draped down the side of the luxury apartment complex. Below the sign, at ground level, the community’s opinion becomes clear: “Gentrification is genocide,” reads someone’s graffiti. Just a few weeks ago, after much insistence, a resident at The Shay got the owner of phone store across the street from the apartment building to turn off the go-go music that has played from the store’s speakers every day for nearly a quarter of a century. “The customers were complaining. Everybody kept running at the store asking why my music wasn’t on,” said owner Donald Campbell. He sits at the counter of his Metro PCS store, surrounded by go-go CDs that he sells at \$10 each, in addition to phone equipment. “They thought we were closed.” Over the next month, the store’s silence rang loudly in the neighborhood. Residents organized petitions and impromptu street concerts, spreading the word on social media via the hashtag #DontMuteDC (referring to the District of Columbia, where Washington is located). They finally succeeded in convincing John Legere, the

CEO of T-Mobile-of which Metro PCS is a subsidiary—who took to Twitter to end the controversy. “I’ve looked into this issue myself and the music should NOT stop in DC!” he wrote. Campbell has since turned the music back on, albeit a little quieter now. But the fight for go-go continues. “You can’t go to Nashville, Tennessee and say, ‘Stop playing country music.’ You can’t go to New Orleans and say, ‘Stop playing jazz,’” said the former nightclub owner, his jeweled cross glinting around his neck. “Everybody’s voice has to be heard.”

Chocolate City

Born in the 1960s and popularized over the following decade by Chuck Brown, the “Godfather of Go-Go,” the music borrows from multiple genres-funk, rhythm and blues, soul-and is mainly heard live in concert, with an emphasis on audience call and response. “Go-go means that the music keeps going. It doesn’t stop. It’s continuous,” explains former go-go musician Peter Battle, who sports a t-shirt that reads “District of Cannabis,” a substance that has been decriminalized in Washington. The former trumpet player, now 55, has come to Campbell’s store to buy a Chuck Brown CD. He remembers the times during the 1980s when he would play “all around the city” with his friends in the groups Petworth Band and The Mighty Peacemakers. But after the height of its glory in the 1970s and 80s, go-go began to crumble, dragged down by its grim reputation. “DC experienced an epidemic of gun violence and drug addiction that coincided with the rise of go-go music,” said Natalie Hopkinson, the author of “Go-Go Live: The Musical Life and Death of a Chocolate City,” which refers to DC’s nickname, given due to the cultural significance of its black community. “The music was completely innocent in this. But because it was the gathering place, it ended up being blamed for the problems that were happening,” Hopkinson explained. Today, the American capital has the fastest rate of gentrification in the country. And high-end apartments like The Shay have become a symbol of movement. When it opened in 2015, in the heart of Washington’s historically segregated neighborhood, the poster on the side of The Shay declared, “She has arrived,” in capital letters above a picture of a white woman wearing a powdered wig, in the style of Marie-Antoinette. The black community was “very offended by this,” said Hopkinson. “There is a total colonial mentality, and a not-so-subtle signal that it is time for black people to leave.” Since it became the symbol of the fight against Washington’s gentrification, go-go has experienced a resurgence. In June, a city council member introduced a bill that would make go-go the official music of the city, and iconic go-go groups such as Rare Essence, Backyard and Junkyard are increasingly sought for performances. “The popularity is back up,” said Campbell, who has become the second-best-known Donald in Washington. “Everybody wants to see what it is.” Campbell, who is also launching a streaming platform dedicated to the genre, isn’t worried about go-go’s future. Thanks to the speaker over his store’s doorway, go-go often is the first thing heard by newborns in the neighboring maternity ward. — AFP

Brazilian bossa nova pioneer Joao Gilberto dead at 88

Joao Gilberto, the legendary Brazilian musician and songwriter who pioneered the lilting, melodious music known as bossa nova, has died, his son Joao Marcelo announced Saturday. The legend was 88. The cause of death was not immediately known. “My father has passed,” the son, who lives in the United States, wrote on Facebook. “His fight was noble, he tried to maintain his dignity.” Gilberto, a small-town boy from Bahia state whose soft voice singing “The Girl From Ipanema” in the 1960s made him world famous, was living alone in a borrowed house in Rio de Janeiro at the end, deeply in debt. He fell in love with music when he got his first guitar at the age of 14. After leaving his village, he made it onto local radio in Salvador de Bahia, and at age 19, arrived in Rio. In 1957, he made a name for himself as guitarist on a recording by Elizeth Cardoso, “Cancao do Amor Demais,” considered the first bossa nova album. Later, known both for his smooth voice and his guitar style, Gilberto brought the sounds of bossa nova-meaning “new trend” or “new wave”—to jazz festivals and concert halls around the world, putting Brazilian music on the map. Bernardo Araujo, a music critic for the daily O Globo newspaper, said last year that Gilberto’s importance was “immeasurable.” “He was the leading voice of the best-known Brazilian style in the world and a revolutionary without even really meaning to be,” Araujo told AFP. “He was the first singer, at least in Brazil, to demonstrate that you don’t need a big voice, that you can sing quietly, like in a whisper, while accompanied by virtuoso guitar.” Among Gilberto’s dozens of albums, some of the most renowned were recorded with jazz greats Stan Getz, Herbie Hancock and fellow Brazilian Antonio Carlos Jobim. The singer of “Desafinado,” “Corcovado” and “Chega de Saudade,”—which he often sang as a duet with his first wife Astrud Gilberto—was an obsessive perfectionist and then an eccentric recluse. He is known for living in his pajamas and for reclusiveness, only opening the door of his home to get restaurant deliveries. Family feud In his later years, he was caught in an ugly conflict pitting two of his three children-Joao Marcelo and daughter Bebel Gilberto, both musicians-against his last wife, Claudia Faissol, a journalist 40 years his junior from whom he had separated. The two children accused Faissol of taking advantage of their father’s mental and physical decline and contributing to his financial ruin. In late 2017, Bebel was named her father’s legal guardian as he was found no longer competent to manage on his own. “In front of the microphone, he was a smashing success,” his biographer Ruy Castro said last year, “but offstage it was the opposite.” —AFP

Dates in the life of Joao Gilberto, bossa nova pioneer

Here are some of the key dates in the life of Brazilian singer-guitarist Joao Gilberto, the bossa nova pioneer who helped put his country on the world’s music map. He has died at age 88, his son said Saturday. **June 10, 1931:** Joao Gilberto Prado Pereira de Oliveira was born in Juazeiro, Bahia state. At 19, he first recorded in Rio with a small band, “Garotos da Lua.” **1957:** Gilberto made a name for himself playing guitar on Elizeth Cardoso’s “Cancao do Amor Demais,” composed by Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes. **Summer 1958:** “Saudade” (nostalgia) invaded the waves, as his 33 rpm “Chega de Saudade” kicked off his career and bossa nova (“new trend”), the syncopated rhythms of samba mixed with cool jazz. **1962-1979:** After two albums with Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes, Gilberto moved to New York, with an interlude of two years in Mexico that included collaboration with Jobim and jazzmen like Stan Getz. **Autumn 1964:** A concert at Carnegie Hall in New York is a huge success. It came after the album Getz/Gilberto, which popularized bossa nova around the world, and the concert featured his then-wife Astrud Gilberto (who would leave him for Getz.) Frank Sinatra would add “Girl From Ipanema” to his repertoire. **End of 1979:** Gilberto returned to Rio, recorded the album “Brasil” with Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and Maria Bethania. He performed on world tours until the beginning of the 2010s. **2001:** Gilberto won a Grammy for best artist in the world music category, for his album “Joao: Voz e Violao.” **2008:** Final public appearance on stage, in Salvador de Bahia. — AFP



In this file photo Brazilian singer and composer Joao Gilberto, 77, one of the trio of Brazilian artists who brought Bossa Nova to the world in 1958, performs during a concert in Sao Paulo, Brazil. — AFP

Classifieds

Monday, July 8, 2019



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JOSEFINA BARRETO HERE-
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AND DOCUMENTS I WILL BE
KNOWN AS MARIA JOSEFINA
BARRETO.

I, CONCEICAO FREDI VAS, R/O
H.NO. 989 BELBHAT CHORAO
TISWADI NORTH GOA 403102
HAVE CHANGED FROM CONCE-
ICAO FREDDY VAZ TO CONCE-
ICAO FREDI VAS. HEREINAFTER
IN ALL MY DEALINGS AND
DOCUMENTS WILL BE KNOWN
AS CONCEICAO FREDI VAS.

I, MARGARIDA CARON VAS,
R/O H.NO. 989 BELBHAT
CHORAO TISWADI NORTH GOA
403102 HAVE CHANGED FROM
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S3697819 do hereby change
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en name) MATHEWS (surname)
for all purposes. I also under-
take to effect the change in all
my other public documents. (C
5658)

The public is hereby notified
that NIKKI ANGEL ANDALLO
INES has filed with the Embassy
of Republic of the Philippines,
State of Kuwait, a Migrant peti-
tion for Change of First Name
of her daughter, from AMIRA
ANDALLO INES to AMIRA in the
Report of Birth filed with the
Embassy on 16th July 2018
under Registry number ROB-
KT-1974-2018. Passport No.
P7973187A. Any person having
knowledge and/or claiming
interest or may be adversely
affected by the said petition,
file a written opposition with
the Philippine Embassy in
Kuwait within ten (10) working
days. (C 5659)

8-7-2019

I, Samson Glateena Elsa, (Given
name: Samson and Sur name:
Glateena Elsa) holder of Indian
Passport No. T4010890 wish to
correct my name as (given
name) Glateena Elsa (Surname)
Samson. Hereinafter in all my
documents, my name will
appear as Glateena Elsa
Samson. (C 5660)

I, Sakina Habib Jigar holder of
Indian Passport No. J3507105,
issued in Kuwait, I need to
change my name on my pass-
port as Sakina Zakir Husain
Rantawala. (C 5656)

5-7-2019

I, CABRAL CAETANO S/o JOSE
FRANCISCO CABRAL, holder of
Indian Passport No. J0369680
issued in Kuwait, I need to
change my name on my
Passport as CAETANO CABRAL
S/o JOSE FRANCISCO CABRAL
SEBASTIANA COSTA, Passport
No. J0369680, H.No. 996/1
Nova Palmar, Cortalim,
Cortalim Mormugao, South
Goa, Goa 403710. (C 5655)

4-7-2019

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Embassy of India
Kuwait

Contract for operation and maintenance of Embassy building

Embassy of India, Kuwait invites bids from interested companies from 2nd July 2019 to 1st August, 2019 for operation and maintenance of air-conditioning, plumbing and firefighting system etc, installed in the Embassy building. Details of the scope of work etc. are available on Embassy's website: www.indembkwat.gov.in

All offers should be sent in a **sealed cover** to be marked for **"Offer for Contract for operation and maintenance of Embassy building** - to be opened by the Addressee only" and addressed to the Head of Chancery, Embassy of India, Daeya, Diplomatic Enclave, Arabian Gulf Street, Safat 13015, Kuwait. The offer must be delivered at the Embassy on or before 12:00 hrs. on **1st August, 2019**. For enquiries - 22513498; 22530600 Ext. 212 & 229 [9 am to 4 pm] on any working day

Embassy of India, Kuwait




Embassy of India
Kuwait

Annual contract for hosting and maintenance of Embassy's website & server

The Embassy of India, invites bids from interested companies from 1st July to 21st July, 2019 for annual contract for hosting and maintenance of Embassy's website & server. Details of the objective of the contract etc. are available on Embassy's website: www.indembkwat.gov.in

All offers should be sent in a **sealed cover** to be marked for **"Offer for Annual contract for hosting and maintenance of Embassy's website & server** - to be opened by the Addressee only" and addressed to the Head of Chancery, Embassy of India, Daeya, Diplomatic Enclave, Arabian Gulf Street, Safat 13015, Kuwait. The offer must be delivered at the Embassy on or before 16:00 hrs. on Sunday, **July 21, 2019**. For enquiries - 22513498; 22530600 Ext. 212 & 229 [9 am to 4 pm] on any working day

Embassy of India, Kuwait



Flight Schedule

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DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 8/7/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 8/7/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MSC	412	Asyut	00:15
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	FEG	342	Sohag	01:05
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	713	Sohag	01:10
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	IGO	1758	Kochi	01:10
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	KAC	677	Dubai	01:40
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	THY	773	Istanbul	01:50
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	DLH	625	Frankfurt	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	111	Doha	02:10
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	THY	765	Istanbul	02:50
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KKK	1269	Istanbul	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:30
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	THY	769	Istanbul	03:50
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	OMA	306	Abu Dhabi	04:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	OMA	644	Muscat	04:05
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	MSR	1087	Doha	04:15
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	KAC	613	Cairo	04:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	RBG	1552	Alexandria	04:30
RBG	1551	Alexandria	03:15	JZR	1735	Cairo	04:40
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OHY	351	Istanbul	05:00
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	IGO	1752	Chennai	05:10
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	THY	1465	Istanbul	06:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FDB	070	Dubai	06:00
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	THY	771	Istanbul	06:30
KAC	382	Delhi	04:55	GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	RJA	643	Amman	07:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	JZR	251	Amman	07:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	Dubai	121	Dubai	07:15
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	RBG	550	Alexandria	07:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	BAW	156	London	07:40
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	KAC	173	Munich	07:55
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	MSR	602	Cairo	08:00
BAW	157	London	06:10	KAC	193	Trabzon	08:10
JZR	702	Asyut	06:15	KAC	181	Paris	08:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	IGO	1756	CNN	08:10
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	RBG	214	Sohag	08:15
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	KAC	163	MXF	08:35
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
MSR	601	Cairo	07:00	KAC	545	Cairo	08:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	KAC	157	Istanbul	08:55
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	KAC	561	Amman	08:55
JZR	714	Sohag	07:20	KAC	121	AGP	09:00
RBG	211	Luxor	07:25	MSC	402	Alexandria	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	117	New York	09:05
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	QTR	1085	Doha	09:10
MSC	401	Alexandria	08:00	IRA	666	Esfahan	09:10
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:15
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	741	Dammam	09:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC	773	Riyadh	09:40
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	JZR	731	Cairo	09:45
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	BJV	195	Beirut	09:50
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	KAC	505	Dubai	09:50
KAC	384	Delhi	09:10	UAE	856	RBG	09:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	JZR	301	Istanbul	09:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	OMA	642	Muscat	10:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	KAC	101	London	10:05
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	GFA	210	Bahrain	10:05
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:40	QTR	1071	Doha	10:30
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	617	Doha	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	Dubai	056	Dubai	10:40
MSR	3132	Cairo	11:00	Ahmedabad	1754	Ahmedabad	10:40
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	JZR	221	Riyadh	11:20
THY	1282	Trabzon	11:05	AXB	890	Mangalore	11:20
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	12:10	JZR	309	BJV	11:45
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	ABY	396	Kozhikode	11:50
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	MEA	405	Beirut	11:55
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	MSR	3133	Cairo	12:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	THY	1283	Trabzon	12:00
MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	JZR	213	Jeddah	12:05



People jump into the Mediterranean Sea in the French Riviera city of Nice yesterday. — AFP

Tehran set to exceed nuclear deal uranium enrichment cap

TEHRAN: Iran said yesterday it was set to breach the uranium enrichment cap set by an endangered nuclear deal within hours as it seeks to press other parties into keeping their side of the bargain. The Islamic republic also threatened to abandon more commitments unless a solution is found with parties to the landmark 2015 agreement. London said Iran had “broken the terms” of the accord and along with Berlin urged Tehran to halt its advance towards breaching the cap.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that Tehran could further scale back its commitments, but “all such steps are reversible” if European countries deliver on their part. The move to start enriching uranium above the agreed maximum purification level of 3.67 percent comes despite opposition from the European Union and the United States, which has quit the deal. President Hassan Rouhani’s order to exceed the threshold would be implemented “in a few hours” after the last technical details were sorted, Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi said live on state television.

Rouhani initially flagged Tehran’s intentions on May 8, exactly a year on from US President Donald Trump abandoning the multilateral deal. The Iranian president has said the move is in response to a failure by remaining parties to help Iran work around biting sanctions reimposed by the US. The arch-rivals have been locked in an escalating war of words with Washington blaming Iran for a series of attacks on tanker ships and Tehran shooting down an American surveillance drone, raising fears of a conflict that both sides have said they want to avoid.

Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi yesterday singled out Iran’s declining oil sales and the effect of financial sanctions as the main issues that needed to be solved, or Tehran would further step back from its nuclear commitments. “We hope we can reach a solution otherwise after 60 days we will take the third step as well,” he said, adding that Tehran would give further details at an “opportune moment”.



TEHRAN: (From left) Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi, government spokesman Ali Rabiei and Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi give a joint press conference yesterday. — AFP

Iran has previously threatened to also resume building as of July 7 a heavy water reactor - capable of one day producing plutonium - in Arak in central Iran, a project that had been mothballed under the agreement. However since Iran delivered its ultimatum on the Arak reactor “good technical progress” had been made with parties to the deal on modernizing the reactor, convincing Iran to postpone its decision, Araghchi said.

The 2015 deal was reached between Iran and six world powers - Britain, China, France, Germany, the United States and Russia - and saw Tehran agree to drastically scale down its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. Washington began reimposing sanctions in August 2018 and has targeted crucial sectors including oil exports and the banking system, fuelling a deep recession. Kamalvandi said Sunday that Iran’s Atomic Energy Organisation was fully ready to enrich uranium “at any amount and at any level” if ordered to do so. A top advisor to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei hinted Friday it could reach five percent. The 3.67 percent enrichment limit set in the agreement

is far below the more than 90 percent level required for a nuclear warhead. Iran says that it is not violating the deal, citing terms of the agreement allowing one side to temporarily abandon some of commitments if it deems the other side is not respecting its part of the accord.

Britain and Germany said Sunday they were coordinating with other partners to the deal. In separate statements, their foreign ministries called on Iran to “stop and reverse all activities inconsistent with its commitments”. French President Emmanuel Macron told Rouhani of his “strong concern” over the risk of weakening the nuclear agreement during a telephone call Saturday, according to a statement from the Elysee Palace. However, Macron pledged to “explore by July 15 the conditions for a resumption of dialogue between all parties”.

Iran says it exercised “strategic patience” for a year after the US withdrawal, waiting for the remaining partners to make good on promised economic benefits. Trump has warned Iran that it is “playing with fire” by scrapping limits set by the accord.—AFP

Top British envoy in US says Trump administration ‘inept’

LONDON: Britain’s ambassador in the United States has described President Donald Trump and his administration as “inept” and “uniquely dysfunctional”, according to leaked diplomatic memos published by the Mail yesterday. Ambassador Kim Darroch reportedly said Trump’s presidency could “crash and burn” and “end in disgrace”, in the cache of secret cables and briefing notes sent back to Britain seen by the newspaper. “We don’t really believe this administration is going to become substantially more normal; less dysfunctional; less unpredictable; less faction riven; less diplomatically clumsy and inept,” Darroch allegedly wrote in one dispatch.

The paper said the most damning comments by Darroch described Trump, who was received by Queen Elizabeth II during a state visit to Britain just last month, as “insecure” and “incompetent”. A memo sent following the controversial visit said the president and his team had been “dazzled” by the visit but warned Britain might not remain “flavor of the month” because “this is still the land of America First”.

He reportedly wrote that the “vicious infighting and chaos” inside the White House - widely reported in the US but dismissed by Trump as “fake news” - was “mostly true”. Darroch is one of Britain’s most experienced diplomats whose posting in Washington DC began in Jan 2016, prior to Trump winning the presiden-

cy. The Mail on Sunday said the memos, likely leaked by someone within Britain’s sprawling civil service, cover a period beginning in 2017. In one of the most recent reported dispatches filed on June 22, Darroch criticized Trump’s fraught foreign policy on Iran, which has prompted fears in global capitals of a military conflict, as “incoherent” and “chaotic”.

He allegedly said the president’s assertion that he called off retaliatory missile strikes against the Iranian regime after a US drone was shot down because it risked killing 150 Iranians, “doesn’t stand up”. “It’s more likely that he was never fully on board and that he was worried about how this apparent reversal of his 2016 campaign promises would look come 2020,” Darroch reportedly stated, referring to the next presidential election.

Britain’s Foreign Office did not dispute the veracity of the memos. “The British public would expect our ambassadors to provide ministers with an honest, unvarnished assessment of the politics in their country,” a spokeswoman said. “Their views are not necessarily the views of ministers or indeed the government,” she added, noting “we pay them to be candid”. “Our team in Washington have strong relations with the White House and no doubt that these will withstand such mischievous behavior,” the spokeswoman said of the potential fallout from the leak. — AFP

Oman diplomat meets Assad in...

Continued from Page 1

maintaining relations with rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran - a key backer of Assad. Abdullah visited Damascus in 2015, Syria’s official SANA news agency reported at the time, to discuss ways to “resolve the crisis in Syria”. During a visit to Oman last year, Syria’s Mualllem praised Muscat for taking “supportive

positions towards Syria at various Arab and international forums”, the state-run Oman News Agency reported.

Syria’s once rocky ties with the region are on the rebound. The United Arab Emirates reopened its embassy in Damascus late last year after years of closure, and Syria’s relations with Bahrain and Jordan have also improved. But Saudi Arabia remains hostile to Assad, who has made a military comeback with military support from Russia since 2015, clawing back almost two-thirds of the country. Syria’s multi-fronted war has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it began with the repression of anti-government protests in 2011. — AFP

The lawmaker warned that floods will happen again in winter if the sewage network is not repaired and necessary infrastructure is not completed, adding that Sabah Al-Ahmad, one of the worst affected by the floods, will be hit again if repairs are not completed. Damkhi said the investigation was very comprehensive and the committee sought help from the Engineers’ Society and the Audit Bureau, which was asked to conduct technical studies on loose gravel, the Mangaf bridge and Sabah Al-Ahmad area. He attributed the criticism against the committee to the fact that it was straightforward and transparent to make sure that such violations are not repeated in the coming years.

Fallout runs deep as Salah, Egypt...

Continued from Page 1

when his shoulder was injured as he was wrestled to the ground by Real Madrid’s Sergio Ramos in the 3-1 loss in the 2018 Champions League final in Kiev. He scored twice in four matches in Cairo, both goals struck with unerring precision, but rarely looked at his peak surrounded by an Egyptian supporting cast far more limited than he is accustomed to at club level.

But Salah also, uncharacteristically, made headlines off the pitch after offering a degree of support for disgraced teammate Amr Warda, who was banished from the squad over sexual harassment allegations only to later be recalled - with Salah at the forefront of appeals for his reinstatement. One of the most popular Twitter hashtags in the wake of Salah and others defending the midfielder was “National team of sexual harassers”.

Salah faced a backlash from many users after saying Warda deserved a “second chance” and that “shunning is not the answer”. Many of Salah’s fans noted his hypocritical line of argument. He has made a point of speaking up for women in the Muslim world, and in an April interview with Time magazine he vehemently defended their rights in the region. Shouldering the weight of

expectation of nearly 100 million Egyptians, hoping for a fourth title in five editions as hosts, Salah found himself a capable ally in Mahmoud ‘Trezeguet’ Hassan, the team’s standout performer in the group stage.

But he too wilted as the pressure intensified once the tournament moved into the knockout phase, spurning Egypt’s best chance in a bitter defeat that provoked widespread dismay throughout the football-mad nation. “I’m really sad. Nobody expected we would go out at this stage. We thought for sure our team would reach the final,” said Mohamed Alaa, a 17-year-old fan from Cairo. Amr Kamel, 23, said he was “disgusted” by the team’s abject failure. “We expected better than that, that we would win, especially given the competition is being played in our country. We are really disgusted.”

The sense of shame prompted Egyptian FA president Hani Abou Rida to sack coach Javier Aguirre and announce his own resignation out of “moral obligation” just hours after the defeat, paving the way for a vast shake-up within the organization. Aguirre came in for criticism for his management of the side during the Cup of Nations, with Egypt legend Wael Gomaa accusing the Mexican of having “no tactics or strategy”.

But Gomaa did not point the finger at Salah, saying the team’s failure was due to a lack of strength in depth. “Counting on just two or three players? That’s impossible in football,” he told BeIN Sports. “I will not blame Salah. Salah has played at the highest level throughout the season for more than 60 matches, and honestly, he provided what he is capable of doing with the national team.” — AFP

Anti-graft body refers official...

Continued from Page 1

Damkhi said the report includes both technical issues and political responsibilities, adding that the minister of public works has so far been very slow in implementing the recommendations. He called for holding the minister accountable in case the recommendations are not implemented.

Sports

Rays walk off after Yankees' rally; Angels overpowered

Gonzales wins 10th as Mariners down A's

NEW YORK: Travis d'Arnaud hit a game-winning homer with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning as the Tampa Bay Rays overcame blowing a late lead and edged the New York Yankees 4-3 in St. Petersburg, Fla on Saturday. The Rays were one strike away from getting the win in the top of the inning, but left-hander Colin Poche allowed a game-tying homer to Aaron Hicks. Poche (2-1) blew his first career save attempt but kept the game tied by striking out Gary Sanchez. After Chad Green (2-3) easily got the first two outs in the bottom of the frame, d'Arnaud won it by lining a first-pitch fastball just over the right field fence. D'Arnaud's sixth homer with the Rays ended Tampa Bay's six-game losing streak to the Yankees. It also gave the Rays only their third win in 12 meetings against New York this season.

Nationals 6, Royals 0

Max Scherzer won his seventh straight start with seven scoreless innings and stole his second career base, while Kurt Suzuki hit a two-run homer as host Washington beat Kansas City. Both teams wore throw-back 1969 uniforms, with the Nationals paying homage to the Expos, who moved from Montreal prior to the 2005 season. Washington won for the fifth time in six games and is 27-11 since May 24. Scherzer (9-5), who has not lost since May 17, allowed four hits with 11 strikeouts. He did walk one and threw 75 strikes on 103 pitches. He has fanned 79 batters in his last seven starts against just six walks.

Twins 7, Rangers 4

Marwin Gonzalez homered, Miguel Sano tripled and scored twice, and Jason Castro drove in three runs to lead Minnesota to a victory over Texas in Minneapolis. Gonzalez's home run was the 166th of the season for the Twins, matching the team's entire total for the 2018 season while also extending their major league record for home runs before the All-Star break. Michael Pineda (6-4) won his second consecutive start, allowing one run on five hits over six innings while finishing with a season-high nine strikeouts. It marked the 13th time in 17 starts this season that Pineda allowed three or fewer earned runs.

Indians 7, Reds 2

Roberto Perez highlighted his second career four-hit performance with a go-ahead two-run homer in the eighth inning, as visiting Cleveland posted a victory over Cincinnati. Shane Bieber (8-3) tossed eight strong innings, and Francisco Lindor belted a pair of solo shots to record his 11th career multi-homer performance for the Indians, who have won five in a row. Yasiel Puig launched a two-run homer in the first inning and finished with three of the five hits for the Reds, who saw their three-game winning streak come to a halt.

Astros 4, Angels 0

Gerrit Cole continued his run of exceptional pitching, and Houston squared its three-game series with visiting Los Angeles. Cole (9-5), the American League Pitcher of the Month for June, twirled seven shutout innings at the Angels to open July in similar fashion. He surrendered three hits and two walks while recording

nine strikeouts, lowering his ERA to 1.76 over his last eight starts dating to May 27. During that stretch, Cole has allowed 10 earned runs on 35 hits and 13 walks with 70 strikeouts over 51 innings while going 5-0.

Padres 3, Dodgers 1

Hunter Renfroe and Manuel Margot hit late home runs as visiting San Diego got the best of a pitchers' duel, earning a victory over Los Angeles. It was the second consecutive game Renfroe put the Padres in the lead for good with a late home run, ending a scoreless tie with a solo homer in the seventh inning. He hit one in the eighth inning Friday night to give San Diego the lead in a 3-2 victory. Padres rookie starter Chris Paddack pitched 5 2/3 scoreless innings, giving up three hits with one walk and six strikeouts while his 96 pitches were one off his career high. Trey Wingenter (1-1) earned the victory with 1 1/3 scoreless innings. Kirby Yates pitched a scoreless ninth inning for his 29th save.

Cubs 6, White Sox 3

Kyle Schwarber and Javier Baez both hit two-run doubles in a decisive five-run fifth inning, and Jon Lester pitched 6 1/3 strong innings to lift the visiting Cubs over the White Sox. Eight consecutive Cubs reached base to start the fifth, including the first three via walk as White Sox ace Lucas Giolito struggled with his command. Schwarber followed with a two-run, bloop double to the opposite field in left to give the Cubs a 3-1 lead before Baez chased Giolito from the game with a two-run double one batter later. Recently named an American League All-Star, Giolito (11-3) allowed six runs and four hits in four-plus innings with five walks and five strikeouts. He has two losses and a 12.96 ERA in two starts against the Cubs this season, compared to a 2.26 ERA in 15 starts against the rest of the majors.

Red Sox 10, Tigers 6

Andrew Benintendi had four of his team's 17 hits, scored two runs and knocked in another as visiting Boston downed Detroit in a game delayed four hours and five minutes by rain. Mookie Betts supplied three hits while scoring two runs and driving in two more for Boston. Marco Hernandez contributed three hits and scored twice, while Christian Vazquez knocked in two runs. Rick Porcello (6-7) collected the win despite allowing six runs on nine hits in 5 2/3 innings.

Mets 6, Phillies 5

Tomas Nido's three-run double capped a wild fifth inning and gave host New York the lead for good in a win over Philadelphia. The Mets won for just the third time in 12 games. The Phillies fell to 9-16 since June 9 — though they are 5-1 against the Mets in that span. Until Nido's hit, the Mets were in danger of seeing more people ejected than runners cross home plate in the fifth. Third baseman Todd Frazier and manager Mickey Callaway were each ejected during a testy inning in which Phillies starter Jake Arrieta hit his second and third batters of the game.

Marlins 5, Braves 4

Caleb Smith overcame a shaky beginning to his first



FLORIDA: Mike Tauchman #39 of the New York Yankees slides past Willy Adames #1 of the Tampa Bay Rays after hitting a double in the second inning of a baseball game on July 06, 2019. — AFP

start off the injured list, completing six innings and helping visiting Miami snap an eight-game losing streak against Atlanta. Smith (4-4) staggered in the first three innings of his first start since June 6, giving up four runs (three earned) on five hits and one walk. But the lefty retired the final nine batters he faced and earned his first win since May 1. He finished with six strikeouts. Closer Sergio Romo worked around a lead-off single to Nick Markakis in the ninth and notched his 16th save. The Braves still lead the season series 9-2.

Mariners 6, A's 3

Marco Gonzales earned his 10th victory, the second successive season he's done so before the All-Star break, as Seattle defeated visiting Oakland. The left-hander (10-7) went eight innings, allowing two runs on five hits. He walked one and struck out six. Daniel Vogelbach and Kyle Seager hit home runs for the Mariners, who snapped a three-game losing streak and won for just the second time in their past nine games.

Giants 8, Cardinals 4

Madison Bumgarner gutted out two innings after getting hit by a line drive, and Austin Slater smacked just the majors' third pinch-hit grand slam of the season, helping host San Francisco turn back St Louis. Bumgarner's 11th pitch of the game was lined back at him by Jose Martinez, a shot that struck the ace left-hander near the left elbow. Bumgarner remained in the game through two innings but then left. X-rays taken at the site were negative. Reliever Sam Dyson (3-1) retained the 1-1 tie with two innings of shutout relief, and Slater was pinch hitting for him with the bases loaded in the fourth inning. Promoted from Triple-A at the start of the week, Slater took Cardinals starter Miles Mikolas (5-9) over the wall in right field for just

his second home run of the season.

Pirates 12, Brewers 2

Kevin Newman hit a solo homer and a two-run single to help Pittsburgh pound visiting Milwaukee, giving the teams a split through the first two games of a weekend series. Starling Marte added a two-run triple and an RBI single, and Melky Cabrera hit a two-run homer for Pittsburgh, which totaled 17 hits. Mike Moustakas and Yasmani Grandal each hit a solo homer for the Brewers.

Diamondbacks 4, Rockies 2

Jake Lamb hit his first home run in more than a year to break a sixth-inning tie and power Arizona to a win over Colorado in Phoenix. Arizona closer Greg Holland, who blew two saves on consecutive days in the previous series against the Dodgers in Los Angeles, gave up two hits in the ninth but struck out Ryan McMahon to end the game for his 13th save. Adam Jones led off the bottom of the sixth with a single, and then the left-handed Lamb drove an outside fastball to left-center field, where the ball bounced off the top of the wall for a 3-1 lead. It was Lamb's first homer since June 25, 2018.

Orioles 8, Blue Jays 1

Renato Nunez hit a two-run homer, Stevie Wilkerson hit a solo blast and right-hander Andrew Cashner pitched seven strong innings as visiting Baltimore defeated Toronto. The Orioles have won the first two games of the three-game series leading into the All-Star break. They have a 5-3 advantage in the season series with the Blue Jays. Cashner (9-3) allowed one run, three hits, no walks and a wild pitch. He struck out four in winning his third straight start.— Reuters

Twin set - Pakistan's Qureshi hopes sister act can lead to victory

LONDON: Pakistan's Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi admits that playing at Wimbledon with a mixed doubles partner who has a twin sister can often leave him seeing double, but he's happy to remain bamboozled if it brings him and his country a first Grand Slam title. Qureshi teamed up with Ukraine's Nadiia Kichenok at Roland Garros and they immediately clicked, reaching the semi-finals despite only squeezing into the draw at the last minute.

However, he admitted that with Nadiia also having twin sister Lyudmyla playing on the tour, it can lead to some embarrassing moments. "At Roland Garros, I thought I saw her in the gym and I said 'hey, partner, how's it going?' She said 'I'm not your partner, it's the other one!'" the 39-year-old Qureshi told AFP.

"Now I see the differences between the two although it's tough to tell how I know they are different. "It's just the look and you kind of sense it. Maybe it's the way they greet me, I can sense straight away who my partner is." Qureshi's recent fortunes have been inter-linked with the Ukrainian sisters. He said that when

they originally planned to play in Paris, they were just one spot off the cut after Lyudmyla decided to play with Santiago Gonzalez of Mexico. Ironically, Gonzalez is Qureshi's partner in the men's doubles on the tour.

"He had no one to play mixed with so Lyudmyla signed with him—so one sister kicked the other one out. "I said that you know you're doing this to your own sister and she was like 'yeah, yeah, but I need to get in.'" In the end, Qureshi and Nadiia squeezed into the Roland Garros draw as alternates and went all the way to the semi-finals where they were just two points from making the championship match. Gonzalez and Lyudmyla were beaten in the second round.

Qureshi, who was a mixed doubles runner-up at the US Open in 2010 with Kveta Peschke, and Nadiia decided to play again at Wimbledon. "We were the last team in again. The cut was 110 and we were 110, it was pretty sweet." It was even sweeter when they made the second round at the All England Club on Saturday, beating China's Xinyun Han and....Gonzalez. "It's hard to get

all play last 16 ties against opponents who have never progressed this far before.

Federer, the second seed, tackles Italy's world number 20 Matteo Berrettini in what will be the Swiss great's record 17th fourth round appearance at the All England Club. "I don't know him very well, so that makes it a bit more tricky," said Federer, chasing a 21st Grand Slam title. "I saw him play a little bit in Halle (where he made the semi-finals). Saw his run, of course, in Stuttgart (which Berrettini won). "Now he's backing it up here again. That's not easy to do, especially when you're sort of newer on the tour,"

Nadal, the champion in 2008 and 2010, also has an unexpected opponent in the shape of world number 69 Joao Sousa, the first

Portuguese player to reach the fourth round at Wimbledon. Nadal has a 2-0 career advantage over the 30-year-old Sousa, with both wins coming on clay. "He's a super dangerous opponent against everybody. He is very quick, has a very good physical performance," said Nadal, looking to back up his 12th Roland Garros title last month with a third Wimbledon.

Djokovic insists he will not be complacent about his chances of reaching the final for the sixth time. The highest seed that the world number one can face before the final is number 15 Milos Raonic, the 2016 runner-up from Canada. But first up for the defending champion and 16-time major winner is 21-year-old Ugo Humbert from France who is playing in his first Wimbledon.—AFP



Pakistan's Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi

pumped up as me and Santiago have been playing together all year," said Qureshi, who is still in the doubles tournament at Wimbledon with his Mexican friend.

"I can't ever remember playing my doubles partner in the mixed. "I didn't know we had been drawn against each other. He texted me and said you can't believe it but we are playing each other, smiley face, LOL. and I was like no way!" But Qureshi added: "My partner was on fire today, she didn't care who I was playing against, so credit to her." Once the Grand Slam season is finished for Qureshi, there will be another big date for him when he leads the Pakistan team into an historic Davis Cup home tie

against India in Islamabad in September.

It will be the first time India have played a Davis Cup tie in Pakistan in 55 years. "It's huge and it could be my last. Playing singles is tough on my body," said Qureshi, who made his debut in the tournament back in 1998. He also played in the most recent tie between the two countries in Mumbai in 2006 when India won 3-2. "This is historic for us, it will be one of the most memorable ties. "There will be lots of tension and lots of hype but we are playing on grass and it's best-of-three. "We are underdogs but we will fight to the last point and we will see what happens."—AFP

Kuwaiti fighters grab three gold medals



KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwait's Kyokushin Karate national team yesterday clinched a triumvirate of gold medals and a pair of silvers in Malaysia's Open Kyokushin-kar Bare Knuckle Karate Tournament. Dhari Al-Enezi powered his way to a gold medal in the 85kg division, while his compatriot

Salem Al-Harbi emerged victorious in the 65 kg category, team leader Hassan Al-Kanderi told KUNA. In the 75kg category, Kuwait's Abdullah Al-Abdullah finished second amid stiff competition that featured Kyokushin fighters from across the Asian continent.— KUNA

Kuwait to host Asian Boxing Championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Olympic Committee President Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad will patronize the Asian Boxing Championship to be hosted by Kuwait from August 1st till 9th. Chairman of the Board of Kuwait Boxing Federation Mohammad Mansi Al-Enezi appreciated the patronage and the interest expressed by Sheikh Fahad Al-Nasser, adding that it is a major moral boost for Kuwait boxers to make the best results in the championship - which is considered one of the best championships in the world.

It also highlights the support of KBF's board in its efforts to present the event

in the best way possible - confirming Kuwait youth's ability to organize major tournaments. The tournament will see 24 teams from various Asian countries. He lauded the role of Public Authority for Sports and its Director General Dr Humoud Fulaited and his deputy Dr Sayer Al-Mulla in removing all obstacles - to ensure the tournament's success.



Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad

Federer, Nadal, Djokovic star on 'Manic Monday'

LONDON: Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic, with 14 Wimbledon titles between them, dominate 'Manic Monday' at the All England Club with the 'Big Three' still standing while weary rivals have again flattered to deceive. Eight-time champion Federer, four-time winner Djokovic and Nadal, a double champion,

Tour de Impossible? Pakistan hosts ‘toughest cycle race’

Climbing towards the ‘Roof of the World’

KHUNJERAB: Finishing nearly 5,000 metres above sea level after hundreds of kilometres winding past blackened glaciers and snow-capped peaks: a new Pakistani race presents a world-class challenge for cyclists-climbing towards the “Roof of the World”. The Tour de Khunjerab-its name a homage to its more famous French counterpart, which began on Saturday-is still many years away from being another Big Loop, but with a solid claim to being the highest cycling race in the world, it has a lot to offer a certain type of athlete.

In the last week of June, some 88 cyclists, including two teams from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka as well as solo participants from Spain and Switzerland, took part in its second edition. Less than half completed it within the allotted time. The four stages-three ranging from 68 to 94 kilometres (42 to 58 miles) plus a shorter time trial-are much shorter than many other cycling events. But there is one fundamental difference: the Pakistani Tour starts at 1,500 metres above sea level, and never stops climbing.

The final day of this year’s event sums up the challenge. Starting at 2,800 metres-higher than the Iseran Pass, the summit of the Tour de France-it ends at 4,700 metres, just over 100 metres short of Mont Blanc, Europe’s highest mountain. The Khunjerab Tour must become “an attraction... for the most daring and adventurous cyclists in the world”, said Usman Ahmed, the top official for the northern Gilgit region, home to some of the planet’s tallest peaks and where the race was held.

The cyclists’ tyres swallow up the asphalt of the Karakoram Highway, one of the highest paved roads in the world. Named after the Karakoram mountain range-just one of the ranges in Gilgit-the road passes through

an extraordinary landscape. Soaring, jagged peaks contrast with vertiginous ravines, glaciers driving a chill wind, and tumbling aquamarine rivers. Landslides are common. Guardrails are a flimsy suggestion of protection from steep falls of hundreds of feet. “There is no place in the world that offers all these things,” said Ahmed.

“No doubt it is the toughest cycle race in the world. We are aiming to make it our trademark,” said Haroon General, president of the Pakistan Cycling Federation. “The most difficult part of the race is the final stage where cyclists face shortage of oxygen and there is risk of heart issues... At such an altitude a person falls down (faints) after running for 200 metres, but our cyclists travelled for almost 59 kilometres,” he said. Five ambulances were on standby in case of emergencies in the final stage, he said, adding: “A majority of the cyclists made it but the support staff needed ambulances.”

‘Breathless’

The winner of the event, Najeeb Ullah-a Pakistani from a hilltop village in the southwestern province of Balochistan who won three of the four stages-told AFP that breathing was a “problem” for him in the final climb. “I had to face a lot of difficulties while reaching the finishing line,” located at the Khunjerab Pass, the border between Pakistan and China, he said.

Especially since altitude was not the only obstacle: On the final day, fierce winds drove snowflakes into the cyclists’ faces, forcing some already struggling to catch their breath to dismount. “Our entire training is reduced to nothing when we reach the final stage,” lamented Abdullah Aslam, a participant who could not finish the



HUNZA: Pakistani and international cyclists take part in the Tour de Khunjerab, one of the world’s highest altitude cycling competitions, near the Pakistan-China Khunjerab border. — AFP

race. “I could barely pedal and was feeling breathless,” he admitted. Aslam, a runner from Islamabad, had already had to dismount and walk to the finish on the second day.

“The road was so steep that a majority of the cyclists had to get off their cycles because even a normal vehicle (two-wheel drive) faces issues,” he recalled. Organisers

said in some sections the competitors faced a gradient of 20 percent, an angle rarely seen in such competitions in around the world. At each stage organisers wearing construction helmets scrutinised the surrounding mountains, peering closely for any sign of the rockfalls that periodically smash on to the road-a potential peril to the cyclists below. — AFP

5 Cricket World Cup stars for the future

LONDON: With the Cricket World Cup heading into the semi-finals, the tournament is set for a dramatic conclusion featuring some of the game’s finest talents. But the group stage also introduced the world to several vibrant young talents set to dominate cricket for years to come. Here, AFP Sport looks at five players who have announced their arrival as potential stars:

Nicolas Pooran (West Indies)

Nicolas Pooran finally showcased the talent he has promised to unleash for so long as the batsman finished as the West Indies’ leading run scorer. The 23-year-old made a duck on his ODI debut before the World Cup but went on to play each of the team’s nine group games, scoring 367 runs at an average of 52.42. West Indies assistant coach Roddy Estwick had seen Pooran’s potential five years ago when he scored 143 in an Under-19 World Cup match against Australia. “I’ve always believed in Nicholas. I’m not surprised by his talent. What’s surprised me is it’s taken as long as this for him to come through,” Estwick said.

Shaheen Shah Afridi (Pakistan)

Pakistan paceman Shaheen Shah Afridi enjoyed a breakthrough World Cup campaign, prompting Wasim Akram to hail the teenager as a future star. The teenager recorded Pakistan’s best-ever World Cup bowling figures with a scintillating spell of 6-35 in Friday’s win over Bangladesh at Lord’s. He became the youngest player to take a five-wicket haul at the World Cup at 19 years and 90 days, finishing the tournament with 16 wickets in five games. “Definitely, Shaheen is one for the future, a beacon of light for the next generation of fast bowlers,” Wasim said.

Double triumph for dominant Marquez brothers in Germany

SACHSENRING: Honda rider Marc Marquez tightened his grip on a possible sixth world title with a seventh consecutive victory at the German MotoGP yesterday. The 26-year-old Spaniard, who had earlier seen his younger brother Alex win the Moto2 race, led from start to finish to cross the line over four seconds ahead of the Yamaha of Maverick Vinales and Cal Crutchlow on another Honda.

It is Marquez’ fifth victory in nine races this season which takes him to 185 points in the championship standings, 69 clear of the Italian Andrea Dovizioso, who took fifth. “The race went to plan, I was riding out in front and enjoying myself,” said Marquez. “At the end I was thinking about my brother. I am very happy with this victory and very happy to have the summer break in these conditions.”

It was a ruthless performance from Marquez who has now won at each of his last 10 races at Sachsenring. He first won here in 2010 in the 125cc race and followed that in 2011 and 2012 with wins in Moto2. He has won every MotoGP in Germany since 2013. Vinales



West Indies' Nicholas Pooran

Mujeeb Ur Rahman (Afghanistan)

Afghanistan may have left the World Cup winless after losing all nine matches, but the minnows could take heart from the rise of teenage off-spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman. Mujeeb took just seven wickets in the tournament, but the 18-year-old tormented batsmen with his crafty use of flight and variation, marking him out as one to watch. Rashid Khan, his senior by two years, remains Afghanistan’s number one spinner, but Mujeeb is coming up fast, as he proved with a superb spell of 3-39 against Bangladesh in Southampton.

Avishka Fernando (Sri Lanka)

When Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne reflected on a frustrating campaign for the 1996 champions, the promising form of fearless batsman Avishka Fernando put a smile back on his face. The 21-year-old scored 203 runs in only four matches in the

tournament, including 104 against the West Indies and 49 in Sri Lanka’s shock win over England. “We’ve had a few positives out of this World Cup,” Karunaratne said. “Avishka Fernando is playing really well. “He showed what he can do, he can produce runs for Sri Lanka. He’s one of the future stars.”

Jofra Archer (England)

Barbados-born Jofra Archer has repaid England’s faith with a dazzling breakthrough in his first major tournament. Archer only became eligible to play for England earlier this year and was fast-tracked into the team just before the World Cup in a bid to make the most of the paceman’s natural gifts. The 24-year-old’s combination of speed and accuracy made him unplayable at times. He taken 17 wickets in England’s run to the semi-finals, including a run of four successive three-wicket hauls, leading many to mark him down as the spearhead of his country’s attack for years to come. — AFP



HOHENSTEIN-ERNSTTHAL: Repsol Honda Team’s Spanish rider Marc Marquez (right) steers his bike in front of Monster Energy Yamaha’ Spanish rider Maverick Vinales (center) and Suzuki Ecstar’s Spanish rider Alex Rins during the Moto GP Grand Prix Germany yesterday. —AFP

followed up his win in Assen last week with a feisty battle with Crutchlow which only ended when the Briton eased off near the end. “A couple of laps to go I had a big moment with my rear tyre so I thought I would let Maverick have it,” Crutchlow said.

The Briton’s performance was all the more remarkable given that he fractured his tibia and damaged his anterior cruciate ligament in a cycling accident earlier in the week.

Championship contenders Fabio Quartararo and Alex Rins both lost ground after crashing out. Rookie Frenchman Quartararo, who was second last week in Assen, started in second place but was quickly out of contention, slipping down to sixth before sliding off on the second lap. Rins was also running behind the leaders when he lost his front end going into a corner with 12 laps to go and slithered across the track into the sand. — AFP

Five Cricket WCup flops

MANCHESTER: Six of the World Cup’s 10 teams are heading back home after missing out on the semi-finals following the conclusion of the group stage on Saturday. England, Australia, India and New Zealand still have their eyes on the prize, but here AFP Sport takes a look at five players who failed to live up to expectations:

Chris Gayle (West Indies)

Chris Gayle seldom fired for the West Indies in his eight innings as his side failed to make the last four. Gayle, 39, managed 242 runs including two fifties to end his World Cup career-he played in five editions of the 50-over tournament-on a disappointing note. The self-styled “universe boss” started with a 50 in his team’s opening win over Pakistan, but struggled to convert starts into big scores for most of the tournament. The one-time six-hitting machine faltered against pace and spin, but got a rousing send-off in his last game against Afghanistan, even making waves on Twitter with an ‘End of an era’ hashtag to mark his World Cup farewell. Gayle finished with 1,186 runs from 35 World Cup matches.

Rashid Khan (Afghanistan)

Rashid Khan came into the World Cup as cricket’s hottest property after catching the eye with his leg spinners for minnows Afghanistan. But the Twenty20 sensation, who played a leading role for many sides in franchise cricket across the globe, claimed only six wickets in nine games as the Afghans returned winless.

Skipper Gulbadin Naib defended his premier spinner, who is number one in the T20 rankings, after their final loss to West Indies, saying “he gives 100 percent but it’s bad luck”. But the 20-year-old Rashid, who made the world take notice of his art when he became the fastest to take 100 ODI wickets, in

44 matches, still has a long way to go.

Mashrafe Mortaza (Bangladesh)

Mashrafe Mortaza started the tournament by leading Bangladesh to a shock victory over South Africa as he became the country’s most successful ODI captain with four World Cup wins. But the 35-year-old struggled with his own form as the seamer claimed just one wicket from eight matches. The sting was missing from Mashrafe’s bowling as he seldom completed his quota of 10 overs, relying on the team’s other quicks to do the job. The end came with his team’s disappointing loss to Pakistan and Mashrafe signed off by saying: “We are extremely sorry that we couldn’t lend a helping hand to Shakib (Al Hasan) who batted, bowled and fielded very well in every match in this tournament.”

Hashim Amla (South Africa)

One of South Africa’s most dependable players in the last five years, Amla scored just 203 runs in his seven World Cup outings. The opener did hit two half-centuries but one came in a losing cause and the other was delivered in a consolation win after the Proteas had fallen out of the semi-finals race. Amla’s woes often put Faf du Plessis’ side in trouble in the first 10 overs and the rest of the batting did little to make up for it. He remains a cherished figure in South Africa though and when he scored an unbeaten 80 against Sri Lanka, veteran commentator Harsha Bhogle wrote on Twitter: “So happy to see Hashim Amla get runs. One of the greats of our era.”

Hasan Ali (Pakistan)

A lot was expected of the right-arm quick who had starred for Pakistan in his team’s 2017 Champions Trophy triumph in England. But the speedster disappointed after claiming just two wickets in four games and failing to check the flow of runs. He was dropped after returning figures of 1-84 in his nine overs in the team’s thrashing against arch rivals India. And the fastest bowler to take 50 wickets for Pakistan remained benched for the rest of the tournament. — AFP



West Indies' Chris Gayle

Sports

Late Lorch goal stuns Africa Cup of Nations hosts Egypt

Nigeria topple holders Cameroon 3-2

CAIRO: Theminkosi Lorch scored on 85 minutes to give South Africa a stunning 1-0 victory over Africa Cup of Nations hosts Egypt after a pulsating last-16 clash in Cairo Saturday. After three woeful group performances, South Africa were rank outsiders against the record seven-time African champions, whose line-up included Liverpool star Mohamed Salah. A seesaw struggle was settled when a swift counterattack allowed Lebo Mothiba to send Lorch through and he fired past goal-keeper Mohamed Elshenawy.

The winners were unrecognisable from the team that struggled in the group stage as they displayed sharpness and desire not previously evident. South Africa will face arch-rivals Nigeria, who eliminated defending champions Cameroon earlier Saturday, in the quarter-finals. Egypt changed three of the side that defeated Uganda to complete Group A with a 100 percent record, five goals scored and none conceded. Back came defender Mahmoud Alaa, midfielder Tarek Hamed and forward Marwan Mohsen with Baher Elmoahady, Nabil Donga and Ahmed Hassan dropping to the bench. South Africa made two changes, both in midfield, from the team that lost to Morocco and squeezed into the second round with the worst record of the best four third-place teams.

In came South African Premiership Player of the Season Lorch and fit-again Dean Furman for Thulani Serero and suspended Themba Zwane. Bafana Bafana (The Boys) had been woeful in all three Group D matches, barely troubling rival defences, and the public and media slammed the negative tactics of coach Stuart Baxter. The England-born coach hinted at a more attacking approach and was true to his word as Percy Tau and Lorch had ambitious long-range attempts at goal within three minutes of the kick-off.

Tormented

Salah, passed fit after recovering from a midweek

cold that forced him to miss some training, had a shot deflected wide soon after. Mohamed 'Trezeguet' Hassan, one of the Pharaohs' stars in the group stage, tormented several defenders just outside the box and induced a foul, but Abdallah el Said botched the free-kick. The desire of South Africa to attack was evident again on 15 minutes when impressive winger Tau stung the fingertips of Elshenawy with a hard, long-range shot.

Tau came much closer to breaking the deadlock midway through the half with a free-kick that cleared the wall and forced Elshenawy into a brilliant save. South Africa were looking the likelier side to break the deadlock and a brave block by Ayman Ashraf foiled Lorch. Mokotjo then unleashed a sizzling low, long-range shot that flew past Elshenawy but finished just off target. The frustration of Egypt, who scored all five group goals before half-time, was mirrored in the angry reaction of Salah when a free-kick was awarded against him.

Mexico-born Egypt coach Javier Aguirre altered his largely ineffective attack at half-time, bringing in veteran Ahmed Ali for Mohsen. 'Trezeguet' squandered a great chance just before the hour, tamely shooting straight at goalkeeper Ronwen Williams after a superb defence-splitting pass from Salah. Amr Warda, axed from the squad over sexual harassment allegations and swiftly recalled after player pressure, came off the bench on 64 minutes for his second tournament appearance. South Africa captain Thulani Hlatshwayo headed just wide as he darted on to a free kick with 20 minutes remaining.

Nigeria beat Cameroon

In another development, Odion Ighalo scored twice and teed up Alex Iwobi's winning goal as Nigeria eliminated defending Africa Cup of Nations champions Cameroon after a thrilling 3-2 victory in Alexandria on Saturday. China-based forward Ighalo bundled home a



ALEXANDRIA: Nigeria's midfielder Oghenekaro Etebo tackles Cameroon's midfielder Pierre Kunde Malong (right) during the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) Round of 16 football match between Nigeria and Cameroon on July 6, 2019. — AFP

scrappy opener but Clarence Seedorf's Cameroon hit back through Stephane Bahoken and Clinton Njie with two quick-fire goals before half-time.

Nigeria drew level as Ighalo volleyed in his second just past the hour and he then turned provider to play in Iwobi to steer home three minutes later and set up an

unexpected quarter-final clash with South Africa, who stunned hosts and favourites Egypt 1-0 in Cairo. "It was a good win and it was a difficult game. Even when they scored to make it 2-1 we still believed we could score and come back," said Ighalo, as coach Gernot Rohr praised the resilience of the Super Eagles. — Agencies

Angry Messi slams 'Brazilian fix' after Copa red card

SAO PAULO: Lionel Messi was sent off before halftime and then angrily hit out at "corrupt" tournament organisers after Argentina beat Chile 2-1 to win a bad-tempered third-place playoff at the Copa America on Saturday. The match was 34 minutes old when Chilean captain Gary Medel shepherded out a ball near his own goal. Messi challenged him from behind and Medel reacted angrily, pushing the Argentine and raising his hands.

The Paraguayan referee showed Medel a red card and even though Messi did not react, he too was sent off, prompting boos in Sao Paulo's Corinthians arena. Reports said the Barcelona forward did not attend the ceremony to receive his third-place medal and he later hit out at the South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL). "We don't have to be part of this corruption," Messi told reporters. "The lack of respect that they have showed us throughout this tournament."

"Sadly, the corruption, the referees, they don't allow people to enjoy football, they ruined it a bit. "I think the cup is fixed for Brazil," Messi added. "I hope that the VAR and the referees have nothing to do in this final and that Peru can compete because they have the team to do so although I think it's difficult." His comments came four days after Argentina were beaten 2-0 by arch rivals Brazil in a semi-final that was marked by a number of contentious refereeing decisions.



SAO PAULO: Paraguayan referee Mario Diaz de Vivar shows the red card to Argentina's Lionel Messi and Chile's Gary Medel during the Copa America football tournament third-place match at the Corinthians Arena on July 6, 2019. — AFP

Argentina were furious that VAR was not consulted for two possible penalty decision, with the Argentine Football Association president writing an angry letter to CONMEBOL to express his disgust. Messi's frustration was evident in the mixed zone after what was only the second red card of his career. "You saw what happened," he told reporters. "A yellow would have ended it for both of us. The important thing is that with 10 the team finished well and won."

The referee also showed six yellow cards in a match that was disrupted by 37 fouls. Sergio Aguerro put Argentina 1-0 ahead in 12 minutes and Paulo Dybala made it two 10 minutes later with a nice finish after Giovani Lo Celso put him through on goal. Artur Vidal pulled one back for Chile from the penalty

spot 14 minutes into the second half. Hosts Brazil faced Peru in the final yesterday in Rio de Janeiro.

Football bosses fire back

Meanwhile, South American football governing body CONMEBOL hit back at Argentine superstar Lionel Messi on Saturday after he accused the body of corruption. Messi reacted after he was sent-off during Argentina's 2-1 victory in the third place play-off against Chile earlier in the day. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner was involved in a tangle with Chile captain Gary Medel in which Messi appeared to do nothing wrong, but both players were given their marching orders by referee Mario Diaz de Vivar. — Agencies

Egyptians light up stadium in tribute to fallen fans

CAIRO: Even as Egypt struggled against South Africa in the last 16 of the Africa Cup of Nations on Saturday, the home fans took time to honour a recent tradition. In the 20th and 72nd minutes of a match that the Egyptians were to lose 1-0, hundreds of supporters switched on their mobile phone flashlights a simple tribute to victims killed in deadly stadium clashes after the 2011 revolution.

"This is our tradition that we pull out our mobiles," said 19-year-old Mostafa Atef. "The blood of martyrs has nothing to do whether we support (rival clubs) Al Ahly or Zamalek." The timing of the flashlight tributes reflect the numbers of fans killed in two separate incidents. There is still uncertainty at the number of fans who died in February 2012 when security forces stormed the field at the Port Said stadium of Al Masry during a match with Cairo-based Al Ahly.

Some reports claim 74 fans died that day, others say 72. Whichever, it was one of the world's deadliest football clashes. Three years later, almost to the day in 2015, 20 Zamalek fans-some



CAIRO: Egypt supporters watch the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) Round of 16 football match between Egypt and South Africa at a cafe in the Egyptian Capital on July 6, 2019. — AFP

reports say 22 — died after a mass stampede at the June 30 Stadium's gates, prompted by police use of teargas and live bullets. That led to the reinstatement of a total ban on attending domestic games which is still in effect.

For sales representative Islam Abdel Sadek, 30, the tragedies are a reminder that security in football stadiums will still be necessary after the tournament. "Egypt is strong and safe now," said Sadek. "But it's a poignant memory and we are praying for the martyrs. So of course we will always turn our lights on."

Troubling times

In a tournament designed to promote the country's international image, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi told the national squad that preparations for international audiences were more important than their results on the pitch. Under Sisi, who led the army's overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi in 2013, a focus on political stability and crushing dissent has meant that even football has been heavily scrutinised by the security forces. — AFP

Egyptian press slam 'embarrassing', 'still-born' Pharaohs

CAIRO: Egypt's usually tame press did not hold back after the national team's exit from the Africa Cup of Nations on home soil, branding the side "embarrassing" after a "still-born performance". The record seven-time champions were dumped out in the last 16 by South Africa on Saturday with a 1-0 defeat at the Cairo International Stadium. "You embarrassed us... Our national squad disappoints millions and bows out of the African Cup of Nations," Al-Akhbar, one of Egypt's main newspapers, splashed on its Sunday front page. In a country where the press is rarely critical of official institutions, there was plenty of blame thrown around.

Al-Akhbar lambasted "the absurdities" of Mexican coach Javier Aguirre's tactics and "the still-born performance of the players". A photo of star forward Mohamed Salah on the verge of tears accompanied the front-page article. Meanwhile, state mouthpiece Al Ahram declared the loss as "one of the biggest surprises of the 2019 AFCON". Egypt, with most of their team playing in Europe's top leagues, were the pre-tournament favourites.

"Egyptian football paid the price for the coaching staff who chose players unfit to play at an international level," the paper said. "Coach Javier Aguirre is the number one man responsible for this humiliating exit." The Egyptian Football Association (EFA) sacked Aguirre just hours after the loss along with the entire coaching staff. EFA president Hani Abou

Rida also tendered his resignation. Papers wary of fans' swelling anger shied away from criticising the association directly as it is politically loyal and backed by the authorities.

'Catastrophic failure'

In Al-Watan, one of the biggest tabloids close to the security services, the devastating loss was summed up with: "The dream goes up in smoke." It also went after Aguirre for making "catastrophic" errors throughout the tournament, leading to a national "failure". Previously praised in this competition, rising star Mahmoud Trezeguet "wasted every single opportunity" he was given to put South Africa away, Al-Watan said. Popular football website Yalla Kora questioned whether "this generation will ever reach the next World Cup in 2022". Even beloved national icon Salah was caught in the crosshairs of criticism.

Several reasons were given for the disappointing exit, including how the Liverpool star had "imposed" his will by demanding the return of his teammate Amr Warda. The controversial player was initially kicked out of the squad following sexual harassment allegations surfacing online, but was then brought back into the fold after an outcry by the players supporting him. Many fans actually welcomed the defeat of the Pharaohs on social media, with the "National Team of Harassers" trending last night. They felt the loss was punishment for players defending the inclusion of Warda. — AFP

simultaneously sacking Mexican head coach Javier Aguirre and the rest of the coaching staff.

He also called on the EFA's board members to resign. Most have done so. Fans had long called for an overhaul of the EFA over accusations of mismanagement. After Egypt's unceremonious exit from the World Cup's group stage last year, those calls increased. "There is no plan, there are no players, no one knows how to defend or attack," said fan Ahmed Mostafa outside the stadium after the loss. "This is what the four games we played looked like. None of the players wanted to play, really. There is no spirit, nothing."

Off the pitch, the EFA had been grappling with a scandal surrounding striker Amr Warda, who was removed from the squad for disciplinary reasons on June 26. The EFA gave no details, but Warda had previously been accused of harassing a fashion model on Instagram and a complaint against him was filed with Egypt's public prosecutor. After Salah and other prominent team mates came to Warda's defence and Warda posted an apology on Facebook, the EFA reinstated him, drawing the ire of some fans. "Egypt's national team is also its national embarrassment ... Plenty of Egyptians are basking in the team's loss today," tweeted Karim Zidan, a journalist, referring to a trending hashtag "Team of sexual harassers". — Reuters

Egypt's fans bitter as unloved team crash out

CAIRO: Egyptian football fans reacted with anger and sorrow yesterday after the host team tumbled out of the Africa Cup of Nations in the second round following a lacklustre run marred by a controversy over alleged sexual harassment. The defeat led to an immediate purge of Egyptian football officials, and took the gloss off a high-prestige event that Egypt had volunteered to host at short notice after Cameroon was stripped of the competition.

Fans had high hopes for a Pharaohs team starring national hero and Champions League winner Mohamed Salah. Egypt have won the cup a record seven times and were runners-up in 2017. But after winning their three group games in unconvincing style, the host team were upset 1-0 on Saturday by a South African side that had scraped through to the knock-out stages with one win and two defeats. Egyptian Football Federation (EFA) President Hany Abou Rida resigned hours after the defeat,

25 Rays walk off after Yankees' rally; Angels overpowered



26 Tour de Impossible? Pakistan hosts 'toughest cycle race'



27 Messi blasts Copa America 'corruption' after red card



RHONE: USA's players celebrate with the trophy after the France 2019 Women's World Cup football final match between USA and the Netherlands yesterday. —AFP

US retain Women's World Cup

Rapinoe and Lavelle give US fourth WCup title

LYON: The United States retained the women's World Cup yesterday as a Megan Rapinoe penalty and a superb Rose Lavelle strike gave the holders a 2-0 victory over a battling Netherlands side in Lyon. Having been kept at bay by the brilliant Dutch goalkeeper Sari van Veenendaal throughout the first half, the USA finally went ahead just after the hour as Rapinoe stroked home from 12 yards to end the tournament as joint top scorer on six goals. There was an air of inevitability about the pink-haired 34-year-old, the star of this World Cup on and off the field, putting the USA ahead. It also seemed inevitable that the breakthrough goal here should come from a VAR-awarded penalty, with French referee Stephanie Frappart initially giving a corner before pointing to the spot following a review. The whippet-like Lavelle, another stand-out performer over the last month, got the second goal in the 69th minute, killing off Dutch hopes of a comeback. The victory underlines the USA's status as the dominant force in

international women's football as they claim the World Cup for the fourth time in eight editions. They were already the first team to appear in three consecutive finals, and coach Jill Ellis becomes the first coach to win back-to-back World Cups in the men's or women's game since Italy's Vittorio Pozzo in the 1930s. The USA had been the only non-European team to make it to the quarter-finals here, but they had already ended the hopes of the hosts and England before denying the Dutch a dream double success, two years after they won Euro 2017 on home soil. Whether the Americans can continue this domination on to the next World Cup remains to be seen, not least because Rapinoe is already in the twilight years of her career. She was brought back into the starting line-up here by Ellis having sat out the victory over England in the last four due to a hamstring problem. Christen Press made way but came on for the closing stages, as Rapinoe went off to a loud ovation from the

massed ranks of USA fans.

Goalkeeping heroics in vain

At a tournament which has showcased the improving standards of goalkeeping in the women's game, the excellent Van Veenendaal prevented the USA from winning by a greater margin. The 29-year-old, who has spent the last four years at Arsenal, had already excelled in her team's win over Sweden in the semi-finals. Here, she allowed her team to withstand an onslaught from the holders towards half-time, saving well from Julie Ertz and bettering that by producing two superb stops in quick succession in the 38th minute. Both American chances came from crosses from the left by Rapinoe. First Van Veenendaal stopped a Samantha Mewis header, and then she turned the ball onto the post when Alex Morgan diverted Rapinoe's low centre towards goal. Morgan was thwarted again

moments later as she tried her luck from 20 yards, and the European champions held out until the interval. The USA had scored no later than the 12th minute in all of their prior matches at this World Cup, but the Dutch, crucially, offered little going forward at the other end. Still, it was 61 minutes before the holders went ahead. The referee gave a corner when Stefanie van der Gragt challenged Morgan in the area, but changed her mind upon seeing the images. Rapinoe stroked in the first penalty scored in a women's World Cup final to claim a share of the golden boot with Morgan and England's Ellen White. The Netherlands tried to regain their composure, but there was nothing they could do to stop Lavelle's piercing run towards the box midway through the second half. She dropped her shoulder to set up the shooting opportunity, and fired in low from 18 yards. Van Veenendaal then saved from Morgan and Dunn to keep the score down, but the title was the USA's again. — AFP

Wimbledon targets Asian fans 'nirvana' with lite app

LONDON: Wimbledon has unleashed a new lightweight app to try and hook the growing tennis-loving market in Asia, while AI-generated highlights are getting smarter at spotting the most exciting action. The official Wimbledon app is packed with heavy graphics but the new, slimmed-down alternative is designed for fans in places with poorer bandwidth and older smartphones-especially India. The prestigious tennis tournament reckons it can potentially reach several hundred million people in India who are interested in the championships but can only download data over slow mobile phone networks. The slimmer app has lightweight scores, results, headlines and the order of play. "India is one of the largest social media audiences for them globally," said Sam

Seddon, IBM's client executive for Wimbledon. "That's the nirvana fan base." Wimbledon is also producing a Chinese scoreboard that can be embedded into web-sites in a bid to reach a bigger Chinese audience. **AI learning to improve** Every single shot at Wimbledon is logged by US technology giants IBM, with up to 180 staff capturing 4.8 million bits of information. Their statisticians have been refining their artificial intelligence-generated video clips. By monitoring a mixture of crowd noise, match analysis of key moments such as break points and player reactions, an overall excitement factor is produced for each passage of play. But IBM has detected inadvertent bias in the AI system, which this year it has managed to iron out. Seddon gave the example of a three-hour epic match on Centre Court. "The place is full and everyone is screaming and cheering," he said. Once it finishes, people step out for a breather. "It doesn't matter who comes on next, the crowd noise will be different," Seddon explained. "Same court, same high-profile players, same high quality of tennis, but the highlights

could be inadvertently treated differently."

Statistically capturing excitement

The AI system has this year learnt how to recognise ball strikes so clips can automatically be trimmed to when a point starts. Last year, the AI highlights garnered more than 14 million video views. Despite the buzz generated by 15-year-old qualifier Coco Gauff, Roger Federer's army of adoring fans, and fiery Nick Kyrgios's clash with Rafael Nadal, the clips from those matches did not top the overall excitement factor rankings from the first week of the championships. Statistically, the highest-ranking point, at 0.97 out of 1.00, was China's Zhang Shuai securing victory over former world number one Caroline Wozniacki, sinking to her knees with a double fist-pump, having come back from 0-4 down in the first set.

Big screen vote

Wimbledon is seeking to bring together as much digital information as it can on the 40,000-odd daily visitors to the complex in southwest London, in order to deliver a better fan experience. Signing in with the

official app, ground pass ticket-holders watching the big show court action on the giant screen can vote for which match they want to be shown. "There's a value return in providing your data, to help Wimbledon understand more about user interests," said Seddon. "It's been really interesting for them to understand what their fans on Henman Hill want to see." Spectators have plumped for the big name players and British favourites that might have been anticipated, but have also voted for some more unexpected choices. In the future, fans should be able to access more personalised highlights on their smartphones.

Need for speed

Seddon said the fan demand for immediacy in consuming sport was driving changes in the entertainment industry. "Sport is becoming the cutting edge of the media industry, and AI is a component of the cutting edge," he explained. "You can watch your box sets whenever you want. Sport is an in-the-moment experience. "The challenge for the sports business is: 'who are my fans, what are they consuming?' "And if you've got the data, how do you structure it to drive insights? That's the hard bit." — AFP