

2 Defense Minister: Youth true wealth of the nation



9 10 dead in Mumbai building collapse amid rescue efforts



24 Palestinians protest Lebanon crackdown on foreign workers



27 Qatar's Nasser Al-Attiyah dominates Silk Way rally



Khamenei: Iran to give no quarter in standoff with US

Zarif warns Washington 'playing with fire' • Trump not seeking 'regime change'

Iranian bread permanent guest at Kuwaiti tables



KUWAIT: A waiter serves Iranian bread - known as taftoon - at a restaurant in Kuwait City on June 27, 2019. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See Page 4)

DUBAI/NEW YORK: Iran's supreme leader upped the ante in a volatile standoff with the United States yesterday, warning Tehran would continue removing restraints on its nuclear program and retaliate for the seizure of an Iranian oil tanker. Tensions have spiked since US President Donald Trump last year abandoned world powers' 2015 nuclear deal with Iran under which it agreed to curtail its enrichment of uranium in return for the lifting of global sanctions crippling its economy.

European parties to the pact decided on Monday not to trigger the deal's dispute mechanism in favor of pursuing more talks and avert any US-Iranian military conflict, but took no action to shield Iran against a sanctions clampdown by Trump. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's ultimate authority, accused Britain, Germany and France of failing to uphold obligations under the deal to restore Iranian access to global trade, especially for Tehran's oil exports blocked by US sanctions.

"According to our foreign minister, Europe made 11 commitments, none of which they abided by. We abided by our commitments and even beyond them. Now that we've begun to reduce our commitments, they oppose it. How insolent! You didn't abide by your commitments!" Khamenei said, according to his website. "We have started to reduce our commitments and this trend shall continue," Khamenei said in remarks carried by state television.

He has previously upbraided European powers for not standing up to Trump and circumventing his sanctions noose. Russia and China are also parties to the accord. But it was the first time Khamenei explicitly pledged to press ahead with breaches of the nuclear deal, spurning European appeals to Iran to restore limits



Ali Khamenei

on enrichment aimed at obviating any dash to developing atomic bombs. "So far, efforts to win gestures from Iran to de-escalate the crisis are not succeeding (as) Tehran is demanding the lifting of sanctions on its oil and banking sectors first," a European diplomatic source told Reuters.

Iran has long denied any intent to acquire nuclear weapons, and has said all its breaches could be reversed if Washington returned to the deal and its economic dividends were realized. Tehran has accused Washington of waging "economic war". "Western governments' major vice is their arrogance," Khamenei said. "If the country

Continued on Page 24

News in brief

Kuwait reserve assets hit \$39bn

KUWAIT: State reserve assets amounted to KD 11.9 billion (\$39.2 billion) by the end of May, the Central Bank said yesterday. These assets are made up of gold, Kuwaiti reserves with the IMF, special drawing rights, currency and deposits - excluding external assets of the Public Investment Authority. The assets are at the disposal of relevant monetary authorities to meet the needs of balance of payment funding or intervention in the market to affect exchange rates. The bank said in a press release that overall currency and assets reached by the end of May KD 11.2 billion (\$36.9 billion), including paper and metallic banknotes, namely foreign currencies in circulation for securing payments. — KUNA

HRW: Return of dissidents unlawful

DUBAI: Kuwait's deportation of eight Egyptian dissidents linked to the Muslim Brotherhood is unlawful and put them at "grave risk" of torture and prosecution, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. "The deportation of the men appears to violate Kuwait's obligations under international law," HRW said in a statement. The New York-based rights group called on Kuwait to end further deportations to Egypt of anyone at risk of mistreatment. — AFP

13 killed in Iran minibus accident

TEHRAN: Three babies were among 13 people killed yesterday when a minibus they were travelling in plunged into a gorge in central Iran, state news agency IRNA reported. The brakes of the 1970s Mercedes-Benz failed during a descent in Isfahan province, Khansar city governor Mansour Kamali said. "Ten adults and three babies were killed, and nine people were injured," Kamali said, quoted by IRNA. — AFP

Colombian hides cocaine under wig

MADRID: A Colombian man was arrested at Barcelona airport with half a kilo of cocaine hidden under his wig, Spanish police said yesterday. The man attracted officers' attention because he was "considerably nervous" and his wig was of "disproportionate size", police said in a statement. Officers questioned the man and found a "perfectly-sealed package taped to his head". It contained 503 gm of cocaine worth over €30,000. In what police have dubbed "Operation Toupee", the man was arrested at Barcelona's El Prat airport. — AFP

Trump denies racism charges; Dems hit back

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump denied accusations of racism yesterday after launching an attack on four minority Democratic lawmakers, saying he does not have "a racist bone in my body". Trump tweeted out a defense of his incendiary remarks about the congresswomen as the House of Representatives was poised to vote on a resolution condemning his "xenophobic tweets". In a series of weekend tweets attacking the four lawmakers - who are of Hispanic, Arab, Somali and African American origin - Trump urged them to "go back" to their countries of origin.

He doubled down on the provocative

comments Monday and again yesterday. "Our Country is Free, Beautiful and Very Successful. If you hate our Country, or if you are not happy here, you can leave!" the president tweeted yesterday morning. Democratic leaders have roundly condemned Trump's remarks, and rallied round the lawmakers - Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley - who with the exception of Omar were born in the United States.

The four struck back at a news conference Monday and urged people not to "take the bait". Trump was simply trying to distract with his "blatantly racist attack" on the four women of color, Omar said. "This is the agenda of white nationalists," she said. Pressley also urged the American people "to not take the bait". "This is simply a disruption and a distraction from the callous chaotic and corrupt culture of this administration, all the way down," Pressley said.

Continued on Page 24

Pakistan reopens airspace after India standoff

KARACHI: Pakistan yesterday fully reopened its airspace for all civilian traffic, ending months of restrictions affecting major international routes including from India after clashes between the nuclear-armed rivals brought them to the brink of war. "With immediate effect Pakistan airspace is open for all type of civil traf-

fic," the state-run Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said. A CAA spokesman confirmed to AFP that the eastern airspace along the border with India had been reopened.

Pakistan closed its airspace completely after aerial dogfights in February ratcheted up tensions between Islamabad and New Delhi. It removed some restrictions a month later but kept constraints in place along its eastern border with India. The closure disrupted Indian flights headed west, forced Pakistan International Airlines to suspend some of its flights, and effectively closed off major international routes in and out of Islamabad and Lahore, such as the Thai Airways route from Islamabad to Bangkok.

The crisis between the countries was first sparked

Jordan names Qatar envoy, 2 years after downgrading ties

AMMAN: Jordan appointed a new ambassador to Qatar yesterday, a step toward restoring normal relations two years after Amman withdrew its ambassador in solidarity with Gulf Arab allies who severed ties with Doha. Amman downgraded its diplomatic representation in June 2017, a few days after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain scrapped all ties with Qatar, accusing it of supporting Islamist militants, which Doha denies.

Zeid Al-Lawzi, a senior Jordanian career diplomat and secretary general of the foreign ministry, was named as the new ambassador, according to a royal decree. The

government also said it had accepted Qatar's nomination of Sheikh Saud bin Nasser bin Jassem Al-Thani, a member of Doha's royal family, as ambassador to Amman.

Jordanian officials denied the rapprochement with Qatar amounted to a snub of Saudi Arabia, Amman's traditional, heavyweight Gulf patron. But diplomats said the timing of the move could reflect divergent views of US President Donald Trump's approach to settling the Arab-Israeli conflict. Jordan has traditionally turned to Arab monarchies in the Gulf to shore up its economy. However, Gulf Arabs have shifted their foreign policy focus to their rivalry with Iran, cutting financial support for Amman.

Amman feels Gulf Arabs' dependence on Washington to confront Iran makes them hesitant to challenge Washington's possible jettisoning of a Palestinian state under any future peace plan. Jordan cites last month's conference in the Gulf state of Bahrain where US officials laid out their economic vision for peace, making no mention of a "two-state solution". Amman, which has the longest Arab border

with Israel, says a solution involving a Palestinian state co-existing alongside Israel is crucial to any lasting peace in the region.

The resumption of normal ties with Qatar followed overtures from Doha, the latest when Qatar's deputy premier and minister of state for defense affairs, Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah, visited Amman in April and signed military cooperation accords. Qatar last summer extended a \$500 million aid package to Jordan only days after its Gulf adversaries pledged \$2.5 billion to help Jordan overcome an economic crisis after a wave of rare anti-government protests.

Wealthy Qatar has in recent months opened up more jobs for Jordanian expatriates as part of the aid package, which includes project finance and job-generating investments. Qatar, which has a large stake in Jordan's second largest bank, has also pledged to pump hundreds of millions of dollars in coming years in what diplomats say is an attempt to drive a wedge between Amman and Saudi Arabia. — Reuters



WASHINGTON: US Representatives Ayanna Pressley speaks as Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez look on during a press conference at the US Capitol on Monday. — AFP (See Page 8)

Local

Amir, Crown Prince receive Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad at Bayan Palace

Speaker receives Kuwaiti, foreign diplomats



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Kuwait Martin Dvorak.



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Ambassador of Serbia to Kuwait Vladimir Kohut.



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Ambassador of Indonesia to Kuwait Tri Tharyat.



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Kuwait's General Consul in New York Hamad Al-Hazim.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-

Ahmad Al-Sabah separately at Bayan Palace yesterday. In other news, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem received yesterday Kuwait's General Consul in New York Hamad Al-Hazim.

Ghanem also met with Ambassadors of the Czech Republic, Serbia, and Indonesia to the State of Kuwait Martin Dvorak, Vladimir Kohut, and Tri Tharyat respectively. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Kuwaiti students studying at universities of the American state of Colorado. —Defense Ministry photos



Youth true wealth of Kuwait: Defense Minister

KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah stressed yesterday that Kuwait's real wealth lies in the youth, who have responsibility to build a nation where everyone enjoys education and welfare opportunities. This came in a statement by Sheikh Nasser Al-Sabah in a press release issued by the Ministry of Defense after receiving number of Kuwaiti students

studying at universities of the American state of Colorado.

Sheikh Nasser called on students to complete their educational journey to be active in Kuwait's progress and renaissance. He urged the students to be dedicated to their scientific achievements and to invest the opportunities granted to them by joining these prestigious universities and benefiting from the available expertise. He explained that the students will reap great benefits of their scholarship to study abroad in building a future homeland; to be in line with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's '2035 vision'. During the meeting, Sheikh Nasser exchanged cordial conversations with the students and reviewed their educational process, activities and their social initiatives. —KUNA



Alghanim Industries supports NUKS-USA orientation meeting

KUWAIT: In line with its deep-seated commitment to support youth to become leaders of a better future, Alghanim Industries was a strategic partner of the annual orientation event for Kuwaiti recipients of scholarships in US universities. The event, which took place

in Arraya Conference Hall, was organized by the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) - USA Branch, and held under the patronage of the Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi. It was attended by the US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman, Cultural Counselor and Director of Cultural Office in the Embassy of Kuwait Aseel Al-Awadhi, and Deputy Undersecretary of Scholarships in the Ministry of Higher Education Wafaa Al-Sarraf.

Hadeer Shelash, Corporate Communications Manager at Alghanim Industries, commented on how the company's participation and sponsorship reflects a commitment to the goals of NUKS and a support for

their major events inside or outside of Kuwait, saying: "Our participation in this event stems from our long-established organizational priority to empower youth as part of our commitment to our society. We believe our young men and women are able to conquer challenges and realize new milestones if they are in an enabling environment." She added: "We are committed to provide training and internship opportunities in various specializations to students, whether in Alghanim Industries or any of the businesses we operate across different industries."

During the event, X-cite Alghanim sponsored a raffle draw for visiting students, who had a chance to win one

of 10 valuable vouchers for the latest essential electronics ahead of their new academic journey. As part of its efforts in giving back to the community, Alghanim Industries focuses on supporting education and encouraging entrepreneurship on a long-term basis. In addition to its sponsorship to NUKS activities, Alghanim Industries also has a long record of accomplishments in giving forward to youth in the country, working with many key partners including Tmkeen Youth Symposium, AMIDEAST, INJAZ-Kuwait, and other entities dedicated to empowering youth and encouraging them to take up positions of leadership that can positively impact their communities.



Hadeer Shelash, Corporate Communications Manager at Alghanim Industries speaks at the event.



Organizers, sponsors and top guests in a group photo.

Local

Kuwait's Prime Minister heads Supreme Petroleum Council meeting

Government forms commission to lead anti-corruption strategy



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the 122nd meeting of Kuwait's Supreme Petroleum Council at Bayan Palace yesterday. —KUNA



Members of Kuwait's Supreme Petroleum Council attend the meeting.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah headed the 122nd meeting of Kuwait's Supreme Petroleum Council (SPC) at Bayan Palace yesterday. During the meeting, the participants tackled several issues put on the agenda.

Separately, the Kuwaiti government formed a higher commission aimed at leading and coordinating the national strategy to promote integrity and fighting corruption. The commission will be chaired by the Public Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), with members from parliament, Supreme Judicial Council, Public Prosecution, ministries of justice, interior, finance, commerce and industry, education, higher education and information.

The commission will also consist of the Civil

Service Commission, Kuwait Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Central Agency for Information Technology, Central Tenders Committee, private universities council, Capital Market Authority and Kuwait Transparency society, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said in a statement after a cabinet meeting, chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister. He said the commission

would supervise implementation of the strategy and change it when necessary.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet assigned the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources to rapidly distribute lots for fish and shrimp farming so operations would begin by August 30 maximum. The government also decided to reduce to two years from three the period required for divorcee woman to acquire renovation loan, and increased the loan to KD

35,000 from KD 25,000 for government houses and KD 30,000 loan for private houses.

They approved trade and technical cooperation agreement with Dominican and cultural agreement with Mauritania. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the cabinet about recent visit by Federica Mogherini, EU's Foreign Policy chief, to Kuwait to open the EU Delegation mission in the country. He said Mogherini praised Kuwait's mediation efforts in regional crises. The Cabinet, on the other hand, condemned a train collision accident in Pakistan that killed and wounded many people. It also condemned an armed attack on a hotel in southern Somalia. —KUNA



Cabinet briefed on Mogherini's visit

Al-Hamra becomes home to European Union Delegation to Kuwait

KUWAIT: Al-Hamra Real Estate Company welcomes the newly opened European Union Delegation to the State of Kuwait and is pleased that its iconic Business Tower has been selected as its new home. Aiming to strengthen bilateral ties, the Delegation recognizes Kuwait as an important partner in promoting peace and prosperity in the country and the wider region.

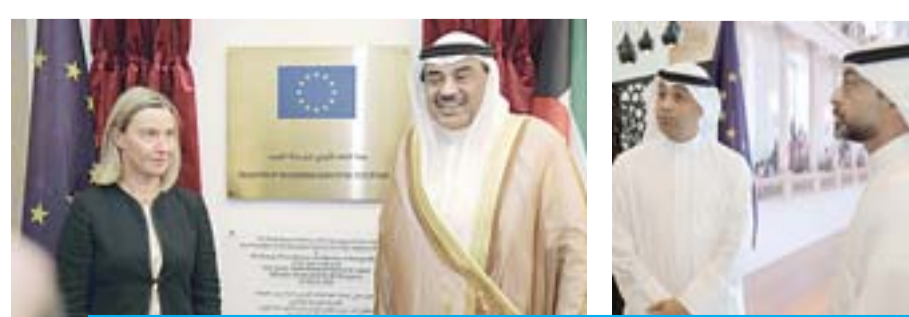
To mark the official opening, the EU Delegation to Kuwait hosted a high-level ceremony in the presence of EU's Chief Diplomat Federica Mogherini, Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the newly-appointed EU's Ambassador to Kuwait Michele Cervone, Al-Hamra leadership team, senior government officials, business leaders, diplomats, civil society activists and media representatives.

Welcoming EU's top diplomats to Al-

Hamra Business Tower, Khaled Adel Al-Ibrahim, Vice Chairman of Al-Hamra Real Estate Company, said: "This is a proud moment as we host our European partners to our premises and witness the opening of a new chapter between Kuwait and the EU. As a leading business and real estate company, we look forward to new avenues for growth and I am certain Al-Hamra Business Tower is the ideal home for the EU, providing an international hub for enhanced opportunities and global connectivity."

Commenting on this historic development, Abdullah Al-Mansour, Public Relations and Marketing Manager of Al-Hamra said: "Hosting the EU Delegation is a distinct honor that reiterates Al-Hamra's global appeal to tier one organizations from around the world. Our internationally-renowned Business Tower remains the most sought-after destination, bringing first-class facilities to the heart of Kuwait City."

Al-Hamra's Business Tower serves as Kuwait's most dynamic business and diplomatic hub, credited for enabling individuals and businesses to flourish in an international setting. Home to 6,000 elite professionals from across various industries, the Tower symbolizes a cultural, historic and revolutionized presence in the heart of Kuwait City's commercial district. Al-Hamra Business Tower is also home to the Embassies of Germany, France, and the World Bank.



KUWAIT: EU's Chief Diplomat Federica Mogherini, Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and other officials attend the inauguration of the EU Delegation's new office at Al-Hamra Business Tower.



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Local

Iranian bread permanent guest at Kuwaiti tables

Kuwaitis' bond with Iranian culture unchanged despite regional tensions



Workers prepare pita bread at a factory in Kuwait City.

KUWAIT: Khalil Kamal makes sure he regularly visits Kuwait's popular Souq Al-Mubarakiya, where he enjoys his favorite kebab meal with onion, rocket and freshly baked Iranian bread. The smell of the bread wafts through the market as it bakes in a traditional oven at the Al-Walimah restaurant in downtown Kuwait City.

The restaurant's Iranian baker takes one of the many dough balls lined up in front of him and spreads it over a cushion, using the pad to stick the dough against the inside wall of the clay oven. Once ready, he uses a long stick to reach in and pull out a steaming rounded loaf, served piping hot to customers.

For decades, Iranian bread — known as taftoon — has been a staple of Kuwaiti breakfast, lunch and dinner tables. For Kuwaitis, their bond with Iranian culture remains unchanged despite the growing regional tensions between some Gulf countries and Iran.

Iran sits just across the strategic Gulf waterway and its culinary influences are strong. "Iranian bread is the only bread we have known since we were born," 60-year-old Kamal said.

Hassan Abdullah Zachriaa, a Kuwaiti of Iranian origin, opened Al-Walimah in 1996. Its tables are spread across a courtyard, surrounded by wooden columns and entryways.

Zachriaa, in his 70s, said the restaurant puts out between 400 and 500 loaves of Iranian bread a day.

"The big turnout in Kuwait for Iranian bread stems from the fact that for decades, our mothers used to make it at home," he said. "We then started to buy it from bakeries and stand in lines to get it fresh and hot in the morning, noon and evening."

'Since childhood'

The flat bread is offered alongside many dishes popular in Kuwait such as Al-Baja, lamb bits stuffed with rice, Al-Karaeen, cooked sheep feet, classic chickpea plates, or beans and cooked fish. Almost all restaurants in the old market have their own traditional clay ovens where either Iranian or Afghan bakers work.

Derbas Hussein al-Zoabi, 81, a customer at Al-Walimah, said many Kuwaitis were raised on Iranian bread. "Since childhood, Iranians baked bread for us... and we used to eat in the morning with milk and ghee" — clarified butter.

Other than at street markets, Kuwaitis can buy Iranian bread from co-ops, where people line up in the early hours of the morning and again in the evening to get the freshly baked goods. Some bakeries even have designated



KUWAIT: Hassan Abdullah Zachriaa, a Kuwaiti of Iranian origin and owner of the Al-Walimah restaurant (right), shares Iranian bread - known as taftoon - during a meal with a friend in Kuwait City on June 27, 2019. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

segregated entryways for men and women.

Some Kuwaitis customize their orders with spreads of sesame, thyme and dates, and many come prepared with cloth bags to keep the bread as fresh as possible on the trip home. Bakeries specializing in Iranian bread began popping up in Kuwait in the 1970s and have

since expanded to more than 100, according to deputy chief of the Union Co-operative Society Khaled al-Otaibi.

"These bakeries produce two million loaves of bread a day to meet the needs of Kuwaitis and residents," he said. "They receive fuel and flour at a subsidized price so that bread is

available for not more than 20 fils (less than seven cents)." The price however can go to up to 50 fils depending on the amount and type of additives, including sesame and fennel.

'Nothing to do with politics'

Taftoon has remained popular in Kuwait despite escalating tensions in the past year between Iran on one side and the United States and regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia on the other. "Bread has nothing to do with politics," said Zachriaa. "Iranians live here, and there will be no shortage of this bread that is very desired."

Iran maintains good relations with Kuwait, unlike its strained ties with other Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. According to Jassem Abbas, a heritage specialist, regional politics do not have a major impact on the social lives of Kuwaitis. "Despite the current tensions and what has happened in the (1980-1988) Iraq-Iran war, Iranian bread remains a top favorite," he said.

Around 55,000 Iranians live in Kuwait, according to the Iranian embassy, while Shiites make up about one-third of Kuwait's 1.4 million native population. "Politics does not ruin friendships between people," Abbas said. — AFP



A baker bakes Iranian bread at a bakery in Kuwait City on June 27, 2019.

Local

Foreign investments licensing & granting incentives

Decision No. (329) of 2019 on Scoring Mechanism for Evaluating

KUWAIT: Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) is mandated with the task to attract, promote and encourage both foreign and local direct investments into the State of Kuwait. KDIPA also provides all needed services and aftercare to facilitate licensing procedures and granting incentives for interested investors, as well as addressing potential obstacles to ensure a favorable investment climate. In a broader sense, KDIPA coordinates national efforts with various government entities, the private sector, and civil society organizations, to streamline needed reforms to improve legal and regulatory business environment.

KDIPA overarching goal for attracting direct investments is added value investments that contribute to enhance the transfer, settlement and utilization of modern and state-of-the-art innovative technologies, means of production and operation, management method, technical and marketing expertise, the creation of employment opportunities for the national workforce, and increasing productivity and personal skills in accordance with the best international standards adopted in this regard to the State of Kuwait.

Based on Law No. 116 of 2016 Regarding the Promotion of Direct

Investment in Kuwait, and in view of Kuwait's National Vision 2035, the Director General of KDIPA issued Decision No. (329) of 2019 regarding the Scoring Mechanism for Evaluating Investments Licensing and Granting Incentives Applications. Decision No. (329) of 2019 provides a transparent criterion for assessing the licensing and granting incentives applications based on 5 main criteria, with a total of 15 sub-criteria, equally weighted, to include:

I. Transfer and settlement of

technology:

1. Innovative tangible technology
2. Innovative intangible technology
3. Research & Development (R&D) for enabling knowledge creation
4. Modern management methods.

II. Human Capital:

1. Job Creation for nationals
2. Certified training programs related to specialization or core activity
3. Corporate scholarship programs

III. Market Development

- a. Domestic Market needs
- b. Use of national products and services
- c. Product Accreditation and Quality Management Systems

IV. Economic Diversification:

- a. Contribution of non-oil sectors to GDP
- b. Industry, innovation & infrastructure
- c. Fostering competitiveness

V. Sustainable Development:

1. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
2. Environmental sustainability



Correction

Kuwait Times incorrectly stated details regarding the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Decision No. 329. We are including the correct information below. We offer our apologies to KDIPA. We regret the error.

Decision No. (329) of 2019 provides a transparent criterion for assessing the licensing and granting incentives applications based on 5 main criteria, with a total of 15 sub-criteria, equally weighted. (See accompanying report)

Percentages used are based on the points scoring mechanism for all 15 sub-criteria and not only the sub-criteria II. 1 Jobs Creation for nationals as previously reported.

Regarding this specific subcriteria:

2-1 Job creation for nationals

Creating job opportunities for national employment in accordance to the Council of Ministers Decision No. 1028 of 2014 regarding the National Labor ratios at non-governmental entities applied to the investment entities with 25 employees or more. Investment entities with less than 25 employees are not subject to the above mentioned decision, but KDIPA applies on it a Kuwaitization percentage of 50 percent or more from the total employment.

Decision Matrix: The decision is based the Points Scoring Mechanism outcome for the investment licensing and granting incentives applications in fulfilling the set criteria as follows:

Points	Score	Decision	Coverage
85%-100%	13-15	Approval	Both investments licensing & incentives as stipulated under Law No. 116 of 2013.
60%-80%	9-12	Approval	Both investment licensing & granting only one incentive of choice.
30%-55%	5-8	Approval	Only investment licensing application.
below 30%.	≤4	Not qualified	—

Dhows get 'habab and shouna' application for pearl diving expedition

By Ben Garcia



Omar Al-Sultan

KUWAIT: The maritime heritage committee at Kuwait Sea Sports Club (KSSC) continues its preparations for the upcoming 31st annual pearl diving expedition scheduled to be held from July 25 to August 1, 2019. Around 160 Kuwaiti youth are participating in the month-long event, which includes training every Friday at the KSSC. The event is organized under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Captain Feras Al-Khasti said most of the participants are children wanting to spend their summer break in a productive manner. "Their parents want them to spend their precious time productively with other Kuwaiti kids. Just like me - one of my sons is here enjoying the company of his friends. This is not easy training but is really worth it. We teach everything we knew when I was once a student. I did the same when I was nine. It is about time my kids learn the way I learned when I was a kid," he said.

This week, the sailors applied oil and cement (habab and shouna) to the dhows which will be used for the weeklong expedition. Habab and shouna is done by hand to make the dhows safer and stronger. The shouna ritual is as important as other phases in the preparations to make the dhows ready for the voyage.

"Most of the dhows must get the same treatment, and we leave the work to the young people so they know how it was done in olden times and understand the lives of our forefathers before oil was discovered," Khasti said. Most of the dhows used were donated by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. "We have 15 boats to be used for the expedition. For the whole week, we will stay and camp at Khairan resort to dive early in the morning. They will apply the entire lesson learned at KSSC, where we will test them in real-life pearl diving," Khasti said.



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti young men apply oil and cement at a ship during the 'habab and shouna' in preparation for the 31st annual pearl diving expedition scheduled from July 25 to August 1. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

They also teach participants traditional seafaring songs, commonly known as sanji, popular traditional songs sung by sailors while at sea, on the shore after a long day of pearl diving and while their friends are yet to return from diving. These are sung along beats of clapping, chanting and beating drums, amidst a festive and celebratory mood. The number one supporter of this expedition is no other than His Highness the Amir. The pearl harvest is normally turned over to His Highness the Amir for safekeeping and for the use of future generations.

Even though he attended last year's pearl diving expedition, Hamad Al-Suwaidan, 14, is back again this summer. He said his presence is in compliance with the wish of his friend Omar Al-Sultan, 16, to be with him in this expedition. "I convinced him to join this year and said if he agrees, I will join again. This is why we are

here together this year," Hamad said. "I like to share the joy in doing the hard work - I value the work of our forefathers. I think we kids should try this pearl diving experience, as it will help us define our true value as people. It is not just about friendship and camaraderie; it is more than just a lesson in seafaring; it is the whole experience," he added.

The young sailors will be seen off by their family members at the KSSC in a ceremony to be held on July 25 and attended by several invited guests from the Amiri Diwan and the maritime heritage committee. The pearl diving expedition started in 1986 with only five vessels provided by the ministry of information, and throughout the years, His Highness the Amir also donated dhows for the pearl diving activities. The expedition was halted during the 1990-1991 Iraqi invasion but resumed a year later.

Inmate died in hospital due to heart attack: Police

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's relations and security information department commented on social media reports about an expatriate man's death inside a traffic holding cell, saying that the man was alive when he was hospitalized but was later pronounced dead at Sabah Hospital. The man was held for committing a grave traffic violation, then fell ill and an ambulance was called, which took him to the hospital where he was admitted inside the ICU. Thirty minutes later, the medical team pronounced him dead due to a heart attack, the ministry said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the ministry also on social media claims about a broken part of the flyover connecting King Fahd Road with Fifth Ring Road, saying that the reports are untrue, and that traffic flow is normal and the flyover is safe with no obstacles. In the meantime, the ministry commented on a video on social media showing a person smashing the windows of a van, saying the vehicle's owner and company representative were summoned and a case was lodged against the Kuwaiti who did the act.

Front signage collapse

Owners of car spare part shops in Shuwaikh are expected to face legal action if an investigation reveals that the collapse of their shops' front signage, which happened yesterday due to strong winds, was a result of lack of safety measures. Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Department said in a statement that following a video circulated on social media and showing the collapse of the shops' front signage, supervisory teams from the Capital municipality went to the place where the incident took place and took legal action. Director of the Capital municipality branch Bader Al-Otaibi said engineering inspection and follow up, safety, inspection, municipal services follow up and public cleanliness departments inspect-



KUWAIT: A Kuwait Municipality vehicle is seen outside car spare part shops in Shuwaikh that had their front signage knocked off by strong winds yesterday.

ed the site and will prepare a technical report by the safety department.

Mahboula fire

Mangaf fire station men battled a blaze in four vehicles parked in an open area in Mahboula. Firemen isolated the fire to keep it from spreading. No casualties were reported. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.

Treachery

A man fell victim to treachery by some of his friends at a farm, as the owner and several of those present beat him, causing several injuries, Al-Rai reported yesterday. All those involved

were arrested and taken to Kabd police station, where one of those involved was found to be a police captain.

Kidnap and assault

Detectives are looking for three persons who kidnapped a girl with the help of her friend, assaulted her, then dumped her in a Jahra street, reported Al-Rai yesterday. A Syrian man told police that his 14-year-old daughter called him seeking rescue from three men she does not know. Policemen found the victim and questioned her. She said an Egyptian friend tricked her and three men took her in their car, assaulted her, dumped her on the street and escaped. The friend was arrested.

Recruitment not subject to labor nationalities, numbers: Authority

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower Ahmad Al-Mousa said bringing in expat labor is subject to rules mentioned in labor law 6/2010 and its decisions. He said the authority carries out its responsibilities to issue work permits based on employers' requests according to rules that are not related to the nationality or number of expat labor. He said the labor law and the law establishing the authority 109/2013 gave it the right to bring in labor based on employers' requests.

Mousa said the higher committee to deal with the population structure's imbalance based on the decision of state minister for economic affairs of 2/2019, and the teams formed for this purpose, are working hard on this issue. He said that this matter requires general awareness by employers and government departments that need workers to complete government projects. Several MPs have called upon the government in recent years to take action in order to curb the government's demographic imbalance, including calls to limit the recruitment of laborers from countries that have large populations in Kuwait.

Doctor warns against ignoring back pain

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Interventional radiology, spinal column and chronic pain consultant Dr Waleed Al-Hajji warned against neglecting any pain one feels in the back, as this may lead to unpleasant repercussions. Sufferers must go to the nearest hospital to find out the reasons so it can be treated more easily. He said any negligence in treating spinal disc herniation can lead to greater health problems and severe complications, and may need surgical intervention. He said neglecting treatment may even lead to weakness and sexual impotence due to pressure on the nerves.

Hajji finds the increase of disc, back and neck pain in youth as strange, as it was much less prevalent previously. He said this may be due to a lack of sporting activity or wrong practices, especially by youth who want to

appear muscular quickly, in addition to new lifestyle changes such as having an unhealthy diet, eating junk food and lack of exercise.

Hajji said the elderly gets disc and back pain the most compared to other age groups, followed by youth who are younger than 30. He said the youngest case he treated was of a 16-year-old patient, which is rare. He said the rate of disc pain in the elderly compared to youth is 4 to 1, adding that the rate of spinal disc herniation patients increased lately in the Gulf region and may reach 55 percent in Kuwait.



Dr Waleed Al-Hajji



Floods worsen in India's northeast

German Chancellor stays seated again after shaking spells

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KABUL: Afghan dog handlers stand as explosive detection dogs sit next to them during a practice session at the Mine Detection Centre (MDC) in Kabul.

Dogs sniffing out explosives in Kabul

Man's best friend: Dogs trained for a life-or-death mission

KABUL: Naya, a three-year-old Belgian Malinois, focuses intently as she leaps over hurdles and zooms through tunnels on an obstacle course at a training centre on a hill overlooking Kabul. She seems to be having fun, but is in fact being trained for a life-or-death mission: finding explosives in a country where hidden mines, bombs and weapons routinely kill.

Naya is one of about 200 dogs at the Afghan capital's Mine Detection Centre (MDC), a non-governmental group raising the animals from rambunctious pups into a disciplined force, and teaching handlers how to work with the canines. A common sight around the Afghan capital, explosives-sniffing dogs are deployed at checkpoints and government facilities, where they are an important tool in combating the flow of homemade bombs being smuggled into Kabul. "The dogs are very useful - they are very fast, they do their jobs with great speed," Taj Mohammad, a long-time trainer at the centre, told AFP on a recent visit.

Handlers demonstrated how they train dogs to hone in on particular scents — explosives mainly, but also narcotics - by using a special carousel of identical metal canisters that conceal different smells. Each time a dog correctly identifies a target smell, the handler gives it a rubber chewy ball to chomp on as a reward. "The relationship with the handler must be

perfect. If it does not work, there will be casualties," Mohammad said.

It takes about two years to train an explosives dog, and the process is intense for both the handler and the canine. The animals at the MDC are all German Shepherds or Belgian Malinois. "It's as if you are building a house or bringing up a child," Mohammad said. Handlers get about \$500 a month for their dangerous work - not a bad wage in Afghanistan - as well as life insurance and retirement benefits. Explosives are "a hidden enemy, so all the time I have a little fear in my heart," dog handler Zabihullah Amin said.

No more mine detection

After the MDC was established in 1989, the dogs mainly came from the Netherlands, but now most are local after breeding started here in 1994. More than 1,100 dogs have completed the training. The canines' initial mission was to hunt for landmines, a vital task in a country left strewn with the devastating weapons during the war with the Soviet Union in the 1980s. But the dogs' use tapered off in recent years following a series of incidents where they missed explosives, sometimes causing casualties as people returned to areas thought to be cleared. According to Abdul Qudos Ziaee, head of operations at

Afghanistan's Directorate of Mine Action Coordination, dogs can be a useful mine-detection tool if properly managed.

But in several areas contaminated with anti-vehicle mines, some agencies failed to use the canines correctly or handlers were improperly trained, leading to sloppy practice and areas of terrain left dangerous. "Whether it was fault of the dog handler or the dog was not properly trained ... the mine will be missed and the negative consequence will be borne by civilians," Qudos Ziaee said. Dogs can still be used to sweep large areas deemed "low threat", he said, noting that procedures are currently being revised and new standards will be introduced in about a year.

At the MDC, handlers insist dogs are a better tool for finding mines than mechanical detectors, as they can sniff the explosives in non-metallic devices. According to Ziaee, at least 1,432 people were killed or wounded in Afghanistan by mines and so-called explosive remnants of war in 2018. Mohammad Wirwais, who works at the Mine Detection Centre, was blinded by a mine while clearing terrain in 2008. "I am fortunate and lucky, I have friends ... who lost their lives to mine explosions," he said. "I am good, thank God, I can solve my problems on my own, and I can work here too." — AFP



KABUL: An Afghan dog handler trains an explosive detection dog to catch a ball during a practice session at the Mine Detection Centre (MDC) in Kabul. —AFP photos

Training journalists in the era of fake news

PARIS: As uncannily realistic "deep fake" videos proliferate online, including one recently retweeted by Donald Trump, journalism schools are scrambling to adapt to an era of misinformation - or fake news. Experts discussed how to train tomorrow's reporters for these new challenges at the World Journalism Education Congress in Paris last week.

The three-day event - "Teaching Journalism During a Disruptive Age" - was attended by 600 educators and researchers from 70 countries. "We have journalism educators from places as different as Bangladesh and Uganda, but essentially we all face the same challenges," congress organizer Pascal Guenee, head of IPJ Dauphine journalism school in Paris, told AFP.

In China, the government makes no secret of its tight grip on the media. But fake news is seeping into traditional media via Weibo, WeChat and other Chinese-language social media platforms, said journalism professor Peiqin Chen of the Shanghai International Studies University. "When someone posts false information on Weibo, it can be reposted by a mainstream newspaper's Weibo

account," she said. "Other mainstream media pick up on it from there." "Mainstream media play the biggest role in confirming and spreading fake news in China," she added.

For politics or profit

It was US President Donald Trump who first popularized the phrase "fake news" in attacks on the news media. But in May, Trump tweeted a video of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi which appeared to have been edited to focus on sections of a speech in which she stuttered and mispronounced certain words. "Pelosi stammers through news conference," he wrote. Another doctored Pelosi video, which went viral online, slowed down her speech to give the impression she was drunk. The motivation behind fake news is not always political, said Gifty Appiah-Adjei from the University of Education in Ghana.

"Often it is for financial gain by creating internet traffic, or it's entertainment," she told AFP. "And some people write fake stories just for fun." Journalism education "is the most effective means by which fake news can be addressed", she argued. Until recently however, how to detect and counter fake news has rarely been taught as a stand-alone course at journalism schools, she said.

Checking sources has "always been part of the curriculum," said Kamilla Nigmatullina, senior lecturer at Russia's Saint Petersburg State University. But today's ever-more sophisticated misinformation - including doctored videos and photos - requires a fresh approach. "Journalism schools in China give some courses in fact-

checking, but the academic material we study is based on research in other countries," said Chen. "China still has a long way to go." But for Nigmatullina, we do not need to develop a whole new discipline.

Technology not the answer

"What we do need is joint research with scholars from different disciplines," she told AFP. "We could work with neuroscience students, for example, to determine why people decide to share certain information." In one project organized by the European Journalism Training Association (EJTA), students from almost 20 journalism schools in 13 countries participated in the fact-checking of articles in the run-up to the European Union elections.

One of the aims, said project manager Nadia Vissers from the Artesis Plantijn University in Belgium, was to learn the difference between "misinformation" and "disinformation". "Misinformation is false information spread without the intention to cause harm," she explained. "Disinformation has the intention of spreading lies and influencing people."

Misleading information in the media, for example, about migration, climate change and Brexit was classified as "mostly true", "mostly false", "false" or "uncheckable". The project runs on a shoe-string budget, said Vissers, because "we don't want any funding from Facebook or Google". "The goal is to train journalists," said Eric Nahon, deputy head of IPJ Dauphine and chair of the panel discussion. "Technological solutions are not the answer - we need educated journalists." — AFP

Pakistan hopes to 'refresh' US ties with Khan's visit

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan expressed hopes yesterday that Prime Minister Imran Khan's maiden trip to the White House later this month would help repair its acrimonious relationship with Washington as the US seeks its help in ending the war in Afghanistan. Observers believe that the nearly 18-year conflict will be the major focus of talks between Khan and President Donald Trump when they meet on July 22, as Washington presses for Pakistani assistance in securing a peace deal.

"Pakistan has been facilitating the US-Taliban talks in good faith, underscoring that it remains a shared responsibility," Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said during a seminar in Islamabad. "It will therefore be appropriate to work for broader engagement from Afghanistan to bilateral issues, economic and trade cooperation, to peace and stability in South Asia," he added.

Khan and Trump - both celebrities-turned-politicians whose love lives once made regular tabloid fare - have clashed in the past, with the Pakistani premier once describing a

potential meeting with the US president as a "bitter pill" to swallow. But yesterday, Qureshi said that Trump's invitation to Khan reflected the "importance of the relationship for both sides".

Relations between Pakistan and the United States have been turbulent since Trump took office in 2017, with the US leader frequently singling out Islamabad for failing to rein in extremists and being an unfaithful partner in the fight against militants. The White House has repeatedly accused the shadowy Pakistani military establishment of helping fund and arm the Taliban, both for ideological reasons and to counter rising Indian influence in Afghanistan.

Pakistan denies the claims and says it has paid the price for its alliance with the US in the so-called "war on terror", with thousands of its citizens killed in its long struggle with militancy. Last year, Trump suspended \$300 million in military aid to Islamabad, saying Pakistan has given Washington "nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools". — Reuters

International

Sierra Leone school defies state ban on 'pregnant girls in class'

Women's rights group files a challenge to Sierra Leone's ban

FREETOWN: When Mariatu Sesay realized she was pregnant at 14, one thing scared her more than the social isolation she felt in the classroom: Sierra Leonean law banned her from attending school at all because she was expecting. A keen student, Sesay continued to show up anyway and begged her teachers to let her stay, even as other children mocked her swelling belly. Moved by Sesay's resolve, the school principal, Eric Conteh, defied the law, risking his career and becoming an unwitting figurehead in the fight against a rule that rights groups say is outdated and stigmatizes teenage pregnancy.

"They would call me names, laugh at me and try to tear at my uniform," Sesay told Reuters, holding her now nine-month-old baby girl, Nadia, in her arms. "Whenever I showed up everyone would provoke me, but I love education so I summed up the courage to keep going." Sesay, with her parents' consent, agreed to be identified for this story in order to draw attention to the law.

The school, whose name Reuters is withholding at principal Conteh's request, is the only one in Sierra Leone known to be allowing a pregnant girl to continue to attend classes, but pressure against the law is mounting. Women's rights group Equality Now filed a challenge to Sierra Leone's ban last year before the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) court in Nigeria. The court heard arguments last month and is expected to rule in November.

The government says allowing pregnant girls to attend regular schools would tire them out, expose them to ridicule and encourage others to get pregnant. It has created part-time centers where they can study. Since taking office last year, President Julius Maada Bio has

expanded primary school access. His wife, Fatima Jabbie-Bio, is an advocate for new legal protections against sexual violence. But they have not moved to lift the ban on pregnant students. The education ministry did not respond to requests for comment from Reuters.

Conteh said a regional education official visited the school when Sesay was late in her pregnancy but was so impressed by her success that he chose not to report her. "There is no reason that a child should be denied her basic human rights just because she's pregnant," said Conteh. "Any pregnant girl who wants to learn is welcome at our school." Conteh could in theory be fired from his job by the education authorities for allowing a pregnant girl to continue studying.



Principal defies the law, risking his career

There to learn

Africa has the highest adolescent pregnancy rates in the world and 18 African countries require pregnant girls to drop out of school. The ban in Sierra Leone was adopted in 2015 when teenage pregnancies rose amid the chaos of a massive Ebola outbreak, in part due to a surge in rapes. But it can derail girls' lives. One 14-year-old in the capital Freetown, who was kicked out of school and her parents' home last September after becoming pregnant, said she hopes ECOWAS will overturn the ban and allow her to study to become a journalist.

"Just because someone gets pregnant, it doesn't mean their life is over," said the girl, whose name Reuters is withholding to protect her privacy. Sesay herself was persuaded into having sex for the first time with an older man, a motorcycle taxi driver, and two months later realized she was pregnant. "If you're in school, you're there to learn. If you're not, you're just going to get married or get pregnant again," she said. —Reuters

Could foreign IS suspects be tried in northeast Syria?

QAMISHLI: Months after the territorial defeat of the Islamic State group, Syria's Kurds are pushing for an international tribunal to try alleged jihadists detained in their region. The Kurds run an autonomous administration in the northeast of Syria, but it is not recognized by Damascus or the international community. This brings complications for the legal footing of any justice mechanism on the Kurds' territory, and the international cooperation required to establish one. With Western nations largely reluctant to repatriate their nationals or judge them at home, could foreign IS suspects be put on trial in northeast Syria?

large parts of Syria and neighboring Iraq, implementing its brutal rule on millions in an area the size of the United Kingdom. The jihadists stand accused of a string of crimes including mass killings and rape, and a UN probe is investigating alleged war crimes. Mahmoud Patel, a South African international law expert invited to the July conference, said any court should include input from victims and survivors.

It should be "established in the region where the offences happened so that the people themselves can be part of that process", he said, preferably in northeast Syria because the Kurds do not have the death penalty. In Iraq, hundreds of people including foreigners have been condemned to death or life in prison. In recent months, a Baghdad court has handed death sentences to 11 Frenchmen transferred from Syria to Iraq in speedy trials denounced by human rights groups.



QAMISHLI: Syrian Kurdish security forces inspect the wreckage of a rigged car which detonated outside the Syriac Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary in the predominantly Christian neighborhood of Al-Wasti. —AFP

Why try them in Syria?

After years of fighting IS, Syria's Kurds hold around 1,000 foreign men in jail, as well as some 12,000 non-Syrian women and children in overcrowded camps. Almost four months after Kurdish-led forces backed by the US-led coalition seized IS' last scrap of land in eastern Syria, few have been repatriated.

The Kurdish authorities say they are seriously exploring how to set up an international tribunal, and invited foreign experts to discuss the idea at a conference it hosted early this month. "We will work to set up this tribunal here," the region's top foreign affairs official Abdelkarim Omar told AFP afterwards. "The topic of discussion now is how we will set up this tribunal and what form it will take," he said.

IS in 2014 declared a "caliphate" in

How would it work?

Omar, the foreign affairs official, said he hoped for an international tribunal to try suspects "according to local laws after developing them to agree with international law". The Kurdish region has judges and courts, including one already trying Syrian IS suspects, but needs logistical and legal assistance, he said. A tribunal would have "local judges and foreign judges, as well as international lawyers" to defend the accused, he said.

Nabil Boudi, a French lawyer representing four Frenchmen and several families held in Syria, said the Kurdish authorities seemed determined. "They're already starting to collect evidence," he said after attending the conference. "All the people who were detained and jailed had their own phone" and data can be

retrieved from them, said the lawyer, who was however unable to see those he represents.

Boudi called for "a serious investigation by an independent examining magistrate... that should take time and be far less expeditious than in Baghdad". Stephen Rapp, prosecutor in the trial of Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor, said the most realistic option to try foreigners in northeast Syria would be a Kurdish court. It could have "international assistance conditioned on compliance with international law", he said, including advice from a non-governmental organization specialized in working with non-state actors.

How realistic is it?

The Kurds have said they are hopeful after talks with the Americans, British,

French, Dutch, Belgians, Norwegians, Swedes, and Danes. "We have not seen any side object to the need to form this court or the necessity to try these criminals," Omar said. In May, France said it was studying the "possibility of creating a specific jurisdictional mechanism", potentially inspired by Kosovo or African precedents.

But without serious engagement by the states concerned, foreigners in northeast Syria could remain in detention without trial for years to come, Rapp said. "Keeping all of them together in indefinite detention is expensive and dangerous," he said, and likely just as costly as a credible and properly funded judicial process. IS continues to claim arson attacks and deadly car bombings in areas held by Kurdish-led forces. —AFP

German Chancellor stays seated again after shaking spells

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel remained seated for national anthems at an official ceremony yesterday for the second time in a week, after a series of shaking spells sparked concern about her health. Merkel took a seat next to visiting Moldovan Prime Minister Maia Sandu during military honors for her guest, one day before the German leader's 65th birthday.

She has suffered three bouts of uncontrolled shaking while standing at public ceremonies, and remained seated last week as national anthems were played during a ceremony with Denmark's new prime minister. However the German chancellor insists she is doing "very well" and there is no need to be alarmed about her wellbeing.

She has kept up a grueling schedule since her first trembling spell a month ago including attending a G20 gathering in Japan followed by a crunch EU summit in Brussels. Merkel is expected to embark on her annual summer holiday later this

month. A poll published at the weekend indicated that 59 percent of Germans saw the shaking as Merkel's "private" matter, while 34 percent said it was a matter of public interest. Merkel has been in power since 2005 and plans to step down at the end of her fourth term, in 2021.

German population

Germany's population reached a record high of more than 83 million people last year, largely because migration, most of which came from eastern Europe, data showed yesterday. Net migration fell to some 400,000 people in 2018 from 416,000 in the previous year, the Federal Statistics Office said. European Union states remained the main origin of new arrivals with net migration of 202,000.

Within this group, net migration was highest from Romania (68,000), Croatia (29,000), Bulgaria (27,000) and Poland (20,000), the data showed. Record-high employment and falling joblessness have led to a tightening labour market in Europe's largest economy, with employers struggling to staff more than a million positions and work-related bottlenecks limiting overall economic growth.

An ageing population and low birth rates mean Germany's workforce is likely to shrink over coming decades, so migrants are considered crucial to help companies find workers, whose pension contributions



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel reacts during a press conference with Moldova's Prime Minister at the Chancellery in Berlin yesterday. —AFP

support the growing number of retirees. Fewer refugees from war-torn countries seem to be arriving in Germany. Net migration from Syria nearly halved to 34,000 in 2018 from 60,000 in the previous year. Net migration from Africa slipped to 34,000 from 35,000. —Agencies

Hackers hit Bulgaria, send data from Russian email

SOFIA: Hackers stole thousands of Bulgarians' personal financial data and distributed it from a Russian-based email in an attack possibly related to the purchase of new F-16 fighter jets from the United States, the government said yesterday. The hackers accessed the National Revenue Agency's (NRA) systems on Monday before sending local media confidential information

purportedly from Finance Ministry servers, Interior Minister Mladen Marinov said.

"Maybe this is the first case in Bulgaria which is successful and a lot of personal data has been stolen," Marinov told local BTV channel. He said the cyber attack was probably motivated by Bulgaria's move to buy eight new Lockheed Martin F-16 fighters for \$1.256 billion from the United States, its biggest military purchase since the end of communism.

"A political analysis can also be made - the email comes from a Russian site ... and a crucial decision to buy the F-16s aircraft was made yesterday," Marinov said. Once an obedient satellite of Russia, the Balkan nation has joined the European Union and transatlantic NATO alliance in the last

decade, and is replacing its ageing Soviet made MiG-29 planes with the F-16s. A leading Bulgarian newspaper, 24 Chasa, said one file emailed by the hackers had more than 1.1 million identification numbers with income, social security and healthcare figures.

According to local web site Mediapool, the email came from an address with Russian mail provider Yandex. There was no immediate comment from authorities in Moscow. Bulgarian media said the hackers' email included an appeal for the release of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. "Your government is mentally retarded. The state of your cyber-security is a parody," reports quoted it as saying. In a statement, the NRA said it and security agencies were checking "a potential weakness" in its computer systems. —Reuters



SOFIA: Bulgarian policeman holds fake bank cards during a police raid in the town of Dobrich in a workshop for the production of skimming equipment used to fraudulently recover code and data from the magnetic stripes of bank cards used in service stations in France. —AFP

Canada probe 'policy breaches' at National Microbiology Lab

TORONTO: Canada's national police force said yesterday it is investigating a referral by the country's Public Health Agency over "possible policy breaches" at its National Microbiology Lab, whose work includes research on the most dangerous human and animal pathogens, such as Ebola. "We can confirm that we have received a referral from the Public Health Agency of Canada," Julie Courchaine, spokeswoman for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), said in a statement.

"We will not speculate on the potential outcome of the investigation. In order to maintain the integrity of the investigative process, we have no further comment at this time." The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) said it advised the RCMP of the "possible policy breaches" in late May. The agency declined to provide any specifics, saying only that it is "looking into an administrative matter" at the lab and "taking steps to resolve it expeditiously."

CBC News on Sunday reported that Xiangguo Qiu, a Chinese-educated doctor who is head of the Vaccine Development and Antiviral Therapies section in the Special Pathogens Program at the lab, was escorted out of the National Microbiology Lab (NML) in Winnipeg earlier this month amid the investigation. Qiu, who was part of a team working out of the NML that developed ZMapp, a vaccine for Ebola used during the 2014 outbreak in West Africa, had also been an adjunct microbiology professor at the University of Manitoba.

A spokesman for the university told Reuters that Qiu had been a non-salaried adjunct professor but that her appointment had ended, "pending an RCMP investigation." Both the PHAC and the RCMP refused to comment on Qiu's reported removal, and the NML referred all questions to the PHAC. "There is no employee from the NML under arrest or confined to their home," Eric Morrisette, spokesman for the PHAC, said. "We can assure Canadians that there is no risk to the public and that the work of the NML continues in support of the health and safety of all Canadians." Qiu, who is still listed on the university's website, could not be reached via multiple attempts for comment. CBC News reported that Qiu's husband, Keding Cheng, a biologist at the NML, and an unknown number of her students from China were also removed from the lab. Reuters also could not reach Cheng for comment. The RCMP has "assessed that there is no threat to public safety at this time," Courchaine, the spokeswoman, said in an email.

The alleged removal comes amid heightened tensions between Canada and China, which began when Canada, carrying out an extradition request from the United States, arrested Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer of China's Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, in Vancouver in December 2018. The sensitive nature of the research conducted at the NML means material housed there could be of interest to foreign countries. The CBC reported that Qiu's removal came several months after IT specialists at the NML entered her office after hours and replaced her computer. —Reuters

International

Italy seizes missile, guns and rocket launchers from far-right extremists

Investigation sparks raid; police arrest three

ROME: Italian police seized an air-to-air missile, machine guns and rocket launchers during raids sparked by an investigation into far-right extremist groups yesterday, a huge haul of weapons that authorities said was almost without precedent. Police arrested three people, including Fabio Del Bergiolo, 50, a former candidate for the neo-fascist Forza Nuova party, whose home was found to contain a huge stash of arms as well as neo-Nazi propaganda and Hitler memorabilia.

"During the operation, an air-to-air missile in perfect working order and used by the Qatari army was seized," police said of the 245-kilogram Matra missile. They also found automatic assault rifles that they described as "latest generation" among the cache. "This is a significant seizure, with few precedents in Italy," said Turin police commissioner Giuseppe De Matteis. The missile, 3.54 meters long was made in France and Del Bergiolo had been hoping to sell it for 470,000 euros (\$529,000), according to Italian media reports.

The missile was "without explosive charge, but re-usable by people specialized in the field," police said. "For now, nothing leads us to suspect" an active plot to use the weapons, said counter-terrorism official Eugenio Spina. The other arrests were a Swiss national, 42, and an Italian, 51, accused of holding and marketing the missile, which was found by police at a warehouse near the small Rivanazzano Terme airport in the Pavia province.

'Extremely dangerous'

The Mantra Super 530 F was a modernization of the R530 missile that went into service in 1980, and has a range of 25 kilometers, with an explosive charge of 30 kilos. "It is extremely dangerous and risky to turn it into a missile to fire from the ground, unless you have good engineers and equip-

ment," a missile expert who asked not to be named told AFP. Similarly, because of its age, it is "extremely unlikely that it can be used, but its use can be changed," he added.

The raids were the result of a police probe into Italian extremists known to have fought against pro-Russian rebels in Ukraine. Messages intercepted by the police led them to investigate Del Bergiolo, who had sent photographs of the missile for sale through the Whatsapp messaging service. They put him under surveillance before raiding his home and finding a stash of weapons including a Scorpion machine gun, 306 firearm parts and 20 bayonets. His collection included street signs from the Nazi era, including one reading "Adolf-Hitler Platz".



Air-to-air missile used by Qatari army seized

Trafficking war weapons

Police in Pavia also found the cockpit of a military plane. The Digos law enforcement agency, which deals largely with terrorism and organized crime, led the operation from Turin with assistance from police in Forlì, Milan, Novara and Varese. "We have some idea about what the seized equipment could be used for, but will not speculate," De Matteis told reporters. The Forza Nuova party released a statement Monday distancing itself from Del Bergiolo.

Police have carried out several raids in recent weeks on far-right targets around Turin, with a man arrested earlier this month for advocating fascism and possessing illegal weapons. While Italy's far-right interior minister Matteo Salvini was uncharacteristically quiet following the raid, the opposition centre-left Democratic Party (PD) urged the country's populist government to do more to tackle right-wing extremists. "The far right in this country trafficks weapons of war, and even missiles. It's an incredible, very serious event," said Maurizio Martina, the PD's former party head. —AFP

Shelters full, hopes dim for migrants seeking US asylum

TIJUANA: The giggles of children at play are about the only pleasant thing about a dark, crowded and stifling warehouse in Mexico that is home to some 150 migrants waiting for the United States to process their asylum claims. Some of the adults sweep the floor or help out in a makeshift kitchen. But most just sit and stare off into space as they kill time, day after day, waiting in Tijuana to see if the US will take them in.

Most are Central Americans fleeing violence and poverty in their home countries and hoping to win refugee status in the United States. But now, under a deal effectively forced upon Mexico by President Donald Trump to spare it from punishing tariffs, migrants who cross into the US illegally are not allowed to wait north of the border while their applications are processed. They are sent back to Mexico.

"And that means shelters in border regions are full," said Jose Maria Garcia, who runs a migrant shelter called Juventud 2000, just a stone's throw from the border. "People come from all over, and those who manage to get in (to the US) are returned to Mexico. And that is causing us overcrowding," said Garcia. Life for asylum seekers is full of anxiety—and further complicated by the Trump administration's drive to crack down on undocumented foreigners.

The latest thrust came Monday with news from the Justice Department that any migrant who enters the United States from the southern border and has not asked for asylum in any of the countries they cross to get there would be ineligible for asylum in the US. The Madre Asunta Institute, another shelter a few miles away from Juventud 2000, has surpassed its capacity several times since a huge exodus of US-bound Central Americans



TIJUANA: Minor migrants draw at Juventud 2000 migrant shelter in Tijuana, Baja California state, Mexico. Asylum seekers in the US are overflowing shelters in Mexico waiting for their claims to be processed. — AFP

began in 2015 and 2016. It was originally designed for 44 people but now houses 130. The managers do whatever they can to avoid turning people away.

"We squeeze them in somehow," said a smiling Sister Salome Limas, who has worked there for six years. These managers fear things will get much worse if Trump goes through with threats to carrying out mass deportations of undocumented foreigners in America or return huge numbers of people living in migrant care facilities. "We could not handle such an amount" of people, said Garcia.

Things are different on the other side of the border. The new accord obliging migrants to wait in Mexico has reduced the flow of people seeking shelter in the San Diego area. Shelters there used to be full and now they are emptying out, said Hugo Castro of a non-governmental organization called Border Angels. "They sweep them out to Mexico like garbage," said Castro, who expressed fear that the situation will grow worse in Tijuana

and other border towns in Mexico.

Too dangerous to go home

Sister Salome is super-involved in her work, supervising efforts to turn a play room into sleeping quarters by night while tussling the hair of a little boy who walks by her and checking on lunch for the day-pasta and salad. In another room, volunteers from the UN children's agency UNICEF distribute paper and colored markers to kids.

A seven-year-old boy named Brian carefully draws a house that looks like the shelter he is living in. But he explains it is actually his house in Honduras—to which he may never return. In the courtyard of the Madra Asunta shelter, women hang freshly washed clothes on a wooden bannister—the clothes were donated, because they got here with only what they were wearing. Such is the case of a woman who asked to be identified as Maria and says that in her native Honduras, she witnessed a massacre by the ultra violent street gang MS-13 in a marketplace. — AFP

Trump: A history of inflammatory and racist statements

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump drew fresh accusations of racism Monday after he attacked four ethnic-minority Democrats in Congress, telling them to "go back" where they came from. While Trump denies he is racist, he has a long history of political pandering to white suspicions about other ethnic groups, which many believe helped him win electoral victory in 2016 and which could be important in the election next year.

Campaign against Obama

Well before opened his bid for the White House in 2016, Trump targeted the African-American background of Barack Obama, suggesting the Hawaii-born president was really born outside the United States. In 2011 he suggested Obama was secretly a Muslim—another group among his regular targets.

Mexican 'rapists'

Trump made fighting immigration a key plank of his election platform, and told supporters in speeches that migrants from US neighbor Mexico are "drug smugglers and rapists." "They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they are rapists, and some, I assume, are good people," he said in a campaign speech. After becoming president, he defended his border policies in similar terms. "You wouldn't believe how bad these people are, these aren't people, these are animals," he said of the migrants.



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump speaks during the 3rd Annual Made in America Product Showcase on the South Lawn at the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP

Pentagon gets 3rd acting chief since Mattis quit

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's administration named its third acting defense secretary in seven months on Monday, underscoring the lack of permanent leadership at the Pentagon since James Mattis quit. Owing to complex bureaucratic rules, the acting defense secretary of the past four weeks, Mark Esper, was forced to step down as Trump submitted his formal nomination for the permanent job to Congress.

While his nomination is under consideration in the Senate, Esper will fall back to his former job as secretary of the army, and current Navy Secretary Richard Spencer will assume the role of acting secretary of defense. "While my time in this role is anticipated to be brief, I am fully prepared and committed to serve as acting secretary of defense, and will provide continuity in the leadership of the department," Spencer said in a letter addressed to military personnel. Esper, 55, is expected to be easily passed by the

Senate Armed Services Committee, which held a hearing on his nomination yesterday. Then the full Senate must confirm the nomination in a vote that could take place before the end of the month.

The deeply respected Mattis resigned in December in a break with Trump over policy toward the Middle East and Afghanistan. Trump then nominated Mattis' deputy secretary of defense, Patrick Shanahan, as a replacement. But Shanahan, a former Boeing executive who had never served in the military, ran into resistance in the Senate and finally withdrew after an FBI background check revealed a violent altercation with his then-wife in 2010. The Pentagon has never gone without a confirmed secretary of defense for so long.

The gap in permanent leadership was more acute as tensions rose with Iran and Trump flirted with a military strike against the country last month. Unlike Shanahan, Esper served in the 1991 Gulf War and was part of the Army's famous 101st Airborne Division, recently honored at the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings at Normandy. He is also close to top US diplomat Mike Pompeo, with whom he studied at the prestigious West Point military academy. Both men graduated in the same year, 1986. — AFP

Target of Trump's wrath: 'Squad' of congresswomen

WASHINGTON: The four Democratic congresswomen in President Donald Trump's crosshairs—all members of ethnic minorities—personify their divided party's most activist liberal wing, and are no strangers to controversy. The self-styled "squad" of progressive newcomers are representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Ilhan Omar from Minnesota, Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Rashida Tlaib from Michigan—all of whom except Omar are American-born. Trump has taken aim at the four in a series of xenophobic comments, telling them to "go back" where they came from and accusing them of having "love" for America's "enemies like Al-Qaeda," among other remarks.

Ocasio-Cortez, a 29-year-old of Puerto Rican ancestry, is the youngest member of the House, while Pressley is the first African American elected to Congress from Massachusetts. Tlaib and Omar are the first two Muslim women elected to Congress. Tlaib is the first American of Palestinian descent elected to the body, while Omar, who fled war-torn Somalia as a child and came to the United States as a refugee, is the first black Muslim woman in the legislature. She wears the hijab.

They are all part of the new wave that helped flip the House of Representatives back to Democratic control, and all took office in January. They are united by their drive to oppose the Republican Trump using the same weapon he does—social media—to advance a progressive agenda, despite resistance from



WASHINGTON: (Left to right) US Rep Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) speaks as Reps Ayanna Pressley (D-MA), Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and Rashida Tlaib (D-MI) listen during a news conference at the US Capitol. — AFP

more centrist Democrats. Ocasio-Cortez considers herself a socialist, which in the United States puts her on the party's left-most flank with Senator Bernie Sanders.

Anti-Semitism allegations

She is a social media natural, with 4.7 million followers. But she sparked a major controversy last month when she termed migrant detention facilities in the southern United States "concentration camps" in comments condemned as demeaning victims of the Holocaust. Omar and Tlaib have been regularly accused of anti-Semitism since they announced their support for an international campaign to boycott Israel.

In February, Omar, 37, came under criticism for saying that US politicians support Israel out of financial interest, while in March she was accused of seeking to minimize the impact of the 9/11 attacks when she said that

"some people did something." Comments in May about the Holocaust by Tlaib, 42, were condemned as anti-Semitic. "There's a kind of a calming feeling, I always tell folks, when I think of the Holocaust and the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the fact that it was my ancestors—Palestinians—who lost their land and some lost their lives," she told Yahoo's "Skulduggery" podcast. Pressley, 45, is a fierce critic of the Trump administration's immigration policies, who has slammed the fact that migrants have been put in "cages" at detention facilities. She, Tlaib and Ocasio-Cortez are all members of the powerful House finance committee. On Monday, Pressley said that the "squad" is by no means limited to herself and the other three lawmakers. "Our squad is big. Our squad includes any person committed to building a more equitable and just world and that is the work that we want to get back to," she said. — AFP

International

North Korea nuclear envoy reported executed 'is alive'

Nuke talks 'at risk' if US-S Korea exercises go ahead

SEOUL: A North Korean nuclear envoy who steered talks before a failed summit with the United States in February is alive, a South Korean legislator said yesterday, contradicting a South Korean news report that he had been executed. There has been a series of conflicting reports in recent weeks about the fate of North Korea's negotiators after a second summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump broke down in Vietnam in February.

Kim Hyok Chol, who led working-level talks in the run-up to that summit with his US counterpart, Stephen Biegun, is alive, said Kim Min-ki, a lawmaker who was briefed by South Korea's intelligence agency. The lawmaker did not elaborate on Kim Hyok Chol's situation. South Korea's Chosun Ilbo newspaper said last month that Kim Hyok Chol had been executed in March, but CNN quickly refuted the report, saying he was alive and in state custody.

Chosun Ilbo also reported that another senior official who was instrumental in preparing the failed summit with the United States, Kim Yong Chol, had been sent to a labor and re-education camp. But a few days later Kim Yong Chol appeared in a state media photograph with leader Kim Jong Un. Seasoned North Korean diplomats have taken over the talks since the Hanoi summit, with a long-time veteran with knowledge of arms control set to lead a new round of negotiations.

US-S Korea exercises
Meanwhile, the North Korean Foreign Ministry said yesterday US looks set to break a promise not to hold military exercises with South Korea, putting talks aimed at getting North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons at risk. The United States' pattern of "unilaterally renegeing on its commitments" is leading Pyongyang to reconsider its own commitments to discontinue tests of nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), the ministry said in a pair of statements released through state news agency KCNA.

US President Donald Trump revitalized efforts to persuade the North to give up its nuclear weapons last month when he arranged a spur-of-the-moment meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on the border between the two Koreas. Trump said they had agreed to resume so-called working-level talks, stalled since their second summit in February collapsed. The negotiations are expected in coming weeks.

But a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman cast doubt on that, saying the United States and South

Korea were pressing ahead with exercises called Dong Maeng this summer, which he called a "rehearsal of war". "We will formulate our decision on the opening of the DPRK-US working-level talks, while keeping watch over the US move hereafter," the spokesman said, using the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The exercises are expected in August. North Korea has for years denounced military exercises between the United States and South Korea, but in recent months has increased its criticism as talks with Washington and Seoul stalled. "It is crystal clear that it is an actual drill and a rehearsal of war aimed at militarily occupying our Republic by surprise attack," the North Korean spokesman said in a separate statement, adding that Trump had reaffirmed at last month's meeting with Kim that the exercises would be halted.

Trump, in his first meeting with Kim in Singapore in June last year, said he would stop exercises, after the two leaders agreed to work towards the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and to improve ties. While

the main annual South Korean-US exercises have been stopped, they still hold smaller drills. "Readiness remains the number one priority for USFK," said Jacqueline Leeker, a spokeswoman for US Forces Korea (USFK). "As a matter of standard operating procedure, and in order to preserve space for diplomacy to work, we do not discuss any planned training or exercises publicly."

She said US and South Korean troops continued to train together, but had adjusted the size, scope, number and timing of exercises in order to "harmonize" training programs with diplomatic efforts. An official at South Korea's ministry of defense said it did not have immediate comment, but Seoul officials have previously said the drills are defensive in nature. Since the Singapore summit, North Korea has not tested any nuclear weapons or intercontinental ballistic missiles, though it tested new short-range missiles in May.

The United States' decision to forge ahead with drills less than a month after Trump and Kim last met is "clearly a breach" of the two leaders' agreements made in Singapore last year, and is an "undisguised pressure" on North Korea, the foreign ministry spokesman said. "With the US unilaterally renegeing on its commitments, we are gradually losing our justifications to follow through on the commitments we made with the US as well," he said. — Agencies



Top official sent to a labor camp

Fuel leak halted blastoff for India rocket

SRIHARIKOTA: A fuel leak in the rocket engine forced India to abort the launch of its landmark Moon mission less than one hour before liftoff, media reports said yesterday. A committee of experts was looking into the causes of the problem that put back the bid to become just the fourth nation - after Russia, the United States and China - to land a spacecraft on the Moon.

Having halted the countdown 56 minutes and 24 seconds before the scheduled launch of Chandrayaan-2 - or Moon Chariot 2 - the Indian Space Research Organization gave no explanation for what it called a "technical snag" in the rocket nor a date for a new attempt. "As a measure of abundant precaution Chandrayaan-2 launch has been called off," ISRO said.

However, the Times of India quoted a senior mission scientist as saying there had been a leak in the GSLV-MkIII rocket's helium fuel component. "After filling helium, we found the pressure was dropping, indicating there was a leak," the unnamed scientist said adding that it was possible there were "multiple leaks". "We were lucky that the mission did not enter the automatic launch sequence else all would have been lost," the Hindustan Times quoted a senior ISRO official as saying.

The report added that scientists were "racing to plug the leak" in time for a new launch window at the end of July. Experts said Indian mission chiefs would be cautious about trying a new liftoff. "If the launch does not happen in the next 48 hours, it could be postponed for a few months until we get an opportune launch window," said Ravi Gupta, a scientist formerly with the state-run



SRIHARIKOTA: A Spectator holds an Indian national flag after a mission of the Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) Chandrayaan-2, with on board the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-mark III-M1) was called back due to a technical snag in Sriharikota. — AFP

Defense Research and Development Organization.

Low-cost missions

India has spent about \$140 million on Chandrayaan-2, with most of it home-made. It is one of the cheapest in the crowded space race. The launch would have been the third to the moon this year. China put its Chang'e 4 mission on the lunar surface in January, while Israel's \$100 million Beresheet crash-landed when it sought to become the first privately funded mission in April. A soft landing on the Moon would be a huge leap forward in India's space program. National pride is at stake as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed to launch a crewed space mission by 2022.

It follows another high-profile but low-cost Indian mission - Mangalyaan - which put a spacecraft in orbit around Mars in 2014 at a fraction of the cost of comparable projects by

established space powers like the United States, which often cost billions of dollars. The Indian mission involved a 2.4-tonne orbiter that will circle the Moon for about a year taking images and testing the atmosphere. A lander named Vikram was to take the rover to the surface near the lunar South Pole. The rover that was to be put on the surface on September 6 was to spend 14 days sending back data on rocks and soil.

India's first lunar mission in 2008 did not land on the Moon but orbited it searching for water using radar. New Delhi also has ambitions to land a probe on Mars, following the success of the Mangalyaan orbiter. Lunar exploration has been in focus in recent months with the looming 50th anniversary of the first human landing on the Moon, and US President Donald Trump giving NASA a 2024 deadline to return astronauts to the lunar surface. — AFP

4 dead, 12 feared trapped; Mumbai building collapses

MUMBAI: Four people were killed and at least 12 others feared trapped under rubble after a building collapsed as heavy monsoon rains lashed India's financial capital Mumbai yesterday, officials said, the second such tragedy in two weeks. Torrential downpours have swept away homes, triggered landslides and claimed at least 180 lives across South Asia. "Four people are dead and over 12 people are still stuck under the rubble," disaster management spokesman Tanaji Kamble told AFP of the building collapse in southern Mumbai's congested Dongri area.

"Eight injured have been sent to hospitals and rescue operations are ongoing." Two teams from India's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) as well as local volunteers, the fire department and police officials were scouring the rubble for sur-

vivors. Volunteers could be seen recovering household items including furniture from the debris. "The building collapse sounded like an earthquake and we rushed to the spot to check the loud noise," a local resident told Indian news channel NDTV.

Another resident said the building was more than a century old and had 10 families living inside despite its dilapidated condition. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted his condolences to the victims' families, describing the incident as "anguishing". Earlier this month, a wall collapsed in the city, killing 29 people. Building collapses in Mumbai, home to 20 million people, are common during the monsoon season because rickety structures buckle under the weight of continuous rain. — AFP



MUMBAI: Indian National Disaster Response Force and Indian fire brigade personnel search for survivors amid debris after a building collapsed in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

'Misogynist' Duterte slammed

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, whose rape jokes have sparked outrage in the past, drew fresh flak yesterday after signing a law against sexual harassment, with campaigners saying his role as the "misogynist-in-chief" would make implementation challenging. Duterte, who has himself been accused of sexual harassment on multiple occasions, signed the law that prohibits behavior such as catcalling and sexist slurs in April, according to the text released on Monday.

The 74-year-old was "the single most brazen violator of the law's intent with his staple macho-fascist remarks", women's rights political party Gabriela said on Twitter. "Under this context, implementing the law will certainly be a challenge." The law imposes fines and, in some cases, prison sentences for sexual harassment in streets, schools and offices, including wolf-whistling, groping, misogynistic slurs, as well as uninvited comments or gestures referring to a person's appearance.

Opposition Senator Risa Hontiveros, the law's author, welcomed its passage saying it would plug gaps in previous legislation against sexual harassment but added it was "only as good as how it is implemented". Duterte has stirred controversy in the past over his treatment of women. In 2016 he wolf-whistled a female journalist during a nationally televised news conference, while last year he kissed a Filipina woman on the lips onstage during a visit to South Korea in a move that prompted accusations of abuse of power.

The president last year urged soldiers to shoot female guerrillas in the vagina. He also



MANILA: A relative of a victim of an extrajudicial killing touches the portrait of the relatives during a memorial mass at the Philippine Human Rights Commission office in Manila. — AFP

provoked fury in 2016 when he said he had wanted to rape a "beautiful" Australian missionary who had been sexually assaulted then murdered in a Philippine prison riot. Referring to Duterte as "the misogynist-in-chief", journalist and campaigner Inday Espina-Varona said that while the law was "long overdue, his signing it only rams home the truth: he believes himself above the law".

Duterte's arch-critic, detained Senator Leila De Lima, said she hoped the president would not be exempt from compliance. The president had repeatedly criticized De Lima over an affair, saying she was "not only

screwing her driver, she is also screwing the nation," referring to drug trafficking charges she said were politically motivated.

"If we count all his acts and comments disrespecting women since he came to power, the penalties under the law would be sorely lacking," De Lima said in a statement. Duterte spokesman Salvador Panelo said the president would comply with the law but rejected misogyny allegations. "When he cracks jokes, it is intended to make people laugh, never to offend," Salvador Panelo told reporters. "You women should know that. Misogyny is different from making people laugh." — Agencies

Floods worsen in India's northeast; rhinos in danger

GUWAHATI: Floods in northeast India worsened yesterday with incessant rain swelling already raging rivers, in undating villages and a rhinoceros sanctuary as 1,000 soldiers were deployed to rescue people fleeing the rising waters. Heavy early monsoon rain has lashed parts of South Asia since last week, killing at least 119 people and forcing more than five million people from their homes in India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Some areas of Pakistan have also been flooded. The rain was easing on

over parts of Nepal, Bangladesh and India's Bihar state, where thousands have sought shelter in relief camps, officials said. But India's Assam state in the remote northeast is still battling the monsoon, a four-month-long season that is responsible for most of the region's annual rainfall, with 4.5 million people driven from their homes due to flooding, authorities said.

"This is one of the worst floodings in recent memory," Assam's Water Resources Minister Keshab Mahanta said. Water levels in major rivers, including the Brahmaputra that flows down from the Himalayas through Assam and into Bangladesh, rose overnight, and an additional 200,000 people displaced, Mahanta said. Traffic on the main road that runs the length of tea-growing Assam has also been disrupted, and rail links with some neighboring states have been severed by flooding. — Reuters



ASSAM: An Indian girl carries drinking water as she wades through flood waters at Pabhokathi village in Morigaon district of India's Assam state. — AFP

Analysis

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Move over Trump: China's tweeting envoys open new front

Tweets from Chinese diplomats abroad, including seasoned ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai, have opened a fresh front in Beijing's increasingly assertive approach to diplomacy and propaganda and may be a sign of things to come. Cui sent his first tweets just last week from his newly opened Twitter account, including one about Taiwan, the self-ruled and democratic island China claims as its own, garnering thousands of comments.

"#Taiwan is part of #China. No attempts to split China will ever succeed. Those who play with fire will only get themselves burned. Period," Cui tweeted, after China threatened sanctions on U.S. firms selling weapons to Taiwan. And over the weekend, a series of tweets defending China's policies in the far western region of Xinjiang by diplomat Zhao Lijian, the no. 2 at the Chinese embassy in Pakistan, lambasted the United States for its own human rights problems and what he described as hypocrisy.

The recent spate of 240-character missives, a regular channel of communication with US President Donald Trump in his criticism of China, fit a newer, more aggressive type of diplomacy that Beijing is deploying globally, analysts say. Yuan Zeng, a lecturer in Media and Communications at the University of Leeds, said the diplomat tweets were part of a clear shift in China's strategy. "For individual officials to get so openly expressive and assertive, this is really something new," she said.

Twitter is blocked in China and the diplomats' messages were in English and aimed at a foreign audience. Chinese news outlets, including the ruling Communist Party's leading propaganda organs, the People's Daily and Xinhua, have also targeted readers outside China's so-called "Great Firewall". Zhao's tweets were responding to a letter 22 countries signed at the UN Human Rights Council last week calling on China to halt detentions in Xinjiang.

He criticized the United States for its poor treatment of Muslims in places like Iraq and at Guantanamo Bay, where Al-Qaeda fighters are held. He also tweeted a link to a Washington Post story about racial segregation in the capital and then proceeded to write a string of tweets about US gun violence, hate crimes and violence against women. "If you're in Washington, DC, you know the white never go to the SW area, because it's an area for the black & Latin. There's a saying 'black in & white out', which means that as long as a black family enters, white people will quit, & price of the apartment will fall sharply," he tweeted in English. He then corrected himself, saying it was the southeast area.

The tweets put China's diplomatic aggressiveness on full display and reach a larger audience than more conventional media might, but they also may come with a cost, Zeng said. "I have doubts on how effective it could be to create a better international environment for China either to grow or to lead, as the government has been saying, to peacefully engage with the world," she added.

Responding to Zhao on Twitter, Susan Rice, who served as National Security Adviser and US ambassador to the UN during the Obama administration, labelled the diplomat "a racist disgrace" who was "shockingly ignorant", and called on Cui to make sure Zhao was removed. Zhao returned fire on Monday - and noted pointedly that he was based in Islamabad, not Washington, where Cui is ambassador. "To label someone who speak(s) the truth that you don't want to hear a racist, is disgraceful & disgusting," he wrote.

China and the United States have long sparred over human rights, and in recent years China has produced its own annual rights report on the situation in the United States, focusing on areas including racism and gun crime. Cui's Taiwan tweet received over 2,000 comments, most of which were negative and many of which offered support for Taiwan, potentially highlighting a risk of expanding the propaganda battlefield.

A recent paper in the International Journal of Communication analyzed tweets from official Chinese diplomatic accounts from 2014 to 2018 and found that engagement with platforms that are blocked in a China helps extend the reach of "the invisible hand of censorship". China's foreign ministry spokeswoman, Hua Chunying, encouraged officials to "clearly express China's position and attitude", to join foreign social media platforms and look for ways to cooperate in a deeper way with media. "We are closer than ever to the center of the world stage," she wrote last week in the Study Times, a publication of the Central Party School which trains Chinese officials. "But we do not have a full grasp of the microphone." — Reuters

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



The sun sets behind 42nd Street in Manhattan during a power outage in New York City on July 13, 2019. — AFP

NY blackout: Lots of questions, no answers

A weekend blackout in New York raised a host of unanswered questions, put the mayor on the defensive as he runs for president and triggered doubts about the state of infrastructure in America's biggest city. Utility company Con Edison apologized for the Saturday's five-hour power outage. But mystery surrounds the cause of the blackout on the west side of Manhattan, which left some 73,000 customers without power, turned Times Square dark, silenced Jennifer Lopez mid-concert and halted subway lines.

Con Edison warned more blackouts were possible as the city prepares for a heatwave this weekend, with temperatures of up to 36 Celsius and very muggy air. "We expect that there could be service outages - those things happen during heat waves," spokesman Mike Clendenin told TV station PIX11 on Monday, while pointing out that the company spends \$2 billion a year to prepare for such eventualities. He said the blackout was not caused by a spike in electricity usage.

The outage struck on the 42nd anniversary of a major blackout in 1977 that sparked chaos in the Big Apple, as people engaged in looting and acts of vandalism. This time no one was injured but 2,875 commuters had to be rescued from five subway trains and 400 elevators got stuck. "The center of our little island is supposed to be the center of the universe... Yes, we want to be the cen-

ter of finance, tech and media, but we cannot even keep the lights on for a Saturday evening," columnist Nicole Gelinas wrote in the New York Post.

Isolate the problem

Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer, who represents New York, said the blackout shows the city is not maintaining its electrical grid properly. "This type of massive blackout is entirely preventable with the right investments in our grid," Schumer said as he called for a federal investigation into the outage. Richard Berkley, executive director of consumer rights group the New York Utility Project, wondered if Con Edison has paid enough attention to making the grid resilient.

"This is not necessarily a reliability problem alone within Con Ed. It was a resilience problem, because even if there was an error of some kind of malfunction of the system, it should have been isolated just to one neighborhood," said Berkley. He said this was one of the lessons learned from how authorities dealt with Hurricane Sandy in 2012. "A failure in New York City is an incredible failure for the world's financial markets. Here you have something like a third of all elevators in the world. In New York City thousands of people are going to be trapped, plus the subways," Berkley said.

Francisco de Leon, who teaches engineering at New

York University, rejected the idea that the blackout stemmed from a lack of investment in the grid. "It is not the case that Con Edison has invested little. To the contrary it has invested too much," de Leon told AFP, adding that, compared to other US cities, it was very reliable. He said the blackout was minor, hitting four or five of Con Ed's 62 networks in the city. But it affected many people because of the population density.

Mayor out of town

Mayor Bill de Blasio, who is among a large field of candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020, was campaigning in Iowa when the blackout hit and came under withering criticism for not rushing straight home. Governor Andrew Cuomo did make an appearance in Manhattan and called the power failure unacceptable. "Mayors are important," said Cuomo, also a Democrat, who frequently trades barbs with de Blasio.

One bone of contention is whether the city or the state should bear the cost of upgrading the New York subway. "Situations like this come up and you have to be on site, I believe that," Cuomo said on CNN. The New York Post on Monday called on Cuomo to fire de Blasio, who returned to the city on Sunday morning after the lights had come back on. — AFP



Zhan Beleniuk smiles as he leads a training of young wrestlers at a sports school for children in Boyarka, near the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, on July 4, 2019. — AFP

Ukraine wrestler tackles prejudice in run for parliament

Zhan Beleniuk, an Olympic wrestler with Rwandan roots, is seeking to enter Ukraine's parliament as the first mixed-race MP in a bid to overcome racist attitudes and support the country's young new leader. The Greco-Roman style wrestler, who won silver for Ukraine at the Rio Olympics, is standing for the party of the new Ukrainian president, comedian and actor Volodymyr Zelensky, in Sunday's polls. The 28-year-old is the son of a Ukrainian dressmaker and a Rwandan pilot killed in that country's civil war in the 1990s. He grew up in a one-room flat in the capital Kiev.

"Volodymyr Zelensky invited me to join his party, we knew each other before," Beleniuk told AFP in an interview as he campaigned in the small town of Boyarka just outside Kiev. "It seems like he saw qualities in me that will help promote the development of Ukrainian sport," said the athlete after holding a training session for children. Describing himself as "100 percent Ukrainian", Beleniuk said his election would prove "we're really a country that's modern and that treats all races, all ethnic groups the same."

Prejudice is nevertheless an issue in Ukraine where last year, radical hate groups carried out two dozen attacks on Roma and other minorities, according to Human Rights Watch. "I do get some abuse due to the fact that I don't look like other Ukrainians," Beleniuk admitted. So far his campaign has encountered little overt racism. One Ukrainian reporter called him "a negro" on social media but deleted his post after criticism from fellow journalists.

'It's a challenge'

Beleniuk is one of the best-known faces standing for Zelensky's Servant of the People party among mainly young and politically inexperienced candidates. But he says he believes

these "new energetic people" will be able to fight corruption in crisis-hit Ukraine. Zelensky is hoping his party will dominate parliamentary polls that he called early after winning the presidency with a landslide victory in April. The fact that Beleniuk is running for the party in parliament shows that Ukrainians are open-minded people, said Kiev-based analyst Volodymyr Fesenko. "We have no negative racist stereotypes," he said.

By entering politics, Beleniuk is following in the footsteps of another heavyweight - former professional boxer Vitali Klitschko, who is Kiev's mayor. Speaking with lengthy pauses, Beleniuk admitted that politics "won't be as comfortable for me as training but you see, for me it's a challenge". "I got a chance ... to influence the situation and it would be cowardly for me to say I'm not ready to do this," he said.

Beleniuk was 2015 world champion and silver medalist in the 85-kg category at the 2016 Olympics in Greco-Roman wrestling, an ancient style that only allows holds on the upper body. Established in 2017, the Servant of the People party currently has no seats in the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's single-chamber parliament. But it is leading in opinion polls with more than 40 percent support which means that Beleniuk could very likely be elected. Analysts chalk up the newly created party's popularity to Zelensky's high approval ratings after he beat the incumbent president Petro Poroshenko with 73 percent of the vote.

Olympic hopes

Despite his apparent diffidence, Beleniuk has got involved in sports-related politics before. In 2016, he accused Ukraine's sports authorities of not caring about their athletes after they failed to pay out promised funds immediately. He said both Russia and Azerbaijan had offered him citizenship and financial incentives to relinquish his Ukrainian passport. But he vows to continue his professional career under the Ukrainian flag and hopes to compete in the Olympics in Tokyo in 2020.

At the same time he intends to abide by Zelensky's declaration that Servant of the People lawmakers must attend all parliamentary sessions and vote on all bills - a response to a culture of frequent absences and proxy voting. "This year I will attend the Verkhovna Rada. Only during active training (for the Olympics), most likely, I will go on unpaid leave," Beleniuk said. — AFP

Opinion

ICE raids begin

By Rahaf Al-Harbash

ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) began its immigration raids the morning of July 14 in 10 major cities. President Donald Trump told the press: "We are really specifically looking at bad players. But, we are also looking at people that came into our country, not through a process, who just walked over a line." He ended his statement by saying: "They have to leave."

Trump's chosen course of action will not only terrorize families and rip them apart, but will also result in the deportation of many innocents who found refuge in America. As a result, mayors began speaking up and supporting the protests against immigration raids. Advocacy groups began protests to notify undocumented immigrants of their rights.

People online have also started sharing posts on social media, informing them of what ICE can or cannot enforce. Some have shared pictures to familiarize people of the difference between an administrative warrant (not enforceable) and a judicial warrant. Any ICE agent with an administrative warrant has no legal rights to enter private property, but they have tried to use them to "bait" people. Thus, the awareness that social media generated is of paramount importance.

Although President Trump seems to be keen on enforcing the "law", he has not yet voiced his concerns against ICE agents' unlawful searches by claiming they have judicial warrants. Law enforcement agents should be held accountable regardless of what position they hold. It is somewhat ironic that ICE agents have to partake in unlawful actions to "enforce" the "law".

By attempting to divide people due to asinine notions, President Trump prompted people to unite and protect the people he often referred to as "criminals" and as of recently, "bad players". When the number of people currently protesting immigration raids to protect "bad players" indubitably surpasses the number of those who attended Trump's inauguration, we will manage to get a glimpse of his 2020 campaign's fate.

Business

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China rebuffs Trump claim on slowing economy

Wait until US growth hits 6.2%, then laugh at China: Hu



BEIJING: A boy drinks coconut water at a market in Beijing. China yesterday rebuffed a suggestion from US President Donald Trump that Beijing needs a trade deal with the US because its economy is slowing. — AFP

BEIJING: China yesterday rebuffed a suggestion from US President Donald Trump that Beijing needs a trade deal with the United States because its economy is slowing, saying this was "totally misleading" and that both countries wanted an agreement.

Trump, in a Monday tweet, seized on slowing economic growth in China as evidence that US tariffs were having "a major effect" and warned that Washington could pile on more pressure. Official data on Monday showed China's economic growth cooled to 6.2 percent in the second quarter, the weakest annual pace in at least 27 years, amid trade pressure from the United States. In the first half, the economy grew 6.3 percent compared with a year earlier. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said China's first-half pace was a "not bad performance" considering global economic uncertainty and slowing world growth, and in line with outside expectations.

China's stable growth was good for the world and also the US economy, Geng told a daily news briefing. "As for United States' so-called 'because China's economy is slow-

ing so China urgently hopes to reach an agreement with the US side', this is totally misleading," he added. Both China and the United States wanted to reach a trade deal, not China alone, Geng said.

A win-win agreement

Many people in the United States strongly opposed the tariffs and the trade war, he added. "I again call on the US side to work hard with China, meet each other halfway, and on the basis of mutual respect and treatment, strive to reach a mutually beneficial, win-win agreement. This accords with the interests of both countries and is what the international community expects." Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping last month agreed to another truce in the year-long trade spat between the world's two largest economies.

That agreement, announced after the leaders met in Osaka, Japan, was aimed at kickstarting stalled negotiations, but no deadline has been set for the process to conclude. Hu Xijin, editor of the widely-read Chinese tabloid Global Times, published by

the ruling Communist Party's official People's Daily, responded on Twitter to Trump's comment, asking if it was "noble for a president to gloat".

"6.2 percent is much higher than US growth. Wait until US growth hits 6.2 percent then laugh at China," Hu tweeted. "Chinese economic growth slows down because of restructuring. The credit doesn't go to the White House."

The People's Daily said it was "laughable" to say the Chinese economy was being given trouble by the US tariffs.

"From trade and investment to technology, China is contributing more and more positive energy to global development," it said in a commentary. "These irrefutable facts are not negated by anyone raising a hubbub."

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin later said he and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer would speak with their Chinese counterparts by phone again this week as part of the recently resumed trade talks. A face-to-face meeting hinges on progress in the year-long trade war, he

added. "To the extent that we make significant progress, I think there's a good chance we'll go there later," he told reporters at a rare White House news briefing ahead of his trip to meet with finance ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) nations.

Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping last month agreed to another truce in the year-long trade spat between the world's two largest economies. That agreement, announced after the leaders of the world's two largest economies met in Osaka, Japan, was aimed at kickstarting stalled negotiations, but no deadline has been set for the process to conclude.

Trump has grown increasingly frustrated that China has not delivered on what he viewed as a promise by the Chinese side to start buying more US agricultural goods, even as talks continued.

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow told Fox Business Network the administration was still waiting for Beijing to reciprocate for goodwill gestures such as eased restrictions on China's Huawei Technologies Co Ltd and a freeze in any

new tariffs. "We expect the Chinese to be launching a significant purchase of US agriculture products, goods and services. We haven't seen that quite yet, but we're very keenly watching the developments there," he said.

However, sources familiar with the state of negotiations insist the Chinese side did not make firm commitments at the meeting to immediately purchase agricultural commodities. Adding to mounting pressure on China, Trump will sign an order on Monday seeking to increase the US domestic content threshold for iron and steel in federal procurements, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro said on Fox News. The move, which aims to boost the threshold from 50 percent to 95 percent, comes amid continued concerns over overproduction by China, the world's biggest steel producer.

Official data showed that China's daily crude steel output rose to record levels in June, according to Reuters calculations, even as anti-pollution production curbs pushed whole-month production slightly lower. — Reuters

UAE plans oil trade overhaul to boost Middle Eastern clout

DUBAI/LONDON: The United Arab Emirates' state-run ADNOC, long seen as one of the most conservative oil firms in the Middle East, plans an overhaul for its trading operations as it seeks to emulate the success of rival oil majors and bolster its regional influence. The company has splurged on hiring former employees of private-sector peers and wants to launch a regional oil benchmark, possibly this year, similar to international markers Brent and WTI, four sources familiar with the plans said.

The plan is not yet finalized and still has to be approved by UAE authorities, such as the Abu Dhabi Supreme Petroleum Council, the sources said. ADNOC did not respond to a request for comment.

"ADNOC hopes the benchmark will allow it to earn more money and gain bigger prestige in the region. This all fits into a drive by (Abu Dhabi Crown Prince) Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed to turn the UAE into a regional leader," one of the sources said.

The UAE, the third-largest oil producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, behind Saudi Arabia and Iraq, pumps around 3 million barrels per day. It plans to boost output to 4 million bpd by 2020. Most of that oil is produced by ADNOC, based in the country's capital, Abu Dhabi.

For many years it has traditionally sold oil directly to end-users, mainly in Asia, based on a retroactive pricing system rather than the forward pricing used by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq. Now, the company wants to launch full, in-house trading for refined products and crude as part of energy-sector reforms under Sheikh Mohammed and ADNOC Chief Executive Sultan Al-Jaber.

The reforms will seek to go further than those at Saudi state oil giant Aramco, which is also seeking to expand its trading operations to capture added value, the sources said. For now, Aramco trades only oil products and non-Saudi crude. ADNOC is considering

dropping destination restrictions on all of its oil and allowing it to trade freely on the open market, as part of a broader transformation to become more proactive and adaptive to market changes, the sources said.

"The idea behind trading is simple - the UAE sells its crude to someone like BP, which then takes it to the UK, where it is refined into jet fuel which then goes to refuel the UAE's Etihad planes," one source said, referring to the Abu Dhabi airline.

"So why can't ADNOC capture some of the value of trading and the supply chain?"

ADNOC is venturing into oil trading as part of an international expansion aimed at securing new markets. In January, it signed agreements worth \$5.8 billion with Italy's Eni and Austria's OMV covering refining and a new trading venture to sell refined products jointly.

Over the past year, ADNOC has hired a raft of ex-Total traders, led by executive vice president Philip Khoury. The others include ADNOC's head of crude, Emmanuel de Reynies, head of products Lionel Richardson, and Jean Marc Cordier, Francois Chupin and Aegidia Schnepf. Traders from other oil majors and trading houses also joined, includ-



A general view of ADNOC headquarters in Abu Dhabi. — Reuters

ing Suzanne Mullen, previously of BP and Citi. "These guys know how trading works, how benchmarking works," one of the sources said. ADNOC has held talks with French energy company Total and trading house Vitol as part of its new crude oil pricing and trading overhaul, the sources said, while beefing up its in-house trading team.

Total and Vitol declined to comment. One of the options is for ADNOC to team up with

a large player whose worldwide storage facilities it would use. ADNOC is in talks for a stake in Vitol's storage business VTTI, two of the four sources said. VTTI owns storage in the Netherlands, the United States, Asia and Africa. In the UAE, VTTI holds storage in Fujairah, a bunkering hub where ADNOC sends most of its crude, bypassing the often-troublesome Strait of Hormuz, which is further north. — Reuters

Business

AUB achieves a net profit of KD 30.8m for first half of 2019

Bank's profit from operations amounts to KD 32.2m, an increase of 6.3%

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank K.S.C.P announced a net profit for the first half of 2019 amounting to KD 30.8 million, compared to KD 29 million for the same period in the previous year, with a growth of 6.2 percent.

The bank's profit from operations amounted to KD 32.2 million, having grown by 6.3 percent over the profit from operations of KD 30.3 million in the same period in the previous year. Total assets reached KD 4 billion as at 30 June 2019 compared to KD 3.7 billion as at 30 June 2018 (Y-o-Y growth of 8.1 percent). Financing receivables increased by 5.8 percent to KD 2.90 billion as at 30 June 2019 compared to KD 2.74 billion and customer deposits increased by 5 percent to KD 2.50 billion compared to KD 2.38 billion, as at previous period last year. Further shareholders' equity increased by 4.6 percent to KD 432.1 million as at 30 June 2019 compared to KD 413.2 million as at previous period last year.

In addition to the foregoing achievements, the Bank maintained a good capital adequacy ratio of 15.3 percent as at 30 June 2019 which is higher than the level required by the supervision authorities, thereby increasing the opportunities of future expansion in credit facilities and operations.

The bank achieved good returns on equity and assets at 14.3 percent and 1.54 percent respectively for the first half of 2019, both of which are among the highest in the market, leading to the earnings per share rising from 14.7 fills in the previous year to 15.7 fills this year. Despite the assets growth, the bank continued to maintain the high quality of its assets whereby assets

quality metrics remained strong of Non-performing finance (NPF) ratio of 1.23 percent of the total finance books with provision coverage ratio of 256.1 percent excluding collaterals.

Commenting on these results, the Chairman of Ahli United Bank, Dr Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, said that the positive indicators that accompanied the bank's performance during the first half of the year are the result of the continuous efforts made by all business sectors in the Bank. This remarkable performance enhances the Bank's reputation and solidifies its position within the Kuwaiti banking sector as the first bank operating in Kuwait, now for more than 77 years. It also reflects our successful business strategy and plans to diversify sources of income, maximize shareholder returns, and supporting our customers in achieving their aspirations.

In Al-Mudhaf's words: "Ahli United Bank maintained positive valuations and ratings by international rating agencies and gained numerous prestigious prizes from the world's foremost entities specialized in monitoring the performance of banks and financial institutions. These achievements are a strong indicator of the Bank's business strategy and sound performance."

Dr Al-Mudhaf expressed his pride that the Bank recently won the 'the Best Business IT Innovation - Banking - Kuwait 2019' award from the International Finance Magazine (IFM), a world-class recognized magazine specialized in Banking and Finance based in London, UK. This award can be attributed to the several achievements and success made by the Information



Dr Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf

Technology of AUB, the Bank is continually striving to discover new, more efficient ways to deliver services that go beyond contemporary banking systems and business models. Al-Mudhaf referred to the role of AUB's sustained social development program which continued to focus on support Kuwait's youth and environment. These efforts continue to deepen Ahli United Bank's positive impact on society.

Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf pleased with the progress Ahli United Bank has made in implementing digital initiatives. Specific mention is made on the success

deployment of Robotics in process automation. This has supported the removal of repetitive tasks, reduces operating risks whilst allowing our staff to focus on more value added services. Such technologies, including Artificial Intelligence is supporting the progress of our Bank".

Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf expressed thanks and appreciation for the Bank's shareholders and customers for their committed support to and deep trust in the Bank. He also expressed appreciation to the Central Bank of Kuwait, and all supervision authorities and lauded the efforts of the bank's executive management and all its employees that enable the Bank to achieve that success.

AUB acting Chief Executive Officer Tareq Muhmood said: "We continue doing our best to achieve more successes during 2019. We are very proud and pleased with the new services we offer to our customers, which is part of our journey of digital transformation. This helps in maintaining our reputation as a pioneer financial institution through a number of steps including the launch of Video Chat Room Service at the Avenues Branch, providing customers a privacy space for video chatting with customer service staff. The Bank also provided several new updates to its outstanding Mobile Banking Application, providing its customers unparalleled exclusive features in terms of convenience, speed, security and the ability to meet and exceed customers' expectations in the digital era. Tareq Muhmood added "With the excellent team at Ahli United Bank, we expect to see more progress over the coming months".

US retail sales increase solidly in boost to economy

WASHINGTON: US retail sales increased more than expected in June, pointing to strong consumer spending, which could help to blunt some of the drag on the economy from weak business investment.

The report from the Commerce Department yesterday did not change market expectations that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates this month for the first time in a decade. But signs of strong consumer spending and rising underlying inflation suggest the US central bank is unlikely to cut rates by 50 basis points at its July 30-31 policy meeting as markets had initially anticipated.

Fed Chairman Jerome Powell last week told lawmakers the central bank would "act as appropriate" to protect the economy against risks stoked by a trade war between the United States and China, as well as slowing global growth. "It certainly will counteract weak business spending to some degree," said Robert Frick, corporate economist at Navy Federal Credit Union in Vienna, Virginia. "Given that the Fed is most worried about foreign economies and the threat of an escalating trade war, it is unlikely to dissuade them from cutting rates soon."

Retail sales increased 0.4 percent last month as households stepped up purchases of motor vehicles and a variety of other goods. Data for May was revised slightly down to show retail sales gaining 0.4 percent, instead of rising 0.5 percent as previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast retail sales edging up 0.1 percent in June. Compared to June last year, retail sales advanced 3.4 percent.

Excluding automobiles, gasoline, building materials and food services, retail sales



SAN FRANCISCO: A sign is shown in the window of a retail store in San Francisco. —Reuters

jumped 0.7 percent last month after an upwardly revised 0.6 percent increase in May. These so-called core retail sales, which correspond most closely with the consumer spending component of gross domestic product, were previously reported to have increased 0.4 percent in May.

June's strong gain in core retail sales, coming on the heels of solid increases in April and May, suggested an acceleration in consumer spending in the second quarter. Consumer spending grew at its slowest pace in a year in the first quarter. The dollar held gains versus a basket of currencies after the data, while US Treasury yields rose.

Broad gains

Consumer spending is being supported by a tight labor market, even as the broader economy is slowing as weaker business investment, an inventory overhang, a trade war between the United States and China,

and softening global growth pressure manufacturing. The Atlanta Fed is forecasting GDP increased at a 1.4 percent annualized rate in the second quarter. The economy grew at a 3.1 percent pace in the January-March quarter. The government will publish its snapshot of second-quarter GDP next Friday. The economy is losing speed in part as last year's stimulus from massive tax cuts and more government spending fades. Auto sales increased 0.7 percent in June after a similar gain in May. Receipts at service stations fell 2.8 percent, reflecting cheaper gasoline. Sales at building material stores rebounded 0.5 percent after dropping 1.5 percent in May.

Receipts at clothing stores rose 0.5 percent. Online and mail-order retail sales climbed 1.7 percent, matching May's increase. Receipts at furniture stores advanced 0.5 percent. Sales at restaurants and bars surged 0.9 percent. Spending at hobby, musical instrument and book stores was unchanged. — Reuters

IMF must adapt to China's rise, fintech, to stay relevant: Lipton

PARIS: The International Monetary Fund must continue to adapt to rising economic powers such as China and new financial technologies to remain relevant in its next 75 years, the fund's acting managing director said on Monday.

David Lipton, speaking at a conference in Paris marking the 75th anniversary of the Bretton Woods institutions, said the IMF, dominated by the United States and European industrial powers since its inception, has a built-in duty to reflect the rising power of emerging markets.

"The hubs of economic activity will shift over the coming decades. New financial centers will grow in importance. New reserve currencies may eventually emerge," Lipton said in remarks prepared for delivery. Lipton delivered the speech initially scheduled for IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde, who was nominated earlier this month to become president of the European Central Bank. Lagarde has temporarily relinquished her IMF duties during the nomination period.

Lipton noted that Lagarde's transition to the ECB in November was another change to which the IMF is readily able to adapt. He said the IMF must make changes to maintain a stable and robust international monetary system.

"Free trade, flexible exchange rates, and non-disruptive capital movements are essential ingredients for a thriving, global economy. That is why the role of multilateral institutions - and especially the IMF - will be more relevant than ever. If we continue to adapt," Lipton said.

Lipton, who has spent much of his

career at the IMF and has served since 2011 as the Fund's second-ranking official, praised the Bretton Woods founders for creating at the end of World War II a quota-based IMF shareholding system based on economic influence.

But he added that the current formula, where the United States has a 16.52 percent share of voting power, followed by 6.15 percent for Japan and 6.09 percent for China—the world's second-largest economy—has not fully kept pace with economic reality.

"We must reckon with the fact that our formulae have not fully kept pace. We cannot expect to retain the global reach and resources that we need unless countries gaining in economic importance and ready to take on commensurate responsibility gain appropriately in their say at the Fund."

The IMF's bylaws call for the Fund to be based in the largest member economy. Lagarde said two years ago it was possible for the IMF to be based in Beijing in a decade if growth trends for China and other big emerging markets continued and are reflected in the IMF's voting structure. Lipton said some countries feel they lack the influence they deserve in other multilateral institutions that do not have such a proportional structure—a veiled reference to the World Trade Organization, 164-member countries each get an equal vote and rule changes are extremely difficult to make.

Lipton also said the IMF sees significant gains from development of new financial technologies to increase efficiency and transparency and benefit people who are currently excluded from the traditional banking system. Unlike US President Donald Trump's dismissive comments about Facebook Inc's Libra digital currency plans, Lipton said such technologies could "help re-orient the financial services industry closer to better serve the real economy and foster job creation." — Reuters

Ryanair slashes growth outlook on Boeing crisis

LONDON: Ryanair yesterday slashed its growth outlook and said it would temporarily shut bases as crisis-hit Boeing pushes back plane delivery owing to fatal crashes that grounded its 737 MAX jets.

Ryanair expects to receive only 30 new Boeing 737 MAX jets by late May, instead of a planned 58, the Irish no-frills carrier said in a statement. It hopes to take delivery of its first MAX 200 jet between January and February 2020, it added.

"This shortfall in aircraft deliveries will necessitate some base cuts and closures for summer 2020, but also for the winter 2019 schedule," said Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary.

"We will... be consulting with our people and our unions in planning and implementing these base cuts and closures, which are directly caused by the B737 MAX delivery delays to the B737 MAX program."

Ryanair would not be drawn on any possible job cuts but the Dublin-based group said it now expected passenger growth to rise by only three percent this summer, rather than by seven. The airline cut its full-year 2020/2021 passenger traffic forecast to 157



ROME: In this file photo, a Boeing 737-8AS bearing the Ryanair Irish low-cost airline livery, are pictured at Rome's Ciampino airport. —AFP

million from 162 million.

Ryanair is overhauling its activities into distinct operations, mirroring a set-up by British Airways-owner IAG, as part of its strategy to reach 200 million passengers per year by 2024.

'Remains committed'

Despite Tuesday's setback, Ryanair said it remained committed to orders of up to 210 new Boeing 737 jets, including 135 MAX 200s. It also has options for 75 more MAX 200s. Boeing's global fleet of 737 MAX planes has been grounded since mid-March

following the second of two catastrophic accidents in Indonesia and Ethiopia which killed 346 people.

"Ryanair remains committed to the B737 MAX aircraft, and now expects that it will return to flying service before the end of 2019, however the exact date of this return remains uncertain," O'Leary said.

"Boeing is hoping that a certification package will be submitted to regulators by September with a return to service shortly thereafter. "We believe it would be prudent to plan for that date to slip by some months, possibly as late as December." —AFP

Amazon workers strike as 'Prime' shopping frenzy hits

SAN FRANCISCO: Amazon workers walked out of a main distribution center in Minnesota on Monday, protesting for improved working conditions during the e-commerce titan's major "Prime" shopping event. Amazon workers picketed outside the facility, briefly delaying a few trucks and waving signs with messages along the lines of "We're human, not robots."

"We know Prime Day is a big day for Amazon, so we hope this strike will help executives understand how serious we are about wanting real change that will uplift the workers in Amazon's warehouses," striker Safiyo Mohamed said in a release.

"We create a lot of wealth for Amazon, but they aren't treating us with the respect and dignity that we deserve." Organizers did not disclose the number of strikers, who said employees picketed for about an hour in intense heat before cutting the protest short due to the onset of heavy rain.

The strike was part of an ongoing effort to pressure the company on issues including job safety, equal opportunity in the workplace, and concrete action on issues including climate change, according to community

organization Awood Center.

US Democratic presidential contenders Kamila Harris and Bernie Sanders were among those who expressed support for the strikers on Twitter. "I stand in solidarity with the courageous Amazon workers engaging in a work stoppage against unconscionable working conditions in their warehouses," Sanders said in a tweet.

"It is not too much to ask that a company owned by the wealthiest person in the world treat its workers with dignity and respect." Amazon employees also went on strike at seven locations in Germany, demanding better wages as the US online retail giant launched its two-day global shopping discount extravaganza called Prime Day.

Amazon had said in advance that the strike would not affect deliveries to customers. Amazon has consistently defended work conditions, contending it is a leader when it comes to paying workers at least \$15 hourly and providing benefits. The company last week announced plans to offer job training to around one-third of its US workforce to help them gain skills to adapt to new technologies. — AFP

Business

VIVA, DHL ink strategic partnership to offer exclusive discounts to customers

Agreement allows customers to pay less and deliver more across Europe, USA and Middle East

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, and DHL, the global market leader in the logistics industry, signed a strategic partnership agreement that offers exclusive discounts exclusively to VIVA customers in Kuwait, allowing them to pay less and deliver more across Europe, USA and the Middle East. Customers can subscribe by sending 'DHL' to 510.

Commenting on the partnership, Haneen Al-Fulaij, Acting Chief Consumer Officer at VIVA said: "We are looking forward to meeting ever-increasing our customers' needs, thus we built this partnership with DHL to provide them unique end exclusive offers that meet their needs."

On his part, DHL Express Kuwait Country Manager, Amr Tantawy, said: "We are proud that each of our partnerships both globally and locally offer our customers a unique set of benefits; pairing up with VIVA provides us the opportunity to increase our reach within the community and provide a wider audience with special benefits with the same promise of service excellence."

With a global network in over 220 countries and territories across the globe, DHL is the most international company in the world and can offer solutions for an almost infinite number of logistics needs.

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things 'More' for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established a pioneer position in the market through its customer centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions: a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation "4G LTE" network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability.



Seize Special summer offers from Nissan Al-Babtain

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co (AABC), the sole authorized dealer of Nissan in the State of Kuwait, is pleased to announce its latest campaign that is applicable on the Nissan KICKS, Altima and X-Trail models. Bringing its customers, the best of this season's offers with added benefits, the new summer package includes free service packages, gift vouchers, free 3rd party insurance in addition to free traffic registration fees on all the models.

Starting from only KD 4,750 accompanied by a free 3rd party insurance in addition to free traffic registration, the Nissan KICKS has class-leading fuel efficiency thanks to its advanced 1.6-liter engine and light-weight platform. Power is rated at 88kW (118HP) and torque of 149Nm while at KD 6,250 with 4 years of free service respectively, the Nissan X-TRAIL, a customer favorite gives young families and adventure-seekers more premium style options such as the choice between the five or seven-seat version as well as five new vibrant exterior vehicle shades, unrivalled space and comfort.

Starting at KD 5,999 only, the Nissan Altima comes with two years of free service. The sixth generation of Nissan's best-selling sedan features expressive styling, an uplifting interior, two new powertrains, and advanced Nissan Intelligent Mobility features.

The car also features Apple CarPlay(tm) and an 8-inch multi-touch color display for complete in-car entertainment and ease of driver control. Cutting-edge Nissan Intelligent Mobility technologies have been integrated into the 2019 Altima as standard. The Altima also provides front, side and rear safety monitoring and intervention technologies - including Automatic Emergency Braking with Pedestrian Detection, Lane Departure Warning (LDW), radar-based Blind Spot Warning (BSW), Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA) and High Beam Assist (HBA). Nissan Al-Babtain invites everyone to visit its showrooms in Al-Rai and Ahmadi to explore and enjoy this year's summer specials.

AUB announces launch of training program

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank has announced the launch of its initiative to provide a number of job opportunities to the people of determination (differently abled persons) to work in the banking sector starting from July 14. The bank has appointed 12 employees of the people of determination and started its training program for the first batch on Sunday, July 14 to receive the appropriate courses to qualify them according to the established plan.

Sahar Dashti, General Manager Customer Protection, being responsible for social responsibility programs at Ahli United Bank, made the following statement: "AUB has adopted this noble initiative launched by Human Construction Institute, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, the Public Authority of the Disabled, and the Civil Service Commission, within the activities of the 'Partners to Employ Them' Campaign out of its social responsibility towards the people of determination, and its commitment to support them and get them integrated in the private sector so that they can achieve success and gain confidence in themselves and in their society through their success in jobs appropriate for their skills and qualifications."

Dashti also affirmed that AUB strives to present a role model for all institutions in Kuwait by providing a distinct work environment for the people of determination, believing that they will be a true addition to our human wealth, and they will receive all support and encouragement from AUB family, pointing out that this experience is the first of its kind in the private sector in Kuwait.

Dashti thanked all entities that contributed to the success of this initiative and reaffirmed that AUB does its utmost to make this noble initiative a success to be a role model in promoting social partnership among civil society institutions, driving the wheel of sustainable development by sponsoring and supporting such training programs and providing job opportunities to our sons and daughters who are entitled to our full assistance and encouragement.

Naqeb Amin, General Manager, Human Resources at AUB affirmed that Ahli United Bank's initiative and patronage of "Partners to Employ Them" campaign



Tareq Mahmood, acting CEO and Sahar Dashti with a number of employees.



Tareq Mahmood and Sahar Dashti honoring the people of determination

stems from AUB's strong belief in the ability of the people of determination to accept the challenge and achieve success in the banking work.

Amin added that AUB has already started training a number of the physically challenged persons, providing them an appropriate work environment as well as determining the works suitable for their

abilities so that the bank can benefit from their efforts and invest their potentials, affirming that success of the people of determination in the banking sector will be a message for optimism and confirms that they have great ability of giving, and that they just need a real opportunity to get integrated in society.

5G phone review: The Huawei Mate 20X

KUWAIT: At a time when countries are racing to be among the very first to install 5G connectivity networks, 5G-supported phones have to be up to the challenge. One of the few phones that is 5G-ready is the Huawei Mate 20X 5G. We know that Huawei has an excellent track record for producing high-tech products, would Huawei Mate 20X 5G continue this trend? Let's have a look.

Dual 5G chipsets

Huawei has equipped the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) with Kirin 980 and Balong 5000, a 5G multi-mode chipset. The 7nm Balong 5000 is compatible with multiple generations of network technology including 4G, 3G and 2G. Huawei empowered this smartphone to identify slow Internet connection and thus switch between different networks. While some 5G phones support only Non-Standalone (NSA) networking mode, Huawei Mate 20X 5G supports both NSA and Standalone (SA). The SA, the recent version of networking mode, ensures a better performance and higher efficiency for your phone.

7.2-inch Ultra Large OLED dewdrop display

This phone is so big: it is edge-to-edge display. It measures 7.2 inch and it's OLED Dewdrop Display2. The

large display makes it the perfect device for viewing content and running gaming apps.

Matrix camera system

The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) comes with three Leica cameras in a distinctive squared layout - 40MP wide angle camera, 20MP ultra-wide camera and the 8MP telephoto camera - and a single 24MP snapper on the front. Photography possibilities are endless including macro and ultra-wide photography.

A battery that lasts one day

With faster connectivity comes a greater demand for data, which means a need for more power. Huawei has addressed this matter by housing a 4,200mAh battery inside the Huawei Mate 20 X (5G). The Huawei Mate 20 X (5G) also supports 40W Huawei SuperCharge, and its safety is certified by TÜV Rheinland, the international organization that provides product safety assessment and certification services.

Advanced cooling technology

Even in the case of graphically-intensive games, this device stays cool and responsive thanks to the integration of Huawei SuperCool - a groundbreaking cooling solution that utilizes graphene film and vapor chamber to deliver an outstanding cooling performance.

Verdict

Huawei Mate 20X 5G is a beast of phone that is feature-loaded and ready to take on the new 5G network connection challenges.



JPMorgan profit beats estimates on lending strength

NEW YORK: JPMorgan Chase & Co reported a better-than-expected quarterly profit yesterday as higher interest income and buoyant consumer lending offset lower activity at its trading desks. Even as the world's biggest bank recorded record earnings, there were warning signs that the playing field is beginning to tilt against the financial industry. JPMorgan's net interest margin declined to 2.49 percent from 2.57 percent a year ago as deposit rates rose and the rate the bank paid on other borrowings rose. Citigroup similarly reported a decline in net interest margin on Monday, which sent bank stocks lower.

Trading volumes have been lower at large US banks as a tit-for-tat tariff war between Beijing and Washington has kept investors on edge. A flattening of the yield curve and rising bets of an interest rate cut have also challenged banks' ability to boost revenues. Average loans at the largest US bank, however, increased 2 percent on the back of an 8 percent rise in credit-card loans. The earnings beat was driven by JPMorgan's consumer bank, Chase, which reported credit card loans were up 2 percent, credit costs were flat and overall income was up 22 percent.

Chief Executive Officer Jamie Dimon remained bullish about the US economy. "We continue to see positive momentum with the U.S. consumer - healthy confidence levels, solid job creation and rising wages - which are reflected in our Consumer & Community Banking results," he said in a statement.

Income from consumer and community banking, JPMorgan's largest business, rose 22 percent to \$4.17 billion, offsetting declines across its other main businesses. Total net interest income, the difference between what banks pay on deposits and earn on loans, rose 7 percent to \$14.40 billion. Investors, however, worry that if the US Federal Reserve cuts interest rates in July, it could pressure margins at banks, which have benefited recently from higher rates.

Net income climbed 16 percent to \$9.65 billion. Excluding the tax gain, it earned \$2.59 per share. Net revenue rose 4 percent to \$29.57 billion. Analysts were expecting earnings of \$2.50 per share and revenue of \$28.90 billion, according to IBES estimate from Refinitiv. The bank's return on tangible common equity, a key profit measure for how well it uses shareholder money, rose to 20 percent, up from 19 percent in the first quarter and higher than the bank's 17 percent target. JPMorgan's results are closely watched by investors looking to gauge the health of the US economy. Among other banks reporting results yesterday are Goldman Sachs Group Inc and Wells Fargo & Co. —Reuters

What's On



Al Sayer Holding Management honors 'Always with You' team of volunteers

AL SAYER Holding Management and Kuwait volunteering experts gathered to remark the involvement and services offered by ALSAYER Volunteers Team established with a name to represent its mission - "ALSAYER Always with You", to meet the needs and requirements of the Kuwaiti community at its best.

A social gathering was arranged to recognize, and further streamline the efforts of Volunteers Team, specially the recent efforts to create awareness on road safety measures, which reflected their passion and dedication during the holy month of Ramadan. In addition to this, contributions of ALSAYER volunteers' team also included activities towards cancer awareness, spread message on wellness through marathons, involvement to support the disabled as well as for the empowerment of youth.

The event was attended by Mr. Mubarak Al Sayer CEO of Al Sayer Holding, Mr Hamad Al Sayer CEO Al Sayer Franchising and Vice Chairman of ALSAYER Sustainability Committee, Mr Farid Al Fawazan representative of Ataa Hub, Dr Fatima Al Mousawi representative of Spread the Passion Society, Ali Assad and

Mr. Ahmad Al-Kandari representatives from the Limitless Sports Team, and Mr Salah Al-Saif representative of Nahtam Volunteers Group.

According to Mubarak Al Sayer "in current days, the development and civilization of nations are measured by the number of volunteer hours they provide to serve society issues. Al Sayer Holding made this into reality by establishing its volunteer team consisting of members from diverse backgrounds who joined together to address the society issues and promote the values of volunteering for the benefit of Kuwait community.

"During the Ramadan Aman campaign which aimed at safer roads, around 30 employees from the group volunteered for the campaign, with staff voluntarily assisting distribution of meals before breaking fast at traffic signals, to promote safer and responsible driving. Our employees achieved excellent contribution of around 60 hours of voluntary work within two weeks. The team name "Always with You" reflects the purpose of this team that will be present at any event to serve the community" said Hamad Al Sayer.



Kyrgyzstan Embassy in Kuwait highlights trade ties, produce



The local traders showed keen interest in the fruit exhibition at the Kyrgyzstan at Embassy. Speaking to Kuwait Times, the Ambassador Samargyul said that Kyrgyzstan has great potential for growing crops. Natural conditions, a warm climate, the development of the agricultural economy allow growing and producing of high-quality fruit and vegetable products.

More than 20 types of vegetable crops are cultivated in Kyrgyzstan: peppers, eggplants, onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, and much more. Favorable climatic conditions allow for the development of fruit and berry farming. Fruit crops in Kyrgyzstan are

cultivated in an area of 45,000 hectares and the gross harvest is approximately 193,000 tons of products. The main fruit crops are apples, pears, cherries, plums, apricots, peaches, figs, pomegranates and persimmons. The types of berries includes strawberries, raspberries, currants, barberries

All these factors create profitable conditions for the realization of an economic and business partnership between the state of Kuwait and Kyrgyzstan Republic. This year the two sides celebrated the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kyrgyz Republic and the state of Kuwait.

Sheraton restaurants: Delightful cuisines and a multitude of choices

Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel invites you to an unforgettable culinary journey at its exquisite cuisines at the Avenues, the largest shopping mall in Kuwait and the Middle East. Internationally inspired with passionate services and an ideal ambience for an authentic and joyous dining experience during the Summer Season to cherish unique moments with your loved ones.

Straight from Lebanon, Le Tarbouche Restaurant presents you its Traditional Lebanese food, the aroma of freshly baked saj bread with the best hot and cold mezzas delicately flavored to soothe every taste. Bukhara Restaurant offers you its authentic Indian spices and ingredients prepared by our world class chefs to bring to life the traditional Indian dishes including the famous flavors of tandoori. The majestic Shahrayar Restaurant invites you to experience a different kind of indulgence of its traditional Persian dishes with a charm of idyllic surroundings. Presenting you with alluring dishes including the traditional Persian grills and bread sizzled to perfection.

For more choices, Al Hambra Restaurant at the Avenues invites you to a rich selection of your favorite Kuwaiti and International flavors with its diverse range of exceptional buffet during the Weekends and a la carte menu for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for a remarkable dining experience. In addition, The English Tea Lounge located at the 2nd phase of the Avenues, provides you with the most pleasant ambience to experience the finest English tea and delectable scones, mini sandwiches, chocolate fondue, and fresh fruits in a relaxing atmosphere of sophistication and opulence.

On the occasion of the Summer Season, Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait launches its exquisite Summer Promotions which includes a stay with complimentary breakfast, Wi-Fi, as well as complimentary airport transfer to and from Kuwait International Airport. In addition, discounted coupons are offered to our guests for all Al-Shaya brands - one of the largest multinational retail industries in the world - for a unique shopping experience at the Avenues.



CIS Kuwait holds discussion on India budget

Center for India Studies (CIS) Kuwait organized a public discussion meeting on Union Budget 2019. The program, moderated by Sudhir V Menon - Fahaheel Area

President of Center for India Studies Kuwait, was held at Sopanam Auditorium, Mangaf on July 11, 2019. Various aspects of the budget presented by India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman were discussed in detail.

KE Subramaniam CA, Assistant Vice President, NBK Capital, Adv Sumod Kottieth - President of Bharatiya Pravasi Parishad Kuwait, Ajith Kumar - Member Loka Kerala Sabha, Sajeev Narayanan - Vice Chairman Saradhi Educational and Charitable Trust, Gopakumar - Convenor, Kuwait Engineers Forum and Raghu

Perumbilli - Member of Sevadarshan Kuwait participated in the discussion. With the active participation of the audience, the program was excellent and informative.

In continuation to the development activities of Narendra Modi government's first term, the new budget also is far sighted and development oriented felt the participants of the meeting. Many schemes benefiting farmers, fishermen, women empowerment, pollution control etc have been included in this budget. The steep increase in advance tax revenues paid by Corporate entities are encouraging.

The meeting, however, expressed concern regarding 100 percent FDI in the insurance sector, foreign sovereign bonds, the difficulty of holding the fiscal deficit at 3.3 percent and control of inflation which is likely to be hit by rising fuel prices. Binu Narendran, Fahaheel Area Secretary of CIS Kuwait welcomed the gathering and Anil Paravoor proposed the vote of thanks. Sreejith Nair, General Secretary, Center for India Studies Kuwait, explained in detail the objectives and future plans of CIS Kuwait. Similar to this event, CIS Kuwait is planning to conduct more events concerning Indian expatriates in the coming months.



Health

High and dry: Alpine resorts grapple with climate change

Bears, bikes on the tourism menu; Campaign is on to attract more visitors

AROSA: The prospect of searing heatwaves driving holidaymakers to cool mountains and children asking grandparents about their memories of snow is focusing minds in Alpine ski resorts on the implications of climate change. With global warming widely expected to slash snowfall, especially at lower levels, the Swiss tourism industry is looking for ways to preserve a lucrative business brutally exposed to the weather.

Enter Napa, Serbia's last circus bear. The Arosa ski resort in eastern Switzerland has created a \$6.5 million refuge hosting Napa and two other bears rescued from cages at restaurants in Albania to help draw summer visitors and reduce its reliance on skiers and snowboarders. School classes, families and a group of army veterans celebrating an 80th birthday were visiting one recent summer day, helping the park towards what Arosa tourism director Pascal Jenny said was a target of 50,000 visitors this year.

Arosa has reinvented itself before - moving to winter tourism in the 1930s after decades as a health resort for tuberculosis patients. But with nearly 620,000 overnight stays in winter last year, more than three times the summer total - it will not be easy. Jenny, who fears a sharp decline in snowfall over the next 20 or 30 years, is hedging his bets.

"What gives us some hope is that artificial snow is making strong technical advances. I can make snow now at 5 degrees above freezing," he said, standing on an observation platform beside the Weisshorn cable car which gives a sweeping view of the snow-capped Alpine valley. His two-pronged approach highlights the dilemma faced by mountain resorts - how to retain profits as they embark on what the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) says needs to be a global rethink of tourism.

"The consequences of climate change will be felt across the travel and tourism sector over the coming decades," the OECD, whose member countries represent 80% of the world's trade and investment, said in a 2018 study of megatrends in tourism. Storms, flooding and tidal surges will threaten coastal regions, southern destinations face extreme heatwaves and northern ones will see shorter periods of snowfall, it said.

Danish industrial estate?

Mountain resorts tend to be higher in Switzerland than in Austria or France, giving them better chances as snow becomes scarcer. But even at 3,000 meters, pistes could see snow depths more than halved by 2100 if greenhouse

gas emissions are not curbed, a report in *The Cryosphere*, a peer-reviewed geosciences journal named after the frozen water parts of the Earth, said.

Resorts below 1,200 meters - as about a quarter of Alpine ones are - might get almost no snow, said the 2017 report, whose title starts "How much can we save?". Snow levels will gradually stabilize if global temperature rises are contained, it says. Arosa is 1,775 meters up but Jenny worries that a loss of snow in the lowlands will cost it visitors because people will lose their emotional connection with snow. "That is almost more dangerous for the sector," he said.

Hence his interest in an industrial estate in Denmark, where Arosa is cooperating on a project to make artificial snow so that urban dwellers can learn to ski and then, he hopes, go on to hone their skills in the Alps. The economics are clear: a daily lift pass for skiers in Arosa costs 79 Swiss francs (\$), while a summer hiker or mountain biker typically pays 18 francs for a pass that lets them use a rope park, a swimming area and paddle boats on the town's lake.

Hotels and restaurants charge more in winter too, but the strong Swiss franc has priced many people out. Switzerland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and the Swiss government says the long-term outlook for

tourism is healthy. "Mountain summers can position themselves as an alternative to the Mediterranean regions," a 2017 report said.

Summer tourism already accounts for 60% of overnight stays across Switzerland, but the season brings in only 18% of revenue, said Therese Lehmann, an economist at the University of Bern's Centre for Regional Development. Government data already shows a 24% drop in skiers in the decade to 2016, with other factors as well as climate change. "The decline of ski tourism - a powerful economic engine - will have more of an impact than the additional revenue in summer," said Dominik Stegrist, director of the Institute for Landscape and Open Space at Switzerland's University of Applied Sciences Rapperswil.

Europe's population is ageing and younger people are less interested in skiing. Snowshoeing, winter hiking, sledging and ski touring - in which people hike up mountains, are on the increase, industry lobby Swiss Tourism says. Consolidation of winter tourism is on the horizon, with overnight stays in bigger Swiss resorts up 1 percent in the decade to 2015, but down 17 percent in smaller ones. "Lots of smaller ones are grasping at straws, trying to survive as long as they can because the valleys depend on this tourism," Stegrist said. — Reuters

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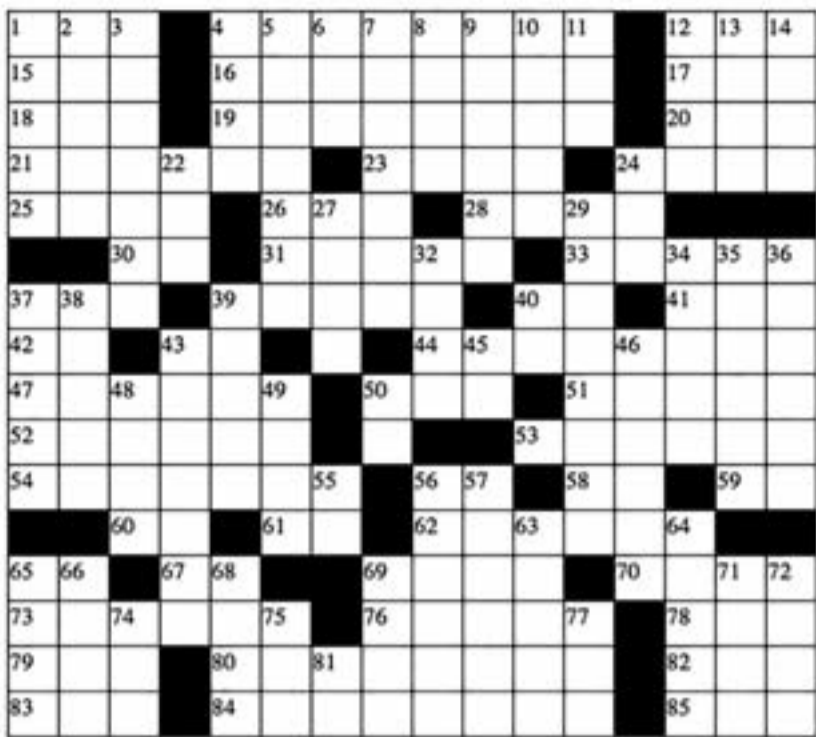
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ACROSS

1. Extremely pleasing.
4. Be earlier in time.
12. The syllable naming the first (tonic) note of any major scale in solmization.
15. (Irish) The sea personified.
16. A frequently prescribed benzodiazepine (trade name Restoril).
17. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
18. A rapid bustling commotion.
19. Leader of Black Muslims who campaigned for independence for Black Americans (1897-1975).
20. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
21. Cast again, in a different role.
23. A toothed wheel that engages another toothed mechanism in order to change the speed or direction of transmitted motion.
25. (Old Testament) The eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac.
26. The seed of the cereal grass.
28. An informal term for a father.
30. 1/10 gram.
31. The large trunk artery that carries blood from the left ventricle of the heart to branch arteries.
33. Port city on southern Honshu in Osaka Bay.
37. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
41. 10 grams.
42. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
44. Diverge from the expected.
47. European bison having a smaller and higher head than the North American bison.
51. A string of more than 3,000 islands east of Asia extending 1,300 miles between the Sea of Japan and the western Pacific Ocean.
52. An implement used to erase something.
53. British writer noted for romantic adventure novels (1856-1925).
54. Restrain or bind with chains.
58. A unit of information equal to one million (1,048,576) bytes.
59. A state in midwestern United States.
60. A unit of potential equal to a thousand volts.
61. A unit of magnetomotive force equal to 0.7958 ampere-turns.
62. In the Arabian Nights a hero who tells of the fantastic adventures he had in his voyages.
65. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
67. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
70. A short labored intake of breath with the mouth open.
73. Any movable possession (especially articles of clothing).
76. An evergreen tree of the family Ulmaceae that grows in tropical America and Africa and Asia.
78. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
79. Someone (especially a woman) who annoys people by constantly finding fault.
80. A person who makes measurements.
82. A light touch or stroke.
83. A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
84. The position of a prominent or well-known object in a particular landscape.
85. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A shape that spreads outward.
2. Yellow-fever mosquitos.
3. Thick heavy expensive material with a raised pattern.
4. Weapons considered collectively.
5. Neither moral nor immoral.
6. Anterior pituitary hormone that stimulates the function of the thyroid gland.
7. A piece of furniture with open shelves for displaying small ornaments.
8. Informal terms for a human head.
9. A large fleet.
10. A crown-like jewelled headdress worn by women on formal occasions.
11. Late time of life.
12. Tropical woody herb with showy yellow flowers and flat pods.
13. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
14. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
22. The month following July and preceding September.
24. An associate degree in applied science.
27. United States baseball player (born 1925).
29. A jamb for a door.
32. (British) Traditional jazz as revived in the 1950s.
34. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
35. Of or concerning Qatar.
36. A temporarily organized plan for matters to be attended to.
38. (in Scotland) A child.
39. Transient cessation of respiration.
40. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.
43. The second month of the civil year.
45. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
46. A motley assortment of things.
48. A bag made of paper or plastic for holding customer's purchases.
49. (of persons) Neat and smart in appearance.
50. A heavy ductile magnetic metallic element.
55. A soft gray ductile metallic element used in alloys.
56. Wild ginger.
57. Type genus of the Viperidae.
63. A person who gives a name or names.
64. (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
66. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
68. (computer science) A standardized language for the descriptive markup of documents.
69. An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as guilt about surviving or reliving the trauma in dreams or numbness and lack of involvement with reality or recurrent thoughts and images.
71. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
72. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
74. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
75. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
77. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
81. An associate degree in nursing.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It seems as if you are entering a period of emotional change. You may have mixed emotions about some situations in your life, but you are torn between right and wrong and good and bad. You feel a great need to make some kind of changes in your lifestyle. The only thing that is bringing you any sense of peace is staying on the go and keeping your mind preoccupied to prevent dwelling on the problems at hand. Do whatever you need to do to keep peace in your world and stress at arm's length. This may be a time you have a great desire to further your education and gain as much knowledge as possible. We have always been told knowledge is power and it seems you long for power now. Spend your time taking in all this world brings your way.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Make a plan and put it in action. The ins and outs of your daily life have become mundane. You need excitement and change. Even though plans for a getaway may not go smoothly, the actual trip is just what you need to refresh and rejuvenate. Your focus tends to be centered on the wants and needs of those around you. This is a time in your life it will be best to put yourself first. Remember you must first take care of yourself to be able to help others.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You find yourself in admiration of the mystical world around you. You are more determined than ever to put your talents to use whether artistic or psychic. You may find you are faced with opportunity to use these talents and bring the mysterious, the glamorous, and the intriguing into your life. You may be curious of how your mind could be so active and overwhelmed by the ideas that are flowing through in over drive. You feel the need to express these ideas as fast as they come to you and could catch yourself talking the ears off of anyone that would listen.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You find that your thoughts are staying about two steps ahead of your actions today. Your mind is in overdrive. You are quick and on your toes. There is no doubt you are extremely intelligent, and others are attracted to this quality. You may find that you can be of great counsel to others today. Your opinions matter to those close to you. You may find yourself seeking knowledge and wanting to surround yourself with others that have the same desire. Education is extremely important to you and you may find yourself led to continue yours in some form, whether it be additional training in your field of work or enrolling in new courses. Cancer. Surrounding yourself with your love ones and those who know you best will be very beneficial to you today.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

All that sparkles may not be gold, but it sure does catch your eye. You have deep appreciation for the beauty surrounding you and find it hard to pass by any sparkling treasure in your path. Admire it and move on Leo, and this could be a very good financial period for you if you can resist the urge to spend. This may be a time of change in your life. The changes you are about to make or may be making may not be supported by those close to you. You may experience conflict or major pushback. You are longing to broaden your horizons, a longing to grow and have new experiences. Remember, Leo, these things cannot occur without change.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You don't care how, you want it now! This is your attitude when it comes to life today. You have taken love a step farther. Obsession is a more appropriate description of how you feel about your goals. This could be an extremely passionate time in your world. Jealousy and possessiveness may be emotions that play a role in your world. You may find your ambition is in overdrive and you will not stop until you have exactly what you want.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Far from reality is where you may find your thoughts today. Dreaming of what the future holds can lead to peace and clarity in your life. Set a goal. Picture yourself accomplishing this goal. Imagine how you will feel once your dream becomes a reality. Make a list of everything you need to do to accomplish this. Today is the first day of the rest of your life. Make it happen. Dedication and determination can lead you to the position in life you wish to be. Love to learn and learn to love, Libra. The world has much more to offer you. Know this and own it!



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Stress plays a bigger role in your life than usual. Under pressure is not the best position to be in to make decisions. When tensions are high like you may experience today, it is best to but off any decisions for later. Hit the road, take a drive, or just do what it takes to add a bit of relaxation into your world. You may find someone turning to you for advice or as a shoulder to cry on. Pouring your time into helping someone may seem to relieve your stress and minimize your own problems. Helping others could be the best way to help yourself.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You are a practical person with an abundance of common sense. You are able to use both of these qualities as assets to make your way to the top in the career world. You may be feeling a need to change your focus and tighten your circle a bit. You feel as if you need to spend more of your time and attention on you and yours. At this point you may have accomplished your goal in the workplace but feel you need to continue to work on your goal at home. This will be a balancing act to continue to make sure you thrive in every area of your life. Your communication skills are at all time high and you are able to relate and interact with ease to all who surround you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your self-confidence may be a little off today. Not to worry. Confidence is not something you are born with. It is not part of your DNA. You can boost yours with a simple mantra. It could be "I am strong. I can handle whatever comes my way today" or "I am blessed. I have a lot to give, and I will make every effort to share my talents with others." You can use the same mantra everyday or find a new one to fit each day. When you feel confident, it is apparent and contagious. Others respond to it. With practice confidence can become an effortless habit.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This day may find you longing for change. A new style, new friends, new experiences may be calling out to you. You want to break out and break away from the mundane life you have been leading. A major change is on the horizon. You may be led to really change things up in your life. Don't run out and get a tattoo or make any changes that can be reversed because this phase could fade as fast as it appeared. This change is in attitude is very evident to those around you and you may find you are being met with much opposition. The new you is not the highly respected hard-working role model that so many close to you have grown to admire.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Today finds you all about "YOU"! Your hard work and dedication seem to have finally paid off and you are on top of the world. You are admired by your peers and it seems as if the world is raining sunshine directly on you. You are on fire and seem to find sharing the spotlight with others and showering them with kindness, appreciation, and gratitude is extremely rewarding to you. You want to share this feeling and make sure others around you feel your gratitude and love. You feel as if you want everyone to feel this feeling. You are full of love of life and love of those all

Wordsearch Puzzle

90's Songs 4

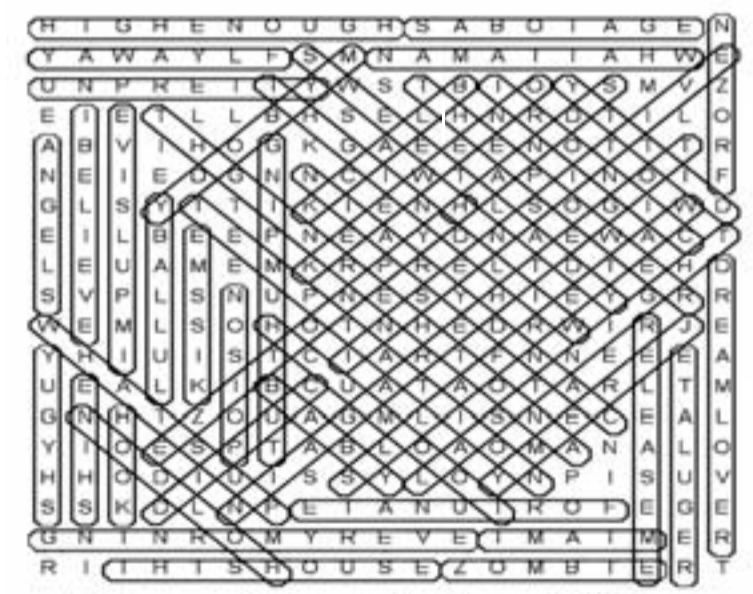
Find and circle all of the 1990's songs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional song.



- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| ADIA | DISARM | LATELY | SAY IT |
| ALRIGHT | EVERLONG | LOUNGIN | SLIDE |
| ANGEL | EVERYTHING | MASTERPIECE | SUKIYAKI |
| ANYTHING | FINALLY | MISSING | TELL ME |
| ANYWHERE | FOOLISH GAMES | MR. JONES | TIME |
| BIG POPPA | HERO | NO DIGGITY | TOO CLOSE |
| BLACK CAT | I KNOW | NO RAIN | TWO PRINCES |
| CRAZY | I SWEAR | NOBODY KNOWS | UNBELIEVABLE |
| DEAR MAMA | INFORMER | NOT TONIGHT | WARNADE |
| DECEMBER | JUMP AROUND | RUN-AROUND | WHO DAT |
| DISAPPEAR | JUMPER | RUNAWAY TRAIN | WITHOUT YOU |
| | LAST KISS | SAVE TONIGHT | YOU'LL SEE |

Yesterday's Solution

90's Songs 3



- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| ANGELS | HANDS | LULLABY | THE POWER |
| ANOTHER NIGHT | HIGH ENOUGH | MIAMI | THIS HOUSE |
| BABY | HOLD ON | MY BODY | TOGETHER AGAIN |
| BLACK | HOOK | ONE WEEK | TOO MUCH |
| CANDY RAIN | HYPNOTIZE | POISON | TUBTHUMPING |
| CUPID | I BELIEVE | REGULATE | UNPRETTY |
| DITTY | IMPULSIVE | RELEASE ME | WATERFALLS |
| DREAMLOVER | INSENSITIVE | SABOTAGE | WHAT'S UP |
| EVERY MORNING | IRONIC | SHINE | WHATTA MAN |
| FLY AWAY | JEREMY | SHY GUY | WILD NIGHT |
| FORTUNATE | KISS ME | SWEET LADY | ZOMBIE |
| FROZEN | LAST NIGHT | TEMPTATION | |

The hidden song title is: SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2019



A visitor takes a photo of a display at a "Tape Art" exhibition by Tape That, an artist collective based in Berlin, in Taipei on July 16, 2019. The exhibition is on display until September 1. — AFP

LVMH teams up with Stella McCartney

French luxury and fashion giant LVMH said Monday it will buy a minority stake in Stella McCartney's design house, which has cut ties with LVMH's fierce rival Kering after 17 years. Stella McCartney, daughter of iconic Beatle Paul, set up her business in 2001 and will "continue as creative director and ambassador for her brand while holding majority ownership," LVMH said in a statement. The accord will help "accelerate the worldwide development" of the company, it said, adding that further details on the deal would be forthcoming later this year.

Stella McCartney-noted for her environmental credentials and concerns-will also become a "special adviser" to LVMH head

Bernard Arnault on sustainable development policies, it added. LVMH is the world's biggest luxury and fashion company which Arnault has built up steadily in rivalry with Francois Pinault's Kering group. "I am extremely happy with this partnership with Stella. It is the beginning of a beautiful story together, and we are convinced of the great long-term potential of her (company)," Arnault said in the statement.

"A decisive factor was that she was the first to put sustainability and ethical issues on the front stage, very early on, and built her (company) around these issues," he added. Stella McCartney said that since her decision to quit the Kering tie-up and take back control of her

company, there had been many approaches "from various parties expressing their wish to partner and invest." "While these approaches were interesting none could match the conversation I had with Bernard Arnault and his son Antoine," she said. LVMH announced in May that it was backing pop idol Rihanna in the launch of her own luxury brand. — AFP

This file photo shows British fashion designer Stella McCartney acknowledging the audience at the end of the Stella McCartney Fall-Winter 2019/2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AFP



At 82, NASA pioneer Sue Finley still reaching for the stars

Sue Finley began work at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory as the US prepared to launch its first satellite into orbit in 1958, racing to match the Soviet Union, which had accomplished the feat months earlier. Now 82, she is one of NASA's longest-serving women, starting out as one of its "human computers," whose critical yet long-hidden contributions to the space program, including the Apollo missions to the Moon, are finally being recognized. Finley had dropped out of college and joined a group of mathematically gifted individuals, overwhelmingly women, whose job it was to solve the complex equations thrown at them by rocket scientists before electronic computing became affordable and reliable.

Neil Armstrong may be remembered for his "giant leap for mankind" when he stepped out onto lunar soil a decade later, but it was the work of these women that helped hone the rocket, invent the propellant, and develop the global antenna network that allowed viewers to watch the crew's famous live broadcast. Finley's story, like many of the other "computers," is one that speaks to the many challenges faced by women of the time.

Math whizz

Finley had been a math whizz for as long as she could remember, getting straight As at high school, and winning an award for completing chemistry equations in her head faster than others could with slide rules. But as a young woman she decided to pursue other interests, majoring in art with the hope of one day becoming an architect. Her plan failed because she lacked the required flair, "and you can't really learn art," she told AFP. She got her start as a "computer" at the now-defunct aerospace firm Convair, which worked with the Navy.

Finley had initially hoped to become a secretary but flunked the typing test. "They said, 'How do you like numbers?'" And I said, "Oh, I like numbers much better than letters," she laughed. Not all of the calculations were carried out by hand: she and the other "computers" made use of electro-mechanical adding machines called "Fridens," though these could handle only basic arithmetic, not the advanced calculus and geometry needed for their work. After getting married and moving farther from her workplace, she found the long drive was getting taxing. Her husband Peter Finley had graduated from Caltech, which founded the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), and told her about a lab up in the hills above Pasadena that she should go up and see. But why did the JPL hire all women teams?

"The woman who was in charge of it... thought that men wouldn't take instruction from her and so just hired women," explained Finley. "And women are much cheaper, they still are." Despite the fact that women could not rise to the rank of engineer at that time, Finley insisted that being a "computer" was still a job that carried prestige.

Trailblazer

Finley took a career break from 1963 to 1969 to raise her two young boys-starting a family had always been the plan following the death of the couple's first son at birth. But she soon realized being a homemaker was not the path for her and became clinically depressed. "I was a complete failure as a housewife," she said. "The psychologist that I went to said that I really needed to go back to work" and that the boys would be alright. While reluctant to tout her own accomplishments, she acknowledges that the decision was unusual for the time.

"I think that when I went there to work as a mother and a wife, I was being a trailblazer as far as women's lib," she said. She returned to a drastically changed JPL, one in which flesh and bones "computers" had been replaced with processors and memory-but she had managed to stay ahead by learning the new computer language Fortran. Author Nathalia Holt writes in "Rise of the Rocket Girls" that one of Finley's biggest successes came in October 1989 when disaster struck the Galileo probe to Jupiter and its moons.

As the probe orbited Earth, gathering momentum to slingshot toward the gaseous planet, an antenna failed to open, leaving the mission imperiled. Finley wrote a program that combined the power of Earth's Deep Space Network (DSN) of dishes, so that they could make use of the probe's lower-powered antennas instead. It ended up sending back stunning footage, including the breakup of a comet and the discovery of a moon orbiting an asteroid.—AFP



Sue Finley poses for a portrait at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California long before the word "computer" meant the device you're probably reading this on right now. — AFP

'Game of Thrones' and Netflix tipped to sweep Emmy nominations

"Game of Thrones" and Netflix are tipped by TV industry watchers to dominate yesterday's Emmy nominations as Hollywood gears up for awards season. The Television Academy's 24,000 members sifted through a record number of entries for this year's Emmys, the small-screen equivalent of the Oscars. After nominations are announced final-round voting will begin to pick winners who will be revealed at a glitzy Los Angeles show on September 22. Here are five things to look out for:

'Game of Thrones'

"Game of Thrones" enraged fans with its final season, but experts still expect the HBO fantasy epic to reign over Emmy nominations one last time. "Thrones" is the most decorated fictional show in the awards' seven-decade history, with 128 nominations and 47 wins.

The last six episodes dominated water-cooler chat and settled the question of who would sit on the Iron Throne-sort of-but the flood of social media anguish over its unsatisfying conclusion almost broke the internet. Still, voters could pick the show out of "nostalgia" and because "they want to pay respect for the impact it's had on TV overall," said IndieWire TV critic Ben Travers. "But it also could be a lack of options," he added.

Major absentees

The Emmys only recognize shows that were on in the 12 months to May 31. That means several big hitters are absent from main categories this year, including Hulu's former drama series winner "The Handmaid's Tale," "Big Little Lies" and "Stranger Things" also just missed the cut-off-something which may not be accidental. "Some of the more prominent shows got out of the way fearing 'Game of Thrones' just dominating everything, and not wanting to go head to head with it," said Travers.

Comedy reigns

Pundits say the comedy and limited series categories are vastly stronger this year. In comedy, White House satire "Veep"-another departing HBO awards juggernaut-faces stiff competition from last year's winner "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," Amazon's story of a 1950s housewife-turned-stand-up comic.

Dark hitman comedy "Barry" is also expected to challenge its HBO stablemate. In limited series, Showtime has vigorously promoted Ben Stiller's "Escape at Dannemora,"

in which two real-life convicts escape a New York prison by seducing a female employee. "When They See Us," Netflix's true story of five men wrongly accused of raping a Central Park jogger, is also likely to line up, alongside acclaimed HBO drama "Chernobyl."

Netflix v HBO

The two giants are set to renew their battle for overall Emmy supremacy, after Netflix overtook HBO last year in the nomination count to end its rival's 17-year reign. Web streamer Netflix secured a whopping 112 nods last time around, edging out HBO's 108. "The sheer amount of programming that Netflix submits at the Emmys is daunting," said Travers. "They have so much more than anybody else to put on the ballot." While Netflix also benefits from the exposure that comes with its huge subscriber base, HBO has vast experience mounting campaigns for its prestige offerings-and could ultimately garner more wins.

Star quality

As movie stars continue to switch to TV, A-listers will be plentiful. Amazon is eyeing a strong year with its Julia Roberts-powered thriller "Homecoming," in addition to "Maisei" and irreverent British comedy "Fleabag." "Catch-22" leads Hulu's charge thanks to George Clooney, while in comedy Jim Carrey ("Kidding") and Michael Douglas ("The Kominsky Method") are tipped for acting nods. — AFP



In this file photo taken on April 3, 2019 British actress Maisie Williams (left) and British actress Sophie Turner (right) arrive for the 'Game of Thrones' eighth and final season premiere at Radio City Music Hall in New York city. — AFP

Lifestyle | Gossip

The Voice finalist *Loren* signs worldwide publishing deal

Loren has signed a worldwide publishing deal with A&G Songs and A&G Sync. The 27-year-old singer - formerly known as Lauren Bannon - is taking her career to the next level after appearing on the ITV talent show last year, and has landed herself a major deal with the London-based publishing and sync agency. The founder and CEO of A&G Songs and A&G Sync, Roy Lidstone, was introduced to the rising star earlier this year, after seeing her perform at an A&R session, and he was drawn to her "incredible" talent for writing as well as her impressive vocals. On the signing, he said: "One of A&G Songs strengths is its sync agency, A&G Sync. When I first discovered Loren at an open A&R session, she grabbed my attention with her incredible writing and vocal skills; I knew she would be an awesome addition to the roster." Loren has vowed to be the first contestant from 'The Voice UK' to have hits. The electro-pop singer admitted she wants to be more than "just a pretty voice from a TV show" and is determined to use the "platform" she gained from the program to become a major pop star and buck the trend which has seen all the winners and other hopefuls fail in their attempts to crack the UK charts. In a recent inter-

view with BANG Showbiz, she said: "I hope so, I think many people assume when you've got so far on a television show, you've made it. When really it actually takes a lot of time and hard work - that kind of exposure can only be the beginning. "I'm grateful to the show for giving me a platform, but I'm aware to cut it as an artist I've got to be more than just a pretty voice from a TV show." Loren was mentored by Olly Murs on the show, and asked whether she and the 'Dear Darlin' hitmaker - who shot to fame on 'The X Factor' in 2009 - stay in touch, she said: "Of course, we still talk and I saw him at an event a few months ago!" Loren - whose debut single 'Into The Fire' surpassed 100,000 streams - also revealed that Olly often offers up his advice about the music business and she appreciates it even though it isn't always "the most helpful". She said: "Olly and I had the same agent and I asked him for some advice on his thoughts within the industry. His advice isn't always most helpful, but his heart is always in the right place."



BOB DYLAN AND NEIL YOUNG DUET FOR FIRST TIME IN OVER A DECADE

Bob Dylan and Neil Young duetted for the first time in 25 years at Kilkenny, Ireland's Nowlan Park on Sunday. The music legends teamed up for their own interpretation of the traditional hymn 'Will The Circle Be Unbroken', which dates back to 1935. The pair last performed together at New York's Roseland Ballroom in 1994. The 'Desolation Row' hitmaker and the former Crosby, Stills & Nash star both have a history with the song. Dylan played the track on his tour of coffee shops in 1961, and six years later he recorded it for his 16th studio album 'The Basement Tapes' with The Band, which was released in 1975. The 78-year-old musician hadn't included the song in his set since May 1976, when he performed in Houston, Texas, on his 'Rolling Thunder Review Tour'. Young has performed the song four times since 1995 with Willie Nelson. However, his first live performance of the hymn was in 1975 at the Kezar Stadium in San Francisco for a benefit show, where he was joined by Dylan for their first duet together. The Kilkenny concert followed the pair's sold-out show in Hyde Park last week. The two stars came together for an historic night in London which saw them play a host of their classic tracks for the capacity crowd of 65,000. 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's son Lukas, the 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'.

Lawson offered to write for Horan

Jamie Lawson has spoken to Niall Horan about writing songs for him. The 'Wasn't Expecting That' hitmaker supported One Direction on their 2015 'On the Road Again Tour' and he has revealed he spoke to the Irish hunk - who has been working on his second solo album, following the release of 2017's 'Flicker' - about sending him some of his ideas, though he's yet to get back to him. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz at Barclaycard presents British Summer Time Hyde Park, Jamie said: "I'd love to. I have offered. I have bumped into Niall a couple of times so ... he hasn't called me yet, but it would be nice to." The 43-year-old singer/songwriter - who was the first artist to be signed by Ed Sheeran's record label Gingerbread Man Records - also opened up about his battle with stage nerves and how it's worsened as he's gotten older. He said: "Oddly enough I've got more nervous as I've got older, which is very strange. "I am trying to work that out in my head. "But I can't see what else I would be doing." Meanwhile, Jamie recently admitted he is thankful for having 'Perfect' hitmaker Ed as his mentor. Speaking about how he helped him with his last album, 'The Years In Between', he said: "Ed is mentoring me in a sense - I would play him the recordings we had done. "He gave me advice, he's always been in that role for me. "This is the third record I have with him and it feels good because he has faith in what I do."



Duran Duran will have '300 swarming drones' at Apollo 11 Moon landing gig



Duran Duran's concert to mark the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing will feature "300 swarming drones". Simon Le Bon and co will perform in front of the spacecraft which landed the first two people on the Moon, late Commander Neil Armstrong and lunar module pilot Buzz Aldrin, at the Kennedy Space Center's Rocket Garden in Florida tonight to mark the special milestone. The new wave band's keyboardist Nick Rhodes has revealed they had to seek special permission from NASA to use the unmanned aircrafts in such close proximity to their airspace. Nick told the Daily Star newspaper's Wired column: "At the start of the show, 300 drones will rise up and move around in swarms. "It's one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen. "We had to go through all sorts of bureaucracy for this concert. "NASA don't normally allow anything to fly over their airspace, let alone 300 swarming drones!" It's only fitting that Duran Duran - completed by John Taylor and Roger Taylor - have landed the gig, as their 1981 debut single was titled 'Planet Earth'. The set will feature that and 'New Moon on Monday', plus a

cover of The Police's 'Walking On The Moon'. The group's Kennedy Center show will go towards Buzz's Aldrin Family Foundation - which "strives to cultivate the next generation of space leaders, entrepreneurs and explorers who will extend human habitation beyond the Earth to the Moon and Mars." The concert won't be short of special effects, with the art duo Studio Drift on board to choreograph the drone light show. Whilst DJ Evalicious will open the anniversary performance. Tickets are priced at an eye-watering \$300. Meanwhile, the band are working on their first album since 2015's 'Paper Gods', which they hope to release by spring 2020. The 'Girls on Film' hitmakers have tapped Mark Ronson to produce and Lykke Li and Blur's Graham Coxon will also be featured. Nick said: "Rather than copy our previous styles, we say, 'What would we do if we were a new band today?' "Of course there will be some similarities - Simon's voice is very identifiable and we like to have one foot on the dancefloor with some songs. "We hope to have a new single out early next year and late spring is realistic for the album."

Kate Nash wants more support for musicians

Kate Nash calls for better support systems for musicians. The 32-year-old singer was just 17 when she signed a record deal with Polydor, and scored a number one album with her debut record 'Made of Bricks' in 2007. And now, she's said her meteoric rise to fame at such a young age left her without a support system, as she slammed those around her at the time for not being "concerned about [her] health in any way". She said: "Artists often have

mental health issues. And their lifestyles are unstable because of all the travelling and the media commentary on their lives. Now I'm like: 'How were all these 40-year-old men hanging out with me and happy to profit from me and not concerned about my health in any way?'" The 'Foundations' hitmaker added that although Hollywood has "problems" of its own, she believes actors are able to talk to someone if they have an issue, whereas the music industry doesn't have that security. Speaking to The Guardian newspaper, she said: "As many problems as there are with Hollywood, I feel so much more protected because if there's a serious issue, I have someone I can talk to. "Where's that in the music industry? We need it. Because our lifestyles are associated with partying, it hasn't had to be professional. But you're like: 'Where's the HR?'" Meanwhile, back in 2018, Kate slammed the music industry as "the most unprofessional business in the world". The 'Trash' singer said: "It's a night-time lifestyle - people are fucked and doing drugs and drinking. Labels are buying drugs. Men in their 30s and 40s are buying drugs for 18-year-olds. That's messed up. I haven't personally experienced anybody like that. I haven't had a #MeToo moment of people in the music industry. I've had inappropriate s**t, though. I've had unprofessionalism. I've had them treat me like s**t, like a piece of meat, and not care about me really at all."



TLC axe two shows as Rozonda 'Chilli' Thomas is put on vocal rest



TLC have been forced to cancel shows in North America as Rozonda 'Chilli' Thomas has been put on vocal rest. The 'No Scrubs' hitmakers had to axe their planned performance in Sacramento on Sunday and the singer later updated fans to let them know she was still poorly and as a result they won't be able to play their show at Stanislaus County Fair in Turlock, California yesterday. Chilli tweeted: "It breaks my heart to tell our fans that we have to cancel our performance tonight at Sacramento because I lost my voice and my dr has me on strict voice rest. "We want the fans at Sacramento to know we love them and thank them for their support. (sic)" And on Monday she added: "STILL on voice rest getting better but not at a 100% just yet. Sadly we will miss seeing the fans in Turlock. Thank u so much for ur prayers n well wishes. I'll be back on stage soon. (sic)" The 48-year-old star's bandmate Tionne 'T-Boz' Watkins had also taken to the micro-blogging to comment on the cancellation and promised to make it up to their fans. She wrote: "Yes it breaks my heart too... "And #Sacramento We'll Come There Again I'm sure at some point... We love you all and thank u for all your support...but we need her to heal (sic)" On July 23, the band are due to hit the road

with Flo Rida and Nelly, kicking off at the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Meanwhile, the remaining members of the 90s girl group - who tragically lost third member Lisa 'Left Eye' Lopes to a car crash in 2002 - recently revealed their plans to turn their music and career into stage shows, featuring brand new music. Chilli said: "We're also working on the TLC musical and TLC on Broadway. "We're going to create new music for those projects as well." After releasing their crowdfunded self-titled LP in 2017, they admitted they had no desire to put out another full-length release because of how hard the record industry has become. However, the pair vowed to keep on touring. Speaking about going bankrupt despite selling 70 million records, Chilli said previously: "You are just out there working hard, not making anything, but they are making all the money. It was because of our contracts and when people aren't advising you the proper way. After our first album there was no renegotiation when your contract is jacked up. "That's why we said, shall we do this just one more time? It is definitely not the end of TLC as far as touring but making an album is difficult. The business has changed a lot."

Bad sex and fake fur: Russians trash 'The Last Czars'

From awkward sex scenes to cheap-looking robes and a shot of Red Square in 1905 with the Lenin Mausoleum already in place, Russians have found plenty to criticize in Netflix's new series "The Last Czars". "What's wrong with Netflix's 'The Last Czars'? Spoiler: everything," wrote news site Fontanka, based in the imperial capital Saint Petersburg. The series, which launched this month, tells the story of Nicholas II's ill-fated reign. In an unusual move, it alternates acted scenes with talking head explanations from British and US academics and popular historians.

The focus is on the role of Grigory Rasputin, the holy man who convinced Tsar Nicholas and his wife Alexandra that he could heal their haemophilic son and heir Alexei. The series-aimed at viewers without special knowledge of the period-was never likely to please Russians, who often pick holes in Western dramatizations of their history and literature. A noticeable exception was HBO's "Chernobyl" series earlier this year, which was warmly received by Russians and praised for attention to detail.

In "The Last Czars", journalists singled out for mockery a title with the date 1905 and a photo of Red Square with the mausoleum erected after Lenin's 1924 death already in situ. This sparked a host of internet memes with the date imposed on pictures of modern Russia. In another error, the Kremlin walls are shown as red but were actually whitewashed at the time. "After such things, it's very hard to take the show seriously," wrote newspaper Argumenty i Fakty.

Presented 'myths as truths'

Lengthy sex scenes showing the royal couple also had Russians cringing. On their wedding night, the topless tsarina tells the tsar as they make love that "you need to be strong. You're the tsar, the master of the land." Journalist Fyodor Krashennikov on Facebook criticized another "disgusting scene" where the tsarina prays out loud for a son while making love. "The series will only please people who wanted to see the tsarina naked," wrote Argumenty i Fakty.

In other errors, footage of an Armenian monastery is used for a monastery in the Urals that Rasputin visited, TV Rain independent channel reported. "To be honest, I'm disappointed," journalist Yevgeniya Zobnina said on TV Rain. "Because after the huge success of 'Chernobyl'... it seemed we would see something similar. 'It's like the series gathered together all the myths about the tsar's court of that time and presented them as convincing truth.'"

Russian media criticized what they called the cheap look of the show, given that its subject is a hugely wealthy dynasty that lavished vast sums on pomp and ceremony and ornate trinkets such as Faberge eggs. In the coronation scene, the ermine trimming of robes worn by Nicholas and Alexandra appears to be synthetic fur, Fontanka complained. "Rugs from Ikea would look better." "Some of the jeweled ornaments that cost millions look like cheap costume jewelry," wrote the website of 5TV channel, while conceding that officers' uniforms and courtiers' clothes in later scenes looked "believable". — AFP



Visitors speak in front of the huge portraits of Russia's monarchs from the Romanov dynasty at the exhibition 'My History. The Romanovs', in Moscow's Manege Exhibition Hall. — AFP



Unlike his cousin here at the zoo in Rome, M49 has revealed a talent for breaking out into the wild. — AFP

Italians cheer on wild bear's 'Great Escape'

Italian animal lovers cheered on a wild bear yesterday after a daring escape from an electrified holding pen sparked a bear-hunt and a furore over its fate. The three-year old, known only as M49, was captured Sunday in the Val Rendena valley in the Trentino region in northern Italy after it was spotted several times approaching inhabited areas. But in a getaway compared by Italian media to Steve McQueen's exploits in the 1963 WWII film "The Great Escape", M49 went on the lam Saturday after scaling a four-meter (13-foot) high and 7,000 volt electric fence.

"Run bear, run!" said one user on Twitter as the #fugaperliberta (#escapeforfreedom) hashtag went viral. Three teams from the state forestry corps with sniffer dogs were set on its trail. The search was complicated by the fact that the bear's tracking collar was apparently removed after its capture. "If M49 approaches inhabited areas, the forestry service is authorized to kill it," said Maurizio Fugatti, governor of the Trentino region.

"The fact that the bear managed to climb over an electric fence with seven cables carrying 7,000 volts... shows how dangerous it is," he said. But Environment Minister Sergio Costa was quick to countermand that order. "M49's escape from the enclosure cannot justify an action that would cause its death," he said.

'Escape genius... superhero'

Farmers' association Coldiretti claimed the bear had approached inhabited areas 16 times, and killed 13 farm animals. WWF Italy ridiculed the region's efforts to deal with the bear. "A solid electrified fence with adequate power is an insurmountable barrier even for the most astute bears," it said. "Obviously the structure was not working properly, since bears do not fly." It was particularly serious that the collar had been removed, "making it even more difficult to track", it added.

The global conservation group insisted "its danger to people is still to be demonstrated." "At most, it can be considered problematic for causing economic damage to farming activities, following the failure to adopt appropriate prevention tools," it said. M49 is part of the Life Ursus project, which since the early 1990s has worked to reintroduce brown bears into the Trentino region after they were driven to extinction in northern Italy. Professor Luigi Boitani from Rome's La Sapienza University told Italian media they now number between 50 and 60. The mistake had been failing to use electric fences to dissuade M49 from approaching inhabited areas.

At the same time, he added, an electrified cage was never going to contain "a large, adult and spirited male bear". The League for the Abolition of Hunting (LAC) said it suspected the bear had been allowed to escape, so that it could be declared a danger to humans and killed. "M49 is, of course, an escape genius... endowed with superpowers like a Marvel Comics hero," it said.

"He just happened to climb over the fence, unharmed by electric shocks, by chance without his radio collar-and, what do you know, he can be declared public enemy number one and the escape sparks a maximum security alert". Michela Vittoria Brambilla, president of the Italian Defence League for Animals, told M49 to "run and save yourself!" "We are on the side of the bear, and of freedom," she said. — AFP

Luc Besson's studio discussing rescue with US fund Vine

French film-maker Luc Besson's loss-making studio EuropaCorp said Sunday it was in talks with US investment fund Vine Alternative Investments, one of its creditors, for it to take a major stake to rescue it. The studio, confirming a report in the Journal du Dimanche newspaper, said in a statement it was speaking with Vine about "a possible equity participation".

It cautioned though that it "cannot give any guarantee that this operation will carry through". According to the Journal du Dimanche, Besson-the man behind movies such as "Leon: The Professional", "The Fifth Element" and the action-packed "The Transporter" and "Taken" films-preferred to see Vine take control of EuropaCorp rather than French film group Pathe. Representatives for Pathe and Vine were not contactable Sunday by AFP. EuropaCorp, a 20-year-old studio, located in a northern Paris suburb, has run up losses over the past four years, particularly by failing to recoup its big production costs on a lavish 2017 sci-fi movie, "Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets", that was a box-office disappointment.

EuropaCorp in May secured a six-month suspension of its debt repayments as it cast around for a rescuer. Its 2018-2019 financial year saw it rack up 110 million euros in debt, on top of the 82 million in the previous period. In 2016, China's Fundamental Films injected 60 million euros in the studio, becoming its second-largest shareholder. Besson's latest film, a crime thriller titled "Anna" that he wrote and directed, opened last month to poor reviews but solid audience scores. — AFP



French film-maker Luc Besson's loss-making studio EuropaCorp said Sunday it was in talks with US investment fund Vine Alternative Investments, one of its creditors, for it to take a major stake to rescue it. — AFP

Lewis Capaldi's signed Chewbacca mask up for auction for charity

Lewis Capaldi's signed Chewbacca mask is being auctioned off to raise funds for Frightened Rabbit's mental health charity. Following the 22-year-old star's performance at TRNSMT festival in Scotland at the weekend, where he walked on stage in the mask of the 'Star Wars' character as another dig at his rival Noel Gallagher, who had called him the Wookiee warrior, the prop has been put up for sale on eBay and, in just over 12 hours, it has reached more than £5,000 with six days still left to go. The money raised will go to Tiny Changes, which was set-up by the family of Frightened Rabbit's late founding member Scott Hutchison - who tragically took his own life at the age of 36 in May last year - to improve mental health in children and young people.

In a statement, his family said: "The charity has at its heart a passion for changing how young people in Scotland are affected by mental health issues. "We want to see a Scotland where young people are listened to when they talk about their mental health. Where young people can access the support they need, when they need it. — Bang Showbiz



Lewis Capaldi's Chewbacca mask



Captured swans and cygnets are measured and checked during the annual Swan Upping Census on the River Thames at Staines, west of London. — AFP photos

'All up': Queen Elizabeth's swans checked and counted

Royal officials clad in scarlet outfits took to the River Thames in traditional boats on Monday for the annual "Swan Upping" ceremony, an 800-year-old tradition of counting the swans owned by Britain's Queen Elizabeth. Teams in old fashioned skiffs will row up a stretch of the river over the next five days to carry out the annual census of the birds, shouting "all up" when they come across a mute swan and its family of young cygnets. "We will lift the whole family out of the water, we will take them ashore, we weigh them, measure them and check them for any injuries," David Barber, the queen's Swan Marker, told Reuters. "You have a population of swans that hasn't changed much since the mid 1800s."

The ancient ceremony dates back to the 12th century when the English crown first claimed ownership of all mute swans, which have long curved necks, orange beaks and white feathers and were then considered a delicacy that would be served at banquets. "These days it's nothing to do with eating swan, it's all about conservation

and education," said Barber, who has carried out his job for 26 years.

The river was much busier than in the original days of the swan upping and the birds, which are protected by law, were losing their natural nesting grounds, he added. A high number were dying or having their nests destroyed as a result of dog attacks while fishing tackle also resulted in injuries. He said he would be pleased if they found about 100 cygnets this year.

The queen shares ownership of mute swans on the Thames with the old trade associations of the Vintners and Dyers who also join in the upping. However, the monarch retains the right of ownership of all unmarked mute swans swimming in open waters, although this is mainly exercised on certain stretches of the Thames. The Swan Uppers began their census-taking in Sunbury, west London, and will end at Abingdon Bridge in Oxfordshire to the west of the British capital on Friday. — Friday



Swan Upping crew capture a swan during the annual Swan Upping Census on the River Thames at Staines.



Swans and cygnets are released after being weighed, documented and measured during the annual Swan Upping Census on the River Thames at Staines, west of London.



Queen's Swan Marker, David Barber inspects a swan during the annual Swan Upping Census.



Captured cygnets are measured and checked during the annual Swan Upping Census on the River Thames.

Lifestyle | Feature



A picture shows a view of the historical museum of Abomey, a 47 hectares site composed by a set of royal palaces, inscribed on the list of the world heritage of UNESCO since December 1985.

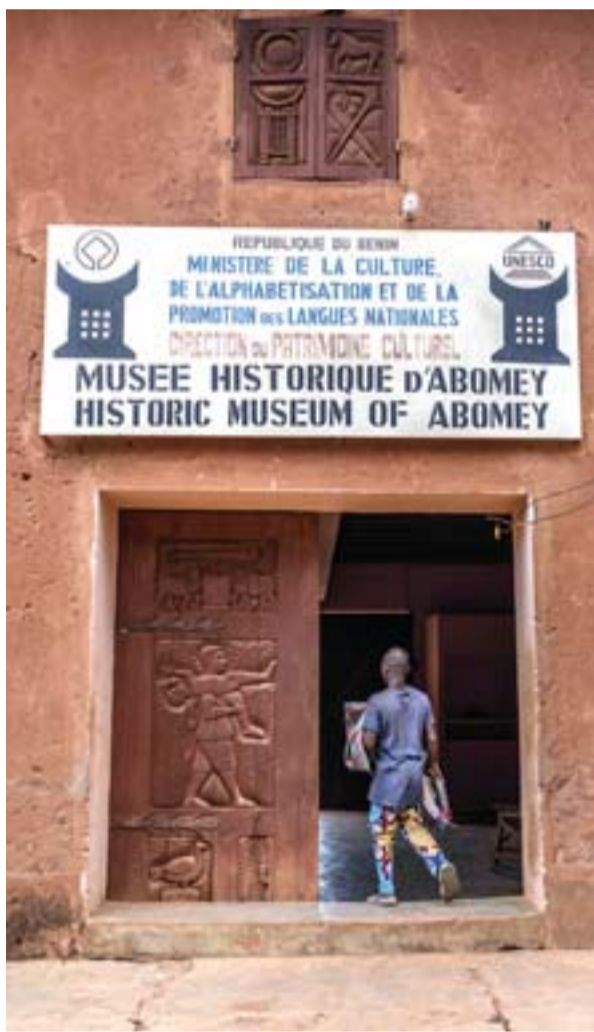


A picture shows a cannon displayed in the park of the historical museum of Abomey.



A view of the historical museum of Abomey. — AFP photos

BENIN READIES FOR RETURN OF TREASURES TAKEN BY FRANCE



A man walks through the entrance of the historical museum of Abomey.

The display cases at the royal palaces in Benin's sleepy southern town of Abomey are coated in dust and the exhibition halls plunged in darkness. But local tourism chief Gabin Djimasse hopes all this will change with the return of 26 artefacts from former colonial master France and the construction of a new museum to hold them. "These objects are a chance for the survival of the site," Djimasse told AFP as he toured the vast courtyards lined with bas-relief dating back to the 18th-century Dahomey Kingdom.

"They will allow us to build a new museum and make the royal palaces more economically sustainable." In November President Emmanuel Macron took the landmark decision to return the artworks—including a royal throne—taken by French troops over a century ago and housed at the Quai Branly museum in Paris. The move has piled pressure on other former colonial powers to hand back looted artefacts to their countries of origin—and fired up dreams of a lifeline in Abomey.

The Kingdom of Dahomey reached its peak in the 18th and 19th centuries and became a major source of slaves for European traders before conquest by Paris in the 1890s ended its rule. Now a loan of 20 million euros (\$22.5 million) from the French Development Agency will fund the new museum and aims to make the 47 hectare (116-acre) UNESCO World Heritage Site more attractive for visitors.

While Benin has welcomed France's decision to return the objects, it has cautioned against doing so too quickly. Macron wants the artworks returned "without delay" but the museum in Abomey is only set to be opened in 2021 and Benin's heritage agency says the country needs time to be "truly ready".

'Great opportunity'

Djimasse said plans for the museum to showcase its history and heritage have already gone through several changes. At first "it was all 3D videos, and you would have thought you were at a theme park or in Dubai," he joked. The latest project is set to be more low-key, fitting



in with local architecture and relying more on natural lighting and less on plasma screens. But building the physical infrastructure is only one part of the challenge.

Djimasse said the other major priority is finding people to work as guides and develop the expertise to properly care for and restore the artworks. "Four years ago the Quai Branly in Paris wanted to train two young people from Benin in restoration," he said. "We looked everywhere for scientists but we couldn't find any—and in the end we sent a history student."

At the School for African Heritage in Benin's capital Porto-Novo a dozen students aged from 23 to 53 are diligently working to be part of the project. This is the "first batch" of a new training program aimed at cultivating the various skills required, said their teacher Richard Sagan. "At a museum there is more than just the curator," said Sagan, a specialist at Benin's heritage agency. "There is a whole chain of trades, from skilled technicians and craftsmen."

Those in the class have already been working in the cultural field and insisted they felt the return of the artworks from France could be a big boost. "It is a great

opportunity for young people," said Messie Boko, a 28-year-old student and guide at a museum in the city. "It is our duty to know how to spread this heritage".

'World heritage'

Alain Godonou is called "Mr Benin heritage" by his colleagues at the national agency. He may have studied in France but he has never gained access to the roughly 5,000 artefacts from the Kingdom of Dahomey held by the country. A former UNESCO official, Godonou told AFP preparing for the return of the objects has been a "goal" of his life. But he insisted that Benin still needs to pass a comprehensive legal framework to protect heritage.

As for the 26 objects—they should just be a start of a broader process. Godonou said Benin wanted to "reclaim its property rights" over all the artworks held abroad—even if that doesn't mean returning them home permanently. "We want the works to move around, that is our philosophy," he said. "In the end they are part of world heritage." — AFP



A picture on Abomey-Calavi shows a view of the historical museum of Abomey.



Skeletons are displayed in the park of the historical museum of Abomey.



Elected member of the Abomey City Council, head of the region's Heritage and Tourism Office of the historical museum of Abomey, Bernard Gabin Djimasse speaks as he visits the historical museum of Abomey.



Elected member of the Abomey City Council, head of the region's Heritage and Tourism Office of the historical museum of Abomey, Bernard Gabin Djimasse visits the historical museum of Abomey.



A view of the historical museum of Abomey.



A view of the historical museum of Abomey.



Classifieds

Wednesday, July 17, 2019



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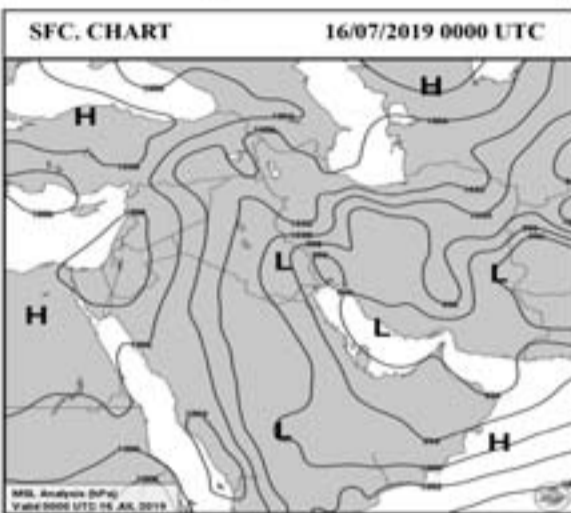
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 55 km/h with a chance for rising dust.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot with moderate freshening at times over coastal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 45 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 16/07/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	44 °C	33 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	34 °C		
ABDALY	45 °C	30 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	46 °C	32 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	44 °C	31 °C		
SALMIYAH	40 °C	33 °C		
AHMADI	43 °C	36 °C		
NUWASIB	46 °C	31 °C		
WAFRA	45 °C	32 °C		
SALMY	44 °C	27 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	07/17	Hot with a chance for rising dust	46 °C	32 °C	NW	20 - 50 km/h
Thursday	07/18	Hot and Dusty	46 °C	33 °C	NW	20 - 60 km/h
Friday	07/19	Hot and Dusty	46 °C	33 °C	NW	25 - 60 km/h
Saturday	07/20	Very hot with a chance for rising dust	48 °C	35 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:26
Sunrise	04:59
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:29
Sunset	18:49
Isha	20:19

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	32 °C
MAX. RH	26 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	N 60 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
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Dudekula Masthan Basha, holder of Indian passport No.L7719785 and Civil ID No.291031002941. Father Name: Dudekula Syed Basha Mother Name: Dudekula Sarthaj Bagum, have changed our names from Dudekula Masthan Basha Father Name: Dudekula Syed Basha, Mother Name: Dudekula Sarthaj Bagum, to Shaik Masthan Basha, Father Name: Shaik Syed Basha, Mother Name: Shaik Sarthaj Bagum here in after in all our dealings and documents, we will be known by name of Shaik Masthan Basha Father Name: Shaik Syed Basha, Mother Name: Shaik Sarthaj Bagum. (C 5558)

PASSPORT NO. Z2809798 hereby declare that I have changed my name from ABBAS to ABBAS SHARAF ALI PAINTER. I shall be known by name ABBAS SHARAF ALI PAINTER in future. (5662) 16-7-2019

I, Dilip Kumar S/o Jalim Prasad, holder of Indian Passport No. K7041953 issued in India has changed the given name in Passport from Dilip Kumar to Dileep Kumar resident of Newal Village, Bangarmau Post, Unnao Dist. (U.P) India. (C 5557)

FRANCINA DIAS - Old Name, FRANSQUINHA DIAS - New Name, change into my passport of my wife name P.P No. L9665868 Manuel Dias. (5661) 15-7-2019

I, ABBAS holder of INDIAN

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

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Flight Schedule

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 17/7/2019				Departure Flights on Wednesday 17/7/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	QTR	1075	Doha	12:10
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	TBZ	6606	Mashhad	12:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	JZR	123	Dubai	13:10
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:10
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	221	Riyadh	13:15
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	JZR	115	Doha	13:25
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:10	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:10	JZR	213	Jeddah	13:35
UAE	853	Dubai	01:35	MSR	611	Cairo	13:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:40	THY	767	Istanbul	14:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:45	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	CLX	7912	Hanoi	14:20
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	JZR	715	Sohag	14:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	RBG	218	Asyut	14:35
JZR	262	Beirut	02:30	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	FBM	060	Doha	15:05
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	QTR	1079	Jeddah	15:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:55	SAW	501	Jeddah	15:45
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	105	London	15:55
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	THY	769	Sharjah	16:15
KAC	418	Manila	03:15	ETD	304	Jeddah	16:20
QTR	1076	Doha	03:20	OMA	646	Abu Dhabi	16:20
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
IGO	751	Chennai	04:10	JZR	103	Bahrain	16:30
ETH	424	Bahrain	04:15	FEG	242	Alexandria	16:55
KAC	796	Madinah	04:25	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:55
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	SAW	505	Madinah	17:00
KAC	382	Delhi	04:35	FDB	052	Doha	17:10
JZR	1738	Cairo	04:45	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
FDB	069	Dubai	04:50	JZR	125	Dubai	17:30
IGA	170	Bahrain	05:05	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
THY	770	Istanbul	05:05	KAC	155	Istanbul	17:35
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	KAC	503	Beirut	17:40
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	FDB	058	Dubai	17:50
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
BAW	157	London	06:10	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	OMS	226	Muscat	18:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	SAW	511	Riyadh	18:10
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:10
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	JZR	127	JZR	18:20
IGO	1755	Kochi	07:10	QTR	1083	Hyderabad	18:25
KAC	358	Dubai	07:25	MSR	621	Doha	19:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FBM	064	Cairo	19:30
JZR	708	Luxor	07:55	QTR	1081	Doha	19:45
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
JZR	714	Sohag	08:00	JZR	253	Amman	19:50
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	19:55
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	JZR	721	Alexandria	19:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	JZR	733	Cairo	20:10
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	261	Beirut	20:15
JZR	102	Bahrain	09:00	KAC	351	Kochi	20:30
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:15	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:40
KAC	384	Delhi	09:20	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
JZR	706	Asyut	09:45	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	MSC	402	Alexandria	21:30
SAW	703	Damascus	10:00	JZR	401	Mumbai	21:30
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	10:00	RBG	214	Sohag	21:35
SYR	341	Damascus	10:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:50
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	IGA	171	Bahrain	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	205	Islamabad	21:55
KIS	6023	Mashhad	11:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
QTR	1074	Dubai	11:00	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
JZR	122	Doha	11:45	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
TBZ	6605	Mashhad	11:55	THY	1413	Trabzon	22:25
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
JZR	252	Amman	12:20	UAE	860	KAC	22:40
QTR	114	Doha	12:25	JZR	407	Ahmedabad	22:45
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	547	Alexandria	22:45
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
JZR	1736	Cairo	12:45	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				JZR	622	Amman	23:15
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
				SAW	515	Riyadh	23:25
				SAW	503	Jeddah	23:45

Palestinians warn diplomats over Israel demolition plans

JERUSALEM: Palestinian officials urged diplomats yesterday to take action to prevent Israel from carrying out a demolition order against Palestinian homes in the Jerusalem area as a deadline related to it approached. Diplomats from around 20 mostly European countries toured the area where the demolition orders have been given on the grounds the buildings are in a security zone near Israel's separation barrier cutting off the occupied West Bank. The buildings, most of which are still under construction, are located south of Jerusalem in the Sur Baher area.

Palestinians accuse Israel of using security as a pretext to force them out of the area as part of long-term efforts to expand settlements and roads linked them. They also point out that most of the buildings are located in areas meant to be under Palestinian Authority civilian control under the Oslo accords. "When the house is demolished, we will be in the streets," Ismail Abadiyeh, 42, who lives in one of the buildings under threat with his family, including four children, told the diplomats.

French consul general for Jerusalem, Pierre Cochard, told journalists he did not think the security explanation provided by Israel was sufficient to move ahead with demolitions. "I think it's important to underline that we cannot deny their right," Cochard said, referring to the families living in the homes. "They

are here in Palestinian territory." Palestinian governor of Jerusalem Adnan Gheith said "we are looking for serious actions from your governments to stop these continuous crimes".

An Israeli high court ruling last month dismissed a petition by Palestinian residents requesting the cancellation of a military order prohibiting construction. On June 18, residents received a 30-day notice from Israeli authorities informing them of their intent to demolish the homes. According to UN humanitarian affairs agency OCHA, the ruling affects 10 buildings already built or under construction, including around 70 apartments. Some 17 people would be displaced and around 350 others affected, OCHA said. Residents fear another 100 buildings in the area in a similar situation could be at risk in the near future.

Israel's military did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Israeli authorities regularly carry out demolitions of what they consider illegal construction by Palestinians in east Jerusalem and the West Bank. It is extremely difficult for Palestinians to receive construction permits from Israeli authorities in areas under their control, and Palestinians and rights activists say a housing shortage has resulted. Israel occupied the West Bank and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War. It later annexed east Jerusalem in a move never recognized by the international community. — AFP



BEIT SAHUR: A diplomat uses her phone to take pictures of Palestinian buildings which have been issued notices to be demolished, during a Palestinian government tour in the village of Dar Salah near Beit Sahur in the occupied West Bank south of Bethlehem, yesterday. — AFP

Palestinians protest Lebanon crackdown on foreign workers

BEIRUT: A couple of hundred Palestinian refugees protested yesterday in the streets of Beirut against Lebanon's labor ministry cracking down on businesses employing foreign workers without a permit. They and dozens of demonstrators in Palestinian refugee camps in the capital, as well as the south and east of the country, denounced the move as "unfair". Last month, the ministry gave companies a one-month deadline to acquire the necessary work permits.

After the grace period expired last week, it started inspections, closing down non-compliant establishments and issuing others with warnings. Critics have said the measure essentially targets Syrians who have fled the war next door, but Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon also fear they will be hit. In Beirut, security forces prevented the protesters from reaching parliament, where this year's much delayed state budget was under discussion.

Palestinians in Lebanon are exempt from paying for work permits, the UN refugee agency says. But Palestinian business owners must still register and pay a quarter of the standard fee. Labor Minister Camille Aboussleiman denied the inspections had overwhelmingly affected Palestinians. "Of the 550 violations registered since last Wednesday, only two concerned large companies owned by Palestinians," he said. "The Palestinian reaction is incomprehensible," the minister said.

The Palestinian ambassador in Beirut, Ashraf Dabbour, on Monday called on the Lebanese government to exempt Palestinians from these measures. Palestinian movement Hamas called for "the immediate end to all closures". Azzam Al-Ahmad, from the Palestine Liberation Organization, discussed the measures with Lebanese officials, saying they went against Lebanese-Palestinian efforts "to organize the residency, work and rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon".

Around 174,000 Palestinian refugees live in 12 camps across the country, a one-off government census said in 2017. In 2010, Lebanon's parliament revoked a ban that had barred them from tens of professions for years, restricting them to jobs in fields such as construction and farming. But Palestinians are still not permitted to work in professions reserved for Lebanese citizens such as medicine, law, the army, and police.

Palestinians began taking refuge in Lebanon with the creation of Israel in 1948, setting up camps that have since transformed into bustling, urban districts. Their presence has been controversial, with many blaming them for the start of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war. Lebanon says it hosts around 1.5 million Syrians, after they fled the eight-year conflict at home, who have been accused of sparking a series of economic woes in the country. — AFP



BEIRUT: A man chants slogans while lifted on the shoulders of another wearing a Palestinian flag as a bandana, as protesters block the main road outside the Palestinian refugee camp of Burj Al-Barajneh south of the Lebanese capital yesterday. — AFP

Khamenei: Iran to give no quarter in...

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opposing them is a weak one, their arrogance works. But if it's a country that knows and stands up against them, they will be defeated."

IAEA inspectors last week confirmed Iran is now enriching uranium to 4.5 percent fissile purity, the second breach in as many weeks after Tehran exceeded limits on its stock of low-enriched uranium. The level at which Iran is now refining uranium is still well below the 20 percent purity of enrichment Iran reached before the deal, and the 90 percent needed to yield bomb-grade nuclear fuel. Low-enriched uranium provides fuel for civilian power plants.

European Union foreign ministers, in a meeting on Monday, deemed Iran's violations not to be "significant", drawing Israeli accusations of appeasement recalling failed diplomacy with Nazi Germany in the run-up to World War Two. British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said on Monday Iran remained "a good year away from developing a nuclear bomb", adding there was still a "small window to keep the deal alive". The Europeans are trying to set up Instex, a barter-based trade conduit with Iran but it would initially deal only in items not subject to US sanctions - such as pharmaceuticals and foods. Iran has said Instex must include oil sales or provide substantial credit facilities for it to be beneficial.

Khamenei also said Iran would respond to Britain's "piracy" over the seizure in early July of an Iranian oil tanker in Gibraltar. "Evil Britain commits piracy and steals our ship ... and gives it a legal appearance. The Islamic Republic...will not leave this wickedness unanswered and will respond to it at an appropriate time and place," he said. Iran has called on Britain to immediately release the vessel, which was detained by British Royal Marines on the suspicion that it was breaking European sanctions by taking oil to Tehran's close ally Syria.

Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif warned Monday that the United States is "playing with fire", echoing remarks by Trump. "I think the United States is playing with fire," Zarif told NBC News. Iran announced last week that it had enriched uranium past the 3.67 percent limit set by the nuclear deal, and has also surpassed the 300-kg cap on enriched uranium reserves. But "it can be reversed within hours," Zarif told the channel, adding: "We are not about to develop nuclear weapons. Had we wanted to develop nuclear weapons, we would have been able to do it (a) long time ago."

Zarif's comments came as the United States imposed unusually harsh restrictions on his movements during a visit to the United Nations. Weeks after the United States threatened sanctions against Zarif, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that Washington issued him a visa but forbade him from moving beyond six blocks of Iran's UN mission in Midtown Manhattan. "US diplomats don't roam around Tehran, so we don't see any reason for Iranian diplomats to roam freely around New York City, either," Pompeo told The Washington Post.

No US diplomats are based in Iran as the two countries broke off relations in the aftermath of the 1979 Islamic revolution that toppled the Western-backed shah. "Foreign Minister Zarif, he uses the freedoms of the United States to come here and spread malign propaganda," the top US diplomat said. UN spokesman Farhan Haq told reporters that the UN Secretariat was in contact with the US and Iranian missions about Zarif's travel restrictions and "has conveyed its concerns to the host country".

The United States, as host of the United Nations, has an agreement to issue visas promptly to foreign diplomats on UN business and only rarely declines. Washington generally bars diplomats of hostile nations from traveling outside a 40-km radius of New York's Columbus Circle. Zarif is scheduled to speak today at the UN Economic and Social Council, which is holding a high-level meeting on sustainable development.

Despite the restrictions, the decision to admit Zarif is the latest sign that Trump's administration appears to be retreating from its vow to place sanctions on him as part of its "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on June 24 that sanctions against Zarif would come later that week. Critics questioned the legal rationale for targeting Zarif and noted that sanctions would all but end the possibility of dialogue - which Trump has said is his goal. Zarif said in an interview with The New York Times he would not be affected by sanctions as he owns no assets outside of Iran.

Trump said yesterday the United States is not pushing to topple Iran's leadership but is determined to stop it acquiring nuclear weapons. "We are not looking for regime change. We are not looking for that at all," Trump said during a cabinet meeting. "They can't have a nuclear weapon."

According to leaked diplomatic cables published at the weekend, Britain's ambassador to Washington believed Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal because it was associated with his predecessor Barack Obama. "The administration is set upon an act of diplomatic vandalism, seemingly for ideological and personality reasons - it was Obama's deal," wrote the envoy, Kim Darroch, who resigned amid a storm triggered by the release of the sensitive documents. — Agencies

Pakistan reopens airspace after...

Continued from Page 1

Flights between Europe and Southeast Asia were forced further south, adding as much as 450 km to some journeys and forcing the cancellation of some routes.

"Pakistan being open again makes the traditional and preferred Europe-Asia route through Afghanistan, Pakistan and onwards to India available again, and means that city pairs abandoned after the February shutdown will likely be restarted," OPSGROUP, which provides guidance to operators, said in a note. Indian operators were badly affected by the shutdown. An Air India spokesman said the company would take about a week to rework its schedule and come up with a plan to operate its flights over Pakistan.

Air India suffered losses of 4.91 billion rupees (\$71.6 million), India's aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri told lawmakers this month. Interglobe Aviation Ltd controlled Indigo Airlines, India's largest by market share, incurred a loss of 251 million rupees due to the closure of the Pakistani airspace, while Spicejet Ltd incurred losses of 307.3 million rupees, Puri said.

Pakistan's announcement came hours after United Airlines Holdings Inc said it was extending the suspension of its flights from the United States to Delhi and Mumbai in India until Oct 26, citing continued the Pakistani restriction. The dropping of the restriction will allow Pakistan, which this month agreed to a \$6 billion bailout with the International Monetary Fund, to collect overflight fees from airlines.

Pakistan and Indian soldiers have continued to fire over the Line of Control, the de facto border dividing Kashmir, killing several civilians on both sides. Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the end of British colonial rule in 1947. Both claim the Himalayan territory in full and have fought two wars over it. — Agencies

Trump denies racism charges...

Continued from Page 1

The four lawmakers - who have been nicknamed "The Squad" by some media - said attention should instead be focused on healthcare and immigration and, in particular, the treatment of asylum seekers on the southern border. "Weak minds and leaders challenge loyalty to our country in order to avoid challenging and debating the policy," said Ocasio-Cortez. "Trump does not know how to defend his policies, so what he does is attack us personally, and that is what this is all about," she said.

Tlaib said Trump's tweets and remarks were "a continuation of his racist and xenophobic playbook". "We cannot allow these hateful actions by the president to distract us from the critical work to hold this administration accountable to the inhumane conditions at the border that is separating children from their loved ones and caging them up in illegal, horrific conditions," she said. Omar and Tlaib repeated calls for Trump to be impeached.

Slamming the "so-called vote" scheduled for later yesterday as a "Democrat con game", Trump urged his fellow Republicans not to "show weakness" and fall into their trap. "Those Tweets were NOT Racist. I don't have a Racist bone in my body!" Trump said ahead of the vote in the Democratic-led House. "This should be a vote on the filthy language, statements and lies told by the Democrat Congresswomen, who I truly believe, based on their actions, hate our Country," the president wrote.

"Nancy Pelosi tried to push them away, but now they are forever wedded to the Democrat Party," Trump added, in a jab

at the House speaker who has had a tenuous relationship with the four left-leaning first-term congresswomen. Trump's repeated attacks appear to be aimed at galvanizing his mostly white electoral base ahead of the 2020 presidential vote - while also stoking racial tensions and divisions among his political opponents. "See you in 2020!" said Trump, who before becoming president pushed the racist "birther" conspiracy theory that Barack Obama was not born in the United States.

While some Republican members of Congress have condemned Trump's remarks, House Republican leaders closed ranks behind the president and said they would oppose the resolution. "This is all about politics," said House Republican minority leader Rep Kevin McCarthy of California. "Our opposition to our colleagues' beliefs has absolutely nothing to do with race or gender or religion," said Rep Liz Cheney. "We oppose them and their policies because their policies are dangerous and wrong and will destroy America," the Republican from Wyoming said.

Senator Mitch McConnell, the leader of the Republican majority in the Senate, has not commented so far on Trump's remarks but several other Republicans have spoken out. "The comments are unnecessary and wrong by their very nature," Republican Senator Rob Portman of Ohio told CNN. "Three of four of these women of course were born in the United States, so all of them are American citizens as much as I am," Portman said.

"My view is that what was said and what was tweeted was destructive, was demeaning, was disunifying, and frankly it was very wrong," said Senator Mitt Romney, a Republican from Utah. "There is no excuse for the president's spiteful comments - they were absolutely unacceptable and this needs to stop," said Senator Lisa Murkowski, a Republican from Alaska. Obama's former vice president Joe Biden, who is seeking the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, denounced Trump as the most "openly racist and divisive" president in US history. "Go home to your country? It's sickening, it's embarrassing," Biden said. — Agencies

Sports

Woods drawing his inspiration from Watson, Norman's Open near-misses

Woods' troublesome back could come under extra strain

PORTRUSH: Tiger Woods said yesterday he is confident his body can hold up under the rigors of links golf this week as he bids for a 16th major title at the British Open. The 43-year-old, who capped one of sport's greatest-ever comebacks with victory at the Masters in April, will be playing in just his fourth tournament since winning the green jacket.

With cold, wet weather predicted for all four days as the British Open returns to Northern Ireland and Royal Portrush for the first time since 1951, Woods' troublesome back could come under extra strain. But he was keen to point out tricky conditions may also play into his hands, as they did for Tom Watson when he lost in a playoff to Stewart Cink at the age of 59 at Turnberry in 2009, and Greg Norman when he finished third at Birkdale in 2008 aged 53.

"It's just part of, unfortunately, dealing with the procedures I've had, and being a little bit older," said Woods, who returned to elite golf in December 2017 after spinal fusion surgery. "It just doesn't move quite as fast when it's a little bit cooler."

"But the great thing is playing in an Open Championship, you can do it. Look what Tom did at Turnberry, what Greg did at Birkdale. The golf course is fast enough, even if you don't have the speed to carry the ball."

'Navigate the bunkers'

"You just have to navigate the bunkers and navigate

around the golf course. And that's true, that's understanding how to play an Open Championship." Woods' fifth Masters triumph was his first major victory since the 2008 US Open, but the success relaunched his bid to chase down Jack Nicklaus' record tally of 18 titles. The American admitted the effort needed to get over that major hurdle again had taken its toll.

"Getting myself into position to win the Masters was — it took a lot out of me. That golf course puts so much stress on the system," he said. "Seeing my kids there, they got a chance to experience The Open Championship last year after their dad took the lead, and then made a few mistakes. And this time they got to see me win a major championship. "So it was a very emotional week and one that I keep reliving."

Woods is now ranked fifth in the world, but has not threatened at either of the last two majors, won by Brooks Koepka and Gary Woodland. But he does still feel the Open and links golf gives him the best chance of closing in on Nicklaus' haul of victories. "It does (offer the best chance of more majors). It allows the players that don't hit the ball very far or carry the ball as far to run the golf ball out there."

"Being able to control it as best you possibly can in the air to control it on the ground allows the older players to have a chance to do well in The Open Championship." Woods opens his campaign at 1410 GMT tomorrow, playing alongside England's Matt Wallace and 2018 Masters champion Patrick Reed. — AFP



PORTRUSH: US golfer Tiger Woods plays onto the 18th green during a practice session at The 148th Open golf Championship at Royal Portrush golf club. — AFP

Korean tears at consolation goal in 30-1 water polo rout

GWANGJU: South Korea's female water polo team have lost their first two games at the world championships by an eye-watering aggregate score of 94-1 — but they celebrated their goal as if they had won gold. After suffering a record 64-0 defeat by Hungary in their Group B opener at the weekend, the plucky hosts were battered 30-1 by the 2017 bronze medalists Russia on Tuesday.

But despite another lopsided result, goalscorer Kyung Da-seul was the toast of Gwangju after finding the net in the final quarter to trigger tearful scenes. The 18-year-old said she would cherish the memory but was sad not to keep the ball as a memento. "I'd love to have the ball but I have no idea where it's gone," Kyung told local media. "I'd be grateful if someone found it for me."

Footballers get to keep the match ball when they score a hat-trick and baseball players often keep the ball they hit for their first career run or homer — if they can trade a signed bat or other memorabilia to get it back. Kyung went home without her ball but was nevertheless fêted as if she had hit the winning run in baseball's World Series after her goal provided a little respite with the Koreans losing 27-0.

"When I took the shot I didn't think it was going to go in," revealed Kyung. "But I gave it everything I had. I couldn't have done it without my teammates." South Korea only managed to rustle up a team a month before



GWANGJU: This handout photo taken and released by the FINA Organising Committee via Yonhap shows South Korea's players reacting after scoring a goal during the women's water polo match between South Korea and Russia at the 2019 World Championships. — AFP

the start of the competition, calling on former swimmers, with all but captain Oh Hee-ji still in their teens.

Their dogged determination evoked memories of Equatorial Guinean swimmer Eric "The Eel" Moussambani, who clung to the lane rope at the 2000 Sydney Olympics in his first dip in a 50-metre pool before making it to the wall as the crowd erupted. "Our coaches told us that we're here to show people that we're ready to battle hard," Kyung added. "They also said we grew so much after the first game — we shed many tears of joy."

The local crowd got into the spirit as fans danced

along to Korean pop classic "Gangnam Style" blaring from the venue's loudspeakers, including a group of elderly women, who brought the house down by copying musician Psy's raunchy moves. Back on the pool deck, Korean-American Ryan Hanna Yoon promised there was more to come from the hosts. "It was really emotional because we've been going through a lot," she said. "The goal means everything for us. We're just beginners in water polo." Asked about her hopes for their next game against Canada on Thursday, Yoon smiled: "Scoring more and having them scoreless." — AFP



KUWAIT: Acting Director General of Public Authority for Sports Dr Saqer Al-Mulla recently received the President of Kuwait Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad. Both sides discussed cooperation and the activation of the Olympic champion program as well as their further plans to develop Kuwait sports.

Tough new standards have Aussies fine-tuned for worlds

SYDNEY: Coach Jacco Verhaeren has set brutally difficult qualifying standards to make Australia's team for this month's world swimming championships team after a poor showing two years ago. Australia, a traditional powerhouse, had a disappointing campaign last time in Budapest, slumping to eighth on the medals table.

Their haul of just one gold, five silver and four bronze in the pool left them badly trailing the table-topping Americans, who scooped 18 golds. Verhaeren's new selection policy means the Aussie team that competes in Gwangju is smaller than usual, but looks very strong. He has moved the Australian trials much closer to the championships — emulating the all-conquering Americans — while setting qualifying times far harder than required by swimming's governing body FINA.

'Convert and capitalize'

It means the team is down to 27 swimmers compared to the upwards of 40-strong squads who have featured previously. Verhaeren said that while it was leaner it was also meaner with all swimmers clocking times that should put them in medal contention.

"There have been some fantastic individual performances," said the Dutchman. "We now have to convert and capitalize on these performances in South Korea."

The Dolphins will be a serious threat in a host of events, headlined by Olympic 100 meters freestyle champion Kyle Chalmers and former world record holder Cate Campbell. Mitch Larkin boasts a world-leading time in the 200m individual medley and will also line up in his favoured backstroke across 100m and 200m — for which he was world champion in 2015. There are also high hopes for a handful of Australia's younger generation, led by ten sensation Ariarne Titmus, who recently set a new Commonwealth best of 3:59.35 in the 400m freestyle and will also compete over 200m and 800m.

'No panic'

While Mack Horton failed to make the grade in either the 200m, 400m or 800m, he was added to the squad as a discretionary pick, meaning he will almost certainly renew

Asian Boxing Championship preparations are nearly done

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Deputy Chairman of Kuwait Boxing Federation Abdallah Al-Otaibi said that the technical and administrative preparations to host the Asian Boxing Championship are almost complete. The championship is being held under the patronage of Chairman of Kuwait Olympic Committee in which 25 countries are participating. It is set to start on August 1st and continue until the 9th of that month. He said that all committees are currently working two shifts a day to ensure the best possible preparations are made before the start of the championship.

Al-Otaibi said, the boxing ring in which the championship will be contested will be installed according to the most recent technical standard approved by the International Boxing Federation. Meanwhile, as for the delegations that are arriving, he said all Kuwait hotels are ready to welcome the tournament's guests. The expected delegations will arrive 48 hours before the championship.

Al-Otaibi lauded the continuous follow up by the KBF Chairman Mohammad Mansi, and the cooperation of Kuwait Sports Club Chairman Khalid Al-Ghanim and his deputy Bader Al-Osaimi.



Abdullah Al-Otaibi

his bitter rivalry with China's Sun Yang. Horton is the only man to topple Sun over 400m in major competition over the past eight years, winning the Rio Olympic gold after publicly calling the controversial Chinese giant a "drug cheat" in the lead-up to the race.

"He's an Olympic champion, it's not panic stations, he could turn it around in weeks," Verhaeren said of Horton's inclusion. Chalmers qualified for Korea in 47.35sec — almost half a second quicker than the 2016 Rio final — to put himself in prime position for gold and perhaps even threaten Brazilian Cesar Cielo's 10-year-old world record of 46.91sec. "I definitely think I need to be out faster to be competitive," he said of the 50-metre split. "A lot of guys are out in 23 (seconds) which I haven't done yet — it's something I'm working on."

Campbell is also in fine form, clocking the fastest 100m time this year of 52.12 — quicker than the 52.27 swum by American Simone Manuel to win the world title in 2017. The two-time Olympic champion is desperate to make amends after famously flopping in the Rio final as the red-hot favorite, but acknowledged everything must click perfectly. "It is the trickiest race," said Campbell. "That is why it's the blue riband event. Your margin for error is so small." The swimming competition in Gwangju begins on July 21. — AFP

McIlroy looks to end drought on Open's return to Northern Ireland

PORTRUSH: The British Open returns to Northern Ireland for the first time in 68 years this week at Royal Portrush, giving Rory McIlroy the opportunity on home soil to end his five-year major drought. The four-time major champion has not lifted one of golf's big four trophies since winning the 2014 US PGA Championship, but is the bookmakers' favourite to get his hands on the Claret Jug after finishing tied for second a year ago at Carnoustie, two strokes behind Francesco Molinari.

McIlroy has continued his consistent form this season, claiming two titles including the prestigious Players' Championship while recording 11 top-10 finishes. He admitted that it would be a dream come true to triumph in the 148th Open Championship at a club where as a 16-year-old he fired a course record 61. "If I'm being honest, it would obviously mean the world to me," said the Northern Irishman, who won the 2014 Open at Hoylake. "But just like winning Hoylake meant the world to me as well. Just getting my hands on that Claret Jug again would be a huge accomplishment."

World number three McIlroy, who won the 2016 Irish Open at the K Club just outside Dublin, was keen to play down the pressure of playing in front of his home fans. "I think it's going to feel normal. It's going to feel like just another Open Championship," said the 30-year-old after a solid showing at last week's Scottish Open. "I've played in a few of them now. I know what to expect. Might be a little louder. "Atmosphere might be a bit different but the objective is the same, to go there and play good golf and hopefully give myself a chance to win the Claret Jug." Englishman Max Faulkner won the last Open to be played at Portrush, in 1951, taking home a top prize of just £300 (\$375). The champion this year will receive \$1,935,000 (£1.5 million).

'I just hope I hit the fairway'

Among the favorites is red-hot world number one Brooks Koepka and a resurgent Tiger Woods. But the fans will roar loudest for McIlroy and his compatriots, including 2011 Open champion Darren Clarke, who will have the honour of hitting the first tee shot of the tournament early on Thursday at his home course — he lives in the town of Portrush. "It's going to be amazing," said Clarke. "Thursday morning is going to be exciting. And I just hope I manage to get one going straight down the fairway."

Koepka's recent major record remarkable — he has won four in his last nine appearances and finished first twice and second twice in the last four he has played. He missed Carnoustie a year ago through injury but his British Open record has been good, with two top-10s from five appearances and a best of tied sixth in 2017. Woods will play professionally in Northern Ireland for the first time as he seeks a 16th major to close on Jack Nicklaus' record of 18.

The 43-year-old American capped one of sport's greatest comebacks by winning the Masters in April, despite previously slipping out of the top 1,000 in the world rankings after years of struggling with back injuries and poor form. Woods' re-imposed threat at the top of the game was confirmed 12 months ago at Carnoustie when he seized the lead on the back nine in the final round, only to finish in a tie for sixth, three shots behind winner Molinari.

The Italian says he has kept good care of the Claret Jug since his triumph 12 months ago. "We've had a couple of drinks out of it. Nothing out of the ordinary," he said. "I've got small kids at home so I had to keep it out of reach most of the time to avoid disaster." — AFP

Sports

N Zealand coach wants rules review after losing final to a technicality

‘There’s many different ways that they’ll probably explore’

WELLINGTON: New Zealand coach Gary Stead has called for the Cricket World Cup’s rules to be overhauled, labeling the showpiece final “hollow” after England defeated the Black Caps on a technicality. The teams could not be separated at the end of both regular play and a Super Over shootout, so England were handed victory because they had a superior boundary count.

“It’s a very, very hollow feeling that you can play 100 overs and score the same amount of runs and still lose the game, but that’s the technicalities of sport,” Stead told reporters in remarks released by New Zealand Cricket yesterday. He said such a thrilling match, which has been hailed by many experts as the greatest one-day game in history, deserved a better way to determine the result. “There’s going to be many things they look at over the whole tournament — I’m sure when they were writing the rules they never expected a World Cup final to happen like that,” he said. “I’m sure it’ll be reviewed (and) there’s many different ways that they’ll probably explore.”

Stead shrugged off suggestions England had been mistakenly handed an extra run after a throw from a fielder hit the bat of a diving Ben Stokes and deflected to the boundary in the final over of regular play. England were awarded six runs but former umpire Simon Taufel said they should only have got five as the batsmen had not crossed for their second run when the throw was made. “I didn’t actually know that,” Stead said. “But at the end of the day the umpires are there to rule. They’re human as well, like players, and sometimes there’s a mistake but that’s just the human aspect of sport.”

‘We didn’t lose’

Skipper Kane Williamson pointed out his team was not defeated on the pitch, saying it instead fell victim to “fine print” in the rules. He said that was a shame but the New Zealanders had signed up to the rules that governed the tournament. “At the end of the day nothing separated us, no one lost the final, but there was a crowned winner and there it is,” he told Newstalk ZB. The New Zealand captain and his teammates have been widely praised for the grace with which they accepted the gut-wrenching defeat. “Williamson has shown sports fans and elite athletes alike how to behave with humility, how to accept heartbreak,” stuff.co.nz columnist Kevin Norquay wrote.

“You don’t need to smash your equipment, yell at the umpire, or swear at and threaten rival batsmen, even with the stress of a World Cup on your mind; this news will be foreign territory to some.” There have been calls in New Zealand to give the team a ticker-tape parade, regardless of the result. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said that was unlikely but she wanted to ensure that the players received “a heroes’ welcome” when they returned to the country. New Zealand Cricket said they were in discussions with the government about when that would take place. “At the moment, however, with some players arriving back at different times, some not arriving back at all, and others having alternative playing commitments, it’s just not practical,” they said. “Hopefully, given the interest surrounding this, we can organise something appropriate in the weeks to come.” — AFP



LONDON: New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson (C) walks with his players ahead of a ‘super over’ during the 2019 Cricket World Cup final between England and New Zealand at Lord's Cricket Ground. — AFP

England hero Archer grieved cousin's death during WC

LONDON: England star Jofra Archer was grieving over the death of his cousin in Barbados during his team's incredible success at the Cricket World Cup. Ashantio Blackman, 24, was shot dead outside his home in St Philip the day after England's World Cup campaign started with a win over South Africa in May.

Despite the shocking news, Barbados-born Archer finished as England's leading wicket-taker with 20 wickets in 11 innings during the World Cup. He also bowled the Super Over in which Eoin Morgan's side clinched their victory against New Zealand in Sunday's dramatic final at Lord's. Archer's father Frank told the Times newspaper: “(His cousin) is the same age as Jofra and they were really close, he even messaged him in the days before he died. Jofra was really affected by his death but had to carry on.”

Archer qualified for a British passport thanks to his father and only became eligible to play for England in March. “People have been questioning his Britishness, but him playing for England has shown he will inspire everyone to play cricket, because it's usually seen as an elitist sport,” his father said. Meanwhile, England all-rounder Ben Stokes, who was voted man of the match in the final after scoring a vital 84 not out, admitted England's post-match celebrations led to “the latest night I've had for a very, very long time”.

It was a redemptive triumph for Stokes after his involvement in a 2017 street brawl in Bristol led to a court case that saw him acquitted of affray. “After what I've been through, it does make these moments feel all the



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May (C) shakes hands with England's Jofra Archer (R) outside 10 Downing Street as England players arrive for a reception. — AFP

sweeter because you are going to have ups and downs, but it is how you cope with it that matters,” Stokes wrote in the Daily Mirror. “It was great to eventually get hold of mum and dad back in New Zealand as well, they were

over the moon. “Redemption is a word that people have been using, but that is not something I'm thinking about. I certainly wasn't thinking about it while I was trying to win the game.” — AFP

Bangladesh to rest Shakib for Sri Lanka ODIs

DHAKA: Bangladesh are resting all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan but have retained skipper Mashrafe Mortaza for the three-match one-day international series against Sri Lanka later this month, officials said yesterday. Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam and top-order batsman Anamul Haque were also recalled to replace Shakib and batsman Liton Das, who has been rested for personal reasons.

Medium pace Abu Jayed, who was part of World Cup squad but did not play any games, was the other player to miss out. “Now that the World Cup chapter is over and we are starting a new season. This series is very important for us,” said Minhajul Abedin Nannu. “We didn't make big changes from the World Cup squad here. As we don't have Shakib and Liton, we included two players in their places and dropped one player,” he said.

Bangladesh finished eighth in the World Cup after just three wins — against struggling South Africa, West Indies and Afghanistan. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) sacked coach Steve Rhodes after the team returned home last week and announced it will not renew the contract of bowling coach Courtney Walsh.

Mashrafe, who claimed just one wicket in eight matches, shouldered the responsibility for the team's lackluster performance, but the BCB has kept faith on him. Bangladesh will become the first team to tour Sri Lanka since the deadly Easter attacks in which 258 people were killed. The teams will play three one-day internationals on July 26, 28 and 31 at the Premadasa International Stadium in Colombo.

Squad: Mashrafe Mortaza (Capt), Tamim Iqbal, Soumya Sarker, Anamul Haque, Mohammad Mithun, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, Mosaddek Hossain, Sabbir Rahman, Mehidy Hasan, Taijul Islam, Rubel Hossain, Mohammad Saifuddin, Mustafizur Rahman. — AFP



LONDON: England's Ben Stokes attends a World Cup victory event at The Oval in London on July 15, 2019, a day after they won the 2019 Cricket World Cup final against New Zealand. — AFP

Strauss urges England star Stokes to stay grounded

LONDON: Andrew Strauss has urged Ben Stokes to keep his feet on the ground after the England all-rounder earned hero status with his role in their incredible World Cup final triumph. Stokes scored 84 not out against New Zealand at Lord's on Sunday to force a Super Over in which he and Jos Buttler pushed England towards their first World Cup crown.

Former England captain Strauss believes Stokes will be deluged with demands on his time and he warned the star not to be distracted by his sudden spike in popularity. “What will be hard for Ben going forward is the levels of adulation he'll receive,” Strauss said

yesterday. “That was a burden for Freddie Flintoff. He often lived up to it and that was great, but increasingly you are under more and more pressure to be the man every time you play and that is a big burden.”

Stokes' man-of-the-match display went some way towards making up for the 2016 T20 World Cup final when Carlos Brathwaite hit him for four sixes in the final over to grab an unlikely victory for the West Indies. It also came less than a year after Stokes was found not guilty of affray following a late-night brawl in Bristol, an incident that forced him to miss an Ashes series and placed his future in doubt.

Strauss was director of England cricket at the time and was present when Stokes was released from his police cell before helping guide him through the aftermath. Strauss, who yesterday announced that Lord's will be turning red for day two of the second Ashes Test on August 15 in aid of the Ruth Strauss Foundation, sensed early on that the 28-year-old would go on to flourish despite the controversy.

“You know what, I just remember going down to the police station with Ben. I spent a long time with Clare, his wife, waiting for him to come out of the jail,” he said. “What struck me as soon as he came out was actually his character. Because he stood up and said, ‘I've got this horribly wrong. I apologize sincerely for what I've done here.’”

“From that moment on, I thought this was going to be a good thing for him. It was very hard to know which way it was going to go. People can go two ways after something like that happens to them. “Anyone who knows Ben and who has played with him knows what an incredible person he is to have on your team. “What we've seen is some of those rough edges just smoothed a little bit over the last 12 or 18 months without him losing that incredible desire and hunger to win. “It's an easy story to say what happened in the World Cup final is redemption for him, but I just think it was one of English cricket's talents showing what he can do on the greatest stage.” — AFP

Warriors ready new basketball stadium, fueled by tech dollars

SAN FRANCISCO: The Golden State Warriors are weeks from opening a sleek \$1.5 billion sports and entertainment complex in San Francisco thanks largely to a years-long tech boom that made it financially feasible, the team's president said on Monday. The Warriors, led by ace shooter Stephen Curry, have appeared in the past five straight NBA finals and won three of them. For over 40 years, their home was an aging arena across San Francisco Bay in far less glitzy Oakland.

San Francisco has been transformed in recent years by thousands of tech workers streaming into the city. That boom has also pushed housing costs to unprecedented levels, creating angst among many longtime Bay Area residents that they will not be able to afford to stay. For some, the Warriors' move has come to symbolize the changing economics. Team president Rick Welts said the new Chase Center facility would not have been possible without hundreds of thousands of square feet in office space as part of the development. Ride-share giant Uber is the major tenant.

The Warriors did not receive any public financing for the project, which the team calls unprecedented in modern sports. Welts led reporters on a tour of the bright, airy facility on Monday, where the yellow hardwood basketball court was just installed. Construction workers put finishing touches on luxury amenities including courtside lounges with their own private wine cellar. Welts said 70 percent of Oakland season ticket holders have renewed their seats. He did not yet know how many security guards and concession staff from Oakland will ultimately be able to keep their jobs.

The Warriors obtained the land for Chase Center from Salesforce, whose chief executive Marc Benioff had originally planned to use the site for a new corporate campus but found it too small. Last year, Benioff backed a successful San Francisco ballot measure to increase funds for homeless services by raising taxes on business. The proposal bitterly split the city's corporate community. Welts said the Warriors declined to take a position on the initiative, adding that the team's major charitable focus was on improving education and life outcomes for kids. The team plans to repurpose its former facilities in Oakland to that end. “We're going to teach more kids to play basketball there than I'm guessing any other team in the NBA,” he said. — Reuters

Australian newspapers lose Chris Gayle defamation appeal

SYDNEY: An Australian media group yesterday lost an appeal against an Aus\$300,000 (US\$211,000) defamation payout to West Indies cricket star Chris Gayle after claiming he exposed his genitals to a masseuse. Gayle was accused by former media group Fairfax, which at the time was publisher of The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age, of exposing his genitals and indecently propositioning the woman in a dressing room during the 2015 World Cup in Sydney.

Gayle vigorously denied the allegations, claiming the journalists behind the series of stories published in the newspapers in 2016 were out to “destroy him”. He won the defamation case in October last year after jurors found Fairfax was motivated by malice and had failed to establish a defense of truth. The publisher appealed the case arguing it did not receive a fair trial and the judge should have discharged the jury after Gayle's barrister attacked the credibility of the massage therapist. Gayle also appealed the size of his payout, seeking an increase. A New South Wales court dismissed both appeals.

Gayle caused a stir in Australia in 2016 prior to the Fairfax stories being published when he attempted to flirt with a presenter on live TV, asking her out for a drink and telling her: “Don't blush, baby.” After winning his court case last year, he tried to spark a bidding war for a tell-all interview, promising that “when I break this down to y'all it will be like a movie”. — AFP

Sports

Arsenal open US tour with 3-0 friendly win

Real Madrid midfielder Dani Ceballos is close to joining Arsenal

LOS ANGELES: Brazilian Gabriel Martinelli scored in his Arsenal debut Monday as the English Premier League club launched their pre-season tour of the United States with a 3-0 friendly win over the Colorado Rapids. Bukayo Saka and James Olayinka also scored for the Gunners, who cruised to the victory at Dick's Sporting Goods Park in suburban Denver. Martinelli, the 18-year-old forward signed from Ituano on July 2, was sent a surprise start in attack by Unai Emery and sent an early chance wide.

Saka, 17, was an energetic presence and put Arsenal up 1-0 in the 13th minute as he collected a through-ball from Eddie Nketiah. Another teenager — 18-year-old Olayinka — doubled the score in the 29th, seizing a stray pass from defense and racing in to fire into the top left corner of the net. Martinelli, having missed his early chance, capped the scoring in the 61st when he slotted home a cross from close range.

The Rapids, in the midst of the Major League Soccer season, fielded a mostly reserve side that featured several players from the lower-rung Colorado Springs Switchbacks. Arsenal, too, started a reserve team as they begin their build up to the Premier League season after again failing to secure a Champions League berth. The tour hasn't started without controversy. Captain Laurent Koscielny refused to travel to the US, and a group of influential Arsenal supporters' organizations published a statement on Monday hitting out at Stan Kroenke's "passive ownership".

Under a hashtag "WeCareDo You" the statement decried a "soulless" atmosphere at Arsenal's Emirates

Stadium and a lack of transfer strategy. Kroenke, who began investing in the club in 2007 through his company Kroenke Sports Enterprises and took full ownership in 2018, also owns the Rapids as well as the NFL's Los Angeles Rams.

Ceballos close to joining Arsenal

In related news, Real Madrid midfielder Dani Ceballos is close to joining Arsenal on a season-long loan, Spanish media reported yesterday. Newspaper Marca said the 22-year-old would head to north London "without an option to buy", and the Gunners "would be responsible for 100% of the player's salary, which is about three million euros (\$3.36 million)."

Ceballos has also been linked with AC Milan and Arsenal's local rivals Tottenham, who reportedly want to buy him. Marca said Unai Emery's side are awaiting a final decision from Real. Ceballos was voted the player of 2017 European U-21 championship and was picked on the team of the tournament at this year's edition which Spain won. "He understands that he will have limited opportunities under Zinedine Zidane," wrote Spanish sports daily Marca.

Another Spanish sports newspaper, AS, wrote: "Madrid need to trim the fat from a bloated squad and are looking to shift at least five players before the season starts." Both papers reported Ceballos, who started his career at Sevilla, likes the idea of playing in London and was swayed by the interest shown by Gunners boss Emery, who managed Sevilla after the player had joined local rivals Betis. —AFP



COMMERCE CITY: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang No 14 of Arsenal chases a loose ball during the second half against the Colorado Rapids at Dick's Sporting Goods Park. —AFP

Solskjaer confident De Gea will sign new deal soon

PERTH: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said yesterday he was optimistic that goalkeeper David De Gea would sign a new deal to remain at Old Trafford as Manchester United prepared to face old rivals Leeds in Perth. United's pre-season tour of Australia has been overshadowed speculation over the futures of several stars, including De Gea who is in the last year of his contract and has been linked with French champions Paris Saint-Germain.

The Spaniard is reportedly close to signing a new five-year deal with United worth in excess of £350,000 a week that would make him the highest paid goalkeeper in the world. De Gea was rested from United's pre-season opener against Perth Glory on Saturday but will line up against Leeds on Wednesday to wrap up the Red Devils' 10-day visit to the Western Australia city. "He'll play and hopefully we can agree (on a new deal) with David, as I've said a few times," Solskjaer told reporters. "That'll be up to David to announce when that happens, if and when."

The United boss refused to be drawn on whether Leicester City and England centreback Harry Maguire was on his way to Old Trafford. "There's been loads of speculation but I can't really say anything," Solskjaer said. "There's a limit of players and whoever performs will be part of the team and whoever doesn't they will have to get back in."

After an unconvincing 2-0 victory over a depleted Perth, United will be hoping for a better performance against one-time bitter enemy Leeds. The rivalry has simmered since Leeds' relegation from the English Premier League in 2004 but hostilities between the passionate fan bases are still evident with extra security measures being put in place by organizers at Perth Stadium. Solskjaer said United were excited to renew the rivalry. "Of course you want to have games against the biggest clubs," he said. "It's a great occasion for both sets of supporters and the players because there were great games (in the past)." Romelu Lukaku, who is reportedly looking to secure a move to Inter Milan, is set to play his first pre-season match against Leeds after recovering from a "nigggle". However, Luke Shaw is likely to miss out after suffering a hamstring injury in the match against Perth. United will have further pre-season games against Inter Milan in Singapore on July 20 and Tottenham in Shanghai on July 25, while Leeds will head to Sydney to face Western Sydney Wanderers. —AFP

Qatar's Al-Attiyah dominates at Silk Way rally

DUNHUANG: After traversing Russia's forests, the Mongolian steppe and the deserts of northern China, Qatar's Nasser Al-Attiyah finally claimed victory in the "big and beautiful" Silk Way Rally yesterday. Unchallenged after the elimination on day two of his main rival — Toyota teammate Yazeed Al-Rajhi of Saudi Arabia — Al-Attiyah and French co-driver Mathieu Baumel cruised to victory, winning all the stages of a grueling competition.

His first victory in the Silk Way, adds to Al-Attiyah's three wins in the Dakar rally, including the 2019 edition. China's Wei Han and Liao Min were second with Frenchmen Jerome Pelichet and Pascal Larroque third. Al-Attiyah, twice second in previous editions of the race, said: "It was important to me because it

is a big and beautiful race." The ninth edition of the rally started from Irkutsk in Russian Siberia on July 6 and ended 10 days, and 5,000 kilometers, later in China's Gobi desert crossroads of Dunhuang, the Silk Road outpost famous for caves adorned with ancient Buddhist statues and frescoes.

The rally introduced a two-wheel category this year and Britain's Sam Sunderland, who rides for KMT and won the Dakar in 2017, became the first ever Silk Way motorbike champion. Winner of three stages, he beat Andrew Short of the United States, second and Adrien Van Beveren of France third. For the first time the race crossed the dusty Mongolian steppe. It drew 181 competitors in car, motorbike, and truck categories, the latter won by Russian Anton Shibalov. "It has been an amazing experience, going through so much different scenery, seeing so many different sights," said Sunderland. "As far as the race was concerned it was a tough one. Especially these last three days in China." —AFP



DUNHUANG: Qatar's driver Nasser Al-Attiyah (R) and his co-pilot France's Mathieu Baumel pose behind a flag of Qatar as they celebrate after winning the Silk Way Rally 2019. —AFP

Lampard won't look backwards as he takes over Chelsea

YOKOHAMA: Chelsea legend Frank Lampard said yesterday he won't be looking backwards as he takes on possibly the biggest challenge of his career: managing his former team. Speaking in Japan where the Blues are playing two friendlies, Lampard said he was "very happy" with his squad but expects to work the team hard during the pre-season.

"For me the story is not to look backwards," said Lampard, whose return to his former club as head coach was confirmed earlier this month. "I know the club very well, I know the players very well, I have my own way that I want to work with the players," he told reporters in Yokohama, where Chelsea will face Japan's Kawasaki Frontale on July 19. Lampard acknowledged taking on

leadership of the Blues will be a major undertaking, with Chelsea having lost their best player of recent times, Eden Hazard, to Real Madrid last month, and serving a two-window transfer ban that prevents him from making new signings. But he said there was no reason to dwell on the ban. "I think I inherited very good players. We cannot bring in any players we know that... But I'm very happy with the squad."

"My job now is to work hard in pre-season with them. I like my teams to play with a lot of energy and speed, with and without the ball, so I want to win it back as quickly as we can," he said. Chelsea's new \$72 million signing, Christian Pulisic, is listed as one of the team members visiting Japan, but it was not year clear when he will arrive.

Lampard declined to reveal the lineup for the two friendlies on Chelsea's calendar, which include a much-anticipated face-off against Barcelona on July 23. American international Pulisic signed a five-and-a-half year contract with Chelsea in January but was immediately loaned back to Germany to finish the season at Borussia Dortmund. Lampard won 13 trophies in 13 years



YOKOHAMA: Frank Lampard (L), head coach of English Premier League club Chelsea, shares a laugh with Croatian footballer Mateo Kovacic (R) during a press conference ahead of an exhibition match with Japan's club team Kawasaki Frontale. —AFP

and became Chelsea's all-time leading marksmen with 211 goals from midfield during a decorated playing career at Stamford Bridge. But he has a lot to prove in his new role. The former

England midfielder has just one season of managerial experience having led Derby County to the Championship play-off final in May, when they were beaten by Aston Villa. —AFP

Benitez exit a surprise, says Newcastle midfielder Ritchie

NANJING: Newcastle United midfielder Matt Ritchie said yesterday that he was "surprised" and "disappointed" to see manager Rafael Benitez leave the Premier League crisis club. Newcastle have approached Steve Bruce over the vacancy and the former Manchester United defender has reportedly resigned as manager of Sheffield Wednesday.

But the time is ticking down to Newcastle's Premier League opener on August 11 and the club has lost key players, while also in limbo over the managerial hot seat. Newcastle fans were furious that hated club owner Mike Ashley failed to convince the hugely popular Benitez to stay, and the

Spaniard has since moved to China as coach of Dalian Yifang.

Newcastle are now among the favorites for relegation — Benitez was widely praised for steering the northeast club to 13th last term. Speaking in Nanjing ahead of the Premier League Asia Trophy, the 29-year-old Ritchie said: "To see the manager leave was disappointing because he had a good reign with the club." But it was a decision made between the manager and the club owners so it's out of our hands. "Now we have to look forward to a new manager and a new season."

Benitez's departure last month was particularly galling for Ritchie because it was the former Liverpool boss who recruited him from Bournemouth in 2016. "I was surprised, I thought he was going to stay," Ritchie said. "But he didn't and you have to move on as a club and as individuals and I am sure the new manager will come in with new ideas and I'm looking forward to that."

Ritchie, perhaps mindful that Newcastle fans have made clear they do not want life-long fan Bruce at the club, added: "The key thing is that we have to create a togetherness

from top to bottom and everyone pulling in the same direction." Newcastle, who have seen Ayoze Perez move to Leicester City and will lose fellow forward Salomon Rondon, play Wolverhampton Wanderers today. The other match in the mini pre-season tournament is between Premier League champions Manchester City and West Ham United.

Ben Dawson, Newcastle's academy head of coaching, and under-23s head coach Neil Redfern are overseeing pre-season work in the Far East. Dawson said he was awaiting news like everyone else on who will take over from Benitez, although all the signs point to Bruce, a former coach of fierce rivals Sunderland. "Obviously all we can do is focus on the job out here," said Dawson. "We are just taking it day by day." Midfielder Jonjo Shelvey said that no matter who eventually replaces Benitez, "we must be prepared to fight every week and make sure we don't let our fans down. "There is nothing as players that we can do (regarding the manager), just do your job and get on with it." —AFP

Zabaleta says this is his last Premier League campaign

NANJING: Pablo Zabaleta says this will be his last season in the Premier League and could even be his final campaign before retirement. The veteran Argentine defender has signed a new one-year deal with West Ham United and revealed yesterday that it will be his swansong in English football.

Asked if he will retire for good after the coming season, Zabaleta, speaking in the Chinese city of Nanjing, said: "I don't know, honestly. "The reason I'm here is because I'm still enjoying my football. I think I can still give 100 percent for the team and use my experi-

ence. I know I'm 34 and I'm getting a bit old and coming to the end of my career, I'm honest with myself," said Zabaleta, who joined Manuel Pellegrini's West Ham from Manchester City two years ago. "But I'm still a good professional and try to give everything for the team. "I'm still enjoying (being) around the team and helping young players."

"Definitely will be my last season in England, for sure, this is something that I know," added the right back, who was twice a Premier League champion with City. "But I don't know in football, it's not the right time to think about retirement now with a long season ahead." Zabaleta, who was one of the finest full-backs in English football in his pomp, said, "I will miss the Premier League a lot, for sure." West Ham will play Zabaleta's former side in Nanjing on Wednesday in the Premier League Asia Trophy. The other game is between Newcastle United and Wolves. —AFP

25 Woods drawing his inspiration from Watson, Norman's Open near-misses



26 N Zealand coach wants rules review after losing final to a technicality



27 Lampard won't look backwards as he takes over Chelsea duties



NEW YORK: Gio Urshela #29 of the New York Yankees tags out Avisail Garcia #24 of the Tampa Bay Rays trying to advance to third base on a Guillermo Heredia #54 single to right field in the fourth inning at Yankee Stadium. — AFP

Rays' d'Arnaud hits 3 HRs to beat Yanks

The Rays win their third straight head-to-head meeting with the Yankees

NEW YORK: Tampa Bay leadoff man Travis d'Arnaud hit three homers, including a go-ahead three-run shot with two outs in the ninth inning off Aroldis Chapman, and the Rays stunned the host New York Yankees 5-4 Monday night in the opener of a four-game series. After hitting solo homers in the first and third off James Paxton, d'Arnaud was down to his last strike against Chapman (2-2). On the eighth pitch of his final at-bat, with a full count, d'Arnaud lifted a slider into the second row of the right field seats. The Rays won their third straight head-to-head meeting with the Yankees — all by one run. Edwin Encarnacion homered twice for his 36th career multi-homer game, and he gave New York a 4-2 lead with a two-out homer off eventual winning pitcher Andrew Kittredge (1-0) in the eighth.

CARDINALS 7, PIRATES 0

Miles Mikolas scattered eight hits in St. Louis' first complete-game shutout of the season, a defeat of visiting Pittsburgh in the opener of a three-game series. The Cardinals, who have won three straight, have thrown four shutouts this year, three of them started by Mikolas. The Pirates have lost four in a row. Mikolas (6-9) walked none and struck out three. He needed just 100 pitches to go the distance, including 22 pitches to retire the final six batters in order.

DODGERS 16, PHILLIES 2

Cody Bellinger hit two home runs, Max Muncy and Alex Verdugo each homered, and Los Angeles routed host Philadelphia. Bellinger finished with four hits, including his 32nd and 33rd home runs of the season. Verdugo had three hits for the Dodgers, who ripped 19 hits and won their third game in a row. Dodgers lefty Clayton Kershaw (8-2) threw 61 pitches through the first three innings and then settled down to toss six solid innings. Kershaw gave up four hits and one run while striking out seven on 101 pitches, 68 for strikes.

BRAVES 4, BREWERS 2

Freddie Freeman delivered a three-run homer for the second straight game, and Atlanta hung on to win at Milwaukee. Freeman drove his 25th homer over the center field fence in the fourth inning to break up a

scoreless game and send the Braves on their way to their fifth straight win. Atlanta won for the eighth time in its past nine games. Freeman is 2-for-15 since the All-Star Game, both hits three-run home runs. The Braves improved to 3-1 against the Brewers and to a National League-best 30-18 on the road. Atlanta starter Max Fried (10-4) pitched five shutout innings before leaving the game with a blister on his left index finger.

REDS 6, CUBS 3

Eugenio Suarez, Yasiel Puig and Curt Casali homered, and Cincinnati pulled away to defeat host Chicago. Luis Castillo (9-3) struck out 10 batters over six innings in his first start since appearing in the All-Star Game. Cincinnati won for only the second time in the past six games. Kyle Schwarber went 2-for-5 with a solo home run to lead Chicago at the plate. Jason Heyward finished 2-for-4 with an RBI for the Cubs, whose three-game winning streak ended.

RED SOX 10, BLUE JAYS 8

Michael Chavis crushed a first-inning grand slam, and Andrew Benintendi had two hits and three RBIs as host Boston held off Toronto. Xander Bogaerts had three hits, and Mookie Betts, Rafael Devers and Brock Holt added two apiece as the Red Sox snapped a two-game skid in the opener of a four-game series. Rick Porcello (7-7) earned the win, allowing four runs on eight hits and no walks while striking out two over six innings. Billy McKinney hit a two-run home run for the Blue Jays, who lost for the sixth time in their past eight games.

GIANTS 19, ROCKIES 2 (GAME 1)

Brandon Crawford hit two home runs and drove in a career-high eight runs as San Francisco continued its hot hitting in a romp over Colorado in the opener of a doubleheader at Denver. The Giants jumped on Rockies starter German Marquez (8-5) for 11 runs and 11 hits in 2 2/3 innings en route to the fifth double-digit run explosion in their past 11 games. San Francisco totaled 94 runs in those 11 games.

Crawford and Mike Yastrzemski both homered in the Giants' five-run first inning. Jeff Samardzija (7-7) bene-

fited from the offensive onslaught, coasting through 6 2/3 innings while allowing two runs and four hits. He walked one and struck out nine.

GIANTS 2, ROCKIES 1 (GAME 2)

Stephen Vogt and Brandon Crawford hit home runs within a three-pitch span of the fourth inning, and Derek Rodriguez made a successful return to the Giants with five solid innings, allowing San Francisco to complete the doubleheader sweep of Colorado in Denver. Chi Chi Gonzalez (0-2) limited the hot-hitting Giants to one hit before Vogt hit his third pitch of the fourth inning over the fence in right field for his third homer of the season. Two pitches later, Crawford made it 2-0 with his third homer of the day and ninth of the year. Rodriguez (4-5), who was recalled from the minors between games Monday, allowed one run on four hits and no walks with six strikeouts. Will Smith tossed a scoreless ninth inning for his 24th save.

INDIANS 8, TIGERS 6

Rookie Oscar Mercado capped a two-homer performance by going deep to lead off the seventh inning as host Cleveland tamed Detroit. Mike Freeman launched a two-run homer, and Tyler Naquin and Jose Ramirez each ripped a two-run double for the Indians, who have won nine of 10 meetings with Detroit this season. Jordy Mercer belted a pair of homers, and Christin Stewart and Jeimer Candelario also went deep for the tumbling Tigers, who fell for the 21st time in their past 25 games.

ROYALS 5, WHITE SOX 2

Jakob Junis struck out a career-high 10 batters over seven innings, and host Kansas City defeated Chicago in the opener of a four-game series. Junis (5-8), who was 0-3 with a 5.31 ERA in his past seven starts, allowed one run, five hits and two walks. White Sox starter Lucas Giolito (11-4) took the loss, allowing three runs and seven hits in six innings. Nicky Lopez had two hits and drove in two runs, and Hunter Dozier and Cheslor Cuthbert each had two hits and an RBI for the Royals, who have won three of four coming out of the All-Star break. — Reuters

'My Tour is already a success,' says yellow jersey Alaphilippe

TOULOUSE: Yellow jersey holder Julian Alaphilippe says his Tour de France is already a success, no matter what happens when the race resumes after yesterday's rest day. "Before the Tour, I wanted to do well (in the first 10 days)," he told a press conference ahead of Wednesday's 167 kilometre stage 11 from Albi to Toulouse.

"I worked hard with that in mind which is why I am not thinking too much about the end of the Tour but more about what I have achieved over these opening 10 days." It's way beyond anything I imagined. My Tour is already a success. Anything that happens now is a bonus." The 27-year-old Frenchman, who earlier this season won the Milan-San Remo and La Fleche Wallone one day races, has had two spells in yellow on his Tour.

After winning stage three in the champagne region, he became the first Frenchman since Tony Gallopin in 2014 to wear it, holding it for three days before handing it over after stage six. He then reclaimed it again after stage eight when he finished third in Saint-Etienne, donning it on Bastille Day. Alaphilippe has a lead of one minute 12 seconds over defending champion Geraint Thomas with the Welshman's Ineos teammate Egan Bernal just four seconds further back. Thomas, a two-time Olympic track gold medalist, is expected to press for the race lead during Friday's time-trial in Pau. — AFP