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Authorities grill members of terrorist cell busted in Kuwait

Investigators probing suspects' sponsors, meetings, activities

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Following the arrest of eight members of a terrorist cell linked to Egypt's outlawed Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait on Friday, security sources yesterday said state security investigations with them focused on three basic elements - the visas on which they entered Kuwait and their relationship with the sponsors who issued them; the meetings they had in Kuwait with Kuwaitis or others and whether they were held with good or bad intentions; in addition to the nature of work and activities they practiced in Kuwait. According to sources, some of the suspects - all Egyptians - worked for a charity organization in Kuwait.

The sources added that investigators want to know whether the cell had planned any operations outside Kuwait while they were here. The sources said after confiscating the group's laptops, mobile phones and documents, state security detectives are currently examining and analyzing them to prepare a complete case file. The sources said the terrorist group had been tracked down after state security received tips from local and foreign sources, including suspects arrested

in Egypt, concerning the cell members and the danger they pose due to their military training.

A statement by the interior ministry on Friday carried by the state-run news agency KUNA said the militants were allegedly members of a "terrorist cell", including some who have been "convicted of terrorism" and sentenced to jail in Egypt. "Those arrested carry Egyptian nationalities and belong to the Muslim Brotherhood organization," the ministry said.

The suspects, it said, are wanted by Egypt where some of them have been sentenced to up to 15 years in jail. During interrogations, the suspects admitted to carrying out terrorist operations in Egypt. Investigations are ongoing to determine their accomplices, the statement said, warning that it will crack down ruthlessly against saboteurs.

Egyptian authorities have led a crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood members after the military overthrew Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013. Later that year Egypt outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood and declared it a "terrorist organization". Egypt and its allies, including Gulf powerhouses Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, consider the Muslim Brotherhood a "terrorist" organization.



KUWAIT: A screen grab taken from a video released by the interior ministry late Friday shows the eight suspects who were arrested on terrorism charges. — Mol

News in brief

Three killed in Mahboula blaze

KUWAIT: Three people were killed in a fire that broke out in the early hours of yesterday in a six-storey building in Mahboula. Security sources said firemen rushed to the scene and found the fire was on the first floor. The building was evacuated and 12 residents were rescued and rushed to Adan Hospital, said the sources, adding three of the injured died on the way, while two others are in critical condition. The sources said firemen faced difficulties in fighting the fire due to a number of violations in the building and that legal actions will be taken against the owner. An investigation is in progress to determine the cause of the blaze. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

Sheikh killed while cleaning gun

KUWAIT: A ruling family member in his thirties was killed by a bullet while he was cleaning his gun in his house, said security sources. Forensic and criminal investigators were dispatched to the scene for further investigations. — Meshaal Al-Enezi

Bedoon arrested for incitement

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's PR and security media department said a bedoon was arrested for posting a video on social media networks in which he made incendiary statements including threats to the regime and called for rioting, which are deemed as severe violations of Kuwaiti laws. The suspect was referred to the public prosecution pending further action. — Hanan Al-Saadoun



Kuwait backs Xinjiang policy

GENEVA: Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Russia and 35 other states have written to the United Nations supporting China's policies in its western region of Xinjiang, in contrast to strong Western criticism. China has been accused of detaining a million Muslims and persecuting ethnic Uighurs in Xinjiang, and 22 ambassadors signed a letter to the UN Human Rights Council last week criticizing its policies. But the letter supporting China commended what it called China's remarkable achievements in the field of human rights. The letter was also signed by ambassadors from many African countries, North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, Belarus, Myanmar, the Philippines, Syria, Pakistan, Oman, Qatar, the UAE and Bahrain. — Reuters

Customs foils bid to smuggle 10m drug pills

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti customs officers seized on Friday 10 million Tramadol pills, enlisted among narcotics that affect human mental condition. Jamal Al-Jalawi, Director of the Kuwait Customs Directorate General, said in a statement personnel of the customs warehouses management at Shuwaikh Port seized the banned drugs.

Jalawi said the Tamol-X 225 pills were in a container shipped from an Asian

country, adding that the importer tried to smuggle the shipment illegally into Kuwait, and when he failed, attempted to send the drugs abroad. Musaad Al-Hlailah, inspection supervisor at the port, said the smugglers attempted to bring the cargo in a 40-foot container with a manifest reading electrical and medical appliances.

Hlailah said contents of the container were examined after the importer tried to reshipe them, thus arousing suspicion among officers in charge. Screening devices showed cartons were packed with the prohibited pills. Tramadol is illegal in Kuwait and its medical prescription for some cases of physical or psychological illnesses is subject to regulations and terms. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Customs officers are seen with the 10 million Tramadol pills seized at Shuwaikh Port on Friday. — KUNA

Turkey ignores US warnings on S-400 missiles

ANKARA: Turkey ignored US warnings as it continued yesterday to take delivery of Russia's S-400 missile defense system near Ankara, a defense ministry statement indicated. "Delivery of S-400 Long Range Air and Missile Defense Systems resumed today," the statement said. "The fourth Russian plane carrying S-400 parts landed at Murted Airport outside Ankara," it added.

The US fears that if Ankara integrates the S-400 into its defenses, data about the US-built F-35 fighter jet could leak

back to the Russians, and Washington has threatened to deny Turkey access to the stealth aircraft. The western defense alliance NATO, which counts Turkey as one of its members, is also "concerned about the potential consequences" of the S-400 purchase, an official told AFP.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has refused to back down and said he is confident Turkey will not face US sanctions, after meeting his US counterpart Donald Trump on the margins of the G-20 summit in Japan last month. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists on Friday that "everything is happening in strict accordance with the agreements and signed contracts, all obligations are being carried out".

While the Trump administration stayed quiet, members of Congress

Continued on Page 24



ANKARA: A Russian military cargo plane carrying the S-400 missile defense system from Russia is seen at Murted military airbase on Friday. — AFP

Hurricane takes aim at Louisiana

MORGAN CITY, Louisiana: Barry strengthened into a category 1 hurricane yesterday as it neared the Louisiana coast, US meteorologists said - prompting millions of residents of the southern US state to hunker down for expected major flooding. At 10:00 am (1500 GMT), the storm was packing sustained winds of 120 km per hour - just above the minimum to qualify as a category 1 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) said in its latest storm advisory.

The eye of the storm was located about 50 miles from Morgan City, to the west of the state's biggest city New Orleans, and moving at a slow pace of six miles an hour - meaning that landfall could still be hours away. But the outside

edge of the storm was already punishing the US Gulf Coast with heavy rains. Authorities ramped up evacuations, airlines canceled flights and flood gates were slammed shut.

In Morgan City, the streets were deserted. The Atchafalaya River had flooded its banks, and trees were already blown over in residential areas. "It's painstakingly slow," government meteorologist Ben Schott told CNN, noting that residents should not be lulled into complacency about facing the storm. "If you don't have to go anywhere, stay home. Monitor what's going on. Do not put yourself at risk."

With Barry dumping rain across several southern states, federal emergency declarations were issued to help free up resources to address the storm. Governor John Bel Edwards said New Orleans was well prepared to withstand the storm, the first hurricane of the Atlantic season, but urged vigilance by residents across the state, tens of thousands of whom had lost power.

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NEW ORLEANS: A cyclist rides along a near deserted street near downtown as most of the city is hunkered down indoors in anticipation of Hurricane Barry yesterday. — AFP

Local

Kuwait a voice of wisdom, force for peace: Mogherini

'European Union, Kuwait work side by side to overcome regional challenges'

BRUSSELS: European Union High Representative Federica Mogherini yesterday lauded Kuwait as a 'voice of wisdom' and a 'force for peace' in these difficult times for the region. "And this is what has made us natural partners. This new European Delegation is first and foremost a sign of how close the European Union and Kuwait have become. By opening our new delegation, we want to strengthen our relation with Kuwait even further, as part of our engagement in this region," she said in an interview ahead of her visit to Kuwait to open an EU embassy there. "You have taken up the role of the mediator and the peace builder, and this required a lot of courage. We appreciate the constructive role Kuwait is playing within the Gulf Cooperation Council through its continuous mediation at the highest level. Your country has worked and is working to end the war in Yemen, and you have demonstrated your commitment to multilateralism as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2018-2019," she said.

The EU's foreign policy chief noted that on each one of these challenges - from the war in Yemen to tensions in the Gulf - the European Union and Kuwait have been working side by side. "Together we co-chaired the conference for the reconstruction of Iraq, we contributed to saving UNRWA in its funding crisis, and we have been among the strongest supporters of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, or of children in Yemen," she said. The highly-respectable EU High Representative recalled that three years ago we signed a cooperation arrangement between our foreign services. "And now, by establishing a full diplomatic presence in Kuwait City, we are opening a new chapter in our partnership. The aim is

to further strengthen our political dialogue as well as our economic cooperation, in particular in support of Kuwait's 'Vision 2035,'" she stressed. "Our cooperation already focuses on energy, trade and investment, security and counterterrorism, and we are working on extending our dialogue to other fields, in particular education, research and innovation. The new delegation will also aim to build bridges between the Kuwaiti society and European citizens," she stated.

EU's third delegation

Mogherini pointed out that this is the EU's third delegation in the GCC countries, following those in Saudi Arabia and in the United Arab Emirates. "So this is also a mes-



EU opens new delegation in Kuwait

sage to the whole region: the European Union cares about the Middle East and the Gulf. We care about peace, security and human development in this part of the world, because we are neighbors. It is essential to invest in our ties, and to explore every opportunity for cooperation when our interests and values converge," she stressed. Referring to relations between the EU and the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), she said the partnership between the two blocs is one of the oldest in the region, and cooperation has continued whenever

possible, in spite of all the tensions within the Council. "We believe that regional cooperation is crucial to prevent new escalations and to address controversies in a peaceful way. We have learnt it through decades of European cooperation, which ended centuries of wars on our continent," she said.

"The polarization generated by divisions within the GCC affects negatively the situation in the region and beyond. This is why we continue to support negotiated solutions in the Gulf. As soon as Kuwait started its mediation, we threw all our political support behind your work to create a breathing space for regional detente," said the EU High Representative. "I was in Kuwait already in the summer of 2017, to meet His Highness the Amir and discuss how we could be of help. And we will continue to support your role as a mediator and a voice of wisdom in the region," she said. Commenting on EU-Arab ties, she said "Europeans and Arabs are more than just neighbors. We share so much history and culture. The Mediterranean Sea has always connected our people more than it divided us. We share the same space: whatever happens in the Arab world has an impact on Europe, and vice versa."

"The European Union is among the top investors in the Arab world, and we are the main trade partner. Our young people share many of the same aspirations - to better opportunities, to better jobs, to finding their place in our societies. I have always believed that Euro-Arab cooperation holds the key to address these common challenges. Together we can better address the crises in our region. Together we can create the opportunities for human growth that our people are asking for," said Mogherini. "Our region stands at a crossroads - between more conflict, and the possibility of reconciliation. If



Federica Mogherini

you think of Syria, Yemen, Israel and Palestine, Libya - all crises that could evolve either way, depending on our individual and collective response," she said.

More cooperative dynamics

"As I see glimmers of hope, power confrontation in the Middle East and North Africa could bring new violence and new suffering to our region. Rising tensions in the Gulf could trigger a new arms race. Confrontation among regional powers is spreading: I think for instance of the Horn of Africa. It is urgent to invest all our energies in preventing new escalations, and in planting the seeds for a more cooperative regional dynamics," said Mogherini. "And for doing so, Europe needs to engage further with the Arab world. This is what we have tried to do in these years. No one has invested as much

as we did to address our region's humanitarian emergencies, from Syria to Yemen. We have supported UN-led peace talks all across the region," she said.

Mogherini noted that the EU has accompanied Tunisia on its transition to democracy, hosted three Syria Conferences, created the Quartet for Libya, and we have been unwavering in supporting a two-state solution for Palestine and Israel. "This year we held the first-ever summit between the EU and the League of Arab States. The Arab region was the only one with which the European Union never had a summit before - and this was a huge paradox. We have a duty to cooperate, to address the crises of our times and to fulfill our citizens' aspirations. To me, this should be the natural trajectory of our partnership. And I am glad that we have found in Kuwait such a close partner and friend," added Mogherini. —KUNA



In this file photo, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends the opening ceremony of the 8th Ministerial Meeting of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum.

Head-of-state diplomacy guides China-Kuwait relations to new development

KUWAIT: The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait Li Minggang released the following statement on the occasion of the first anniversary of the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to China.

In July 2018, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid a state visit to China and attended the opening ceremony of the 8th Ministerial Meeting of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping. This is the seventh time that His Highness visited China, and also the first time he visited China in nine years, which has played an important role in reviewing the China-Kuwait relations in the past and paving the way for the future.

During the visit, President Xi held talks with His Highness the Amir. The two leaders agreed to establish strategic partnership between the two countries, and reached important consensus on enhancing pragmatic cooperation in various fields and witnessed the signing of several documents of bilateral cooperation. As the head-of-state diplomacy has always been an important driving force for the rapid development of the relations between the two countries, the talks between President Xi and His Highness the Amir have charted a plan and direction for the development of the China-Kuwait relations in the new era, have opened new horizons for both countries, like a beacon which guides and ensures the development of the bilateral relations in terms of depth from a higher level and leads the bilateral cooperation in building the 'belt and the road' to more outcomes.

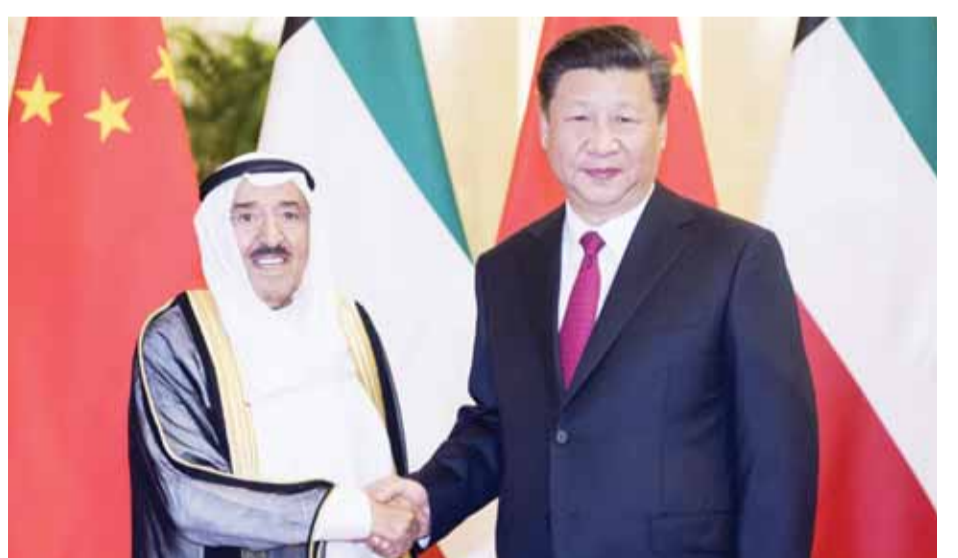
During the past year after the visit, both the Chinese and the Kuwaiti sides consider

the implementation of the consensus of the two countries' leaders as a primary goal of promoting the bilateral relations. President Xi and His Highness the Amir exchanged many messages, stressing the need to further strengthen the synergy between the development strategies of the two countries and to deepen pragmatic cooperation. In December last year, the envoy of His Highness the Amir, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visited China and discussed with the Chinese side in particular the ways to implement the results of His Highness's visit to China. The Kuwaiti Council of Ministers established a special committee to follow up the implementation process. In February this year, Vice Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission of the People's Republic of China Ning Jizhe visited Kuwait and chaired the first meeting of the Steering Committee for China-Kuwait Cooperation in the construction of 'Silk City and the Five Islands,' where they exchanged in-depth views mainly on China-Kuwait cooperation in the construction of the 'Belt and Road' and 'Silk City and the Five Islands.' During the second session of the 'Belt and Road' Forum for International Cooperation held in April this year, the Kuwaiti side signed memorandums of understanding with the China Development Bank and the China Association of City Planning, reflecting a new development achieved by the two countries in pragmatic cooperation under the framework of jointly building the 'Belt and Road.' In addition, the relevant authorities of both sides are actively working on the implementation of the other cooperation documents signed during the visit of His Highness the Amir concerning economy, trade, investment, smart city

and other fields, pushing forward the cooperation in a stable manner.

Reviewing of the development of the China-Kuwait relations in the past one year shows that the bilateral cooperation in various fields has succeeded in achieving remarkable results, including the continuous deepening of mutual political trust between the two countries, and the constant support of the fundamental interests of both sides as well as in international forums. In addition, the two sides have not stopped expanding their cooperation in the areas of energy, infrastructure, finance, trade, investment and others. In 2018, bilateral trade between China and Kuwait had totaled 18.7 billion dollars, with an increase of 55.1 percent from the previous year. China remains Kuwait's largest source of imports, and second largest export destination and Kuwait's largest trading partner in non-oil fields. Kuwait is China's ninth largest oil exporter. China imported 23.21 million tons of crude oil from Kuwait, with an increase of 27.2 percent year-on-year, with a total value of \$ 11.9 billion dollars with an increase of 68.48 percent year-on-year. By the end of 2018, the total number of projects that Chinese companies in Kuwait was 120 worth almost 21.5 billion dollars. In the conditions of harsh nature, Chinese builders, with their hard work and outstanding skills, are offering Kuwaiti society the exceptional competence inherent in 'Built by China' and making great contributions to advancing Kuwait's development.

In order to bring the two peoples closer together, we have worked together with the local Kuwaiti authorities to send many Chinese cultural delegations to visit Kuwait for culture exchange, enhanced mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the two countries.



His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

At present, the work to complete the establishment of the Chinese Culture Center is under way on a regular basis, and the two governments are intensively coordinating on mutual visa procedures to achieve the facilitation of exchange visits between the two peoples. We hope that our Kuwaiti friends will be able to feel and know China more deeply and become a witness, participant and beneficiary of friendship and cooperation between China and Kuwait.

The friendly exchange between China and Kuwait has always been a model for exchange between China and other countries in the region. With the growing instability and ambiguity in international relations and the current situation in the region, the stable and right development of China-Kuwait strategic partnership has

not only been a new driving force in promoting peace and development in the region, but also provided new energy to shape a community of shared future for China and all Arab countries and advance the reform of the global administrative system and build a community of shared future for mankind. In the future, we will work harder together with the Kuwaiti side to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, further strengthen the strategic partnership between China and Kuwait and push forward pragmatic cooperation in all fields under the framework of cooperation in building the 'Belt and Road,' in order to achieve more results and bring more benefits to the two countries and peoples and jointly write a new chapter of friendship and cooperation.

Local

'Bachelors' evicted from 59 houses in crackdowns on private residential areas

Flights to carry 10,666 pilgrims from Kuwait for Hajj

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality evicted single expatriate men from 59 houses out of 428 houses that received eviction warrants as part of a campaign to force out 'bachelors' renting dwellings illegally in private residential areas. Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Department said that inspection campaigns targeting 'bachelors' living in private residential areas have been in progress since the beginning of July, adding that the municipality will still receive complaints from both Kuwaitis and expats about such violations. The department added that 102 citations were also made during the same period, in addition to disconnecting electricity from 63 houses housing bachelors.

Side effects

Ministry of Health (MoH) Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha issued a decision forming a special team headed by MoH assistant undersecretary for medicine and food control Dr Abdullah Al-Bader to follow up medical equipment and safety requirements. Bader said that team will be responsible for following

up the side effects related to using medical equipment, pharmaceutical and biological substances, food supplements and health products in general. Bader added that a team from the medical engineers syndicate from Kuwait Engineers Society had provided the team with technical support. Bader said senior pharmacist Dr Reem Al-Essa had prepared a plan in collaboration with pharmacist Dunia Bastaki to determine the team's stakeholders and set a certain mechanism to keep relevant hospital staff posted about the latest devices or recalls issued by the US FDA and other peer bodies in Europe.



that 1,336 pilgrims will be leaving onboard six Kuwait Airways flights, 6,030 on 15 Saudia flights and 3,300 on Flynas flights starting from Aug 4, adding that extra flights will be scheduled if needed.

ACs power efficiency chart approved

Civil Aviation Director Yousef Al-Fauzan announced that the total number of pilgrims due to leave via Kuwait International Airport and Terminal 4 (T4) to Saudi Arabia for hajj is 10,666, flying on Kuwait Airways, Flynas and Saudia. Fauzan explained

Power efficiency

Director of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI) Abdul Kareem Taqi said PAI has approved a standard power efficiency chart for various air conditioners as directed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI). Taqi explained that PAI formed a special subcommittee subjected to the national committee for electricity and electronics to study and set the power efficiency chart, which includes air conditioners' minimum power efficiency needed to allow importing them to Kuwait, adding that manufacturers will accordingly be mandated to label their products using a number of stars that increase the more the product

saves power. Taqi said that both manufacturers and importers had been consulted before setting the chart's final version.

Retirees' hiring

Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi said the Civil Service Commission (CSC) has allowed hiring five retirees in each body. Responding to proposals made by Municipal Councilmember Hassan Kamal and former members Ali Al-Moussa and Abdullah Al-Kandari to hire retirees to protect marine environment and parks, Manfouhi said the CSC conditioned hiring the maximum of five per body as consultants, researchers or advisors.

KPC strategy

Well-informed sources said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) requested the finance ministry's consultation on its strategy till 2040, namely with regards to the role the oil sector is expected to play both locally and internationally, KPC's points of weakness and strength, the challenges that might affect the industry, cooperation with other state bodies and priorities.

Company releases statement on 'water tank collapse' video

KUWAIT: A local company released a statement yesterday commenting on a video circulating on social media and showing what appears to be a collapsed water tank that is under construction in

an area south of Kuwait. An official source at Al-Ghanem International Company is quoted in the statement saying that a malfunction in a temporary metal clamps used in constructing the upper part of tank number 8 by the manufacturing Austrian company, which is in charge of installing these clamps, was the main cause of the partial collapse of the clamp while being installed at the Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City. The source affirmed that the Ministry of Electricity and Water was free of responsibility over the incident. The ministry confirmed that the contract was signed with

La'ala Al-Kuwait Real Estate Company, the owner of Sabah Al-Ahmad Sea City, which was keen in signing the contract on adhering to the terms of security and safety on the site. Thanks to Allah and to the company, no injuries were sustained, the source confirmed. "We are responsible before the La'ala Company for completing the work on time," the source said, noting that the incident would not obstruct the project's progress. The Austrian company acknowledged the incident and said it would bear full responsibility for it.

local spotlight

A bedoon man's suicide

By Muna Al-Fuzai
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A young bedoon who committed suicide in Kuwait last week sparked a media uproar and controversy on social media. It is regrettable that this issue negatively affected Kuwait and key officials who are doing their job. Some tweets, calls and visits seemed like foreign intervention in an internal matter. For all these reasons, I feel a few things must be clarified.

The bedoon man committed suicide by hanging himself with a rope in his room. The suicide led some to launch negative comments and even accusations against Kuwait. I would like to clarify that suicide is forbidden by Islam and the law because it is a crime against oneself. Therefore, suicide should not be justified, because there might be other reasons that we don't know about that took this man down this road.

The interior ministry released a statement saying that investigations conducted by specialized security authorities showed that the deceased was a drug addict. The statement added that 12 cases of misdemeanors, drug-related crimes and forced robbery were recorded against him, pointing out that he was arrested on May 11, 2019 by the general security on charges of possessing narcotic substances and was transferred to state custody.

This incident also provoked several reactions, including criticism by Kuwaiti media figure Fajer Al-Saeed. She commented on Twitter over a video showing a US official offering condolences to the family of the young man. "Why is the political advisor of the embassy at the funeral of the bedoon? Is it the duty of the US Embassy counselor to attend the man's funeral and investigate the causes of his suicide?"

She was not the only one who made such comments. MP Ahmad Al-Fadhl also said there are attempts to exploit the suicide of the bedoon to blackmail Kuwait or harm it, adding interference by any state in an internal matter of Kuwait is rejected. Fadhl praised the ministry of interior's quick handling of the case by issuing the statement on the suicide.

I think it is unfortunate that the bedoons' issue does not seem to have a radical solution so far, leading it to become a complex and offensive issue for Kuwait. But we must not deny efforts by the central agency for illegal residents. Saleh Al-Fadhalah, head of the agency, is doing his job as per the law and regulations. In April, the agency said nearly 90 percent of all illegal residents (bedoons) received ID cards in 2018. So, there are still 10 percent who are not willing to correct their status by denying or hiding their original nationality, in the hope of obtaining Kuwaiti nationality. I do not know of any international system in the world that would grant someone an identification card or citizenship without knowledge of the person's origins or their true nationality.

There are a few matters that are sadly never mentioned in the news, like what was said by the ministry of justice, which announced the issuance of 1,742 legal documents for marriage, divorce and annulment contracts for illegal residents during 2018 in cooperation with the central agency. All services provided to illegal residents are based on continuous cooperation with the central agency to deal with the situation of bedoons.

I believe this suicide led to a serious and negative media orientation towards Kuwait, with calls to demonstrate against the state and threaten public safety, which should not be tolerated or accepted because this poses a security threat to the country and people. The ministry of interior is required to confront any attempts to threaten people and their lives and safety, and such an incident should not be a pretext for breaking the law.

Kuwait delivers more aid to Rohingya

KUWAIT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced yesterday distribution of 2,300 food parcels to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh in coordination with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society. Each portion, handed over to a five-member family, is sufficient for two weeks, said Anwar Al-Hasawi, the KRCS Deputy Chairman and head of the society field team in Bangladesh. He added that KRCS is continuing relief operations for the Rohingya either in coordination with local and international associations or directly by volunteers who have been doing their best to make sure that the aid supplies are delivered to those in need. The KRCS team has inspected refugees' conditions in the region of Cox's Bazar and a makeshift hospital built with contributions by the Kuwaiti, Bangladeshi and Qatari red crescents. He has underlined necessity of the mission to assess needs of the refugees in general, the children, elderly and those of special needs in particular. More than 700,000 Muslim Rohingya have fled persecution in Myanmar to neighboring Bangladesh since 2016. Kuwait has dispatched batches of aid to the refugees, bulk of whom live in squalid conditions.

In other news, Kuwaiti relief aid bodies operating in Yemen pledged to provide continuing assistance across the country worth a total \$2.3 million amid talks with other assistance-providing Gulf countries on Thursday. The attending bodies at the meeting, held at the Riyadh-based King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, were Kuwait's Foreign Ministry, KRCS and the Kuwait Relief Society. In the first half of 2019, some 309,000 Yemenis benefited from campaigns launched by KRCS, according to Abdulsalam Baaboud, member of the Yemeni Higher Relief Committee. These campaigns, worth a collective \$3.3 million, have targeted sectors, such as food, education and water, he said. —KUNA

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Local



KUWAIT: Sunrise at the Green Island. — Photo by Hassan Mahmoud (KUNA)

Gulf Bank wraps up first-ever career fair for people with disabilities in partnership with MGRP

Career fair attracts over 54 attendees, with Gulf Bank employing 10 applicants



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank and the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) concluded the first-ever career fair for people with disabilities in Kuwait. The career fair, which took place on Wednesday at the MGRP Building in Reqqai, was designed to pair those with disabilities with career opportunities while promoting an active interest and involvement in the banking sector.

Gulf Bank's General Manager of Human Resources, Salma Al-Hajjaj, said: "We were very pleased with the amount of applicants that attended the career fair, and are proud to have been a part of launching the first career fair of its kind in Kuwait. During the day of the career fair, we conducted a number of on-the-spot job interviews, with many applicants being accepted immediately."

As a result of the career fair, we are proud to wel-



Salma Al-Hajjaj

come 10 new colleagues, who will be joining Gulf Bank at various branches and departments across Kuwait. Above all, we appreciate the confidence that our applicants have placed in us, and always strive to maintain the level of excellence that applicants have come to expect of Gulf Bank. We are looking forward to celebrating their



10 new recruits join Gulf Bank

achievements, which will undoubtedly be a part of shaping the future of the banking sector in Kuwait." 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.



Kuwait continues humanitarian acts internationally

KUWAIT: Kuwait as usual, stood its grounds as a leading country in aiding humble nations around the world on various levels, political and humanitarian. Kuwait's humanitarian approach is engraved in Kuwaitis since birth, it is in their blood, generation after generation, and even the leadership of Kuwait show that in their political relations with other countries. It continued its method last week in providing several humanitarian acts in different countries.

On the political level, Kuwait on Monday expressed regret over several countries that decided to boycott the UN's Human Rights Council General Debate over Israeli violations in the occupied Arab lands. Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, said

that this boycott minimizes the importance of this case in the Council's agenda, and it can also be seen as support for Israel's hostile policy in violating International Law for Human Rights. Ghunaim noted that Israel is continuing to force Palestinians out of their homeland, pointing out that Kuwait condemns such actions, especially in attempting to deform the Palestinian Identity, religion and culture in forcing them out of Jerusalem. The Ambassador stressed Kuwait's keenness on respecting legal rights of the Palestinian people, as well as voicing Kuwait's concerns over recent provocative Israeli actions in Palestinian lands after an Israeli government official have broken into Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Furthermore, Kuwait Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs provided a donation worth KD 70,000 (\$230,000) for the expansion of Islamic projects in Montenegro. Kuwaiti Ambassador to Serbia and non-resident Ambassador to Montenegro Yousif Abdulsamad met with Montenegrin Islamic official and delivered the donation to build an Islamic education center in capital of Podgorica on Monday. Ambassador Abdulsamad also handed over to a Montenegrin official a donation from the

Kuwait-based Islamic Heritage Revival Society worth KD 36,700 (\$120,000) to build a mosque in a city north of Montenegro. Kuwait's humanitarian policy and framework is to support Arab and foreign countries in developmental projects related to culture, education and infrastructure. Afterwards, Montenegrin official praised Kuwait's contributions and its prominent role in charitable and humanitarian work to help Muslims in Montenegro.

On another level, The Yemeni government signed on Tuesday an agreement of cooperation with Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR) to fund a water and electricity project in Aden and Abyan governorates. This agreement comes in light of the 'Kuwait by your side' campaign that has been organized by KSR for several years. The Yemeni Minister of Water and Electricity Mohammad Al-Anani during the signing ceremony praised the continuous Kuwaiti support for Yemen through different times and circumstances. The agreement states on importing and installing an electrical power plant that exceeds 10 megawatt as a donation presented by KSR for the Yemeni government. And it also states on completing the third stage of the (Aden grand waters) in Abyan governorate, in

addition to improving electricity for the citizens near the project site.

Moreover, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) supported feeding one Billion starving people initiative by distributing 4 million meals with basic nutrition for needy people around the world. Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Anwar Al-Hasawi said that this initiative comes as part of the eighth conference of active partnership of under the slogan "One Humanity Against Hunger" held in Kuwait November 2018. "KRCS have made several relief campaigns over the years by providing bread loafs, food baskets and meals for the orphans and needy people worldwide," he added. "Our relief campaign have reached Jordan, Iraq, Philippines, Lebanon, Yemen, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Palestine, Uganda, Comoros, Benin, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Mozambique," he continued. Hasawi stressed on the Hunger case and the important role of the humanitarian organizations in that matter, indicating that KRCS would not tarry in proving more support and aid for needy people in the world. — KUNA

Ethiopia: 'Land of Origins', Africa's fastest growing economy

Envoy speaks on Ethiopia's ties with Kuwait, investment opportunities, tourism potential



KUWAIT: Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulfatah Abdullahi Hassan speaks to Kuwait Times. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: For the first time after seven months as head of mission, Ethiopia's envoy Abdulfatah Abdullahi Hassan sat down for an interview with Kuwait Times. The new Ethiopian ambassador to Kuwait presented his credentials to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Jan 22, 2019. The envoy said he is here to make the life of every Ethiopian in Kuwait more vibrant, and wants further cooperation and diplomatic and bilateral ties with Kuwait.

"I was appointed by the newly-installed government of Ethiopia to assist our compatriots and further strengthen our relationships in all aspects," he said. The envoy said Kuwait and Ethiopia share a lot of common interests in many areas including culture, trade and commerce, tourism and manpower, among others. According to Hassan, Ethiopia and Kuwait have a long history of cooperation since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1967.

"Our diplomatic relations with Kuwait are very strong. We share lots of issues of common interest. Ethiopia is strategically located in the African region, where multinational companies thrive. Geopolitical issues are important for both countries, and it is common knowledge to many that when it comes to international issues, we share the same stands with Kuwait, such as in the global affairs of the United Nations and Afro-Arab regional groupings," he said.

According to Hassan, bilateral relations are growing steadily and cordially. He also lauded the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait for the stable political and economic climate, not just in

Kuwait but also in other GCC countries. "We enjoyed the generosity of HH the Amir, especially when he financed several infrastructure projects in Addis Ababa including the airport terminal, which turned into reality through the Kuwait Fund," he said.

Fastest growing economy in Africa

Ethiopia enjoys being labeled as one of the fastest growing economies in Africa - second to Nigeria - attributing the growth to the new and wise leadership of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Sahle-Work Zewde. "We diversified our economy and it's doing well now, thanks to several economic initiatives initiated by our prime minister. We registered double-digit economic growth in the last decade or so and we are still growing. The World Bank has commended Ethiopia for creating a large number of jobs and opportunities for our people and for welcoming the largest foreign direct investment in the country, thanks to several reforms implemented by the new government, not to mention in the telecom sector. We have several industrial parks from which many of our compatriots have benefitted. We have several international brands that consider Ethiopia as their second home," Hassan said.

Kuwaiti investors to Ethiopia are also growing, from none in the 1970s to around 21 new licensed investors in the agricultural and manufacturing sec-

tors. "We want to attract more Kuwaiti investment to our market. Ethiopia is now very competitive; the good news is that our manpower can attract more and more employers than ever before, because they are now being trained and prepared for the job market," he added.

The volume of trade between two countries has been increasing as well, despite the fact that there is no trade protocol between the two countries. "Before the 1970s, the trade relationship with

Kuwait and the balance of trade was in favor of Ethiopia. Recently, however, the situation has changed - the balance of trade is now in favor of Kuwait. For example, bilateral trade in 2014 totaled \$945 million, with only \$2.86 million for Ethiopia against \$942 million for Kuwait. We import 100 percent of our oil and gas products from Kuwait. Ethiopia sends first-class coffee and livestock products to Kuwait. There is a huge disparity, and we hope to balance our trade in the coming years," Hassan said.

Negotiation ongoing on domestic helpers

Wooing Kuwaiti tourists

Ethiopia is also trying to attract Kuwaiti visitors with its new tourism slogan 'Land of Origins' and emphasizing the physical proximity of Ethiopia to Kuwait. Hassan said the country is rich in natural resources: the climate is cool with an average temperature of 22-25 degrees Celsius throughout the

year. "Geographically speaking, we are 3.5 hours away from Kuwait. Our country has been known even before the ancient and biblical eras. We have the best and most fantastic sceneries, plus several UNESCO natural and cultural world heritage sites. We are also known as the cradle of humanity, as we are considered the very first ancient civilization in the world," he said.

"We are a country that embraces all cultures and religions, and we are also proud that we were never colonized by anyone. We refused being colonized - in fact we have a victory celebration every 6th of April to commemorate the bravery of our ancestors when the Italians tried to invade and failed," Hassan said. He said Kuwaitis can visit Ethiopia with visa on arrival. Addis Ababa also has regular flights to and from Kuwait daily.

Kuwait Times asked if the Kuwaiti market is open for Ethiopian domestic helpers. "Not yet - we are waiting and renegotiating with Kuwaiti authorities. In the near future, perhaps. We also need to train and update our people and hope we can come up with a bilateral agreement similar to that signed by the Philippines and Kuwait. But I want to stress our workforce can provide the best manpower ever - we are training our people so that when they are deployed, they are ready and more competitive. We want Kuwait to know that Ethiopia is also open to sending skilled and semi-skilled workers and not just those in the domestic labor sector," Hassan said.

Ethiopians in Kuwait number around 30-35,000 - around 90 percent of them engaged in domestic work. Some are engineers, while the rest are in the hospitality business.

Burgan Bank honors KFSD for dedication to employee safety

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank recently hosted the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) at its headquarters to honor their continued commitment to workplace safety and civic responsibilities. The ceremony appreciated KFSD's community efforts at conducting regular preventive and precautionary in-house drills for the Bank's employees. The ceremony was held at the Burgan Bank headquarter, in the presence of the Bank's senior management, in recognition of the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate's contribution and the success of the surprise emergency evacuation drill.

The ceremony was attended by the Director of Capital Governorate Fire Department, Colonel Ahmad Hayef Al-Rashidi, the Head of Al-Hilali Fire Station, Colonel Fahad Al-Ajmi, and the Head of Al-Madina Fire Station, Colonel Bashar Al-Nafe. Raed Al-Haqhaq, Chief Executive Officer of

Burgan Bank Kuwait said: "We extend our gratitude to the hardworking KFSD members for their world-class standards of emergency protocols in ensuring employee safety. Burgan Bank will continue its partnership with KFSD to accommodate the Bank's staff with up-to-date training procedures and real-life learning programs to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of our employees."

The Head of Al Hilali Fire Station, Colonel Fahad Al-Ajmi said: "We would like to thank the management of Burgan Bank for their support during the evacuation process and for following the highest standards of safety to ensure the utmost security of its employees. The Bank's staff successfully assessed the situation and evacuated its building personnel in a timely manner. We are committed to working continuously with the Bank's management and departments to ensure everyone's wellbeing."

Burgan Bank has always maintained the highest health and safety standards through yearly emergency drills and application of sustainable security measures as employee safety is a high priority. The exercises strengthen employee readiness to secure efficient response time and proper evacuation techniques in the case of a natural disaster or fire outbreak.





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Hong Kong protesters target Chinese traders

British counter-terrorism police hunting leaker

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KISMAYO: A man passes in front of the rubbles of the popular Medina hotel of Kismayo a day after at least 26 people, including several foreigners, were killed and 56 injured in a suicide bomb and gun attack claimed by Al-Shabaab militants. —AFP

26 killed in deadly Somalia hotel siege

Attack lasted 11 hours; Local elders, MPs were meeting in the hotel

MOGADISHU: Islamist gunmen killed 26 people, including Kenyans, Americans, a Briton and Tanzanians, when they stormed a hotel in Somalia's southern port city of Kismayo, a regional state president said yesterday, the deadliest day in the city since insurgents were driven out in 2012. A car bomb exploded at the hotel where local elders and lawmakers were having a meeting on Friday night, and then three gunmen stormed in, police said. It took 11 hours before security forces ended the overnight attack, police officer Major Mohamed Abdi told Reuters.

The dead included a presidential candidate for August's regional elections, Jubbaland state president Ahmed Mohamed Madobe said in a statement. At least two journalists and a UN agency staff member were also reported to have been killed. Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist group al Shabaab, which is trying to topple Somalia's weak UN-backed government, immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Abdiyas Abu Musab, the group's military operation spokesman said yesterday they had killed 30 people and four of its

fighters were also dead. Al Shabaab and government officials tend to give differing casualty numbers for attacks. Regional president Madobe said that three Kenyans, one Briton, two Americans and three Tanzanians were among those killed. "Among the dead was also a Jubbaland presidential candidate named Shuuriye. Four militants attacked the hotel. One of them was the suicide car bomber, two were shot dead and one was captured alive by Jubbaland security forces," he said.

He said 56 people were wounded in the attack, including two Chinese citizens. Police had said earlier all the attackers had been killed. Kismayo resident Osman Nur told Reuters that the explosion had destroyed huge parts of the hotel and nearby businesses and security forces were deployed all over the city. Another anguished resident said she had lost relatives in the attack.

"I have been looking for the whereabouts of my nephew who worked at the hotel. I got his dead body this morning and have just buried him," Halima Nur, a mother of four, told Reuters by phone. "And this afternoon I will attend the burial of other relatives."

Jubbaland's minister of planning, Just Aw Hersi, confirmed the deaths of several prominent Somalis on Twitter. He said some of the foreigners also held dual Somali citizenship. "We admit, we are heartbroken by their sudden violent deaths. But rest assured, we are also as mad as hell because of it," he tweeted.

Naming the dead

The Somalia office of the UN's International Organization for Migration said one of its local staff members, Abdifatah Mohamed, was among those killed while SADO Somalia, a local non-governmental organisation, said its executive director Abdullahi Isse Abdulle had died in the attack. Two journalists were among the dead: Somali-Canadian Hodan Naleyah, the founder of Integration TV, and Mohamed Sahal Omar, a reporter for SBC TV in Kismayo.

Jubbaland president Madobe said Jama Fariid, Naleyah's husband, had also been killed. "Through her work as a journalist, Hodan highlighted the community's positive stories and contributions in Canada. She

became a voice for many. We mourn her loss deeply, and all others killed in the #KismayoAttack," Ahmed Hussen, Canada's Immigration minister, said on Twitter.

Al Shabaab was forced out of Mogadishu in 2011 and has since lost most of its other strongholds. It was driven out of Kismayo in 2012 by Kenyan forces supporting a regional militia headed by Madobe. The city's port had been a major source of revenue for the group from taxes, charcoal exports and levies on arms and other illegal imports. Kismayo is the commercial capital of Jubbaland, a region of southern Somalia still partly controlled by al Shabaab.

The group remains a major security threat, with fighters frequently carrying out bombings in Somalia and neighboring Kenya, whose troops form part of the African Union-mandated peacekeeping force that helps defend the Somali government. Somalia is scheduled to have parliamentary elections this month and presidential elections next month. But relations between the central government and its federal states have sometimes been rocky amid arguments over power and resources. —Reuters

Eternally stinky city? Rome garbage crisis sparks health fears

ROME: Landfills in flames and rats feasting on waste in the streets have sparked health fears in Rome, as doctors warn families to steer clear of disease-ridden curbside garbage and locals launch a disgusting dumpster contest online. Crowds of summer tourists are forced to navigate overflowing bins in the stifling heat, as the pungent perfume of neglected garbage draws scavenging animals and the threat of disease to the Eternal City and locals fume over the city's refuse management.

Rome's chief physician Antonio Magi has issued a "hygiene alert", telling AFP this could be upgraded to a health warning, with disease spread through the faeces of insects and animals banqueting on rotting waste. His warning prompted local prosecutors to open an investigation this week into the city's refuse collection. In the meantime, furious Rome residents have launched a contest on Twitter to find the most fetid dustbins.

Discarded pizza boxes or the remains of spaghetti lunches and fruit rinds draw opportunistic seagulls, rats and even wild boars to the streets of Rome, with wolves also spotted closer to the city's outskirts than ever before. Adding to the indignation of Rome residents is the steep price they are paying for their garbage to rot in the streets. The city spent more than 597 euros (\$670) per inhabitant on household waste treatment in 2017 - by far the highest in the country, ahead of Venice (353 euros) and Florence (266 euros), according to a report by the Openpolis Foundation. But the city lacks infrastructure: of its three main landfills, one has closed and the others were ravaged by fire in recent months. And two biological treatment sites have reduced their activities for maintenance work.

'Degradation and abandonment'

Some residents make matters worse by simply dumping their old mattresses, fridges and sofas next to garbage bins. But local Salvatore Orlando, 50, told AFP the council was entirely to blame. "Of course it's the mayor's fault. You certainly can't blame the citizens," he said. "They produce waste, they have to throw it away, and the public services have to collect it. It's simple. We pay taxes for it". Rome's mayor and the pres-



ROME: A resident walks past overflowing trash bins in the Centocelle district of Rome, as the Italian capital struggles with a renewed garbage emergency aggravated by the summer heat. —AFP

ident of the Lazio region both assured Italy's environment minister Tuesday that the crisis would be resolved "within 15 days". But to do so, more of the city's 5,000 tons of daily waste will have to be sent for incineration elsewhere.

"Everyone complains about waste but no one wants an incinerator. Instead, we take the waste abroad, to Austria, to Germany!", another aggrieved resident said, declining to give his name. Even Pope Francis has commented on the decline, lamenting in June Rome's "degradation and abandonment". Italy's Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, head of the far-right League, has jumped on the chance to use the crisis as a political weapon against mayor Virginia Raggi, who hails from the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S).

The stench and sticky pavements have given him ammunition ahead of the next municipal elections, scheduled for 2021. But in a city where key sectors are riddled with inefficiency and corruption, residents will wonder whether Salvini has a magic recipe for resolving a situation that has stumped parties over the years across the political spectrum. In the meantime, rubbish is just one more daily challenge in a city with countless potholes, trees that topple at the first gust of wind and buses that catch fire if their engines start at all. —AFP

US Labor Secretary resigns over Epstein affair

WASHINGTON: US Labor Secretary Alex Acosta resigned Friday, amid a backlash over a secret plea deal he negotiated a decade ago with Jeffrey Epstein, the financier accused of sexually abusing young girls. Acosta, 50, a former federal prosecutor, had been facing mounting calls to quit over the deal that saw Epstein serve just 13 months in a county jail. "I called the president this morning and told him that I thought the right thing was to step aside," Acosta said in a joint appearance with President Donald Trump at the White House.

Epstein, 66, was charged on Monday by prosecutors in New York with one count of sex trafficking of minors and one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking of minors. He faces up to 45 years in prison if convicted. Trump, who had defended Acosta after Epstein's arrest, described him as a "tremendous talent" and "great secretary of labor" who had done a "very good job." The president said Patrick Pizzella, Acosta's deputy, "will do the job. Highly recommended by Alex. Going to be acting. He's already been told."

According to prosecutors, Epstein sexually exploited dozens of underage teen girls at his homes in Manhattan and Palm Beach, Florida, between 2002 and 2005. Some were as young as 14. Acosta fielded a barrage of questions Wednesday from reporters about his office's handling of the Epstein case when he was a federal

prosecutor in Florida. The deal reached with Epstein required him to admit a single state charge of soliciting prostitution from a minor and register as a sex offender.

'Roll of the dice'

Acosta said prosecutors agreed to the deal rather than take Epstein to trial on more serious charges because that would have been a "roll of the dice." "The goal here was straightforward," he said. "Put Epstein behind bars, ensure he registered as a sexual offender, provide victims with the means to seek restitution, and protect the public by putting them on notice that a sexual predator was in their midst." Acosta welcomed the revived charges against Epstein but demurred when asked whether he should apologize to the victims in the Florida case.

Another alleged victim of Epstein went public Wednesday with her claim that he raped her when she was 15 years old. Jennifer Araoz, 32, told NBC News that she was recruited by a woman outside her New York City high school in 2001 to meet Epstein at his Manhattan townhouse. She said that in the fall of 2002, Epstein raped her. "He raped me, forcefully raped me," Araoz said, adding that she did not return to his home after that day.

She said she was afraid at the time of going to the authorities. Top Democrats in Congress, including House speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer, have called this week for Acosta's resignation. "Acosta was never fit to serve in the Cabinet - his departure is the right thing for our country," tweeted Virginia Senator Tim Kaine, Hillary Clinton's running mate when she lost the 2016 election to Trump. "Now it's time to focus on finally securing justice for survivors of Epstein's abuse and getting a Labor Secretary who will stand up for workers and trafficking victims." —AFP

International

Hezbollah: Iran is able to bomb Israel with ferocity and force

‘When Americans understand war could wipe out Israel, they will reconsider’

BEIRUT: The head of Lebanon's Tehran-backed Hezbollah said Friday that US ally Israel would not be "neutral" if a war broke out between the United States and Iran. And "Iran is able to bombard Israel with ferocity and force," Hassan Nasrallah said in an interview broadcast on Hezbollah's Al-Manar television. His remarks came after weeks of increasing tensions between the United States and Iran, and as US President Donald Trump steps up his war of words with the Islamic Republic.

"When the Americans understand that this war could wipe out Israel, they will reconsider," Nasrallah said. "Our collective responsibility in the region is to work towards preventing an American war on Iran," he said. He said neither Saudi Arabia nor the United Arab Emirates had any interest in a conflict erupting. On Friday, the US House of Representatives voted to restrict Trump's ability to attack Iran, voicing fear that his hawkish policies are pushing toward a needless war.

Hezbollah is considered to be a terrorist organization by the United States, and is the only faction not to have disarmed after the Lebanese 1975-1990 civil war. But it is also a major political player in the small Mediterranean country, taking 13 seats in parliament last year and securing three posts in the current cabinet.

Nasrallah also said he had decreased the number

of his movement's fighters supporting the Damascus regime in neighboring war-torn Syria. "The Syrian army has greatly recovered and has found that today it does not need us," he said. "We are present in every area that we used to be. We are still there, but we don't need to be there in large numbers as long as there is no practical need," he said. The head of the Iran-backed Shiite movement, which has been fighting in Syria since 2013, did not give details on the extent of the reduction.

Backed by Russia and Iran, the Damascus government has taken back large swathes of territory from rebels and jihadists since 2015, and now controls around 60 percent of the country. Nasrallah spoke after Washington announced fresh sanctions Tuesday against Hezbollah, targeting elected officials from the movement for the first time. Nasrallah said none of his fighters were currently

involved in fighting in Syria's northwestern region of Idlib, where regime and Russian forces have increased deadly bombardments on a jihadist-run bastion since late April. But "if there was a need to return, all those who were there would go back" to Syria, he added.

Tel Aviv 'within range'

Responding to a question about repeated Israeli air strikes on Syria, he said the Israeli Prime Minister



An image grab taken from Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV shows Hassan Nasrallah, the head of Lebanon's militant Shiite movement Hezbollah, giving an interview in Lebanon. —AFP

Benjamin Netanyahu was "deceiving his people." "He is playing a game of brinkmanship, because Iran will not leave Syria," he warned. Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes in neighboring Syria against what it says are Iranian and Hezbollah military targets. It has vowed to keep Iran from entrenching itself militarily there.

Nasrallah's interview came to mark the start of his movement's 2006 war with Israel, which killed more than

1,200 Lebanese, mostly civilians, and more than 160 Israelis, mostly soldiers. Both countries are still technically at war, and a UN peacekeeping force has said three tunnels have been found to have dug under the border from Lebanon into Israel since late last year. The group's leader warned that key Israeli installations along the Mediterranean coast including Tel Aviv were "within range of our rockets." —AFP



Hezbollah cut down its forces in Syria

Iraqi Ex-PM Abadi hints at comeback

BAGHDAD: Iraqi ex-prime minister Haider Al-Abadi is eyeing a sequel to his turbulent single term, he hinted to AFP, warning a failure to tackle sectarianism and corruption risks seeing his country "fall apart". As the government of incumbent Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi faces growing criticism over poor services, Abadi has been working in the wings to secure a second term, according to multiple sources. "We have good intentions," he said coyly, when asked about his ambitions in a wide-ranging AFP interview at his home in Baghdad's "Green Zone".

The 67-year-old, who came to office in 2014 without an election as Iraq reeled from the Islamic State group grabbing a third of the country, has sent out feelers to major political blocs who may help him win allies in parliament, a government source said. "He may take advantage of a wave of summertime protests if they happen," said the source. Soaring summer temperatures - paired with crippling electricity shortages, which restrict refrigeration and air conditioning - often provoke significant unrest in Iraq.

Abadi has even reached out to Iraq's powerful Shiite clerics, who can make or break a politician's career, said intermediaries close to the religious establishment. The rumors of his return have gained so much traction that Abdel Mahdi has repeatedly had to deny allegations he was preparing to resign.

Abadi oversaw both the fight against the Islamic State group and a tough response by Baghdad to an independence referendum by the country's Kurds, but his bloc fared poorly in national elections last year.

Abadi painted himself as an opposition figure who could help "guide" the current government. The chief priority should be tackling corruption, he said, in a country ranked by Transparency International as the world's 12th most corrupt. "There is a new kind of state corruption now - selling positions, which happened secretly in the past but now goes on in the open," Abadi told AFP. "Everything has a price." Graft is endemic across Iraq, where parliament estimates that \$228 billion has vanished into the pockets of shady politicians and businessmen over the last 15 years. Abadi himself was accused of failing to curb corruption during his term.

The ex-premier said the government should also tackle the spectre of sectarian violence, which ravaged Iraq's diverse communities over a decade ago. "In the past, sectarianism was used as a weapon in the conflict between factions to divide up the spoils of war," he said.

"If Daesh (IS) or another terrorist group returns, or if a cocktail of terrorists and politicians is formed, it'll be so dangerous that everything will completely fall apart," Abadi himself declared IS defeated in December 2017 after a draining three-year military campaign, a moment that will likely define his legacy. Several months earlier, he had ordered federal troops to retake disputed territories and adjacent oil fields from Kurdish forces after an independence referendum in the autonomous region that saw an overwhelming vote in favor of secession.

identity had dealt a "big blow" to the defense. Calantropo said he had applied for asylum on behalf of Behre as they feared he could be deported upon release. Behre had been accused of running a vast trafficking network, with branches in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Europe.

'Made a mistake'

Italy, Sudan and Britain at the time hailed his capture as the stellar result of a joint operation which had dealt a significant blow to the people smuggling business. Despite differences in appearance between the two men, and DNA evidence supporting Berhe's case, Italian prosecutors stuck to their guns throughout and had called for a 14-year jail sentence. On Friday, they said they would wait for the court's reasoning to be published before deciding whether to appeal.

Mered ended up on an international wanted list after being identified as the man who organized the packing of migrants onto a boat that sank off Italy in October 2013, killing at least 360 people in one of the worst such disasters in the Mediterranean. The "cynical and unscrupulous" Mered had been "continuously and constantly reaping vast profits while showing a contempt for human life," according to a joint statement by Sudan, Italy and Britain announcing his arrest in May 2016.

But the images broadcast by Italian police of a thin young man with frizzy hair, looking frail as he walked off the plane in handcuffs, sparked confusion and disbelief within the Eritrean diaspora around the world. Those who had had dealings with Mered said it was not him. Berhe's family



BAGHDAD: Iraq's former prime minister Haider Al-Abadi speaks during an interview with AFP on July 3, 2019. —AFP

'Where are the revenues?'

Abadi remains largely disliked by the autonomous Kurdish regional government (KRG), led by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which he indirectly criticized. "I have no problems with Kurdish citizens," he said. "But there is a problem with some of the parties which control the region, its wealth and its oil," Abadi said.

He accused the KRG of exporting nearly double the agreed amount from their northern pipeline without federal authorization, asking: "Where are the revenues?" Abadi's poor ratings in the north notwithstanding, he is one of the rare figures in Iraq widely respected by both the country's Shiite majority - from which he hails - and its Sunni minority. And in the

regional tug-of-war between the US and Iran, both allies of Iraq, Abadi has been seen as closer to Washington's camp.

Tensions between the two countries have skyrocketed since the US reimposed tough sanctions on Iran last year, which Abadi had pledged to implement as prime minister. That stance cost him his premiership, observers say, and parliament voted in Abdel Mahdi to replace him. This month, Abdel Mahdi ordered the Hashed Al-Shaabi, a collection of mostly-Shiite, pro-Iran paramilitary units, to integrate into the state's security forces by July 31. Abadi, who issued a similar decision in 2017, told AFP the decision was too little, too late. "I believe we lost a year and a half," he said. —AFP



PALERMO: A man believed to be Eritrean Medhanie Yehdego Mered, the head of one of the largest migrant trafficking networks, but claims his identity has been mistaken and to be Medhanie Tesfamariam Behre, is pictured at the end of a session of his trial. —AFP

recognized him instantly.

According to American, Italian and Swedish investigative journalists, Mered spent part of 2016 in prison in Dubai for using a false passport and now lives in Uganda. DNA evidence also suggested the wrong man was behind bars: tests on Behre's mother showed the defendant was her son.

Further tests, on Mered's three-year-old son, who lives in Sweden, showed the defendant was not his father. A New Yorker investigative reporter was told by "the General" himself in 2017 that the Italians had the wrong man. "They should just have said 'we made a mistake'," lawyer Michele

Calantropo told AFP on Thursday head of the verdict. Calantropo insisted that the man behind bars has only one thing in common with the trafficker: his first name, Medhanie.

"This is one of the biggest injustices on the face of the earth," he said. Medhanie was the name flagged by Britain's National Crime Agency in 2016 when it heard someone going by that name calling the tapped phone of a suspected smuggler in Libya. The man who made the calls was tracked down and arrested in Khartoum.

But while prosecutors said the calls were made to organize migrant trips, Calantropo said his client was just looking out for loved ones heading to Europe. —AFP

Mistaken identity: Eritrean cleared in a trafficking case

PALERMO: An Italian court ruled Friday that an Eritrean accused of being a human trafficking kingpin known as "the General" was telling the truth when he claimed it was a case of mistaken identity. Carpenter Medhanie Tesfamariam Berhe was arrested in Sudan in 2016 on suspicion of being at the heart of one of the world's largest migrant trafficking networks, but after a 21-month trial the court ruled that police had the wrong man.

Behre was accused of being Medhanie Yehdego Mered, known as "the General", and was extradited to Italy. But the Palermo court accepted his argument that this was a case of mistaken identity. It did however give him a five-year prison sentence for aiding illegal immigration.

The judge ordered he be immediately set free, having spent more than three years behind bars already. Behre's friends hugged and cheered in the court gallery as the sentence was read out inside a massive bunker, built in the 1980s for a trial against the mafia. His sister, who was wearing a T-shirt calling for his liberation, wept with joy. Behre quietly thanked and shook hands with his interpreter. He was then taken by police van to prison to collect his belongings.

"I believe they have found a solution," his lawyer, Michele Calantropo, told reporters, adding that the recognition of mistaken

Istanbul's new mayor faces stiff road ahead

ISTANBUL: Turkey's main opposition scored a major blow against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan last month when it won control of Istanbul, but now faces a wounded government reluctant to relinquish power. With Erdogan expected to stay in office until at least 2023, the new mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem Imamoğlu of the secular Republican People's Party (CHP), knows he must find a way to work with the president. But the signs are mixed.

After Erdogan's ruling AKP party lost Turkey's largest city in a rerun vote on June 23, the president congratulated Imamoğlu and described the vote as the "will of the people". But just days later his government moved to strip Imamoğlu of key mayoral powers of patronage. The show of strength raises strategic questions for Imamoğlu, who has vowed to work "in harmony" with Erdogan but is also talked about as a future presidential challenger.

Having called for a meeting with Erdogan to address the urgent problems of the 15-million-strong metropolis, the new mayor has so far remained fairly vague about his plans. He has promised to crack down on alleged lavish spending at the municipality and bring in international-standard auditors to assure transparency, warning that the city faces bankruptcy if urgent action is not taken.

Imamoğlu also said he would create green belts in Istanbul, and return trees and grass to Taksim square in the heart of the city - echoing the demands of protesters who triggered a mass anti-government movement over the redevelopment of neighboring Gezi park in 2013. Urban planners remain sceptical about his promises. "Istanbul's green space problem is not only about hostility to nature - it's also a question of the economy," said Sedat Durel, environment engineer at the Chamber of Environmental Engineers.

Durel said nothing will change without a fundamental change in the current governing mentality, which favours mass commercial development over natural spaces. Imamoğlu, who started out in his family's lucrative real estate and restaurant business in western Istanbul, does not appear to have an obvious background to shift that mindset. "Although there is hope it will not continue this way, we have yet to hear anything concrete," said Durel.

'Political maneuvering'

After failing to mount serious challenges in elections for decades, Turkey's main opposition has been revitalized by Imamoğlu's win. Aside from the sky-high expectations, his biggest challenge may be overcoming a municipal council dominated by AKP members and its right-wing ally, the MHP, which together control 25 of 39 city districts. Ege Seckin, an analyst at IHS Markit, said Imamoğlu's new job would be an "uphill struggle".

"The government will go to great lengths to impede his work, seeking to validate their longstanding claim that the AKP is the only game in town when it comes to delivering basic services, and that all alternatives, including the CHP, are incompetent," Seckin said. The first sign of trouble came immediately after the June 23 election, when Erdogan's government issued a circular shifting the power to assign managers of municipal companies from the mayor to the council.

"We were informed of a change in legislation," Imamoğlu told reporters this month, warning against "political manoeuvring" to limit his power. The first municipal council meeting chaired by Imamoğlu on July 8 - which was aired live, as part of his efforts at greater transparency - nonetheless saw positive messages from the AKP rank and file. One AKP councillor, Tefvik Goksu, assured that the party would avoid "negative" attitudes and support any project that serves Istanbul. —AFP

International

British police warning to media over leaked memos stirs anger

UK counter-terrorism police hunting leaker

LONDON: Senior British politicians, including one of the contenders to be the next prime minister, joined journalists yesterday in criticizing police for warning media not to publish leaked government documents, saying it was a "dangerous road to tread". Last week, a Sunday newspaper published leaked memos from Britain's Washington ambassador that provoked a serious diplomatic spat with US President Donald Trump and ultimately led to the envoy announcing his resignation.

Britain's most senior counter-terrorism officer, Neil Basu, said on Friday police would investigate who was responsible but also warned journalists and publishers they too could be in breach of the law if further documents were leaked. "I would advise all owners, editors and publishers of social and mainstream media not to publish leaked government documents that may already be in their possession, or which may be offered to them, and to turn them over to the police or give them back to their rightful owner, Her Majesty's Government," Basu said. His comments provoked anger and criticism from journalists, editors and politicians who said it risked infringing the freedom of the press.

"The state threatening media freedom is a dangerous road to tread," Health Minister Matt Hancock said on Twitter. George Osborne, editor of the London Evening Standard and a former finance minister, described the remarks as a "very stupid and ill-advised statement from a junior officer who doesn't appear to understand much about press freedom". His view was echoed by both men battling to replace Theresa May as prime minister when she steps down on July 24 because she failed to deliver Britain's exit from the European Union.

'That is their job'

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt and his predecessor Boris Johnson said the leaker should be found but the press should not be targeted. "It cannot be conceivably right that newspapers or any other media organization publishing such material should face prosecution," Johnson, also a former mayor of London, told an event in central England.

Hunt wrote on Twitter: "I defend to the hilt the right of the press to publish those leaks if they receive them & judge them to be in the public interest: that is their job." The Mail on

Sunday newspaper last week published cables from Kim Darroch, Britain's ambassador to the United States, in which he called the Trump administration "inept", prompting the president to label him "very stupid" and "wacky".

The spat has become one of the central issues of the contest for the leadership of the governing Conservative Party and the next prime minister that will be decided by about 160,000 members of the Conservative Party. A diplomatic source told Reuters that the lack of backing from the frontrunner, Boris Johnson, had been a factor in Darroch's decision to resign. Johnson himself acknowledged his comments had been partly responsible but denied he was to blame.

Not all politicians, though, felt the police were wrong. Security minister Ben Wallace said members of the public were bound by parts of the Official Secrets Act. "If (journalists) are receiving stolen material they should give it back to their rightful owner and they should also be aware of the huge damage that's already been done and the potentially even greater damage that could be done," former defence minister Michael Fallon told BBC radio. — Reuters



WASHINGTON: The British Embassy is seen in Washington, DC, following the resignation of British Ambassador to the US Kim Darroch, after US President Donald Trump said he would no longer deal with him after he called Trump 'inept.' — AFP

French minister mired in lobster dinners scandal

PARIS: A senior French cabinet minister has defiantly vowed to stay in his job despite fresh claims he used the public purse to fund an extravagant lifestyle including lobster feasts. Environment Minister Francois de Rugy has endured a torrid week after the Mediapart investigative website said he hosted lavish dinners — allegedly for friends — while serving as parliament speaker. Piling on the pressure, Mediapart published a new report saying that Rugy rented a council flat with subsidized rent in western France, even though his salary was "far higher" than the maximum allowed for such aid.

But Rugy, who also holds the portfolio of minister of state which makes him the government number two after Prime Minister Edouard Philippe — insisted he was not shifting, even if he had considered that option. "Of course, you feel like giving up" when "you're attacked morning, noon and night," he said, close to tears in an interview on French TV channel BFM. But he added: "I won't do that because I'm very angry when I read an article which claims I live in a council house."

"I have absolutely no reason to resign. That is what I have told the prime minister who has absolutely not called on me to do so," insisted Rugy, who had a two-hour meeting Thursday with Philippe. The revelations come as the centrist government of President Emmanuel Macron looks to recover from six months of anti-government protests sparked by economic inequality and claims that French leaders are out of touch with ordinary people.

'Shellfish allergy'

Mediapart said that the dinners hosted by Rugy included luxuries like lobster, champagne and vintage wines from parliament's cellar. Most damagingly, it alleged that the dinners had little connection to his function and were essentially social gatherings hosted by his wife, a journalist with the people magazine Gala, and funded by the taxpayer. On a visit Thursday to the central town of Deux-Sevres, the minister was met by a giant inflatable lobster and protesters brandishing slogans like "were the lobsters organic?"

Rugy has not denied the existence of the dinners. Mediapart listed a dozen between October 2017 and June 2018 — but insisted they were linked to his work, defending the gatherings as "informal working dinners". He told BFM he has "never paid more than 30 euros for a bottle of wine", doesn't eat lobster because of a "shellfish allergy", and avoids champagne, which "gives him a headache". In another blow, French daily Le Parisien reported Friday that Rugy's wife used public money to buy herself a golden hairdryer worth 499 euros (\$561). He said the claim was a "lie". Rugy suggested someone had an axe to grind against his wife, slating Mediapart for indulging a "fantasy of lopping off heads" in seeking to portray her as a kind of "Marie-Antoinette." Whoever that person was, he said, was looking to "settle scores".

Rugy said he was the victim of "a machine launched to attack me" but pledged to "pay back every euro disputed". He also did not deny renting the apartment near Nantes in western France, but insisted his landlord and letting agency never told him it was social housing. "Never in my life have I applied for a council flat," he said. Philippe's office said Thursday it had asked for an enquiry into a separate Mediapart report into 63,000 euros (71,000 dollars) worth of renovations in Rugy's townhouse in Paris' chic seventh district. — AFP



NIORT: French Environment Minister Francois de Rugy visits a farm operation as part of his trip to Niort on the theme of water management. — AFP

\$5 billion US fine set for Facebook on privacy probe

WASHINGTON: US regulators have approved a \$5 billion penalty to be levied on Facebook to settle a probe into the social network's privacy and data protection lapses, the Wall Street Journal reported Friday. The newspaper said the Federal Trade Commission approved the settlement in a 3-2 vote, with the two Democratic members of the consumer protection agency dissenting.

According to the report, the deal, which would be the largest penalty ever imposed by the FTC for privacy violations, still needs approval from the Justice Department before it is finalized. Although details have not yet been released, the deal will likely include restrictions on how Facebook is able to use personal data. Charlotte Slaiman of the consumer group Public Knowledge thinks it is unlikely the restrictions will be overly harsh.

"We don't yet know key aspects of the settlement: whether Facebook must make any changes to its business model or practices as a result," said Charlotte Slaiman, the

group's Competition Policy Counsel. "By itself, this fine will not be sufficient to change Facebook's behavior." The outlook was more optimistic at the Center for Democracy and Technology, whose president Nuala O'Connor said the fine underscored the importance of "data stewardship" in the digital age. "The FTC has put all companies on notice that they must safeguard personal information," O'Connor said. Facebook did not immediately respond to an AFP query on the agreement.

Unlikely to hurt

The FTC announced last year it reopened its investigation into a 2011 privacy settlement with Facebook after revelations that personal data on tens of millions of users was hijacked by the political consultancy Cambridge Analytica, which was working on the Donald Trump campaign in 2016. Facebook has also faced questions about whether it improperly shared user data with business partners in violation of the earlier settlement.

The leading social network with more than two billion users worldwide has also been facing inquiries on privacy from authorities in US states and regulators around the world. The settlement would be in line with Facebook's estimate earlier this year when it said it expected to pay \$3 billion to \$5 billion for legal settlements on "user data practices." The fine is unlikely to hurt Facebook, which logged a profit of \$2.4 billion on revenue that climbed 26

percent to \$15.1 billion in the first three months of this year. Facebook's stock value increased 1.8 percent after the fine was announced, closing at nearly \$205, the highest it has been all year.

Break up Facebook

Some Facebook critics have argued the company should face tougher sanctions including monitoring of its data practices, or that chief executive Mark Zuckerberg should be personally liable for penalties. Faced with criticism, Facebook's head of global affairs, Nick Clegg, called on governments to do more to regulate social networks, instead of leaving the work to companies. "It's not for private companies, however big or small, to come up with those rules. It is for democratic politicians in the democratic world to do so," Clegg said in a June 24 interview with the BBC.

But there are increasing calls to dismantle the massive social network. In May, one of Facebook's co-founders called for the social media behemoth to be broken up, warning that Zuckerberg had become far too powerful. "It's time to break up Facebook," said Chris Hughes in an editorial for The New York Times, saying it had become necessary to separate the social network from Facebook's Instagram and WhatsApp services. Zuckerberg's "focus on growth led him to sacrifice security and civility for clicks," said Hughes. — AFP



PORT-AU-PRINCE: A woman carries clean water in a bucket in her neighborhood of Port-au-Prince. — AFP

Raped and widowed: Haiti's slum women abandoned to gangs

PORT-AU-PRINCE: As the first bursts of gunfire rang out, the women from La Saline slum grabbed their kids and fled for cover. Shootings are common here, but this time, there was no outrunning the full-on battle between five rival gangs in the heart of the Haitian capital. The turf war that broke out last November lasted 14 hours and ended with more than two dozen people dead, women and girls gang-raped and scores of dwellings razed to the ground.

There is not much left of Lovely Saint-Pierre's home, aside from some slabs of concrete and two sheets of rusty metal which provide scant protection from the blazing sun as she recounts the nightmare that began eight months ago. "When the shooting started, my husband stayed behind," the 32-year-old said matter of factly. "We just have walls made of sheet metal. The bullet went straight through and killed him." Around 5,000 people live in La Saline, which has long been plagued by turf wars between gangs battling for control of one of the largest marketplaces in Port-au-Prince.

A United Nations report on the November violence said at least 26 people were killed and 12 reported missing. Haitian human rights groups put the death toll at 71. The horror of the slum's denizens was magnified when the gangs decided to follow up on the gun battle by setting fire to their meager dwellings. "They occupied our neighborhood for three days. I don't know why and I have no idea why they decided to burn everything," said Valioa Jean-Charles, 42.

"We called the fire department but when they showed up the gangs opened fire on them, so all our houses burned down," she said. Her husband dead, her

tiny shop a smoking ruin. Lovely Saint-Pierre found herself destitute. "I left my three older kids with my sister. I can't live with her myself, she has a husband and I am older than her," she said, trying to explain her plight. Instead, she has spent the past eight months sleeping in a nearby market.

No help for rape victims

Among the survivors of the massacre are 11 girls and women who were gang-raped, some in front of their own young children, human rights groups said. They have received no medical support or psychological counseling. La Saline and other slum districts in the heart of the capital are regularly subjected to gang shoot-outs. The underfunded police do nothing, even though bursts of automatic gunfire erupt less than a kilometer from the presidential palace.

The residents of these poor areas are increasingly left to fend for themselves as fellow countrymen ignore their plight. "Some people simply refuse to consider these people, who are from a lower social class, as citizens. Since it's a reality that doesn't affect them directly, they don't worry about it," said Evelynne Trouillot, a writer and member of the Gathering for a Dignified Haiti movement.

The inhabitants of La Saline push back against stereotypes held by many who are better off than they are all somehow affiliated with violent gangs. "I've nothing to do with these gangs, neither me nor my son," said Josette Magloire who lost her 24-year-old son in the massacre. "When I think about what I've lost, I feel so bad." "They have destroyed my life," she said. — AFP

For Palestinian family, tunnel under Israel barrier leads home

AL WALAJAH: On one side of the Israeli separation barrier sits the Hajajla family's home. The Palestinians' house is cut off from the rest of their village that lies on the other side, with only a tunnel connecting the two. Endless trouble has followed, they say. Their situation made the news again when Israeli authorities locked the gate leading to the tunnel linking their home to their village of Al-Walajah in the occupied West Bank.

For more than a week, 10-year-old Mohammed Hajajla had to walk six kilometers in the blazing sun as part of his route to school due to the closure, the family says. Israeli authorities say the closure was because the family was suspected of allowing illegal crossings into Jerusalem from the West Bank through the Israeli-built tunnel.

The family denies it and says it is another example of harassment from Israeli authorities they have faced over the years. "I already refused to bend. I will not be discouraged," said the father of the family, Omar Hajajla. The brick house sits on a hill, across the valley from the Israeli settlement of Gilo on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Their problems date back to 2010, when construction of Israel's separation barrier cutting off the West Bank reached their area.

Doorbell dispute

Israel began constructing the barrier in 2002, during the bloody second Palestinian intifada. For Israel, the barrier is for security reasons. Palestinians see it as an "apartheid wall", a potent symbol of the Israeli occupation. Israeli authorities gave the family a choice: leave or see their home cut off by a fence. Other village land was also isolated by the barrier's construction.

Omar Hajajla says they offered him large amounts of money to move, but he refused and took the case to court. In 2016, an

agreement was reached with Israeli authorities on strict conditions for his family's use of the tunnel, whose gate can be opened by remote. Hajajla said he later installed an electric doorbell at the other side of the tunnel to make it easier for family members to come and go, especially since his children don't have mobile phones. But an Israeli police officer spotted it in May.

"They said to me, 'This bell is in the (Israeli military's) security zone,'" the 53-year-old said. Hajajla said he was taken for questioning for four hours and the gate was padlocked. For eight days, the family was only able to get out by a clandestine side exit, he said. Mohammed and his brother's route to school included walking six kilometers. "We left very early in the morning and came back late," said Mohammed. The family threatened to take the case to court again and the lock was eventually removed, the family says.

But later Omar lost his Israeli-granted permit to cross a checkpoint into Israel and Jerusalem, where he works. "Each time they invent a new excuse to force us to leave the house," he said. Israel's military referred questions on the issue to police, who did not respond to requests for comment from AFP. In a statement to Israeli newspaper Haaretz, police said Omar Hajajla "is suspected of taking advantage of the gate to improperly bring Palestinians through it and was therefore taken in for questioning." "All investigations that involve suspicion of security-related crimes of Palestinians result in the revocation of entry permits into Israeli territory until the suspicions can be clarified and/or an indictment filed." Palestinians say the family's situation is another example of the troubles posed by Israel's separation barrier. — AFP



AL WALAJAH: Palestinian Omar Hajajla poses next to the tunnel connecting his home in Jerusalem to Al-Walajah, his village in the occupied West Bank. — AFP

International

Hong Kong protesters clash with police; demonstrations target Chinese traders

Unrest grips HK over now-suspended extradition bill

HONG KONG: Hong Kong protesters clashed with police yesterday in a town near the boundary with mainland China where thousands rallied against the presence of Chinese traders, seizing on another grievance following major unrest over an extradition bill. The demonstration in the Hong Kong territorial town of Sheung Shui, not far from the Chinese city of Shenzhen, began peacefully but devolved into skirmishes and shouting. Protesters threw umbrellas and hardhats at police, who retaliated by swinging batons and firing pepper spray. Later in the day Hong Kong police urged protesters to refrain from violence and leave the area.

The protest was the latest in a series that have roiled the former British colony for more than a month, giving rise to its worst political crisis since its 1997 handover to China. Sometimes violent street protests have drawn in millions of people, with hundreds even storming the legislature on July 1 to oppose a now-suspended extradition bill that would have allowed criminal suspects in Hong Kong to be sent to China to face trial in courts under ruling Communist Party control.

Critics see the bill as a threat to Hong Kong's rule of law. Chief Executive Carrie Lam this week said the bill was "dead" after having suspended it last month, but opponents vow to settle for nothing short of its formal withdrawal. Protests against the bill had largely taken place in Hong Kong's main business district, but demonstrators have recently begun to look elsewhere to widen support by taking up narrower, more domestic issues.

In Sheung Shui, protesters rallied to oppose small-time Chinese traders who make short trips into the territory to buy goods that they then haul back to China to sell. The demonstrators chanted demands in Mandarin, China's official language, for the Chinese traders to go home. Many street-level shops were shuttered during the march.

The traders have long been a source of anger among those in Hong Kong who say they have fuelled inflation, driven up property prices, dodged taxes and diluted Sheung Shui's identity. "Our lovely town has become chaos," said Ryan Lai, 50, a resident of Sheung Shui, where so-called "parallel traders" buy bulk quantities of duty-free goods to be carried into mainland China and sold.

"We don't want to stop travel and buying, but please, just make it orderly and legal. The extradition bill was the tipping point for us to come out. We want Sheung Shui back." When Britain returned Hong Kong to China 22 years ago, Chinese Communist leaders promised the city a high degree of autonomy for 50 years. But many say China has progressively tightened its grip, putting Hong Kong's freedoms under threat through a range of measures such as the extradition bill.

Democracy deficit

Hong Kong's lack of full democracy was behind the recent unrest, said Jimmy Sham of the Civil Human Rights Front, which organized protests against the extradition bill. "The government, Carrie Lam, some legislators in func-

tional constituencies are not elected by the people, so there are many escalating actions in different districts to reflect different social issues," he said. "If political problems are not solved, social well-being issues will continue to emerge endlessly."

One protester said yesterday's scuffles started when demonstrators charged the police after the latter came to the assistance of mainland traders who had assaulted demonstrators. "Some people were attacked and got injured in a stampede. I tried to save some girls so I was also attacked by pepper spray by police. Now I feel so bad. The cops are dogs," said the man, who would only give the name Ragnar. Protesters ripped up median barriers and fences to set up roadblocks and defenses.

A young man was treated for a bloody head wound meters from where surrounded police were hitting activists armed with umbrellas. A baton charge by police in riot gear cleared the street minutes later to free trapped officers. "We have no weapons and we were peaceful. When we saw them taking photos of us in the crowd we had to react," said another protester, surnamed Chan, who declined to give his full name. "We are all scared now. How can they hit us with batons?" he said, staring at a pool of blood where one of his peers was treated.

Last week nearly 2,000 people marched in the Tuen Mun residential district to protest against what they saw as the nuisance of brash singing and dancing to Mandarin pop songs by middle-aged mainland women. On Sunday,



HONG KONG: A photojournalist falls down during clashes between protesters and police at an anti parallel trading march in Sheung Shui district in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

tens of thousands marched in one of Kowloon's most popular tourist shopping areas, trying to persuade mainland Chinese tourists to back opposition to the extradition bill. "We want to raise awareness in Washington that the United States has to do more now to help Hong Kong become fully democratic," said a resident of the nearby town of Fanling, who was one of five people

in yesterday's crowd carrying US flags. "They are the most important power left that can stand up to China," added the 30-year-old man, who gave his name only as David. Anti-extradition protesters plan another demonstration on Sunday in the town of Sha Tin, in the so-called New Territories between Hong Kong island and the border with China. — Reuters

S Korea, Japan hold talks as diplomatic row worsens

TOKYO: Japanese and South Korean officials held hours of talks Friday to discuss a worsening diplomatic row that has prompted Washington to offer to mediate between the US allies. The meeting between representatives from Japan's trade ministry and South Korea's foreign ministry ran hours longer than expected but there was no sign of a detente in the simmering dispute.

Japan last week ramped up long-running tensions over the use of forced labor during World War Two by announcing restrictions on exports used by South Korean chip and smartphone companies. The move sparked anger in Seoul, but also raised international concern about the effect on the global tech supply chain and the possibility of price hikes for consumers.

Tokyo says the constraints, which apply to three chemicals as well as technology transfers, were made necessary by

a "loss of trust" in relations with Seoul, but also accuses South Korea of improperly handling exports of sensitive materials from Japan. And Japanese officials said they defended their decision in Friday's talks. "We confirmed Japan's safety management system on exports," a spokesperson from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry told reporters, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"We answered all their questions in a careful manner and explained that this is based on international rules. It is not a World Trade Organization violation, and it is not a countermeasure." But earlier in Seoul, President Moon Jae-in's office said South Korea had done nothing wrong and called for a third-party investigation into Japan's claims.

The brief glimpse given to media of the meeting suggested an environment that was anything but warm — the two Japanese officials remained stony-faced and sitting at a table when their South Korean counterparts arrived, offering no apparent greetings or handshakes before reporters were ushered out. The new restrictions, which significantly slow exports, took effect from July 4.

Japanese officials are weighing additional measures including removing South Korea from a "white list" of countries that face minimal constraints on technology transfers with national security implications. Seoul has threatened to take the issue to the World Trade

Organization and also urged Washington to intervene. US officials said they would "do everything we can" to ease tensions, without offering a specific opinion on Japan's measures. Relations between the American allies have long been strained over issues related to Tokyo's brutal 1910-45 colonial rule over the Korean peninsula.

But ties have been further hurt by a series of rulings from South Korean courts ordering Japanese firms that used wartime forced labor to compensate victims. Experts said there was little hope of either side backing down quickly, with both Moon and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe unlikely to offer concessions. "As the dispute deepens, it is increasingly difficult for either Moon or Abe to yield," wrote Tobias Harris, an analyst at the Teneo consultancy group, in a note. Any compromise by Moon "would likely be seen as capitulation to Japanese economic coercion and could trigger a backlash," Harris wrote. "Meanwhile, the South Korean reaction has likely convinced Abe that he has hit a pressure point... and could encourage his administration to intensify the pressure to goad Moon into surrendering." Japanese officials appeared to rule out further talks. "We think we fully answered all the questions," the spokesperson from Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry said. "We will accept emails if they have technical questions." — AFP



KARACHI: Supporters of Home Based Women Workers Federation (HBWWF) shout slogans against the 2019 national budget and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during a protest in Karachi, after prices were hiked in the country. — AFP

Pakistan's traders strike over the IMF austerity measures

KARACHI: Markets and wholesale merchants across Pakistan closed yesterday in a strike by businesses against measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund to crack down on tax evasion and bolster the country's depleted public finances. In Karachi, the country's main commercial city, around 80% of markets dealing in bulk goods were closed, said Atiq Mir, president of the All Karachi Traders Alliance, which represents hundreds of markets in the city.

"Government policies have created mistrust in trade and industry," said Mir, who added that traders were already struggling with corrupt tax officials demanding bribes. Similar strikes were called in other big business centers including the eastern city of Lahore, Rawalpindi, near the capital Islamabad, and Multan, home to a celebrated ceramics industry.

Not all business associations joined the strike but the move underlines the pressure facing Prime Minister Imran Khan's government, which came to power last year promising millions of new jobs and welfare measures to help the poor. Instead, like so many of its predecessors, it is having to impose tough austerity measures having been forced to turn to the IMF for Pakistan's 13th bailout since the late 1980s.

In Karachi, calm prevailed around the

main electronics market in the old city that would normally be bustling on a Saturday with traders selling everything from mobile phones to televisions, refrigerators and air conditioners. A popular textiles market on Tariq Road in another part of the city was also closed as traders, already struggling to attract customers hit by a sliding rupee and inflation running at around 9%, shut up shop for the day.

Under the IMF bailout, signed this month, Pakistan is under heavy pressure to boost its tax revenues to plug a fiscal deficit which has ballooned to around 7% of its gross domestic product, as well as avert a looming balance of payments crisis. The South Asian country has long suffered from a weak tax base, with only about 1% of its 208 million population filing income tax returns and key industrial sectors dominated by powerful lobbies that pay little or no tax.

Among the measures which have roused the anger of traders is a new rule that would require customers buying items worth 50,000 rupees (\$315) or over to produce identity documents, a move intended to help authorities to track tax evaders. "The new condition of the national identity card on purchases of 50,000 rupees or more has created harassment among the people," Mir said.

Under the measures agreed with the IMF, the government has also agreed to close loopholes and preferential rates in sales tax on sugar, steel, edible oils and medium and large retailers, hitting many businesses. "We want zero tax on small retailers. Sales tax should be limited to the manufacturing sector," Mir said. The strike, which follows isolated protests by traders this month, was called after the government refused to agree to the traders' demands to abandon its tax plans. — Reuters

Lost lessons: North Koreans get 're-education' in South

SEOUL: One of the first things North Korean defector Ri Kwang-myong did after reaching the South was to go back to school - 12 years after finishing his education. North Korea claims a 100 percent literacy rate and boasts that its free compulsory education demonstrates the superiority of its socialist system. But those who escape from the impoverished country often struggle in the South from a lack of basic knowledge. Lessons at North Korean schools are peppered with praise for the leadership, defectors say, and for many, education is also disrupted by grinding poverty or their long journey to freedom.

Ri, 31, is among a handful of adult students at Wooridul School in Seoul, an educational haven for North Korean students too old, or lagging academically and so unable to go to appropriate state schools. "Although I studied in the North and graduated, I don't know much," said Ri, who went back to school last year, six months after arriving in South Korea. Much of what he was taught in the North was not applicable in his new home, he added: "Everything I learned is different."

Revolutionary studies

One of the most important subjects in the North Korean education curriculum is revolutionary studies, which focuses on the ruling Kim family. It starts with two hours a

week at the age of six - when pupils are taught the official versions of the childhoods of the country's founder Kim Il Sung and his son and successor Kim Jong Il, grandfather and father of the current leader Kim Jong Un.

Soon afterwards Kim Jong Il's mother Kim Jong Suk joins the pantheon, and in secondary school six classes a week are devoted to the subject - a significant percentage of the total teaching. When AFP visited Manbok high school in Sonbong, North Korea, principal Ri Myong Guk said: "Our students grow up in the love and care of the party and the state. "We believe it's important to educate the students with political and revolutionary history so they appreciate the love and care of the great leaders," he explained.

The South Korean government describes the North's education system as designed to instil "unconditional loyalty to the party and the leader as the most important aspect of life". And Lee Mi-yeon, a former kindergarten teacher in the North who fled in 2010, added: "They are taught as mythical, God-like figures who created the country and made grenades out of pine cones." Teachings about the leaders seep into other subjects as well, she said. "If we are teaching about the construction of a building, we have to spend about five minutes to tell a related story about the leader for ideological education," Lee said.

According to defectors many young North Koreans were forced to abandon their schooling when the country's economy collapsed in the mid-1990s and a famine claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. Lee Song-hee, a 27-year-old student at Wooridul School, said that after only four months of elementary school in the North she had to drop out to help her mother as they struggled to earn a living. — AFP



SEOUL: Adult students study at Wooridul School in Seoul - an educational haven for North Korean defectors too old to go to appropriate state schools. — AFP

News in brief

Monsoon rains kill 28

NEW DELHI: At least 17 people have been killed across Nepal after torrential monsoon rains induced floods and landslides, officials said yesterday. In neighboring north-eastern India the death toll rose to 11, with six dead in Assam and another five in Arunachal Pradesh, officials said. Heavy rains since Thursday have hit several districts in Nepal, especially in the country's eastern region and the southern plains. According to figures released by Nepal's police, a further seven people have been injured and seven others reported missing. Three were killed when a wall collapsed in the capital Kathmandu. "Local authorities and our security officials are all working to rescue people and bring them to safety. Helicopters are on standby if needed," Home Ministry official Umakanta Adhikari said. Nepal's weather department warned Thursday that heavy rains were expected to continue for two days, and advised people to stay alert. — AFP

Duterte blasts 'idiot' critics

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday branded as "idiots" the governments behind a UN rights body investigation into his narcotics crackdown that has killed thousands and drawn international censure. Duterte's three-year drug war has unleashed a surge of bloodshed in the Asian nation, with reports of nightly slayings of suspects by police and masked gunmen. The UN Human Rights Council on Thursday narrowly passed a resolution spearheaded by Iceland which gives UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet a year to conduct a "comprehensive" international review of the campaign, a centerpiece of Duterte's presidency. "These sons of w*****s cannot understand that we have a problem," Duterte said in a speech to corrections officers, in his first comments on the resolution. "Iceland, what is Iceland's problem? Just ice. That's your problem. You have too much ice and there is no clear day or night there." — AFP

Over 100 fighters killed

BEIRUT: More than 100 fighters were killed in clashes between regime and jihadist-led forces in northwest Syria, a war monitor said yesterday, as violence raged on the edge of an opposition bastion despite a September truce deal. Eight civilians also died in the latest violence since Wednesday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Six of them, including a child, were killed in regime air strikes on the town of Jisr Al-Shughur. The UN said it had received reports that the strikes hit medical facilities and health care workers. Syria's civil war has killed more than 370,000 people and spiraled into a complex conflict since starting in 2011 with the repression of anti-government protests. Russian and regime aircraft have since late April ramped up the deadly bombardment of the Idlib region of some three million people in northwest Syria. — AFP

Quake rocks Philippines

MANILA: Fifty-one people were injured and several homes, churches and other buildings damaged yesterday when an earthquake sent terrified residents of the southern Philippines fleeing their homes before dawn, police said. The 5.8-magnitude shallow quake struck the northeast coast of Mindanao island at 4:42 am, with the Philippine seismology office recording seven less intense aftershocks. Officers at the police station in Madrid town, near the epicenter, ducked beneath tables as the glass door of a filing cabinet splintered and a television set fell to the floor and shattered, police chief Lieutenant Wilson Unite said. "We saw people running out of their homes. A number of residences sustained minor damage like cracked walls," Unite told AFP by telephone. Patients were also evacuated briefly at the Madrid District Hospital, which sustained cracks on its concrete walls, he added. — AFP

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

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Washington Watch

Two US Congressional resolutions that won't advance Mideast peace

By Dr James J Zogby

In the coming week, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs will move on four bills - all of which, I believe, drive more nails in the coffin of Israeli-Palestinian peace. While two of the proposed bills are blatantly pro-Israel, it is the two more benign pieces of legislation that cause me real concern.

House Resolution 246 (HRes246) "Opposing efforts to de-legitimize the State of Israel and the Global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions" is a non-binding resolution putting Congress on record in opposition to BDS. Unlike earlier versions, HRes246 does not impose penalties on BDS supporters nor does it conflate Israel and "areas under Israeli control" - a not too clever way designed to recognize Israeli sovereignty over West Bank settlements. For this reason, this resolution has won the support of several liberal groups and is currently co-sponsored by a bi-partisan group of 338 Members of Congress.

HRes246 also includes language calling for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "both the Israeli and Palestinian people should be able to live in safe and sovereign states, free from fear and violence, with mutual recognition." And it "urges the Israelis and Palestinians to return to direct negotiations as the only way to achieve an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

The bulk of HRes246, however, is devoted to a series of "Whereas" and "Resolved" clauses opposing BDS. These clauses mischaracterize the goals of the BDS movement, misquote the co-founder of the BDS movement, and falsely claim that BDS targets not just the State of Israel but individual Jews "who support Israel."

HRes246 concerns me for two principal reasons:

- far from being a benign resolution, HRes246 has been correctly described by the Arab American Institute as a "transparent ploy" that delegitimizes a legal and non-violent movement that advocates for Palestinian human rights - and secures the blessing of an overwhelming majority of Congress in this effort. While this non-binding resolution does not criminalize BDS, by defaming the practices advocated by this movement and putting Congress on record in opposition to it, HRes246 opens the door to current state laws and future Congressional efforts to do so.

- HRes246's profession of support for a two-state solution and its implication that the BDS movement is an obstacle to reaching that goal can only be described as naïve, at best, or even disingenuous. Nowhere in the resolution is there any mention of any of the obstacles posed by the Israeli Government: the 620,000 settlers living in settlements that have, by design, carved the areas West Bank open to Palestinians into non-contiguous "bantustans"; the aggressive land grabs, demolition of Palestinian homes; the brutal behavior of the occupation authorities; the policies of both the current Israeli Government and its opposition, both of which see no place for the "viable" Palestinian State called for in HRes246; or the annexationist policies currently underway in the area referred to "East Jerusalem," having a profoundly negative impact on the lives of the 320,000 Palestinian citizens who live there.

All of this is ignored, as is Congressional complicity in these Israeli policies. Despite several past US Administrations calling on Israel to stop settlement construction, not only do they continue, but they continue with Congress' blessing in the form of increased aid and not only no US sanctions, but not even a rebate. When the Palestinians have appealed to the United Nations or other international bodies like the International Criminal Court, the response of US Administrations or Congress has been to punish the Palestinians and/or the international organizations, in question. As a result, the only recourse Palestinians have had is in the court of public opinion, hence, the BDS movement. Their successes have been greeted by Israel and now the US Congress with hysteria. Hence, the effort to delegitimize and defame the movement - with criminalization sure to follow.

The second bill before Congress is House Resolution 326 (HRes326) "Regarding efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution." This is also a non-binding resolution. It is currently sponsored by 144 Members of Congress and has a companion bill before the US Senate (Senate Resolution 234) that is sponsored by nine Democrats - including two presidential aspirants: Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

HRes326 includes one very positive "Whereas" clause which calls for "an end to the occupation, including opposing settlement activity and moves toward unilateral annexation in Palestinian territory."

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

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



A man rides a Velib self-service bike by the fence of a roadwork site reading "What is this mess?" in Paris on July 11, 2019. — AFP

Cars make way for Paris two-wheel revolution

With the wind rushing through their hair, they zip past on bikes, electric scooters and mono-wheels, effortlessly passing lines of hot-and-bothered drivers stuck in the endless Paris traffic. In the French capital, the new mobility revolution has caught on fast, with locals and tourists embracing the growing array of app-based ways to get around. And with climate change bringing frequent heatwaves and more peak pollution alerts, Paris is beginning to push back against the dominance of the car.

Not only is the city upgrading its public transport system offering of interurban trains, buses and the metro, it is also enjoying an unparalleled explosion of alternatives. "Our cities have been colonised by cars. They get into the smallest gaps, today we need to put them back into their proper place," says Christophe Najdovski, the city's deputy mayor who has responsibility for transport. "In Paris, they are only used for 10 percent of daily trips but they take up 50 percent of the public space."

Car crush

But the city has been at the forefront of innovation, setting up a pioneering bike-share service back in 2007. Known as Velib', it has since been copied across the globe, from London to Chicago. Then came the Autolib' electric car-sharing scheme which was followed by a flood of dockless bikes, and then the overnight appearance of e-scooters that exploded onto the streets in the summer of 2018. And that's without mentioning other private mobility devices such as two-wheeled e-hoverboards or electric

unicycles. But is there enough space? Not according to the taxi drivers, who are already infuriated with the growing demands on their space and the planned 1,000-km of bike lanes that are due to be completed by 2020. And the estimated 15,000 e-scooters on the streets have also triggered a backlash, with riders initially dumping them randomly on pavements, cluttering the curb and creating a nuisance for pedestrians. "I'd like to slap them," fumes Nordine, a woman in her 40s walking through the Marais district, muttering furiously about "the lack of public spirit". "Paris is a great playing field but the space is saturated. They need to bring it back down to two or three operators, like San Francisco, which has just two," says Najdovski from the mayor's office. At its height, Paris had 13 companies running scooter fleets, but that number dropped to around seven earlier this month after the city brought in a raft of demands for operators.

37% of Parisians own a car

Every day, there are some 41 million trips made in the Paris region, of which 15 million are by car and 10 million by public transport. Since July 1, all diesel vehicles registered before 2006 have been banned from entering the city, but should the authorities go further and shut the entire city centre to cars? Today, just over a third - 37 percent - of Parisian homes have a car, and that drops to one in five in the city centre, according to the mayor's office. "The priority is to enable city dwellers to get around," says Jean-Pierre Orfeuil, an engineer who spe-

cializes in urban mobility. "Generally speaking, those who are using these new means of transport are people who used to use the metro," he said. "So they haven't played a role in easing the traffic."

Dumping diesel, passing on petrol

To get away from fuel-powered vehicles, the focus should be on electric bikes, which could potentially help those living in the suburbs, he says. But even there, the infrastructure is lacking. "In France, we are two or three times worse off than Germany or the Netherlands" in terms of the number of electric bikes, he said. Although car-sharing has been slow to take off in France compared with its neighbours, one way to encourage this could be shared lanes, notably on the city's choked periphery, its 34-kilometre ring road. "At rush hour, you have an average of 1.1 people in every car. If you increased that to 1.7 it would get rid of the congestion," Najdovski said.

But these new forms of transport don't work for everyone, notably raising questions for those with families. And for many city dwellers, the car is a private space akin to their living room which offers a certain form of intimacy, says Orfeuil. "You can make private calls, you can listen to music." For Mireille Apel-Muller, a sociologist who heads the City on the Move Institute, mobility is about more than just transport. "It's a way of life," she said. "All these new forms of transport require a smartphone and applications which you have to master. Otherwise, it becomes exclusive." — AFP

Rehabilitating Indonesia's child bombers

Thrown off a motorbike as her parents blew themselves up, nine-year-old Mila was the sole survivor of a family suicide bombing, part of a wave of such attacks involving children that rocked Indonesia. Orphaned and radicalized, there were concerns for her future after the Islamic State-inspired strike, but a renewed focus on rehabilitating the children of terror suspects may offer Mila, and others like her, a chance at normality.

She is among a small group who are being treated at a Jakarta safe house in a unique scheme that provides psychological and social care to the offspring of suicide bombers or children directly involved in terror plots. The world's biggest Muslim majority nation is grappling with the growing global threat of 'family attacks' and also with how to reintegrate returning IS jihadists and their relatives as the extremist group's caliphate lies in ruins, a challenge faced by many nations including France

and the United States. "It hasn't been easy dealing with (the children) because they believed in radicalism...and that bombing was a good thing," said safe-house head Neneng Heryani, who gave AFP exclusive access to the state-run compound on the edge of Indonesia's capital. "They were taught that jihad was essential to go to heaven and that you must kill non-believers. It was very hard to change that mindset," she added. Social workers and psychologists are trying to re-socialize the children with counselling and an emphasis on normal daily routines which include lessons, mosque visits, and regular playtime.

'Indefensible and deplorable'

For Mila - a name given by AFP to protect her identity - this treatment means helping her find a way to cope with her parents' suicide bombing and living with the knowledge they involved her in mass murder, and intended for her to die. Other children of terror suspects, including those linked to the deadly suicide bombings in Surabaya last year, are also undergoing this dedicated treatment. "Deploying children in such a way is indefensible and deplorable," Human Rights Watch campaigner Andreas Harsono said, adding that the 2018 incidents were the first time suicide bombers used their own kids in attacks in Indonesia.

The youngsters that survived had been subjected to years of jihadi indoctrination by their families and often shown violent propaganda, counsellors say. Gaining their trust has not been easy but staff at the safe house believe their approach could help neutralize the years of radicalization. At the heart of the rehabilitation effort are lessons about Indonesia's national heroes, building trust and Pancasila, the nation's ideology which stresses unity and respect for ethnic and religious minorities in a country of some 260 million spread across thousands of islands.

"We still teach them that the Quran is the foundation for everything and that they have to believe in it. But if you violate other people's rights, then that's not okay" said social worker Sri Musfiah Handayani. Trying to help rehabilitate the children of suicide bombers is largely uncharted territory. "This is the first time that we know of. It's not a common phenomenon," said Sidney Jones, director of Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC).

'Family attacks'

While children are easy prey for extremists, "that vulnerability can also provide a starting point for treatment", said Haula Noor, an expert in radicalized families at Australian National University

(ANU). "We should view these children as both victims as well as potential perpetrators" she added. A surge in Islamist attacks in the past decade has dented Indonesia's reputation for religious tolerance.

Mila was wedged between her parents on a motorcycle as they detonated themselves at a Surabaya police post last May. That attack came after another family - including a nine and 12-year-old girl - from the same Quran study group staged suicide bombings at several Surabaya churches, killing themselves and a dozen congregants, while injuring scores more.

Then, in March, the wife of a suspected Indonesian militant blew up herself and child at their home after an hours-long standoff with police. The incidents have aggravated international fears that women and their children would be increasingly used, as they tend to attract less scrutiny. "There are going to be two main trends in the future - attacks carried out by families and also by lone wolves," said Stanislaus Riyanta, a terrorism expert at the University of Indonesia.

In April, the pregnant wife of one of those involved in the Sri Lanka bombings that left nearly 260 dead, detonated her own suicide vest killing herself, her three young children, and several police officers when authorities raided their home. — AFP

Lobster fishing in Honduras: A poisoned chalice

Diving for lobsters in the Caribbean waters around Honduras provides a vital source of income for the local indigenous population in La Mosquitia, but it's an extremely hazardous occupation. After his last dive, 44-year-old Ernesto McLean lost the ability to walk. "I got dizzy, I had a pain in my stomach and when I got out of the water I tried to stand up but my legs were paralyzed," McLean told AFP. He and La Mosquitia's 100,000 strong indigenous community in the far east of the Central American country have been in mourning since July 3, when 27 fishermen died and another six went missing after the Capitan Waly boat, with 88 people aboard, sank.

The lobster fishing season had only opened two days earlier, when thousands of fishermen using rudimentary oxygen cylinders clambered aboard boats, like every year, to go in search of the prized seafood that constitutes their main, if not only, source of revenue for the entire year. The season, which lasts eight months, begins with people renting boats and hiring divers from the poor Gracias a Dios state, says Oswaldo Echeverria, the president of the Association of La Mosquitia divers. But there is a lack of government



Disabled diver Jaime Lemus Maturé, 60, using a makeshift walking stick, stands between boats in Prummitara, Puerto Lempira, Honduras, on July 8, 2019. — AFP

control on the industry, particularly in terms of health and safety. Workers complain of being subject to labor exploitation while many have died and thousands more have suffered severe and irreversible physical disabilities.

Decompression sickness

Back in 2004, the local handicapped divers' association asked the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) to intervene to force Honduran authorities to regulate commercial under-water fishing. The association claims that some bosses have even threatened workers with a gun to force them to dive down as much as 40 m

without adequate equipment. Thousands have suffered from decompression sickness.

The latest health ministry statistics, which already date back to 2004, show that of the 9,000 professional divers in La Mosquitia, 4,200 are handicapped. Boat captains pay divers three US dollars per pound of lobster. On a two-week fishing expedition, the most successful, or luckiest, divers can collect up to 400 pounds of crustaceans, while others might only bring in 40 pounds, Echeverria told AFP. Most of the produce is exported to the United States.

Echeverria says things won't improve for divers until authorities "grant financing" so they can buy their own boats and not be so dependent on owners and contractors. Since his 1998 accident, McLean moves around in a wheelchair or by using crutches and has reinvented himself as a cobbler. "I don't have a house, (friends) put me up at night," he said. "I'm in a bad situation." It was 50 hours after emerging from the water that he was taken to the hospital at nearby Puerto Lempira for hyperbaric oxygen therapy, which reverses the effects of decompression in the joints, bones and muscular tissue - as long as it's done within 24 hours. Jaime Lemus, 60, is another who walks with crutches now since coming back up from a 36.5 m dive in 2004. "All these years without getting any help," he complained. He was another whose hyperbaric oxygen therapy came too late and now he survives by transporting passengers on the Caratasca lagoon - the largest in Honduras - in his canoe for \$8 a day: When there are customers. Around 15-18 divers a month need hospital treatment in Puerto Lempira for decompression, physiotherapist Danyra Tylor told AFP. — AFP

Business

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KUWAIT: The dedicated zone in the Avenues Mall at the Phase 4 branch to test 5G technology

Zain launches dedicated 5G Zone at the Avenues Phase 4 branch

Zone offers interactive experience to test 5G applications

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, launched a dedicated 5G Zone that offers customers the opportunity to experience the true capabilities of 5G technology at its branch in the Avenues Mall, Phase 4 - Electra. The zone offers Zain customers a hands-on experience to test various 5G applications and learn about the huge capabilities behind this revolutionary new technology.

Zain recently launched its 5G Internet bundles for postpaid customers after the company's announcement last May of the full readiness of its network for the commercial launch of fifth generation wireless technology (5G), making it the first operator to offer 5G technology in the GCC region via the Kuwaiti market with nationwide coverage of all areas.

Zain's newly-launched 5G Zone, located inside the company's branch in the Avenues Mall, Phase 4 - Electra, offers customers a live, hands-on experience of 5G technology compared side by side with the previous generation network. The available demos feature various applications, including online video gaming, entertainment devices, video streaming services, downloading heavy files, smart home devices, and more. Zain will be dedicating more 5G Zones in other branches soon.

Zain dedicated this zone to offer customers a direct and interactive experience of 5G speeds instead of relying on traditional online speed tests. In addition, the zone offers customers an opportunity to explore the huge capabilities behind this revolutionary new technology, and learn about how it enhances users' everyday lives and boosts productivity. Through the zone, customer can also ask about Zain's multiple 5G Internet bundles and select the plan that best suits their personal and professional needs.

Last May, Zain unveiled that it succeeded in designing an integrated network for 5G services built on a world-class infrastructure. This came after the official announce-

ment made by Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) to grant Zain the needed licenses for telecom operators to launch 5G services in the Kuwaiti market. This technology will contribute to fully launching the Zain's potential within the digital community and further reinforcing its leadership in the ICT sector. To commemorate the commercial launch of the service, Zain temporarily changed the name of its network to "Hello 5G" for 48 hours.

Zain has always been one of the first companies to offer the latest generations of telecommunications technologies. As the telecom sector is currently directing towards digital transformation with significant pace, it is evident that current mobile telecom networks will not be capable of satisfying the future needs of the sector with what is currently available. For that, Zain's impending commercial launch of 5G services comes to keep up with the fast-paced and ever-evolving lifestyle patterns of the community on all levels. The revolutionary fifth generation wireless technology (5G) offers endless applications that can be summarized in three main uses. The first use is enhanced mobile broadband (eMBB), which can be considered a direct extension and progression of the current 4G LTE networks, offering faster connections, higher throughput and more capacity. The second use is Ultra-Reliable Low-Latency Communications (URLCC), which means a 5G network is reliable for mission critical applications that requires uninterrupted and robust data exchange. The third use is Massive Machine-Type Communications (mMTC), which will be enabled by 5G networks to serve as an infrastructure and an enabler for the new applications that are expected to mature in the near future.

Reports and forecasts refer to the huge potentials that will be offered by 5G technology, as well as the many opportunities it will offer for the various industries, such as e-commerce, retail, government transactions, energy,

global automakers as they face enormous costs in developing new technologies.

"It just makes sense for us. It makes both companies stronger," VW chief executive Herbert Diess told reporters. "It makes a lot of sense to combine forces."

Volkswagen will invest \$2.6 billion in capital and assets in Ford's self-driving unit Argo AI to market new-technology vehicles in the United States and Europe. VW's investment values Argo at more than \$7 billion and will allow Ford to use VW technology to market "at least one" high-volume fully electric vehicle to European consumers starting in 2023.

But this is not a merger or traditional corporate tie-up. Ford chief Jim Hackett said that while the automakers "remain independent and fiercely competitive in the marketplace, teaming up and working with Argo AI on this important technology allows us to deliver unmatched capability, scale and geographic reach."



KUWAIT: Zain team at the company's branch in the Avenues Mall, Phase 4 - Electra

public and safety facilities, healthcare, public transportation, media, entertainment, and financial services. Furthermore, 5G services will enhance essential services, and will further push the telecom sector to a new phase of growth.

5G technologies will offer ultimate access, where people and smart devices within the community will communicate with each other in entirely new fashions. The flow of information will be smooth and continuous, while the

highest degrees of coverage and unlimited speeds will be possible with this generation of networks.

The real value of digital information lies not just within the information itself, but rather in the new innovative services that can be obtained from them. The nourishment of digital economy will be possible, as well as achieving positive change in manufacturing methods, current lifestyles, and more. All this will ultimately enhance the lives of people for the better

Ford, Volkswagen join forces on the new frontier of electric autos

NEW YORK: Volkswagen and Ford are teaming up on a massive \$7 billion project to attack the new frontier in the global auto market: electric and self-driving vehicles, the companies announced Friday. The German and US auto giants announced they were expanding their alliance, accelerating cooperation among otherwise competing

He told reporters that Ford will take advantage of motors, batteries and other components VW developed to build a new electric model called ID.3 which is due next year with a starting price of 30,000 euros (\$33,800). The news sent Ford's share price up 2.9 percent, while VW also posted a solid gain on the Frankfurt stock market.

Diess said this could be just the start of greater cooperation between the two manufacturers. "Our global alliance is beginning to demonstrate even greater promise and we are continuing to look at other areas on which we might collaborate," he said.

Automakers worldwide have been forced to transform quickly in the race to dominate new technologies. Ferdinand Dudenhofer, an analyst in Germany with the Center for Automotive Research, told AFP that prior to the alliance Ford had no electric models in development for the European market and going it alone was not possible. —AFP



DETROIT: A Ford Argo AI vehicle drives through the downtown area during testing in Detroit, Michigan on Friday. —AFP

Business

Mutawa Alkazi: GAC GS8 named leader in JD Power review of safety and quality

The brand wins quality award for the 6th consecutive year



KUWAIT: Mutawa Alkazi Co, the exclusive and authorized distributor and dealership of GAC Motor in Kuwait, has revealed that GAC GS8 won J.D Power Quality award for SUV vehicles. In a press release, Mutawa Alkazi pointed out that with this rating GS8 had won J.D Power award for the sixth consecutive time, making it a leader among Chinese commercial brands.

The company confirmed that the award is a recognition of the Chinese brand's continuous commitment to launching models meeting all preferences and maintaining driver and passenger safety as a top priority. Mutawa Alkazi said that the award came after running GS8 through robust tests on several road types and under various world weather conditions. It emphasized that this accomplishment is but a reflection of GAC vehicles ability to gain the trust of clients and partners and be their first choice in their daily trips and adventures.

Mutawa Alkazi noted that the J.D Power report praised GAC Motor strategy based on quality and driven by innovation and true professional spirit in designing each new model. The company added that GAC adopts an integrated system that guarantees quality across the production process, starting with research and development up to production, manufacturing and creating the chain of sales and services.

In order to guarantee the quality and safety of the

product, GAC Motor adopted a strict quality control system with the aim of achieving 'Zero defects' and improving the quality standards through 6 management activities, 5 checks and tests and two main systems for monitoring the product flow.

Mutawa Alkazi saw that rating GS8 as the top Chinese commercial brand in integrated SUVs reflects GAC Motor success in improving the systems, boosting the institutional mechanism and innovative driving. Mutawa Alkazi invited its clients to visit its showrooms in Al-Rai and Shuwaikh (Al-Tilal Complex) to get acquainted with the GS8 merits and to avail themselves of a chance to test drive it, pointing out that its work team is ready to answer all queries and offer advice to clients

Innovative design with high safety features

The design of the new "GAC GS8 2019" strives for comfort with the three-sided, butterfly-shaped head rest meeting the work environment and creating a beautiful feeling of guarding the head and reducing fatigue. The seats are covered in natural napa leather with an exclusive lining technique to show elegance, smoothness, gloss and splendor. Leather is also used in covering parts of the doors aesthetically and elegantly with added trimmings evoking the flow of water in the forest with special attention to details. GAC provided its car with a distinctive design for the rear with upward open-



ing of the storage area to offer more comfort when loading luggage. Add to this an attractive rear bumper with reflexive lights as well as a rear 3D tunnel-shape lighting. Integrated with the bumper are two chrome exhaust vents.

An embodiment of power, GS8 of GAC Motor is a classy car that reached the top in world markets with its unique style and features guaranteeing distinctive driving with the world's most advanced and efficient energy system. The vehicle embodies innovative renewable energy system, the result of GAC Motor R&D efforts, incorporating the top fifty technologies in this field. The

car features a sophisticated and safe suspension and auto-braking system in emergencies. There is also the warning system at leaving the lane which is automatically activated. Upon exceeding 30km/h speed the front collision system is automatically activated depending on various degrees of danger. The car is fitted with an adaptive cruise control to maintain safe distance from other cars at all times.

The car boasts a new grille, remote monitoring, smart security, rescue and emergency new and unique services which allow remote operation and one-button control.

A first in Kuwait: KFH launches cheque deposit solution via mobile

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched the first ever Mobile Deposit of Cheques service to customers. This confirms the leadership position of the bank in offering high end digital banking services that cater for customers' aspirations. This unique Mobile Deposit of Cheques service was launched in collaboration with the renowned ProgressSoft corporation, a leading international IT Solutions provider. This service enables quick deposit of cheques in a fast and efficient way to customers' accounts - simply by using a screenshot of the original cheque through KFH Online.

KFH customers can simply log into their KFH mobile app, go to the cheque deposit menu and take a picture of both sides of the cheques using their smart phone camera. The funds will then be deposited directly into their accounts through KFH Online app. This provides customers with a mobile capability that enables faster and more convenient money management, especially that physical cheque is not required to be delivered to a branch.

Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at KFH, Waleed Khaled Mandani said that "the new digital banking service confirms KFH is on track of its digital transformation strategy, indicating Mobile Deposit of Cheques saves KFH customers the time and effort

to visit a branch to deposit cheques, while maintaining highest safety and security levels. Through this innovative service, KFH strengthens its leadership as advanced financial solutions provider and keeps abreast of the technological developments in the banking industry, in a way that serves the needs and immediate requirements of the customers".

Mandani added that KFH hugely invests in advanced digital solutions that enables its customers to use the latest innovative banking solutions to execute their transactions and achieve their long-term goals. By its continued expansion of easy-to-use solutions, KFH succeeded in empowering its customers with high-standard products and services, unblocking new business opportunities.

He continued: "KFH is keeping up with the digital transformation, implementing Fintech and AI, achieving highest standards of efficiency and best utilization of resources as well as promoting the values of entrepreneurship, innovation, partnership and responsibility."

He added that KFH had made long strides along the digital transformation journey, drawing attention to its services, modern and innovative financial products. This includes instant financial transfers service using RippleNet network, Skiplino service for booking appointments electronically in bank branches, opening three KFH-Go branches in Ishbiliya, Jabriya and Mangaf, cash withdrawals using QR code, Civil ID or mobile number, the fast cross-border money transfer service "KFH Xpress", KFH Pay service for electronic payments, robot service, Chatbot and many other digital services.



Waleed Khaled Mandani

Emirates Holidays launches 'deposit' packages for travellers in Kuwait

KUWAIT: For the first time in Kuwait, Emirates Holidays is offering travellers the ability to lock-in discounted prices in July on their next holiday package for a small deposit at the time of booking. The promotion is valid for booking until 31 July 2019 for outbound travel between 1 September and 30 November 2019.

Customers traveling from Kuwait can avail specially priced packages and pay at their convenience to 14 destinations across the globe including Bangkok, New York, London, Madrid, Prague, amongst many others, with deposits starting at KD 59 and to Dubai with deposits starting at KD 19. Customers will have to settle the payment of the full package 35 days prior to the date of travel.



Emirates Holidays, which has been in operation for over 20 years and operates in 38 markets globally, exclusively supports the award-winning Emirates Airline and offers fully-inclusive premium leisure packages from Dubai to exciting destinations on the Emirates network and beyond.

Emirates Holidays provides exceptional holidays, tapping into some of the best hotels and travel partners in the world to deliver unique experiences that suit every budget.

EXCHANGE RATES

| Al-Muzaini Exchange Co. | | Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd | | BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL | | Arab | | | |
|--|---------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|----------|----------|
| EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES | | Rate for Transfer | Selling Rate | CURRENCY | BUY | SELL | | | |
| US Dollar Transfer | 304.350 | US Dollar | 303.640 | British Pound | 0.376858 | 0.390758 | Hong Kong Dollar | 0.037030 | 0.039780 |
| Euro | 345.890 | Canadian Dollar | 231.025 | Czech Korune | 0.005387 | 0.014687 | Indian Rupee | 0.003887 | 0.004659 |
| Sterling Pound | 384.850 | Sterling Pound | 386.455 | Danish Krone | 0.041858 | 0.046858 | Indonesian Rupiah | 0.000017 | 0.000023 |
| Canadian dollar | 235.380 | Euro | 346.375 | Euro | 0.336732 | 0.350432 | Japanese Yen | 0.002739 | 0.002819 |
| Turkish lira | 54.350 | Swiss Frank | 298.070 | Georgian Lari | 0.132022 | 0.13022 | Korean Won | 0.000248 | 0.000263 |
| Swiss Franc | 311.830 | Bahrain Dinar | 807.490 | Hungarian Lari | 0.001337 | 0.001337 | Malaysian Ringgit | 0.070333 | 0.076333 |
| US Dollar Buying | 297.000 | UAE Dirhams | 83.070 | Norwegian Krone | 0.031650 | 0.036850 | Nepalese Rupee | 0.002677 | 0.003017 |
| ASIAN COUNTRIES | | Qatar Riyals | 84.310 | Romanian Leu | 0.065218 | 0.082068 | Pakistan Rupee | 0.001340 | 0.002110 |
| Japanese Yen | 2.808 | Saudi Riyals | 81.865 | Russian ruble | 0.004747 | 0.004847 | Philippine Peso | 0.005934 | 0.006234 |
| Indian Rupees | 4.411 | Jordanian Dinar | 429.550 | Slovakia | 0.009097 | 0.019097 | Singapore Dollar | 0.219013 | 0.229013 |
| Pakistani Rupees | 1.966 | Egyptian Pound | 18.210 | Swedish Krona | 0.028451 | 0.033451 | Sri Lankan Rupee | 0.001352 | 0.001932 |
| Sri Lankan Rupees | 1.730 | Sri Lankan Rupees | 1.719 | Swedish Krona | 0.303531 | 0.314531 | Taiwan | 0.009921 | 0.010101 |
| Nepali Rupees | 2.773 | Indian Rupee | 4.379 | Swiss Franc | | | Thai Baht | 0.009529 | 0.010079 |
| Singapore Dollar | 224.440 | Pakistani Rupees | 1.933 | | | | Vietnamese Dong | 0.00013 | 0.00013 |
| Hongkong Dollar | 39.952 | Bangladesh Taka | 3.596 | Australasia | | | | | |
| Bangladesh Taka | 3.590 | Philippines Peso | 5.904 | Australian Dollar | 0.206073 | 0.218073 | Bahraini Dinar | 0.801146 | 0.809198 |
| Philippine Peso | 5.955 | Cyprus pound | 18.065 | New Zealand Dollar | 0.198205 | 0.207705 | Egyptian Pound | 0.018633 | 0.021993 |
| Thai Baht | 9.941 | Japanese Yen | 3.825 | America | | | Iranian Riyal | 0.000084 | 0.000086 |
| Malaysian ringgit | 77.839 | Syrian Pound | 1.590 | Canada Dollar | 0.228577 | 0.237577 | Iraqi Dinar | 0.000210 | 0.000270 |
| GCC COUNTRIES | | Nepalese Rupees | 2.739 | US Dollars | 0.300250 | 0.305550 | Jordanian Dinar | 0.424361 | 0.433361 |
| Saudi Riyal | 81.214 | Malaysian Ringgit | 74.225 | US Dollars Mint | 0.300750 | 0.305550 | Kuwaiti Dinar | 1.000000 | 1.000000 |
| Qatari Riyal | 83.747 | Chinese Yuan Renminbi | 44.515 | | | | Lebanese Pound | 0.000157 | 0.000257 |
| Omani Riyal | 791.033 | Thai Bhat | 10.825 | Asia | | | Moroccan Dirhams | 0.021368 | 0.045368 |
| Bahraini Dinar | 808.690 | | | Bangladesh Taka | 0.003029 | 0.003830 | Omani Riyal | 0.785392 | 0.793285 |
| UAE Dirham | 82.918 | | | Chinese Yuan | 0.042796 | 0.046296 | Qatar Riyal | 0.082942 | 0.083776 |
| ARAB COUNTRIES | | | | | | | Saudi Riyal | 0.080073 | 0.081373 |
| Egyptian Pound - Cash | 21.600 | | | | | | Syrian Pound | 0.001292 | 0.001510 |
| Egyptian Pound - Transfer | 18.294 | | | | | | Tunisian Dinar | 0.101919 | 0.109919 |
| | | | | | | | Turkish Lira | 0.047030 | 0.056875 |
| | | | | | | | UAE Dirhams | 0.082231 | 0.083057 |
| | | | | | | | Yemeni Riyal | 0.000989 | 0.01069 |

Business

Turkish Airlines and Kuwait Airways announce new strategic partnership

Airlines launch codeshare flights between Kuwait and Istanbul-Sabiha Gokcen airports



ISTANBUL: Signing ceremony of codeshare agreement at Turkish Airlines headquarters in Istanbul, and was attended by Bilal Eksi and Yousef Al-Jassem Al-Saqer along with respective delegation from both airlines.



KUWAIT: With great pleasure Turkish Airlines and Kuwait Airways are pleased to announce a new strategic partnership, which saw Kuwait national carrier's code added to Turkish Airlines flights, and Turkey's national carrier's code added to Kuwait Airways flights operated between Kuwait and Istanbul/Sabiha Gokcen Airports. The Bilateral Codeshare Partnership will commence from 1st August 2019.

Both Airlines have endeavored a cordial commercial relationship since 1991, and since then both airlines have been reaping the rewards of such partnership. Turkish Airlines and Kuwait Airways' cooperation further strengthened by signing renewed 'Special Prorate Agreement' in May 2019, and this codeshare agreement is now expected to take the partnership of two national flag carriers to a new height, and provide a great opportunity for the passengers from Kuwait and Turkey.

Signing ceremony of this Codeshare Agreement took place on Tuesday, July 9th at Turkish Airlines Headquarters in Istanbul, and was attended by Bilal Eksi, General Manager of Turkish Airlines, and Yousef Al-Jassem Al-Saqer, Chairman of Kuwait Airways, along with respective delegation from both airlines.

Turkish Airlines General Manager, Bilal Eksi said he is pleased with the new codeshare agreement signed with



Kuwait Airways and added that the agreement would not only contribute to the carrier's existing commercial relations with Kuwait Airways but also offer alternative connections between Turkey and Kuwait for Turkish Airlines passengers.

"Istanbul is the natural and historical connection point between Asia and Europe. With its brilliant performance over the last 16 years, Turkish Airlines holds the title of the airline that flies to the highest number of countries in the

world with 124 countries. The opening of our new home base, Istanbul Airport will further contribute and create new opportunities for our airline and I firmly believe that this Codeshare Agreement will support promoting the cultural and commercial relations between Istanbul and Kuwait. Both Turkish Airlines and Kuwait Airways will work closely to offer the best services to our passengers and improve the customer experience. On this occasion, I would like to thank my esteemed friend Yousef Al-Jassem Al-Saqer, Chairman of Kuwait Airways, his team and my team for their efforts in making this Codeshare Agreement effective. I believe two brother countries' nationals will benefit a lot from this agreement," Eksi added.

Yousef Al-Jassem Al-Saqer, Chairman of Kuwait Airways said: "We welcome Turkish Airlines as a codeshare partner. The new beginning of this revived partnership will bring enhanced connectivity and increased convenience to our customers, who can expect the same level of impeccable service that they expect from our airline, when they travel on codeshare flights to/from Kuwait to/from Istanbul/Sabiha Gokcen. The agreement will support Kuwait Airways and Turkish Airlines operating between the two cities and allow more travel options, facilities for the public to take advantage of the services provided by the carriers. The new codeshare partnership will give

customers the simplicity of purchasing connecting flights on both airlines using one reservation, and a seamless ticketing, check-in, boarding and baggage check experience during the entire journey. Passengers and travel agents will be able to book directly on these flights thru our website and agents' reservation system. Further, this Codeshare Partnership will not only enhance the relationship between the two airlines but also the strong relationship between the two brotherly States, Kuwait and Turkey."

Signing of this agreement coincides with the time when Kuwait market is witnessing steady growth in travel to Turkish cities as a main tourist destination famous for its rich history, hospitality, culture and other facilities which make the visit to Turkey a perfect holiday experience.

It is worth mentioning that Kuwait Airways operates weekly 7 flights with 330/320/777 fleets to Istanbul, and 7 weekly flights to Sabiha Gokcen; while Turkish Airlines operates 28 flights with 320/738/330 fleets from Istanbul, and 14 flights with 320/738 fleets from Sabiha Gokcen. Both Turkish Airlines and Kuwait Airways are working on the possibility to incorporate the Frequent Flyer Program for codeshare flights, so passengers can be rewarded benefits of such programs. Both airlines have also agreed to explore other avenues for future mutual co-operation/expansion of SPA and Codeshares.

Ooredoo offers pre-orders for Huawei Mate 20 X 5G with amazing gifts

KUWAIT: In its consistent stride in providing customers with the best and most innovative products in the fast-paced telecom industry, Ooredoo started taking pre-orders for the first smartphone device that supports 5G, the Huawei Mate 20 X 5G. Ooredoo celebrated the pre-order campaign last Thursday, during the 5G event that took place in the Avenues Mall. All customers that pre-order the device before 17th July will receive exclusive valuable gifts that will complement their 5G experience with the latest Huawei Mate 20 X 5G smartphone. The launch of the Huawei Mate 20 X 5G comes to reiterate Ooredoo's commitment to

providing its customers with the newest products and the best offers. The Huawei Mate 20 X 5G delivers true innovation and breakthrough technology, which is portrayed by making it the world's first smartphone that supports the 5G network.

The Huawei Mate 20 X 5G has an array of exciting features which include a revolutionary New Leica Triple Camera system with ultra-wide angle lens, world first Balong 5000 5G chipset, Kirin 980 Chipset, the Huawei M-Pen4 and the Huawei SuperCharge with TUV Safety certification. The new Leica Triple Camera powered by AI reveals life's drama, texture, color and beauty in every photograph. Designed for different scenarios, the 40 MP main RGB camera captures great details, while the 8 MP camera with telephoto lens will focus on distant shots and the 20 MP camera with Leica Ultra Wide Angle Lens is perfect for the landscape photos and macro shots.

The Balong 5000 is the world's first 7nm multi-mode 5G chipset that provides industry-leading 5G speeds and supports both NSA and SA (Non-Standalone and Standalone) architecture for a smooth transition of the evolving 5G network.



US Treasury warns it will run out of cash in September

WASHINGTON: The US government could run out of money in early September unless Congress allows the administration to borrow more, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin warned Friday.

The Treasury has been taking extraordinary steps since March to shuffle its cash around to continue paying its bills after hitting the \$22 trillion debt limit set by Congress.

Officials have issued dire warnings that without an increase in the borrowing limit, the US could default on its debt for the first time and they have been urging the legislature to act before the summer break later this

month. "Based on updated projections, there is a scenario in which we run out of cash in early September, before Congress reconvenes," Mnuchin warned in a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Pelosi late Thursday said she is working to finalize a deal that would temporarily raise the debt ceiling before the House of Representatives shuts down July 26, according to news reports.

The House is not scheduled to reopen until September 9. The United States lost its coveted AAA debt rating in 2011, following battles among lawmakers in Washington over whether to lift caps on US sovereign borrowing, raising the likelihood of a US default. Because the federal government traditionally runs a budget deficit, it has no choice but to borrow to finance government operations, including salaries, retirement benefits, social spending and other expenses already approved by Congress.

The Treasury previously said it could hold out until late summer, but the latest letter adds more urgency to the debate. It has suspended issuing new debt, and halted investments by government pension funds. — AFP

Amazon 'Prime Day' becomes phenomenon as rivals jump in

WASHINGTON: It started as a simple sales promotion, but Amazon's Prime Day has now morphed into a major phenomenon joined by scores of retailers jockeying with the US colossus for a bigger slice of the e-commerce pie. Amazon's Prime Day, now in 17 countries, will be held tomorrow and Tuesday, highlighted by a pre-recorded Taylor Swift video concert and promotions across a range of products and services from the e-commerce leader.

Rival retailers including Walmart, Target and eBay are offering their own versions of the blockbuster event. According to the tracking group RetailMeNot, some 250 retailers will be offering promotions that aim to expand their market share ahead of the key back-to-school shopping season. "Mid-July used to be one of the sleepest times for retailers, and Prime Day has really reshaped the dynamics," said Andrew Lipsman of the research firm eMarketer.

Prime Day sales for Amazon are expected to hit \$5 billion this year, up from \$3.2 billion in 2018, which at the time represented its biggest ever global shopping event, JP Morgan analyst Doug Anmuth says in a research note. "While the numbers are impressive, we believe there are also additional benefits of Prime Day across Amazon's ecosystem as it allows Amazon to better gauge customer demand for the second half (of the year), acts as a critical peak-day test to ready fulfillment centers and logistics for the holiday season and brings in new Prime members well ahead of the holidays." Amazon began the event in 2015 across nine countries to promote its Prime subscription service. The original event brought in more revenue than "Black Friday," the key shopping day opening the holiday season in November.

'Crash Day' for eBay

Online rival eBay is calling its event "Crash Day," poking fun at technical glitches that Amazon has experienced

China's GDP growth seen slowing to 6.2% in second quarter: Poll

BEIJING: China's economy grew at its slowest rate in nearly three decades in the second quarter, according to an AFP survey of analysts, hit by the US-China trade war and weakening global demand. The world's second largest economy expanded 6.2 percent in April-June, the poll of 10 economists predicted ahead of the official release of gross domestic product figures Monday.

The reading would mark the worst quarterly growth in almost three decades but stay within the government's target range of 6.0-6.5 percent for the whole year. The economy grew 6.6 percent in 2018. Beijing has stepped up support for the economy this year but the moves have not been enough to offset a domestic slowdown and softening overseas demand for its toys, gadgets and electronics.

Policymakers are likely to take further action, analysts say, with Premier Li Keqiang presiding over a state council meeting Wednesday that pledged to lower tariffs and step up tax rebates for exporters.

"The existing tariffs on exports to the US are having an

impact on China's economy," said Steven Cochrane, chief APAC economist with Moody's Analytics. "Industrial production and exports are also weak, with shipments to the US declining significantly," he said.

Beijing pushed forward a raft of stimulus measures earlier this year to cushion the impact from its cooling economy, increasing spending on roads, railways and other big-ticket infrastructure projects, and tax cuts worth 2 trillion yuan (\$297 billion) kicking in from April.

The policies buoyed the economy in March and brought in 6.4 percent growth for the first quarter, but it proved no more than a short-term panacea. Industrial output surged 8.5 percent in March before tumbling in April and dropping to five percent growth in May, the slowest increase since 2002. The build in infrastructure investment has also retreated from the first quarter, coming in at 4.0 percent in January-May, sharply down from years of near 20 percent expansion.

China's 1.3 billion consumers have remained a bright spot. "Consumption is holding up relatively well, possibly reflecting the effects of income and value-added tax cuts," said Tommy Wu of Oxford Economics. Sales of big-ticket items such as cars have not held up, though, with sales down 12.4 percent in the first half of the year, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. Analysts widely expect Beijing will step up with further easing in coming months, with Cochrane tipping new measures heading into 2020. "This will include lower real interest rates for small firms, further reserve requirement ratio reductions, and ongoing infrastructure spending," he said. — AFP

Worries for the leader? Amazon is facing a walkout in at least one of its US warehouses over working conditions, and it has drawn scrutiny from antitrust enforcers over its vast reach. Now one of the world's biggest companies with its retail, music and video streaming, cloud computing and other services, Amazon is the undisputed leader in e-commerce, although not quite as dominant as previously believed.

eMarketer recently revised down Amazon's share of US online commerce to 37.2 percent from a prior estimate of 49 percent, following data released in chief executive Jeff Bezos's shareholder letter on third-party sales on the platform. Still, eMarketer said it expected the number of US households that subscribe to Prime to jump 8.6 percent this year to 65 million—meaning more than half of American homes will be on the program.

"Prime membership is the fulcrum on which Amazon's commerce flywheel spins," Lipsman said. Lipsman said Amazon is facing more competition around Prime Day but has been successful in using the event to underscore the value of the subscription program and promote its smart speakers, media and other offerings. "Amazon typically gains significant market share during the event," he said. — AFP

Business

Al Mulla Automobiles opens Mercedes-Benz showroom and service center in Ahmadi

Reinforcing its commitment to serve its customers throughout Kuwait



KUWAIT: Al Mulla Automobiles, the sole authorized distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, has opened a new Mercedes-Benz Certified Pre-Owned showroom and service center in Ahmadi, where it offers customers a range of certified pre-owned vehicles and a wide selection of maintenance and repair services in its service center.

Commenting on this occasion, Talal Al Mulla, CEO of Al Mulla Group, said: "We are pleased to open our second Mercedes-Benz Certified Pre-Owned showroom and our first Mercedes-Benz service center in Ahmadi. This opening is part of our expansion plans to be closer to our Mercedes-Benz customers across Kuwait, keeping our promise of offering them the best experience at all our facilities and showrooms."

The Mercedes-Benz Certified Pre-Owned showroom conforms to the Mercedes-Benz future retail concept MAR2020, which can be easily felt in the overall look and design of the showroom,

vehicle presentation, sales process, and customer consultation.

The new facility extends over an area of 2,500 Sq m divided into 1,200 Sq m for CPO showroom operation, 1,300 Sq m for after sales and parts operations. The showroom has the capacity to display 15 Certified Pre-Owned cars and features private and semi-private customer consultation areas, in addition to two vehicle delivery area where customers can receive their cars.

Pre-owned Mercedes-Benz cars under this label fulfill stringent criteria and undergo thorough checks by the qualified Mercedes-Benz technicians to ensure that customers who drive Mercedes-Benz Certified cars have confidence in the valuable services that this program delivers, including a warranty that meets the highest standards.

When customers choose a pre-owned Mercedes-Benz under this program, they get the same attention

and care as expected when buying a new car. Every pre-owned Mercedes-Benz car has passed rigorous safety, mechanical, and electrical checks. The signed multi-point checklist ensures that the vehicle has undergone thorough testing. The new service center in Ahmadi offers a variety of options that suit the needs of different customers and aims to achieve their full satisfaction. The Ahmadi service center provides services such as General Repair, Express Service, Quick Lube and a Spare Parts.

Whether the customer brings the vehicle in or requests it to be picked up, the vehicle is inspected through the complementary Active Reception service to make sure that required jobs are properly handled. The new facility also offers the Mercedes-Benz ExpressService, which provides the highest quality, precise and efficient service in the shortest period of time. The ExpressService includes all annual services such as the Maintenance Repair Service A and



Service B, oil change, AC system service, tire change, and brake service. On the other hand, the Quick Lube offers customers a fast engine oil and filter oil change within 30 minutes only.

Freight volumes shrink as world economy stalls

LONDON: Freight volumes in the United States and around the world are falling, signalling tougher times for manufacturers amid escalating trade tensions and heightened uncertainty.

Freight volumes in the United States were up by just 0.8% in the three months from March to May compared with the same period a year earlier, according to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

Volumes fell year-on-year in May, for the first time in more than two and half years, according to the agency's transportation services index. Freight is growing at the slowest rate since the mid-cycle slowdown of 2015/16, based on the index, which covers movements by truck, railroad, barge, pipeline and air cargo. Truck volumes were still up 3.4 percent year-on-year in March-May, but growth was less than half the rate at the same time last year.

Containerised rail traffic actually fell 3.8 percent in March-May after increasing by 6.9 percent in the same period a year previously. The slowdown within the United States is part of a broader global downturn in freight which has spread across Europe and Asia. At Hong Kong's International Airport, the busiest air cargo hub in the world, reported volumes shrank by 8 percent in the second quarter compared with 2018.

London Heathrow's cargo was down by 6 percent in the second quarter, the worst performance since the recession in 2009. California's Port of Long Beach, one of the major entry points for trans-Pacific cargo, reported container volumes down almost 11 percent year-on-year in April-June.

Los Angeles, the other major cargo entry point on the US West Coast, continued to eke out growth, but container trade was up by just 1 percent. Globally, trade volumes were up by just 0.4 percent in the three months from February to April, according to the Netherlands Bureau of Economic Policy Analysis.

More recent data for individual ports and airports suggests growth will slow further and turn negative in May and June. Most historical proxies for trade suggest volumes will stay flat or fall in the second half of the year. South Korea's KOSPI-100 equity index, which has a heavy exposure to export industries and has been closely correlated with world trade, is down almost 8 percent compared with July 2018. BASF, the giant German-based chemicals company, which is also heavily exposed to trade and manufacturing activity, has seen its share price fall by more than 26 percent from a year ago.

The slowdown in global trade and manufacturing is weighing on oil consumption growth, especially for middle distillates such as diesel. In a sign of how concerned investors are about the outlook, trade and manufacturing proxies remain under pressure even though markets are now factoring in a very high probability the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates.

The slackening global economy is now rebounding on the United States through a combination of weak export growth, heightened competition from cheap imports, and a strong dollar.

"Economic momentum appears to have slowed in some major foreign economies, and that weakness could affect the US economy," US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said in his testimony to Congress this week. For now, it remains unclear whether the current deceleration in trade and manufacturing growth is a mid-cycle slowdown like 1997/98 and 2015/16 or marks the end of the current business cycle. —Reuters

Global concludes majority exit from Kuwait-based JTC

KUWAIT: Global Investment House (Global), a regional asset management and investment banking firm headquartered in Kuwait, with offices in major capital markets in the MENA region, announced yesterday that its alternative asset management arm, Global Capital Management ("GCM"), has concluded a successful partial exit of its controlling stake in Kuwait-based Jassim Transport and Stevedoring Company KSCC ("JTC").

The transaction was concluded on Wednesday, 10 July 2019 and 60 percent ownership of JTC, collectively held by Global's Private Equity (PE) funds and Boodai family, was transferred to Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC) and its group companies. Under this transaction, Global Buyout Fund and Global Opportunistic Fund II sold 25.3 percent and 10.7 percent equity stake in JTC respectively. The Investment Banking team at Global was the sell-side advisors to the sellers in this exit transaction, in association with EY.

Sulaiman Mohammed Al-Rubaie, CEO of Global and Chairman of JTC commented on this exit: "We are extremely delighted to have completed the partial exit of JTC, one of the crown jewels from the existing portfolio companies of our PE funds. The PE team along with the Boodai team has successfully turned around this company over the last five years to be a leader in its fields. Following this successful partial exit, the company is preparing to come out with an Initial Public Offering (IPO) in the coming quarters and list on

Bursa Kuwait. We are confident that the commitment, track record and expertise of the acquirers will provide JTC with the required support and guidance to further grow the company."

He added, "We expect to distribute the proceeds from this transaction to clients investing in the funds in the third quarter of 2019. Over the years, Global's private equity team has demonstrated its capabilities in managing, growing and exiting assets across diverse sectors and in challenging market conditions".

The two PE funds had collectively acquired 60 percent stake in JTC in 2008 and since then the PE team has done a complete organizational restructuring, transforming the company from a family-owned business to an institution with best corporate practices. After acquisition by Global, JTC has grown as a high quality, integrated solutions provider in four business segments: Ports Services, Contract Logistics, Equipment Leasing and Power Rental. In terms of geographical expansion, today, the company has an active presence in three countries in the Middle East: Kuwait - hub for all the businesses, Qatar - Equipment Leasing and Saudi Arabia - Power Rental. Achievements resulting from the company's transformation under Global's PE funds include the growth of Power Rental as a dedicated business line, and the company's expansion in the warehousing business in Kuwait.

JTC, which celebrates its 40th year of operations in 2019, has significantly expanded its capabilities in all its business segments in recent years. The company has added around 90 cranes, 100 trucks and 350 generators in the last 5 years alone. JTC's strong cash generating ability enabled it to make new Capex investments of around KWD 30 million since 2014, all self-funded from its own operations. It has also distributed dividends of around KWD 35 million to shareholders during the same period, while maintaining a healthy and



Sulaiman Mohammed Al-Rubaie



Chandresh Bhatt

debt-free balance sheet.

"We are thankful to Global and the Boodai family for their continued support, guidance and business decisions that have positioned the company on the growth path to take it to the next level", commented Adel Kohari, Chief Executive Officer of JTC.

"The competitive position, strong financial, zero debt status with strong cash flow generating ability in addition to the solid foundation for future growth makes JTC an ideal IPO candidate," commented Chandresh Bhatt, Portfolio Manager for this asset and a Partner with Global's PE team.

It is worth noting that since the new management of Global's private equity team took over in 2010, the team has successfully restructured the portfolio companies, put them on the growth path and enhanced their value. Till date, the team has concluded 47 exits, the highest among all private equity firms in the region and distributed more than \$749 million to its clients since inception.

6 hidden tricks you didn't think your Huawei P30 Pro could do

KUWAIT: When you dig around the Huawei P30 Pro and its EMUI 9.1, you are bound to find some hidden gems! Which means features that are not immediately visible or you didn't your phone could do. Now these hidden features are more than just fun features, in fact they make your life a little easier and the overall experience of using the phone much smoother. Here are some of the hidden tricks that you didn't know your Huawei P30 Pro could do.

App Twin takes care of multiple accounts

Do you have multiple accounts on social media platforms and find it annoying to sign in and out every time? App twin lets you login to two different accounts for the same app at the same time. When enabled, twin apps will be displayed on the home screen.

Only on supported social media applications Just tap the screen thanks to the In-screen fingerprint reader

Gone are the days when you use a home button as a fingerprint reader or search around the back of your phone to scan your finger just to unlock your phone. With the Huawei P30 Pro, it is a lot easier, because all you need to do is just tap the screen. Thanks to its improved In-screen fingerprint technology, unlocking your phone is just a simple tap away.

No one runs out of battery with Wireless Reverse Charging

If you head into the battery settings menu, you can find an option called Wireless Reverse Charging. This nifty feature will allow you to charge other phones and accessories wirelessly with your Huawei P30 Pro, provided they support the Qi Wireless Charging standard. Quite handy when you need a quick recharge.

Knuckle powered action

Trying to press multiple buttons at a time or swiping on your screen, all for just a screenshot is old news. With the Huawei P30 Pro, all it takes is two knocks with your knuckles. That's not all, you can also draw an S with your knuckles to take a scrolling screenshot or draw a straight line to split the screen for multitasking.

Video Ringtones for those extra special someone

Everyone has musical jingles when they get a call. Some even customize it by giving special people their own ringtone. Take it a step further with the Video Ringtone feature on the Huawei P30 Pro and watch a short clip fill your screen when you get a call.

Switch to Huawei easily with Phone Clone

Switching from your old phone to a brand new Huawei P30 Pro, but worried about all your data? Download Huawei's Phone Clone on your old phone and just connect to your new Huawei P30 Pro via QR Code or a local hotspot. Then all you have to do is select what data you need to be transferred over and then watch the magic happen at super-fast speeds. Using this feature does not require an Internet connection or cables and the app is free to download as well.



What's On



NBK participates in NUKS annual orientation event

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) is committed to supporting the youth of Kuwait in a belief of the role they will have in building a better future. The bank continues to support initiatives that target their growth and development such as the Annual orientation event held for students who were accepted in scholarships to study in the United States and which is organized by the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) - United States Chapter and held under the patronage of the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Dr Hamed Al-Aazmi.

The meeting was attended by a large number of students who were given an overview on NBK's banking services which will benefit them during their studies, as well as the latest transfer alternatives and payment systems that were designed to fit their lifestyle. Students positively engaged in the discussions that responded to their queries about various requirements such as accommodation, living conditions, laws and regulations they need to be aware of, as well as the teaching systems and skills they are expected to acquire.

Commenting on the bank's ongoing support of NUKS, General Manager of Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait Mohammad Al Othman said, "NBK continues to lead in providing the necessary support to Kuwaiti students abroad and the youth segment in general. This comes as part of our ongoing investment in serving every segment of the society and providing them with services and products that cater to their lifestyles and evolving needs."

Al Othman affirmed that NBK is the only Kuwaiti bank to be present in the United States through its New York branch which is

part of its large network of branches, representative offices and subsidiaries located in major business and financial capitals around the world. He added: "We have carefully listened to the concerns of our young customers, the challenges they may face, and the services that the bank can provide them with to facilitate their daily financial transactions. We assure them that we at NBK always place their well being and banking aspirations ahead of our priorities."

Among the many benefits and services offered to students are the toll free numbers, advantageous features offered by the prepaid cards, as well as the US Dollar prepaid card which can be reloaded by the family of the student. NBK gives students access to its services through toll free numbers when calling from outside of Kuwait to assist and respond to their banking inquiries. These numbers are available free of charge and around the clock in nine of the most popular travel destinations which comprise: United States, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Turkey, Italy, Spain and UAE.

NBK's toll free number in the United States is 1-885-577-7625. The bank can also be contacted by the NBK WhatsApp number +965 1801801 which is also available around the clock. NBK Services are as well available at the convenience of customers through NBK Mobile Banking and NBK Online Banking. NBK provides its banking services to customers worldwide thanks to its large network which covers four continents. The bank is present in leading financial centers including Geneva, London, New York, Paris, Shanghai and Singapore, as well as regionally in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and UAE.



French School of Kuwait achieves outstanding results

The French School of Kuwait announced that it had achieved 95 percent success in the French Baccalaureate well known for its demand on the academic performance. 66 percent of candidates received an honorable mention or very honorable: Three candidates received special con-

gratulations from the jury due to an average of more than 18/20. More than that most of our students could enter the most prestigious universities and schools around the world, in France of course, but even in other countries for studies followed through French, English or Arabic languages.



Burgan Bank holds summer workshop

Keeping up with the latest creative interests of the community, Burgan Bank has collaborated with Floward, a premium flower and gifts store, by holding a free workshop for its Youth Account holders. Ensuring its vibrant youth segment are met with diverse, modern trends and prefer-

ences, the innovative workshop was conducted at the Residence Inn by Marriott in Kuwait City. Three workshop sessions were organized due to high demand from youth customers especially since it's during the summer vacation.

The youth account is dedicated for young individuals, between the ages of 15 to 25 who seek to attain a successful future. Account holders receive an instant KD 50 upon student allowance transfer and while also receiving a free prepaid MasterCard and an ATM card which entitles them to discounts at selective merchants thus insuring innovative and one of a kind services for its customers.



LOYAC recently hosted a conclusion ceremony and exhibition for its 'Loyac Jr' program at its headquarters. During the ceremony, children were given the chance to showcase their arts and other works they've done during the summer program.

Low-cost Moon mission puts India among lunar pioneers

SRIHARIKOTA, India: India will step up the international space race tomorrow when it launches a low-cost mission to become only the fourth country to land a probe on the Moon. Just five days before the 50th anniversary of man's first lunar landing, Chandrayaan-2 — or Moon Chariot 2 — will blast off from a tropical island off Andhra Pradesh state after a decade-long build-up.

The mission will also highlight how far space travel has advanced since Neil Armstrong's giant leap for mankind during the Apollo 11 mission. India has spent about \$140 million to get Chandrayaan-2 ready for the 384,400 kilometers trip from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre to the scheduled landing on the lunar South Pole on September 6.

The United States spent about \$25 billion—the equivalent of more than \$100 billion in current prices—on 15 Apollo missions, including the six that put Armstrong and other astronauts on the Moon. China landed its Chang'e 4 lunar craft in January, and spent \$8.4 billion on its entire space program in 2017, according to international Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development figures. And Russia—the first country to land an unmanned Moon rocket in 1966 — spent more than \$20 billion at today's values on lunar missions in the 1960s and 70s.

Spiced-up space race

Almost the entire Chandrayaan-2's orbiter, lander and rover have been designed and made in India. India will use its most powerful rocket launcher, GSLV Mk III, to carry the 2.4-ton

orbiter, which has a mission life of about a year. The spacecraft will carry the 1.4-ton lander Vikram—which in turn will take the 27-kilogramme rover Pragyan—to a high plain between two craters on the lunar South Pole.

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) chief K. Sivan said Vikram's 15-minute final descent "will be the most terrifying moments as we have never undertaken such a complex mission". The solar-powered rover can travel up to 500 meters and is expected to work for one lunar day, the equivalent of 14 Earth days. Sivan said the probe will be looking for signs of water and "a fossil record of the early solar system".

Despite the relatively small budget, the mission does raise questions about how funds are allocated when the country is still battling hunger and poverty. But national pride is at stake: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed to send a manned mission into orbit by 2022. Most experts say the geo-strategic stakes are small—but that India's low-cost model could win commercial satellite and orbiting deals. "The fundamental question that we should ask ourselves in this context is not whether India should undertake such ambitious space ventures, but whether India can afford to ignore it," said K. Kasturirangan, a former ISRO chief. India has to aim to be a leader in space, he added. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, head of space policy at the Observer Research Foundation, a New Delhi think tank, said Chandrayaan-2 will enhance the nation's reputation "at a time when the global and particularly, the Asian space programs are becoming increasingly competitive". — AFP

Mediterranean sharks risk 'disappearing'

PARIS: Sharks—the sea's top predators for millions of years—are at risk of disappearing from the Mediterranean as overfishing and plastic pollution choke populations of the endangered hunters, conservationists warned Friday. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said that more than half of shark and ray species in the Mediterranean were under threat, and that almost a third of them have been fished to the brink of extinction.

Its report, released ahead of Shark Awareness Day, singled out Libya and Tunisia as the worst culprits, with each country's fishery hauling in about 4,200 tons of sharks a year—three times that of the next biggest Mediterranean fisher, Italy. While some species are targeted for food, many of the sharks fished in the Mediterranean are by catch caught up in nets set for other fish. The WWF said it had

recorded more than 60 shark species entangled in fishing nets across the Mediterranean.

In addition, the explosion of plastic pollution is endangering shark populations, either through the animals ingesting or becoming entangled in refuse items. Sharks have been around for more than 400 million years and are particularly vulnerable to population decline due to their slow maturation and long gestation periods. WWF said a lack of international cooperation and regulation meant it was nearly impossible to actively monitor shark conservation efforts.

The IUCN Red List of endangered species counts 79 endangered shark and 120 endangered ray species. But an even bigger problem could be difficulty in tracking sea-based populations; the IUCN says it currently lacks sufficient data on nearly 200 shark species to make a classification. "Sharks are at risk of disappearing from the Mediterranean," said Giuseppe Di Carlo, director of the WWF's Mediterranean Marine Initiative. "Their rapid decline is the most serious signal of the status of our sea and of irresponsible fishing practices. "All Mediterranean countries are responsible for this. Sharks have been part of our sea and culture for thousands of years, we need to act quickly to ensure they remain in the future." Di Carlo added. — AFP

CLINIC

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Stars

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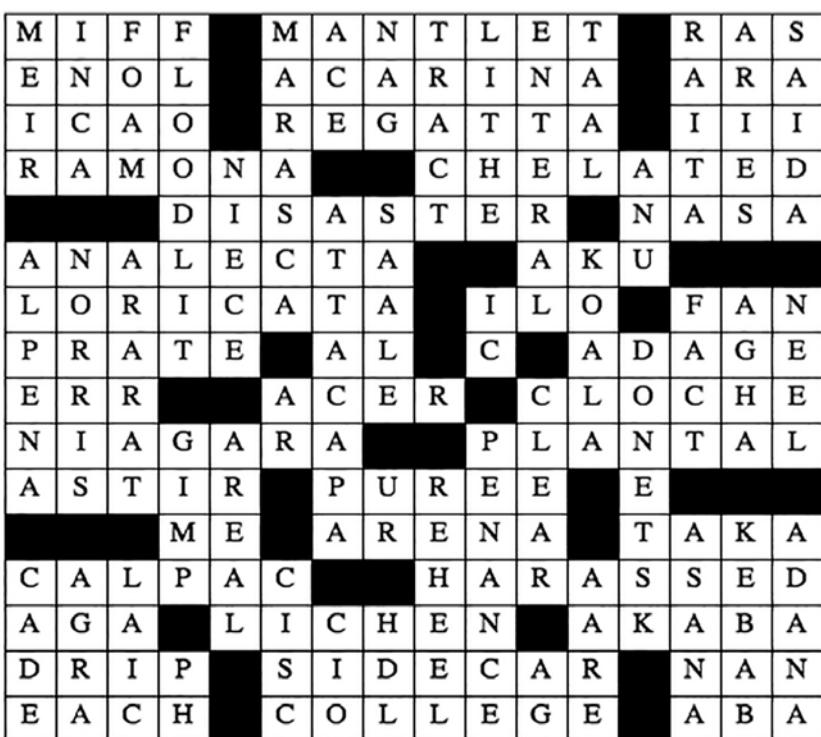
ACROSS

- 1. A recognizable kind.
5. A small hole (usually round and finished around the edges) in cloth or leather for the passage of a cord.
11. Round object that is hit or thrown or kicked in games.
15. A city in northwestern Syria.
16. The mistake of not following suit when able to do so.
17. A fee charged for exchanging currencies.
18. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
20. A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
21. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
22. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
23. A colorless odorless gas used as fuel.
26. (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
28. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
30. A radioactive element of the alkali-metal group discovered as a disintegration product of actinium.
32. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
34. The cry made by sheep.
37. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
39. A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
42. A state in the western United States.
44. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
45. A public promotion of some product or service.
48. A characteristic state or mode of living.
52. Mar or spoil the appearance of.
54. The character flaw or error of a tragic hero that leads to his downfall.
55. A cadenced trot executed by the horse in one spot.
57. Make a more or less disguised reference to.
58. Cut the head of.
61. The fatty flesh of eel.
63. Being one more than one.
64. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
67. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
71. (Irish) The sea personified.
75. The act of slowing down or falling behind.
76. A doctor's degree in dental medicine.
77. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
78. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
79. A column of light (as from a beacon).
80. Any plant of the genus Gerardia.
81. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).

DOWN

- 1. An independent group of closely related Chadic languages spoken in the area between the Biu-Mandara and East Chadic languages.
2. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
3. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
4. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
5. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
6. Not only so, but.
7. Any amoeba of the genus Endamoeba.
8. Lacking excess flesh.
9. Moth having nonfunctional mouthparts as adults.
10. The starting place for each hole on a golf course.
11. When dried yields a hard substance used e.g. in golf balls.
12. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
13. Large luxurious car.
14. The provision of money temporarily (usually at interest).
19. Heal or recover.
24. A city in southeastern South Korea.
25. The face of a timepiece.
27. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
29. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
31. Tie again or anew.
33. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
35. A true bug.
36. Large family of bark-boring or wood-boring short-beaked beetles.
38. (British slang) Cafe.
40. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
41. Of or relating to the African people who speak one of the Bantoid languages or to their culture.
43. Thrown together in a pile.
46. Fallow deer.
47. Capital of Germany located in eastern Germany.
49. A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.
50. Someone who tries to persuade by blandishment and coaxing.
51. Bushy plant of Old World salt marshes and sea beaches having prickly leaves.
53. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
56. Felt hat with a creased crown.
59. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
60. Having rugged physical strength.
62. (Scotland) A landowner.
65. Slightly open.
66. Being two more than ninety.
68. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
69. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
70. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
72. White crystalline compound used as a food additive to enhance flavor.
73. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
74. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today is a day you may find yourself extremely understanding and sympathetic to others. There have been many times in your life you have made decisions that others didn't understand and didn't seem to agree with.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are fully aware you are not getting any younger. A desire to make the most of this life you have been given is a driving force for you. You have been too strict with yourself in the past. It is time to let your hair down and live a little.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your main focus seems to be family. You crave a solid foundation and know that the root of your success and happiness begins and ends with your family. You have needs and you want to be needed by your family and those closest to you.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may find yourself tense and anxious about a situation you have found yourself in. You may feel under pressure and feel somewhat anxious. This may lead to you mentally checking out. You may use this as a coping mechanism for the stress you are under.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Don't be alarmed if you feel as if the hair on the back of your neck is standing on end. Something is leaving you with an unsettled feeling. Suspicions are high. Your mind is in overdrive and you will find your words come quick and sharp.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This is a day you will crave all eyes to be on you. You crave attention. From the way you dress, to the way you carry yourself, the center of attention is what you can expect to be. All eyes are on you. You will shine today.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Surround yourself with all that is beautiful today. You may put yourself in the spotlight today. Don't push responsibilities to the side today. Take care of business. This will be beneficial later and will help you to avoid conflict today.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Romance is in the air and what your heart desires today. An emotional release is on the horizon. This is one of those days your heart is full. There is no more room inside and these emotions have to be shared with someone who is very special to you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 18)

You may be feeling drawn and even turned on by that which is taboo. Sex, power, and the pursuit of wealth are beginning to be a driving force behind your emotions. You are fascinated by people. What makes them do the things they do? What makes them tick? You desire a fresh start in your life and major changes.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may feel as if you wake up living in a fairy tale today. Everything seems to be going in your favor. An almost magical world surrounds you. A world where your dreams are becoming realities and you long for nothing. You are absolutely glowing and others will be drawn to you.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

This is your time to shine. You are full of pride and proud of your accomplishments. You are being noticed in the workplace and have been excelling at your job. You are very observant of the feelings of those around you and are able to make them feel good about themselves.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

People sometimes wonder about the secret to your contentment. It's not something you think about. You just go about each day being helpful and kind. You consider being reliable a part of who you are. You are not working at being happy, but happiness is a by-product of your lifestyle.

Wordsearch Puzzle

90's Songs 1

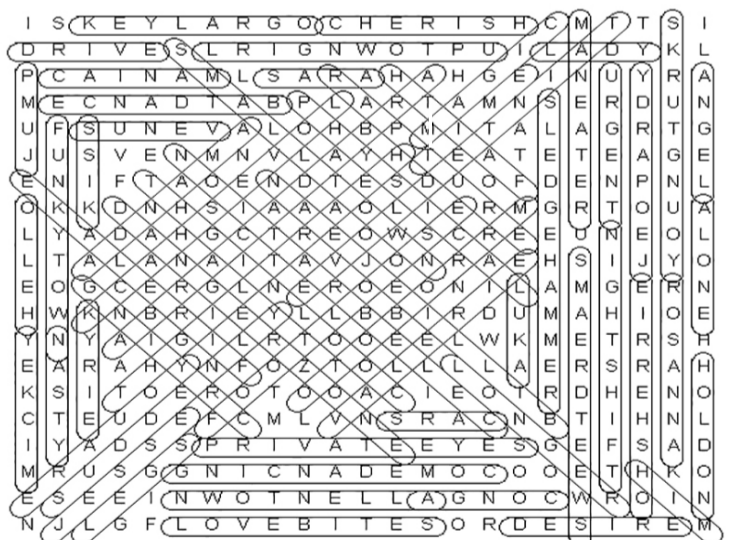
Find and circle all of the 1990's songs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional song.



- ALL STAR ALWAYS BLACK VELVET CARNIVAL COME UNDONE DO ANYTHING EVERY HEARTBEAT FREAK ME GLYCERINE HAZARD HEARTBREAKER HEY LOVER HOLE HEARTED I WISH IESHA INVISIBLE MAN JOYRIDE JUMP LITHIUM LOSER MACARENA MMBOP MOVE THIS MR. WENDAL MY ALL NEVER EVER ONLY YOU PUSH RHYTHM NATION ROOM ROMANTIC RUN AWAY RUSH RUSH SCAR TISSUE SENSITIVITY SHOOP SOMEDAY SUMMERTIME TENNESSEE THA CROSSROADS THE ONE TOM'S DINER TORN VOGUE WICKED GAME WONDER YOU LEARN

Friday's Solution

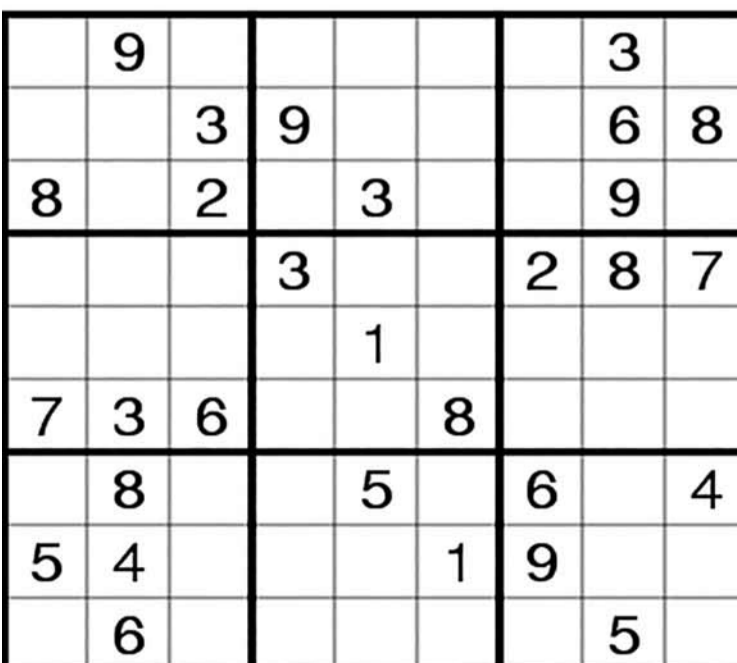
80's Songs



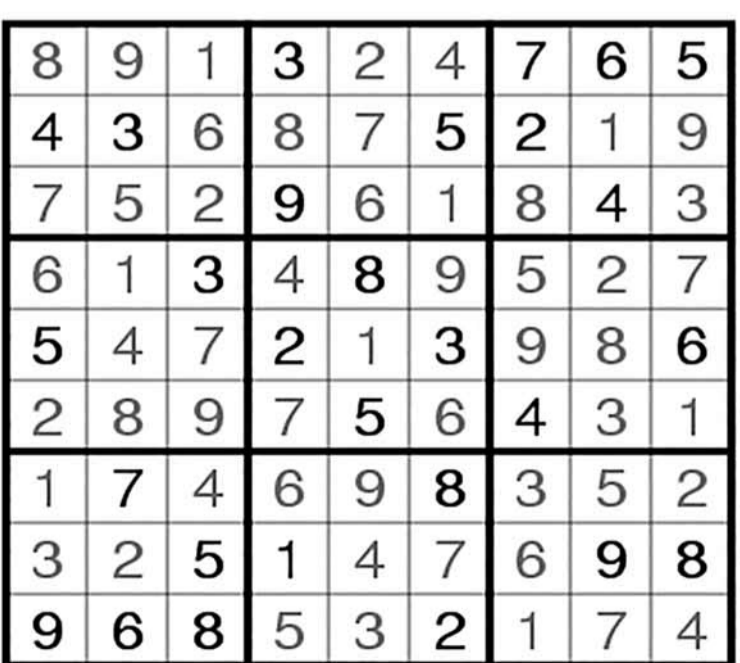
- ABRACADABRA ALLENTOWN ALONE AMANDA ANGEL BATDANCE BILLIE JEAN CARS CELEBRATION CHERISH COME DANCING CONGA COOL NIGHT CRYING DANGER ZONE DESIRE DRIVE FAITH FIRE LAKE FOOTLOOSE FUNKY TOWN HEARTLIGHT HELLO HIM HOLD ON JEOPARDY JESSE JUMP KEY LARGO KISS KYRIE LADY LEGS LONGER LOVE BITES LOVE SHACK LUKA MAGIC MANEATER MANIAC MICKY MR. ROBOTO NASTY NIGHTSHIFT OH SHERRIE PHYSICAL PRIVATE EYES RAapture ROSANNA SARA SLEDGEHAMMER SMALL TOWN SUDDENLY SWEET DREAMS TAINTED LOVE TIME UPTOWN GIRL URGENT VALERIE VENUS YOU ARE YOUNG TURKS

The hidden song is: I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR

Daily Sudoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2019



A visitor takes pictures of an art installation named "100 colors" by French architect Emmanuelle Moureaux on July 12, 2019 at the Eslite book store in Taipei. This art installation made of 8,000 paper-cut numbers will exhibit between July 12 to 31. — AFP

ANCIENT PHARAONIC HARP STRUMS ALONG TO NEW TUNE

When Mohamed Ghaly's workshop was reduced to rubble in February, he could never imagine that a new cultural center dedicated to an instrument with Pharaonic roots would thrive just months later. The semsemia, similar to a harp and made of beechwood with steel strings, is believed to have ancient Egyptian roots. It appears on ornate engravings on tombs. Ghaly, a carpenter by trade, is one of the last craftsmen in Egypt keeping the cultural heritage of the instrument alive. "It's an enchanting instrument that summons you in a way, and I answered its call," he told AFP.

In the last century, the triangular lyre-lookalike with a round bottom has become associated with the coastal towns dotted around the Suez Canal, especially Port Said. It was brought over by Nubian workers who dug the Suez Canal through the Sinai Peninsula. This year marks 150 years since the canal was officially inaugurated. The semsemia is normally played in a dhamma (gathering) with a tabla (an Arabic drum) and a riq (tambourine) accompanying as the musicians sing.

Ghaly, 52, convened a final dhamma flanked by bulldozers as his workshop in the city's famous fish markets was demolished to make way for a new shopping mall. Mostly men of all ages played and sang through the night dancing on the rubble. He had implored the authorities to save his workshop, where musicians jammed and he had chipped away at making semsemias for over a decade, but to no avail.

Weeks later, however, Ghaly secured a new venue for El Torathayah—a folk arts association he founded in 2005 dedicated to the instrument. Canal 20, his new incarnation, is a cultural museum standing just a stone's throw away from Port Said's majestic harbour. Its mission is to teach the woodshop craft and pass on the semsemia's musical heritage to a new generation.

'Palpable spirit'

Firefighter Ibrahim Awad, 35, a semsemia fan from an early age, was there on the emotional night when Ghaly

had to close up shop. "What I love is there isn't a band with a leader but a palpable spirit you can feel...it's really interactive," he told AFP. When British, French and Israeli troops launched an attack in 1956 after then president



Iman Haddo (center), a 20-year-old musician, plays a semsemia fan during a music session at the Canal 20 cultural museum in the northeastern city of Port Said at the northern terminus of the Suez Canal. — AFP photos

Gamal Abdel Nasser had nationalized the canal. Egyptians wrote nationalistic songs inspired by their defense of the canal. The semsemia became a musical weapon of national resistance.

Port Said, a cosmopolitan trading hub on the Mediterranean that once boasted sizeable communities of French, Greeks, Jews and Italians, was destroyed during the Suez crisis. In 1967 when Israel occupied the Sinai, Ghaly's family was among thousands of residents displaced to other parts of Egypt. But he never forgot his Port Said roots. "I used to hear it on the radio and that made me fall in love with it. Here I was a Port Saidi away from my home—so that left a mark on me," he said.

He started tinkering around with making his own semsemias in the 1980s. After a musician asked Ghaly to make him one, he enjoyed the challenge of putting his carpentry skills to good use and has professionally been crafting



Egyptian craftsman Mohamed Ghaly adds the finishing touches on a semsemia fan that he made.

them since 2003. "When I am crafting it, I'm either in a really good mood or a bad one. When I'm really upset, I actually make the best semsemias. I live through the craft," he said.

'Not just for men'

Iman Haddo, 20, is part of the young crowd that gathers at Canal 20, where Ghaly displays old photographs of semsemia legends. She instantly fell in love with the semsemia when she was a teenager after attending a local concert with her father. "I heard the semsemia for the first time about seven years ago. It was very strange for me, I'd never seen it before and you never see it around really," she said.

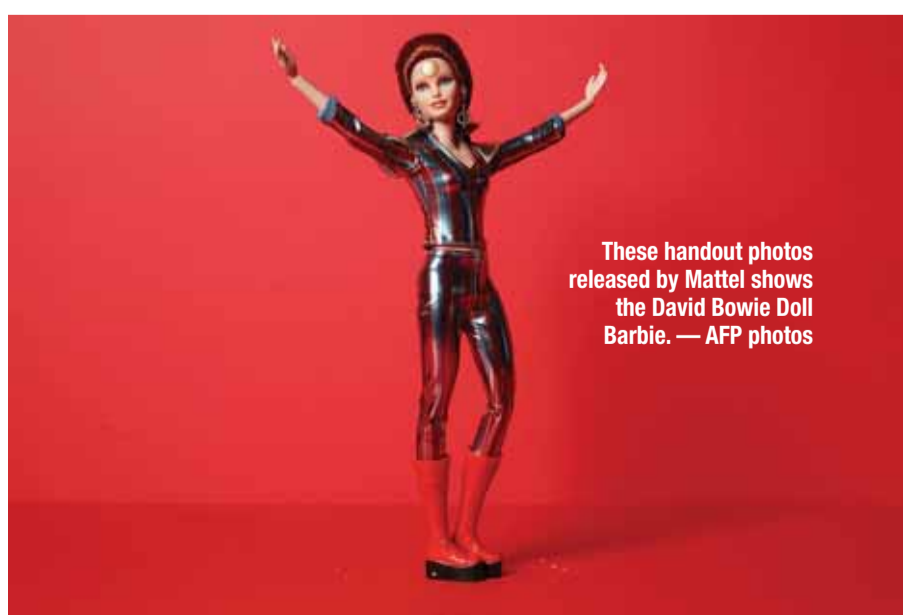
"I also questioned why it was only boys playing and asked where are the girls," Haddo said. Semsemia players are mostly older men.

Strumming the semsemia's strings came naturally to her,



Iman Haddo (center), a 20-year-old musician, plays a semsemia fan during a music session.

and a year ago, Haddo started the Arab world's first all-female semsemia choir called Amwag (waves). "In our local folk culture, girls would dance and perform to the tune of the semsemia but they weren't ever expected to play so I thought why not start a girls' band," she said. They practice three times a week at Canal 20 and have been invited to play at music festivals. "We want to show music lovers that the semsemia isn't just for men, that women can play it well and be successful at it," she said. "We also want to save our heritage." — AFP



These handout photos released by Mattel shows the David Bowie Doll Barbie. — AFP photos

Mattel unveils David Bowie Barbie doll

A limited edition David Bowie Barbie was unveiled Thursday by toymaker Mattel to honor the 50th anniversary of the release of the iconic singer's hit single "Space Oddity." The doll, sporting a striped metallic jumpsuit with matching platform red boots and cosmic accessories, symbolizes Bowie's bisexual alien messenger alter-ego Ziggy Stardust. "In a definitive celebration of two pop culture icons, Barbie honors the ultimate pop chameleon, English singer, songwriter and actor, David Bowie, whose dramatic musical transformations continue to influence and inspire," Mattel said in introducing the \$50 doll.

It added that the collectible was a tribute to "the cultural legacy of the musical genius who redefined rock and roll." The singer, who died in 2016, had said that his classic 1969 single "Space Oddity" was inspired by filmmaker Stanley Kubrick's epic film "2001," which was released a year earlier. Mattel this week also launched a doll of astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti, the European Space Agency's only active female astronaut, as part of a project to inspire more girls to explore careers in science and technology. — AFP





YOUNG AND DYLAN WOW HYDE PARK CROWD

Neil Young and Bob Dylan both wowed 65,000 fans as they shared headline billing in Hyde Park on Friday night. The two music legends came together for an historic night in London which saw them play a host of their classic tracks for the capacity crowd. First on stage was Young who joked that he had "never played in daylight before" in reference to the fact he had to go on before Dylan and the Canadian musician was in good spirits as he added "it's great to see everybody". Backed by his band The Promise of the Real, which features Willie Nelson's son Lukas, the 73-year-old rocker opened with 'Mansion on the Hill', 'Over and Over' and 'Country Home' from his Crazy Horse period before playing 'Alabama' - which features on his acclaimed 1972 album 'Harvest' - to huge cheers from the crowd. Those cheers only got louder when Young strapped on his acoustic guitar and harmonica for beloved classic 'Heart of Gold', also taken from 'Harvest'. Appreciating the crowd's response to the song, he followed it up with 'From Hank to Hendrix' and then acknowledging his fans' love of his folk material he said with smile whilst pointing to his guitar "Do you want another one on this one?" The huge cheers gave way to a rendition of 'Old Man' which sparked the biggest singalong of his set. Young - whose stage was adorned with a Love sign and a bird flying above the band with a peace sign as an eye - also delivered an impassioned version of 'Rockin' in the Free World' showing his political passions still burn as brightly as ever. He and the band returned for an encore of fan

favorite 'Like A Hurricane' and 'Piece of Crap' - from his 1994 album 'Sleeps with Angels'. It was then Dylan's turn to take to the stage and he walked out unannounced and sat down at his piano with a wide grin before opening with 'Ballad of a Thin Man' from his seminal 1965 album 'Highway 61 Revisited'. Unlike Young, Dylan likes to be playful with his most famous songs often changing the key, the melodies and the arrangements and it seemed to take the capacity crowd a minute to spot that his next song was a piano-led version of his 1964 track 'It Ain't Me, Babe'. The 78-year-old icon did play a faithful version of his song 'Make You Feel My Love' - which featured on his 1997 LP 'Time Out of Mind' and became a huge hit for Adele when she covered the track - and when he played 'Like A Rolling Stone' the crowd joined in to provide backing vocals raising a smile from their hero. Other highlights included blues numbers 'Thunder on the Mountain' and 'Gotta Serve Somebody' and ballads 'Simple Twist of Fate' and 'Girl from the North Country'. Dylan's encore was comprised of an intriguing rendition of 'Blowin' in the Wind' and 'It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry' before he and his band took a bow in front of their adoring audience. Both Young and Dylan were watched by a host of famous fans including actor Luke Wilson, former Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker and Jake Bugg.

Robbie likes working with hubby

Margot Robbie thinks it is a "huge advantage" to work with her husband. The 29-year-old actress and her spouse Tom Ackerley head up their own production company, LuckyChap Entertainment, and though they were warned it would be a "bad idea" to venture into business together, she thinks it was the right decision. She said "I've been told by many people in showbiz that it's a really bad idea to work with loved ones or close friends but I don't see it that way at all. I think it's a huge advantage for me to be able to work with Tom. We know each other so well and we enjoy being able to develop and work on projects together. Several of my long-term friends also work with me at our company and one of my best friends is my set assistant, so we get to spend a lot of time together - it's nice to have a close friend around you while you're

working, especially on very long days when you're not always feeling your best." The 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood' star hopes her company can create more opportunities for women. She told Psychologies: "I don't intend to be the lead actress in all our productions! My goal is to collaborate with many talented women of my generation and, as a matter of policy, our production company is made up of 50 per cent women. Women are often seen as competing against each other for the best roles or jobs and I think that's ridiculous and absolutely not true. I would like to prove that a group of girls of the same generation can work together and accomplish great things. I am the first to applaud other women who make their mark in film."



Keanu Reeves' Toy Story honor

Keanu Reeves has described starring in "Toy Story 4" as an "honor". The 54-year-old actor lent his vocal talents to Canadian stuntman toy Duke Caboom in the latest installment of the franchise and he "absolutely loves" his daredevil animated alter ego. He said: "It has been an incredible experience, an honor. Duke Caboom is very brave and he has a lot of heart. He's a daredevil stuntman. I absolutely love Duke Caboom." Just like Duke, Keanu rides a motorcycle but he's not gone without accidents on the high-powered vehicle. He admitted: "I had a motorcycle accident in Topanga Canyon and it was at night, so I yelled out for help. Out of the darkness, someone yelled, 'Help is on the way!'. I never met them but saw an ambulance coming, so thank you for that." But the accident didn't put the 'Speed' star off riding a motorbike and he still enjoys the "thrill" of getting out on the road. He told Britain's OK! magazine: "I love the vibration, the movement and the independence. It's quite thrilling. There's a physical pleasure and it's a great place to think and to feel - or not to think and not to feel." As well as riding his motorbike, Keanu also finds meditation beneficial for his mental state, though he doesn't do it very often any more. He said: "I fall into it once in a while, I don't meditate regularly. But I recommend it. It's calming."

Raimi thinks about unfinished Spider-Man movie 'all the time'



Sam Raimi thinks about his unmade 'Spider-Man' movie "all the time". The 59-year-old director helmed the 'Spider-Man' trilogy between 2002 and 2007, but Sam still harbors regrets about plans for his fourth Spider-Man movie being scrapped by the studio. Speaking to Yahoo, Sam explained: "I think about it all the time. It's hard not to, because each summer another Spider-Man film comes out! So when you have an unborn one, you can't help but think what might have been. But I try to focus on what will be, and not look into the past." Meanwhile, J.K. Simmons previously admitted he would "never say never" to returning to the Spider-Man world. The actor starred as Daily Bugle newspaper editor J. Jonah Jameson in all three of Sam's 'Spider-Man' movies, and he would very much like to reprise the role in Tom Holland's Spider-Man films. J.K. said: "I never say never. I mean, you know, obviously I had an amazing time with Sam Raimi on those movies and Tobey Maguire and everybody. That was a great, great time and huge for my career and my life, and just pure fun. If there were an opportunity to revisit that ... I don't know, though. How old is 'Spider-Man' going to be if J. Jonah Jameson is this old?"



Ed Sheeran: I'm inspired by Bruno Mars

Ed Sheeran feels inspired by Bruno Mars. The 28-year-old pop star has joined forces with Bruno, 33, for his latest album, 'No.6 Collaborations Project' - which features a number of the world's best-known musicians - and Ed has admitted to being a long-time fan of the 'Finesse' hitmaker. Speaking on his own YouTube channel, Ed explained: "He's just a talented writer. And he's so musically talented, he's played every instrument on that [track, 'Blow']". "Played the drums, played the bass, played the guitar. He's like, different level in the studio." Ed also admitted that the song's rock vibe came about because of the influence of country singer Chris Stapleton. He said: "It was purely by accident with having Chris Stapleton, and he just seemed the most interesting. Chris was there and he played us the riff ... and then we were like 'Oh, let's write a song about that.'" Similarly, Ed relished working with Cardi B on the track 'South of the Border', which also features Camila Cabello. Speaking about Cardi, he shared: "I love how unfiltered she is. She's so media trained not to be media trained. Like her whole shtick is she goes on and says whatever she wants and that is what works for her. She's successful because she is who she is; there's no one else that could be Cardi B."



Madonna: 'Awards are overrated'

Madonna thinks awards are "overrated". The 60-year-old singer doesn't care about having accolades bestowed on her in recognition of her career and doesn't pay much attention to them. Asked if she felt it was about time when she was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2008, she said: "No. No. I don't know about awards and things like that. They're overrated." However, the 'Medlin' singer admitted it was "an honor" to induct her idol David Bowie - who died of cancer in 2016 - into the hall in 1996. Reflecting on the moment, she said "To be connected with him in any way is an honor. I watched his documentary recently, just to be reminded of what a genius he was. So brilliant, so amazing. So fearless. He tried on so many things. He just went down so many roads and tried so many different genres of music too. And he really went for it and was fearless. He didn't care what people thought. I love that about him." Madonna thinks the 'Life on Mars' singer "changed [her] life" and she was blown away the first time she saw him perform when she was just 15. She gushed to MOJO magazine: "He changed my life. It was the first concert I ever went to. I remember just being frozen. Rigid. Staring up at this creature thinking, Oh my God, he's everything. He's male and female and beautiful and elegant and poetic and funny and ironic and other-worldly." And I recognized myself in him somehow and he gave me license to dream a different future for myself."

Millie Bobby Brown designs collection for Converse

Millie Bobby Brown has designed her own collection for Converse that is inspired by her "love of the ocean". The 15-year-old actress has logged on to her Instagram account to show off her limited-edition collaboration with the iconic sneaker brand, and the star has revealed she wanted her line which features 10 different color-ways and prints, to "highlight" her passion for "do it yourself fashion" and also "whales". She captioned a campaign image: "Introducing MILLIE BY YOU, a new collection of shoes I designed with @Converse that highlights my love for whales and the ocean as well as DIY fashion. The coolest part is YOU get to customise and create your own unique pair of chucks with prints, colours and materials chosen by ME! Go design your pair now!!!! Link in bio. #ConverseXMBB #ConverseByYou #ConversePartner (sic)" And the 'Stranger Things' star - who is Converse's youngest ever collaborator - insisted she wanted the shoe range to be expressive and represent her own personality. Converse captioned a photo of the star on social media: "When I started with this collection, I wanted something that represented me as a person. I wanted to express myself but also let other people express themselves." - @milliebobbybrown The Millie By You Collection. Design yours now at Converse.com. (Available in the US and Western Europe.) #ConverseByYou #ConverseXMBB (sic)" The footwear brand - which has previously

launched collaborations with Blondie singer Debbie Harry, artist Damien Hirst and Nintendo - will also allow fans of Millie and Converse to customise their pair of Chuck Taylors, which are available in both a high top and low top version.



Lifestyle | Gossip



Doves plan new music

Doves are "working towards" new music. The 'Black and White Town' trio - comprising Andy and Jez Williams and Jimi Goodwin - returned to live performing earlier this year after a hiatus of nearly 10 years and they have now confirmed fans will get to hear some fresh songs from them, though they warned it could take some time. Jez said: "We're working towards new music. It's impossible to say when, but we have started on that long and winding road." The trio are enjoying performing live again and thinks they've got the "subtlety" of their sound back. Jimi told Uncut magazine: "We've got all the subtlety back [on stage]. We'd become quite bombastic but now the feel is right again. It's a real joy." Although it's been 17 years since the group released their biggest hit, 'There Goes the Fear', they still love to perform it, much to their relief. Jez said: "It's always been fun to play. We're like vampires, we feed off the crowd's enthusiasm and the reaction

and feedback is always great. That's why it never gets boring." Jimi added: "It would be horrible if we didn't enjoy playing it, having to get up and do it with a grin on your face. "Every band has got a track that kind of defines them and I guess this is the one that represents us. I'm cool with that. It's a great tune." But the band didn't expect the song to be so big at the time it was recorded. Jez said: "We were proud of the track, we loved it, but we never had an idea of 'oh God people are going to love this.' "We had done that before and we were always wrong. "But a guy who worked for EMI had this brilliant idea of putting 50,000 copies out and just deleting it the same day. Cool. "It's a bit elitist, thinking about it now, but it went mental then. "People were talking about it, radio were playing it, you could sense this general atmosphere around the track. Definitely a lot of love."

Miller thinks Sonic the Hedgehog redesign will please fans



Tim Miller hopes the 'Sonic the Hedgehog' character redesign pleases fans. The film director and visual effects artist is executive producing the live-action film based on the blue hedgehog from the iconic video game franchise, which faced backlash from fans when the first trailer dropped, as many were unhappy with the titular creature's design. Following the criticism - which took aim at Sonic's human teeth and bizarre looking calf muscles - Paramount pulled the film from its release schedule in order to redesign the character, and Miller has now said it was important to "listen" to the fans. Speaking to Variety magazine, he said: "This is a franchise, and it has to be great. Look, I was with fans and so was Jeff [Fowler, the movie's director]. When the s**t hit the fan, I went over there and said, 'The most important thing to do, man, is say, I messed up.' He'd already sent a tweet out an hour before I got there. He's a good man. It was exactly the right way to handle that. The fans have a voice in this too. There's a right way to listen." And Miller believes the new design will please fans. When asked if he's seen the new look, he said: "In fact I have. And I think the fans will be pleased." Miller's comments come after Jeff Fowler recently insisted he'd heard fans' criticisms "loud and clear" and would be making "changes" to Sonic's design as soon as possible. He tweeted: "Thank you for the support. And the criticism. The message is loud and clear ... you aren't happy with the design & you want changes. It's going to happen. Everyone at Paramount & Sega are fully committed to making this character the BEST he can be... #sonicmovie #gottafixfast (sic)" Following the need for a redesign, the movie - which stars Ben Schwartz as the voice of Sonic and Jim Carrey as the evil Doctor Robotnik - has been pushed back to a February 2020 release.

Scouting For Girls announce new album The Trouble With Boys

Scouting For Girls think their new album is their strongest in over a decade. 'The Trouble With Boys' will be the pop trio's fifth studio album - and their first standalone LP since 2015's 'Still Thinking About You' - and they made sure to "take extra time and care" to make the collection exactly how they wanted it. The band said: "We are so excited to release 'The Trouble with Boys', our first studio album in four years. "We're really proud of it and genuinely feel it's our best collection of songs since our debut. "Both albums really benefited from the extra time and care we spent writing and recording them. I can't wait for people to hear it." The album - which will drop on September 20 - will feature brand new summery single 'Grow Up', and the 'She's So Lovely' hitmakers are set for a huge winter tour this year. Although it is recog-

nized as the first studio release in four years, Scouting For Girls did release a best off collection 'Ten Add Ten' two years ago to mark a decade since their self-titled debut, which featured new tracks as well as the original LP. Meanwhile, the group - made up of Roy Stride, Greg Churchouse and Pete Ellard - will play venues like London's Shepherd's Bush Empire and Manchester's Albert Hall on a 30-date UK tour in November and December, following a string of festival shows over the next couple of months. They added: "Touring is our very favorite aspect of being in this band. Our 2017 anniversary tour was so incredible that we're pulling out all the stops to beat it. "We've got a handful of new tunes, some old fan favorites we haven't played for years plus all the big singles. We can't wait."



Wayne 'won't quit' Blink-182 tour

Lil Wayne "won't be quitting" the Blink-182 tour - despite walking off stage during a recent set. The 36-year-old rapper star appeared to quit the tour in abrupt fashion during a gig in Bristow, Virginia, but he's now confirmed he won't be walking away from the scheduled shows. He wrote on Twitter: "Yesterday was crazy! But I want all my fans to know I won't be quitting this tour! I'm having too much fun with my bros blink-182. Bangor, ME See you tomorrow! (sic)" Prior to walking off stage, Wayne spoke to the crowd about his grievances. He said: "I just want the people to know if you were wondering, please forgive me but I am so not used to performing to a crowd and there's not too many ... that's not my swag. "I'm not sure how long I'm gonna be able

to do this tour, but make some noise for Blink-182 for including me anyway. This might be my last night, though." Meanwhile, Blink-182 - which is made up of Mark Hoppus, Travis Barker and Alkaline Trio's Matt Skiba - are set to release a new album later this summer. Mark, the group's bassist and singer, recently revealed there is an official announcement "forthcoming". He explained: "There is not an exact date. It is coming out this summer. I was just on the phone earlier today with Ron Perry, who's the head of our label, and we are figuring out the exact launch date. "But we are finalizing mixes right now, we have about half the album mastered, and the announce on when the album will be released will be forthcoming."

Dave Bautista: Stuber tackles toxic masculinity

Dave Bautista says 'Stuber' offers up a "constant discussion" about toxic masculinity. The 50-year-old wrestler turned actor is set to star alongside Kumail Nanjani in the upcoming two-hander comedy, and has said that whilst the film works hard to make audiences "laugh", there's an underlying strong message about the dangers of toxic masculinity. He said: "Throughout the film, we're constantly talking about it. Sometimes you don't realize it because we're making you laugh or disguising it with action, but we really do have the discussion throughout the film." And his co-star Kumail - who plays a straightlaced Uber driver alongside Dave's rogue cop character - added that it was important for them to talk about "dude issues" in the movie, because the way masculinity has been "traditionally defined" is causing "problems for everyone". Speaking in a joint interview with The Hollywood Reporter, he said: "I feel like we're in a time where we can talk about masculinity and how it's always been very traditionally defined in

a narrow way and how that's led to problems for everyone - for women and for men. I felt like it would be interesting to try to talk about that stuff in a traditionally very masculine genre. A buddy cop action comedy is such a dude movie, so we thought it would be interesting to talk about dude issues that also affect the whole world, in a traditionally male genre." Meanwhile, Dave recently said the movie is a "huge deal" for him as he feels smaller movies are "hit and miss" and thinks its success lies entirely on how it does commercially. He said: "That's the scary part, it's my first studio lead which is a huge deal for me and it's a great movie I'm really proud of the movie. "The thing is small movies like this are hit and miss because people don't turn up to see it they wait for the big Marvel films. "It costs a lot to go see a movie now and everybody gauges everything on box office drop so if we don't crush it - hopefully that won't destroy me as a lead but I'm really hoping we will crush it."



Woody Harrelson joins the cast of Kate

Woody Harrelson has joined the cast of 'Kate'. The 57-year-old actor will star in alongside Mary Elizabeth Winstead in the thriller flick, which will see a female assassin go on a manhunt on the streets of Tokyo after she is poisoned and given just 24 hours to live. Variety first reported the news of Harrelson's casting, which comes almost three months after they also broke the news of Winstead's role as the assassin herself. Cedric Nicolas-Troyan will direct the motion picture, and Umair Aleem will pen the script. Production on 'Kate' is expected to begin this year, and the film will be produced by Bryan Unkeless, Kelly McCormick, and Patrick Newall, while David Leitch and Scott Morgan will serve as executive producers. The movie will be shown through Netflix after the streaming giants secured the rights when they won an aggressive bidding war back in 2017. Netflix have also hired stunt coordinator and second unit director

Jonathan Eusebio, special effects make-up designer Damian Martin, visual effects producer Taylor Rockwell, production designer Dominic Watkins, and Lyle Vincent as cinematographer. Meanwhile, Harrelson recently revealed that playing himself in his 2017 directorial debut 'Lost in London' - which recounted autobiographical events in 2002 - was "one of the least likeable characters" he's ever played. He said: "This is probably one of the least likeable characters I've ever played and I'm playing me. So I wish I had made some reason to like him a little more." "I gotta say it was something so wonderfully liberating about everything working out. You get a shot at redemption. It's a pretty glorious thing because what it taught me, and what the theme of the movie is, is that you've gotta feel pretty lucky for what you have you know? I was made aware of how lucky I was and hopefully I haven't taken it lightly since then." — Bang Showbiz

KISS heartbroken by Manchester Arena attack

KISS say the Manchester Arena bombing "broke their hearts". The legendary rock band were due to perform at the venue just eight days after a terror attack at Ariana Grande's concert killed 22 people two years ago, and bassist Gene Simmons has opened up about how "heartbreaking" the horrific tragedy was. He told The Sun newspaper's Bizarre column: "Manchester broke our hearts. It's the children, the innocent young people who have nothing to do with politics or foreign policy. It's heartbreaking. We stepped up to do anything we could." Although the 'Detroit Rock City' band weren't able to play a proposed benefit show at a different venue due to security concerns, they raised £300,000 by auctioning branded, UK-themed guitars they planned to use at the cancelled show. The money raised went towards an MRI scanner at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, where

victims were treated following the 2017 attack. Now, as KISS prepare to play at the arena on Friday night they have planned another fundraiser to boost the tally even further. They have commissioned two more guitars - each in the team colors of Manchester United and Manchester City - which will be signed by the band, both current squads of players and team legends before being auctioned on September 21. Gene added: "I hope the players put in bids as we're sort of a big deal. They'll pay." Meanwhile, the 69-year-old musician also opened up on live as a rock 'n' roll icon, and insisted his long hair is a vital part of the image. He said: "If you're in Coldplay it doesn't matter. But it's part of the culture of the music we do. I have a lot more on my back. I wake up in the morning a new hair has grown in my nose. It's like God has a sense of humor."



Lifestyle | Music & Movies



Members of "La Vieja Escuela" rock band perform in Havana. — AFP photos



Members of rock band "Challenger" play during a rehearsal in Havana.

CUBA'S AGING ROCKERS FINALLY EARN THEIR DUE

For decades, their songs were banned, and even called the "music of the enemy." But Cuba's rockers have finally found their place in a nation where salsa, rumba and reggaeton usually reign. This year, Havana will celebrate the International Day of Rock and Roll—which falls on Saturday—with three days of concerts. Each day, 13 groups will take the stage at Maxim Rock, the club that

can no longer squeeze into those tight jeans, but they're still performing regular gigs in Havana. Roberto Diaz, a 48-year-old with a graying goatee who will begin a European tour next month with his group Animas Mundi, was one of the musicians who tried to keep rock alive in Cuba in the late 1980s.

"I was one of those youngsters who would get

between the communist-ruled island nation and Washington soon followed—most notably in the form of the US economic embargo in place since the early 1960s. Rock music was banned from television and radio airwaves from the 1960s to the 1980s before slowly benefiting from a decade of increasing tolerance. During the ban, rock "was sometimes viewed as ideological corruption,"

Yellow Submarine

In 1990, the Soviet Union crumbled, Cuba lost its main financial backer—and the island suffered its worst economic crisis. At that time, rock music began to spread its wings. The open-air "Patio de Maria" concert space opened in a hugely symbolic spot: close to Havana's Revolution Square, the country's political hub. There, Cuba's first professional rock groups started performing and change was in the air. Castro himself unveiled a statue of John Lennon in 2000, and El Submarino Amarillo, a rock bar that pays tribute to the eponymous Beatles album and film, "The Yellow Submarine," opened its doors. Several state-run cultural centers began to include rock—once seen as subversive—on their programs.

That was a step in the right direction, "but there's still a lot to do," said Hernandez. "Access to television and radio programs has improved, but we're still only at the beginning." Torres says it's still hard to get interest from music labels. Steinar Seland, a 50-year-old Norwegian who arrived in Cuba in the 1990s, is the leader of Vieja Escuela. When he came to the island, rock "was still a marginal phenomenon, and it remains a bit that way," Seland explains. "But then again, we're on the island of salsa, aren't we?" he added.

Cuban rock diehards say they're ready to make up for lost time. "There are fans who've started to come back," said Torres, explaining the phenomenon of the "tembas" (oldies), who are driven by nostalgia and happiness to be able to listen openly. "They were kids who were hippies or rock enthusiasts and now they're architects, doctors... perfectly integrated into society." Even if the audience is still relatively small, "it makes us happy" to play without fear, said Torres. — AFP



Members of rock band "Challenger" play during a rehearsal in Havana.



Members of rock band "Challenger" play during a rehearsal in Havana.



Members of "La Vieja Escuela" rock band perform in Havana.

also serves as the home of the government-sanctioned Cuban Rock Agency, for a 10-hour marathon. It will be a far cry from the many years when the classic rocker look—long hair, tight jeans and leather bracelets—was at odds with the "new man" image, hard-working and serious, vaunted by the authorities during Fidel Castro's revolution.

Despite the obvious difficulties, most of Cuba's rockers chose to remain at home and dedicate themselves to their music, rather than opt for exile or the struggles of dissident life. Nowadays, some have lost their hair while others

stopped in the street all the time, getting asked for my ID documents or being taken down to the police station if I was walking around with my guitar or keyboard," said Diaz. "It was tough—it wasn't like it is today," said Virgilio Torres, a 62-year-old singer with Vieja Escuela ("Old School").

'Ideological corruption'

Rock came to Cuba from the United States in 1955, four years before the revolution. Political confrontation

said Torres. "It was the enemy's music because we sang in English, which created confusion.

"Later, (authorities) realized it wasn't many years later but they'd already deprived many musicians of their instruments, leaving them with nothing." The island's rockers needed to come up with ingenious ways to keep playing. "We made guitar strings with telephone wires, used telephone handsets to fashion adapted microphones, we created speakers from wood," said Aramis Hernandez, 62, a drummer and leader of the band Challenger.



Movie producer Harvey Weinstein (center) exits after his appearance in criminal court on sexual assault charges on July 11, 2019 in New York City. — AFP

Judge approves fresh changes to Weinstein defense team, trial due in September

A New York judge approved fresh changes to the defense team of Harvey Weinstein on Thursday, less than two months before the former Hollywood producer's trial on sexual assault charges is set to begin on September 9. Asked by Judge James Burke if he agreed to allowing Chicago-based Donna Rotunno, a former prosecutor who specializes in defending men accused of sexual assault, and Damon Cheronis to replace his current attorney Jose Baez, Weinstein, dressed in a suit and tie, said "Yes." Weinstein faces charges involving two different women—one who alleges he raped her in 2013, the other that he forced her to perform oral sex in 2006.

Having originally retained leading New York attorney Benjamin Brafman, who battled unsuccessfully to get the case dismissed, Weinstein then switched out his team earlier this year and brought in Baez and also Ronald Sullivan, a Harvard law professor, who withdrew in May after protests on campus. According to US media reports, the founder of the Miramax studios and The Weinstein Company has reviewed his defense strategy several times, and thought that having a woman heading his team would make a more favorable impression on the jury in a sexual assault case.

"I think this type of a case requires the right lawyers," Rotunno said after the court session. "I think a woman standing here could make a difference. I think I may view things a little bit differently." She said the #MeToo movement, which erupted in protest against sexual harassment as dozens of women came forward to denounce Weinstein, was partly to blame for her client's plight. "Movements allow emotions to take over and they're devoid of facts and evidence," she said. "Emotion in this case has taken over."

"We are hoping that as the trial progresses, as evidence is put forth and witnesses are heard, we will hear the other side of this story," the attorney said. "The story that has been told up to this point has been very one-sided. And I can promise you that there is a truth you have not reported on." Lawyers representing the women accusing Weinstein pointed out that disgraced entertainer Bill Cosby had also hired a high-powered woman lawyer to plead his case, but he ended up in jail. Once one of the most powerful men in Hollywood, Weinstein has been accused of harassment and assault by more than 80 women, including stars such as Angelina Jolie and Ashley Judd. — AFP

R. Kelly arrested on child pornography, other charges

R&B superstar R. Kelly has been arrested on suspicion of having sex with five underage girls, recording some of it on video tapes, and then attempting to hide the evidence, US prosecutors said Friday. A 13-count indictment returned Thursday in Chicago also alleged the 52-year-old singer intimidated victims and concealed evidence in a 2008 trial that ended in his acquittal of child pornography charges. The latest charges include receiving and producing child pornography, enticing a minor to engage in criminal sexual activity and obstruction of justice.

A separate federal indictment unsealed in New York Thursday accused Kelly of recruiting women and girls for sex. Federal agents arrested the Grammy Award winner Thursday night while he walked his dog in Chicago, his lawyer Steve Greenberg said in a statement. Two former employees of his music business—Derrel McDavid and Milton Brown—also were charged in the case. The Chicago indictment alleges Kelly met the five victims in the 1990s and had sex with them when they were under age 18, "creating numerous explicit videos with four of them," federal prosecutors said in a statement.

Payments for videos

According to the indictment, Kelly and McDavid began paying an acquaintance hundreds of thousands of dollars in 2001 to collect the videos in an effort to hide evidence. When the unidentified acquaintance planned to go public with the videos, the indictment alleges, Kelly, McDavid and others paid him \$170,000 to cancel the event. Kelly, whose legal name is Robert

Kelly, was already facing Illinois state felony charges of aggravated sexual assault, and was out on bail at the time of his arrest.

"The conduct alleged appears to largely be the same as the conduct previously alleged against Mr Kelly in his current state indictment and the former state charges that he was acquitted of," Kelly's lawyer Greenberg said. "Most, if not all, of the conduct alleged is decades old," he added. Kelly has a decades-long history of abuse allegations, especially of underage girls. In 1994 he wed his protegee Aaliyah, the late R&B star who was 15 at the time.

Kelly, then 27, had produced the teenage singer's debut album titled "Age Ain't Nothing But a Number." Their marriage was later annulled, and Aaliyah died in a plane crash in 2001. Despite unsettling claims against him, the decorated musician—known for hits including "I Believe I Can Fly"—has continued to perform and maintain a solid fan base.

'Surviving R Kelly'

But his fortunes began to shift after the January release of a six-part documentary called "Surviving R. Kelly." The documentary, which alleged that Kelly engaged in sexual, mental and physical abuse of girls and women, prompted Chicago prosecutors to publicly seek out potential victims. After the state charges were filed in February, Kelly spent three nights behind bars and was released after coming up with \$100,000, a tenth of the \$1 million bail set in court. — AFP



In this file photo Singer R. Kelly leaves the Leighton Criminal Court Building after a hearing on sexual abuse charges in Chicago. — AFP



French jazz accordionist Vincent Peirani recently did a tour that included a stop in New York, where he participated in the France Rocks festival. — AFP

Despite financial hurdles, New York still seducing jazz artists

Its lilts and grooves can feel like nostalgic rhythms from a bygone era, but jazz remains a thriving contemporary art form—and its proponents still flock to New York hoping to catch a break. Despite a booming rents that have left few affordable bases for struggling artists of all stripes, jazz musicians tend to consider the American cultural metropolis the premier petri dish for cultivating their craft. "There's a long history," said Clovis Nicolas, a bassist who grew up near Marseille and has called New York home for 16 years. After a few visits in his late 20s he decided to move there from Paris.

"I was getting so much information and inspiration from the music scene that it would make me play better," he recalled. "The standards are pretty high. It's a place where all the best musicians from the US and the world come to meet," the 46-year-old told AFP at a diner a few neighborhoods south of his home in Harlem. Jazz pianist Jean-Michel Pilc, like Nicolas, took part in the recent France Rocks concert series highlighting the strong presence of French musicians stateside.

The sheer number of hopefuls vying to be the next Count Basie, Dizzy Gillespie or Billie Holiday have helped maintain the city's status as a jazz capital, he says. "There is a mythology to New York," he said, adding that shortly after he arrived in 1994 "all of the French musicians were coming here... it became a little bit of a gimmick."

'Something sweet'

Pilc lived in New York nearly two decades, becoming an American citizen before moving to Montreal in 2015 to teach his craft at McGill University. "I think musicians need energy, and there is a particular type of energy in this place," Pilc, who recently played at New York's historic Blue Note club in Greenwich Village, said of his old stomping ground. "You step in a club in New York and you'll hear people playing bass and drums in such a way—there is something sweet, idiomatic about it, that sometimes is more difficult to find in Europe," he said. — AFP

Classifieds

Sunday, July 14, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

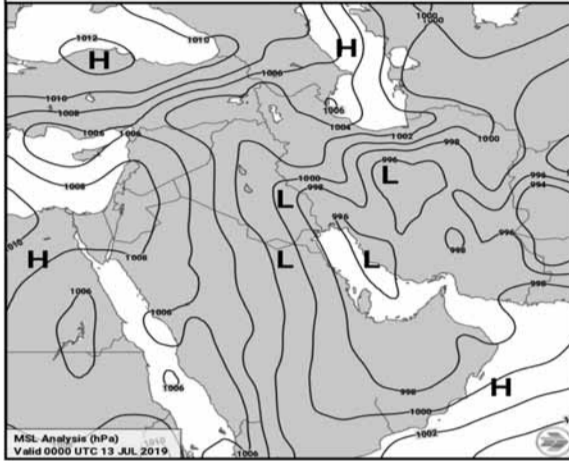
BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate freshening gradually north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 50 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h.

| WEATHER WARNING | No Current Warnings |
|-----------------|---------------------|
|-----------------|---------------------|

| STATION | MAX. EXP. | MIN. REC. |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| KUWAIT CITY | 47 °C | 34 °C |
| KUWAIT AIRPORT | 47 °C | 35 °C |
| ABDALY | 47 °C | 31 °C |
| BUBYAN | - °C | - °C |
| JAHRA | 48 °C | 34 °C |
| FAILAKA ISLAND | 47 °C | 31 °C |
| SALMIYAH | 43 °C | 34 °C |
| AHMADI | 45 °C | 35 °C |
| NUWAISIB | 47 °C | 33 °C |
| WAFRA | 48 °C | 31 °C |
| SALMY | 46 °C | 28 °C |

SFC. CHART 13/07/2019 0000 UTC



| DAY | DATE | WEATHER | Temperatures | | Wind Direction | Wind Speed |
|-----------|-------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------|--------------|
| | | | MAX. | MIN. | | |
| Sunday | 07/14 | Hot | 46 °C | 32 °C | NW | 15 - 35 km/h |
| Monday | 07/15 | Hot | 45 °C | 30 °C | NW | 15 - 40 km/h |
| Tuesday | 07/16 | Hot with a chance for rising dust | 45 °C | 29 °C | NW | 25 - 55 km/h |
| Wednesday | 07/17 | Hot with a chance for rising dust | 46 °C | 31 °C | NW | 20 - 55 km/h |

| PRAYER TIMES | |
|--------------|-------|
| Fajr | 03:24 |
| Sunrise | 04:57 |
| Zuhr | 11:54 |
| Asr | 15:28 |
| Sunset | 18:50 |
| Isha | 20:20 |

| RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| MAX. Temp. | 47 °C |
| MIN. Temp. | 28 °C |
| MAX. RH | 23 % |
| MIN. RH | 07 % |
| MAX. Wind | N 53 km/h |
| TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR. | 0 mm |

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

EMERGENCY



112

CHANGE OF NAME

Old name - MANUEL ROSARIO DIAS, new name - MANUEL DIAS. (C 5555)

Old name - REGINA DIAS, new name - LUISA GOIS. (C 5556) 11-7-2019

Airlines

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

Flight Schedule

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

| Arrival Flights on Sunday 14/7/2019 | | | | | | Departure Flights on Sunday 14/7/2019 | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------|-------|-----|------|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|------|-------------------|-------|----------|-------|
| Airlines | Fit | Route | Time | SAW | 701 | Airlines | Fit | Route | Time | SAW | 704 | | |
| KAC | 540 | Sharm el-Sheikh | 00:10 | THY | 766 | Damascus | 12:30 | KAC | 988 | Hyderabad/Chennai | 00:05 | Damascus | 11:00 |
| IGO | 1757 | Kochi | 00:10 | UAE | 871 | Istanbul | 12:30 | JZR | 502 | Alexandria | 00:10 | JZR | 221 |
| THY | 772 | Istanbul | 00:20 | MSR | 610 | Dubai | 12:45 | KAC | 713 | Sohag | 00:10 | KAC | 157 |
| JZR | 254 | Amman | 00:20 | KAC | 742 | Cairo | 12:45 | MSC | 707 | Luxor | 00:20 | GFA | 214 |
| DLH | 625 | Dammam | 00:50 | AXB | 393 | Dammam | 12:55 | JZR | 713 | Cairo | 00:20 | MEA | 405 |
| KAC | 102 | London | 00:50 | KAC | 774 | Riyadh | 13:10 | MSR | 615 | Dubai | 00:30 | JZR | 213 |
| AHY | 119 | Baku | 00:50 | KAC | 672 | Dubai | 13:35 | FDB | 072 | Alexandria | 00:30 | QTR | 1075 |
| KAC | 504 | Beirut | 01:00 | FDB | 059 | Dubai | 14:00 | JZR | 409 | Delhi | 01:05 | JZR | 715 |
| JZR | 722 | Alexandria | 01:00 | QTR | 1078 | Doha | 14:25 | IGO | 1758 | Doha | 01:10 | JZR | 123 |
| UAE | 853 | Dubai | 01:40 | KAC | 792 | Madinah | 14:40 | KAC | 677 | Kochi | 01:10 | JZR | 115 |
| KLM | 446 | Bahrain | 01:45 | KAC | 562 | Amman | 14:40 | JZR | 723 | Dubai | 01:40 | KAC | 541 |
| PGT | 858 | Istanbul | 01:50 | KAC | 304 | Mumbai | 14:45 | THY | 773 | Alexandria | 01:50 | SAW | 702 |
| THY | 1464 | Istanbul | 01:50 | SVA | 500 | Jeddah | 14:45 | DLH | 625 | Frankfurt | 01:50 | ETH | 3621 |
| KKK | 1268 | Istanbul | 01:55 | JZR | 222 | Riyadh | 14:45 | AHY | 120 | Baku | 01:55 | MSR | 611 |
| JZR | 262 | Beirut | 02:05 | KAC | 618 | Doha | 14:50 | KAC | 417 | Manila | 02:00 | KAC | 515 |
| ETH | 620 | Addis Ababa | 02:15 | KA | C692 | Jeddah | 14:55 | JZR | 111 | Doha | 02:10 | THY | 767 |
| JZR | 734 | Cairo | 02:15 | KAC | 118 | Muscat | 15:00 | THY | 765 | Istanbul | 02:50 | UAE | 394 |
| QTR | 1086 | Doha | 02:40 | JZR | 602 | New York | 15:00 | PGT | 859 | Istanbul | 02:50 | KAC | 872 |
| KAC | 414 | Bangkok | 02:40 | KNE | 529 | Jeddah | 15:05 | JZR | 705 | Asyut | 02:55 | FDB | 060 |
| GFA | 211 | Bahrain | 02:50 | ETD | 303 | Abu Dhabi | 15:15 | KKK | 1269 | Istanbul | 02:55 | QTR | 1079 |
| THY | 768 | Istanbul | 02:55 | OMA | 645 | Muscat | 15:20 | ETH | 621 | Addis Ababa | 03:05 | SVA | 501 |
| OMA | 643 | Muscat | 03:05 | ABY | 127 | Sharjah | 15:25 | KLM | 446 | Amsterdam | 03:10 | KNE | 530 |
| ETD | 305 | Abu Dhabi | 03:05 | UAE | 857 | Dubai | 15:45 | KAC | 854 | Dubai | 03:30 | JZR | 405 |
| RJA | 648 | Amman | 03:05 | KAC | 546 | Cairo | 15:50 | THY | 769 | Istanbul | 03:50 | KAC | 563 |
| PGT | 856 | Istanbul | 03:10 | FEG | 341 | Sohag | 16:00 | ETD | 306 | Abu Dhabi | 04:00 | KAC | 775 |
| MSR | 612 | Cairo | 03:15 | JZR | 732 | Cairo | 16:10 | OMA | 644 | Muscat | 04:05 | ABY | 128 |
| KAC | 418 | Manila | 03:20 | FDB | 051 | Dubai | 16:10 | QTR | 1087 | Doha | 04:15 | KAC | 785 |
| QTR | 1076 | Doha | 03:30 | KAC | 502 | Beirut | 16:15 | MSR | 613 | Cairo | 04:15 | ETD | 304 |
| OHY | 352 | Istanbul | 04:00 | QTR | 1072 | Doha | 16:15 | PGT | 857 | Istanbul | 04:20 | KAC | 619 |
| LMU | 510 | Cairo | 04:00 | FEG | 241 | Alexandria | 16:45 | QTR | 1077 | Doha | 05:00 | FEG | 442 |
| KAC | 382 | Delhi | 04:05 | SAW | 705 | Damascus | 17:00 | LMU | 511 | Cairo | 05:00 | KAC | 675 |
| IGO | 1751 | Chennai | 04:10 | JZR | 116 | Doha | 17:05 | OHY | 351 | Istanbul | 05:00 | FDB | 052 |
| KAC | 784 | Jeddah | 04:25 | SVA | 510 | Riyadh | 17:10 | IGO | 1752 | Chennai | 05:10 | QTR | 1073 |
| JZR | 1738 | Cairo | 04:45 | GFA | 215 | Bahrain | 17:30 | KAC | 303 | Mumbai | 05:15 | UAE | 858 |
| JZR | 404 | Hyderabad | 04:50 | JZR | 214 | Jeddah | 17:35 | KAC | 103 | London | 05:20 | KAC | 283 |
| OHY | 1352 | Istanbul | 05:00 | IRA | 665 | Shiraz | 17:35 | JZR | 1735 | Cairo | 05:35 | KAC | 503 |
| THY | 1414 | Trabzon | 05:05 | JZR | 124 | Dubai | 17:40 | OHY | 1351 | Istanbul | 06:00 | FEG | 242 |
| FDB | 069 | Dubai | 05:05 | JZR | 104 | Bahrain | 18:00 | FDB | 070 | Dubai | 06:00 | KAC | 621 |
| IGA | 170 | Bahrain | 05:05 | QTR | 1080 | Doha | 18:10 | THY | 1465 | Istanbul | 06:00 | KAC | 343 |
| THY | 770 | Istanbul | 05:20 | KAC | 516 | Tehran | 18:20 | THY | 771 | Istanbul | 06:30 | KAC | 381 |
| JZR | 402 | Mumbai | 05:25 | JZR | 302 | Istanbul | 18:20 | GFA | 212 | Bahrain | 06:50 | SAW | 706 |
| KAC | 344 | Chennai | 05:30 | MSR | 620 | Cairo | 18:30 | RJA | 649 | Amman | 07:00 | JZR | 721 |
| KAC | 552 | Cairo | 05:50 | JZR | 736 | Cairo | 18:55 | JZR | 251 | Amman | 07:10 | JZR | 127 |
| JZR | 112 | Doha | 05:50 | FDB | 063 | Dubai | 19:05 | JZR | 121 | Dubai | 07:15 | GFA | 216 |
| BAW | 157 | London | 06:10 | RJA | 640 | Amman | 19:05 | JZR | 113 | Doha | 07:30 | JZR | 403 |
| KAC | 284 | Dhaka | 06:15 | GFA | 217 | Bahrain | 19:05 | RBG | 550 | Alexandria | 07:30 | IRA | 664 |
| JZR | 714 | Sohag | 06:20 | UAE | 875 | Dubai | 19:05 | KAC | 165 | Rome | 08:00 | JZR | 733 |
| KAC | 678 | Dubai | 06:40 | ABY | 123 | Sharjah | 19:20 | KAC | 171 | Frankfurt | 08:00 | JZR | 501 |
| KAC | 204 | Lahore | 06:45 | KAC | 156 | Istanbul | 19:25 | BAW | 156 | London | 08:00 | JZR | 253 |
| RBG | 559 | Alexandria | 06:50 | RBG | 555 | Alexandria | 19:40 | IGO | 1756 | CNN | 08:10 | QTR | 1081 |
| KAC | 302 | Mumbai | 07:05 | KAC | 674 | Dubai | 19:45 | FDB | 054 | Dubai | 08:35 | KAC | 345 |
| IGO | 1755 | CNN | 07:10 | KAC | 776 | Riyadh | 19:45 | KAC | 177 | Vienna | 08:45 | MSR | 621 |
| KAC | 358 | Kochi | 07:25 | KAC | 178 | Vienna | 19:50 | KAC | 501 | Beirut | 08:50 | JZR | 261 |
| FDB | 053 | Dubai | 07:50 | KAC | 158 | Istanbul | 19:55 | KAC | 545 | Cairo | 08:50 | FDB | 064 |
| QTR | 1084 | Doha | 08:00 | KAC | 104 | London | 20:00 | KAC | 561 | Amman | 08:55 | GFA | 218 |
| JZR | 708 | Luxor | 08:00 | KAC | 166 | Rome | 20:00 | KAC | 117 | New York | 09:05 | ABY | 124 |
| KAC | 332 | Trivandrum | 08:05 | OMA | 647 | Muscat | 20:05 | KAC | 791 | Madinah | 09:10 | RJA | 641 |
| KAC | 384 | Delhi | 08:10 | DLH | 624 | Frankfurt | 20:10 | QTR | 1085 | Jeddah | 09:10 | RBG | 556 |
| UAE | 855 | Dubai | 08:25 | KAC | 542 | Cairo | 20:15 | KAC | 807 | JZR | 09:15 | JZR | 401 |
| QTR | 8511 | Doha | 08:30 | MEA | 402 | Beirut | 20:15 | KAC | 161 | UAE | 09:15 | KAC | 876 |
| JZR | 724 | Alexandria | 08:35 | KAC | 620 | Doha | 20:30 | KAC | 671 | KAC | 09:15 | KAC | 351 |
| ETD | 301 | Abu Dhabi | 08:50 | QTR | 1088 | Doha | 20:40 | KAC | 691 | DLH | 09:20 | KAC | 624 |
| IRC | 528 | Ahwaz | 09:00 | KAC | 172 | Frankfurt | 21:00 | JZR | 601 | OMA | 09:20 | QTR | 1084 |
| OMA | 641 | Muscat | 09:00 | KLM | 445 | Amsterdam | 21:00 | KAC | 741 | KAC | 09:40 | MEA | 403 |
| ABY | 125 | Sharjah | 09:00 | ETD | 307 | Abu Dhabi | 21:00 | KAC | 773 | KAC | 09:40 | KAC | 301 |
| GFA | 209 | Bahrain | 09:05 | UAE | 859 | Dubai | 21:15 | ABY | 126 | QTR | 09:40 | QTR | 1089 |
| QTR | 1070 | Doha | 09:20 | ALK | 229 | Colombo | 21:15 | JZR | 731 | IGA | 09:45 | IGA | 171 |
| JZR | 706 | Asyut | 09:20 | THY | 764 | Istanbul | 21:30 | UAE | 856 | KAC | 09:50 | KAC | 203 |
| IGO | 1753 | Ahmedabad | 09:40 | KAC | 676 | Dubai | 21:45 | JZR | 301 | KLM | 09:55 | KAC | 445 |
| FDB | 055 | Dubai | 09:40 | KAC | 622 | Doha | 21:50 | ETD | 302 | | | | |

Sudan nomads untouched by Bashir downfall



OMDURMAN, Sudan: A camel struggles with bondage rope as another is lifted by a mobile crane to be loaded into a waiting truck headed to the border with Egypt at El-Molih camel market on July 10, 2019. — AFP

EL MOLIH, Sudan: Not far from Sudan's capital Khartoum, the epicenter of an uprising that toppled autocratic ruler Omar Al-Bashir, dozens of camel traders are oblivious to the country's biggest political upheaval in decades. "What protests? We have all that we need in the desert - water, food and livestock, we don't have any demands," said Ali Habiballah, 52, a camel trader in El Molih, a vast swathe of desert about 100 km west of Khartoum.

Habiballah, with his deep, black eyes and leathery skin - the product of working under a scorching sun for years - buys and sells camels, just like his father and grandfather before him. "I love the desert and drinking camel milk is enough to make me happy," Habiballah told AFP during a tour of El Molih's camel market. "We don't care about politics. I don't even go to Khartoum," he said as his young son, dressed in traditional attire and seated in a leather saddle, rode by on a camel.

Sudan has been rocked by a political crisis since Dec

19, when protests erupted against the tripling of bread prices by the then government of Bashir. The demonstrations swiftly escalated into a nationwide anti-Bashir campaign that finally led the army to oust him in April, ending his ironfisted rule of three decades.

El Molih's daily camel market is a hit among tourists visiting Sudan. Some camels are sent to slaughter houses for meat, but superior breeds are exported to Gulf countries to take part in races. When it comes to politics, many traders in El Molih simply laugh. "With or without Bashir, this country is just the same for us," said Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed, a camel seller, as he sat with other men in a mud house used for storing animal fodder. "All we are interested in is whether the price of livestock goes up or down," he said, sipping hot tea.

In the distance, a mobile crane loaded a camel onto a truck heading to the border and onwards for sale in Egypt, Israel or the Gulf. The price of each camel depends on what purpose the animal is sold for. A

camel sold for meat exports fetches between 60,000 and 90,000 Sudanese pounds (\$1,330 to \$2,000) from slaughter houses. And a camel destined for racing in Gulf countries can bring in as much as 1.5 million Sudanese pounds.

Thousands of Sudanese nomads live in vast desert stretches of North Darfur, North Kordofan and along the border with Chad, Egypt and Libya. Many hail from the Arab tribes who supported Bashir's brutal war against ethnic African rebels in Darfur that broke out in 2003. While many traders profess to have no interest in politics, others have strong opinions. "The Arabs would be happy if Bashir was still around," said Ali Salim Hamid, 35, who owns around 200 camels. "I want Bashir, our father, to be back," added Hamid, who hails from North Kordofan, one of Bashir's erstwhile support bases.

For him, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) "had nothing to do" with a raid on a protest camp in Khartoum on June 3 that killed scores of

demonstrators. Protesters and rights groups have accused the RSF, which has its origins in the feared Arab Janjaweed militias that were unleashed in Darfur, of carrying out that raid. But its commander General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo - widely known as Himeidi - has defended his men, insisting there was an attempt to distort the paramilitaries' image.

"Previously, camel traders were targets of thieves in the desert but it was Himeidi who caught them and handed them to the authorities," said Hamid. "Thanks to him our business continues." Dagalo, who hails from Darfur, is the deputy chief of Sudan's ruling military council, which seized power after Bashir's downfall. In an interview with AFP in 2016, Dagalo said that he used to sell camels and sheep in Sudan, Libya and Chad. For people like Hamid it does not matter who forms the new administration in Sudan. "Civilian or military government - it is of little importance to us as long as it does not interfere in our business," he said. — AFP

Children among 14 civilians killed in Syria strikes

BEIRUT: Fourteen civilians, including six children and infants, were killed yesterday in air strikes in northwest Syria, targeted for months now by deadly regime and Russian bombardment, a monitor said. Most of the children were among civilians killed when Russian aircraft raided an informal camp of internally displaced Syrians after midnight Friday, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The camp near the town of Khan Sheikhou, in Idlib region, houses Syrians who had fled raids and clashes in neighboring Hama province. Hours later a man and his heavily pregnant wife were killed in the eastern Idlib town of Kefraya in air strikes carried out by unidentified aircraft, the Britain-based Observatory said. White Helmets

volunteers found the bodies of the dead woman, and her well-formed baby lying next to her open stomach the umbilical cord still attached, an AFP correspondent said.

In the north of Hama province, three civilians including a child were killed by artillery fire, the Observatory said. Russian and Syrian regime aircraft have ramped up strikes on Idlib since the end of April, killing more than 590 civilians, while 45 others have perished from rebel fire, according to the Observatory. Regime forces have also been locked in battle with jihadists and allied rebels on the edges of the bastion, which is held by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), including the north of Hama province.

Idlib and its surrounding areas are supposed to be protected from a massive regime offensive by a September 2018 deal between Russia and rebel backer Turkey. A buffer zone planned under that accord was never fully implemented, and the region has seen an uptick in violence. Syria's war has killed more than 370,000 people and displaced millions since it started in 2011 with a brutal crackdown on anti-government protests. — AFP



KEFRAYA, Syria: A member of the Syrian Civil Defense (White Helmets) carries the body of an infant following a regime airstrike on this village in Idlib province yesterday. — AFP

Hurricane takes aim at...

Continued from Page 1

"No one should take this storm lightly," Edwards said on Twitter. NHC Director Ken Graham warned of the potential for inland flooding: "It's not just a coastal event."

For many, the large storm swirling in the Gulf of Mexico and the potential for large-scale flooding in coastal and river areas has brought with it unpleasant memories of 2005's deadly Hurricane Katrina. Thousands have packed up and left their homes as floodwaters hit low-lying areas like Plaquemines Parish, where road closures left some communities isolated. Some nevertheless hunkered down to ride out the storm, despite mandatory evacuation orders. "We've stayed for some pretty strong storms and we shouldn't have," admitted Keith Delahoussaye, a 60-year-old mechanic, at his trailer home in Port Sulphur. He was keeping a close eye on the nearby Mississippi River. "If we see the water rising here, we'll leave," he said.

In New Orleans, residents and business owners were laying down sandbags and boarding up windows while city officials set up shelters for residents. But local revelers and tourists drank "hurricane" cocktails and sang arm in arm as they walked down Bourbon Street late Friday. Yesterday, Mayor LaToya Cantrell again urged caution, saying: "A lot of the rain won't happen until after landfall."

Louisiana is facing an extraordinarily dangerous

confluence of conditions, experts say. The level of the Mississippi River, already swollen from historic rains and flooding upstream, was at nearly 17 feet (5.2 m) in New Orleans - just below flood stage. River levels are expected to peak at just over 17 feet, according to yesterday's forecast by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

US Senator Bill Cassidy said officials with the Army Corps of Engineers told him they were "confident" that the 20-foot-high levee system protecting New Orleans, a city of 400,000, would hold. "There's still going to be two to three feet between the top of the levee and the top of the floodwaters," Cassidy told Fox News. Storm surges of up to six feet are projected, and 25 to 50 cm of rain are forecast.

Mike Yenni, president of Jefferson Parish near New Orleans, said the community had taken the "unprecedented" step of closing hundreds of flood gates, largely due to the high levels of the Mississippi. Authorities closed highways in several locations along the coast as floodwaters began creeping in. In St John's Parish next to New Orleans, some communities were already under two or more feet of water, local television footage showed.

In 2005, Katrina - the costliest and deadliest hurricane in recent US history - submerged about 80 percent of New Orleans, causing some 1,800 deaths and more than \$150 billion in damage. The city's main sports arena, the Superdome, was turned into an emergency shelter during Katrina. The facility was due to host a concert by the Rolling Stones today, but it was postponed by a day due to Barry. "We're here with you - we'll get through this together," the band said in a statement. — AFP

Turkey ignores US warnings on...

Continued from Page 1

across party lines called for the United States to terminate Turkey's participation in the F-35 program and to slap sanctions on Turks involved in the deal with Russia. "President Erdogan was given a very clear choice. Unfortunately, he has clearly made the wrong one," said Eliot Engel and Michael McFaul, the top Democrat and Republican respectively on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "That a NATO ally would choose to side with Russia and Vladimir Putin over the alliance and closer cooperation with the United States is hard to fathom," they said in a joint statement.

The US State Department has said Turkish officials are fully aware of legislation - the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act - which mandates sanctions for any "significant" purchases of weapons from Russia. Washington has given Ankara until July 31 to cancel the S-400 purchase or have its pilots kicked off its F-35 training course and expelled from the US. Trump's pick for Pentagon chief, Mark Esper, confronted the Turkish defense minister, Hulusi Akar, about the deal on the sidelines of a NATO meeting last month.

Akar told Esper in a phone call late Friday that Turkey was under "serious threat" and its acquisition of S-400s was "not a choice but an obligation", the Turkish defense ministry said in a statement. He also

said Turkey was obliged to take measures against "intensive attacks" from the Syrian border as it is a priority for Ankara to protect its borders. He said the Turkish army was the only competent force to create a "safe zone" in northern Syria, and the two men agreed a US delegation would visit Ankara next week to discuss the details. The Pentagon confirmed that the call had taken place.

The first parts of the Russian missile system arrived on three planes at Ankara's Murted air base, which was aired live on Turkish broadcasters. It arrived three days before the anniversary of a failed 2016 coup attempt. Turkey has repeatedly refused to back down from the agreement with Russia, despite US threats. "We say this each time. This is a done deal. The process continues. We are coordinating this work, whether permission for planes, personnel," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told reporters in Ankara on Friday.

US support for Kurdish militia in Syria deemed as "terrorists" by Ankara is one of the major stumbling blocks in relations between the two countries, as well as Washington's refusal to extradite Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen blamed for the coup bid. Nick Heras, of the Center for a New American Security, said the S-400 system would be a "game changer" for Turkey's air defense strategy in a region surrounded by actors with well-developed air forces. "It is no secret that Erdogan is positioning Turkey to be a 'Eurasian' power, which means that Turkey needs to balance its relationship with China and Russia as much as it does with the United States and NATO," he told AFP. "Turkey is not guaranteed to be in the American camp forever." — Agencies

Sports

Gatlin upstages Lyles in Monaco, while Hassan and Amos set records

Experience beats youth in the head-to-head US sprint battle

MONACO: Controversial American Justin Gatlin out-sprinted up-and-coming compatriot Noah Lyles in the 100 meters at Friday's Diamond League meet in Monaco where Sifan Hassan set a new world best in the women's mile. In balmy conditions at a packed Stade Louis II, the 37-year-old Gatlin kept both his nerve and form after an average start to streak through the finish line in 9.91 seconds, just one-hundredth of a second ahead of much-vaunted Lyles, 21.

"It was a technical race tonight," said Gatlin, the 2004 Olympic gold medalist and current world champion who served a doping ban between 2006-10. "I just kept focused as I knew Noah would be coming after me like a bat out of hell!" Gatlin said. There was an outstanding performance in the women's mile, which is not an Olympic or world distance, as Ethiopian-born Dutch runner Hassan came home in 4min 12.33sec, smashing by 0.23 seconds the previous best set in 1996 by Russian Svetlana Masterkova.

Hassan, twice European champion over 1500m and once 5000m gold medalist, cracked the field with two laps to go and streaked through the line with teeth gritted, collapsing as the timer flashed up her feat. "The first 800m were a bit slow so I wasn't thinking it would be a world record," said Hassan. "When I crossed the line I was so surprised." "After you run the last 400m like that and set a world record it gives you so much confidence over 5000m," said Hassan, who will aim for a 1500-5000m double in the September 28-October 6 world championships in Doha.

Another experienced campaigner, Botswana's Olympic silver medalist Nijel Amos, produced a stunning meet record in winning the men's 800m in 1:41.89 ahead of Kenya's Ferguson Rotich, France's world

champion Pierre-Ambroise Bosse only managing ninth in a high-quality race. Only four runners have gone faster than Amos' time, which was the 15th fastest ever run over the distance. "Everything has been good in the last few weeks and I knew I could run 1:41 today," said Amos. "The world record is not on my mind but if I'm patient, it will come."

Lisek vaults 6.02m

Another star showing came in the men's pole vault where Poland's in-form Piotr Lisek again went over the mythical 6m barrier, winning with a best of 6.02m, going close three times at 6.06. Kenyan Timothy Cheruiyot cruised to victory in the men's 1500m in 3:29.97, European 1500 and 5000m champion Jakob Ingebrigtsen — still just 18 — coming in second.

American teenager Sydney McLaughlin kicked off the evening in impressive style, setting a world-leading 53.32sec in the 400m hurdles. The 19-year-old led from the first hurdle and scorched around the track in muggy conditions, with temperatures of 28 degrees Celsius (82F) and high humidity. There was further US success as world indoor champion Kendra Harrison streaked to a 100m hurdles win in a season's best 12.43sec.

There was no Caster Semenya in the women's 800m won by American Aje Wilson. The South African double Olympic is not appearing in the Principality despite having been cleared to run during her appeal at attempts by the Monaco-based world governing body for athletics, the IAAF, to introduce rules requiring female athletes in events between 400 and the mile to take medication to reduce high testosterone levels.

In her absence, Wilson won easily in 1:57.73, almost three seconds off Semenya's best for the season. A



MONACO: First placed (from L) Poland's Piotr Lisek in the Men's pole vault, Botswana's Nijel Amos in the Men's 800m, EL Morocco's Soufiane El Bakkali in the Men's 3000m steeplechase, Netherland's Sifan Hassan in the Women's 1 mile and US Justin Gatlin in the Men's 100m pose, with their gold medals, on the podium, during the price ceremony at the end of the IAAF Diamond League competition. — AFP

lead field in the women's 200m saw Shaunae Miller-Uibo of the Bahamas, the reigning Olympic 400m champion, win in 22.09sec ahead of Jamaica's Elaine

Thompson, who won the sprint double in Rio, and two-time defending world 200m champ Dafne Schippers of the Netherlands. — AFP



KUWAIT: Acting Director General of Public Authority for Sports Dr Saqer Al-Mulla recently received the Secretary of Kuwait National Students Union in the United States Al-Marzouq Thunayan Al-Ghanim and union member Usama Al-Daihani.

Bottas takes pole as Mercedes lock out front row

SILVERSTONE: Valtteri Bottas upstaged his team-mate Lewis Hamilton yesterday when he secured pole position as Mercedes locked out the front row of the grid for Sunday's British Grand Prix. The Finn, who is 31 points adrift of defending world champion Hamilton in this year's title race, clocked a track record fastest lap in one minute and 25.093 seconds to outpace the local hero by just 0.006 seconds.

"It was really good and it reminds me of why we do this," said a smiling Bottas after securing his first British pole position and tenth of his career. "It's been really close with Lewis all weekend and I am really happy to get such a good lap and pole." Hamilton, who is hunting a record sixth victory in his home event, said: "Congratulations to Valtteri — he did a really good job. It wasn't quite good enough... But this is the best Grand Prix of the year because of the energy this crowd and all these people bring."

It was Mercedes' 64th front-row lock-out of the grid for a Grand Prix. Charles Leclerc of Ferrari was third, just 0.079 seconds adrift of Bottas, ahead of Max Verstappen and his Red Bull team-mate Pierre Gasly with four-time champion Sebastian Vettel sixth in the second Ferrari. Leclerc said: "I think Mercedes turned up the engine a little bit and they were so good in the corners, which we know we need to work on."

Daniel Ricciardo was seventh for Renault ahead of rookies Lando Norris of McLaren and Alexander Albon of Toro Rosso. Nico Hulkenberg was 10th in the second Renault. Two weeks after the heat-wave conditions in the Styrian Alps, the session began in cool and overcast conditions in front of packed grandstands with a little hint of sunshine. The track temperature fell to 28 degrees, around 30 below that recorded in Austria.

Leclerc proved his speed in the damp morning practice was no fluke with a series of quick record laps, on medium compound tyres, to top the times before Hamilton, on softer rubber, took over. His best lap in 1:25.513 was only 0.020 seconds faster than



SILVERSTONE: Mercedes' Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas gestures after securing pole position in the qualifying session at Silverstone motor racing circuit. — AFP

Leclerc's, suggesting a close scrap was in prospect later in qualifying and also for Sunday's race. Verstappen was third for Red Bull, promising a possible three-team tussle.

As they progressed to Q2, Kevin Magnussen in the unpredictable Haas, topped the drivers who failed to make the cut ahead of Daniil Kvyat of Toro Rosso, Lance Stroll of Racing Point and the two Williams men, George Russell and Robert Kubica. Bottas led Hamilton out for Q2, both on mediums, but Leclerc, also on mediums, was soon on top again in 1:25.646 followed by the two Mercedes and Verstappen.

Unexpectedly, Leclerc made a late switch to join Vettel on softs in the closing minutes, trimming his time to 1:25.546 to finish top ahead of Bottas and Hamilton, Verstappen and Vettel. Most teams had estimated that the durability of the soft compounds was uncertain with them forecast to last no more than around 10 race laps, making it appear Ferrari had chosen a deliberately risky strategy.

After a final flurry of action, the two Alfa Romeos of Antonio Giovinazzi and Kimi Raikkonen were eliminated along with Carlos Sainz of McLaren, Romain Grosjean in the second Haas and Sergio Perez of Racing Point. On his first flying run in Q3, Bottas set a benchmark 1:25.093, 0.25 ahead of Hamilton who had a 'moment' after running deep at Brooklands. The championship leader narrowed the gap but couldn't overhaul his teammate. — AFP

KOCC gives letter of thanks to Chairman of Boxing Federation

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Olympic Committee Chairman Sheikh Fahad Nasser Al-Sabah yesterday received the Chairman of Kuwait Boxing Federation Mohammad Mansi Al-Enezi. The meeting was held to give Al-Enezi a letter of thanks on behalf of the KBF board, its workers and all those associated with KBF, for his patronage of the Asian Boxing Championship set to be

hosted in Kuwait between August 1st and 9th which sees more than 25 countries participating.

Sheikh Nasser was briefed on the preparations of the Higher Organizing Committee, as well as the efforts being exerted to ensure the success of the championship. Sheikh Nasser also asked about the national team and its training in Azerbaijan, adding that all obstacles must be removed so achievements can be made in the name of Kuwait.



Vegas leads PGA event, Glover soars on albatross wings

WASHINGTON: Venezuela's Jhonattan Vegas fired a nine-under par 62 to seize the lead after Friday's second round of the PGA John Deere Classic while American Lucas Glover made a rare albatross. Vegas fired the second-lowest round of his PGA career, his lowest total since a 60 at the 2016 Barbasol Championship, to stand on 13-under 129 after 36 holes at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois.

American Andrew Landry fired his second 65 to hold second on 130 while Glover was another stroke adrift. Glover, the 2009 US Open champion, holed out at the par-5 10th on his approach from 255 yards with a 3-iron for the albatross, putting him in the hunt for his first PGA victory since 2011. "I was trying to hit it short and left and I pushed it and it went in," Glover said. "I hit it solid. I was just trying to make birdie and got lucky and made a two." Glover's ball bounced four times before rolling on the 10th green and into the cup.

Vegas, 34, seeks his fourth PGA title after wins at the 2011 Bob Hope Classic and the 2016 and 2017 Canadian Opens. He would also like the British Open berth available to the best top-five finisher not already qualified for next week's final major of the year at Royal Portrush. He missed the cut in the Open the past two years, the only major in which he has not

reached the weekend.

Vegas made a swing breakthrough on the driving range this week that has made a big difference in his game. "Probably the best I've felt all year, to be honest," Vegas said. "I hit the ball extremely well, kind of what I've been struggling with a little bit the past few months. My game is in a good place."

'It was magical'

A posture adjustment paid big dividends for Vegas. "Phenomenal round. I felt absolutely in control with my irons the whole round. It has been a long time since I felt this good," Vegas said. "I decided to reset my posture, get in a little bit different posture, and it was magical. Everything started to go in." It marked the sixth consecutive US PGA round with a player firing a 62. Since 2000, TPC Deere Run has surrendered more birdies than any other tour course.

The success comes as Vegas' wife, Hildegard, is expecting to give birth to the couple's second child, a boy, early next month. Vegas, who began on the back nine, opened with a 14-foot birdie at the 10th and added a 12-footer to birdie the 13th. Six-footers for birdie followed at the 14th and par-3 16th and he dropped his approach to three feet to set up a birdie at the par-5 17th. — AFP

Westbrook 'eternally grateful' to OKC, Harden vows 'fun'

WASHINGTON: Russell Westbrook declared Friday he would be "eternally grateful" to Oklahoma City Thunder supporters while his new NBA Houston Rockets teammate James Harden predicted "a lot of fun" next season. The comments served to confirm Thursday reports that former NBA Most Valuable Player Westbrook was being traded to the Rockets in exchange for Chris Paul, two first-round NBA Draft picks and a swap of two more future draft selections.

"I can't even begin to put into words all of the emotions I have right now. It's been one heck of a journey Oklahoma!" Westbrook posted on his Instagram account. "You have supported me through all of the ups and the downs, and stood by me through the good times, and tough times. For that I am eternally grateful to you. I'm leaving Oklahoma with so many friends and so much gratitude. I could never thank you all enough for sticking with me. It's been a dream and a whirlwind."

In 2016, Westbrook became the first NBA player since Oscar Robertson in 1962 to average a triple-double for an entire season. He has now done that for three consecutive campaigns. Now he joins a Rockets backcourt alongside NBA scoring leader James Harden, a former NBA MVP and Westbrook's ex-Thunder teammate who has been the scoring spark for Houston since leaving Oklahoma City in 2012.

"When I left OKC, I was sad. Then Houston made a home for me," Harden said Friday, according to ESPN. "Rockets is my home. And now an opportunity came available where Russ wasn't happy. Now we're back. It's going to be a lot of fun this year, I guarantee you that. Believe it." Earlier reactions to the move worried that one basketball game might not be enough for two players who are accustomed to handling the ball much of the time and producing the bulk of their club's scoring.

The pairing unites the NBA's two top scorers over the past five seasons. But reports said both players wanted the deal, suggesting they understand they would need to adapt to create the most formidable force for opponents. Harden often draws double teams from defenders while Westbrook's versatile playmaker skills could make the Rockets more difficult to stop beyond Harden's scoring heroics. Westbrook's posting also spoke of how much he has grown over 11 seasons in Oklahoma City, one of the NBA's smaller markets.

"When I came here, I was 18 years old, bright eyed, and completely unaware of all the amazing things that would soon take place," Westbrook said. "I grew up in Oklahoma with an amazing bunch of people. The people here are what makes this place so special... You are all what makes Oklahoma such a beautiful place, and the reason I've loved playing here all of this time. I've met so many amazing people who have helped shape me into the man that I am today. I hope I have impacted the Oklahoma community as much as Oklahoma has made an impact on me and my family." — AFP

Sports

England faces their day of destiny in World Cup final against New Zealand

The challenge for England is to embrace the hype

LONDON: England face New Zealand in the World Cup final today knowing years of planning come down to a single day at Lord's. When England exited the 2015 edition with an embarrassing defeat by Bangladesh, few were tipping them as potential champions in four years' time.

As England captain Eoin Morgan put it: "If you had offered us the position to play in a final the day after we were knocked out of the 2015 World Cup, I would have laughed at you." One person not laughing was Andrew Strauss, the former England director of cricket.

Drafted into the newly created role, Strauss set about an overhaul that saw the former England captain appoint Australia's Trevor Bayliss as coach, and place greater emphasis on white-ball cricket.

The worth of all that work showed when Morgan's men, now top of the one-day international rankings, thrashed reigning champions Australia by eight wickets in the semi-final at Edgbaston on Thursday. Many of the elements that made England the pre-tournament favorites were on show in Birmingham. Pacemen Jofra Archer and Chris Woakes reduced Australia to 14-3, leg-spinner Adil Rashid took wickets in the middle and the dynamic duo of Jason Roy and Jonny Bairstow — statistically the most successful opening pair in ODI history — launched the run chase with a blistering century partnership.

'Fearless' cricket

The challenge for England is to embrace the hype surrounding today's fixture without letting it inhibit them from playing their brand of "fearless" cricket. By reaching the final, England have guaranteed an international match will be shown live on free-to-air television in Britain for the first time since the iconic 2005 Ashes series — a chance to inspire a new generation.

"I think Sunday's not a day to shy away from, it's a day to look forward to," said Morgan, an outsider in English cricket in becoming an ODI specialist when the steely Dubliner realised his Test career had stalled. It is perhaps appropriate that England are facing New Zealand in a final between two sides who have yet to win the World Cup.

For it was the Black Caps who showed England how to play the modern one-day game at the 2015 edition in Wellington four years ago. They shot out England for just 123 and then overhauled that total in a mere 12.2 overs. "It was as close to rock-bottom as I've been," said Morgan. "Certainly as a captain and as a player, being beaten off the park like that was humiliating."

England gained a measure of revenge with a 119-run thrashing of New Zealand in a group-stage match earlier in this World Cup. But that is unlikely to count for much today. All tournament long, the same comment has been made about New Zealand — they boast a well-balanced attack led by left-arm quick Trent Boult but are over-reliant on captain Kane Williamson and fellow senior batsman Ross Taylor for their runs.

The polite Kiwis have responded by continuing to "scrap", in the phrase of fast bowler Lockie Ferguson, their way to wins as demonstrated by their dramatic 18-run semi-final victory over India. Boult and Matt Henry reduced one of the world's most powerful top orders to 5-3, before left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner, aided by superb fielding, backed them up after Williamson and Taylor had made battling fifties on a tricky pitch.

While many members of the home side were not even born when England made the last of three losing appearances in a World Cup final in 1992, the Black Caps have the experience of their heavy defeat by co-hosts Australia in the climax of the 2015 edition in



BIRMINGHAM: England's captain Eoin Morgan (R) and England's Joe Root celebrate victory at close of play during the 2019 Cricket World Cup second semi-final between England and Australia at Edgbaston. — AFP

Melbourne to call on. "I'd be lying if I said we weren't a bit overawed by the change of scenery," said Taylor as he looked back to New Zealand's first and only match on Australian soil in that tournament. "I think

we know what to expect, the pressures that come with it, we've been there before. You just have to enjoy it, it's the 'Home of Cricket', I can't think of a better place to play a final." — AFP

Omens point to NZ winning the World Cup: Hansen

WELLINGTON: Celebrated All Blacks mentor Steve Hansen believes New Zealand's loss to England in the group stages of the Cricket World Cup will be to their advantage in today's final. The coaching maestro, who is bidding for a third rugby World Cup success with the All Blacks this year, said when teams play each other twice in a tournament it is a psychological disadvantage to win the first match.

"The advantage is held by the team that loses because I think mentally it's very hard not to subconsciously think, 'well, we've beaten these guys before', so you soften yourself a little bit, subconsciously, it's not a deliberate thing," he told Radio Sport yesterday. England beat New Zealand by 119 runs to make the semi-finals and then downed Australia by eight wickets to make the final.

New Zealand, who only scraped into the semis on a superior run rate than Pakistan, then beat tournament favorites India by 18 runs to reach the final "England played Australia (in the group stages) and Australia thumped them. So, you start getting a little bit ahead of yourself and start thinking about stuff you shouldn't," Hansen said.

In the 2015 World Cup, New Zealand beat Australia in the pool stages then lost to their trans-Tasman neighbors in the final. Hansen, an assistant coach when the All Blacks struggled to an 8-7 win over France in the 2011



LONDON: New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson (C) speaks with his players as they take part in a training session at Lord's Cricket Ground. — AFP

World Cup final in Auckland, added that hometown pressure was also a factor which could count against England in cricket's showpiece at the famous Lords ground.

"If you're not used to that kind of pressure it can overwhelm you. So probably, advantage to New Zealand, because no one is expecting them to win in England ... it takes all the pressure off you. Are they capable of winning it? I think they are." Hansen was also an assistant coach of the All Blacks when they started as red-hot favorites in the 2007 World Cup only to be bundled out in the quarter-finals.

He said the lesson from that shock loss was the same as it was for India captain Virat

Kohli when the Black Caps beat them in the cricket semi-final. "He made a pertinent point that 'we've played outstanding cricket in this tournament, apart from 45 minutes, and that's the reason why we're not going,'" to the final.

"If you're in a knock-out tournament, as (the All Blacks) found out in 2007, if you don't get it right in the 80 minutes, for us, and the 45 minutes, for the Indians, then you go home." His advice for both sides facing the pressure of a final was not to focus on what will happen if they lose but to think about what will happen if they win. "Immediately, if you say that to yourself, there's a different feeling. Your eyes light up, there's a smile on your face." — AFP

Morgan hails McCullum influence ahead of final

LONDON: England captain Eoin Morgan paid tribute to former New Zealand skipper Brendon McCullum ahead of his side's World Cup final against the Black Caps at Lord's today. Four years ago, a New Zealand side led by McCullum shot out England for just 123 in a World Cup group match and then overhauled that total in a mere 12.2 overs, leaving Morgan feeling as "close to rock bottom as I've been".

New Zealand went on to finish runners-up to co-hosts Australia while England crashed out in the group stage. McCullum has since retired from international duty and now Morgan finds himself leading England against New Zealand in the World Cup final. Morgan has long acknowledged England's debt to New Zealand for their one-day international revival and, speaking to reporters at Lord's on Saturday, he had warm words for McCullum. "We are close mates and he's taught me a lot about leadership," he said. "I think in 2015 the way that New Zealand played, they proved to everybody that you can perform at the highest level and get to the top by being yourselves and not trying to be somebody else, or a different team."

'Last-chance saloon'

England, like New Zealand, have never won the World Cup, with the last of their three losing appearances in the final back in 1992. "It means a huge amount to me and to everybody in the changing room," said Morgan when asked about the magnitude of Sunday's match. "It's the culmination of four years of hard work and dedication, a lot of planning."

England played close to the perfect game in defeating reigning champions Australia in a lopsided semi-final at Edgbaston on Thursday. Asked if they would need to hit similar heights against a New Zealand team who upset the odds to beat India by 18 runs in their last-four clash, Morgan replied: "I think we will — New Zealand were the best team in the group stage."

Back-to-back group-stage defeats by Sri Lanka and Australia effec-



LONDON: England's captain Eoin Morgan addresses media representatives during a press conference at Lord's Cricket Ground in London yesterday, ahead of the 2019 Cricket World Cup final against New Zealand. — AFP

tively left England playing knockout cricket before the semi-finals but they got their campaign back on track with impressive group-wins over India and New Zealand, who they overwhelmed by 119 runs at Durham's Chester-le-Street headquarters. "I think it has helped us because it's lent itself to actually being more positive and aggressive and a bit smarter about how we play and it's sort of been the last-chance saloon since Durham, which has been nice in a way," explained Morgan.

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson has been in superb form with the bat during the tournament, scoring 548 runs at an eye-catching average of 91.33. But he was unluckily run out for just 27 against England when bowler Mark Wood deflected a drive on to the stumps at the non-striker's end. Morgan, asked if star batsman Williamson had a weakness, replied to laughter from the assembled media: "His backing up, I think." — AFP

England v New Zealand: Three key World Cup battles

LONDON: Hosts England face New Zealand in the World Cup final at Lord's today, with both nations seeking their first win in cricket's showpiece event. Eoin Morgan's England humbled holders Australia to reach their first final since 1992 while the Black Caps finished as runners-up in 2015. AFP Sport looks at three key battles in the match:

Morgan v Williamson - Eyeing history

Eoin Morgan and Kane Williamson both have the chance to become national heroes by leading their teams to World Cup glory for the first time. England have enjoyed a dramatic revival in fortunes since their limp first-round exit in 2015 with Morgan at the helm, infusing his side with a fearless approach. The 32-year-old batsman, who scored an unbeaten 45 in the hosts' humbling of Australia on Thursday, has urged his side to seize their moment.

"I think Sunday's not a day to shy away from, it's a day to look forward to," he said. Williamson, whose team lost heavily to England in the group stage, tried to keep his players calm after New Zealand's stunning victory over India in the first semi-final on Wednesday. "Anybody can beat anybody," he said. "It's important that feet are on the ground and we look forward to that challenge." With two centuries and two fifties in his eight innings, Williamson has led by example with his elegant batting and sharp reading of the game. Batting great Sachin Tendulkar said Williamson's

"captaincy and composure" played a key part in the victory over India.

Roy v Guptill - Opening gambit

Jason Roy set the tone as England tore into the Australian bowling with relish on Thursday, dominating an opening stand of 124 with in-form partner Jonny Bairstow. Roy, who has been involved in four successive century partnerships with Bairstow, missed three group games due to a hamstring injury. England have won all three of their matches comfortably since his return to the side and he averages an impressive 71 at the tournament.

New Zealand's Martin Guptill has struggled badly in England and Wales, eking out just 167 runs in nine innings, a sharp contrast from 2015, when he finished as the top runscorer in the tournament, hitting an unbeaten 237 against the West Indies. He has proved his prowess in the field, hitting the stumps with a direct throw to run out India's MS Dhoni in the semi-final but New Zealand desperately need his runs at the top of the order on Sunday.

Henry v Woakes - First blood

Matt Henry destroyed India's illustrious top order in a ferocious opening spell of fast bowling on Wednesday and a repeat performance would set New Zealand on the way to their first World Cup triumph. His figures of 3-37 included the key wicket of Rohit Sharma and, sharing the new ball with senior partner Trent Boult, the paceman has now claimed 13 wickets in eight games.

Chris Woakes was England's star performer at Edgbaston as he dismantled the Australia top-order including taking the big wicket of David Warner to return figures of 3-20. He has combined with Jofra Archer to give the England pace attack a sharper edge, with the new-ball pair claiming a combined 32 wickets together in 10 matches. — AFP

Twenty20 sensation Rashid Khan named Afghan cricket captain

KABUL: The Afghan Cricket Board (ACB) named leg spinner Rashid Khan captain across all the major formats Friday, despite a disappointing World Cup for the Twenty20 sensation. Asghar Afghan was also appointed vice-captain, the ACB said in a statement announcing the decision. 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 star, 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 home without notching up a single win. At a news conference announcing his new role, Khan acknowledged the responsibility on his shoulders and expressed hopes for the team's future. "We all play as one team and play only for the country. Whatever

I am today, is because of this country and this team," Khan said, according to the ACB.

Gulbadin Naib, who skippered Afghanistan for the World Cup, defended his premier spinner after their final loss to West Indies, saying "he gives 100 percent". The 20-year-old Rashid, who is number one in the T20 rankings, set the cricket world abuzz when he became the fastest bowler to take 100 ODI wickets, in 44 matches. Afghanistan is one of the fairytale stories of modern sport, with cricket introduced to the war-torn country by returning refugees who had learnt about the game in camps in neighboring Pakistan. But their second ever World Cup was chastening, and while they headed home with more experience under their belts, there are also major questions over their batting strength and lack of quality seam bowlers. — AFP

Sports

Disappointed Nadal sees chances of third Wimbledon title slipping from his grasp

‘Today is sad because for me I know chances are not forever’

LONDON: Rafael Nadal rued missing out on the Wimbledon final after losing to great rival Roger Federer and admitted his chances of adding a third title on the grass of the All England Club are receding. The 33-year-old Spaniard, who remains two off Federer's Grand Slam record title haul of 20, has two Wimbledon crowns to his name.

But he said his game on Friday was never at the level required to repeat his epic win in his first championship victory over Federer 11 years ago. Nadal, who won his 12th French Open trophy in June, ended up on the wrong end of a 7-6 (7/3), 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 defeat. It will be Federer who bids for a ninth Wimbledon title against the four-time champion Novak Djokovic, the third member of the great triumvirate that still dominate the sport.

“I am sad for the loss because for me it was another opportunity,” he said. “But at the same time I created another opportunity to be in another final of a Grand Slam.” Just accept that was not my day. I played a great event. I take this in a positive way. “At the same time, today is sad because for me I know chances are not forever. “Last year I had chances here (he lost in five sets to Djokovic in the semi-final), I had another one, and I was not able to convert to win it one more time here.”

‘We are not done’

Nadal, who suffered his first loss to Federer in a Grand Slam semi-final after winning on the previous four occasions, said it was a wonderful experience to be part of the great rivalry with fellow 30-somethings

Federer and Djokovic. Indeed — Andy Murray aside on two occasions — no other player apart from them has lifted the Wimbledon trophy since Australian Lleyton Hewitt in 2002.

“We spoke about that one thousand times,” said Nadal. “The same time is great to be part of this rivalry, be in the middle of these three players that achieved that much in this sport in the same era.” If the increasingly harassed ‘NextGen’ group of players — who speak of the unbearable pressure they feel in trying to break up the trio's dominance — were hoping for light at the end of the tunnel Nadal offered none. “It is something that is going to be difficult to see again,” he said. “We are not done, so... Things continue. Just another episode this afternoon.”

“Of course, as I said the other day, we know that every time there are less chances to play against each other in these high quality matches. “Was another chance this afternoon.”

Nadal said defeat was tough but graciously congratulated Federer on being the better player on the day. Nadal said 37-year-old Federer's qualities remain undimmed and constant. “The same like all my career, no?” he said. “He is always able to do the most difficult things easy.” He's able to move inside the court quicker than anyone. “He puts pressure on the opponent all the time because he has the ability to take the ball earlier than anybody else.” That's probably the most difficult thing to make that happen, and he is able to do it so well.” — AFP



LONDON: Spain's Rafael Nadal speaks during a press conference at The All England Tennis Club in Wimbledon, southwest London, on July 12, 2019 after losing his semi-final match against Switzerland's Roger Federer. — AFP

Sublime Pogba helps Man Utd to 2-0 win over Perth Glory

PERTH: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer insisted wantaway star Paul Pogba will be a contender for Manchester United's captaincy after the French World Cup winner overcame a turbulent week and helped a lackluster United post a 2-0 friendly victory over Perth Glory yesterday.

After being linked with a move to Real Madrid and Juventus, Pogba's uncertain future at Old Trafford has overshadowed United's pre-season tour of Australia. Following Antonio Valencia's exit, Solskjaer is looking for a new captain and has thrown Pogba's name into the ring. Ashley Young and Juan Mata skippered 45 minutes each against Perth.

When asked if Pogba was under consideration, the United boss said: “Yep. We've got quite a few possibilities there and when the season starts we'll announce it. “Of course we'll have a good assessment and see how pre-season goes.” An under-pressure United initially struggled against a weakened Perth Glory, who won Australia's A-League Premiers Plate last season.

After a scoreless opening half, Solskjaer changed his entire lineup and inserted several stars, including Pogba. United finally cracked Perth's tenacious defence in the 60th minute when Pogba showcased his sublime touch with a deft backheel to forward Marcus Rashford, who struck it past goalkeeper Liam Reddy.

James Garner, 18, sealed the result with a long-range strike in the dying stages. Solskjaer was optimistic about his side's performance despite the modest score line. “We are happy. It was all about continuing the good fitness work they've done,” he said. “We played a very well organised team. We did enough in the end. It was professional work from everyone.”

Suffering from a lack of numbers for the friendly,



PERTH: Manchester Paul Pogba (C) fights for the ball with Perth Glory's Chris Harold (L) and Gabriel Popovic (R) during their pre-season friendly match at Optus Stadium. — AFP

Perth fielded a youthful team including two 15-year-olds. Solskjaer rested most of his guns in the first half, including Pogba, Rashford and regular goalkeeper David de Gea. United, in their new gold away strip, controlled a subdued first 45 minutes with speedy winger Daniel James eye-catching on the left flank.

Teenage midfielder Tahith Chong worked his way into the game after a slow start but could not break through. The Dutchman was on the end of Perth's physicality when he received a strong bump from Glory captain Shane Lowry that looked more reminiscent of

the Australian Rules football match played on the same Perth Stadium ground the night before. Solskjaer said defender Luke Shaw suffered a tight hamstring and came off late in the game as a precautionary measure.

Romelu Lukaku, reportedly looking to secure a move to Inter Milan, was rested but is expected to play on Wednesday against Leeds United to end United's 10-day Australian tour before pre-season games in Singapore and China. Meanwhile, Manchester United coach Mark Dempsey will fly home after he fell ill and was admitted to hospital on Friday. — AFP

Starlet Chukwueze offers glimpse of Nigeria future

CAIRO: He was young enough to participate at this year's Under-20 World Cup, but Samuel Chukwueze is assuming a far greater role as a future Nigeria lynchpin with his country attempting to capture a fourth Africa Cup of Nations title. At 20 years and 49 days, Chukwueze became the youngest scorer at this year's tournament as he grabbed his first international goal for the Super Eagles in the quarter-final win over South Africa.

It has been a meteoric rise for the youngster, signed by Villarreal in 2017, following a strong debut season in Spain's top flight which included a goal in April's thrilling 4-4 draw with Lionel Messi's Barcelona and a match-winning strike against Girona that lifted his side out the relegation zone for good. While he may not be cut from the same cloth as the Argentine, comparisons with another left-footed wizard, the recently retired Arjen Robben, are plentiful.

Inspired by the former Dutch star growing up, Chukwueze concedes he would do well to come anywhere close to what Robben achieved as a former Champions League and eight-time Bundesliga winner with Bayern, a World Cup finalist, and league champion at Chelsea, Real Madrid and PSV Eindhoven.

“Chukwueze has a good left foot, is quick, has a low centre of gravity — which gives him very good balance — and can deliver and score,” was Nigeria coach Gernot Rohr's Robben-esque appraisal of his winger. Yet the German has taken a steady approach to blood- ing Chukwueze, handing him a start in the opening win over Burundi before restricting him to a pair of substitute appearances over the next three games in Egypt.

‘Quality overflows’

“We're here to win the title. Sitting on the bench doesn't make me feel bad, it makes me wait for the chance I get to help the team like I did today,” Chukwueze said after his man-of-the-match display against South Africa. Chukwueze came close to joining Arsenal before arriving at Villarreal, following in the footsteps of striker Ikechukwu Uche, who won the 2013 Cup of Nations with Nigeria during his four-year spell at the Spanish club.

“He has a quality that just overflows and you can't stop, like a river,” said Villarreal reserve team coach Miguel Alvarez, who helped Chukwueze make the step up to the top tier. Both he and Victor Osimhen, yet to feature in the tournament here, formed part a core part of Nigeria's Under-17 World Cup winners from 2015, and forward Ahmed Musa believes Chukwueze will become one of the stars of the senior side.

“I think with time he is going to be one of the best players we have in the Super Eagles team,” Musa told reporters after the quarter-final victory. “The old players in the squad are gradually winding down and will not be here in a couple of years from now. “So, we definitely need players like them to step up and take over from us.”

Chukwueze was not part of the 2018 World Cup campaign, where a youthful squad failed to go beyond the group stage, but Rohr says the increased maturity and influx of fresh faces will serve return Nigeria well as they target a return to the top in Africa. Their next test comes on Sunday against an impressive Algeria team that have looked a cut above the rest in Egypt. — AFP

De Ligt close to Juventus after skipping training

PARIS: Matthijs de Ligt is closing in on a move to Juventus after Ajax announced yesterday that the rising star will skip the Dutch champions pre-season training camp due to his expected departure. In a statement, Ajax named a 28-man squad travelling to the camp in Bramberg in Austria on Saturday afternoon, adding that “awaiting a possible transfer, Matthijs de Ligt is not travelling with the group”.

Last week the player's agent Mino Raiola told Dutch newspaper De Telegraaf that a deal had been struck between Juve and the powerful centre-back, reportedly a five-year contract worth 12 million euros (\$13.5 million) a season with a 135 million-euro release clause. However the two clubs had been locked in negotiations with Ajax reportedly demanding 75 million euros, but the Gazzetta dell Sport claims that the fee of 70 million euros is set to be agreed. De Ligt, who turns 20 next month, is expected to join Serie A champions Juve after wowing with superb displays during Ajax's thrilling charge to the Champions League semi-finals last season. He captained the team to a domestic double as their fairytale European run — which included wins over Real Madrid and Juve — came to a heart-breaking end with semi-final defeat to Tottenham Hotspur after leading 3-0 on aggregate at half-time in the second leg.

The signing would be the sixth of what has already been a busy summer for Juventus, who have brought in Maurizio Sarri as coach after removing Massimiliano Allegri and signed Paris Saint-Germain's want-away midfielder Adrien Rabiot, Aaron Ramsey, Luca Pellegrini, Merih Demiral and 41-year-old Gianluigi Buffon, who returns to Turin after a year alongside Rabiot in the French capital. — AFP

Idrissa Gueye: Team Senegal's heart and soul

CAIRO: Indispensable under Alain Giresse, Idrissa Gueye remains central to successor Aliou Cisse's plans at the heart of the Senegal midfield, and has excelled during the country's run to the Africa Cup of Nations semi-finals. The one game he missed, through injury, corresponded with the Teranga Lions' only setback in Egypt, a 1-0 loss to Algeria in the group stage. With Gueye in the line-up Senegal have looked a dominant force, in keeping with the team's billing as title favourites.

The 29-year-old is essential to Senegalese plans as the link between Kalidou Koulibaly and the defense and an attack spearheaded by Sadio Mane. Gueye has complemented his renowned ball-winning ability with telling contributions in front of goal, hitting the winner against Benin in the quarter-finals. “He's a boy with an enormous amount of quality, who is capable of playing as a holding midfielder or much higher up the pitch,” said Cisse.

“He is gifted with great technique that allows him to play in pockets of space and have a bit more creativity. If he scores it's because he throws himself forward as well.” Forging ahead is what Gueye has done for several years in the national team. A starter under Giresse, between 2013 and 2015, he has stepped it up a notch in Egypt after a World Cup which saw him restricted in a more defensive role. In Russia, while Gueye scored with a deflected effort in a 2-1 victory over Poland, his former boss at Lille, Rudi Garcia, regretted that Gueye had not shown his full potential as “one of the greatest players” he has coached.

‘Like good wine’

That message has filtered through, with Gueye tapping into his less-heralded attacking qualities to unpick a deep-lying Benin defense. “I'm trying to do my best to



CAIRO: Senegal's midfielder Idrissa Gueye celebrates after scoring during the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) quarter final football match between Senegal and Benin. — AFP

help my team. I have Papa Ndiaye who's playing in a holding position which allows us to attack, to be close to goal to try and score. I'm helping the team playing this position and I'm very happy,” said Gueye, man of the match in the 1-0 win against the Squirrels.

His development has followed that of his team which, after returning to the World Cup following a 16-year absence, is through to a first Cup of Nations semi-final since 2006. “We're a team which is progressing little by little,” said Cisse. To continue their progress they must now navigate a Tunisia side coached by Giresse, who doesn't believe the knowledge from his two-year spell with Senegal will have much impact on the result. “If the match came down to knowledge of the players that would be a good thing, but the reality is different,” said Giresse. “Knowledge and relationships are one thing but what happens on the pitch is the most important.” — AFP

25 Bottas takes pole position as Mercedes claims front row

26 England faces their day of destiny in World Cup final against New Zealand

27 Disappointed Nadal sees chances of third Wimbledon title slipping



LONDON: Romania's Simona Halep raises the Venus Rosewater Dish trophy after beating US player Serena Williams during their women's singles final on day twelve of the 2019 Wimbledon Championships at The All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon. — AFP

Simona Halep claims first Wimbledon crown

Thwarts Serena history bid in a sensational 56-minute victory

LONDON: Simona Halep torpedoed Serena Williams's latest bid to capture a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam on Saturday when she stormed to a sensational victory in a 56-minute Wimbledon final. The 27-year-old Romanian captured her second career major with a 6-2, 6-2 victory adding a maiden Wimbledon — the first for her country in both men's and women's singles — to her 2018 Roland Garros triumph. Defeat for 37-year-old Williams, a seven-time Wimbledon champion who won the last of her 23 Slam titles at the 2017 Australian Open, meant her attempt to equal Margaret Court's all-time record for major wins was put back on ice until at least the US Open.

"My mom said when I was 10 that if I want to do something in tennis I have to play in the final at

Wimbledon," said Halep. "I had lots of nerves, my stomach wasn't very well. I have never played a better match. "I said at the start of the tournament that one of my motivations was to win and become a lifetime member of the club." Williams bluntly admitted she had not been at the races against a superior opponent.

"She played out of her mind. I was like a deer in the headlights," said Williams. Williams was undone by 26 unforced errors to Halep's two. Williams may have kept Halep waiting to go on court but if she hoped that would upset her opponent it did quite the opposite. Indeed the Halep fan who burst into song — waving a Romanian scarf from the 2015 Rugby World Cup — singing "We love you Simona, we do!" served to give her the boost to rattle Williams from the start.

Fired up

A flashing forehand crosscourt set the tone and she broke her in the first game. She broke again to lead 3-0 — things clearly not going Williams's way when a Halep shot clipped the net and went over but the American's shot also clipped the net but failed to go over. Already 3-0 down after eight minutes, Williams was completely at sea and by the time Halep served to lead 4-0 Williams had won just six points.

She finally got on the board with her next service game but Halep had little trouble in sealing the set which included another remarkable point from the Romanian. The 27-year-old raced to retrieve an incredible get which sneaked over the net and Williams was only able to put her shot into the net. Williams — who has let slip opportunities to equal Court's record in last

year's Wimbledon and US Open finals — appeared to at last get fired up in the first game of the second set.

She let out a long yell at the ground when she won a point on her serve and another on the next point. However, that was a rare show of her fiery side as Halep broke her to lead 3-2. Halep rubbed in her superiority to break her again for 5-2 — two powerful serves earlier in the game had Williams saying why was I not able to do this earlier — and took the match and the title with aplomb with the first of her three match points. She sank to her knees a broad smile on her face before rising to hug Williams. Her victory also gave Halep's favored royal Kate, Duchess of Cambridge, bragging rights over sister-in-law Meghan, Duchess of Sussex — they were sitting beside each other in the Royal Box. Meghan is a close friend of Williams. — AFP

Barca get Griezmann but Atletico contest fee

MADRID: Barcelona announced the signing of Antoine Griezmann on Friday for 120 million euros (\$135 million), sparking a furious reaction from Atletico Madrid over the amount the La Liga champions paid for the World Cup winner. In a statement, Barca revealed they had paid the 120 million euros to activate the Frenchman's release clause, adding he would sign a five-year deal that included a "buyout clause of 800 million euros".

Griezmann almost signed for Barca 12 months ago, but instead opted to remain at Atletico, announcing his choice to stay in a documentary called "The Decision". "When

I was a boy, my dad taught me that trains don't come around just once," Griezmann said in a video posted on the Barcelona website on Friday. "Now it's time to take on the challenge of a new destination. "Finally, our paths cross. I'll defend the Barca colours with all my determination and commitment. It's our time. This is our path."

However, within minutes of Barcelona's announcement, Atletico said they believed "the amount paid is insufficient to meet the release clause as it is obvious that the agreement between the player and Barcelona had been concluded before the release clause dropped from 200 million euros to 120 million euros" at the start of the month.

They said Griezmann had gone to the headquarters of Spanish Football League (LFP) to "unilaterally" break his contract after Barca met the release clause, and added they had already "begun appropriate procedures" to defend their "rights and legitimate interests". The announcement was the latest episode in a spat between the two clubs and Griezmann after the 28-year-

old failed to show up for Atletico's pre-season gathering on Sunday following his announcement in May he would be leaving for an unnamed destination — long-suspected to be Barcelona. Last week Atletico accused Barcelona and Griezmann of a "lack of respect" after Barca president Josep Maria Bartomeu revealed the two clubs had held talks about the former Real Sociedad forward.

Replacement already signed

Atletico then claimed Griezmann had told the club he had struck a deal with Barcelona in March, just days before the second leg of their Champions League last-16 tie with Juventus, which saw them dumped out by a Cristiano Ronaldo hat-trick after winning the first leg 2-0 in Madrid. Griezmann joined Atletico in 2014 and has scored 133 goals in 257 appearances, lifting the Europa League in 2018.

He won the Golden Boot at Euro 2016 when France were beaten in the final on home soil by Portugal before helping to guide his country to World Cup glory in



VALENCIA: In this file photo taken on May 18, 2019 Atletico Madrid's French forward Antoine Griezmann controls the ball during the Spanish League football match between Levante and Atletico Madrid at the Ciutat de Valencia stadium. — AFP

Russia last year. The sale of Griezmann comes after Atletico stumped up a whopping 126 million euros to sign rising star

Joao Felix from Benfica last week, making the 19-year-old one of the five most expensive players in history. — AFP