

8 Netanyahu makes history as longest-serving Israeli PM



21 Jackson, 50 Cent, Brown perform at Saudi concert



26 Kuwait to host Nadal Tennis Academy, ATP tournament

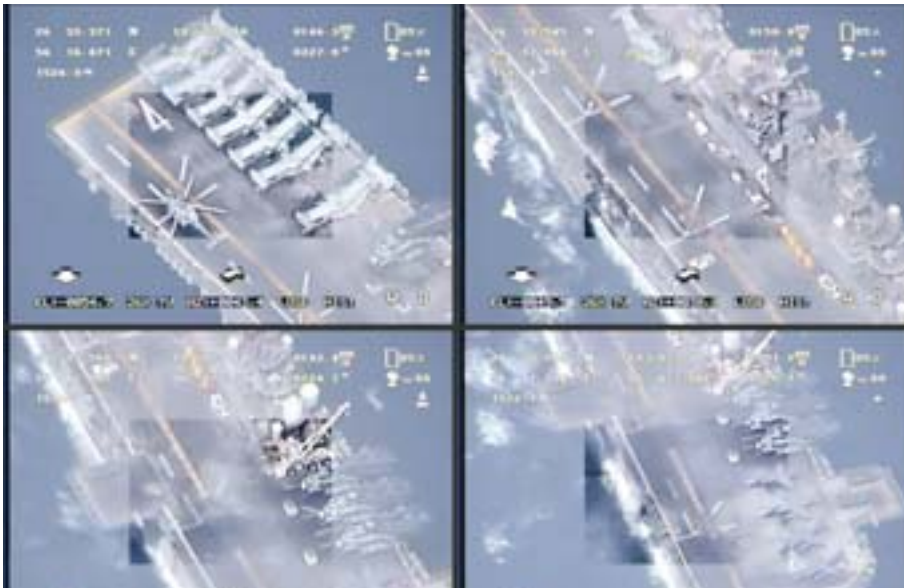


28 Africa Cup champs Algeria return to heroes' welcome



Iran ignores calls to release UK tanker; Saudi to host US troops

Delhi, Manila call to free crew • US, Iran at odds over drone • Iran crewman sent to Oman



This combination of image grabs created from a video broadcast by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on Friday reportedly shows footage obtained from an IRGC drone flying above a US aircraft carrier at an undisclosed location. — AFP



BANDAR ABBAS: This handout picture released by Tasnim News Agency yesterday shows British-flagged tanker Stena Impero anchored in southern Iran. — AFP

TEHRAN: Iran ignored mounting European appeals to release a British-flagged tanker yesterday as Britain denounced a “dangerous move” and summoned a senior diplomat from the Islamic republic. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said it seized the Stena Impero on Friday for breaking “international maritime rules” in the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for around a third of the world’s sea-borne oil.

The tanker was impounded off Bandar Abbas port for allegedly failing to respond to distress calls and turning off its transponder after colliding with a fishing vessel, authorities said, adding an investigation had been launched. It was one of two ships Britain said Iran seized in the Gulf, but the UK owner of the Liberian-flagged Mesdar said it had been later released after being boarded by armed personnel.

That came hours after a court in Gibraltar said it would extend by 30 days the detention of an Iranian tanker seized by British authorities two weeks ago on allegations of breaching EU sanctions against Syria. The Guards said on Thursday they also seized another “foreign tanker” and its crew a few days earlier for allegedly smuggling fuel, without giving further details.

In London, the Foreign Office said it had summoned Iran’s charge d’affaires yesterday. British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said the seizure of the ship showed “worrying signs Iran may be choosing a dangerous path of illegal and destabilizing behavior”. His government, which met twice for emergency sessions Friday, advised British ships to avoid the Strait of Hormuz for “an interim period”.

Germany and France urged Iran to release the

tanker, whose seizure Berlin called a “dangerous further aggravation of an already tense situation”. US President Donald Trump said Friday’s incident “only goes to show what I’m saying about Iran: trouble. Nothing but trouble.” But Iran remained defiant. Foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Iran’s “action in the Persian Gulf is to uphold” international maritime rules. “It is IRAN that guarantees the security of the Persian Gulf & the Strait of Hormuz. UK must cease being an accessory to #EconomicTerrorism of the US,” he tweeted.

Hunt said he had expressed extreme disappointment by phone to Zarif. Zarif told Hunt that the ship must go through a legal process before it could be released, Iran’s INSA news agency reported. A spokesman for Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, Brigadier-General Ramezan Sharif, said Tehran had seized the ship in the

Strait of Hormuz despite the “resistance and interference” of a British warship which had been escorting it.

Tensions in the Gulf have soared since May, with Trump calling off air strikes against Iran at the last minute in June after the Islamic republic downed a US drone. The United States has also blamed Iran for multiple attacks on tankers in the Gulf. Iran said it had opened an investigation yesterday into the newly-seized oil tanker. The Swedish-owned ship “has 23 crew and they are all on the ship,” said Allah-Morad Afifpoor, director-general of the Hormozgan province port and maritime authority. The Philippines said 18 Indians, three Russians, a Latvian and a Filipino were aboard. Both Manila and New Delhi said they were in touch with Tehran to seek the release of their nationals.

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News in brief

Turkish lawmaker’s brother held

ERBIL/SULAIMANIYA, Iraq: Security services in Iraq’s semi-autonomous Kurdish region said yesterday they had arrested the brother of a lawmaker serving in the Turkish parliament for the assassination of a Turkish diplomat in the Iraqi Kurdish regional capital Erbil. “The Kurdistan Region announced yesterday the arrest of the man who planned the assassination of a Turkish diplomat in a restaurant in Erbil, less than a week after the attack,” the Asayish internal security service said. A separate statement from the Iraqi Kurdish Counter Terrorism Department gave the suspect’s name as Mazlum Dag. — Reuters

Ponzi scam mastermind detained

NEW DELHI: An influential businessman was arrested by Indian police Friday over a half-billion dollar Ponzi scheme that allegedly defrauded tens of thousands of mostly-Muslim investors. Mohammed Mansoor Khan was detained at New Delhi airport upon his return from Dubai, where he had fled last month after winding up his scandal-hit company. Khan founded I Monetary Advisory (IMA) Group in Bangalore in 2006 and lured over 100,000 backers with promises of lucrative returns that kept to Islamic principles of finance. More than 20 people, including high-profile Karnataka state government officials, have been arrested after the alleged scam raked up 40 billion rupees (\$580 million). — AFP

Pilot grounded over hijack alert

NEW DELHI: India has suspended a pilot for accidentally sending a hijack alert to air traffic control during a domestic flight last month, the aviation authority said. The AirAsia India plane, flying from the capital New Delhi to Srinagar, suffered a stalled engine and the captain told first officer Ravi Raj to send an emergency code to alert authorities about the situation. Instead of the appropriate code 7700, Raj transmitted 7500 - the code for a hijacking - India’s Director General of Civil Aviation said in a statement on Friday. Local media reported last month that procedures for handling a hijacking were set in motion. — AFP

Outrage after pills sold by fashionista kill bride-to-be

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Preliminary information indicates that a 21-year-old Kuwaiti woman who died on the eve of her wedding used weight-loss pills promoted online by a fashionista who claimed to be a doctor. Meanwhile, the health ministry said investigations are underway to look into the death of the woman. The ministry, in a press statement on Friday, advised everyone to steer clear of drugs sold on social media sites due to relevant health hazards, calling for notifying it of such sellers. The ministry recently adopted a set of measures against unlicensed online advertisements for fake drugs.

Kuwaiti writer Laila Ahmad said the fashionista claiming to be a doctor does not have the least medical knowledge, adding she has forged certificates and sells diet pills online.

Humanity’s first steps on another world 50 yrs ago

WASHINGTON: Fifty years ago yesterday, American astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans in history to set foot on the Moon, an epoch-defining event watched on television by half a billion people. Their lunar module, named “Eagle,” touched down at 2018 GMT (4:18pm ET) on July 20, 1969. A little over six hours later, at 0256 GMT, Armstrong placed his left foot on the lunar surface, declaring: “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

“Looking back, landing on the moon wasn’t just our job, it was a historic opportunity to prove to the world America’s can-do spirit,” Aldrin, 89, tweeted before joining Vice President Mike Pence on a flight to the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. “I’m proud to serve the country that gave me this historic opportunity. Today belongs to you. We must hold the memory of #Apollo11 close.”

NASA has been in overdrive for several weeks to mark the anniversary, with exhibits and events around the country. Pence was due to deliver a speech from Cape Canaveral, from where Armstrong, Aldrin and Michael Collins, the third crewmember, took off. All three men were born in 1930. The anniversary has also revived a discussion about the future of space flight. NASA has declared its intention to return to the Moon by 2024 under the Artemis program - the twin sister of Apollo in Greek mythology - and this time place the first woman on its surface.

It plans to establish a lunar orbiting platform, called a “Gateway,” studying how living organisms react to



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump host Apollo 11 crewmembers Michael Collins (left) and Buzz Aldrin and their families on Friday at the White House during a ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing. — AFP

the radiation and microgravity of a deep space environment over a long period. But experts doubt that the space agency can meet its current goals on time. None of the key elements - the rocket, crew capsule, lander, or orbital station, are near completion.

In an interview with Fox News Friday night, Aldrin lamented the lack of progress in human space exploration since the Apollo program, which ended in 1972. He also called for global cooperation to achieve humanity’s next steps on the Moon and Mars. “It would not be at all helpful to be competing for the Moon or Mars, that’s very wasteful,” he said. “Above the atmosphere and into orbit all nations can and should cooperate together and learn how we can work and help each other and take care of what is found underneath us.”

US President Donald Trump, meanwhile has repeatedly questioned in public the need to return to the Moon, which his space agency has determined

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Recession grips Kuwait’s real estate market

KUWAIT: Kuwait’s domestic property market was sluggish in the first quarter of 2019 largely due to the fasting month of Ramadan and subsequent holidays, according to experts. Speaking to KUNA, Al-Daijan Property Manager Suleiman Al-Daijan said housing and investment rates remained the same, adding that majority of housing traders were brokers and not home seekers.

Trades in housing, investment and commercial sectors were low largely due to stakeholders’ preoccupation with Ramadan, umrah and family duties, he added. The property market was temporarily affected by regional developments, unlike trade in gold and other sectors. Prices were not noticeably affected owing to short supply and tenants holding on to their apartments, Daijan noted.

Secretary of Kuwait Real Estate Union Qais Al-Ghanim, also speaking to KUNA, said the market witnessed limited activity due to abundant financial resources among traders. The housing sector wobbled due to a number of factors such as dependence on expatriates, he pointed out. Currently, the market is unstable but the situation will change after the annual vacation, Ghanim added.

Abdulaziz Al-Dghaishem, a property expert, said the market in the second quarter of 2019 witnessed fluctuation. In April, it was noticeably active in all sectors.

However, the situation changed in May where the market became gripped by temporary recession due to Ramadan and Eid. The recession persisted in general in June, he said. The market is forecast to recover in mid-September, he expected. — KUNA

Local

Kuwait continues relief aid locally and internationally

UNHCR office carries out fund-raising campaign between July 20 and August 20



Kuwait Red Crescent Society are seen during a campaign to distribute food aid to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

KUWAIT: Maintaining its unwavering humanitarian approach, Kuwait last week provided relief aid to people in need in various societies locally and internationally. The continuous aid approach proves that Kuwait is well deserved for the 'Humanities Center' title and 'Humanitarian Leader' designation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahamad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah by the United Nations. On the level of refugees' aid, the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Kuwait will start a new fund-raising campaign for refugee and displaced children between July 20 and August 20 as the donation process will be done through the official UNHCR website.

The initiative, entitled 'Joy of Eid,' includes clothes, health care, food and shelters, as it will enable children to stay alive, said Director of the UNHCR office in Kuwait Dr Sami Hadadeen during a press conference held to launch the campaign. He mentioned that Kuwait is one of the top five donor countries for the UNHCR on the international scale. In a related context, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) announced distribution of 2,300 food parcels to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh in coordination with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society. Each portion, handed over to a five-member family, is sufficient for two weeks, said Anwar Al-Hasawi, the KRCS Deputy Chairman and head of the society field team in Bangladesh.

The KRCS team has inspected refugees' conditions in the region of Cox's Bazar and a makeshift hospital built with contributions by the Kuwaiti, Bangladeshi and Qatari red crescents. Moreover, KRCS announced organizing sacrifice project 'Adahi' for the displaced and refugees on Eid Al-Adha in cooperation with humanitarian organizations and national societies. Director-General of the KRCS Abdulrahman Al-Oun

said that KRCS carried out this annual program to needy, refugees and displaced people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yemen, Comoros, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan to alleviate their sufferings. In Yemen, women of Salem Al-Sabah Mosque in Kuwait funded for the equipment of the maternity and children emergency departments at Al-Sadaka Teaching Hospital at Aden, Yemen's temporary capital. This fund aims to enhance the capacity of the departments and improve the level of health and medical services in the hospital facilities, by providing number of medical and laboratory equipment.

'Children of Yemen'

Meanwhile, Al-Rahma International Charity signed a \$1 million cooperation agreement with the Yemeni government for 'Children of Yemen,' aimed at treating 100,000 children suffering from acute malnutrition. In a press statement, Yemeni Undersecretary of Ministry of Public Health and Population Dr Ahmed Al-Kamal expressed his deep appreciation on behalf of the Yemeni government and people to Kuwait's efforts and generous support for the recovery of health sector and social conditions in Yemen. The one-year campaign aims to treat 100,000 under-five year old children with acute malnutrition in seven Yemeni governorates, Hadramout, Taiz, Aden, Lahij, Hodeidah, Sana'a and Dhamar.

Locally, Kuwait Food Bank launched a no food waste initiative for a life without hunger to help needy families and exploit surplus foods for everyone's benefit in Kuwait. The initiative aims to provide food and basic needs of beneficiaries through a professional work system in addition to raising the awareness in community to reduce the food waste as commanded by Islam to preserve food remains and

2,300 food parcels distributed to Rohingyas



NATO college chief appreciates Kuwait's cooperation

ROME: Dean of NATO Defense College Dr Stephen J Mariano has appreciates Kuwait's cooperation with the college and partnership with the alliance for serving global security and peace. Speaking after graduation of cadets enrolled in the '134 course for high ranks' at the college headquarters in Rome, Dr Mariano said Kuwait's participation in the senior strategic studies is of particular significance. Kuwait partakes in these major courses, held by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, within the framework of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and Mediterranean Dialogue. "We are eagerly looking forward" toward the future to bolster the cooperation in face of challenges, to maintain regional and international peace, he said. The freshly finished course involved 77 participants from 33 states that are members or partners of the alliance. NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, launched at the Alliance's Summit in the Turkish city in June 2004, aims to contribute to long-term global and regional security by offering countries of the broader Middle East region practical bilateral security cooperation with NATO.

The Mediterranean Dialogue, first launched in 1994, is a forum of cooperation between NATO and seven countries of the Mediterranean. The faculty commander, Lieutenant General Christine Whitecross, during the graduation ceremony, distributed certificates to the graduates including Kuwait Army's Colonel Mohammad Jamal. The ceremony was attended by the Kuwaiti Charge d'Affaires, Counselor Sami Al-Zamanan, Counselor of the Middle East Department at the college, Colonel Nasser Maarefi, VIPs, ambassadors, diplomats and military officers. Addressing attendees, Dr Mariano underscored NATO's Middle East dialogue and partnership to boost cooperation among regional states. Col Jamal expressed pride for his participation in the course that would deepen his knowledge of modern strategic and security sciences, planning methods, management of crises and catastrophes and decision-making. —KUNA



Dr Stephen J Mariano

rUS Embassy to organize second day for student visa issuance: Ambassador

KUWAIT: The US Embassy in Kuwait will organize a second day for student visa issuance on August 6 due to high turnout on the first day, US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman said yesterday. In a statement to the press, Silverman affirmed that encouraging Kuwaiti students to study in the US is one of the embassy's top priorities. The consular section at the embassy had completed hundreds of visa application appointments for students wishing to complete their studies at US universities, he added. Ambassador Silverman stressed that the study at American universities prepares students for success in their careers, adding that it is possible for each student to choose between 4,000 accredited and high-quality universities to meet relevant needs and interests. He added that young students would join five generations of Kuwaitis who have studied in the US, who are now leaders in government, business and other fields. The Ambassador pointed out that he and the representatives of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students of the US branch, received on the first day about 200 students at the embassy wishing them success and excellence. —KUNA



Officials attend a press conference to announce a \$1 million agreement between Kuwait's Al-Rahma International Charity and the Yemeni government to treat 100,000 children suffering from acute malnutrition.



A press conference held to announce the inauguration of the vocational convoys program for Yemen's Shabwa's youngsters that was financed by Kuwait's Abdulla Al-Nori's charity.

provide it to poor people, KFB Director General Salem Al-Hamar said.

Meanwhile, KRCS announced renovating number of houses were exposed to fire, rain or cold, for needy families in Kuwait registered in association, KRCS Director of the local aid department, Maryam Al-Adsani said. KRCS is renovating the damaged and affected houses in order to create a safe and comfortable environment for them, as the project included the renovation of ten damaged homes, noting that each family received electrical appliances, furniture and all related requirements of construction.

In Aden, Yemen, assistant undersecretary of Hadramout Hesham Al-Saeedi inaugurated last Thursday the 2nd surgical camp at Al-Cotn general hospital that was financed by Intiaz Investment com-

pany in Kuwait. He hailed in a statement these humanitarian initiatives and Kuwaiti good doers, pointing out that such aid was a continuation of the generous Kuwaiti support of his country. Secretary of Yemeni Shabwa governorate Abdelqai Lamrooq also inaugurated last Thursday the vocational convoys program for Shabwa's youngsters that was financed by Abdulla Al-Nori's charity. The two-month program aims at building vocational capabilities for nearly 90 young people, males and females, of the governorate. The program also contains five vocational workshops. Executive director of student care society Waseem Rubaihan said that the program also aims at qualifying some 375 male and female youngsters in the governorates of Eden, Shabwa and Hadramout. The program was financed by Abdullah Al-Nori's charity. —KUNA



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman in a group photo with Kuwaiti students. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Undersecretary Assistant for Support Services Maj Gen Zuhair Al-Nassrallah honored a number of employees and retired personnel at the General Department of Supplies for their hard work and dedication. Other senior ministry officials attended the honoring.



Local

Kuwaiti newspaper managers' percentage cut down to 15 percent

Authority adjusts Kuwaitis' hiring percentage for secretary and executive jobs in private sector

KUWAIT: Newspapers are now only required to make sure that 15 percent of management are Kuwaitis after a new decision cut the mandatory percentage by half. On the other hand, the hiring percentage of Kuwaitis as managers was increased for most business sectors in the private sector, according to the new rule which Al-Qabas daily published recently.

The Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) released a decision recently adjusting percentages of Kuwaiti manpower in private sector establishments based on the economic activity and main profession, particularly the secretary job item, which was merged with the executive job description, making this item relatively the highest compared to other five categories.

The decision divided percentages of Kuwaiti labor in the private sector into five main categories distributed over 30 types of economic and professional activities. There was a notable increase in the percentages where the private sector is committed to hire Kuwaitis as 'managers', as the percentage was raised to vary between 20 percent and 60 percent based on the sector.

According to the changes, hotel and tourism sectors are now committed to appoint Kuwaitis in 20 percent of jobs as secretaries and executives; both seeing an eight percent increase in the required hiring percentage of Kuwaitis. The manager jobs in the warehousing sector increased to 40 percent from 35 percent, while it was

increased by three percent in the lighting and electricity sector - from 21 percent to 24 percent.

Appointment of managers in commerce and restaurants rose by four percent, and remained at 50 percent at cooperatives. Including Kuwaitis in scientific jobs and as technicians in various sectors rose varying from four to 15 percent, six to 20 percent for salespersons and from two to 20 percent for service providers.

In comparison between the latest adjustment of percentages as approved by the Cabinet in January, with what was being applied in previous years, it is found that the highest percentage is in the insurance sector, which increased by six percent to reach 70 percent as per the latest schedule, followed by banks at five percent. There is no change in Kuwaitization in five sectors - financing and investment, farming, fishing and grazing, real estate, petrochemicals and refining.

and grazing, real estate, petrochemicals and refining.

Kuwait Central Bank topped the list by providing the highest number of jobs and appointments to national labor with 422 jobs, followed by the Public Institution for Social Security with 285, Kuwait Petroleum, Corporation with 269 jobs, Kuwait Public Transportation Company with 251 and Livestock Transport and Trade Company with 232 jobs. PAM hired 75 Kuwaitis including 32 university graduates, 32 diploma holders and 11 with general secondary certificates, while cooperatives provided 32 percent of opportunities.



KUWAIT: Traffic seen on the First Ring Road towards Kuwait City, the country's main business center. — KUNA

Percentage rose in most business sectors



local spotlight

Death pills



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Many people, especially women, like to use weight-loss pills, including supplements or medications, to get rid of excessive weight and reach the ideal weight without dieting. They think these items will curb their appetite, so they will lose weight easily with the least physical effort and in no time. But many people use them without knowing enough about the dangers of these pills to their health, especially if consumed without consulting a doctor or a prescription, and here lies the danger.

Many people in Kuwait were angry recently following the news of the death of a young Kuwaiti woman prior to her wedding day after taking drugs for slimming that she bought when she saw an advertisement on a local social media influencer's account. The angry activists said the girl, who died at the age of 21, was admitted to intensive care, where all her functions collapsed and she died before her wedding day. The incident has highlighted drugs that are marketed through social media sites.

The health ministry launched an investigation on the actual causes of her death. The ministry warned the public to stay away from drugs sold on social networking sites due to their dangers. Constitutional law professor Dr Hesham Al-Saleh said the woman who promoted the slimming pills could be held accountable and imprisoned for promoting medical products without a license and misuse of a telephone.

For years, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the US has said it monitors many unknown products that are marketed through social networks and TV, including unlicensed products that contain highly hazardous substances. These anonymous products contain materials that cause death, adding that the greater threat is that these highly toxic substances are not mentioned on the product and usually presented as natural or herbal, so people deal with them without knowing the chemicals hidden inside.

In 2014, the FDA issued 30 warnings and seven products were banned. I think it is wrong for someone to imagine that it is possible to get rid of excessive weight in record time like a week, as it is common for such pills to mention that they reduce weight - such as 10 kg - in one week, and that they are completely safe and herbal while they contain large amounts of toxins or unknown substances. Experts advise the public not to take any weight loss medication or supplements without referring to specialists in this field, and that changing diet and exercise is the safest way to lose weight.

The ministry of health called on people to cooperate with them to report such pills and not buy them from websites or deal with unlicensed drug sellers. I hope that this unfortunate incident in which a young girl lost her life leads to tighter supervision and control over unauthorized advertising on social media, and creates public awareness that old ways are still the safest and not magic pills.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality workers remove waste during a recent crackdown at makeshift markets in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.



**132,202 cubic
meters of trash
removed in May**



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations department said the public cleanliness and road occupancy in Jahra removed 132,202 cubic meters of trash and changed 874 garbage containers in May, 2019. Separately, the department announced that 80 cubic meters of fruits, vegetables and furniture were seized while 230 cubic meters of waste were removed during recent raids at makeshift markets in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh.

Ministry holds hajj sites' draw

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Deputy chairman of Kuwait hajj mission and head of the awqaf ministry's team Mohammad Al-Mutairi said a draw was held to distribute camps at Arafat to hajj campaigns in front of their representatives. He said the ministry holds the raffle draw to strengthen transparency, which is adopted by the ministry in its strategic plan. He said the draw gives more credibility and assurance to hajj campaign owners. Mutairi valued the cooperation of all owners and representatives during the draw, which went smoothly. Mutairi asked all pilgrims to register with official hajj campaigns as they are approved by the awqaf ministry, and are under the supervision of the mission that provides them with the necessary services.



Local



KUWAIT: A view of Kuwait City from the seafront. — Photo by Ahmad Al-Failakawi (KUNA)

Burgan Bank launch summer young bankers program for 2019

Twenty male and female interns from secondary school trained

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank, a sought-after career destination providing opportunities for young achievers to shine and progress, recently selected and trained 20 male and female interns from secondary school during the summer. Organized by Burgan Bank's Learning and Development Center, the annual summer training program for 2019, was an extensive two-week course that included both practical and theoretical training aimed at equipping the youth with the necessary skills to advance in the world of banking.

Aside from other multifaceted and dynamic training exercises throughout the rest of the year, this ongoing summer educational initiative is centered on its corporate social responsibility to train high-caliber youth and facilitate their role in the Kuwaiti community as resourceful and efficient leaders. Burgan Bank remains committed to enhancing national talent by providing valuable exposure to internal best practices and insights into the modern aspects of banking as part of its long-term objective to encourage more to join the private sector with special consideration to the banking and financial market after graduation. The bank is driven by its belief that capacity-building and mentoring projects at an early stage create seasoned and exceptional professionals.

Through Burgan Bank's two-week summer program that was designed for the secondary school students, aged 15-19 years, the 20 interns benefitted from real life lessons through practical and theoretical knowledge-sharing by visiting the Burgan Bank branches. The field training was conducted under the supervision of the branch managers and staff, who also demonstrated the importance of team work, optimal level of customer service, different banking methods, ways to avoid possible issues and solution-driven

methods and cross selling techniques. In line with its annual corporate social responsibility strategy, Burgan Bank believes that empowering today's youth with a solid foundation in educational and first hand instructive experiences bridges gaps and makes them responsible members of the community. Likewise, reinforcing its mission to build strong leaders of tomorrow, Burgan Bank has showcased its support through sponsorship of other similar several initiatives held under the umbrella of Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KIPCO), which entails meeting changing demands with innovative educational platforms to provide modern day expertise, abilities and core competencies. Some of which were INJAZ-Kuwait, a private-sector driven non-profit NGO who with the help of qualified and dedicated volunteers

Two-week practical, theoretical training

works on developing and building business and entrepreneurial skills of private middle school, high school and university students.

Followed by the Protege program which is a mentorship program dedicated to training young individuals aged 16 to 24 years with a combination of new types of lectures, seminars and trips that encourages them to discover their passions and help them excel in their future careers with the necessary tools to cope with challenges, while also making a positive contribution to society. Additionally, the bank was part of the Tamkeen Youth Empowerment conference which invests and facilitates aspiring young entrepreneurs to start small and medium size enterprises and benefit from networking with other likeminded individuals as well as from the experience of established industrialists and economists.

Burgan Bank will continue to be instrumental in meeting



the youth's needs and fulfill their integration into the Kuwait banking job market through aid of unique training programs that integrate intelligible, methodological and scientific learning by seasoned banking professionals. Burgan Bank's support of this initiative falls under its dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program

sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.

PAS launches sports, summer awareness activities

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Sport (PAS) yesterday launched a number of sports and awareness programs and summer activities that cater to the needs of various segments of society, including those with special needs. Sports and awareness programs include beach tournaments in football, volleyball, basketball, water polo tournament, soap football tournament and sailing championship for young people, said Mishal Al-Hadba, Deputy Director General of the 'Sport for All' division at the authority. Hadba added that the activities also include a bowling championship for men, card playing, the 'reduce your weight' sports awareness program for young people in addition to the organization of summer tournaments for people with special needs for both sexes. — KUNA



KUWAIT: General Director of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Dr Ali Al-Mudhaf met recently with the ambassadors of Yemen and Ukraine to Kuwait, Dr Ali Al Safaa and Oleksandr Balanutsa respectively, to discuss cultural matters and mutual cooperation. PAAET Public Relations and Media Office Director Fatima Al-Azmi attended the meetings.



Local

Kuwait urges UN Security Council to follow up peacekeeping mission role

Conflicts main challenge for youth development, says Kuwaiti envoy

NEW YORK: Kuwait on Friday said it is imperative for the UN Security Council (UNSC) to monitor the role assumed by peacekeeping missions all over the world through a peace building commission. This came in a speech delivered by Nawaf Al-Ahmad, advisor to Kuwait's Permanent Mission to the UN, during a session on boosting partnerships for successful transition operations within the framework of peace building. He called on the Security Council to provide a chance to the commission so as to submit an annual report on its role. It is clear that there is not one approach of transition operations to be suitable for all countries suffering from conflicts, as they are different. National institutions should be tasked with such matters in terms of all conflicts, including the phase of withdrawal of peacekeeping processes to ensure not to face conflicts again, he affirmed. Funding is a challenge facing several operations of peace building, he said, referring to insufficient resources to achieve required duties. As a result, he stressed the need of concerted efforts to guarantee providing enough funding through international contributions like the World Bank and other funds. Ahmad considered that the private sector is a main partner in building and development, saying it can help overcome several funding obstacles.



Kuwait welcomes efforts to improve IRMCT

Improvement efforts

In other news, Kuwait has welcomed efforts made to upgrade the function of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia that included the promotion of cooperation between branches. This came in a speech delivered by Mohammad Hafiz Al-Ajmi, Kuwait's second secretary at the Permanent Mission to the UN, during a recent Security Council session. It is important for the General Assembly to approve the proposed budget without revision and reduction, so that the mechanism can complete the



NEW YORK: Kuwait's UN permanent representative Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a United Nations discussion on conflicts' effect on youth development. — KUNA

remaining work by 2020, he said. He noted that the mechanism will downsize, reduced expenditure should not affect its work. Arresting and prosecuting eight fugitives is the responsibility of not just the mechanism but also of the member states, he added. He urged these states to grant access to information about their whereabouts.

The Kuwaiti official praised rapid measures made

by those responsible for the mechanism that are tasked with looking into the cases. In addition, he lauded measures to be taken by the mechanism on the early release that concern the member states. He highlighted increasing judicial activities pertaining demands on review the announced verdicts, briefing on secret information and claims on violating the court as well as others. — KUNA

Kuwait's strategy body holds UN seminar on SDGs

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) recently organized a discussion forum at the United Nations New York office, which delved into means to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The need to increase global partnerships for the purpose of invention and applying the basis of behavioral economics in order to best serve policies for integra-

tion and empowerment was the focus of these talks. The talks mainly recommended the need to add integration, partnerships and innovation to the list of UN-proposed SDGs. Contributing to the discussions was the SCPD chief Khaled Mahdi and Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences research director Mohammad Al-Ramadan alongside several UN experts. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait, represented by senior General Manager of Corporate Communication Department Sheikhna Nouf Salem Ali Al-Sabah, and the department's Deputy General Manager Amani Al-Waraa, honored veteran meteorologist and astronomer Saleh Al-Ojairi for his cooperation in issuing the bank's annual calendar.

Yemen accords remain ink on paper: Kuwait

NEW YORK: Kuwait has drawn attention of the global community that accords for Yemen have largely remained ink on paper, amid little progress to break the stalemate toward a viable political settlement. Kuwait's UN permanent representative Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, addressing a United Nations Security Council session on Yemen, noted that the Stockholm agreement, worked out seven months ago, has not been implemented.

The stalemate in this respect has persisted although the UNSC passed resolutions 2451, 2452 and 2481, in essence affirming necessity of implementing the Stockholm accord in full, Otaibi noted in his address to the UNSC session. There have been no constructive measures, since hammering out the settlement in Stockholm, toward attaining its objectives, amid the continuing siege of Taiz, plight of prisoners' families and those who have disappeared by coercion. Otaibi welcome resumption of works of the special commission tasked with overseeing troops' redeployment from the Red Sea city of Al-Hodeida following a five-month cessation of its activities, noting the necessity for a pivotal role by the tripartite committee where the Yemeni Government can oversee the forces' redeployment.

Otaibi re-stressed that there would be no 'military solution' to the Yemeni crisis, re-emphasizing the necessity to implement relevant accords. He renewed the State of Kuwait's condemnation, in strongest terms, the ongoing attacks targeting the Kingdom civil and vital installations, re-affirming Kuwait's robust support for the Kingdom with respect of the measures it has been taking to preserve its security and stability. Escalatory aggression by the Houthis group on Saudi Arabia is tantamount to explicit and direct breach of regional security and stability, Otaibi stressed.

The Kuwaiti envoy noted that 850,000 Yemenis have been suffering from deprivation, called for installing a biometric system for tighter control on aid distribution and lauded the Yemeni Government for continuing to pay for public sector personnel and the retirees, in addition to its facilities for fuel deliveries and opening roads for handing over relief supplies to the needy in the troubled country. He appealed to the conflict parties to cooperate with humanitarian and relief agencies and abstain from obstructing their operations. In conclusion, the Kuwaiti permanent representative to the UN renewed the call upon the Yemeni parties to literally adhere to the Stockholm accord, particularly with respect of Al-Hodeida, its three ports, regarding the understanding on prisoners' swap and the Taiz understandings to pave way for a viable political settlement in line with the efforts that have been exerted by the UN special envoy. — KUNA

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Thousands rally in support of police

Erdogan faces a new threat: Former allies



ATHENS: People stand outside buildings in central Athens after an earthquake. A strong, shallow 5.1-magnitude earthquake jolted Athens, knocking out phone connections and causing power outages and minor damage, as worried residents rushed into the streets. —AFP

Athenians settle for an uneasy night

Strong quake jolts Athens, 3 injured

ATHENS: Athenians settled for an uneasy yesterday after a strong 5.1-magnitude earthquake temporarily knocked out phone connections, damaged buildings and caused power outages. Noting that many people were likely afraid to sleep indoors, citizen's protection minister Michalis Chrysohoidis said additional police would be deployed and remain on standby for the entire weekend.

"We are here next to you, we will not leave, we will not sleep until all danger has receded...we will overcome this together," Chrysohoidis said in a televised statement. The quake struck at 1113 GMT northwest of Athens, close to where a 5.9-magnitude quake in September 1999 left 143 people dead in and around the capital. State TV ERT reported that at least four people were slightly hurt-including a pregnant tourist and a young boy-and at least two abandoned buildings in the capital collapsed, while several more suffered damage.

Traffic jams were caused in parts of the capital where power cuts knocked out traffic lights. "It was a very intense quake, we were terrified, everyone started coming out (of the building)," a young woman named Katerina told AFP outside the six-storey cosmetics store where she works. A government spokesman later Friday said "life in Athens is back to normal". Friday's emergency was the second in just over a week for the new

conservative administration of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who took office after a July 7 election.

In the city centre, the marble cupola cross of a historic 19th century church came loose and shattered onto the street below. Another central Athens church had its cupola cross snapped by the tremor, and a disused cargo conveyor belt at the port of Piraeus collapsed, TV footage showed. And a Byzantine-era monastery on the outskirts of Athens was also damaged, the culture ministry said.

'Like an explosion'

The culture ministry said the pregnant tourist was visiting the National Archaeological Museum and was struck by another visitor rushing for the exit. She was hospitalized as a precaution, the ministry said. The boy was struck by a falling chimney, ERT said. News channels broadcast images sent in by viewers which also showed parked cars in central Athens damaged by fallen masonry. Cracks also appeared in some walls in Greece's 170-year-old parliament building.



Quake knocks out phone connections, damages buildings

"It was more like an explosion," another woman told ERT on the city's central Syntagma Square. "We were all very afraid, so we'll stay here for a couple of hours." Government spokesman Stelios Petsas said on television that phone networks had become "overcharged" by the sheer number of users calling to check up on friends and family. SKAI TV said there were 20,000 calls per second, more than on New Year's Eve. The fire department rescued 30 people trapped in elevators in the capital, the citizen's protection minister said.

'Remain calm'

According to the Greek geodynamic institute, the quake had its epicenter near the town of Magoula, 23 kilometers northwest of Athens, and was followed by over a dozen aftershocks. It had a depth of 13 kilometers, it said. State engineers were out checking buildings for structural damage, and two helicopters overflew the quake's epicenter, officials said.

Worried residents and office staff quickly gathered in outdoor areas, and department stores asked shop-

pers to leave but the government denied it had ordered an evacuation alert. "People must remain calm," said Efthymios Lekkas, head of the state anti-quake protection agency. "There is no reason for concern. The capital's buildings are built to withstand a much stronger earthquake," he told ERT.

The US geological institute said Friday's quake had a magnitude of 5.3. "For the time being we cannot be sure whether this was the main earthquake," seismologist Gerassimos Papadopoulos told ERT. "There have been at least three (smaller) aftershocks already, which is a positive sign," he said, adding that the quake was felt as far as the Peloponnese peninsula. "People in the capital must remain calm... they must be psychologically ready for more aftershocks," he said.

Major fault lines

In another natural disaster earlier this month, seven people died and at least 23 were injured-most of them tourists-as a fierce storm ripped through beachfronts in Halkidiki, one of Greece's top tourist areas on July 10. Greece lies on major fault lines and is regularly hit by earthquakes, but they rarely cause casualties. In July 2017, a 6.7-magnitude earthquake killed two people on the island of Kos in the Aegean sea, causing significant damage. —AFP

Shrine to Apostle Peter unearthed

JERUSALEM: Excavations in Israel's Galilee have uncovered remains of an ancient church said to mark the home of the apostles Peter and Andrew, the dig's archaeological director said Friday. Mordechai Aviam of Kinneret Academic College, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel, said this season's dig at nearby El-Araj confirmed it as the site of Bethsaida, a fishing village where Peter and his brother Andrew were born according to the Gospel of John.

The Byzantine church was found near remnants of a Roman-era settlement, matching the location of Bethsaida as described by the first century AD Roman historian Flavius Josephus, Aviam said. The newly-discovered church, he added, fitted the account of Willibald, the Bavarian bishop of Eichstaett who visited the area around 725 AD and reported that a church at Bethsaida had been built on the site of Peter and Andrew's home.

According to Willibald, Aviam says, Bethsaida lay between the biblical sites of Capernaum and Kursi. "We excavated only one third of the church, a bit less, but we have a church and that's for sure," Aviam said. "The plan is of a church, the dates are Byzantine, the mosaic floors are typical... chancel screens, everything that is typical of a church."

"Between Capernaum and Kursi there is

only one place where a church is described by the visitor in the eighth century and we discovered it, so this is the one," he said. Christians recognize Saint Peter, originally a fisherman, as one of the first followers of Jesus and the leader of the early Church following the ascension.

The Catholic Church also venerates him as its first pope. El-Araj, known as Beit Haseck in Hebrew, is not the only candidate for the site of Bethsaida. About two kilometers away at e-Tell, digging has been going on since 1987 and according to the National Geographic website has unearthed major ninth-century BC fortifications and "Roman-period houses with fishing equipment, including iron anchors and fishing hooks, and the remains of what may be a Roman temple".

Aviam is convinced that he and his international team, with professor R Steven Notley of New York City's Nyack College as academic director, are digging in the right spot. "We have a Roman village, in the village we have pottery, coins, also stone vessels which are typical of first century Jewish life, so now we strengthen our suggestion and identification that El-Araj is a much better candidate for Bethsaida than e-Tell," he said.

"It has been excavated for the past 32 years. We started digging two years ago because we thought it's the better one and now we have the proofs." Notley, interviewed in Israeli daily Haaretz, is a little more cautious, saying the clincher will be if complete excavation of the El-Araj church reveals an inscription. "It would be normal to find an inscription in a church of the Byzantine period, describing in whose memory it was built, for instance," he told the paper. —AFP

From Kabul to Baghdad, a tale of 2 'Green Zones'

KABUL: A labyrinth of concrete blast walls, spotlights, and checkpoints are eating up ever more of Kabul, standing in stark contrast to a similar area in Iraq's Baghdad where easing tensions have seen its barricades come down. The tale of the two "Green Zones" provides a snapshot of the dramatically changing nature of the Afghan conflict, long overshadowed by the war in Iraq where multiple insurgencies following the toppling of Saddam Hussein in 2003 turned Baghdad into a warzone.

But following the so-called Islamic State group's loss of territory in Syria and Iraq, Baghdad has experienced a sharp reduction in violence. AFP reported recently on the reopening of Baghdad's Green Zone, with hundreds of streets long sealed off from the public opened as Iraq gets back on its feet after decades of conflict. Not so in central Kabul, once known as a city of gardens and revered by Babur, the nature-loving founder of the Mughal empire.

Today its once-leafy avenues are increasingly blocked by concrete. Towering blast walls continue to expand along with the addition of an already dizzying number of checkpoints that keep traffic perennially gridlocked and residents stressed across the city. The expansion began with a devastating truck bomb near the Green Zone in 2017 that killed some 150 people and wounded hundreds more, becoming the deadliest attack since the US invasion of 2001.

It caused extensive damage to the nearby German Embassy, among other buildings, and blew windows out hundreds of meters away. Shortly after, officials announced that they were expanding the ring of steel around the heart of the city - though with more than a hundred of ways in to Kabul they have admitted it is impossible to control all entrances.

Trucks entering Kabul en route to the area must now pass through a new sophisticated scanner near the airport to detect explosives, often waiting hours before they can proceed. Congestion has grown as more of the area, which contains some of Kabul's key traffic arteries, is sealed off - a security concern, with bombers often targeting rush hour. Diplomats are increasingly avoiding the roads, opting for expensive minutes-long helicopter flights to the city's airport. Diesel generators add to the roar of the choppers passing every few minutes over once tranquil streets.

Only a tiny portion of the Afghan population is allowed to enter the Green Zone, where vehicles are scanned again and armed sentries at myriad checkpoints inspect cars further. Most Kabul residents have been locked out of the area for years. "The last time I drove my taxi there was during the Taleban rule," recalls Shir Mohammad, a 48-year-old taxi driver.

The zone, originally established in 2001 and encompassing buildings such as NATO headquarters and the presidential palace, is classified as "green" in security lingo, while most other areas in the capital are labeled "red" due to their high-threat levels. In the years after the invasion, as security deteriorated across Afghanistan, the resurgent Taleban and in recent years IS stepped up their attacks on Kabul.

Attacks have dipped slightly in recent months, as the US and Taleban hold ongoing talks aimed at ending the nearly 18-year-old conflict. But even if a



KABUL: A US military helicopter flies towards the Green Zone in Kabul. —AFP

breakthrough comes the threat from other insurgent groups remains, and Kabul officials say they are moving forward with the plans to expand the Green Zone.

The expansion is planned mostly at the north end of the Green Zone near the airport, with the ultimate aim of building a new access road, a security official requesting anonymity tells AFP. The plans have gotten off to a slow start, the official admits, saying hundreds of land plots must first be leveled and its owners relocated to a new area. Several officials questioned by AFP refused to speak about the specifics of the project, citing security concerns.

Kabul residents, often trapped in their cars as helicopters travelling in and out of the Green Zone whirl overhead, are hopeful the situation will not last forever. "If the Green Zone opens again it will dramatically ease the traffic pressure in the city," suggests Mohammad. Shukrullah Khan, another Kabul resident, is anxiously awaiting the day when it "opens up to public and the blast walls are removed from the city". "Kabul has become an ugly city," he adds. "They should move the Green Zone to the outskirts." —AFP

International

Far from Cape Town tourist sites, gangland battle rages

Entrenched gang culture fuelling killings . Poor communities under siege

CAPE TOWN: Convoys of armoured vehicles and soldiers with assault rifles are patrolling gang-ridden streets in some suburbs of Cape Town as authorities seek to quell escalating violence that has killed hundreds of people this year. Residents who gathered in Manenberg and Hanover Park to watch as soldiers assisted police on Thursday afternoon welcomed the new deployment to an area that officials liken to a war zone. But by Friday morning, the troops had moved on, leaving many uncertain about what to expect next. “The army is a good thing for now, but when they are gone the gang fights will start again,” said Nizaam Sharmar, a 32-year-old construction worker. Far from popular Cape Town tourist attractions, such as Robben Island and Table Mountain, a life-and-death battle is raging in the vast region known as the Cape Flats.

Bloodshed over the past seven months in mainly poor black and mixed-race areas has killed more than 2,000 people, almost half gang-related, in a city of 4 million, Western Cape provincial officials have said. Community activists say an increase in the availability of illegal firearms is a factor. Charges have been brought against some police officers accused of diverting weapons to criminal gangs.

Experts also point to a failure by authorities to address deep-seated poverty that persists in many black and mixed-race areas 25 years after white minority rule ended. “In Cape Town alone there are around 350,000 kids on the streets who are not in school, not in jobs, and they are causing trouble,” said Don Pinnock, a criminologist at the University of Cape Town. “And then the syndicates come in and say we’ll pay you so much to distribute these things, to protect this area, take out those guys.”



Soldiers called in to help with Cape gangs

daubed on walls in the area, where rows of council flats house families amid a tangle of washing lines strung up with clothing.

Groups of young men, many with visible gang or prison tattoos, stand on street corners. “If you here, then it’s just about death and innocent people dying,” said Dawn Pieters, whose 17-year-old son Trevor was shot dead by unknown assailants in Manenberg on June 2. “I don’t know even how that gangster that shoots an innocent person feels ... Do they even have hearts?”

Pieters was leaving a friend’s home when shots rang out from a nearby shop, where her son had gone to buy sweets before watching a replay of his favorite team Liverpool contesting the Champions League final. The motive for the killing is not known. Pieters said her son, one of five children, was not affiliated with

any gangs. “He didn’t do anything to nobody, that is the tragedy of it all,” she said, tears welling in her eyes. Stray bullets frequently kill innocent bystanders, police and residents said. Others are shot as part of gang initiations.

“Life is very cheap here in Manenberg. People get killed for nothing, for a packet of Tik,” local entrepreneur Shafiek Charles said of the popular methamphetamine drug, which can sell for as little as 20 rand (\$1.44). “For the children

and youth, it is not easy,” said Soraya Samson, a mother of two teenagers who lives four doors down from two drug dens and a known gangster’s home. “When you come out of your gate you must always look - is it quiet or what is going on?” Lameez Jordaan recalled hearing gunshots in her street late one night.

“We just heard BANG, and I told my daughter to get down on the floor,” she said. “When we came upstairs, we saw the bullet hole in the window. It went through the curtain and into the cupboard door.” In Mitchell’s Plain, parents wearing yellow vests have banded together to escort children to and from school. “They are protecting our kids from elements like gangsters,” said Glenda Arendse, who coordinates the initiative dubbed “the walking bus”. “Time after time they get robbed by gangsters or mugged, by taking off their phones.”



CAPE TOWN: A convoy of South African National Defense Force drive through a street close to Manenberg in Cape Town. South African soldiers started on July 18, 2019 to patrol in Cape Town’s crime-ridden townships under a deployment ordered by the government to counter a surge of shootings, gang violence and murders. —AFP

A last resort

In November, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa launched a new specialised anti-gang unit in Cape Town in a bid to curb gangland killings, but there has been limited success. “The army was really the last resort, and we didn’t call for it lightly,” said Albert Fritz, the provincial minister responsible for community safety. “But we’ve seen the escalation of people dying.” The South African National Defense Force said last Friday it would deploy a battalion with support elements to communities in the Cape Flats, including the shantytown of Philippi, where

almost a dozen people were killed earlier this month. “Innocent people are being shot and we need drastic change, but it’s just like they showing their faces and then leaving,” said 28-year-old mother of two Ledgene, who did not want to give her full name Friday for fear of reprisals. Army spokesman Brigadier General Mafi Mgobozi said troops had moved to Khayelitsha on Friday, the largest black shantytown in Cape Town. In Khayelitsha, tens of thousands of people live cheek by jowl in a squalid sea of shacks - unnumbered homes on nameless streets, perfect conditions for criminals and a nightmare for police. —Reuters

4 killed as protests spread in southern Ethiopian city

ADDIS ABABA: Four people have died of gunshot wounds in the southern Ethiopian city of Hawassa, where protesters have been demanding the establishment of a breakaway state, a hospital executive said yesterday. Security forces carried out arrests as violence spread to districts outside the regional capital on a second day of protests, state media reported.

The Sidama, the largest ethnic group in the southern region, have been agitating for their own semi-autonomous state, posing the latest political challenge to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Expectations had been high that they would unilaterally declare their own region on Thursday.

Ethiopia is already partitioned into nine semi-autonomous regions. The constitution requires the government to organize a referendum for any ethnic group that wants to form a new entity within a year of them requesting it. The SLM, which has been leading calls for the new state, accepted government demands for a delay pending a plebiscite before the end of the year. But other parties were unhappy and protests erupted Thursday.

Sidama activists have accused the

security forces of opening fire on protesters who set tyres alight and lobbed stones. “There are four people dead, three men and one woman,” said Zinaw Serniso, general manager of the Hawassa Referral Hospital. One of the victims had been shot in the head while another was shot in the stomach. Three of the victims died on Thursday, while the fourth, a woman, was admitted and died on Friday from injuries believed to have been sustained the previous day.

Regional police commissioner Tewodros Woldemichael told state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting Corporate that police were arresting people who had participated in violence. He acknowledged that unrest had spread outside the city. “Efforts are underway to put under control the violence which started in Hawassa and later spread to the neighboring Sidama woredas (district),” he said. Hawassa residents said the city was calm Friday but that protests and clashes with security forces continued on the outskirts.

Desalegne Mesa, a spokesman for the Sidama Liberation Movement, said party members in and around Hawassa had reported 19 deaths in total, though that number could not be independently verified. Desalegne called on the government to reduce the security presence in the Sidama region. In addition to regional and federal police, soldiers from the Ethiopian military have been patrolling the streets of Hawassa. It is unclear who has been shooting protesters.



AWASA: Youth from the Sidama ethnic group, the largest in southern Ethiopia, ride in the back of a truck at Hawassa city during celebrations over plans by local elders to declare the establishment of a breakaway region for the Sidama later this week. —AFP

‘Brutal killings’

“The community is angry because of the delays of the government to answer their constitutional question,” Desalegne said. “The community has to remain stable and tolerant, and we’ll see what the government does to solve this problem in a constitutional way. It’s not good to solve problems by force.” Tessema Elias, a law professor at Hawassa University and an activist pushing for the formation of a new state, said a group of around five prominent Sidama activists had been arrested Friday. He said the activists had been trying to convene a

meeting to calm the population, and warned that their arrests could exacerbate tensions.

“There is a lot of misinformation going around,” Tessema said. “People are not informed and there are a lot of exaggerations. I am getting a lot of reports of very brutal killings but I cannot give an exact number.” The Sidama issue is the latest headache for Abiy. He has gained high marks abroad for his drive to reform the nation after decades of iron-fisted rule. But change in this highly diverse country has also helped to fuel ethnic violence, displacing more than two million people. —AFP

Erdogan faces a new threat: Former allies

ANKARA: Following losses in key cities this year, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan now risks losing more voters as former allies stick their head above the parapet and appear to be on the verge of creating new parties. Former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and ex-economy minister Ali Babacan have both made statements this month criticizing Turkey’s current trajectory under Erdogan.

Rumors have swirled in Ankara for months that Babacan and Davutoglu may establish their own political parties to challenge the Islamic-rooted AKP that has dominated Turkish politics this century. On July 8, Babacan, who is credited with overseeing Turkey’s economic boom during the AKP’s first decade in power, dealt the first blow when he resigned from the party.

He claimed Turkey needed a “new vision” and cited “deep differences” over policy, hinting a new party - or “new effort” - was “inevitable”. With double-digit inflation, slower growth and a weakened lira, many hope Babacan will be the answer to Turkey’s economic woes and an alternative to Erdogan. Ten days after Babacan, Davutoglu gave an interview broadcast live online in which

he appeared to suggest he would be ready to set up a new party. Erdogan has downplayed the threat but also warned Babacan against splitting the “ummah” - using the Arabic word for the Muslim community.

Experts say the president will not quietly accept these challenges. “Erdogan is likely to combat any threat he sees to his personalized rule,” said Lisel Hintz, assistant professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins University. She pointed to the jailing of Kurdish leader Selahattin Demirtas who had vehemently opposed Erdogan, and the ongoing trials of civil society leaders and AKP opponents. Turkey has been to the polls eight times in just five years, but now any new party will have potentially until the next elections in 2023 to create momentum and attract voters.

Erdogan’s disappointment

When he announced he was standing down as prime minister in 2016 after two years, Davutoglu vowed never to criticize Erdogan in public. That promise lay in tatters this week as he spoke online for three hours, saying he would remain within the AKP for now, but that: “If there is no other option, a (new) party must be set up.”

For now, it appears unlikely that Davutoglu will join forces with other splitters from the AKP, having been a fairly divisive figure himself in the past. However, there have been reports that former president and co-founder of the AKP, Abdullah Gul, could act as an “honorary



ANKARA: Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan (right) prays next to a Turkish soldier wearing a ottoman uniform during a third anniversary commemoration rally at the Ataturk International Airport in Istanbul. —AFP

chairman” to a party led by Babacan. It had been mooted that Gul would run against Erdogan in last year’s presidential elections, but he never came forward.

Erdogan criticized Babacan after his resignation, saying they disagreed over many issues, including interest rates, which the president controversially believes must be kept low to reduce inflation. When asked if he was disappointed by Babacan, Davutoglu and Gul, Erdogan responded with evident exasperation: “For the love of Allah, should this question be asked? If one is not disappointed with them, who would one be

disappointed with?” But he said previous MPs had left the party and been largely forgotten.

Tackling the economy

The AKP came to power after the Turkish economy suffered a severe financial crisis in 2001, and needed an International Monetary Fund loan to emerge from the embers. Eighteen years later, Turkey is again in an economic slump. Inflation is at 15.7 percent, the rate of unemployment is 13 percent while the economy contracted by 2.6 percent in the first quarter of 2019. —AFP

US offers \$7 million to find Hezbollah’s agent

BUENOS AIRES: The United States on Friday offered a \$7 million reward to find a Hezbollah operative accused of masterminding a deadly 1994 attack on a Jewish center in Buenos Aires, as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo sought to unite Latin American nations against the militants. Pompeo visited to mark the 25th anniversary of Argentina’s deadliest attack, lighting a candle at the site of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association where a plaque lists the names of the 85 dead.

“They were killed by members of a terrorist group, Hezbollah, and had help that day from Iran,” Pompeo told a remembrance ceremony, saying that Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guards provided “logistical support and funding.” “We have not forgotten, and we never will,” said Pompeo, who was joined by Latin American government ministers in Buenos Aires for counter-terrorism talks.

The United States offered \$7 million to find alleged perpetrator Salman Raouf Salman and imposed sanctions on him, in tandem with Argentina’s announcement that it was designating Hezbollah as a terrorist group. Ariel Eichbaum, president of the Jewish center known by its Spanish acronym AMIA, said responsibility for the attack lay with Hezbollah and Iran, the primary sponsor of the Lebanese Shiite Muslim militant movement.

Eichbaum asked all countries to “help us find those responsible and bring them to justice.” After 25 years, no one has been brought to trial and the case has been bogged down in Argentina amid allegations of political interference and high-level corruption. Iran and Hezbollah both deny responsibility for the attack, and persistent skeptics have questioned the motivation. Hezbollah was also accused of carrying out a deadly attack two years earlier against the Israeli embassy.

The United States is encouraging Latin American countries to follow its lead in aggressively designating groups or individuals as terrorists, as demonstrated by Argentina’s action. “In the face of a global threat like Hezbollah, it is every sovereign nation’s obligation and responsibility to comply with sanctions designed to keep all of us safe,” Pompeo said as he opened the talks with fellow ministers. “Solidarity is the antidote to the terror threat,” he said. —AFP

US sanctions 4 Iraqis for abuses and corruption

WASHINGTON: The United States has sanctioned two Iraqi militia leaders and two former governors for human rights abuses and corruption. The sanctions target any property they own or have an interest in that is within the United States or under the control of “US persons,” as well as “any entities” in which they have a 50 percent or greater stake, the Treasury Department said.

Ahmed Al-Juburi, the former governor of Iraq’s Salaheddin province, was sanctioned over corruption and has also “been known to protect his personal interests by accommodating Iran-backed proxies,” Treasury said in a statement. The two militia leaders, Rayan Al-Kildani and Waad Qado - the former a Christian and the latter a member of the Shabak minority - were both sanctioned over “serious human rights abuse” by them or their organizations.

Treasury cited a video circulated in May 2018 in which Kildani “cut off the ear of a handcuffed detainee,” and said that his forces have “systematically looted homes” and “reportedly illegally seized and sold agricultural land.” —AFP

International

Ex-jihadist Joya now fights to ‘reprogram’ extremists

American IS ‘sniper’ charged in New York

WASHINGTON: Tania Joya has devoted her life to “reprogramming” extremists and reintroducing them into society – a process she understands well as a “former Islamic jihadist” herself. “My aim is for them to feel a sense of remorse and to train them so that they can be good citizens once they are released from prison, so they can adjust to society,” Joya said during a visit to Washington, to present a project on preventing extremist violence.

Born in 1984 near London to a Muslim Bangladeshi family, Joya grew up confronted by racism and the struggles of integration. She radicalized at age 17, after the September 11 terror attacks in New York and Osama bin Laden’s call for a global jihad.

In 2004, she married an American Muslim-convert, Yahya al-Bahrumi (born John Georgelas). She began advocating for an Islamic state, for which her three children would be soldiers. But in 2013, her husband took her and their children against her will to northwestern Syria to join jihadist insurgents. Joya reported her husband to US authorities and, after three weeks, fled Syria to the United States. Joya settled in Texas, her husband’s home state. There, she rejected Islam and changed her life, divorced and re-married.

Re-programming, giving them hope

Yahya, her first husband, joined the Islamic State group, which would soon control large swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq. He was

in charge of the group’s English-language propaganda, and Joya said he became the “highest-ranking American” in the IS group. He died in 2017 during fighting in Mayadin, in northern Syria, as the so-called IS “caliphate” crumbled. However this created a new problem – Western jihadists or their spouses and children wanting to come home.

Joya realized that she had something to offer. “It’s really important to de-radicalize them, rehabilitate” these people, she said. “It’s reprogramming them and giving them a sense of hope in the political process.” It’s also important to “get them to understand the psychology and the patterns... what led them to extremism,” understanding “the rejection many in the US and Europe faced growing up there, the cultural conflict, the crisis they went through,” she said.

“Once it’s all explained to them, very logically, they will accept it just as I did.” Joya favors repatriating foreign rebels from the Middle East so they can be judged in their countries of origin. While that is the US policy, many European countries such as France are wary of taking in the jihadists. In May and June, 11 French nationals were sentenced to die in Iraq for their affiliation to IS.

Joya has campaigned for the return of Shamima Begum, who joined the jihadist group when she was just 15 but now wants to return home to Britain. However Begum’s lack of remorse has turned public opinion against

her, and the British government stripped her of her citizenship in February. Kurdish-run camps in northeast Syria have taken in some 12,000 foreign fighters from 40 different countries, including 4,000 women and 8,000 children whose fathers are jihadists.

‘Inoculation’ against indoctrination

Countries with jihadists stranded in refugee camps “are responsible for these individuals,” said Joya. “We can’t just push them off to the Middle East, to the Kurdish people... the abuses they’re facing in these camps are only confirming their beliefs of radicalization.” Joya is participating in the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) program organized by the Clarion Program, a US non-profit dedicated to educating people “about the growing phenomenon of Islamic extremism,” according to its website.

The PVE program provides “communication models” that offer “workshops for youth so that before a child is even indoctrinated or introduced to radical ideologies, they’ve really been inoculated” against religious and ideological extremism, said national program coordinator Shireen Qudosi. “That goes from gangs, to radical ideologies: antifa, neo-Nazi groups, Islamist extremism,” she said.

IS ‘sniper’ charged

In another development, a naturalized American who was a sniper for the Islamic



WASHINGTON: Tania Joya, the ex-wife of a senior leader for the Islamic State, speaks during an interview with AFP about her experience and the Preventing Violent Extremism Training, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. — AFP

State group has been charged in New York with material support for a terror group after being captured in Syria and repatriated to the United States, the Justice Department announced Friday. Kazakhstan-born Ruslan

Maratovich Asainov fought for the Islamic State in Syria for five years before he was captured by the Syrian Democratic Forces and handed over to US custody, the department said. — AFP

Germany remembers the heroes in Hitler assassination bid

BERLIN: Germany paid tribute yesterday to Claus von Stauffenberg and others who sought to assassinate Adolf Hitler 75 years ago, a plot that was recognized only belatedly but which a resurgent far-right is now seeking to expropriate. In the attempt on July 20, 1944, Stauffenberg and other high-ranking conspirators within the Nazi regime sought to kill Hitler at his Wolf’s Lair headquarters.

The plot was to seize control of the regime and make peace with Western allies to end World War II. But Hitler survived the bombing and Stauffenberg and other key figures in Operation Valkyrie were executed the same night. Chancellor Angela Merkel underlined the importance of remembering this anniversary, at a time when far-right forces are once again gaining ground with their nationalist line. “This day is a reminder to us, not only of those who acted on July 20, but also of everyone who stood up against Nazi rule,” she said in her weekly podcast. “We are likewise obliged today to oppose all tendencies that seek to destroy democracy. That includes right-wing extremism.”

‘Coward’ or hero?

Stauffenberg and his Operation Valkyrie was brought to the big screen in 2008 when Tom Cruise played the former count as a hero who led an act of resistance against Hitler and his deadly regime. But at home, the verdict on Stauffenberg is more mixed, with some critics branding him a committed Nazi who only changed sides when it was clear that Hitler was going to lose the war. In the aftermath of World War II, some in then West Germany – where former Nazis had assumed key positions in the new democratic country – also viewed him as a traitor. Kurt Salterberg, a soldier at Wolf’s Lair when the attempt took place, recalled that “the troops’ condemnation of Stauffenberg was unanimous” then. “We thought he was a coward who didn’t use a pistol but a bomb so that he could get out unscathed,” Salterberg told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in an interview.

In fact, hundreds of resistance fighters who were executed over their involvement in the plot were also only given due recognition in 2009, when their murders were finally branded an injustice by the court, said Johannes Tuchel, who heads the German Resistance Memorial, in a commentary for TAZ daily. With the lingering ambiguity on Stauffenberg’s legacy, far-right forces, including the AfD party whose leader has downplayed the Nazi era as a “speck of birdpoo”, have claimed to be the inheritors of the heroic act.

The anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany, which is now the biggest opposition party in parliament, has repeatedly used the word “resistance” to characterize its battle against mainstream parties today. “The calculation of the new right, the AfD and the (far-right movement) Identitarians is clear: to portray themselves as victims of the ‘chancellor-dictator’, to see a ‘dictatorship’ in a free country, and to gain legitimacy for their own political activities by making the reference to political activities,” said Tuchel. — AFP



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (left) and Inspector General of the German Armed Forces Bundeswehr Eberhard Zorn stand in front of the memorial plaque after laying a wreath of flowers during the memorial ceremony for the 75th anniversary of the attempted assassination of Adolf Hitler. — AFP

Netanyahu makes history as Israel’s longest-serving PM

JERUSALEM: Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday surpassed founding father David Ben-Gurion as Israel’s longest-serving prime minister, having notched up a list of diplomatic and economic successes but with right-wing leadership many see as deeply divisive. The 69-year-old Netanyahu have been Israel’s prime minister for a total of 4,876 days, over 13 years, according to a calculation by the Israel Democracy Institute think tank.

He was first at the helm between 1996-1999, and then again since 2009. His latest apparent victory in April elections turned sour after he failed to form a coalition government and opted to move towards new elections instead. He faces the new general election on September 17 while under threat of possible corruption charges in the months ahead, including for allegedly receiving pricey cigars and champagne in return for favors.

Netanyahu’s legion of supporters in Israel point to what they see as his effective management of a small country in a volatile region, a series of diplomatic breakthroughs and the country’s growing economy. His many critics say he has demonized political opponents and Israel’s Arab minority by embracing populism and has too often put his personal

ambitions above the long-term good of the country.

He has sought to sideline Israel’s continuing occupation of Palestinian territory and has been backed in that strategy by US President Donald Trump’s administration, which has swung American policy firmly in Israel’s favor. In tandem, Netanyahu has tried to leverage the common concerns of Israel and Gulf Arab states about Iran into improved ties in the region – and has had some success.

He has never been at a loss for words in describing what he sees as his achievements. “We’ve proven that Israel can be turned from a small country that is situated in the corner of the Middle East into a major power in the world,” he told the strongly pro-Netanyahu Israel Hayom newspaper in an interview this week. The popular image of the man he is now surpassing in some ways stands in sharp contrast to that of “Bibi”, Netanyahu’s nickname since childhood.

‘Always beyond reproach’

Ben-Gurion, who led the socialist Mapai party that declared Israel’s independence in 1948, lived a spartan lifestyle that reflected his generation’s sense of mission, said Peter Medding of Hebrew University in Jerusalem and whose books include “The Founding of Israeli Democracy 1948-1967”. “They saw themselves as committed to the communal good,” said Medding. War with Israel’s Arab neighbors surrounded the founding of the state, and the political establishment realized that “unless the collective interest gets looked after, promoted and strengthened, there’ll be no individual interests”, he added.

Netanyahu, the son of a historian clearly mindful of his legacy, has in the past compared himself to Ben-Gurion,



Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu

though the two emerged from two different strains of Israeli ideology. Comparing the two is tough both due to their very different eras and Ben-Gurion’s heroic stature, said Shmuel Sandler, a political science professor emeritus from Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv.

“A founding father is always beyond reproach,” he said. But one trait that Netanyahu does share with Ben-Gurion is a sense of history, said Sandler. “They both have a historic point of view,” he said, noting Ben-Gurion’s self-documentation in diaries and Netanyahu’s allusions to history and historic events in his speeches. One of Netanyahu’s main agendas has been preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. That in some ways also links the two leaders, Sandler said. — AFP

Kosovo PM quits after being called to Hague

PRISTINA: Kosovo’s prime minister said he was resigning because he had been called to a war crimes court in The Hague to answer prosecutors’ questions related to Kosovo’s violent independence struggle two decades ago. “The reason for this decision is because of a call I have received to be interviewed by a specialist chamber as a suspect,” Ramush Haradinaj said, his eyes welling in tears as he spoke to reporters after a government session. “Now the responsibility is to the president to start consultations and to announce an early election date,” he said, adding he would travel to The Hague next week.

Haradinaj, a former guerrilla commander, has always denied any wrongdoing and said he is ready to face any accusations. The Specialist Chamber was set up in 2015 to try ex-Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrillas for alleged atrocities in the war of 1998-99 that led to independence from Serbia. Haradinaj’s resignation will cause further delays in troubled normalization talks between Kosovo and Serbia.

They have been frozen since November 2018 when Kosovo introduced a 100 percent trade tariffs on all products made in Serbia. Asked about Haradinaj’s case, Christopher Bennet, the spokesman for the prosecutor, told Reuters: “Rule 30 states that I have an obligation to protect the privacy of every individual. I cannot confirm anything.” The chamber in The Hague is governed by Kosovo law, but staffed by international judges and prosecutors. It is funded by the European Union, which both Kosovo and Serbia hope to join.

The court sits in the Dutch city partly to help ensure protection of witnesses. Previous cases involving high-ranking former KLA officers have seen witness intimidation. This is the second time Haradinaj has resigned as prime minister. In 2005 he was indicted by the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal for former Yugoslavia. He was tried and acquitted twice by that court. Kosovo President Hashim Thaci said he respected Haradinaj’s decision and would consult with political parties on forming another government or holding snap elections. “I believe in the purity of the war of the Kosovo Liberation Army and I believe in the high moral values of the soldiers who fought for freedom,” Thaci said in a statement. One of his own advisers was also called for questioning in The Hague, he added. Kosovo war veterans organizations say more than 50 ex-KLA guerrillas had been questioned as witnesses or suspects in atrocities against Serbs during the 1998-99 conflict, but that none had been indicted to date. Thaci and parliament speaker Kadri Veseli are also ex-KLA commanders and local media say they could also be summoned to The Hague for questioning. — Reuters



NEW YORK: People cool down at a fountain on Washington Square Park in New York. — AFP

Heat wave gripping eastern, central US

NEW YORK: A massive heat wave that has enveloped the US Midwest pushed into the Northeast on Friday, ushering in temperatures that could top 100 degrees Fahrenheit in Washington and prompting utilities to take steps to prevent power outages. The huge blob of warm air is likely to blanket the region, little to a third of the US population, through today with little overnight relief, said meteorologist David Roth of the National Weather Service’s Weather Prediction Center.

“There are 124 million people under a heat advisory or excessive heat warning – that’s a third of the population,” Roth said. As of Friday, the heat wave sprawled from Kansas to the Atlantic Coast, and from South Carolina north to Maine. It was expected to intensify today.

Utilities in the eastern half of the United States expect to have enough resources to meet power demand on Friday but asked consumers to turn down air conditioners to avoid putting stress on the system, which could cause outages. “I’m very confident,” Consolidated Edison Inc President Tim Cawley said when asked at a news conference if the utility, which serves New York City, could quickly respond to any outages in the country’s most populous city. He said 4,000 employees were poised to work 12-hour shifts over the weekend.

On Saturday, parts of Manhattan lost power for hours, darkening Broadway theaters, halting subways and closing restaurants and shops in a partial blackout blamed on a faulty piece of equipment. Early on Friday, as the heat intensified in downtown Madison, Wisconsin, 11,600

homes and businesses lost power after fires erupted at two substations near the state capitol.

With temperatures forecast to hit 93F (34C) later in the day, Governor Tony Evers asked nonessential state workers to stay home. By midafternoon, power had been restored to all but about 3,500 customers, according to Madison Gas and Electric. On the East Coast, temperatures on Friday were forecast to reach near 100F (38C) in Washington, 97F (36C) in Philadelphia and 91F (33C) in New York, where it would feel more like 110F (43C) with high humidity, Roth said.

On Saturday, the forecast called for 99F (37C) in New York and Philadelphia and 100F (38C) in Washington. Much the same was in the forecast for today. “It’s crazy,” said Fonik Bitaly, 28, who was entering his sixth hour of work dressed as a costumed character, Batman, in New York City’s Times Square. “It’s really, really hard to be outside right now. You need to drink lots of water or you’ll be in serious trouble.”

The dangers posed by extreme heat and humidity prompted officials to scrap outdoor competitions, including horse races at Saratoga Race Course in upstate New York and today’s New York City Triathlon. “As soon as you get outside, it’s like ‘Boom!’” said Loig Loury, 32, who moved to New York from Paris last year. “The heat attacks you.”

To keep cool during past heat waves, suburban children typically ran under lawn sprinklers and city kids frolicked in the spray of fire hydrants, but the New York City Fire Department warned that special spray caps that firehouses hand out should be used to avoid creating a hazard. “If you open a fire hydrant without these caps, you endanger your neighbors because the water pressure drops and our firefighters are not able to fight fires,” FDNY Commissioner Daniel Nigro wrote on social media. — Reuters

International

UAE joins Washington-led call against ‘abuse of blasphemy’

20 countries sign the joint statement on blasphemy

WASHINGTON: The United Arab Emirates has joined a US-led call to prevent the abuse of blasphemy laws, which are on the books in much of the Islamic world. The United Arab Emirates was one of only three Muslim-majority nations along with Albania and Kosovo, both known for moderation, that signed a statement on blasphemy and apostasy laws at the end of a ministerial-level meeting on religious freedom in Washington.

The statement noted that the laws “are often used as a pretext to justify vigilantism or mob violence in the

name of religion, or as a pretext to pursue retribution related to personal grievances.” “We see governments using such laws to wrongfully imprison and punish individuals whose views on matters of religion or belief may differ from official narratives or the views of majority populations,” it said.

“We call on governments that utilize these laws to free any individuals imprisoned on such grounds, and to repeal blasphemy, apostasy and other laws that impede the exercise of freedoms of expression and religion or belief, in a manner inconsistent with international law.”

Blasphemy remains a punishable offense in the United Arab Emirates. The latest State Department report on religious freedom said, quoting local press, that a court in July 2018 sentenced a man to seven years in prison followed by deportation for a phone message deemed to be blasphemous. But the United Arab Emirates, a close US ally, has won international praise for recent steps including welcoming Pope Francis in February on the first-ever papal visit to the Arabian Peninsula.

The United Arab Emirates also held a conference as part of the US religious freedom initiative, a key

priority for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Blasphemy is an especially explosive issue in Pakistan, where Christian woman Asia Bibi was sentenced to death and two of her high-profile defenders assassinated before she was able to leave for Canada in May. Vice President Mike Pence, addressing the ministerial earlier on Thursday, urged Pakistan to free another person jailed for blasphemy, university lecturer Junaid Hafeez. A total of 20 countries signed the joint statement on blasphemy including the United States, Britain, Italy and Poland. — AFP

‘My entire world is gone’: Floods wreak havoc in N Pakistan

LASWA VALLEY: Once a small cluster of houses stood along a gentle stream in Pakistani Kashmir. Now only jagged rocks and a few damaged homes remain after torrential rains wreaked havoc on the picturesque mountain village in the Laswa Valley. More than 270 people have been killed in recent days across South Asia as monsoon rains deluged large swathes of the subcontinent, flooding waterways and destroying communities.

On Sunday evening, the normally quiet stream running through the valley morphed into a raging current - uprooting everything in its path. Twenty-three people are missing, presumed dead by officials. Seven others were injured, while 150 houses and businesses were destroyed and about 50 buildings damaged in the seven hamlets spread across Laswa.

“I was holding the hand of my mother trying to save her, but unfortunately I lost her hand and she was swept away by the floodwater,” says Amin Butt, who was visiting his family in Kashmir. “Within a minute my entire world was gone, my mother was gone and my home,” Butt said, his eyes misting over. “We have nothing left here now except for the stones.”

Hard rain

Kashmir has been divided since the end of British colonial rule in 1947 and both New Delhi and Islamabad claim the former Himalayan kingdom in full. Located just a few kilometers north of the Line of Control - the heavily militarized de-facto border dividing the disputed Himalayan territory - Laswa has been frequently shelled during bouts of fighting between Pakistan and India. But in recent years it had been largely spared despite increasing tensions. On



LASWA VALLEY: A Pakistani Kashmiri flood-affected victim holds her belongings near her damaged house in Laswa Valley, near the Line of Control in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. — AFP

Sunday, the tragedy brought by the floods reminded residents of the horrors of war from the past.

Shahnawaz Butt lost his wife and three of his six children in the disaster. “I was unable to see their faces again because their bodies were not found,” he sighs. “I would like to appeal to whoever hears my voice, to provide us with the basic necessities of life like electricity and water,” he pleads. Several residents interviewed by AFP criticized the slow response by officials, saying supplies arrived slowly by the single road that enters the valley

rather than being flown in. White tents provided by the Pakistani army now stand in place of the homes that resided there just days ago, where survivors receive condolences from their neighbors.

Raging from June to September, the monsoon is essential for irrigating crops and replenishing vital water sources across the subcontinent that approximately one-fifth of the global population depends on. But the yearly rains often turn deadly, as floods wash away communities and destroy farmland. — AFP

Thousands rally in support of police in Hong Kong

HONG KONG: Tens of thousands of people rallied in support of Hong Kong's police and pro-Beijing leadership yesterday, a vivid illustration of the polarization coursing through the city after weeks of anti-government demonstrations. Hong Kong has been rocked by more than a month of huge and largely peaceful protests-as well as a series of separate violent confrontations with police-sparked by a proposed law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China and other countries.

The bill has since been suspended, but that has done little to quell public anger which has evolved into a wider movement calling for democratic reforms, universal suffrage and a halt to sliding freedoms in the semi-autonomous financial hub. Yesterday's rally was a moment for the establishment to muster their own supporters. A predominantly older crowd was joined by families and younger residents, waving Chinese flags and holding banners supporting the police.

“Friends who used violence say they love Hong Kong too, but we absolutely cannot approve of their way of expressing themselves,” said Sunny Wong, 42, who works in insurance. A 60-year-old woman surnamed Leung said protesters who stormed and vandalized the legislature earlier this month must be held responsible for their acts. “I really dislike people using violence on others... it was so extreme,” Leung said. Police estimated a turnout of 103,000 people at the peak of the rally, while local media cited organizers as saying 316,000 attended.

Police crisis

Hong Kong's police are in the midst of a major reputational crisis. With no political solution on the table from the city's pro-Beijing leaders, the police have become enmeshed in a seemingly intractable cycle of clashes with protesters who have continued to hit the streets in huge numbers for six weeks. Demonstrators and rights groups have accused riot police of using excessive force, including tear gas and rubber bullets, and public anger against the force is boiling over.

Police insist their crowd control responses have been proportionate and point to injured officers as proof that a hardcore minority of protesters mean them harm. Some of the most violent clashes occurred last Sunday when riot police battled protesters hurling projectiles inside a luxury mall. Some 28 people were injured, including 10 officers. There is growing frustration among the police force's exhausted rank and file that neither the city's leaders, nor Beijing, seem to have any idea how to end the crisis.

Chinese state media and powerful pro-Beijing groups threw their weight behind the pro-police rally. Saturday's edition of Hong Kong's staunchly pro-Beijing newspaper Ta Kung Pao ran a front page encouraging readers to join with the headline: “Kick away the violence.” It featured a drawing of a large foot kicking over a pro-democracy demonstrator. Many of those at the rally held aloft large slogans printed on the spread of Wen Wei Po, another stridently pro-Beijing newspaper in the city.

Huge rally today

A rally last month by police supporters saw ugly



HONG KONG: People attend a pro-government rally outside the government headquarters in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

scenes, with many participants hurling insults and scuffling with younger democracy protesters as well as media covering the gathering. While the pro-government protests have mustered decent crowds, they have paled in comparison with the huge pro-democracy marches that have regularly drawn hundreds of thousands of people.

Anti-government protesters are planning another large march today afternoon and say they have no plan to back down until key demands are met. Tensions were also raised after police yesterday said they had discovered a homemade laboratory making high-powered

explosives. A 27-year-old man was arrested and pro-independence materials were also discovered.

Under the 1997 handover deal with Britain, China promised to allow Hong Kong to keep key liberties such as its independent judiciary and freedom of speech. But many say that 50-year deal is already being curtailed, citing the disappearance into mainland custody of dissident booksellers, the disqualification of prominent politicians and the jailing of pro-democracy protest leaders. Authorities have also resisted calls for the city's leader to be directly elected by the people. — AFP

15 killed in dark day for Mumbai train commute

MUMBAI: Fifteen people were killed in separate train accidents in a single day in Mumbai, police said Friday, with the sharp toll underscoring the dangers of India's overburdened rail network. Some of the victims were hit while trying to cross the tracks illegally while others fell from packed trains on Thursday, police spokesman SR Gandhi said.

At least 13 others suffered injuries, with police

blaming the deaths on people attempting to take short cuts in the monsoon rains battering India's financial capital. “Too many people prefer to take shortcuts,” said Gandhi. About 7.5 million passengers use the overcrowded trains daily on Mumbai's colonial-era rail network, a lifeline for the city's 20 million residents.

An average of 10 people die on the network every day, either from falling off crowded trains or while crossing the tracks. Nearly 50,000 people were killed in accidents along tracks and on trains across India from 2015 to 2017, according to Indian Railways data. In May, three teenagers were killed while taking selfies on a railway track in Haryana state. While Indian trains carry nearly 24 million passengers every day, critics say the ageing network is inefficient, overburdened and often unsafe. — AFP

The timeline of Gulf escalation

DUBAI: Tensions in the Gulf have escalated in recent months amid a deepening standoff between Iran and United States over Tehran's nuclear program, with a string of incidents involving tankers and drones. Here is a recap:

‘Credible threat’

On May 5, the United States says it is sending an aircraft carrier strike group and a bomber task force to waters near Iran in response to “indications of a credible threat by Iranian regime forces”. The Pentagon also sends B-52 bombers to the region and, later, an amphibious assault ship and Patriot missile defense battery.

US officials do not give more details on the threats, but the move comes amid heightened tensions over Iran's nuclear program. Washington reimposed sanctions on Tehran last year after quitting a multilateral 2015 deal meant to control its nuclear drive. On May 8, Iran announces it will drop certain commitments under the agreement, including increasing enriched uranium and heavy water production. US President Donald Trump responds with new sanctions on Iran's steel and mining sectors.

Tanker ‘sabotage’

On May 12, the United Arab Emirates says four commercial oil tankers had been targeted by “acts of sabotage” in Gulf waters off its coast. Saudi Arabia says later two of its tankers suffered “significant damage” but no casualties or oil spill. The other vessels were Norwegian and Emirati. Washington and Riyadh blame Tehran, which denies involvement. A UAE investigation finds later that a “state actor” was likely responsible for the attacks, probably using limpet mines, but does not specifically blame Iran.

Tankers in flames

In the early hours of June 13, two fuel-loaded tankers passing through the Strait of Hormuz towards the Indian Ocean are hit by mysterious blasts that cause major fires. One is a Norwegian vessel and the other is Japanese-owned. Their crews are rescued. The Strait is a vital corridor connecting the petroleum-rich states of the Middle East with markets around the world. Washington, London and Riyadh accuse Tehran of being behind the attacks, which it denies.

Rocket attacks on Iraq

On June 18, rockets strike an oil field in Iraq's Basra region, near a camp used by a company of US industrial conglomerate General Electric. It is the latest in a nearly week-long barrage of anonymous shelling attacks on American interests across Iraq. The incidents are not claimed, but largely originate from areas where Shiite-dominated armed groups loyal to Tehran have free rein.

US drone downed

On June 20, Iran's Revolutionary Guards say they shot down a US drone which violated Iranian airspace. The Pentagon says the drone was in international airspace and denounces an “unprovoked attack”. Trump says he approved a retaliatory strike the next day but cancelled it at the last minute. On June 24, he announces “hard-hitting” financial sanctions against Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and senior Iranian military leaders.

Tankers seized and searched

On July 11, Britain says three Iranian military vessels had tried the previous day to “impede the passage” of a UK oil tanker in Gulf waters but were warned off by a British warship. Iran's Revolutionary Guards deny there was any confrontation, but warn that US and Britain will “strongly regret” the seizure in early July of a tanker off Gibraltar, a British overseas territory in the Mediterranean. On July 18, Iran's Guards say they have detained a “foreign tanker” and its crew for allegedly smuggling fuel. The tanker was seized south of the Iranian island of Larak, according to the Guards, who do not detail the name or provenance of the vessel.

US shoots down Iranian drone

On July 18, Trump says the US military has taken down an Iranian drone that came within 1,000 yards of one of its naval vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. The USS Boxer “took defensive action” against the Iranian drone as it was “threatening the safety of the ship and the ship's crew,” Trump says. Iran denies the claim and suggests American forces may have shot down their own drone by mistake.

UK-flagged tanker seized

On July 19, Iran's Guards seize British-flagged tanker Stena Impero in the Strait of Hormuz for “failing to respect international maritime rules”. Following the seizure, UK Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt warns of “serious consequences” unless the situation is resolved.

Saudi to host US forces again

Tehran's arch-foe Saudi Arabia announces that it will host US troops on its soil in a joint move with Washington to “preserve the security of the region and its stability”. Saudi Arabia has not hosted US forces since 2003, when they withdrew following the toppling of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. —AFP

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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Washington Watch

The ‘Faustian deal’

By Dr James J Zogby

While much has been already been written about President Donald Trump recent racist taunts against four first-term women members of Congress, I have a few observations of my own to make. In the first place, no one should have been surprised that as Trump began his reelection campaign he would target and bait people of color. This, after all, was how he won in 2016. Back then he incited against Mexicans, Muslims, and refugees, in addition, of course, to the “fake news media.” It appears that nothing has changed – his modus operandi and his targets are still the same.

In a series of tweets and then at a campaign event this past week in North Carolina, the old/new Trump was on full display. As the entertainer/performer-in-chief, his campaign rallies are more like a stand-up comedy routine than political speech-making. He taunts his opponents, making crude jokes at their expense; he conjures up threats, preying on his audience’s hatreds, fears, and insecurity; he makes outrageous (and often fabricated) boasts and false promises that he has no intention of fulfilling; and he complains bitterly about the suffering he must endure because he alone is fighting an establishment that impedes his efforts at every turn. There is a political agenda to be sure, but for the most part, his rallies are performance, masking that agenda. In this regard, he’s not unlike Benito Mussolini – a supreme actor who also held his rapt audiences in the palm of his hand as he had them laughing, cheering, and chanting in anger.

When Trump first began his run for the presidency in 2015, the Republican establishment had contempt for him and his antics. Back then, Senator Lindsey Graham called him a “a wrecking ball for the Republican Party who’s a race-baiting, xenophobic bigot.” Then Chair of the Republican Party, Reince Priebus, charged that Trump’s rhetoric came “at the expense of American values.” Other critics included former Vice President Dick Cheney, Majority Leader Paul Ryan, and Senator Marco Rubio.

It was during that primary season that I had a leading Republican (a former Senator, turned political consultant) on my weekly TV show “Viewpoint”. At that point in the election, Donald Trump had taken a lead in the polls and the GOP establishment that had once rejected his candidacy has suddenly fallen silent. I asked my guest “Why?” His response was quite simple. “They are afraid of his ‘base,’” he told me. They had seen the enthusiasm he generated at his rallies and although they still “found his message repulsive”, they didn’t want to “alienate his supporters” by continuing to attack him.

When it became clear, that Trump had defeated his opponents, the Republican establishment made what can only be described as a virtual “Faustian deal” with the presumptive nominee. If he won, they would be in a position to get what they wanted most: More conservative judges, a revamped regressive system of taxation, sweeping deregulation that would roll back decades of reform, and undoing most of President Obama’s progressive agenda, including the GOP-hated “Obamacare”. In return, the GOP would not only remain silent in the face of Trump’s peccadilloes – past and present – they would also subject themselves to the humiliation of actually trying to defend his words and behavior. Listen to this “post-Faustian deal” Lindsey Graham: “He’s not, in my view, a racist by any stretch of the imagination. I’ve never heard him make a single racist statement!”

There were those Republicans who believed (or maybe just hoped) that after entering the Oval Office Trump would become more presidential. They were sorely mistaken. If anything, his behavior became more erratic and provocative. His bizarre claims, his inflammatory tweets, and some of his executive orders have continued to generate outrage. While members of his party may have felt some discomfort at these “un-presidential” antics, they soon learned that, for Trump, there was a method to what appeared to be madness.

He dominated every news cycle. When challenged by negative developments, a “crazy” tweet would create sufficient enough distraction, that it became the day’s “breaking news”. Even his recent North Carolina rally was initially organized to divert attention from the scheduled Congressional testimony of Robert Mueller which the White House assumed would prove embarrassing for the president. And ever conscious of his base, Trump knew how to turn attacks into a rallying cry for the faithful. His enemies hadn’t changed – Mexicans, Muslims, and media. Nor had his reaction to them.

What had changed is that the entertainer-in-chief became so enchanted with the power he had over his followers (speaking before large rallies of adoring fans can have a drug-like effect) and they had become so captivated by his message of resentment and fear of the “others” against whom he rails that we have entered a danger zone.

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

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Mohammad Al-Naeemi, a Syrian rebel fighter who returned from exile in Germany to join a rebel group, checks his phone next to a tank in a rebel training camp near the Bab al-Hawa crossing between Idlib province and Turkey on July 18, 2019. — AFP

From Berlin to barracks: Syrian rebel returns

Mohammad Al-Naeemi had everything he could possibly want living in exile in Germany, but he returned to war-torn Syria anyway to fight President Bashar Al-Assad’s regime. Clutching a rifle to his chest, his back flat against the ground, the 23-year-old shimmies across a dry field in northwestern Syria on his graduation day from training to join an armed rebel group. “I returned to give back to my country,” said the young fighter, wearing a black T-shirt and beige combat trousers.

With an opposition group cap fit tightly on his head, he powers through push-ups, counting each one out at the top of his lungs in unison with fellow recruits. From now on, “I’ll reside in military barracks and on the front lines,” he said. “It’ll be the best place I can possibly live.” Naeemi was a high school student in Syria’s southern province of Quneitra when peaceful protests demanding change erupted across the country in 2011.

After a brutal crackdown on the demonstrations spiralled into war, he joined the armed opposition for several years. In 2015, fearing a regime takeover of his region, he decided to leave his war-torn country and join his siblings in Germany, he said. Travelling over the summer, he and friends crossed Syria’s central desert to the Turkish border, before travelling by sea to Greece, and then by land onto Germany.

‘Peaceful life’

“I lived in Berlin. I was studying” German, he told AFP. “I had an ordinary life. I had rights like any German citizen and a monthly stipend. I wanted for nothing,” he said. “But I wasn’t happy and I constantly missed my home country,” he added. Syrian government forces have taken back large swathes of the country since Russia intervened on behalf of Damascus in 2015, including Naeemi’s home province of Quneitra last year.

Since late April, regime and Russian forces have ramped up their deadly bombardment of the holdout opposition bastion of Idlib, which is controlled by Syria’s former al-Qaeda affiliate Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. The strikes and rocket fire have killed more than 600 civilians in the jihadist-held region of some three million people, almost half displaced by war from other parts of the country.

“The fierce regime campaign on Idlib” and a government takeover of his hometown are the main reasons Naeemi decided to head back to Syria, he said. “My parents opposed my decision and tried to stop me from returning... but I insisted,” said Naeemi, who has no relatives in the jihadist-run bastion. He arrived in northwest Syria last month and immediately joined Jaysh al-Izza, a formerly US-backed Syrian rebel

group active in the north of Hama province and parts of Idlib.

‘My home’

He spent one month in a rebel training camp near the Bab al-Hawa crossing with Turkey, where life was governed by strict routine. He woke up early every day for military drills, which consisted of diving through burning tires, jumping over cement blocks and shuffling across trenches. He also sat for classes in religion and ethics. His unit was named after Abdel-Basset Al-Sarout, a Syrian goalkeeper turned opposition fighter who died last month of wounds sustained in battle against regime forces.

The group consists mainly of fresh recruits spurred into joining rebel ranks by the latest flare up in Syria’s northwest, said Mustafa Bakour, a rebel commander. “Each one of these men has a story,” he told AFP from the camp. With training now over, Naeemi said the “hard part” is behind him. Looking back, he said he has no regrets. “I liked Germany and considered it as my home but there is nowhere like my country Syria,” he said. “I don’t regret my decision, I did not return for money or wealth. If money was the goal, I would have stayed in Germany.” — AFP

Unity against Trump won’t mask Dem rifts

US Democrats presented a united front last week after Donald Trump’s coarse attacks on progressive lawmakers, but the solidarity masks deep fissures in the party as it moves toward choosing a 2020 presidential nominee. From the most liberal quarters to the centrists, Democrats circled the political wagons and trained their outrage on Trump for his bullying of a quartet of ethnic minority congresswomen whom he said should “go back” to other countries if they hate America.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi rushed to the defense of her more liberal colleagues, pushing a resolution through the divided chamber that rejected Trump’s “racist comments that have legitimized fear and hatred of new Americans and people of color”. But the party has splintered on several fronts, notably economic policies including healthcare and the trillion-dollar Green New Deal, and issues like immigration and how to care for detainees at the border.

The four increasingly powerful congresswomen targeted by Trump – Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, Ayanna Pressley and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, collectively known as “the Squad” – are unapologetic in seeking to pull their party leftward. The quartet – all US citizens and all but one born in America – openly call for Trump’s impeachment and accuse him of enflaming racial and ethnic tensions. “They’re so angry,” a pugnacious Trump said during a campaign rally Wednesday in North

Carolina. When he escalated his attacks on Omar, a former refugee born in Somalia, the crowd broke into chants of “send her back!”

‘Class warfare’

Democrats are highlighting the need to defeat Trump next year, but the party is experiencing friction as candidates position themselves in a crowded field. Some of the more liberal policy platforms, including a universal health care plan known as Medicare for All, have been embraced by Democratic candidates including progressives Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. Candidates in the centrist lanes are warning that drifting too far leftward will alienate moderate voters and make it more difficult to oust Trump in 2020.

“Those folks are engaging in class warfare, promising everything for free, running on things like Medicare for All which is not good policy,” moderate candidate John Delaney, a former congressman and longshot for the Democratic nomination, told CNN Friday. “If we do that we’re going to put Trump on a glide path to re-election.” Republicans have already seized on the Democratic dust-ups, the aggressive activism of the Squad, and the leftward tilt of the party to frame the 2020 contest in stark ideological terms. “This is about socialism versus freedom,” top House Republican Kevin McCarthy told reporters this week.

As Trump exploits the divides and appeals to his conservative, largely white base, race remains a flashpoint for Democrats. Senator Kamala Harris, who is black, wall-popped fellow presidential candidate and former vice president Joe Biden during a televised debate last month over his cooperation with segregationist senators in the 1970s. Even as party leaders consider how to keep their agenda as non-threatening as possible for business interests and middle-of-the-road voters, sensitive debates

over issues like reparations for slavery have emerged, with the potential to unsettle independents or disgruntled Trump supporters.

Kitchen table issues

Looming over the coming months is where the party will take its efforts to impeach Trump. A liberal lawmaker forced a vote on advancing impeachment proceedings this week, and though it failed, it did receive 95 Democratic votes. Pelosi, less ideologically liberal than the Squad, has made her current opposition to impeachment clear, preferring to let House investigations of Trump and his administration continue.

The position of the most powerful elected woman in US history stands at odds with the Squad, and the tensions spilled into the open recently. “Pelosi claims we can’t focus on impeachment because it’s a distraction from kitchen table issues,” tweeted Saikat Chakrabarti, Ocasio-Cortez’s chief of staff. “But I’d challenge you to find voters that can name a single thing House Democrats have done for their kitchen table this year,” he added. “What is this legislative masterminding?”

The public infighting prompted handwringing from some Democrats, while others dismissed it as healthy debate about America’s future. “At least we have the courage to stand up and have the discussion in public,” Sue Dvorsky, a former chair of the Iowa Democratic Party, told AFP. “I’d rather be divided over how fast and far to go covering sick people with insurance than unified behind the cowardice of this constant Republican trope they say in private that they’re horrified” by Trump’s aggressive remarks, but defend him in public. When a Democratic nominee eventually emerges, he or she will be uniquely situated to “bring the threads of this conversation together” and go after Trump, she said. — AFP

Battle for change far from over for women in Sudan

She may have spent 40 days in jail for demonstrating against president Omar Al-Bashir who has since been toppled but activist Amani Osmane says the battle for women’s rights in Sudan is far from over. Women have been at the forefront of the revolt which led to Bashir’s overthrow by the military on April 11 after three decades of iron-fisted rule. Osmane, who is also a lawyer, was detained on the evening of January 12 and escorted to “the fridge”, a grim room where interrogations are paired with extreme cold. “There are no windows, nothing, just air conditioning at full blast and the lights on 24/7,” she told AFP.

The fridge is part of a detention centre run by the all-powerful National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) in

a building on the Blue Nile that runs through Khartoum. Dozens of activists and political opponents of Bashir’s regime have passed through what NISS agents cynically refer to as “the hotel”. Osmane, who spent 40 days behind bars after a frigid seven hours of questioning, said she was arrested “contrary to all laws... because I stand up for women in a country where they have no rights”.

Another activist, Salwa Mohamed, 21, took part each day in protests at a camp outside the army headquarters in central Khartoum that became the epicentre of the anti-Bashir revolt. Her aim was “to have the voice of women heard” in a Muslim country where she “cannot go out alone, study abroad or dress the way I want”.

Student Alaa Salah emerged as a singing symbol of the protest movement after a picture of her in a white robe leading chanting crowds from atop a car went viral on social media. Portraits of Salah – dubbed “Kandaka”, or Nubian queen, online – have sprouted on murals across Khartoum, paying tribute to the prominent role played by women in the revolt.

‘We will no longer wait’

Unrest which has gripped Sudan since bread riots in December that led to the anti-Bashir uprising left scores dead. Doctors linked to the protest movement say that 246 people have been killed since the nationwide uprising erupted, including 127 people on June 3 when armed men raided the protest camp in Khartoum. On Wednesday, protesters and the generals who took over from Bashir finally inked a deal that aims to install a civilian administration, a key demand of demonstrators since his fall three months ago.

The accord stipulates that a new transitional ruling body be established, comprised of six civilians and five military representatives. A general will head the ruling body during the first 21 months of a transition, followed by a civilian for the remaining 18 months, according to the framework agreement. “We will no longer wait for our rights, we will fight to obtain them,” said Osmane, stressing that women wanted 40 percent of seats in parliament.

Amira Altijani, a professor of English at the all-female Ahfad University in Omdurman, Khartoum’s twin city, said: “This



Amani Osmane

movement is an opportunity for women to have their voice heard.” For Osmane, Bashir “hijacked” sharia laws for three decades to oppress women. “But a new Sudan is rising, with a civilian government that will allow equality,” she said. — AFP

Business

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Kuwait's credit rating at AA with stable outlook

S&P expects Kuwait growth rates to accelerate to an average 2.5% over 2020-22



KUWAIT: A breathtaking panoramic view of Kuwait City at night. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Standard and Poor's (S&P) kept Friday Kuwait credit rating at (AA) with stable outlook, and said it could raise rating if the Gulf country carried out wide-scale political and economic reforms. S&P released a report about credit rating of the State of Kuwait regarding rationale behind the rating. It said Kuwait economy remained dependent on oil which accounts for 90 percent of exports and government revenues, and the country was the world's 8th largest crude oil exporter in 2018.

The agency forecast muted economic growth this year given recent extension of OPEC+ agreement to cut oil production, and only modest non-oil growth providing ongoing geopolitical tension. OPEC+ is an agreement between OPEC and non-OPEC countries to cut production by over 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) to push prices higher. S&P said Kuwait has substantial savings of over 400 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accumulated within the sovereign wealth fund. It forecast Kuwait net general government asset position to reach 430 percent of GDP by end of 2019, considered the highest ratio of all rated sovereigns.

Kuwait government surpluses, it anticipated, were set to continue even with lower oil prices ahead, bolstered by investment returns on the sovereign wealth fund assets.

It said Kuwait currency, dinar, would remain pegged to a US dollar-dominated currency basket. The agency said the stable outlook reflected expectation Kuwait's public and external bal-

ance sheets would remain strong over the next two years, primarily underpinned by sizable foreign assets accumulated in the country's sovereign wealth fund, which would partially offset risks related to Kuwait's undiversified oil-dependent economy. "We could raise the ratings if wide-ranging political and economic reforms enhanced institutional effectiveness and improved long-term economic diversification, although we think such a scenario is unlikely over the forecast horizon to 2022," it said. S&P said it could lower Kuwait's rating if it observed a sustained decline in economic wealth, like due to a fall in oil prices, materially weaker economic growth rates or if regional geopolitical risks escalate significantly.

The agency said ratings on Kuwait remained supported by high levels of accumulated fiscal and external buffers. The ratings are constrained by concentrated nature of the economy and relatively weak institutional settings compared with those of non-regional peers in the same rating category. Kuwait, it noted, derived around 55 percent of GDP, more than 90 percent of exports, and about 90 percent of fiscal receipts from hydrocarbon products, making Kuwait's economy undiversified. Extension of OPEC+ agreement constrained short-term growth but higher oil prices offset a broader impact, it said.

The agency said Kuwait was the world's 8th largest crude oil producer in 2018 and the 7th largest oil reserves. Kuwait, on a per capita basis, is the world's largest producer with total

proven oil reserves equivalent to about 100 years. Kuwait economic performance will remain largely determined by oil industry trends, said S&P. "We currently forecast headline growth at 1.5 percent in 2019," backed by OPEC's decision to extend production cuts. OPEC+ agreement was implemented in January 2019 for an initial period of six months but has now been extended until March 2020. S&P expected Kuwait oil production to average about 2.7 million bpd compared with 2.8 million bpd originally planned and included in the government budget.

OPEC+ agreement contributed to higher oil prices, it said, with Brent averaging \$60 pb over the rest of 2019 and 2020 before reducing to \$55 pb, while higher oil prices would underpin Kuwait's larger fiscal and current account surpluses through 2020. S&P expected growth rates in Kuwait to accelerate to an average 2.5 percent over 2020-22, based on forecast OPEC cuts would discontinue beyond March 2020. Kuwait planned expansion of oil output capacity, a potential restart of production within Partitioned Neutral Zone (PNZ) between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, as well as multiple government investment projects would improve income.

S&P said despite "somewhat" stronger institutional arrangements, Kuwait's structural reforms efforts have generally lagged those of other regional economies in recent years. Unlike Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain, Kuwait still has not introduced the valued added tax (VAT). "We understand that the government is



exploring introducing excise taxes first, although the timeframe remains unclear and much remains to be done in terms of capacity building," it said. The new debt law has also faced persistent delays and the agency no longer expected it to be approved in 2019 with the parliament in recess.

"Without the debt law, the authorities are not able to issue new debt and have to rely on asset drawdowns to fund deficit at the central government level," said S&P. It added regional geopolitical tensions would negatively impact Kuwait's economy with trade routes in the Arabian Gulf at risk especially at Strait of Hormuz. Despite forecast of a reduction in oil price in 2021 to \$55 from \$60, said S&P, Kuwait would continue to post general government surpluses averaging eight percent of GDP over medium term.

The rating agency did not expect any debt issuance as the new debt law has not been passed yet, thus the government would continue to rely on asset drawdowns from the General Reserve Fund (GRF) to finance government deficit. It expected Kuwait's current account to remain in surplus over the next two years, turning to only modest deficit from 2021.

Kuwait is more flexible than the foreign exchange regimes in most other GCC countries that maintain a peg to the US dollar alone. This is evident, for example, in Kuwait Central Bank's decision to hike key interest rate only once compared with four US Federal Reserve hikes last year. S&P underlined that Kuwait banking sector remained resilient with stable profitability and improved asset quality. Concentration in commercial real estate segment remains a key credit risk for banks. — KUNA

Trump: US had 'very good talk' with China

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Friday that US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin had a very good talk with his Chinese counterpart, amid signals from China that officials could soon meet face-to-face in their bid to end a yearlong trade war. Officials from the world's two largest economies spoke by phone on Thursday, and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in-person talks could follow.

"Secretary Mnuchin did have a call with the Chinese counterpart. They had a very good talk," Trump told reporters at the White House, suggesting that China's worst economic output data in nearly three decades could propel trade talks forward. "We're dealing with China. ... They're not doing very well. They had the worst year they've had in 27 years. We're having the best year we ever had," he said. "Let's see what happens."

Chinese data this week showed industrial output and retail data beat expectations, but overall figures showed the country's economic growth slowed to 6.2 percent from a year earlier, the weakest pace in at least 27 years. The United States and China have been embroiled in a tit-for-tat tariff battle since



A worker at a pencil factory in the Sihong Economic Development Zone, in China's eastern Jiangsu province. — AFP

July 2018, as Washington presses Beijing to address what it sees as decades of unfair and illegal trading practices.

China has countered that any deal needs to be fair and equitable, leaving the two sides apparently still far from an agreement to end the back-and-forth that has roiled global supply chains and upended financial markets. Hu Xijin, editor in chief of China's Global Times newspaper, tweeted that an in-person meeting could soon follow Thursday's phone call.

"Briefing of the Chinese side on phone talks between Chinese and US trade officials shows face-to-face consultation will not be far away. I think we can expect that some actions may happen, which would be seen as goodwill from each other," Hu said. The Global Times is not an

official mouthpiece for the Communist Party, though its views are believed to at times represent those of its leaders.

The Chinese embassy in Washington and the US Trade Representative's office had no immediate comment on a possible in-person meeting. Chinese Vice Premier Liu He and Commerce Minister Zhong Shan spoke by phone on Thursday with Mnuchin and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer regarding "further consultations, as well as the implementation of Presidential consensus reached in Osaka," the Chinese embassy wrote on Twitter. Global stocks were rattled this week after Trump on Tuesday reiterated his threat to impose further tariffs on Chinese imports, but he did not repeat that threat on Friday. — Reuters

Trump attacks US Fed, demands interest rate cut

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump attacked the independent US Federal Reserve on Friday, demanding the central bank reverse course and cut interest rates—something it is widely expected to do this month.

In another Twitter outburst, Trump called on the Fed to "Correct!" its overreach. "We are in a World competition, & winning big.... but it is no thanks to the Federal Reserve," he said.

"Had they not acted so fast and 'so much,' we would be doing even better than we are doing right now. This is our chance to build unparalleled wealth and success for the US. Growth.... Don't blow it!"

The US central bank raised the benchmark borrowing rate four times last year but seems almost certain to pull back with the first cut in a decade at its policy meeting July 30-31. Recent comments from Fed officials seemed to confirm the signal that policymakers are prepared to act to sustain US growth in the face of a slowing global economy and persistent trade tensions with China.

"You don't need to wait until things get so bad to have a dramatic series of

rate cuts," Fed Vice Chairman Richard Clarida told Fox Business Network on Thursday. That comment echoed a statement earlier Thursday from John Williams, the influential vice chairman of the Fed's policy committee, who talked about the need to vaccinate when rates are very low.

"When you only have so much stimulus at your disposal, it pays to act quickly to lower rates at the first sign of economic distress," said Williams, who is president of the New York Federal Reserve Bank.

Following Williams' remarks, the New York Fed told media outlets the speech concerned decades of research and was not about what the central bank may decide at its next policy meeting.

Trump said Friday he liked Williams "first statement much better than his second. His first statement is 100% correct in that the Fed 'raised' far too fast & too early." The New York Fed had no comment on Trump's tweets, which were only the latest in long series of attacks which have flouted the recent tradition of protecting the independence of the central bank. —AFP

NBK Economic Report

Kuwait’s GDP growth picked up in Q1; domestic credit improves

State’s oil output could remain unchanged for the rest of 2019 and beyond

KUWAIT: While concerns over the global economy have risen over the past few months, the performance of the Kuwaiti economy has been mostly steady or slightly improving. Oil prices, although under pressure from the global outlook, rose in 2Q19, on supply cuts by the OPEC+ group of oil producers and geopolitical tensions. Indicators of non-oil activity including consumer spending and credit growth have picked up, and the equity market has outperformed GCC peers helped by another confidence-boosting index upgrade triggering capital inflows. Although the need for macroeconomic and structural reforms to boost long-term non-oil growth and strengthen the public finances persists, in our view the economy is reasonably well-placed to cope with any moderate slowdown in global growth and consequently oil prices over coming quarters.

Oil prices up in Q2

Oil prices started 2Q19 strongly, but then fell back as concerns about the global economic outlook escalated. The price of Kuwait Export Crude peaked at almost \$75/bbl in late April amid signs that the oil market was tightening in response to supply cuts by OPEC+, but had fallen to \$61 by mid-June before rallying slightly on regional geopolitical tensions to finish the month at \$66. On average, prices were 9 percent higher in 2Q19 than in Q1. Amid downward revisions to oil demand growth and ‘large uncertainties’ facing the oil market, OPEC+ agreed in early July to extend its expiring supply cuts for nine months until end-March 2020. Kuwait’s crude production stood at 2.71 million b/d in May, leaving it 116 percent compliant with its share of the targeted cuts. This suggests that Kuwait’s oil output should be broadly unchanged for the rest of this year and beyond, assuming no change in overall market conditions that could provoke an early OPEC+ policy response. Our expectation remains that a combination of OPEC+ supply restraint and fairly subdued oil demand growth will leave the market broadly balanced ahead, and that Brent oil prices will average \$65/bbl both this year and next having averaged \$66 year-to-date.

GDP growth rose to 2.6 percent in 1Q19

Preliminary official data for 1Q19 show that economic growth picked up slightly in the first quarter of this year, despite OPEC-led oil output cuts weighing on overall performance. GDP rose 2.6 percent y/y in 1Q19, firmer than the 1.7 percent recorded in 4Q18 (which was revised down from 2.0 percent). Oil GDP - which includes the refining sector - grew 1.3 percent (2.0 percent in Q4) which was slightly stronger than the rise in official oil production through the quarter - perhaps helped by a year-on-year rise in refined product output. Of greater surprise however was non-oil growth, which picked up sharply to 4.1 percent from 1.5 percent in 4Q18 (revised form 2.0 percent). But most of this acceleration was due to a change in the erratic taxes and subsidies adjustment used to distinguish market from producer prices. Excluding this, non-oil growth would have been a more modest 2.3 percent in 1Q19, which is closer to our view of underlying economic performance.

The quarterly official data pointed to growth last year of 1.2 percent and 1.1 percent for total GDP and non-oil GDP, respectively, but these figures may be revised when more comprehensive annual data are released in coming weeks. We have left our (stronger) estimates of growth last year unchanged, and expect non-oil growth of 2.5 percent this year and slightly higher in 2020.

The government’s budget for FY2019/20 was approved by parliament, with overall spending unchanged from the draft budget at KD 22.5 billion, a 5 percent rise on the budget for the previous year. Although final details have not yet been released, the draft budget showed (construction-related) capital expenditure little changed at KD 3.3 billion and at a relatively high 15 percent of total spending. Revenues however

were revised down from the draft to KD 15.8 billion due to lower oil receipts and with the oil price assumption left at \$55/bbl, this revision was likely due to lower projected oil output due to OPEC supply cuts.

The figures imply a budget deficit of KD 6.7 billion, or 17 percent of GDP, before transfers to the Reserve Fund for Future Generations. Due to a combination of conservative oil price assumptions and underspending (particularly on capital spending), the government’s deficit projections are usually far too pessimistic: based upon a \$65/bbl Brent oil price assumption and another underspend we project a much smaller deficit of KD 1.2 billion, or 3 percent of GDP this year. Final figures for FY2018/19 have not yet been released but we estimate a surplus of KD 0.8 billion (2 percent of GDP) based on the provisional data for the first 11 months. However, our estimate could be optimistic as large spending could take place in the final month to settle some commitments before closing the end of fiscal year accounts.

Project awards lower than initial projections in Q219

Project awards slowed to only KD 377 million in 2Q19, down from a better-than-expected KD 700 billion in 1Q19. Total awards for 1H19 therefore stood at KD 1.1 billion, pointing, pro rata, to a slightly better performance this year than the KD 1.7 billion awarded in 2018. Awards in 1H19 were dominated by the construction (KD 523 million) and transport (KD 360 million) sectors, mostly for housing and roads. Delayed projects have been rolled over to 2H19, when a large KD 4 billion in awards are now provisionally scheduled. These include large projects in transport and power, such as phase 1 of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer seaport, the Dibdibah solar power plant and the Kabd solid waste project. If these major awards are delayed, H2 performance will be substantially weaker. Based upon historical trends, we expect a more conservative award figure of around KD 2-2.5 billion for 2019 overall, which would still be an improvement on last year.

Real estate sector on a positive trend

Real estate sales stood at KD 225 million in May, declining 36 percent m/m after a robust April and also down 25 percent y/y. The fall is likely to have had a seasonal element, with trading typically slower during the month of Ramadan, which fell mostly in May. Slower sales were due to a drop in the number of transactions in the investment (i.e. apartment) and residential sectors (-46 percent m/m, -20 percent). Commercial sector activity on the other hand surged more than three-fold m/m to a record 120 transactions, possibly due to the sale of small commercial properties in the new areas of southern Kuwait. Sales are still up 3 percent y/y to May amid a solid rise in residential sales but apartment sales are down following a buoyant 2018. We think the market is in a reasonably stable phase overall.

Prices were mostly positive in May on a month-on-month basis, except for home prices which saw a mild 0.6 percent decline. However on an annual basis prices in most market segments are stable-to-rising, with residential home prices for example up 7 percent y/y despite May’s monthly drop. Single apartment prices are the notable exception, with prices down 1.3 percent y/y in May. This reinforces our previous view that the property market overall appears to be reasonably healthy, but the investment sector may still be vulnerable amid oversupply and relatively weak demand reflected by ongoing vacancies: housing rents in the CPI have also recently seen a small decline. After trending lower in 1Q19, consumer spending growth appears to have improved in 2Q19, albeit mildly. According to the NBK consumer spending index, spending rose 1.9 percent y/y in 2Q19 up from 1.4 percent in 1Q19, as growth in services outlays held firm at 5.8 percent and durable goods purchases picked-up 1.9 percent from 0.4 percent the previous quarter. Non-durable sales growth however,

remained in decline, falling by a sharper 7.0 percent versus a 5.7 percent drop the previous quarter, as clothing, cosmetics and general store sales remained weak.

These figures correspond to broad trends in data on POS sales and ATM withdrawals by the central bank, where growth slipped to a more than two-year low of 4 percent y/y in 1Q19. Based upon the NBK index, some pick-up might be expected when data is released for 2Q19.

We expect spending growth to be steady or improve slightly in 2H19 given the stable macroeconomic climate, oil prices at \$60-70/bbl maintaining confidence, an expansionary government budget (including on wages and salaries) and reasonable employment growth. Moreover, the decision by the central bank to loosen consumer loan limits (now up to KD25,000 from KD15,000 previously) in December has since led to a notable rise in consumer borrowing - though the magnitude is quite small relative to the level of consumer spending overall.

Inflation remains low

Consumer price inflation edged up to 0.8 percent y/y in May from 0.7 percent in April. The rise was driven mainly by higher food inflation (1.0 percent from 0.8 percent in April) and slightly slower deflation in the housing segment (-0.5 percent from -0.6 percent in April) due to a rise in maintenance costs, but more significantly higher inflation in the communications segment. Core inflation, which excludes food and housing, was unchanged at 1.6 percent. The pick-up in food prices came mostly from seafood and meat items (unsubsidized), likely stemming from higher demand during the holy month of Ramadan which fell largely in May.

Inflation has drifted slightly higher so far this year having ended 2018 at 0.4 percent, but nevertheless remains at very low levels. Moreover, much of the recent rise reflects base effects following price falls a year ago. We therefore expect inflation to see only a modest rise overall this year, averaging 1 percent compared to 0.6 percent in 2018, and another sub-1 percent figure is possible given recent signs of continued softness in housing rents. Core inflation could be at or below 2 percent versus 1.9 percent last year, reflecting moderate economic growth, a strong dinar with respect to trade partner currencies, and the unlikely implementation of taxes (VAT, Excise) or subsidy cuts this year.

Credit growth continued its gradual recovery

Credit growth has continued the gradual recovery seen since late 2018, accelerating to an almost three-year high of 6 percent y/y in May from 5 percent in April and 5.2 percent in March. This improvement was supported by an increase in lending to both businesses and households. In fact, lending to businesses grew at a near three-year high of 6.5 percent in May, helped by the real estate sector (+7.5 percent) and industry (+5.9 percent), while household credit (excluding for security purchase) remained reasonably steady at 5.6 percent, despite housing loans decelerating (4.3 percent). As per consumer loans, its growth continues to benefit from the central bank’s loosening of lending restrictions last December, reaching 14.2 percent in May. We expect overall credit growth to end 2019 at around 5 percent y/y, supported by the stable macro climate, a slight pick-up in project awards and growing employment market.

Meanwhile, deposit growth edged up in May but remained soft at 1.5 percent y/y versus 1.3 percent in April. The rise was due to a surge in government deposits, while private deposit growth decelerated to just 0.1 percent from 2.2 percent in April.

Current account surplus doubled in 2018

The current account position strengthened in 2018, recording a surplus for the second consecutive year since



2016, when the country posted its first deficit in more than twenty five years. The surplus in 2018 increased to KD 6.2 billion (14.8 percent of GDP), more than double 2017’s figure of KD 2.9 billion (8 percent of GDP). This was primarily due to a 31 percent rise in oil export revenues thanks to higher oil prices and also record foreign investment income of KD 6.4 billion. The latter is mainly a reflection of higher returns on the government’s overseas investments. Growth in goods imports was a moderate 6 percent, reflecting somewhat subdued growth in the broader non-oil economy last year.

Meanwhile the capital and financial account balance - the main counterpart to the current account and reflecting movements of capital into and out of the country - saw net outflows increase to KD 7.4 billion from KD 5.4 billion in 2017. FDI inflows stood at KD 104 million (0.3 percent of GDP), which is the second lowest level in ten years. However, net portfolio investment turned positive at KD 726 million, as Kuwaiti residents sold their foreign bond holdings and as foreign investors bought Kuwaiti bonds and equities, the latter stimulated by the country’s inclusion in the FTSE Russell Emerging Markets Index.

Boursa Kuwait’s All-Share index gained 1.9 percent m/m in June, slightly underperforming the MSCI-GCC (2.1 percent) which was lifted by Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Liquidity was relatively high, with an average daily turnover of KD 38 million. Price gains were led by the consumer goods and banking sectors which rose 12 percent and 3 percent m/m, respectively. Net foreign inflows in June were well down from the exceptional peak of KD 141 million in March, but remained relatively healthy at KD 35 million. For the second quarter as a whole, the Kuwait market’s performance was strong relative to peers, up 3.8 percent versus 0.5 percent for the GCC.

Good sentiment this year has been supported by favorable stock re-weightings by the FTSE in March and good corporate earnings, coupled with the anticipation of the MSCI Emerging Market inclusion announcement which took place officially on June 25, to be implemented in May 2020 once confirmed in December. This is expected to generate further passive inflows in the range of \$2.3-\$2.8 billion, plus large active inflows. Regional markets however face various downside risks: we have already seen a marked deceleration in Q2 performance versus Q1 amid escalating geopolitical tensions, faltering trade talks, lower oil prices and slower global growth.

Economic outlook for 2019-20

A soft oil sector will limit GDP growth this year and next given the extension of OPEC+ agreement to March 2020 and possibly beyond. Non-oil growth will likely be in the 2.5 percent to 2.8 percent range, supported by an accommodative monetary policy and a budgeted increase in public spending. The financing of budget deficits will fall mainly on the General Reserve Fund (GRF) resources if the draft debt law is not approved. This calls for adopting fiscal and structural measures to broaden the revenue base (VAT, excise taxes), cut subsidies, and stimulate private sector activities including by creating a friendlier investment environment through improving the ease of doing business and reducing restrictions that would constrain foreign direct investment.

Lebanon’s parliament passes a ‘reforming’ state budget 2019

BEIRUT: Lebanon’s parliament passed a “reforming” 2019 state budget on Friday, Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri said, without giving details on its deficit target as his coalition government seeks to bring the public debt under control. The budget is seen as a critical test of Lebanon’s ability to address years of economic mismanagement and corruption that have led it to build up one of the world’s heaviest public debt burdens, equiv-

alent to about 150 percent of GDP. “This is a reforming budget and it was difficult,” Hariri said after three days of parliamentary debate on the budget, adding that passing it was an achievement.

Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil said passage of the budget was a message to the international community, including credit rating agencies.

However, details of the final budget, including the deficit target, were not released. Hariri said details would be issued tomorrow. The budget plan the government originally proposed to parliament envisaged cutting the deficit to 7.6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) from 11.5 percent in 2018, but parliament’s budget committee said last week it aimed to cut it to 6.6 percent.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has called

into question even the government’s 7.6 percent target, estimating that its initial budget plan would in fact have produced a deficit of about 9.75 percent of GDP. Budget proposals have included both cuts in spending and increases in revenue, particularly from higher tax on interest. The measures have sparked opposition among some groups.

Army veterans tussled with security forces in the streets around the parliament on Friday as they attempted to barge through a cordon to protest against any cuts to their benefits in the budget.

In a sign of the political difficulties in cutting spending, Defense Minister Elias Bou Saab said proposed cuts in benefits and pensions for military personnel would be reduced. The government’s biggest expenses are debt financing, public sector pay and subsidies to

the country’s electricity provider. It passed a plan this year to resolve its expensive electricity crisis. Finance Minister Khalil has also said the government plans to shave some \$660 million from debt servicing costs through issuing low interest treasury bills.

The IMF has said that buying such low-interest debt would worsen the central bank’s balance sheet and undermine its credibility. It added that there should be no pressure on private banks to buy the debt instead. Khalil said on Thursday that Lebanon needed a plan to manage its public debt to “liberate the public budget from the burden of a deadly accumulation of debt and debt service”. Leading Lebanese politicians have said the coalition government must soon start talks on its 2020 budget plan, which the IMF said should also include further cuts to the deficit. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.600
Euro	343.740
Sterling Pound	380.750
Canadian dollar	234.130
Turkish lira	53.860
Swiss Franc	310.340
US Dollar Buying	297.250
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.815
Indian Rupees	4.425
Pakistani Rupees	1.967
Srilankan Rupees	1.731
Nepali Rupees	2.765
Singapore Dollar	224.710
Hongkong Dollar	38.919
Bangladesh Taka	3.593
Philippine Peso	5.960
Thai Baht	9.917
Malaysian ringgit	77.903
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.281
Qatari Riyal	79.716
Omani Riyal	791.683
Bahraini Dinar	809.350
UAE Dirham	82.986
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.625
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.354

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	109.960
Jordanian Dinar	430.380
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.404

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	304.240
Canadian Dollar	233.420
Sterling Pound	379.325
Euro	342.760
Swiss Frank	301.885
Bahrain Dinar	809.085
UAE Dirhams	83.235
Qatari Riyals	84.475
Saudi Riyals	82.025
Jordanian Dinar	430.395
Egyptian Pound	18.357
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.732
Indian Rupees	4.426
Pakistani Rupees	1.909
Bangladesh Taka	3.603
Philippines Peso	5.971
Cyprus pound	18.100
Japanese Yen	3.810
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.771
Malaysian Ringgit	74.750
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.795
Thai Baht	10.830

Turkish Lira	53.715
Singapore dollars	223.412

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.374858	0.388758
Czech Korune	0.005425	0.014725
Danish Krone	0.041909	0.046909
Euro	0.335478	0.349178
Georgian Lari	0.132065	0.132065
Hungarian 0.001148	0.001338	
Norwegian Krone	0.031608	0.036808
Romanian Leu	0.065245	0.082095
Russian ruble	0.004848	0.004848
Slovakia	0.009102	0.019102
Slovenia	0.028660	0.033660
Swedish Krona	0.304424	0.315424
Swiss Franc		
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.206903	0.218903
New Zealand Dollar	0.200398	0.209898
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.226116	0.237116
US Dollars	0.300350	0.305650
US Dollars Mint	0.300850	0.305650
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003000	0.003801
Chinese Yuan	0.042746	0.046246

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037042	0.039792
Indian Rupee	0.003888	0.004660
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002748	0.002928
Korean Won	0.000249	0.000264
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070267	0.076267
Nepalese Rupee	0.002678	0.003018
Pakistan Rupee	0.001340	0.002110
Philippine Peso	0.006103	0.006403
Singapore Dollar	0.218839	0.228839
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001352	0.001932
Taiwan	0.009625	0.010105
Thai Baht	0.009540	0.010090
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.801411	0.809465
Egyptian Pound	0.018639	0.022999
Iranian Ryal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.424503	0.433503
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021379	0.045379
Omani Riyal	0.785650	0.793546
Qatar Riyal	0.082969	0.083803
Saudi Riyal	0.080100	0.081400
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.102332	0.110332
Turkish Lira	0.046761	0.056606
UAE Dirhams	0.082258	0.083084
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

Business

Capital Intelligence affirms Gulf Bank's long-term foreign currency rating at 'a+'

CI Ratings assigns a standalone rating of 'a-', with a 'stable' outlook

KUWAIT: Capital Intelligence Ratings ("CI Ratings"), the international credit rating agency, has affirmed the Long-term Foreign Currency and the Short-term Foreign Currency of Gulf Bank ratings at "A+" and "A1", respectively. At the same time, CI Ratings has also assigned to the Bank a Standalone Rating of "a-", with a "Stable" Outlook.

On the other hand, CI Ratings has also affirmed the rating of Gulf Bank's KD 100 million Basel III-compliant Tier 2 Subordinated Bonds at "BBB+". The Outlook for the Bond is "Stable".

Both affirmations are mainly driven by the Bank's well established business franchise especially in retail banking, sound loan asset quality, as well as the solid capital position and comfortable liquidity metrics. The ratings also reflect Gulf Bank's size as the fourth largest bank in Kuwait with a wide distribution network and a good market share of both loans and deposits in the banking sector, as mentioned by CI Ratings.

In their report, CI Ratings mentioned that "The principal strength of Gulf Bank is related to its well established retail franchise, which is underpinned by a large distribution network. The Bank's universal banking business model and effective strategies have



Dalal Al-Dousari

helped to maintain market share, which in turn has provided Gulf Bank with good earnings across the business cycle. Gulf Bank has a well-established comprehensive framework of Corporate Governance which is designed to balance performance and conformance."

Commenting on the Capital Intelligence credit rating announcement, Dalal Al-Dousari, Gulf Bank's Deputy General Manager of Investor Relations said: "We are very pleased to receive the affirmation of our Bank's Long-term Foreign Currency rat-

ing at "A+" and our Tier II subordinated Bond rating at "BBB+" by Capital Intelligence Ratings." "This is an international acknowledgement of the Bank's sustained improvement in asset quality and profitability, solid capital and sound liquidity position," added Al-Dousari.

Gulf Bank continues to be well recognized in terms of its credit worthiness and financial strength internationally as it is rated "A" by all four leading credit rating agencies. In addition to Capital Intelligence Ratings recent affirmation, Gulf Bank has a Long-term Issuer Default Rating of "A+" with a "Stable" Outlook by Fitch Ratings, an Issuer Credit Rating of "A-" with a "Stable" Outlook by S&P Global Ratings, and a Long Term Deposits rating of "A3" with a "Positive" Outlook by Moody's Investor Services.

Gulf Bank is one of the leading conventional banks in Kuwait with total assets of KD 6 billion as of 30 June 2019. The bank provides a broad offering of consumer banking, wholesale banking, treasury, and financial services through its large network of 58 branches and more than 200 ATMs in Kuwait. The Bank was founded in 1960 and is listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange (Boursa Kuwait) since 1984.

Profit soars for Microsoft fueled by cloud and business services

SAN FRANCISCO: Microsoft on Thursday posted quarterly earnings that trounced expectations, citing growth in partnerships with companies on technology and cloud computing services.

The US technology titan, shifting in recent years to business services from consumer tech, reported its net income rose 49 percent to \$13.2 billion on revenue that was up 12 percent to \$33.7 billion. Microsoft's profit in the fiscal fourth quarter that ended June 30 was helped by at \$2.6 billion tax benefit, according to the company. The results showed the "strongest commercial quarter ever," for Microsoft, said chief financial officer Amy Hood.

Chief executive Satya Nadella said the results closed out a record fiscal year for the tech giant, which has the largest market value of any company at more than \$1 trillion.

"It was a record fiscal year for Microsoft, a result of our deep partnerships with leading companies in every industry," said Nadella. "Every day, we work alongside our customers to help them build their own digital capability...This commitment to our customers' success is resulting in larger, multi-year commercial cloud agreements and growing momentum across every layer of our technology stack."

Net income for the fiscal year more than doubled to \$39.2 billion on revenue that was up 14 percent to \$125.8 billion, according to the earnings report. Microsoft shares rose 1.4 percent to \$138.35 in after-market trading that followed release of the earnings figures. "Microsoft is firing on all cylinders now, growing big in growing markets, and even managing growth in mature markets like PCs (personal computers)," said technology analyst Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights and Strategy. The Redmond-based company is "cementing its spot" as a provider of software, infrastructure and platforms hosted as services in the internet cloud, according to Moorhead.

Xbox looks to 'Scarlett'
Microsoft reported growth across

all its businesses except Xbox gaming unit where revenue declined 10 percent. A reason is likely that the latest generation Xbox console that debuted nearly six years ago is getting "long in the tooth," with a successor on the horizon, Moorhead said.

Microsoft in June gave the world a first glimpse of a powerful next-generation Xbox that it aims to release late next year. Xbox head Phil Spencer pulled back the curtain on "Project Scarlett," a successor to the Xbox One that will give game makers "the power they need to bring their creative visions to life." The new Xbox was promised to be released in time for the Christmas holiday shopping season in 2020.

Xbox battles in the console gaming arena with Sony, which is working on a new generation PlayStation. The commitment to consoles by longtime contenders in the market comes with the rise of video games hosted as subscription services streamed Netflix-style from data centers in the internet cloud, which plays to Microsoft's cloud and Xbox strengths.

Revenue from productivity and business processes division that includes business and consumer cloud services as well as career-focused social network LinkedIn was up 14 percent to \$11 billion, according to the earnings report. Money taken in at LinkedIn jumped 25 percent with the service seeing record levels of engagement, Microsoft said. The company also saw revenue rise from server products: Windows operating software; online search advertising, and its Surface table computers. Surface revenue growth was "surprising" considering the overall personal computer market was flat, according to Moorhead.

"This quarter was an absolute 'blow out quarter' across the board with no blemishes and in our opinion speaks to an inflection point in deal flow as more enterprises pick Redmond for the cloud," Wedbush analyst Daniel Ives said in a note to investors, referring to Microsoft's headquarters in Washington State. — AFP

India seeks to tap foreign lenders for loans to small firms

NEW DELHI: India's government is in talks with foreign lenders to provide as much as \$14.5 billion in credit to millions of its small firms, two officials said, in a sign the country's banking system may not be robust enough to do the job on its own.

The government is in discussions with multiple foreign lenders, including Germany's state-owned development bank KfW Group, the World Bank and some Canadian institutions to extend lines of credit to small enterprises, one of the officials, who did not want to be identified, told Reuters. KfW's India office confirmed the discussions, though the main focus was on credit lines to support small businesses' solar power generation. The talks were at an early stage, KfW said.

A spokesman for World Bank in India yesterday said the discussions with the government were in the early stages, adding that "further rounds of consultations will help us define the contours of this collaboration". The official said the government plans to source up to 1 trillion Indian rupees of loans from foreign institutions because Indian banks were not in a position to provide enough capital for the small business sector, which is seen as critical to job creation.

"We are exploring, we are having discussions with various funding agencies if something can be done (for small and medium firms)," the second official said. The officials did not provide full details of the discussions they are having with banks, or identify all those they are talking to, but said talks are at a very early stage. India's micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) ministry is dis-



SRINAGAR: A farmer harvests plums from a tree on the outskirts of Srinagar on Friday. —AFP

cussing the proposal to pull in foreign banks with the country's ministry of finance, which will make a final call, the second official said.

The push for foreign loans comes on the heels of the Indian government's announcement earlier this month that it plans to borrow about 700 billion rupees by issuing overseas sovereign bonds.

India's 63 million firms in the micro, small and medium firm sector are responsible for more than a quarter of the country's manufacturing and services output, and must be re-energised for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to kick start the economy.

Gross domestic product growth fell to a five-year low of 5.8 percent in the January-March quarter, well below the 8%-plus rates that the government is targeting. But credit availability for small and medium firms, which also account for about 45 percent of India's total exports, has worsened due to a liquidity crisis in the country's shadow banking industry that has seen big lenders struggling to remain solvent.

State-owned banks, which dominate the sector, have not been able to drive increased lending because they are burdened with more than \$145 billion in bad loans. This has led to a severe credit squeeze for smaller firms. They pay up to 17 percent annual interest on loans from banks, while the shadow banks, which are also known as non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) can charge as much as 20 percent.

Last month, a study by a Reserve Bank of India panel said the overall deficit in credit for the MSME sector is estimated at about 20 trillion rupees to 25 trillion rupees. But lending to such firms can be risky as some lack proper financial information, such as historical cash flow data, which makes it challenging for banks to assess the credit risks.

To mitigate such risks for foreign banks, the loans would be given sovereign guarantees and be routed through Indian government agencies such as the Small Industries Development Bank of India, the first official said. — Reuters

weigh on business and investor confidence.

Fading fiscal stimulus from US tax cuts and increasing interest rates around the world over the course of 2018 contributed to the slowdown. But the slowdown so far has been mostly confined to business investment, manufacturing production, new orders, construction activity and freight movements.

By contrast, employment, wages, consumer confidence, household spending and the much-larger services sector have stayed relatively buoyant. The result has been the emergence of a dual-speed economy. Freight growth has slowed to a crawl, while passenger transportation is still growing at some of the fastest rates since the recession of 2008/09.

Firebreak

As long as the downturn remains isolated in the manufacturing sector and does not spill over into the labor market and services sector, the economy is likely to continue expanding, as it did in 2015/16 and 1998/99. The case for the Fed and other major central banks to cut interest rates early and aggressively rests on the idea that such a move can prevent weakness spreading from manufacturing to the rest of the economy. The aim would be to provide psychological reassurance and discourage households, businesses and banks from turning more cautious and trying to reduce spending and lending.

The case for rate cuts is often framed in terms of taking out "insurance" against a deeper downturn but might be better thought of as a "firebreak" to insulate the domestic services sector from weakness in manufacturing and the global economy. —Reuters

Fed will try to create firebreak to stop downturn

LONDON: Like booms, recessions help individuals and businesses make sense of changes in the level of economic activity and drive those changes with their impact on spending and savings.

As the world economy slows, the US Federal Reserve is now openly discussing an interest rate cut designed to ensure a recessionary narrative does not take root and to keep the economy expanding.

"A recession ... is a time when many people have decided to spend less, to make do for now with that old furniture instead of buying new, to postpone starting a new business, to postpone hiring new help in an existing business, or to express support for fiscally conservative government," Yale economist Robert Shiller told the American Economic Association.

Disturbances that spark a downturn can vary. Bank failures, poor harvests, earthquakes, stock market crashes, real estate busts, post-war demobilizations and monetary policy mistakes have all been blamed for initiating recessions ("The Panic of 1907: Lessons from the Market's Perfect Storm", Bruner, 2007).

The initial disturbance need not be major but it spreads through the economy and is amplified by the existence of positive feedback as households, businesses and financial inter-



US Federal Reserve Board Chair Jerome Powell

mediaries all try to reduce risk exposure at the same time("General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money", Keynes, 1936).

If policymakers want to avoid recession, they must avert the initial disturbance through regulation or prevent it propagating and accelerating through the system. Recessions are caused not so much by the initial disturbance as by the second and third-round responses to it by individuals, firms, banks and governments. Tempering those reactions is normally the priority for policymakers.

Trade shock

In the current slowdown, the origin was likely the rise in economic tensions between the United States and China and the associated impact on business confidence and investment. Manufacturing and trade growth peaked in the second and third quarters of 2018, before the economic conflict escalated and started to



CARBON DIOXIDE SALE TO PRIVATE SECTOR

As a part of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) initiative for private sector participation in Kuwait Oil Sector, KUWAIT NATIONAL PETROLEUM COMPANY (KNPC) invites local companies for the purchase of Carbon Dioxide on a long term supply basis. Towards this, companies willing to purchase Carbon Dioxide are invited to submit their Expression of Interest indicating quantity they intend to purchase, no later than 4th August 2019 to below email. Detailed requirements will be provided later to the interested companies.

Eman Hajeyah
Team Leader Business Development
Corporate Planning
Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC)
Email: e.hajeyah@knpc.com
Tel: +965 23889546 Fax: +965 23886113
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Business

Toyota inaugurates Saudi Arabia's first hydrogen fueling station in Dhahran

Toyota's new Technology Center to support Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030



Pilot Hydrogen Fueling Station in KSA



Toyota Mirai FCEV

KUWAIT: Underlining its deep commitment to sustainability, Toyota Motor Corporation is playing a key role in realizing the objectives of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 through its support to a new hydrogen fueling station pilot project in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia's integrated energy and chemicals company, and Air Products, an international supplier of industrial gases serving energy, environment and emerging markets, recently inaugurated Saudi Arabia's first hydrogen fueling pilot station at Air Products' new Technology Center in the Dhahran Techno Valley Science Park. The facility will fuel an initial fleet of six Toyota Mirai Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEV), which will be supplied through Abdul Latif Jameel Motors, Toyota's distributor in Saudi Arabia. Abdul Latif Jameel Motors will also provide service and maintenance for the vehicles throughout the project's period, to ensure smooth running of operations and that all objectives are met.

The new pilot fueling station is part of the ongoing hydrogen-related research and technology demonstration efforts by Saudi Aramco and Air Products. The data collected from the pilot will provide valuable technical information and insights on the potential role that hydrogen technology could play in the transport sector in Saudi Arabia.

One of the world's first mass-produced hydrogen FCEV, the Toyota Mirai is a four-door, mid-size sedan that uses hydrogen and oxygen to generate electricity onboard the vehicle using a fuel cell. Only water vapor is emitted in the process. The vehicle has a driving range of 500km and can be fueled in approximately three minutes, as opposed to an hour of charging for traditional battery electric vehicles.

The Mirai's impressive capabilities highlight the huge potential of hydrogen-fueled vehicles to contribute to a clean, secure, and affordable energy future, as envisioned in the goals of the Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050, the company's set of long-term sustainability targets that aim to reduce CO2 emissions from its vehicles and plants.

The Toyota Mirai is also being trialed as part of a joint research program in the United Arab Emirates, where it plays an important role in the company's collaboration with Masdar, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Air Liquide, and Toyota distributor Al-Futtaim Motors to explore the potential of hydrogen energy use for the creation of a sustainable, low-carbon society.

"We are proud to support the objectives of the Saudi Vision 2030 and contribute to the creation of a hydrogen-based society through the Toyota Mirai's

role in this exciting project," commented Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation. "Toyota has a long history of developing environmentally friendly vehicles, and we believe hydrogen is particularly promising as an alternative fuel since it can be produced using a wide variety of naturally occurring energy sources. I'd like to extend my gratitude to our loyal customers for their continuous encouragement, which inspires us to fresh heights of innovation in our drive to contribute to a more sustainable tomorrow."

"It is well known that our world needs a sustainable system to address environmental challenges while also meeting growing energy demand. Hydrogen and fuel cell technologies are well positioned to be part of the solution," said Seifi Ghasemi, Air Products' Chairman, President and CEO. "We are honored to collaborate with Saudi Aramco to establish and develop a sustainable, hydrocarbon-based hydrogen supply system for fuel cell vehicles in Saudi Arabia."

The initiative reflects a growing interest in hydrogen as a fuel source, the same interest that led to the creation of the Hydrogen Council in 2017. Established at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Hydrogen



Council brings together some of the world's leading industrial, automotive and energy companies, and includes Toyota among its founding members. According to figures published by the council, hydrogen could account for almost a fifth of total energy consumed around the world by 2050 if deployed at scale, reducing annual CO2 emissions by approximately six gigatons and contributing around 20 percent of the reduction required to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius.

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced on the 17th of July 2019 the winners of its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners. Al Hassad has have over 850 prizes, over a 12 month period.

The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Mohamed Abdulaziz Al-Mailam.

20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Saadah Helal Al-Shammari, Nawaf Abdullah Al-Asousi, Ronald Portales Margate, Huda Khalaf Abdulkareem, Ali A A Alawadh, Naji Abdullah Al-Failakawi, Aminah Shahir Al-Shraifi, Hamed Manea Al-Dosari, Abdulrazzaq Al-Shamari, Saif Mansour Jnaif, Khalaf Meshal Al-Azmi, Fawzi Ali Muslim, Najwa Marafie, Mazin Salman Hasan, Manal Mohamed Ramzi, Sonia Moretti, Manoj Navin Megchiani, Majeda Mohammed Yousif, Ali Yousif Yaqoob And Hamed Manea Al-Dosari.

Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 4 quarterly mega prizes of KD 250,000 that will help the lucky winners achieve their dreams and aspirations in addition the monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000. One powerful new aspect of the Al-Hassad Islamic Account is the prize draws on the holy occasion of both Eid Ul-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, when the winning customers will receive the Eid prizes of KD 100,000 each. May the Eid always bring prosperity and blessings to the Islamic nation. Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also 21 weekly prizes comprised of a grand prize of KD 10,000 and 20 prizes of KD 1,000 each.

What is a 5G user experience? And what does it mean?

KUWAIT: There was a time when our phones had a 2G network and then 3G before it was upgraded to 4G network. Nowadays we hear countries are racing to take steps to deploy 5G networks. But what is it really all about 5G and what does it mean to us consumers? 5G will not only make our smartphones better, but it will also usher in new immersive experiences, such as VR and AR, with faster data rates and lower latency. But in order to enjoy this potential speed we would need a phone that is equipped with 5G. HUAWEI Mate 20 X (5G) is one of the first phones in line to provide us a better 5G experience. Let us discover what this phone can do!

Experience a new speed benchmark

We are 24 hours on the Internet browsing, downloading or uploading.

We badly need a speedy Internet connection. The HUAWEI Mate 20X 5G offers one of the world's fastest connectivity thanks to 5G, saving you lots of frustration when you stream an HD/4K video, download a movie or play an online game. The main difference between this phone and the HUAWEI Mate 20 4G variant is the optimization of 5G technology for enhanced communications. HUAWEI Mate 20X 5G is compatible with multiple generations of network technology including 4G, 3G and 2G1. High speed connectivity is always guaranteed thanks to the two chipsets: Kirin 980 and the 5G multi-mode chipset Balong 5000.

See more

Having a small screen means you narrow your eyes and strain them especially when you try to catch all the details of the action in a game or movie. A large display area does make all the difference. The HUAWEI Mate 20X 5G comes with a 7.2 inch dew-drop display, perfect to immerse yourself in an exceptional entertainment experience. It also takes gaming to a new space, where you are aware of all the movements in your game so you miss no details.

Stay powered long enough

HUAWEI Mate 20X 5G has a 4200mAh battery that is one of the biggest smartphone batteries available on the market, and it is as safe as it is large - being TUV Rheinland certified. So play your favorite music and stay up to the moment with your social media feed and more without having to worry. Additionally, it also has HUAWEI 40W SuperCharge to top up your device in as much less time as possible.

Innovative self-cooling

Even if you're running graphically-intensive games at high settings, this device stays cool and does not stutter thanks to the integration of Huawei SuperCool - a groundbreaking cooling solution that delivers an outstanding cooling performance.

So, if you are looking for a 5G smartphone, Huawei Mate 20X 5G should be your first choice. It has been tested and tried with a number of telecom carriers around the world before the official launch. It delivers all the 5G features as well as a wholly different user experience.



Warba Bank announces 5 winners of Al-Sunbula draw

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, "the Best investment Bank" and "Best Corporate Bank" in Kuwait, held its weekly Sunbula draw number 27. The draw announced the 5 lucky

winners in the presence of representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and bank officials.

The bank proudly announced the lucky 5 winners of the 1000 Kuwait Dinar prize: Entesar Atallah Mejbil Al-Rasheedi, Talal Kanaan Mohammad Al-Otaibi, Amer Ghezlan Beaijan Al-Azmi, Saeed Khalaf Saeed Al-Farhan and Sayer Bader Mohammad Al-Sayer.

Al-Sunbula both account and fixed deposits are the perfect choices for customers who wish to save money and

achieve steady returns while at the same time have the opportunity to win cash prizes throughout the year. In line with the bank's mission to develop and differentiate its offerings, Warba Bank has enhanced its Sunbula campaign for 2019 with more cash and prizes reaching more than KD 1 million. Warba Bank will continue its weekly draws for 5 winners of KD 1,000 each. What's new in 2019 are the "Mega Draws" which will be held every quarter to reveal five winners, the 1st winner will get KD 100,000! The four winners thereafter will

each get the latest Land Cruiser VXR. Furthermore, the final Mega draw held in January 2020 will feature 2 more Land Cruiser VXRs!

As for the chances for winning, each customer is eligible to enter the draw against each KD 10 in the Sunbula Account. Nevertheless, Sunbula Fixed Deposit investors also get chances in the Sunbula draws along with high expected returns that reach up to 3.5 percent distributed either monthly or at maturity upon the customer's preference.

US Steel to lay off 2,500 workers in Slovakia

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia: The United States Steel Corporation said Friday it would cut around a fifth of its workforce in Slovakia over by the next two years due to competition from cheap steel imports from outside the European Union. The company also faulted EU environmental regulations that have driven up the cost of power used to run the massive plant.

The layoff will affect some 2,500 of the nearly 12,000 workers at the Kosice plant located in Slovakia's poorer east struggling with high unem-

ployment. The steel mill ranks among the largest employers in the eurozone country of 5.4 million people focused primarily on car production.

By the "end of 2021 we will reduce the number of employees working at US Steel Kosice and its subsidiaries by 2,500 employees," company president James Bruno said in a statement. "We must act to protect our business and remain competitive," he added. A month ago, management decided to idle one of the plant's blast furnaces and reduce the working week to four days to save on costs.

Slovak government officials were not available for immediate comment. US Steel pointed to "higher electrical costs" and "CO2 credit costs that have risen five times in the past year" as significant factors in its decision to shed employees, according to a separate statement published on the company website.

EU industries using power generated from coal

have faced rising costs to purchase pollution rights under the bloc's Emissions Trading System. "Steel plants in Europe face substantial CO2 allowances costs, which our competitors from third countries massively exporting steel to Europe don't have to bear at all," the statement said.

In May, the European Steel Association (EUROFER) called for urgent action by EU policymakers to help the sector facing a flood of cheap steel exports deflected to the EU because of the US imposition of steel import tariffs in 2018. US Steel Kosice is a key supplier for the Slovakia-based car plants, which include Volkswagen, PSA Peugeot Citroen, Kia and Jaguar Land Rover and have enjoyed record production in recent years. Unemployment stood at 4.97 percent in June in Slovakia, which expects economic growth to hit 3.5 percent this year, followed by 3.4 percent in 2020. —AFP

India's Reliance reports 6.8% rise in profits

MUMBAI: Indian conglomerate Reliance Industries on Friday reported a 6.8 percent rise in consolidated net profit despite a slowdown in its oil refining business. The Mumbai-based company owned by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani said its consolidated net profit for the three months through June rose to 101.05 billion rupees (\$1.47 billion) from 94.59 billion rupees reported for the same quarter a year earlier. "Our first-quarter earnings were strong despite weak global macro-economic environment and challenging hydrocarbon market conditions," Ambani said in a statement. —AFP

What's On



Lulu Hypermarket launches ASEAN Festival 2019 at Al Rai

Lulu Hypermarket, the leading regional retailer, launched its much-anticipated ASEAN Fest 2019 with a grand ceremony at its Al Rai outlet on July 17, 2019. The event was inaugurated by diplomats from several countries that make up the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), in the presence of top Lulu Hypermarket management in Kuwait, and along with a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers.

Attending the inauguration were the Ambassador of Thailand Dusit Manapan, Ambassador of Vietnam Trinh Minh Manh, Ambassador of Indonesia Tri Tharyat, Ambassador of Laos Sisonxay Ngaovongsi, the Charge D'Affaires at the Philippine Embassy Mohammad Noordin PN Lomondot, and the Charge D'Affaires at the Myanmar Embassy Kyaw Nyunt Lwin.

A variety of programs highlighting the rich, colorful culture and tradition of ASEAN was held to mark the launch of the festival. The 11-day ASEAN Fest, taking place across all Lulu outlets in the country and slated to end on July 27, will see a host of activities, including special food counters and food sampling stands show-

casing the variety and range of foods available in the 10-nation ASEAN bloc. All the festival venues of Lulu Hypermarket are also decorated in large, attractive cardboard cutouts of monuments and images reflecting the tourism potential of ASEAN.

The ASEAN Fest offers shoppers a wide range of food and other products from ASEAN at very special prices, including specially imported branded products such as DatuPuti, Silver swan, Skyflakes, Blue Elephant, Kokola, Thai Coco, Thai Pattana, V foods, Golden Elephant, Ding Dong, Mama Sitas, Oishi, Tentay, Delux and Inaco. The ASEAN group comprises of Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Brunei. The ASEAN Fest is an opportunity for shoppers in Kuwait to buy products from all these countries under one-roof at very competitive prices. The festival is part of the Hypermarket's endeavor to enhance the shopping experience for their patrons by offering high quality products from around the world through special offers and prices.



Hyatt Regency Al Kout Mall launches new Business offering

Hyatt Regency Al Kout Mall, located in Kuwait's prime Fahaheel area, has just inaugurated the new Conference and Event Center at the multi-experiential Al Kout Project, the largest waterfront retail and leisure destination in Kuwait. Created to meet booming event space demand from both local and international convex organizers, the new Conference & Event Center is set to become one of the leading business and event destinations, with the venue featuring seven halls that span more than 3700 sqms.

Contemporary design, seamless functionality and luxury surroundings are at the forefront of the space design. The new venue pays special attention to the entire user experience, with the incorporation of aid acoustics, design elements which allow natural light to flood into the reception hall space, and high ceilings to create an airy environment that offers flexibility to accommodate a range of event setups.



Mohammed Abdul Hameed Al Marzouq

Among the venue's seven halls is the all-new, multi-purpose Regency Hall, one of the largest in the south of Kuwait.

The new Hall, combined with the several other meeting and workshop rooms at the Centre creates a large integrated conference facility, all on one single level, which is equipped with the latest audio-visual technology for a fully integrated and seamless event. The Conference and Event Center also boasts a special bridal party suite for weddings and special occasions which has easy access to the hotel's main ballroom.

As part of the venue's design and for convenience assurance, visitors are guaranteed easy access through a dedicated pathway which leads guests directly to the center from the hotel's main gate,

while another dedicated entrance leads in from the underground parking. A large service entrance ensures smooth access for event suppliers while guests can benefit from dedicated parking spaces and a valet parking service. The center links directly with Al Kout Mall, one of Al Kout Project's six bespoke experiences, through the hotel to provide a fully integrated experience.

Commenting on the new addition, Mohammed Abdul Hameed Al Marzouq, CEO- Retail and Hospitality at Tamdeen Group said: "Our vision at Tamdeen Group is to develop the Al Kout Project to be the ultimate destination in the south of the state for entertainment and business, and this new expansion perfectly reflects this goal."

He added: "With its thoughtful design, technology-enabled facilities and flexibility of space, the new Center presents a compelling proposition for Kuwait's business and social sectors. It will not only enable the expansion of the state's conference and events industry, it also gives individuals a superb venue choice for celebratory or business events which can now be delivered in style and complete luxury."

Tamdeen Group, Kuwait's leading mixed-used property developer, is leading the expansion and the development of Al Kout Project with its six bespoke experiences: Al Kout Mall, Souq Al Kout, Marsa Al Kout, Nag'at Al Kout, Sahel Al Kout and Hyatt Regency Al Kout Mall.



Health

Zimbabwe's one-stop clinics, a rare lifesaver for the sick

TB infections in Zimbabwe remain among the highest in the world

HARARE: Blessing Chingwaru could barely walk without support when he arrived at the specialist Rutsanana clinic in Harare complaining of chest pains and fatigue. Weighing a skeletal 37 kilograms (82 pounds), the HIV-positive motor mechanic knew something was wrong. He was immediately given a number of tests and told the bad news: He was also suffering from advanced-stage tuberculosis. Dual infection by HIV and TB is a notorious killer.

"My health was deteriorating and I kept wondering why," Chingwaru, 29, recalled at the clinic.

Within hours of the diagnosis, Chingwaru was given free treatment and nursing care. In a country where more than a dozen people die each day from TB-related sicknesses, it was a rare example of efficient public healthcare. The Rutsanana Polyclinic in Harare's poor suburb of Glen Norah, which Chingwaru visited, is one of 10 pilot clinics in the country offering free diagnosis and treatment for TB, diabetes and HIV. The clinic, which opened in 2016, is staffed by 24 nurses and currently treats 120 TB patients. Among the million-plus people living with HIV in Zimbabwe, TB is the most common cause of death, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). HIV-positive people, and others with weakened immune systems, are particularly vulnerable to contracting the infection.

After Chingwaru's initial visit in February, doctors had feared for his life. But following five months of careful treatment Chingwaru has gained 15 kilos. "Everything I need, I get here," said Chingwaru, forming fists with both hands to show off his regained strength.

Economic and financial crisis

In a country where public health services have practi-

cally collapsed, containing the spread of TB has been a persistent struggle. Zimbabwe has been stuck in a catastrophic economic and financial crisis for decades and its doctors are underpaid and under-equipped.

Although TB treatment is free, the annual number of TB infections in Zimbabwe remains among the highest in the world. The contagious infection is usually found in the lungs and is caught by breathing in the bacteria from tiny droplets sneezed or coughed out.

As HIV-positive people are so vulnerable to TB, the clinics have followed the advice of WHO officials to link TB testing and treatment with HIV prevention programs.

'Catastrophic costs'

Close to the main gate of the Rutsanana clinic, a green self-testing HIV tent has been erected to encourage people to check their status. The clinic also offers voluntary HIV counselling and antiretroviral treatment. Sithabiso Dube, a doctor with the medical charity International Union Against TB who heads the TB and HIV program, said people with diabetes also have a higher risk of developing TB, so patients are tested for both diseases.

"Instead of going to seek diabetic care at one clinic and TB care at another, they are able to get these services in one place," Dube said. Because services are free "they are able to cut down on what we call catastrophic costs to the TB patients," she said.

Largely funded by a US Agency for International Development (USAID) program, the pilot clinics have become lifesavers for the poor-but only if they happen to live near them. The vast majority of the population have no



HARARE: Nurse Angela Chikondo instructs Blessing Chingwaru, 29, an HIV positive TB patient on how he should take medication received as part of his treatment at Rutsanana Polyclinic in Glen Norah township, Harare. — AFP

access to the one-stop clinics. As a result there are plans to scale up the program, with another 46 similar centers to be rolled out across Zimbabwe.

Rutsanana clinic matron Angela Chikondo said the pro-

gram was crucial to minimizing complications among TB and diabetes patients. "If one is on TB treatment and also has diabetes, and the diabetes is well controlled, chances of recovering are very high," she said. — AFP

Thai farmers on the cash trail with snail slime

NAKHON,NAYAK, Thailand: Giant snails inch across a plate of pumpkin and cucumber in central Thailand, an "organic" diet to tease the prized collagen-rich mucus from the molluscs, which to some cosmetic firms are now more valuable than gold. The snails at Phatinisiri Thangkeaw's farm were once the scourge of rice farmers, loathed for eating the buds of new crops.

"Farmers used to throw them on the road or in the rivers," Phatinisiri told AFP. "But now they sell them to me to earn extra money." With her 1,000 snails, the teacher makes an extra \$320 to \$650 a month.

It is one of more than 80 farms in Nakhon Nayok province, two hours from the capital Bangkok, cashing in on the global snail beauty market, estimated at \$314 million, according to research group Coherent Market Insights. The precious slime is patiently "milked" from the glands of the snail by dripping water over it using a pipette. Its raw form is sold to Aden International, a Thai-based cosmetics company that primarily ships its products to Korea and the US. The sole snail slime producer in Thailand, Aden was started three years ago as a business-savvy solution to the snail infestation in Nakhon Nayok, said founder Kitpong Puttarathuvanan.

And his bet paid off — Kitpong sells the serum under the Acha brand, but also supplies Korean and American cosmetic companies with a dried powder at 1.8 million baht (\$58,200) per kilogram, he said.

Gold is currently worth \$46,300 a kilogram. Compared to Aden's snail slime, the mucus produced in China — milked daily instead of once every three

weeks in Thailand — is valued at about 80,000 baht (\$2,600) per kilogram, Kitpong said. "We found that our slime was very intense because the snails eat everything, including vegetables, grains and even mushrooms... producing good quality slime," he told AFP, explaining that the mucus can be used to heal sunburn and "heal wounds". Somkamol Manchun, the doctor in charge of the purification process, said snail mucus contains collagen and elastin — ingredients that "can make skin firm with less wrinkles".

It "triggers the skin cells... and helps heal the skin". At the moment, no scientific studies have been done on the curative qualities of snail serum and slime, but snail farmer Phatinisiri is already feeling the market heat up.

Two years ago, she was the first in the area to try farming the slime, she said, and villagers readily gave her what they considered pests. "Now I buy snails at about 25 baht to 30 baht (about \$1) per kilogram," she said. "But many people are doing snail farms now so the competition is high." — AFP



NAKHON NAYOK: This picture taken on June 28, 2019 shows Phatinisiri Thangkeaw milking a snail of its serum at her farm in Nakhon Nayok province. — AFP

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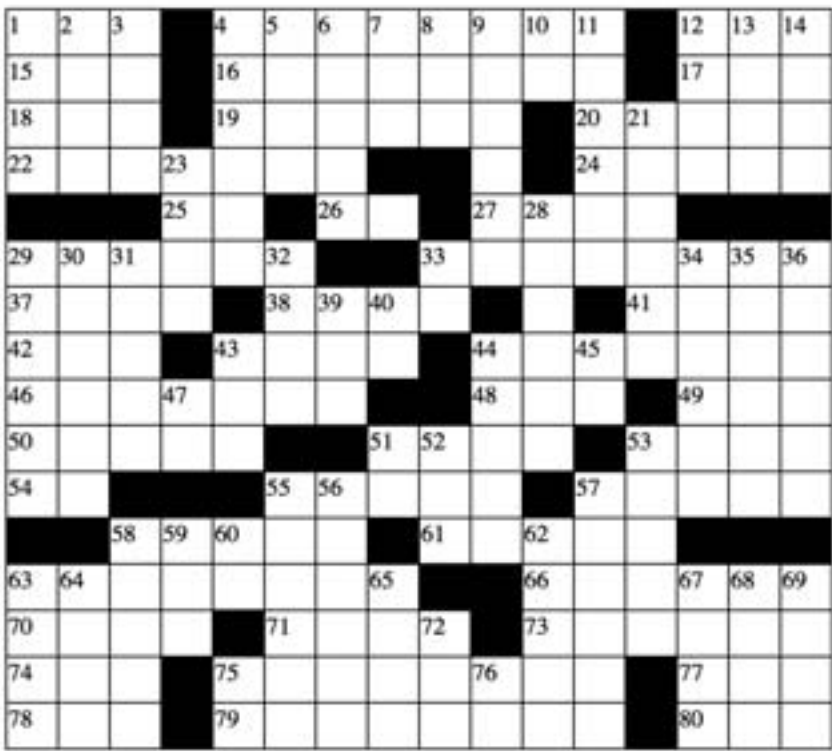
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- Anal surgeries.

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CROSSWORD 2262



ACROSS

- 1. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
- 4. The hard inner (usually woody) layer of the pericarp of some fruits (as peaches or plums or cherries or olives) that contains the seed.
- 12. Kidney disease characterized by enlarged kidneys containing many cysts.
- 15. Something that remunerates.
- 16. Round-tailed muskrat.
- 17. A bloody and prolonged operation in which American marines landed and defeated Japanese defenders (February and March 1945).
- 18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 19. An informal conversation.
- 20. Enthusiastic approval.
- 22. German hero.
- 24. United States poet (1885-1928).
- 25. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
- 26. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- 27. The act of scanning.
- 29. Coffee trees.
- 37. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- 38. God of love and erotic desire.
- 41. A written agreement between two states or sovereigns.
- 42. Greenwich Mean Time updated with leap seconds.
- 46. Method or manner of conduct in relation to others.
- 48. Used of a single unit or thing.
- 49. (prefix) Coming before or being preliminary or preparatory.
- 50. Metal or plastic sheath over the end of a shoelace or ribbon.
- 54. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- 61. The capital and chief port and largest city of Senegal.
- 63. Leader of a group or festival.
- 66. A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
- 70. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
- 71. Marked by lack of intellectual depth.
- 73. An oral drug (trade name Baycol) to reduce blood cholesterol levels.
- 74. A human limb.
- 77. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- 78. Seed of a pea plant.
- 79. A river in northeastern Brazil that flows generally northward to the Atlantic Ocean.
- 80. A doctor's degree in education.

DOWN

- 1. Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.
- 2. A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
- 3. The eighth month of the civil year.
- 4. Enclose in, or as if in, a case "my feet were encased in mud".
- 5. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- 6. An Italian woman of rank.
- 7. Not in operation or operational.
- 8. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collect-

- ing and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
- 9. The superior of a group of nuns.
- 10. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
- 11. Existing or belonging to a time before a war.
- 12. Something that resembles a pill in shape or size.
- 13. The basic unit of money in China.
- 14. Be foolish or senile due to old age.
- 21. Type genus of the Cynipidae.
- 23. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- 28. A chain of connected ideas or passages or objects so arranged that each member is closely related to the preceding and following members (especially a series of patristic comments elucidating Christian dogma).
- 30. Nicaraguan statesman (born in 1945).
- 31. Foul with waste matter.
- 32. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
- 33. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
- 34. The capital of Nationalist China.
- 35. Scarabaeid beetle considered divine by ancient Egyptians.
- 36. (Greek mythology) Goddess of wisdom and useful arts and prudent warfare.
- 39. The month following July and preceding September.
- 40. A unit of information equal to one million (1,048,576) bytes.
- 43. The shorter of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
- 44. A Dravidian language spoken in south central India.
- 45. A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.
- 47. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
- 51. One million periods per second.
- 52. An unabridged dictionary constructed on historical principles.
- 53. A hat that is round and black and hard with a narrow brim.
- 55. A roofed arcade or gallery with open sides stretching along the front or side of a building.
- 56. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade names Acular and Toradol) that is administered only intramuscularly.
- 57. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- 58. Informal terms for a mother.
- 59. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- 60. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- 62. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- 64. Swift timid long-eared mammal larger than a rabbit having a divided upper lip and long hind legs.
- 65. Used of the language of the deaf.
- 67. Made agreeably cold (especially by ice).
- 68. A short personal letter.
- 69. Showing or causing joy and pleasure.
- 72. A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.
- 75. A person forced to flee from home or country.
- 76. A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may feel a nervous restlessness today that's urging you to get moving, Aries. A journey to one place may send you off to another, which may take you on an adventure to some completely different place. It may seem like you're on a crazy scavenger hunt. The energy of the day could leave you feeling ragged, but don't give up. Your persistence will pay off in the end.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

A good tip to remember is to be careful about what you say about other people, Taurus. If you're speaking about someone who isn't present, act like he or she is. What's your motivation for saying the things you say? Is it necessary to speak in such a way? A negative comment about someone is going to resonate through the cosmos. People could lose trust in you.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may need some time alone today to bring yourself back to center, Gemini. Independence is the key idea to keep in your back pocket. Make sure you're not becoming a victim to a commitment you made long ago. As the landscape changes, you must also change. Stubborn actions will be detrimental on a day like this. Be honest and grateful for the things you have.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Don't automatically think that beauty has to be defined by old-fashioned standards, Cancer. It's time to change the definition. There is no need to squeeze yourself into a socially constructed mold that doesn't resonate with who you truly are. Your job isn't to try and make sure everyone loves you. There's only one person you need to satisfy and that is you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Issues may get a little heavier than you'd like today, Leo. Your job is to infuse some levity and humor into the situation. Your adaptability will be put to the test as other people remain steadfast in their opinions. Be conscious of how you use your words. Other people, especially superiors or elders, may be offended by careless, offhand remarks.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

If the doorknob doesn't turn today, Virgo, don't force it. You will only break it. Perhaps you need to try another door. If things don't flow smoothly into place, then they probably weren't meant to be. Life shouldn't always be a struggle. Your job is to enjoy it. Remember that the next time you're in a long line. View the situation as a period of rest.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your new approach to things might get some flack from superiors today, Libra, but don't let that stop you. Realize that your independent and somewhat rebellious nature helps to keep the world in balance. Don't give up the fight when authorities insist that their way of doing things is best when in fact it's simply old. Use your will and determination to combat the forces from above.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You might be called upon to choose between two ways of handling a situation, Scorpio. The old way suddenly conflicts with the new. Which way are you going to proceed? Don't be thrown off course by fast talk and neon lights just because they grab attention. On the other hand, don't assume that the way that has worked forever is still the best. Use your intuition to choose the best route for you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Unexpected events could shuffle the cards when you least expect it, Sagittarius. If you haven't kept a close eye on the deck, you might get thrown for a loop. Don't be discouraged. Everyone else is playing under the same rules as you. If the dealer seems crooked, go to another table. Don't fall victim to the same trick twice.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your sense of self may be challenged today, Capricorn, and you might have trouble keeping your seat during the joust. Keep in mind that the way others see you isn't necessarily the way you are. Don't feel like you have to change direction to please anyone. Your only responsibility is to you. Bizarre events may occur, urging you to change your thinking.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

As you follow the path toward acquiring the latest, greatest, fastest, and best, you may have left behind some fundamental values, Aquarius. Don't lose sight of the principles that make up your foundation. You could be shaken today when your ego goes on trial for pig-headed behavior. Stay in check and be conscious of the way you project yourself to others.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Key in to your sensual, beautiful nature, Pisces. Take time each day to tend to your soul and make sure it gets the nourishment it needs to radiate into the world. Unexpected people are likely to appear out of nowhere, so don't be surprised when a former lover comes knocking on the door. Events from the past may travel to the present in order to teach you a valuable life lesson.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Alice in Wonderland

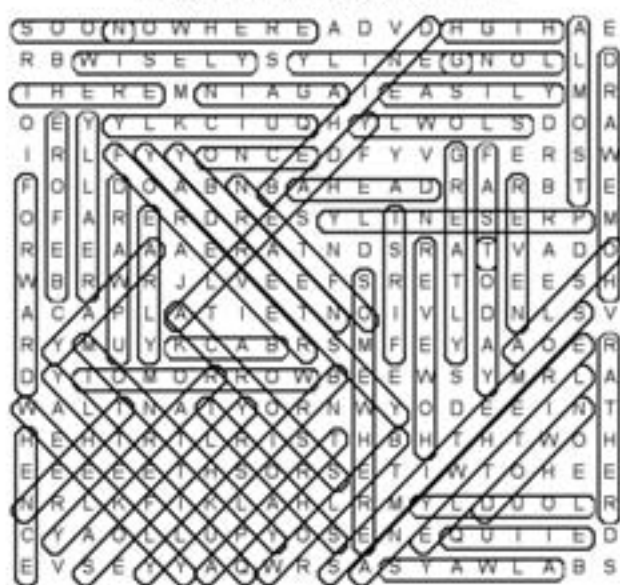
Find and circle all of the Alice's Adventures in Wonderland words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a quote by the Mock Turtle, from the book.



- ALICE BABY BELL BOTTLE CATERPILLAR CAULUS RACE CHESHIRE CAT COOK CROQUET DINAH DODO DOORMOUSE DRINK ME DUCHESS EAGLET EAT ME FAN FISH FOOTMAN FLAMINGOS FROGFOOTMAN GLASS BOX GOLDEN KEY GRIN GRYPHON GUINEA PIGS HEDGEHOGS KING OF HEARTS KNAVE LEWIS CARROLL LITTLE DOOR LIZARD LORY MAD HATTER MARCH HARE MOCK TURTLE MUSHROOM PEPPER FIG PIGEON POOL PUPPY QUEEN OF HEARTS RABBIT HOLE SMALL CAKE TARTS TEA PARTY TEARS THIMBLE WATCH WHITE RABBIT WONDERLAND

Adverbs

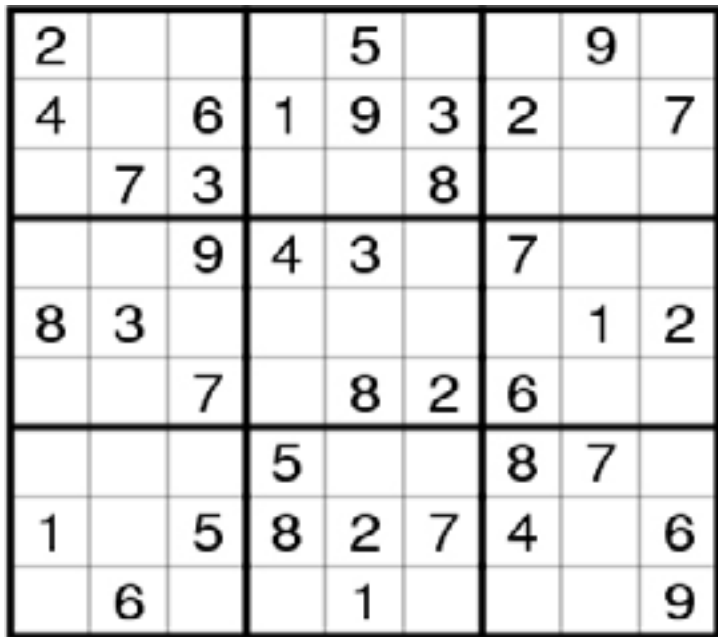
This is the solution to the puzzle located [here](#).



- ACROSS AGAIN AHEAD ALMOST ALWAYS ANYWHERE APART AWAY BACK BEFORE BEHIND BELOW BRISKLY DOWN EARLY EASILY FAST FIRST FOREVER FORWARD GENTLY GREATLY HENCE HIGH HOMEWARD HOWEVER LONG LOUDLY MONTHLY NEARBY NEVER NOWHERE OFTEN ONCE PRESENTLY QUICKLY QUITE RARELY REALLY SHORT SLOWLY SOFTLY SOMETIMES SOMEWHERE SOON THEN THERE TODAY TOMORROW UPWARD WEEKLY WISELY YESTERDAY

The hidden message is: ADVERBS MODIFY VERBS AND ADJECTIVES AND OTHER ADVERBS

Daily SuDoku



easy

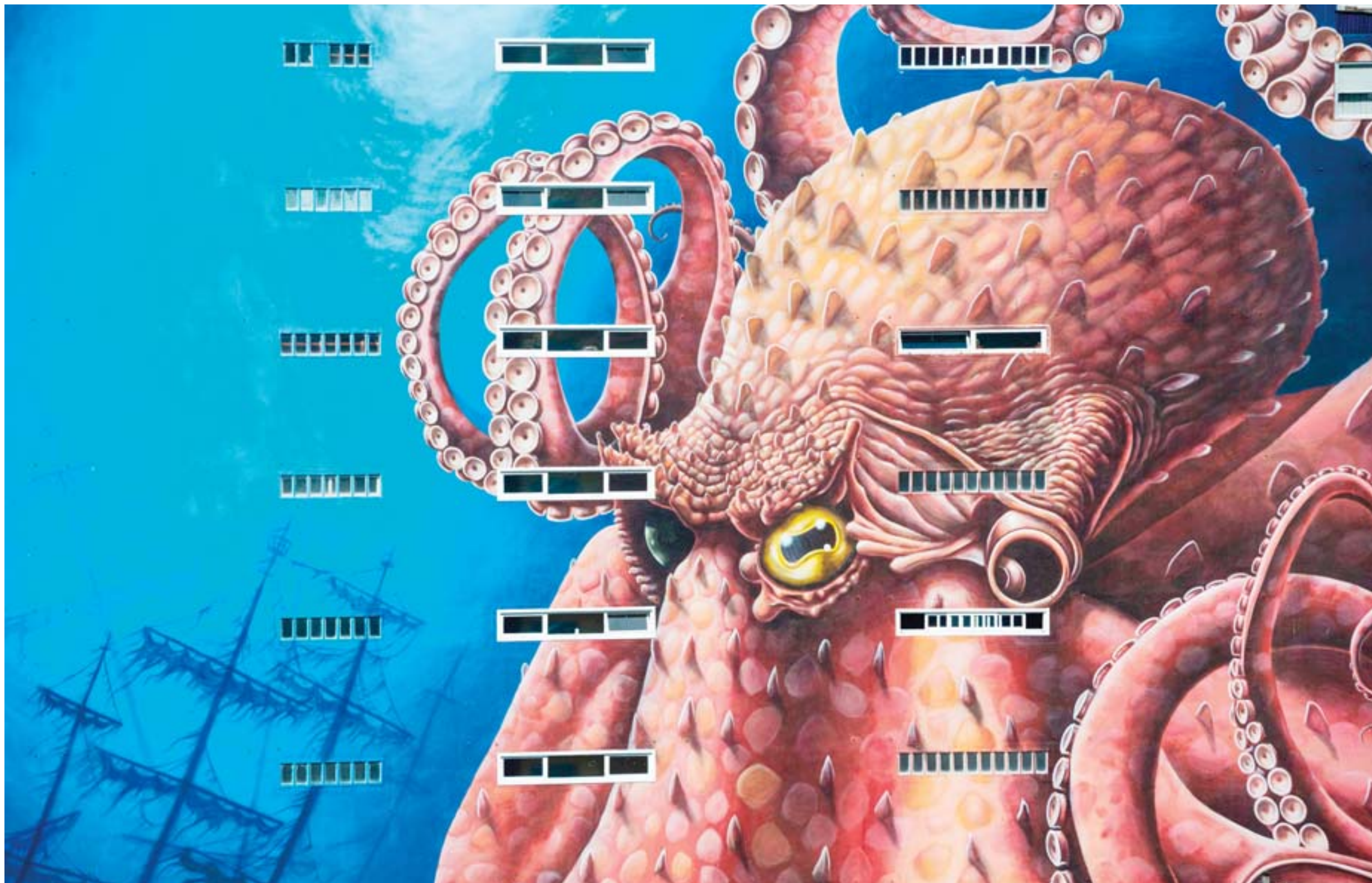
Friday's Solution



hard

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JULY 21, 2019



A mural by Spanish street artist Delio adorns the side of a building in Vigo, northwestern Spain. — AFP

Long live the Lion Queen: Beyonce delights with new album

The Bey Hive was feeling the love Friday over Beyonce's release of the album "The Lion King: The Gift," which the pop queen dropped as a sister piece to her new film, a remake of the Disney classic. Beyonce dubbed the 27-track album she curated and produced "a love letter to Africa," enlisting several African artists as well as a host of stars including her husband Jay-Z, Kendrick Lamar, her co-star Donald Glover (who also performs as Childish Gambino) and Pharrell Williams—along with none other than Jay and Bey's seven-year-old daughter Blue Ivy Carter—as collaborators.

"I wanted to be authentic to what is beautiful about music in Africa," Beyonce, who voices Nala in "The Lion King," told ABC's "Good Morning America." "The Gift" is separate from the film's official soundtrack which includes a rendition of Elton's John's iconic "Can You Feel the Love Tonight?" by Beyonce and Glover, who plays Simba in the film. John himself also graced the film's soundtrack, released 25 years after the original, with a new song entitled "Never Too Late."

Both albums include Beyonce's latest single "Spirit." But it's Beyonce's "Gift" that has her legions of fans abuzz. The album features Afrobeat-heavy songs interspersed with dialogue from the highly-anticipated film, which also was released on Friday and stars Seth Rogen as Pumbaa and Chiwetel Ejiofor as Scar.

Sonic cinema

In addition to pop royalty, Beyonce brought Nigerian musicians Tekno, Yemi Alade and Mr Eazi on board for "The Gift," along with Ghanaian reggae-dancehall artist Shatta Wale, Cameroonian urban music star Salatiel sang with Beyonce and Pharrell on the thumping groove "Water." "I wanted to make sure we found the best talent from Africa, and not just use some of the sounds and did my interpretation of it," Beyonce said on ABC.

In classic Beyonce fashion, the album skews toward the visual—what she calls "sonic cinema." "This is a new experience of storytelling," she said in announcing the album. "It is a mixture of genres and collaboration that isn't one sound. It is influenced by everything from R&B, pop, hip hop and Afrobeat." Beyonce also released a sprawling, richly pigmented video to accompany "Spirit," which features the star and Blue Ivy in matching ruffled pink dresses, their long curls blowing in the desert wind. "Your destiny is comin'



In this file photo US singer Beyonce arrives for the world premiere of Disney's The Lion King at the Dolby theatre in Hollywood. — AFP

close / Stand up and fight," she sings. "So go into a far off land / And be one with the great I Am."

Pairing her powerful vocals with a visual feast, Beyonce makes about a dozen outfit changes in the video including both custom and couture looks, according to Vogue. The clip was partially filmed in Arizona's remote Havasu Falls in the Grand Canyon. It also includes the legendary "Lion King" scene where Simba and Nala lock eyes over a pool oasis, which the new film recreated from the original animated take. "The soundscape is more than just the music because each song tells the story of the film," Beyonce said. —AFP

Cesar Pelli, creator of Malaysia's Petronas Towers dies aged 92

Cesar Pelli, the Argentine architect and creator of Malaysia's Petronas Towers and New York's One World Financial Center, died Friday at the age of 92, his family said. "I want to send my condolences to the family and friends of the talented Cesar Pelli," President Mauricio Macri wrote on Twitter. "The works he leaves throughout the world as a legacy are a pride for all Argentines."

After graduating from the University of Tucuman, Pelli left for the US in 1952, where he studied on a scholarship. He was dean of Yale's architecture faculty from 1977 to 1984, and counted the American Institute of Architects Gold Medal among his many accolades. His most high-profile

achievement was the Petronas Towers in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur—a 452-metre high structure that was the world's tallest building when it was completed in 1998.

Pelli's legacy also includes dozens of theaters and cultural centers across the world, and he oversaw the expansion of New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1984. He also designed the International Financial Centre that towers over Hong Kong's waterfront and the Gran Torre Santiago in Chile. His last project was the Salesforce Transit Center in San Francisco, a transport hub that lies beneath the city's tallest skyscraper and blends green space and shopping areas. —AFP



In this file photo the Petronas Twin Towers, the world's then tallest buildings, crown Kuala Lumpur's skyline during dusk. — AFP



Maisie Williams, left, and Jacob Anderson speak at the 'Game of Thrones' Panel And Q&A during 2019 Comic-Con International at San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California. — AFP photos



(Left to right) Isaac Hempstead Wright, Conleth Hill, and John Bradley speak at the 'Game of Thrones' Panel.



Nikolaj Coster-Waldau

'Game of Thrones' cast defend final season at Comic-Con

The "Game of Thrones" cast leapt to the defense of its much-maligned final season in front of a boisterous crowd at San Diego Comic-Con on Friday, blaming the backlash on negative media coverage. The HBO fantasy epic's conclusion enraged fans around the world, and organizers of the pop culture convention reminded attendees before the retrospective panel to make the cast "feel welcome."

While the cast drew a rapturous reception, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau—who played Jaime Lannister—was booed after describing his character's death in the arms of his sister and lover Cersei as "perfect." "It made sense to me," said the actor, before being interrupted by a heckler. "This show has brought so many people together, watching it, loving it. So obviously when it comes to an end it's going to piss you off no matter what... just don't call people names," he added.

An online petition to HBO to remake the final season with "competent writers" was signed by 1.6 million people. The panel was billed as the show creators' first public outing following the backlash. But showrunners David Benioff and Dan Weiss quietly withdrew along with two cast members earlier in the week. The remaining members expressed support for the final season. Conleth Hill—who played Varys—described the fan response to the show over the years as extremely positive, referring to the negativity as a "media-led hate campaign."

The atmosphere quickly lightened as cast members joked about stealing props from the set. John Bradley, known to fans as Samwell Tarly, addressed another controversy, shooting down theories that he was to blame for a plastic water bottle accidentally left in shot during the final season. "Pardon me for being thirsty," he joked.

TV takes over

After Hollywood film stars Tom Cruise and Arnold Schwarzenegger dominated Thursday's opening day, television took center stage at Comic-Con Friday. Netflix surprised attendees by screening the first episode of "The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance," its upcoming prequel series to Jim Henson's classic 1982 fantasy film. Its combination of old-fashioned puppetry and cutting-edge visual effects aims to cast a spell on old and young alike.

Mark Hamill and "Rocketman" star Taron Egerton—who both provide voices—appeared in a panel discussion. Fan favorite Hamill was presented with Comic-Con's "Icon Award," telling the audience he felt lucky "to be able to do all the things I loved as a kid and get paid for it." "This is just seems wildly excessive," the "Star Wars" actor joked about the accolade, before serenading the crowd with his "Buddi" song from the film "Child's Play."

Amazon Prime wheeled out "Carnival Row," starring Orlando Bloom and Cara Delevingne, which is set in a fantastical Victorian-esque world filled with mythological immigrant creatures. Bloom said it was a "great gift and opportunity" to be in a show which was "so timely and... spoke to a lot of the issues with relevance to what's happening in the world today." AMC used its annual "Walking Dead" franchise panels to confirm veteran Danai Gurira—who appeared in the recent blockbuster "Avengers" movies—will depart the zombie show.

Gurira, who first appeared on the series in 2012, received a standing ovation. Plans were also teased for a series of films starring Andrew Lincoln, who announced his own departure from the show—the highest rated series in cable television history—at last year's Comic-Con. —AFP

'Avengers' directors eye 'Avatar' record, plot Marvel actor movies

"Avengers: Endgame" directors Joe and Anthony Russo said Friday it would be a "big thrill" to pass the all-time box office record held by "Avatar," as they set out plans to collaborate with a number of different stars from the Marvel superhero universe. Smash hit "Endgame" is inching ever closer to surpassing James Cameron's \$2.788 billion haul. It is currently just \$5 million short, and was still playing in 1,400 US theaters at the weekend despite being released in April.

"James Cameron has always been an idol of ours—he fed our passion for filmmaking from the beginning, and to be so close to one of his great films is really special," said Anthony at San Diego Comic-Con, the world's largest pop culture convention. The filmmaking brothers told a Hall H panel their next project "Cherry," starring "Spider-Man" actor Tom Holland, will be a "mature" and "complicated" look at the US opioid crisis, based on a 2018 novel set in the brothers' hometown of Cleveland, Ohio.

"It's touched our families, the crisis, so it's a deeply personal movie for us," said Anthony. "Joe and I are now in a position now where we can get those movies made, and we want to use that sort of capital that we built up," he added. Filming will begin in October. The pair also showed a new trailer for "21 Bridges" starring "Black Panther" actor Chadwick Boseman, which hits theaters in September. Footage of the gritty cop drama in which a detective shuts down Manhattan's bridges and tunnels to hunt a cop killer over one night featured noir-ish action-filled scenes including gunfights and car chases.



Joe Russo and Anthony Russo speak at the Writing 'Avengers: Endgame' Panel during 2019 Comic-Con International.

The Russos are also producing "Dhaka," a Chris Hemsworth ("Thor") film shot in India and directed by former Marvel stuntman Sam Hargrave, and a new remake of "The Thomas Crown Affair" starring Michael B. Jordan—another "Black Panther" alumnus. They said they "would love to work with Marvel again," but announced new, separate adaptations including Japanese anime "Battle of the Planets" and graphic novel "Grimjack," as well as a Netflix collaboration based on card game "Magic: The Gathering." —AFP

Cruise, Schwarzenegger revive 80s Hollywood classics at Comic-Con

Hollywood '80s nostalgia soared at San Diego Comic-Con Thursday as Tom Cruise swooped in to unveil the new "Top Gun" while Arnold Schwarzenegger revealed why he'll be back for an explosive-looking "Terminator" sequel. A-list star Cruise surprised an ecstatic crowd at the world's largest pop culture convention in California with first footage of the long-awaited sequel to the 1986 smash action film that made him a household name. Describing "Top Gun: Maverick" as a "love letter to aviation," Cruise introduced clips of his ageing pilot still launching jets off aircraft carriers, refusing to retire despite failing to rise up the ranks.

The aerial shots were "all real" and the film—out next summer—is the result of working closely with US Navy officials, Cruise said, adding: "I really wanted to give you all an experience of what it is to be inside that aircraft." The original 1986 "Top Gun," in which Cruise played a hotshot US Navy pilot who has a dangerous and reckless flying style, was a huge commercial hit. The new trailer featured familiar images of Cruise's Pete "Maverick" Mitchell racing a motorcycle in his iconic aviator sunglasses, and belting out tunes with friends at a bar.

Addressing the long wait since the original, which was partly filmed in San Diego, Cruise said: "Thirty-four years you guys have been very patient with me, and I felt it was my responsibility to finally really deliver for you." Cruise's shock appearance came at the end of a presentation for another Paramount sequel—"Terminator: Dark Fate." Star Arnold Schwarzenegger said he was "addicted" to the killer cyborg franchise that "really launched my action movie career." "Of course I needed to come back," said the former bodybuilder and California governor, who has featured in four of the five "Terminator" movies to date.

'I hunt Terminators'

But it was the return of Linda Hamilton that dominated both the exclu-



Actor Tom Cruise makes a surprise appearance in Hall H to promote 'Top Gun: Maverick' at the Convention Center.

sive footage shown to attendees, and the cast discussion in Comic-Con's cavernous Hall H which also featured director Tim Miller. Hamilton, 62, reprises her famous role as Sarah Connor—who she first depicted in the 1984 original, but left after 1991 blockbuster "Terminator 2"—and age does not appear to have slowed her down one bit. Clips from the upcoming sequel showed an athletic Hamilton leaping from a vehicle to confront two super-powered, shape-shifting robots with an array of weapons including a gun, a bazooka and a grenade.

"My name is Sarah Connor. I hunt Terminators," she announces in the footage. Hamilton told the packed audience how she had been hesitant because the first two films felt "very intact," but had decided to come back so she could "rock it as a woman of a certain age." James Cameron, who also returns to the franchise as producer for the first time since "Terminator 2," appeared via videolink from the futuristic set of the "Avatar" sequels. He confirmed that Eddie Furlong, who portrayed John Connor as a teenager in "Terminator 2," will also reprise his role. Director Tim Miller said the new "Terminator" out November 1, would be R-rated following fan demand for a darker, grittier sequel. —AFP



Gabriel Luna and Arnold Schwarzenegger speak at the 'Terminator: Dark Fate' panel during 2019 Comic-Con International.

'Sesame Street' and Earth, Wind & Fire among Kennedy Center honorees

The iconic children's television program "Sesame Street" along with the R&B collective Earth, Wind & Fire will be among those recognized at this year's Kennedy Center Honors, one of America's most prestigious arts awards. The Kennedy Center-Washington's performing arts complex that serves as a living monument to slain president John F. Kennedy—announced Thursday that actress Sally Field, genre-spanning singer Linda Ronstadt and 11-time Grammy winning conductor Michael Tilson Thomas would also be among the 2019 class.

The choice of "Sesame Street"—a childhood staple that premiered in 1969 to high viewership and glowing reviews, which this year is celebrating its 50th anniversary—marks the first time the Kennedy Center will honor a television program and the second time it chose a work of art rather than individuals. Last year's inclusion of the groundbreaking musical "Hamilton" was the first such instance.

The program's co-founders will accept the award on the show's behalf, the Kennedy Center said. There was no word yet on whether cast members including the bright yellow Big Bird and furry red monster Elmo, known for his falsetto voice, will attend the December 8 gala. "In this class of Honorees, we are witnessing a uniquely American story: one that is representative of so many cultural touchstones and musical moments that make our nation great," said Kennedy Center President Deborah Rutter in a statement. "We're not just looking back; these Honorees are urging us to look forward as well."

Criticism of Trump

The Kennedy Center Honors traditionally



In this file picture Sesame Street Live characters, left to right, Ernie, Bert, Elmo, Abby Cadabby, Zoe and Cookie Monster, front, celebrate the renaming of the corner of 31st Street and Eighth Avenue to 'Sesame Street' outside Madison Square Garden in New York. — AFP

take place in the presence of the president, but Donald Trump, despised by many cultural and entertainment figures, has skipped Washington's rare night of red-carpet glamour for the past two years. A number of this year's nominees have criticized the president: the funk-inflected Earth, Wind and Fire requested Trump stop using his music during his 2016 campaign, and folk-tinged Ronstadt has voiced anger over the White House separation of immigrant families at the US-Mexico border.

The 73-year-old Ronstadt—who the Center dubbed the "consummate American artist"—sang her last concert in 2009 after a four-decade career that saw her deftly perform everything from country and rock to opera and Broadway standards. Earth, Wind and Fire's unique poppy blend of funk, jazz, soul and R&B has made them one of the best-selling musical groups of all time. The legendary group has played before former presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton. —AFP

Janet Jackson in Saudi concert boycotted by Nicki Minaj



US singer Janet Jackson



US singer Chris Brown

Janet Jackson, 50 Cent and Chris Brown were among artists who performed Thursday at a concert in Saudi Arabia that rapper Nicki Minaj pulled out of citing human rights concerns. A cheering crowd danced to the thumping music at Jeddah World Fest, hosted in the Red Sea city of western Saudi Arabia. Such scenes, unimaginable just two years ago, reflect how the ultra-conservative Islamic kingdom is easing decades-old restrictions on entertainment.

Minaj—well-known for her provocative, profanity-laced lyrics and skin-baring music videos—pulled out of headlining the concert in a show of solidarity for women’s and gay rights in the ultra-conservative Islamic kingdom. The cancellation triggered a social media storm, with many fans in the kingdom voicing disappointment and demanding ticket refunds. The singer insisted on Twitter that her decision was not intended to “disrespect” the Saudi government.

The announcement of her performance had prompted an online backlash from arch-conservatives as the kingdom pursues a contentious liberalization drive. Citing unnamed sources, a few Saudi media outlets including the pro-government Okaz newspaper insisted it was the king-

dom that cancelled her show, as it went against local “customs and values”. The country has faced intense international scrutiny over its human rights record since last year’s killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul and the ongoing trial of women activists.

The Human Rights Foundation has urged artists not to perform in the kingdom. “It’s clear that, after losing Nicki Minaj on the basis of the Saudi regime’s atrocious human rights record and their treatment of women and the gay community, Crown Prince (Mohammed bin Salman) has chosen to spend whatever it takes to give the appearance that things are normal and that this is just another concert,” HRF president Thor Halvorssen said in a statement. “Except it isn’t.”

Saudi Arabia is boosting entertainment for its citizens to have fun, in what some see as an attempt to blunt public frustration over an economic downturn and high youth unemployment. The country’s General Entertainment Authority said it plans to pump \$64 billion into the sector in the coming decade. But some acts have fuelled anger in a country still steeped in conservatism. — AFP



US DJ Steve Aoki



US rapper 50 Cent



The audience reacts during the Jeddah World music Festival at the King Abdullah Sports City in the coastal Saudi city of Jeddah. — AFP photos

Outlandish ‘Cats’ film trailer gives the internet paws

A tribe of cats with names like Rum Tum Tugger, who sing, dance and hold an annual ball to choose who will ascend to feline heaven for reincarnation? Yes, that’s the plot of “Cats”—and somehow the new trailer for the upcoming live action film adaptation of the famed musical looks even trippier than it sounds. This week’s release of the teaser for the film—which stars Taylor Swift, Idris Elba, Ian McKellen, James Corden, Jason Derulo, Judi Dench and the Royal Ballet’s Francesca Hayward—had the internet losing its mind, leaving some viewers mystified, others haunted over the unnerving mashup of the actors’ real faces and feline bodies, all cloaked with “digital fur technology.”

As Jennifer Hudson, who plays Grizabella, belts out the musical’s classic song “Memory,” the band of kitties who call themselves the Jellicles twirl through a remarkably large home decked out in opulent shades of burgundy and olive, with bizarrely enormous chandeliers and furniture on which the cats romp. Many on Twitter voiced uneasiness over the peculiar sexiness of the humanized cats, particularly the breast-like furry mounds on some of their chests, with some wearing jewels and extra fur coats.

“My brain has melted. My eyes are bleeding. There is no god,” said one Twitter user, @KristyPuchko. “the CATS trailer is proof of a conspiracy theory i’ve long believed—that rich people have different, much better drugs,” tweeted another, @BrandyLJensen. Swift plays Bombalurina—the flirty cat, who is sometimes, well, catty—while Dench plays Old Deuteronomy, the boss cat who chooses which feline gets a ticket to the “Heaven’side Layer” to be reborn.

The sung-through musical “Cats”—composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber and based on T.S. Eliot’s poetry collection “Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats”—premiered at London’s West End in 1981, becoming a decorated global phenomenon and grossing \$2 billion worldwide by 1994. For a time it held the record for the longest-running musical on both Broadway and the West End, and has been translated into 15 languages.

The Universal Pictures feature film directed by Tom Hooper, who did 2012’s “Les Misérables,” is set to premiere December 20, 2019. But some say their lives already are forever changed only after seeing the fantasy musical’s trailer. Others acted unmoved. “I don’t know why you’re all freaking out over miniature yet huge cats with human celebrity faces and sexy breasts performing a demented dream ballet for kids,” tweeted @louisvirtel.—AFP

Superstar Bad Bunny hits pause on career to join protests

Puerto Rican trap superstar Bad Bunny is taking a break from music in light of mass protests in his home demanding the resignation of its governor over corruption accusations. The 25-year-old considered the face of Latin trap—a booming genre that fuses reggaeton with elements of hip hop from the US south—said in an Instagram TV video late Thursday that after finishing four contractually obligated shows in Europe he would return to Puerto Rico rather than record his new album.

“I had planned on my agenda after finishing these last 4 shows, going back to Miami to record my new album,” said the artist born Benito Martinez. “But I’m going to cancel that. I’m going to cancel everything.”

“I’m going to put a pause on my career because I don’t have the heart or the mind to make music.”

Thousands have been marching for days in the Caribbean US territory demanding the resignation of Governor Ricardo Rossello, following corruption accusations and the leak of text chats in which he made sexist and homophobic remarks. “I’m going to Puerto Rico,” Bad Bunny continued. “I’m not going to stay silent. I’m not going to step aside, Puerto Rico isn’t going to step aside.” To the chant of “Ricky, renuncia!” (“Ricky, resign!”) large crowds have been gathering in the capital San Juan clamoring for Rossello to leave office—which he is refusing to do. Prior to his announcement, Bad Bunny did collaborate on a blistering new protest song “Afilando Los Cuchillos” (“Sharpening The Knives”) with fellow Puerto Ricans Residente, of the iconic band Calle 13, and singer iLe.

“We are sharp, like knives / Sparkling up to the edge / Weed must be removed from the plantation / So that none of them take advantage of what is mine,” iLe, the younger sister of Residente, sings in the chorus. “Right now suddenly the government is completely exposed,” iLe said via phone. “I’m ashamed, but at the same time I feel proud that there’s a lot of people from different parts of the island expressing themselves with one same goal: We want the governor to resign.” —AFP

New flick by Japan’s Kore-eda to open Venice festival

The Truth”, the hotly-awaited new film by award-winning Japanese director Kore-eda Hirokazu, will kick off the 2019 Venice Film Festival, organizers announced Thursday. Starring Catherine Deneuve, Juliette Binoche and Ethan Hawke, the film tells the tale of a French cinema star whose decision to publish her memoirs prompts a mother-daughter reunion which turns fiery. “Truths will be told, accounts settled, loves and resentments confessed,” the festival said of the film.

The flick will screen on the first day of the 76th Venice International Film Festival, which runs from August 28 to September 7. “It is with great joy that I have learned that my new film, The Truth, has been selected to open the Official Competition of the Venice Film Festival. I am extremely honored,” Kore-eda said in a statement. “We shot the movie in ten weeks last fall in Paris. As officially announced, the cast is prestigious but the film itself recounts a small family story that takes place primarily inside a house.”

“I have tried to make my characters live within this small universe, with their lies, pride, regrets, sadness, joy, and reconciliation. I truly hope you will like this film,” he added. Kore-eda won the top prize at the Cannes film festival last year with “Shoplifters”, about a group of Tokyo misfits and crooks who form a kind of alternative family, called a “modern day ‘Oliver Twist’”. He has been described as Japan’s answer to Ken Loach, a director whose stories about struggling ordinary people never fail to touch. “For the first film he has directed abroad, Kore-eda had the privilege of working with two major French film stars,” Festival Director Alberto Barbera said. “The encounter between the universe of Japan’s most important filmmaker today, and two beloved actresses like Catherine Deneuve and Juliette Binoche, brought to life a poetic reflection on the relationship between a mother and her daughter, and the complex profession of acting,” he added. —AFP



In this file photo a woman walks past a dress by German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld displayed among sculptures at the off-site exhibition 'Back Side / Fashion from Behind' by the Palais Galliera held at the Musee Bourdelle in Paris. —AFP photos



In this file photo a woman looks at dresses displayed among large plaster casts by French sculptor Antoine Bourdelle (1861-1929).

Paris show gives the humble back its place in the limelight

It does not usually make it into the spotlight but the humble back is always there, yet almost never seen in fashion images, forgotten amid the focus on the front and faces. A new Paris exhibition, however, aims to redress this imbalance, exploring the relationship between fashion and this part of the body that is so rarely seen.

At the exhibition organized by the Palais Galliera fashion museum—showing at the Bourdelle Museum amid its famous collection of plaster statues—visitors are confronted by mannequins with their backs turned. Curators say one of the aims of the exhibition is to explore the relationship with the back through history, with the complex fastenings imposed on women often seen as a symbol of submission. Excluding the straitjacket, no men's clothing item has ever fastened at the back. But women's clothing often has been, leaving them in a position of dependence.

"Anatomically, the body is not made to put its arms behind the back. Fastening at the back is unnatural," said Alexandre Samson, curator of the exhibition which runs until November 17. At the end of the 15th century, lacing appeared on the backs of women of all social classes. Without the luxury of chambermaids, peasant women had to ask their brothers, fathers or husbands for help. Hook-and-eye closure appeared in the 18th century, corsets arrived in the 19th century and closed in front, laced at the back.

'Others see, we don't'

The plunging neckline came in the 20th century when French master fashion designer Paul Poiret freed women from their corsets. But even then, freeing the back from the network of lacing and fastening carried connotations of prostitution. A landmark moment came when Rita de Acosta Lydig, a high-flying American socialite, caused a scandal by showing off her bare back in a simple black dress at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in the early years of the 20th century.

A more recent "back fashion scandal" occurred in June 2018, when US first



In this file photo a man looks at a dress by Moroccan fashion designer Martine Sitbon.

lady Melania Trump visited a camp for undocumented immigrant children at the Mexican border. The words on the back of her parka sent a powerful message: "I really don't care, do you?" Through history, what mattered most for rich women was less the look of their back but the vast trains that trailed behind.

This trend started in the 13th century and Catherine the Great of Russia set an ultimate record with a 14-metre train, carried by 12 valets, at her coronation in 1762. In modern times, the back is often marked by a bag—after a failed attempt by Hermes in 1968, the humble backpack only broke with its school



In this file photo a dress by Balenciaga is displayed next to a sculpture.

and military image in the late 1970s when Prada gave it a nylon make-over. The back is absent in most fashion show pictures. In one hallway of the museum, 3,607 Paris Fashion Week shots are displayed: none taken from the side, none from the back.

According to the organizers of the exhibition, modern society is obsessed with people's faces while the back is more a reminder of our limitations. "Our back is the only part of ourselves that we don't see and that others do," Samson said. "To toy with the back is to toy with a form of fragility, of powerlessness. And human beings hate powerlessness." —AFP

Photo feature



Dresses are displayed at the Pierre Cardin's 'Future Fashion' Exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in New York. —AFP photos

Classifieds

Sunday, July 21, 2019



STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h with a chance for rising dust over open areas and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 38 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div>SFC. CHART 20/07/2019 0000 UTC</div>	
KUWAIT CITY	46 °C	33 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	34 °C		
ABDALY	48 °C	32 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	47 °C	33 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	44 °C	31 °C		
SALMIYAH	40 °C	33 °C		
AHMADI	43 °C	35 °C		
NU'WAISIB	46 °C	31 °C		
WAFRA	46 °C	32 °C		
SALMY	46 °C	28 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST					
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.	
Sunday	07/21	Very hot and some high clouds will appear	48 °C	33 °C	NW-VRB 08 - 40 km/h
Monday	07/22	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	43 °C	31 °C	NW-SE 10 - 32 km/h
Tuesday	07/23	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas and some high clouds will appear	46 °C	30 °C	NW-SE 12 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	07/24	Hot and Relatively humid and some high clouds will appear	46 °C	32 °C	NW-SE 12 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:30
Sunrise	05:01
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:29
Sunset	18:47
Isha	20:16

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	46 °C
MIN. Temp.	35 °C
MAX. RH	23 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	N 71 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Mohamed** Shaik Fareedh, holder of Indian Passport No. J5547264, issued at Kuwait on 30-05-2011 permanent resident of Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu. Correct given name: Mohamed Shaik Fareedh, surname: Mahboob Ali. (C5562)

I, **Sapna** holder of Indian Passport No. M5455537 do hereby change my name to (given name Sapna, sur-name Abraham) as per my Adhar number 971045631080 for all purpose. (C 5560) 19-7-2019

I, **Alfeeya** currently holder of Indian Passport No. Z1852112, issued at Kuwait on 04-August-2010, permanent resident of Mohammadi Pura Timba, Sagwara, District Durgapur (Pin: 314025) Rajasthan, India and presently residing at Al-Zahra, Block 8, Street 803, House 201, Kuwait, do hereby permanently change my name from Alfeeya to ALFEEYA HASHIMI HUSSAIN (New Name), with immediate effect.

I, **Hashimi** M. Hussain father of Zaina Manager who is holder of Indian Passport No. P9484557, issued at Kuwait on 02-February-2017, permanent resident of Mohammedi Pura Timba, Sagwara, District Durgapur (Pin: 314025) Rajasthan, India and presently residing at Al-Zahra, Block 8, Street 803, House 201, Kuwait, do hereby permanently change my daughter's name from Zaina Manager to ZAINA

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HASHIMI HUSSAIN (New Name), with immediate effect. (C 5559) 18-7-2019

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112

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Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
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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
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Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044
Bangladesh Airlines	22452977/8
Indian Airlines	22456700



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

ARRIVAL FLIGHTS ON SUNDAY 21/7/2019										DEPARTURE FLIGHTS ON SUNDAY 21/7/2019									
AIRLINES	FLT	ROUTE	TIME	SAW	THY	701	DAMASCUS	12:30		AIRLINES	FLT	ROUTE	TIME	SAW	704	DAMASCUS	11:00		
KAC	540	SHARM EL-SHEIKH	00:10	UAE	871	766	ISTANBUL	12:30		AIC	988	HYDERABAD/CHENNAI	00:05	KAC	221	RIYADH	11:20		
IGO	1757	KOCHI	00:10	MSR	610	871	DUBAI	12:45		MSC	502	ALEXANDRIA	00:10	GFA	157	ISTANBUL	11:30		
THY	772	ISTANBUL	00:20	KAC	742	766	CAIRO	12:45		JZR	713	SOHAG	00:10	MEA	214	BAHRAIN	11:35		
JZR	254	AMMAN	00:20	AXB	393	742	DAMMAM	12:55		JZR	707	LUXOR	00:20	JZR	213	BEIRUT	11:55		
DLH	625	DAMMAM	00:50	KAC	774	742	KOZHIKODE	13:10		MSR	615	CAIRO	00:30	QTR	1075	JEDDAH	12:05		
KAC	102	LONDON	00:50	KAC	672	742	RIYADH	13:35		FDB	072	DUBAI	00:30	JZR	735	DOHA	12:10		
AHY	119	BAKU	00:55	FDB	059	742	DUBAI	14:00		FEG	342	ALEXANDRIA	01:05	JZR	715	CAIRO	12:30		
KAC	504	BEIRUT	01:00	QTR	1078	742	DOHA	14:25		JZR	409	DELHI	01:10	JZR	123	SOHAG	12:50		
JZR	722	ALEXANDRIA	01:00	KAC	792	742	MADINAH	14:40		IGO	1758	KOCHI	01:10	JZR	115	DUBAI	13:10		
UAE	853	DUBAI	01:40	KAC	562	742	AMMAN	14:40		KAC	677	DUBAI	01:40	KAC	541	DOHA	13:25		
KLM	446	BAHRAIN	01:45	KAC	304	742	MUMBAI	14:45		JZR	723	ALEXANDRIA	01:50	SAW	702	CAIRO	13:30		
PGT	858	ISTANBUL	01:50	SVA	500	742	JEDDAH	14:45		THY	773	ISTANBUL	01:50	ETH	3621	DAMASCUS	13:30		
THY	1464	ISTANBUL	01:50	JZR	222	742	RIYADH	14:45		DLH	625	FRANKFURT	01:50	MSR	611	ADDIS ABABA	13:30		
KKK	1268	ISTANBUL	01:55	KAC	618	742	DOHA	14:50		AHY	120	BAKU	01:55	KAC	515	CAIRO	13:45		
JZR	262	BEIRUT	02:05	KAC	788	742	JEDDAH	14:55		KAC	417	MANILA	02:00	THY	767	TEHRAN	13:55		
ETH	620	ADDIS ABABA	02:15	KA	C692	742	MUSCAT	15:00		JZR	111	DOHA	02:10	AXB	394	KOZHIKODE	14:10		
JZR	734	CAIRO	02:15	KAC	118	742	NEW YORK	15:00		THY	765	ISTANBUL	02:50	UAE	872	DUBAI	14:15		
QTR	1086	DOHA	02:40	JZR	602	742	BAKU	15:00		PGT	859	ISTANBUL	02:50	JZR	103	DUBAI	15:00		
KAC	414	BANGKOK	02:40	KNE	529	742	JEDDAH	15:05		JZR	705	ASYUT	02:55	FDB	060	BAHRAIN	15:05		
GFA	211	BAHRAIN	02:50	ETD	303	742	ABU DHABI	15:15		KKK	1269	ISTANBUL	02:55	QTR	1079	DUBAI	15:05		
THY	768	ISTANBUL	02:55	OMA	645	742	MUSCAT	15:20		ETH	621	ADDIS ABABA	03:05	SVA	501	DOHA	15:30		
OMA	643	MUSCAT	03:05	ABY	127	742	SHARJAH	15:35		KLM	446	AMSTERDAM	03:10	KNE	530	JEDDAH	15:45		
ETD	305	ABU DHABI	03:05	UAE	857	742	DUBAI	15:45		UAE	854	DUBAI	03:30	JZR	405	KOCHI	16:00		
RJA	648	AMMAN	03:05	KAC	546	742	CAIRO	15:50		THY	769	ISTANBUL	03:50	KAC	563	AMMAN	16:00		
PGT	856	ISTANBUL	03:10	FEG	341	742	SOHAG	16:00		ETD	306	ABU DHABI	04:00	KAC	775	RIYADH	16:05		
MSR	612	CAIRO	03:15	JZR	732	742	CAIRO	16:10		OMA	644	MUSCAT	04:05	ABY	128	SHARJAH	16:15		
KAC	418	MANILA	03:20	FDB	051	742	DUBAI	16:10		QTR	1087	DOHA	04:15	KAC	785	JEDDAH	16:20		
QTR	1076	DOHA	03:30	KAC	502	742	BEIRUT	16:15		MSR	613	CAIRO	04:15	ETD	304	ABU DHABI	16:20		
OHY	352	ISTANBUL	04:00	QTR	1072	742	DOHA	16:15		PGT	857	ISTANBUL	04:20	OMA	646	MUSCAT	16:20		
LMU	510	CAIRO	04:00	FEG	241	742	ALEXANDRIA	16:45		QTR	1077	DOHA	05:00	KAC	619	DOHA	16:25		
KAC	382	DELHI	04:05	SAW	705	742	DAMASCUS	17:00		LMU	511	CAIRO	05:00	FEG	442	ASYUT	16:55		
IGO	1751	CHENNAI	04:10	JZR	116	742	DOHA	17:05		OHY	351	ISTANBUL	05:00	KAC	675	DUBAI	17:00		
KAC	784	JEDDAH	04:25	SVA	510	742	RIYADH	17:10		IGO	1752	CHENNAI	05:10	FDB	052	DUBAI	17:10		
JZR	1738	CAIRO	04:45	GFA	215	742	BAHRAIN	17:30		KAC	303	MUMBAI	05:15	QTR	1073	DOHA	17:25		
JZR	404	HYDERABAD	04:50	JZR	214	742	JEDDAH	17:35		KAC	103	LONDON	05:20	KAC	858	DUBAI	17:40		
OHY	1352	ISTANBUL	05:00	IRA	665	742	SHIRAZ	17:35		JZR	1735	CAIRO	05:35	KAC	283	DHAKA	17:40		
THY	1414	TRABZON	05:05	JZR	124	742	DUBAI	17:40		OHY	1351	ISTANBUL	06:00	FEG	242	BEIRUT	17:40		
FDB	069	DUBAI	05:05	JZR	104	742	BAHRAIN	18:00		FDB	070	DUBAI	06:00	KAC	621	ALEXANDRIA	17:45		
IGA	170	BAHRAIN	05:05	QTR	1080	742	DOHA	18:10		THY	1465	ISTANBUL	06:00	KAC	343	DOHA	17:50		
THY	770	ISTANBUL	05:20	KAC	516	742	TEHRAN	18:20		THY	771	ISTANBUL	06:30	KAC	381	CHENNAI	17:50		
JZR	402	MUMBAI	05:25	JZR	302	742	ISTANBUL	18:20		GFA	212	BAHRAIN	06:50	SAW	706	DELHI	17:55		
KAC	344	CHENNAI	05:30	MSR	620	742	CAIRO	18:30		RJA	649	AMMAN	07:00	SVA	511	DAMASCUS	18:00		
KAC	552	CAIRO	05:50	JZR	736	742	CAIRO	18:55		JZR	251	AMMAN	07:10	JZR	721	RIYADH	18:10		
JZR	112	DOHA	05:50	FDB	063	742	DUBAI	19:05		JZR	121	DUBAI	07:15	JZR	127	ALEXANDRIA	18:15		
BAW	157	LONDON	06:10	RJA	640	742	AMMAN	19:05		JZR	113	DOHA	07:30	GFA	216	DUBAI	18:20		
KAC	284	DHAKA	06:15	GFA	217	742	BAHRAIN	19:05		JZR	550	ALEXANDRIA	07:30	JZR	403	BAHRAIN	18:20		
JZR	714	SOHAG	06:20	UAE	875	742	DUBAI	19:05		RBG	165	ROME	08:00	IRA	664	HYDERABAD	18:25		
KAC	678	DUBAI	06:40	ABY	123	742	SHARJAH	19:20		KAC	171	FRANKFURT	08:00	JZR	733	SHIRAZ	18:35		
KAC	204	LAHORE	06:45	KAC	156	742	ISTANBUL	19:25		BAW	156	LONDON	08:00	JZR	501	CAIRO	18:35		
RBG	559	ALEXANDRIA	06:50	RBG	555	742	ALEXANDRIA	19:40		IGO	1756	CNN	08:10	JZR	253	AMMAN	19:10		
KAC	302	MUMBAI	07:05	KAC	674	742	DUBAI	19:45		FDB	054	DUBAI	08:35	KAC	345	DOHA	19:20		
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	KAC	776	742	RIYADH	19:45		KAC	501	VIENNA	08:45	MSR	621	AHMEDABAD	19:20		
KAC	358	KOCHI	07:25	KAC	178	742	VIENNA	19:50		KAC	501	BEIRUT	08:50	JZR	261	CAIRO	19:30		
FDB	053	DUBAI	07:50	KAC	158	742	ISTANBUL	19:55		KAC	545	CAIRO	08:50	FDB	064	BEIRUT	19:45		
QTR	1084	DOHA	08:00	KAC	104	742	LONDON	20:00		KAC	561	AMMAN	08:55	GFA	218	DUBAI	19:45		
JZR	708	LUXOR	08:00	KAC	166	742	ROME	20:00		KAC	117	NEW YORK	09:05	ABY	124	BAHRAIN	19:50		
KAC	332	TRIVANDRUM	08:05	OMA	647	742	MUSCAT	20:05		KAC	791	MADINAH	09:10	RJA	641	SHARJAH	20:00		
KAC	384	DELHI	08:10	DLH	624	742	FRANKFURT	20:10		QTR	1085	DOHA	09:10	RBG	556	AMMAN	20:05		
UAE	855	DUBAI	08:25	KAC	542	742	CAIRO	20:15		KAC	787	JEDDAH	09:15	JZR	401	ALEXANDRIA	20:20		
QTR	8511	DOHA	08:30	MEA	402	742	BEIRUT	20:15		KAC	161	GENEVA	09:15	UAE	876	MUMBAI	20:30		
JZR	724	ALEXANDRIA	08:35	KAC	620	742	DOHA	20:30		KAC	671	DUBAI	09:15	KAC	351	DUBAI	20:35		
ETD	301	ABU DHABI	08:50	QTR	1088	742	DOHA	20:40		KAC	691	MUSCAT	09:20	DLH	624	KOCHI	20:45		
IRC	528	AHWAZ	09:00	KAC	172	742	FRANKFURT	21:00		JZR	601	BAKU	09:20	OMA	648	DAMMAM	20:55		
OMA	641	MUSCAT	09:00	KLM	445	742	AMSTERDAM	21:00		KAC	741	DAMMAM	09:40	KAC	333	MUSCAT	21:05		
ABY	125	SHARJAH	09:00	ETD	307	742	ABU DHABI	21:10		KAC	773	RIYADH	09:40	MEA	403	TRIVANDRUM	21:05		
GFA	209	BAHRAIN	09:05	UAE	859	742	DUBAI	21:15		ABY	126	SHARJAH	09:40	KAC	301	BEIRUT	21:15		
QTR	1070	DOHA	09:20	ALK	229	742	COLOMBO	21:15		JZR	731	CAIRO	09:45	IGA	171	MUMBAI	21:25		
JZR	706	ASYUT	09:20	THY	764	742	ISTANBUL	21:30		UAE	856	DUBAI	09:50	KAC	203	DOHA	21:50		
IGO	1753	AHMEDABAD	09:40	KAC	676	742	DUBAI	21:45		JZR	301	ISTANBUL	09:55	KLM	445	BAHRAIN	21:50		
FDB	055	DUBAI	09:40	KAC	622	742	DOHA	21:50		ETD	302	ABU DHABI	09:55	ETD	308	LAHORE	22:00		
SAW	703	DAMASCUS	10:00	GFA	219	742	BAHRAIN	21:50		OMA	642	MUSCAT	10:00	ALK	230	BAHRAIN	22:10		
SVA	512	RIYADH	10:00	KAC	564	742	AMMAN	21:55		IRC	529	AHWAZ	10:00	THY	1403	ABU DHABI	22:15		
GFA	213	BAHRAIN	10:40	QTR	1082	742	DOHA	22:05		KAC	101	LONDON	10:05	UAE	860	COLOMBO	22:20		
MEA	404	BEIRUT	10:55	KAC	162	742	GENEVA	22:15		GFA	210	BAHRAIN	10:05	KAC	383	AYT	22:25		
QTR	1074	DOHA	11:00	ETD	309	742	ABU DHABI	22:15		QTR	8512	DOHA	10:10	GFA	220	DUBAI	22:35		
JZR	114	DOHA	11:10	KAC	786	742	JEDDAH	22:20		QTR	1071	DOHA	10:30	KAC	783	DELHI	22:35		
JZR	122	DUBAI	11:45	AIC	981	742	CHENNAI/AHMEDABAD	22:25		KAC	617	DOHA	10:40	KAC	551	BAHRAIN	22:50		
JZR	410	DELHI	11:50	JZR	128	742	DUBAI	22:50		KAC	155	ISTANBUL	10:40	KAC	411	JEDDAH	22:55		
JZR	1736	CAIRO	12:00	MSC	405	742	SOHAG	23:15		FDB	056	DUBAI	10:40	ETD	310	CAIRO	23:00		
JZR	252	AMMAN	12:20	MSR	614	742	CAIRO	23:30		IGO	1754	AHMEDABAD	10:40	QTR	1083	BANGKOK	23:00		
ETH	3620	ADDIS ABABA	12:30	FDB	071	742	DUBAI	23:35		SVA	513	RIYADH	10:55	JZR	701	ABU DHABI	23:05		
																DOHA	23:20		
																ASYUT	23:45		



An Indonesian forest and land fire task force officer tries to douse a fire at a palm oil plantation in Pekanbaru in Riau province yesterday. — AFP

86 Bosnians buried 27 years after massacre

PRIJEDOR, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Hundreds of people gathered yesterday for the funeral of 86 Muslim victims of a massacre committed in Prijedor by Bosnian Serb forces at the beginning of the 1990s Bosnian war. The remains of the victims, mostly male and many teenagers, were found in 2017 in a mass grave at Koricanske Stijene, a mountain region of central Bosnia. The remains were found at the bottom of a cliff, in a natural pit, and were covered by an enormous amount of stones.

The victims were part of a group of more than 200 civilians, notably Bosnian Muslims, but also several Catholic Croats, previously held in a detention camp at Trnopolje, in the region of Prijedor. On Aug 21, 1992, they were loaded onto buses, officially for a prisoner exchange. But when the convoy arrived at Koricanske Stijene they were offloaded, lined up on the edge of the cliff and executed, according to several verdicts by local courts against members of the Bosnian Serb forces. It was one of the most horrible episodes of the

1992-1995 inter-ethnic war in Bosnia that claimed some 100,000 lives.

Medina Garibovic, 29, who lives in Switzerland, came to bury her father Sefik, who was 35 when he died. “We separated from each other in May 1992 at the train station in Trnopolje (a village near Prijedor),” she told AFP. “My mother, my sister and I first left to Slovenia. He was supposed to join us a week later. But he was taken to the camp in Trnopolje and we never saw each other again,” she told AFP.

Garibovic’s remains, like those of Himzo Mrkalj, were unearthed found during the 2017 exhumations. “In the first exhumation we found a bone and two teeth of my husband. Now, we found more remains and we have decided to bury him,” said his widow, 71-year old Nasima Mrkalj. “On one hand, I am satisfied, but pain is stronger than that satisfaction,” the woman, who lives in Denmark, added.

To date, 181 victim of the massacre at Koricanske Stijene have been found and identified, including 176 Bosnian Muslims and five Croats, according to Mujo Begic, an official from the Bosnian Institute for Missing Persons. After taking control in the northwestern region of Prijedor in April 1992, Serb forces killed some 3,200 people, including 250 women and a hundred children, according to victims’ associations. Some 650 people are still unaccounted for. — AFP



PRIJEDOR, Bosnia: Bosnian Muslims, survivors of massacre in this Bosnian town in 1992, pray near caskets of their relatives as they are prepared for burial yesterday. — AFP

Iran ignores calls to release UK...

Continued from Page 1

Raveesh Kumar, spokesman for India’s foreign ministry, told AFP that 18 of its nationals were on the ship and said New Delhi was “in touch with the government of Iran to secure (their) early release and repatriation”. “(Philippine) Ambassador to Iran Fred Santos is contacting Iranian authorities to seek assurance that the Filipino seafarer is safe and will be released soon,” it said, adding the unidentified crewmember’s family has been notified.

In Riga, the Latvian foreign ministry said it was “doing everything we can to make our citizen free”. It said Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics was in touch with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and British Foreign Secretary Hunt “to ensure close coordination in our attempts to make free our fellow people”.

The fishermen had issued a distress call after the collision and contacted the port authority when they “didn’t receive any response”, said Afifipoor, quoted by Fars news agency. The Stena Impero’s owner said it was in “international waters” when it was “attacked by unidentified small crafts and a helicopter”. Hunt warned that “if this situation is not resolved quickly there will be serious consequences”. But he told Sky News that “we’re not looking at military options, we are looking at a diplomatic way to resolve the situation.”

The incident came as Trump and American officials insisted, despite denials from Tehran, that the US military had downed an Iranian drone alleged to have been threatening amphibious assault ship USS Boxer. The Revolutionary Guard released footage it said disproved the US claims. The seven-minute video, apparently shot from high altitude, shows a convoy of ships the Guards said they were tracking as they passed through the strait. The vessels could not be immediately identified, although one resembles the Boxer.

Trump, speaking to reporters in the Oval Office, warned Iran against doing anything “foolish”, saying it would pay a heavy price if it did so. “No doubt about it, no - we shot it down,” Trump said at a White House event honoring the Apollo 11 astronauts. Trump’s National Security Advisor John Bolton added: “There is no question that this was an Iranian drone.”

The president was asked if he was concerned about the potential for a clash with Iran. “Not at all,” he said. “We have the greatest ships, the most deadly ships, we don’t want to have to use them, but they’re the most deadly ships ever conceived. And we hope for their sake they don’t do anything foolish. If they do, they will pay a price like nobody’s ever paid a price,” Trump said.

“All of (Iran’s) drones... have safely returned to their bases,” said armed forces spokesman Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi. “There have been no reports of a confrontation with the American USS Boxer,” he said, quoted by Tasnim news agency. Iran’s deputy foreign minister Abbas Araghchi tweeted that the USS Boxer may have shot down a US drone by mistake.

As tensions soared, Iran’s archrival Saudi Arabia said it would once again host US troops to boost regional security. The Pentagon said the deployment “ensures our ability to defend our forces and interests in the region from emergent, credible threats”. The US military also said its patrol aircraft were monitoring the Strait, and announced a “multinational maritime effort” to ensure freedom of navigation in key waterways.

“Based on mutual cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the United States of America, and their desire to enhance everything that could preserve the security of the region and its stability... King Salman gave his approval to host American forces,” a ministry spokesman was quoted by Saudi state news agency SPA as saying. A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the deployment would include about 500 US military personnel in Saudi Arabia, and is part of a boost in the number of US troops in the Middle East that the Pentagon announced last month.

Saudi Arabia has not hosted US forces since 2003 when they withdrew following the end of the war with Iraq. The US presence in Saudi Arabia lasted 12 years, starting with Operation Desert Storm in 1991, when Iraq invaded Kuwait. As many as 200 US aircraft were stationed at the Prince Sultan air base situated around 80 km south of the capital at the peak of the Iraq war, and as many as 2,700 missions a day were handled by the headquarters in Saudi Arabia.

Separately, Saudi Arabia said yesterday it had sent a crewmember of an Iranian ship who was previously evacuated for medical reasons from a vessel off the Yemeni port of Hodeida, to Oman. Saudi Arabia in June said it had evacuated a crewmember for medical reasons from a “suspect” Iranian ship northwest of Hodeida after receiving a request for help from Tehran. The Iranian had now been sent to Oman at Tehran’s request after receiving the necessary medical treatment in Saudi Arabia, a source in Saudi Arabia’s foreign ministry was quoted as saying by state news agency SPA.

“The ministry received a request from the Iranian foreign ministry through the Swiss embassy in Riyadh to transfer (the crew member) to the Sultanate of Oman after his health improved,” the Saudi foreign ministry source was quoted as saying by SPA. Oman traditionally seeks to play a conciliatory role in the turbulent region. The crew member had been airlifted from the Iranian vessel Savis to a military hospital in the Saudi city of Jizan, which borders Yemen, after being seriously injured on board the ship. — Agencies

American, Russian, Italian head to ISS

BAIKONUR, Kazakhstan: US, Italian and Russian astronauts blasted into space yesterday, headed for the International Space Station, in a launch coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing. Alexander Skvortsov of the Russian space agency Roscosmos, NASA’s Andrew Morgan and Luca Parmitano of the European Space Agency set off on a six-hour journey to the orbiting science lab from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at 1628 GMT.

A statement published on the Roscosmos website after the Soyuz MS-13 spacecraft entered space stated that “all stages of the flight proceeded according to plan”. A NASA TV commentator hailed a “textbook launch” amid “sweltering” weather at Baikonur, where daytime temperatures reached 43 degrees Celsius yesterday. The blast coincides with the date that NASA’s Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the Moon in 1969, marking a defining moment in the so-called “space race” with the Soviet Union.

Of the trio launching from the Kazakh steppe, only 53-year-old Skvortsov had been born at the time of the Moon landing. A veteran of two ISS missions, Skvortsov is the flight commander for the six-hour journey from Baikonur to the ISS. Morgan, 43, is flying for the first time.

“The absolute hardest part: saying good-bye and watching them walk away,” wrote the father-of-four in a tweet yesterday featuring a picture of his wife and children. Parmitano’s only previous stint at the ISS lasted 166 days and saw him become the first Italian to carry out a spacewalk. “L-2 h 30 min: One more look at my planet... it’s time to climb aboard our rocket. Next stop @Space_Station,” the Italian tweeted. Skvortsov, Morgan and Parmitano all come from military backgrounds and posed together in uniform in the build up to the launch.

Speaking during a pre-launch press-conference on

Friday Skvortsov joked that “two colonels will be taking orders from a colonel” when Parmitano becomes commander of the space station mid-way through his mission - a reference to the military rank the three share. The trio will be welcomed into the ISS by Nick Hague and Christina Koch of NASA and Alexey Ovchinnikov of the Russian space agency Roscosmos after docking which is expected at around 2250 GMT.

Ahead of the launch, 42-year-old Parmitano said the crew were “lucky and privileged” to have their launch coincide with the Apollo 11 date, and indicated that they were wearing badges honouring the anniversary. Morgan paid tribute to the Apollo 11 landing as a “victory for all of mankind” but ducked a question on whether Russian cosmonauts would ever reach the Moon - the Soviet Union only ever sent unmanned missions there. NASA was “even more capable” of accomplishing great things when it did so “as part of an international cooperation,” Morgan said.

Five decades after the 1969 moon landing, Russia and the West are still competing in space, even if the emphasis is on cooperation at the ISS. NASA no longer operates manned flights to the ISS leaving it wholly dependent on Roscosmos’ Soyuz program. But in recent times private companies like SpaceX and Boeing have bid to end the Russian monopoly on manned launches to the ISS, winning multi-billion contracts with NASA.

US President Donald Trump, meanwhile, has set an ambitious deadline to return astronauts to the Moon by 2024. The project - named Artemis - would be the first attempt to send humans to the lunar surface since the last Apollo landing in 1972. Some experts doubt if the deadline is realistic, given budgetary constraints and delays in developing the next-generation rockets and equipment needed for the journey. — AFP

Humanity’s first steps on another...

Continued from Page 1

is a necessary first step to test out key technologies, including life support systems, that will be required for Mars. On Friday, Trump upbraided NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine during a televised event from the Oval Office, chastising him for sometimes voting against him when he was a congressman, and then pitting him against the two surviving Apollo 11 crew members, Collins and Aldrin. Armstrong passed away in 2012.

The White House issued a statement yesterday,

announcing it was “committed to reestablishing our Nation’s dominance and leadership in space for centuries to come.” Sustained exploration that extends from our Earth to the Moon and on to the Martian surface will usher in a new era of American ingenuity, drawing untold individuals into the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and defense.”

But Trump is not the first president to make promises: 30 years ago today, in 1989, the late president George HW Bush pledged to create a permanent base on the Moon and then send a crewed mission to Mars. His son, former president George W Bush vowed the same in 2004 - but their ambitions came up short against budgetary realities. The future of Artemis rests therefore on the willingness of Congress to increase substantially NASA’s current budget of \$21 billion - and possibly on the outcome of the 2020 presidential election. — AFP

Sports

Mariners' Mike Leake falls short of pitch perfection

SEATTLE: Mike Leake took a perfect game into the ninth inning and wound up with a one-hit shutout as the Seattle Mariners defeated the visiting Los Angeles Angels 10-0 Friday night. Luis Rengifo led off the ninth inning by grounding a single into right field, but Leake went on to finish a 98-pitch gem. Daniel Vogelbach hit a pair of three-run homers as the Mariners snapped a six-game losing streak. Exactly one week earlier in Anaheim, California, Leake (8-8) had the shortest start of his 10-year career, lasting just two-thirds of an inning in a 13-0 loss in which the Mariners were no-hit. Leake rebounded Friday by retiring the first 24 batters he faced before Rengifo hit a clean single. Kevan Smith then walked, but Leake escaped the jam, getting Mike Trout for his sixth strikeout of the night to end the game.

Giants 1, Mets 0 (10 innings)

Left fielder Dominic Smith misplayed Pablo Sandoval's two-out fly ball into an error in the bottom of the 10th inning, allowing Alex Dickerson to score from first base and give host San Francisco a second straight walk-off win over New York. The win was the Giants' season-best seventh in a row and came after starting pitchers Tyler Beede (eight innings) and Jacob deGrom (seven innings) left a scoreless game. Dickerson led off the 10th by drawing a walk from the Mets' third pitcher, Jacob Rhame (0-1). Two outs later, Sandoval hit a catchable popup to left that Smith couldn't corral, with Dickerson speeding home to give the Giants their fifth walk-off win of the season.

Diamondbacks 10, Brewers 7

Arizona hit for the cycle in four consecutive at-bats for the first time in franchise history as part of a six-run third running en route to a victory over Milwaukee in Phoenix. With one out in the third, Jarrod Dyson singled, Ketel Marte doubled, Eduardo Escobar tripled and Christian Walker homered to turn a 3-1 deficit into a 5-3 lead. Milwaukee's Jhoulys Chacin (3-10), who is 0-7 in his past 11 starts, gave up seven runs (six earned) and seven hits in 2 1/3 innings. Archie Bradley (3-4) pitched 1 1/3 scoreless innings of relief to get the win, and Greg Holland tossed a 1-2-3 ninth for his 16th save.

Dodgers 2, Marlins 1

Hyun-Jin Ryu delivered seven strong innings in his first home outing since starting the All-Star Game, and Los Angeles earned a victory over visiting Miami. The go-ahead run scored in the sixth inning on a two-out error by Marlins second baseman Starlin Castro, who could not corral Enrique Hernandez's hard ground ball that was hit right at him. Ryu (11-2) gave up one run on four hits with three walks and seven strikeouts. Marlins rookie Zac Gallen (0-2) was effective in his fifth career start, giving up two runs (one earned) on three hits over 5 1/3 innings with four walks and five strikeouts.

Athletics 5, Twins 3

Marcus Semien homered, tripled and doubled and scored twice, and Ramon Laureano had two doubles to lead Oakland past Minnesota in Minneapolis. Khris Davis also had two hits and two RBIs, and Matt Olson went 2-for-4 with an RBI for Oakland, which improved to 14-3 against American League Central teams with its seventh victory in eight games overall. Chris Bassitt (7-4) picked

up his third win in four starts, allowing three runs (two earned) on five hits and two walks while also hitting two batters in five innings. He fanned two. Liam Hendriks picked up his seventh save with 1 2/3 innings of hitless relief, striking out three.

Phillies 6, Pirates 1

Rookie Adam Haseley homered and hit an RBI double as visiting Philadelphia downed Pittsburgh. Bryce Harper, Jean Segura and Maikel Franco each had an RBI single for the Phillies, who have won three of four. Elias Diaz hit an RBI single for Pittsburgh, which is 1-6 since the All-Star break. Starters Jake Arrieta (Phillies) and Jordan Lyles (Pirates) each lasted 5 2/3 innings and gave up a run.

Cardinals 12, Reds 11

St Louis escaped a sizable early hole by scoring 10 runs in the sixth inning and then hanging on for a win at Cincinnati. Reds starter Tyler Mahle brought a 7-0 lead into the sixth inning and appeared in good shape to end a personal five-decision losing streak, but he gave up four runs before the bullpen and defense allowed six more. Jose Martinez hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the sixth, and Paul DeJong drove in four runs to give him seven RBIs in the past two games for the Cardinals. Michael Wacha (6-4) pitched 1 2/3 innings of scoreless relief to earn the win.

Indians 10, Royals 5

Rookie Oscar Mercado recorded his first career five-hit performance as host Cleveland posted a victory over Kansas City to extend its winning streak to a season-high-tying six games. Mercado, who had two RBIs and scored twice, collected a double and four singles to become the 12th Indians rookie since 1913 to record at least five hits in a game. Tyler Naquin belted a two-run homer, and Francisco Lindor had three hits and three runs for Cleveland, which also won six in a row from June 30-July 7.

Astros 4, Rangers 3

Yordan Alvarez capped a stretch of back-to-back-to-back home runs with a titanic blast to right field before Houston hung on for a victory over visiting Texas. Alvarez followed solo blasts from Jose Altuve and Alex Bregman with his 474-foot bomb deep into the upper deck. Altuve smacked a leadoff shot to left-center before Bregman followed a homer to left as the Astros ambushed Rangers All-Star left-hander Mike Minor (8-5) in the third inning. Houston's Justin Verlander (12-4) allowed at least one baserunner in each of his six frames, but he gave up just two runs on eight hits and a walk. He struck out 12.

Braves 4, Nationals 3

Ronald Acuna Jr had three hits and scored the winning run in the bottom of the ninth on a single by Josh Donaldson as Atlanta beat visiting Washington. Acuna led off the ninth with a walk off Fernando Rodney (0-3), who then gave up a single to Dansby Swanson and walked Freddie Freeman to load the bases with no outs. Donaldson then singled to deep left field on a 2-0 fastball. Luke Jackson (5-2) was credited with the win despite giving up a two-out, two-run, game-tying homer to Victor Robles in the top of the ninth. The Braves snapped a three-game losing streak. Washington had won 14 of 18 games after taking the first game of the series Thursday.



SEATTLE: Mike Leake #8 of the Seattle Mariners greets Tom Murphy #2 after the final out in his complete game shutout of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim at T-Mobile Park. — AFP

Yankees 8, Rockies 2

Edwin Encarnacion hit a third-inning grand slam, Aaron Judge added a two-run homer in the sixth, and host New York moved a season-high 30 games over .500 with a victory over slumping Colorado. The Yankees won their fourth straight, having rallied from an early deficit in each contest. New York played without manager Aaron Boone, who served a one-game suspension for his profane rant against plate umpire Brennan Miller on Thursday. The Yankees were managed by bench coach Josh Bard. The Rockies dropped their fifth straight and fell to 2-12 since June 30. Colorado manager Bud Black was ejected in the ninth by plate umpire Doug Eddings for arguing a checked-swing strikeout by Chris Iannetta.

Orioles 11, Red Sox 2

Anthony Santander hit a three-run homer, and Keon Broxton added a two-run shot later as Baltimore defeated visiting Boston. The Orioles banged out 14 hits to win a second straight game. Baltimore's John Means (8-5) allowed two runs on four hits in six innings, while the Red Sox's David Price (7-3) gave up two homers and six runs on eight hits in four innings. Boston's Mookie Betts saw his streak of 13 consecutive games scoring a run — which tied Ted Williams for the club record — come to an end.

Cubs 6, Padres 5

Addison Russell scored from second base on San Diego's second error of the eighth inning to lead Chicago past the Padres in oppressive heat at Wrigley Field. Pedro Strop (2-3)

was credited with the win. Craig Kimbrel, who struck out the side around a walk in the ninth, earned his fifth save since joining the Cubs. Craig Stammen (6-5) took the loss as the Padres fell to 1-6 since the All-Star break. The Cubs have won three straight and are 6-1 since the break.

White Sox 9, Rays 2

Leury Garcia went 4-for-5 with two RBIs, and Reynaldo Lopez pitched seven strong innings to help visiting Chicago snap a seven-game skid with a victory against Tampa Bay. Chicago responded from its recent offensive woes by collecting nine extra-base hits and saddling Rays rookie left-hander Brendan McKay with the quickest exit of his brief major league career. Making his fourth career start and first appearance against the White Sox, McKay (1-1) yielded nine hits and six runs, five earned, in 3 1/3 innings. Lopez gave up two runs on six hits and a walk with eight strikeouts.

Blue Jays 12, Tigers 1

Marcus Stroman cruised through seven innings, rookie Vladimir Guerrero Jr. had three hits and scored three runs, and visiting Toronto pounded hapless Detroit. Stroman (6-10), who has been mentioned prominently in trade rumors, scattered six hits while holding the Tigers scoreless. He walked none and struck out five before the bullpen lost the shutout bid. Eric Sogard supplied three hits, scored twice and knocked in two runs while Teoscar Hernandez blasted his 12th homer and drove in two. Danny Jansen added three RBIs for the Blue Jays, who had lost four of their previous five games. — Reuters



GOLD COAST: In this file photo taken on April 5, 2018 Canada's Penny Oleksiak swims out after the swimming women's 200m freestyle qualifications during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games at the Optus Aquatic Centre. — AFP

Penny drops for Canada's teen swim queen Oleksiak

GWANGJU: Canada's Penny Oleksiak insists she has finally left the "weirdness" of capturing Olympic swimming gold at the tender age of 16 after finally recovering from a lengthy Rio world championship which began in South Korea this weekend, stunned the sport when she dead-heat-ed American Simone Manuel in the women's 100 meters freestyle final as a gangly schoolgirl.

The Canadian also came away from Rio with a silver medal in the 100m butterfly and two relay bronzes but has struggled to replicate that form since. "It was definitely a massive learning experience," Oleksiak told AFP after training in Gwangju. "It was just so different to what most 16-year-olds would have to deal with," she added, attempting to explain her difficulties over the last two years. "At the same time I had normal 16-year-old things to do, so it was a lot of weird circumstances put together at once and I wasn't expecting any of it."

However, Oleksiak has been able to compartmentalize swimming from her private life since the Olympics and maintains that the experience taught her up. "I had to mature quickly," said the Toronto native, set to contest the 50m butterfly and the 100 and 200m free in Gwangju. "I'm still

19, I'm a kid. But I'm always going to be grateful for what happened at the Olympics and looking back I wouldn't change it for the world. "I don't really put any pressure on myself and neither do my family or friends. I really don't have any complaints with how my last three years have gone."

Breakout year

With the likes of Manuel, Sweden's Sarah Sjöström, Australian Cate Campbell and American Katie Ledecky lurking in her freestyle events, Oleksiak will need to rediscover the magic, and quickly, in Korea. "I'm feeling pretty confident," she said. "But they've always been tough events and it's a big field of really competitive girls." Oleksiak has been eclipsed since Rio by country-woman Taylor Ruck, who scooped a record eight medals at a breakout Commonwealth Games on Australia's Gold Coast last year, including gold in the 200m free.

The 19-year-old backed that up by winning the 200m free at the Pan Pacific championships in Tokyo, venue for next year's 2020 Olympics. "Last year definitely helped with my maturity and confidence," said Ruck, who can no longer fly under the radar after her rapid rise in women's swimming. "It definitely got the momentum rolling but I honestly haven't noticed anything different. I just kind of go about my life as I usually would."

Ruck, who slurps a cheeky espresso before races, admits she has had to cut down on her screen time in the run-up to the world championships. "I've been deleting Instagram on and off so that's helpful and keeps me more engaged in real life," she grinned. "I can turn a blind eye to whatever I need to. Not paying attention to outside stuff keeps me humble, keeps me engaged and keeps me focused on what I need to do." — AFP

Energized Maori All Blacks revenge their loss to Fiji

WELLINGTON: Fiji's World Cup preparations suffered a setback yesterday when they were beaten 26-17 by a re-energized Maori All Blacks side in Rotorua. At half-time, it was 7-7 but the low score was no reflection of the frantic pace of the game with daring off-loads and bone-crunching tackles in which the Maori outscored Fiji four tries to two.

The Maori, more at home in temperatures nearly 20 degrees Celsius cooler than last week in Suva, kept faith in the 23 who were demolished 27-10 in Fiji's first win over the Maori in 62 years. Fiji coach John McKee, using the match as a trial as he fine-tunes his squad ahead of the World Cup, made 10 changes and the result was a pack that struggled at lineout and scrum time. But captain Dominiko Waqaniburotu believed that despite the scoreline, the match served its purpose.

"We've got a big squad going into the World Cup campaign and we've got a lot of boys who have something to prove. Every game is an opportunity for every one so I think we did well today," Waqaniburotu said. "It's not easy coming to play the Maori on their home turf so we're going to take the good things

from this game and take it forward to the next," he added, noting that it was "a bit warmer" playing in Fiji.

Maori All Blacks captain Ash Dixon said his side's defense made the difference. "I'm just glad we fronted a lot better than we did last week," he said. "At times when Fiji got in behind us and did their magic offloads and played like the style they do they are hard to stop but our line held well." With the Fiji employing the same flair that has made them a potent sevens force, their first try came from a flick pass between the legs from Waqaniburotu to hooker Veremalua Vugakoto.

Sean Wainui, who scored twice for the Maori last week, touched down to level the scores and in the closing minutes of the half the Maori were denied a try despite the acrobatic efforts of scrum-half Bryn Hall. He was mid-air after diving over the dead-ball line to tap the ball back into the field of play only for replays to show his last step before diving had brushed the line. The Maori hit the front early in the second half when they took Fiji on at their own game with a series of barges at the line before moving the ball wide for Rob Thompson to score.

After an Alivereti Veitokani penalty reduced the gap to four points, the Maori opened up a buffer with tries to Alex Nankivell and Isaia Walker-Leawere before Fiji came back in the dying minutes with a try to John Dyer. Fiji's opening match in the Pacific Nations Cup next weekend is against Japan in Kamaishi city in the tournament which also features Tonga, Samoa, Canada and USA. Their opening World Cup match is against Australia in Sapporo on September 21. — AFP

Herman thanks Trump for his lead in Barbasol

LOS ANGELES: Jim Herman credited "a good talking to" from US President Donald Trump with helping him lift his game enough to take the halfway lead Friday in the PGA Tour Barbasol Championship. Herman, seeking a second US tour title to go with the Houston Open trophy he claimed in 2016, had eight birdies and a bogey in his seven-under 65 at Keene Trace Golf Club in Nicholasville, Kentucky.

His second straight 65 put him on 130 — one stroke in front of fellow American Bill Haas who carded a 66. "Everything seems to be working this week, a nice changeup. I haven't really been playing very well," said Herman, who was an assistant club pro at Trump National Bedminster in New Jersey in 2006-07 and has played numerous rounds with the US president. That included one a couple of weeks ago, Herman said.

"I got some advice from someone pretty high up — he gave me a good talking to and told me to use a different style if it's not working." That was the president of the United States," added Herman, just to clarify, and the changes he has since made to his putting are paying off. "I'm rolling the ball great," said Herman, who hasn't had a top-10 finish since 2017. "I'm hitting a lot of greens and making some putts, that's always a good combination."

Haas followed his opening 65 with a 66 — rolling in a 45-foot eagle at his penultimate hole, the par-five eighth. David Toms carded a 64 to join a group of four players sharing third on 132, alongside D.J. Trahan, Kelly Kraft and Kramer Hickock — who all shot



KENTUCKY: Jim Herman of the United States looks over a putt on the 18th green during the second round of the Barbasol Championship at Keene Trace Golf Club. — AFP

67. Toms, 52, drained a 13-foot eagle at the fifth, his 14th hole of the day, and heads into the weekend in contention to become the second-oldest player to win on the PGA Tour. He would be three months older than Sam Snead was when he won the 1965 Wyndham Championship. JT Poston, who surged to the first-round lead in this event being played opposite the British Open at Portrush with a course record 62, ballooned to a 73 to fall into a tie for 18th, five shots off the lead. Canada's Nick Taylor, who went into the round one shot behind Poston, carded a 72. — AFP

Sports

Nadal Tennis Academy to be located in Kuwait soon

Working on bringing an ATP open in Kuwait following Dubai and Doha

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: “There will be a third ATP tournament following Qatar and Dubai. We will attract World Champions to Kuwait Open”. President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaber said during a press conference held with the visiting President of the Asian Tennis Federation and Vice President of International Tennis Federation Anil Khana, who is also running for ITF president during its general assembly to be held in September.

Sheikh Ahmad said Khana, besides campaigning to get elected as ITF President, also visited the Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber International Tennis Complex. There he expressed his amazement at the structure and considered it one of the best in Asia and the world. “We hope the complex will be open on schedule in January” he said. He added that the Rafael Nadal Tennis Academy will be opened in Kuwait soon, the first one of its kind to be opened outside of Kuwait. Sheikh Ahmad said that Nadal himself will be playing in the opening match of the complex, adding that as a legend to the game “we hope to gain from his experience”.

He added that they will seek the support of ATF and ITF in getting the expertise, programs and scientific methods used in developing and spreading Tennis’ popularity in Kuwait. ATF had been cooperative and expressed their readiness to ensure the success of events that are held in the new complex. Sheikh Ahmad said “we will not ignore the individual sports clubs, rather we will support them so that they can have the bases to provide national teams with players, and we hope that they work with us, so that we can get players who can represent Kuwait at the highest level at all Arab, Asian and International events”. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber thanked the Public Authority for Sport and its Director General Dr Humoud Fulaiteh and his Deputy Dr Saqer Al-Mulla for their support.

A vision and a dream

Meanwhile visiting President of ATF Anil Khana said



(3rd from left) President of Kuwait and Arab Tennis Federations Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaber, (2nd from left) President of the Asian Tennis Federation and Vice President of International Tennis Federation Anil Khana sit with other Federation members at the press conference.

that “it is a great privilege to be in Kuwait as I can see the dream of Sheikh Ahmad coming true. I’ve known Sheikh Ahmad for many years and have had the privilege of taking his guidance in many issues over the years. When Sheikh Ahmad was planning to build a tennis complex, he had a vision and a dream to making the finest complex in Asia if not the entire world”.

He said that he saw the complex, its outdoor, indoor and supplementary facilities and found them to be world-class facilities, and “I am happy to say, with this kind of infrastructure that Sheikh Ahmad dreamed of will do extremely well for the children of Kuwait and the future of Kuwait tennis and will indeed give a great benefit to all of tennis in West Asia”. Khana said Kuwait has been in the forefront of the West Asia Tennis, Davis Cup and various other activities that have been going on. The juniors have also been doing well, he added. He said all this is because of the dedication of the KTF president and his team which has



done splendid work over the years. Anil Khana said he is happy to learn that he will be having some major tournaments coming up in 2020. Sheikh Ahmad mentioned his desire to see whether we can have an Asian tennis facility in this place which is a perfect facility. Responding to a question about his program if he wins the ITF presidency, Khana spoke about funds in national federations saying that “there is no way for national federations to generate funds for the sport and support the development activities”. Khana said Kuwait had exceedingly done well in the

Davis Cup when compared to other West Asian countries. He added that the last one or two years have become challenging but with little difficulty. “I am sure the history of Kuwait Tennis for the last 10 years has been significant, now with the focus on youth, I am sure Kuwait Tennis will continue to do very well.” Sheikh Ahmad Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah gave special thanks to Jassim Al-Marzouq, Tamdeen and the spirit companies for their efforts in the tennis complex projects who have ensured that progress is going on as scheduled.

Daley’s world diving flop ‘lights fire’ for Tokyo 2020

GWANGJU: A defiant Tom Daley promised to come back stronger after flopping to seventh in the defense of his world 10 metre platform title Saturday, losing out to China’s latest superstars. Britain’s diving king trailed far behind Yang Jian and Yang Hao, who captured gold and silver respectively after a cat-and-mouse tussle to cap a majestic week for Chinese divers in Gwangju, South Korea.

“That’s sport for you isn’t it,” Daley said. “It’s not the way I wanted to end the world champs but on a positive I came here to qualify two Olympic spots and I managed that,” added the 25-year-old. “It just puts a fire under you’re a*** basically, to get back to training and doing what you need to do to be the best that you can be.” Daley, who bagged the world title in 2017 and 2009, booked his place for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics with a solid performance in the heats but failed to match China’s swagging display in the evening final.

Yang Jian pumped his fist after his final dive, barely concealing his delight as he pipped countryman Yang Hao to the world title by just 13 points. “What a fantastic final,” said the gold medalist after a dramatic late comeback. “I feel honored to win gold. That was one of the best final dives of my career. I give myself a pat on the back.” Victory came despite a perfect set of 10s in the fourth round for Yang Hao, who had sacrificed a spot in the mixed three-meter synchro final to rest for his main event.

‘Good decision’

“It was a good decision to focus on the platform and it



GWANGJU: Britain’s Thomas Daley competes in the men’s 10m platform diving final during the 2019 World Championships at the Nambu International Aquatics Centre. — AFP

helped a lot,” he said. “I scored 13 perfect marks tonight and was thrilled to be part of such a close contest. It just wasn’t enough.” Russia’s Aleksandr Bondar took bronze behind the Chinese pair, whose victory made it 12 out of 13 for the diving powerhouse at this year’s championships.

Earlier, Australian pair Maddison Keeney and Matthew Carter broke China’s stranglehold of the gold medals by winning the mixed three-meter synchro title by the finest of margins from Canada’s perennial bridesmaids Francois Imbeau-Dulac and Jennifer Abel. Keeney and Carter produced a series of superb dives to post a winning score of

304.86 points, just 0.78 points more than Imbeau-Dulac and Abel, who took silver in Kazan four years ago and the bronze at the 2017 championships in Budapest.

Germans Tina Punzel and Lou Messenberg claimed bronze with 301.62 after China’s Yang Hao and Chang Yani pulled out for Yang to concentrate on the 10m platform final. China scooped a remarkable seven of eight gold medals at the 2016 Rio Olympics and enjoyed a stranglehold again at the last world championships in Budapest two years ago, scooping eight of the 13 titles on offer. — AFP

Lowry, Holmes share Open lead as Woods, McIlroy miss cut

PORTRUSH: Ireland’s Shane Lowry shot a four-under par 67 to claim a share of the lead with JB Holmes at the British Open as 15-time major winner Tiger Woods and pre-tournament favorite Rory McIlroy missed the cut on Friday. Resuming on four-under, Lowry birdied four of the opening five holes and picked up another two shots on eight and 10.

However, he bogeyed the 14th and 18th coming home to fall back level with overnight leader Holmes on eight-under. “There’s not too many days like that on the golf course,” said Lowry. Holmes consolidated his challenge with a three-under round on Friday. “You can have that great round and that day where everything goes right, but it’s nice to get two rounds in a row. It shows a little consistency,” said the American.

McIlroy fell just short with a brave attempt to make the weekend after a horrendous eight-over round on Thursday left him with a huge mountain the climb. The home favourite posted the joint best round of the day with a six-under 65 to get back to two-over, but missed out by just one shot with the cut at one-over. “I felt today I showed the real Rory McIlroy and the golf that I can play,” said the world number three. “I tried my best for them until the very end. I just came up a little short.”

Woods was also made to pay for his 78 on Thursday as a one-under par round left the Masters champion still on six-over. “It’s more frustrating than anything else because this is a major championship and I love playing in these events,” said Woods. The American raised hopes that he could recover from a difficult opening round with his troublesome back restricting his movement in cold conditions. Woods was two under for the day after six holes, but a bogey at the seventh stalled his fightback. Back-to-back birdies at 10 and 11 gave Woods hope again but a bogey-bogey finish was a fitting end to a frustrating two days for the 43-year-old.



PORTRUSH: Ireland’s Shane Lowry tees off at the 3rd hole during the third round of the British Open golf Championships at Royal Portrush golf club. — AFP

English trio in contention

England’s Tommy Fleetwood and Lee Westwood are just one shot off the lead on seven-under, while world number one Brooks Koepka also kept himself in the hunt for a fifth major on five-under. Fleetwood played a starring role in Europe’s victory at the Ryder Cup last year and the world number 20 has a chance for his first major heading into the weekend as he birdied the last for a round of 67.

Westwood rolled back the years with four birdies on the back nine to shoot into contention with a 67. Playing in his 25th British Open, Westwood has finished in the top three at majors nine times without getting over the line. “It’s nice to do it at The Open Championship, it’s a big tournament and prestigious tournament and on a great golf course,” said the former world number one. Justin Rose is another Englishman in the mix as an eagle on the 12th moved the world number four to six-under.

Koepka has not finished outside the top two in all three majors so far this season and the American is dangerously poised after another solid round of 69. But the PGA champion was left frustrated he has not hit the front yet due to his putting. “I haven’t made a putt all week, so I just need to figure that out,” he said. “If I can just make some putts I could have very easily been 10-under and maybe more.” Three-time major winner Jordan Spieth is also five-under after storming up the leaderboard by picking up five shots in four holes between five and eight. — AFP

Roma great De Rossi on the verge of Boca Juniors move

BUENOS AIRES: Veteran former Italy international Daniele De Rossi is “99 percent” sure of joining Boca Juniors, the Argentine giants’ president Daniel Angelici said on Friday. The 35-year-old midfielder brought down the curtain on an 18-year career with his hometown club Roma at the end of last season.

“Having a world champion who says he wants to end his career here at Boca fills me with pride,” said Angelici. “It would be good for Argentine football to have these kind of players. It’s 99 percent sure De Rossi will be a Boca player.” The only remaining stumbling block to De Rossi joining is a cap on the number of foreigners allowed at Argentine teams. They can only have six in their squad with a maximum of five allowed on the pitch at any one time.

Boca already have Colombians Frank Fabra, Jorman Campuzano and Sebastian Villa on their books, as well as Uruguay’s Nahitan Nandez, Venezuelan Jan Carlos Hurtado and Junior Alonso from Paraguay — a total of six foreigners. “I’m not halting his arrival, everything’s agreed with De Rossi, but if he were to join people would start saying Boca aren’t respecting the quota,” Angelici told TyC Sports.

Nandez, however, is rumored to be a target of Cagliari in Italy while Fabra is close to securing Argentine nationality. “If we can complete Nandez’s (sale), we could bring him (De Rossi) to train now.” De Rossi, a World Cup winner with Italy in 2006, spent his entire senior career with Roma, making 615 appearances and scoring 63 goals in all competitions. Only fellow Roma legend Francesco Totti has played more games for the club. De Rossi is also the fourth most capped Italy international of all time with 117 appearances. — AFP

Tamim to lead B’desh as Mashrafe ruled out

DHAKA: Bangladesh on Friday named opener Tamim Iqbal as interim captain for the upcoming Sri Lanka tour after regular skipper Mashrafe Mortaza was ruled out with a hamstring injury. Mashrafe picked up the injury during a training session shortly after he attended Bangladesh team’s formal press conference in Mirpur ahead of the tour. “Mortaza (Mashrafe) injured his left hamstring during training today. He received immediate MSK ultrasound examination which has revealed a grade 1 injury,” Bangladesh Cricket Board senior physician Debashis Chowdhury said in a statement.

“It is a recurrent injury that could take around three to four weeks to recover from. Therefore, he is ruled out from participation in sporting activity for a month,” he added. BCB named Tamim as interim captain in Mashrafe’s absence as regular vice-captain Shakib Al Hasan was rested for the series.

All-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin was also ruled out for the series after he aggravated an old back injury, said BCB cricket operations chief Akram Khan. Pace bowler Taskin Ahmed and all-rounder Farhad Reza were immediately recalled as replacements for Mashrafe and Saifuddin. Bangladesh will play three one-day internationals in Sri Lanka respectively on July 26, 28 and 31. All the matches are scheduled in R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.

Mashrafe earlier at the press conference refused to confirm if he would retire after the Sri Lanka series and likened his situation to former India captain MS Dhoni. Mashrafe and Dhoni both were expected to clear their retirement plan after the recent World Cup in England in which they struggled with individual form. While Dhoni, who made a fifty in India’s losing semi-final to New Zealand, remained silent on his future, Mashrafe chose to continue as team captain.

“To be honest, I don’t feel embarrassed or disappointed with it (retirement talks). It’s normal everyone will consider my performance from their point of view,” said Mashrafe. “As a player I am not close to MS Dhoni as he scored over 10,000 runs in ODIs. But at least in every press conference he has been asked the same question (retirement). I think we should see it normally.” “Being a player I could not deliver my best in World Cup, both as a captain and a player and the team also failed to go to the semi-final. “So it’s normal the question will be raised. I also see it this way. There’s is nothing else to consider,” he said. Mashrafe picked up just one wicket in Bangladesh’s eighth place finish as the team recorded only three wins against fellow strugglers South Africa, West Indies and Sri Lanka.

The Bangladesh cricket team arrived in Sri Lanka amid tight security yesterday, the first foreign sporting side to visit the island since the deadly Easter attacks earlier this year. More than 250 people were killed in the April 21 bombings targeting hotels and churches that were claimed by Islamist militants, and Sri Lanka has been under a state of emergency since.

The Bangladesh team was provided with a level of security usually reserved for visiting state dignitaries, with additional deployments at their hotel and armed guards for their motorcade. “We have special security arrangements at match venues too,” a police official told AFP. Bangladesh will play three one-day internationals on July 26, 28 and 31 at the Premadasa International Stadium in Colombo. Sri Lanka had previously expected New Zealand to be the first foreign sporting visit. The Kivis arrive next month to play two Tests and three Twenty20 matches.

Sports

Wolves beat City on penalties to win Asia Trophy in Shanghai

It was a story of missed penalties for Pep Guardiola’s City

SHANGHAI: Goalkeeper Rui Patricio was the hero for Wolves, saving three spot-kicks after their Asia Trophy final against Manchester City went to penalties yesterday in Shanghai. Wolves won the exhibition tournament 3-2 on penalties after the game against the Premier League champions ended 0-0 after 90 minutes. It was a story of missed penalties for Pep Guardiola’s City.

Raheem Sterling missed a first-half penalty for City, who dominated at a full Hongkou Stadium but were blunt in attack without Sergio Aguero and Gabriel Jesus. Pre-season games are notoriously poor barometers for the season to come, especially when played in stifling heat like in Shanghai. But both sides fielded close to their full-strength sides and Guardiola and counterpart Nuno Espirito Santo will be glad to escape without any serious injuries to their squads.

Leroy Sane, the German winger wanted by Bayern Munich, started for City and won the Sterling penalty, but otherwise had a quiet game before being substituted on the hour. Kevin De Bruyne was Guardiola’s captain for the night — the City armband is up for grabs following the departure of talisman Vincent Kompany. Sterling should have put City in the lead but instead blasted his 20th minute penalty over the bar to let Chinese-owned Wolves off the hook.

The England international forward, playing through the middle, then fluffed a golden chance from close range with only goalkeeper Patricio to beat. In the third-fourth playoff, Newcastle United beat West Ham United 1-0 to give Steve Bruce victory in his first

match as head coach. The Premier League proper begins on August 9.

Guardiola desperate

Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola is desperate to keep Kevin De Bruyne fit this season after the influential Belgian missed a chunk of last year because of injuries. The attacking midfielder is among the City players in the running to succeed the departed Vincent Kompany as captain when the Premier League begins in three weeks.

It was a reminder of what De Bruyne in full flight is capable of, having missed half of last season with knee and hamstring problems. “He’s top, last season we missed him a lot,” said Guardiola, after the friendly with Wolves ended 0-0 after 90 minutes, leading to penalties. “We are stronger with him. Last season he had no holidays (because of the World Cup) but this time we have more time to rest. “We hope that we can keep him healthy, this is a guy who loves to play football and is a huge competitor.”

Guardiola, who backed by money from the Middle East has built one of the most formidable squads in the history of the Premier League, cautioned that De Bruyne needed to remain “calm”. The Spaniard, who will be targeting Champions League glory this season to go with the English title, added: “He is a player who never loses confidence, even last season. “We know his quality, he always has a good attitude, he is incredible. —AFP



SHANGHAI: Manchester City's Leroy Sane (L) vies for the ball with Wolverhampton Wanderers' Ruben Neves (R) during their final match of the 2019 Premier League Asia Trophy football tournament at the Hongkou Stadium. —AFP

Edu urges Arsenal to rediscover their winning mentality

LONDON: Arsenal’s new technical director Edu has challenged the Gunners to find a winning mentality as they bid to erase memories of last season’s disappointments. The former Arsenal midfielder, who was a member of Arsene Wenger’s ‘Invincibles’ squad who won the 2004 Premier League title without losing a game, says it is vital for the club to build the mental strength that was so key to their success in those glory days.

“To work with a strong mentality, you don’t do it like that (instantly). You build a good mentality,” Edu said in an interview with Arsenal Media, his first since returning to the club. “When you talk about mentality, it’s not only the players. The club has to have the same mentality as the players. “We have to have the same mentality, and the mentality of Arsenal, we always had to have winning in front of us. That’s football. That’s the real world.”

Edu was working as Brazil’s technical director before moving back to north London and is now taking stock of the club’s situation after arriving to work with boss Unai Emery as the Spaniard enters his second season with the Gunners. Last year the Gunners misfired badly, missing out on Champions League qualification after finishing fifth and suffering a Europa League final thrashing against Chelsea. The 41-year-old, who played under Emery at Valencia, says the key to a winning mentality and a good season is results.

“When you’re talking about good jobs, doing other things, without results I’m not sure (it works),” he says. “It’s unfair maybe, but the reality is like that.” We have to fight very hard for results and we have to understand the real world, where you live and where you are right now. So we are at Arsenal, we are a big club and we have to understand the situation.” Edu recalled how Wenger’s squad would thrive off the continued quest for more success, which spread throughout the club. “I remember we were winning a lot of things, our team was really strong and there were big names around, but the mentality of the group, the guys around, the staff, was so great,” he said. “We were working hard but at the same time, we were enjoying it. That was important because at the time winning was important, but you have to enjoy it as well and we did that with our group.” Arsenal open their Premier League campaign away at Newcastle on August 11. —AFP

VAR will cause ‘controversy’, admits Premier League chief

SHANGHAI: Premier League interim chief executive Richard Masters admits VAR is certain to cause “controversy” when the technology makes its English top-flight debut in the forthcoming season. The video referee system will be used for the first time in the Premier League after its introduction was delayed for a year to allow time to develop the system.

VAR has been used in England in the FA Cup and League Cup, as well as in numerous other foreign leagues and tournaments including the Champions League. It hasn’t been a huge success, with complaints from managers and fans about the slowness of the system and mistakes made by the officials. “I have no doubt it will create some controversy because it is about the big decisions but we are prepared for that,” Masters said. “We have spent two years working up to this point, and we were committed to doing it in our heads for two years.

“We have been training and testing and making sure when it happens, particularly on Saturday afternoons when we have got multiple matches going on, that we have a number of VARs trained. We feel that is done and we are ready to launch it.” Masters is adamant the Premier League have looked at ways to ensure VAR operates effectively, taking lessons from the initial use of the system elsewhere. He hopes there will be fewer stoppages for referees to consult monitors than seen during other events such as the Champions League last season or the recent Women’s World Cup. —AFP

Greenwood strike earns United victory over Inter

SINGAPORE: Teenage striker Mason Greenwood came off the bench to score a brilliant goal with 15 minutes remaining as Manchester United secured a 1-0 victory over a disappointing Inter Milan side in a Singapore friendly yesterday. The Premier League side dominated from start to finish and manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer will have been delighted with a sharp performance that deserved to be rewarded by a bigger margin of victory against a team still finding their feet under new manager Antonio Conte.

United created several chances in both halves but finally broke down a resolute Inter defence in the 75th minute through a touch of magic from 17-year-old Greenwood, who has impressed so far in the English side’s pre-season tour of Australia and Asia. Ashley Young whipped in a free kick that goalkeeper Samir Handanovic could only parry

straight to Greenwood with the English forward calmly controlling the ball before switching it onto his left foot and sending a curling effort into the far corner.

Greenwood almost added a second with a delicate volley in the 80th minute that brushed off the crossbar as he more than lived up to the pre-match billing afforded to him by team mate Marcus Rashford, who believes his fellow striker has all the tools to make it to the very top. Solskjaer named a strong lineup with starts for summer recruits Daniel James and Aaron Wan-Bissaka. His side soon dominated possession in front of a pro-Manchester United National Stadium crowd, moving the ball quickly and pressing their opponents high up the pitch.

However, despite controlling the flow of the contest, United were frustrated by Inter’s resolute defence, restricted to long-range shots from Luke Shaw, Anthony Martial and Rashford that either flashed wide or were smothered by Handanovic. Inter, meanwhile, were sloppy in possession and unable to create any opportunities. United fashioned the best chance of the first half in the 30th minute when Shaw got behind the



SINGAPORE: Manchester United's Paul Pogba (C) is surrounded by Inter Milan players as they reach for a high ball during the International Champions Cup football match between Manchester United and Inter Milan. —AFP

defense but his cutback took the slightest deflection off Handanovic to deny Rashford a tap-in.

United started the second half with greater purpose as Jesse Lingard and Paul Pogba both went close either side of

Vela opened the scoring with his 20th goal of the season by converting a penalty kick into the bottom left corner. Vela took a pass down the wing and Galaxy goalkeeper David Bingham came charging out of his net to trip him up.

Testy contest

Ibrahimovic tied it up four minutes later with a spectacular right-foot shot from outside the box to the bottom right corner at Dignity Health Park in south central Los Angeles. While in full flight, Ibrahimovic took a high pass from Julian Araujo off his chest to his right foot. He volleyed it over the head of two defenders and let it bounce once on the turf before blasting it home from long range.

He scored in the 56th minute on a header to give the Galaxy their first lead of the game. Ibrahimovic outleaped LAFC defender Jordan Harvey and lofted the ball from the right side of the box to the high centre of the goal and out of

a Nemanja Matic header that clattered off the post as the Premier League side searched for an opening that eventually came when Inter’s luck finally ran out with the prospect of a penalty shootout looming. —AFP

the reach of goalkeeper Tyler Miller. LAFC, who are on pace to break MLS records for points and goals scored this season, were controlling the offence around the hour point but all it took was one chance for Ibrahimovic to pad the Galaxy’s lead. Ibrahimovic blasted a left footed shot from outside the box to the right corner in the 70th minute to bring the Galaxy to 3-1. It was his 520th career goal across all leagues.

Mexican international Vela rounded out the scoring in extra time by right footing a shot home but Ibrahimovic’s heroics had already taken the fire out of the LAFC offence. Tempers flared in the hotly contested contest in the 73rd minute between LAFC’s Eddie Segura and the Galaxy’s Rolf Feltscher. After they came together, players from both teams joined in on the mainly pushing and yelling match. There were a total of eight yellow cards handed out Friday with five going to the Galaxy. —AFP

Newcastle beat West Ham to give Bruce winning start

SHANGHAI: Steve Bruce watched from the stands as his Newcastle United side beat West Ham United 1-0 yesterday in Shanghai. The 58-year-old, whose appointment as head coach has gone down badly with already disillusioned Newcastle fans, was unable to be pitch-side because of Chinese visa restrictions.

The former Sunderland boss is just three days into the job and this was only a pre-season friendly, but he will have been heartened by what he saw against what was on paper a strong West Ham side. Bruce is looking for forward reinforcements but Yoshinori Muto made his case by poking the ball in from close range in the first half after full-back Jamie Sterry crossed.

In contrast to their meek 4-0 defeat to Wolverhampton Wanderers on Wednesday in Nanjing in the Asia Trophy, Newcastle were committed and bit hard into tackles. Midfielder Jonjo

Shelvey was prominent in the first half against an insipid West Ham and said afterwards that Bruce “deserved more credit than he gets”. “Steve has come in and been a breath of fresh air,” said Shelvey. “The fans need to give him a chance and if we play like that (today) in the Premier League the fans can have no complaints.”

Newcastle supporters were incensed that unpopular owner Mike Ashley last month failed to keep hold of coach Rafael Benitez, while Bruce’s mediocre record in the Premier League and his link with rivals Sunderland have put him under the cosh right away. But Shelvey said it was time to pull together to keep Newcastle — among the relegation favorites already — in England’s top flight. “We need to get some solidarity and stay in the Premier League for a long time,” he said.

Newcastle fans will need to see much more than a friendly win over a poor West Ham side. It may have been the other side of the world, but the disenchantment among them was never far from the surface in humid Shanghai. They desperately want Ashley to sell the club and in the 25th minute at Hongkou Stadium came the first chant of “we want



SHANGHAI: Newcastle United's Jonjo Shelvey (C) vies for the ball with West Ham's Andriy Yarmolenko (L) during their match for the third place at the 2019 Premier League Asia Trophy football tournament at the Hongkou Stadium. —AFP

Ashley out”. There were more just before half time.

Newcastle and local boy Bruce, who took over on Wednesday from the popular Benitez, begin their Premier League campaign proper on August 11 when

they face Arsenal at home. West Ham host champions Manchester City in their opener. The final of the Premier League Asia Trophy was later Saturday between Pep Guardiola’s City and Chinese-owned Wolves. —AFP

25 Mariners' Mike Leake falls short of pitch perfection



26 Nadal Tennis Academy to be located in Kuwait soon



27 Wolves beat City on penalties to win Asia Trophy in Shanghai



Algeria claims second Africa Cup of Nations



CAIRO: Algerian players celebrate after winning the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) Final football match between Senegal and Algeria at the Cairo International Stadium. — AFP

CAIRO: Baghdad Bounedjah's early goal propelled Algeria to a first Africa Cup of Nations title in 29 years after a fiery 1-0 victory over Sadio Mane's Senegal in Friday's final in Cairo. Bounedjah gave Algeria a dream start in the second minute when his deflected shot looped over Senegal goalkeeper Alfred Gomis, and it proved enough for the 1990 champions to lift the trophy on foreign soil for the first time.

"It's incredible. The win is for the whole country," Algeria goalkeeper Rais M'Bolhi told beIN Sports. "We have to thank (coach) Djamel Belmadi. The situation was tricky in the past before he arrived." "It's a bit hard to soak in right now but I think we'll realise what we've done when we return home," he added.

For Senegal, who lost to Algeria by the same scoreline in the group stage, the long wait for a first continental crown goes on as coach Aliou Cisse, the captain of the 2002 runners-up, again fell short in the final. "We

conceded the goal very early and on the whole I think we deserved to equalise but it didn't happen," said Cisse. "I want to congratulate my players. We've been working together a long time for this Cup of Nations and we wanted it but tonight it didn't go our way."

It was the first title-decider to feature two African coaches since 1998, with Algeria boss Djamel Belmadi completing a whirlwind 12 months at the helm after inheriting a side that failed to make it out of the group stage two years ago. "Without the players I am nothing. They are the main ones. I suppose the staff played its part in guiding the players but they applied the instructions incredibly well," said Belmadi. With defensive rock Kalidou Koulibaly suspended for Senegal, Salif Sane deputised at the back and Ismaila Sarr was recalled in attack, while Belmadi kept faith in the same side that overcame Nigeria with an injury-time free-kick from Riyad Mahrez.

Senegal had understandably feared the absence of

Napoli star Koulibaly, banned after two bookings in the knockout rounds, although the towering Sane was desperately unlucky as Algeria grabbed the lead with scarcely a minute played. As Bounedjah took aim from 20 yards his effort smacked off Sane and arced high into the air before dropping underneath the crossbar and beyond a static Gomis, sparking delirious celebrations from both players and fans, some of whom arrived for the final on military planes provided by the Algerian government.

It was the first time Gomis had conceded in almost 400 minutes in Egypt having replaced the injured Edouard Mendy ahead of Senegal's final group game. Henri Saivet, who missed a penalty in the 1-0 victory over Tunisia, tried to catch M'Bolhi out with a free-kick while Mbaye Niang fizzed a powerful drive just over as Senegal gradually showed signs of life before the half ended with both sets of players embroiled in a scuffle as they headed for the tunnel.

Senegal thought they had won a penalty on the hour when Cameroonian referee Alioum Alioum pointed to the spot for a suspected handball by Adlene Guedioura, but the official reversed his decision after a VAR review. Niang rounded an advancing M'Bolhi after a searching ball through from Cheikhou Kouyate but the forward sliced wide of the target from a tough angle, with the Algeria 'keeper then acrobatically tipping over a rasping drive from Youssouf Sabaly.

The Desert Foxes started to look jaded as Senegal brought on fresh legs in Krepin Diatta and Mbaye Diagne, but Youcef Belaili nearly made it 2-0 when his cross brushed the head of a defender and skimmed the roof of the net. Sarr blazed over on the volley as Algeria clung on to their advantage in the closing minutes, the final whistle greeted by an outpouring of raw emotion as the North Africans emerged worthy winners of the expanded 24-team event. — AFP

Africa Cup champs Algeria return to heroes' welcome

ALGIERS: Africa Cup of Nations champions Algeria arrived home yesterday to a heroes' welcome from a huge crowd of joyful supporters and a "water salute" for their plane at Algiers airport. "One, two, three, viva Algeria!" tens of thousands of flag-waving fans lining the road from the airport chanted as the players went on a victory parade through the capital in an open-top bus.

An early strike earned a 1-0 victory over Senegal in Friday's final in Cairo, propelling Algeria, known as the Fennec foxes, to a first Cup of Nations title in 29 years. The players, with winner's medals around their necks and captain Ryad Mahrez hoisting the cup in the air, were given a red carpet welcome at the airport and greeted by Prime Minister Noureddine Bedoui.

Their bus was decorated with two stars, marking their second African Cup triumph, and emblazoned with the words "We are proud of you" in Arabic and Amazigh, or Berber, the North African country's two official languages. The scenes on the packed streets were familiar for Algeria

where massive crowds have been taking part for the past several months, especially on Fridays, in anti-regime demonstrations. "This victory will very certainly breath new life" into the country, said the president of the Algerian football federation, Kheiredine Zetchi. It was inspired by "the extraordinary momentum which is leading Algeria to better days".

Madjid, a 28-year-old fan, said: "I didn't sleep all (Friday) night but I had to be here at (the capital's) May 1 Square", where the players on the bus were met with a sea of supporters. On Friday night, Baghdad Bounedjah gave Algeria a dream start in the second minute when his deflected shot looped over Senegal goalkeeper Alfred Gomis, and it proved enough for the 1990 champions to lift the trophy on foreign soil for the first time. Only 12 months ago, Algeria were in turmoil after the departure of former national team star Rabah Madjer, but the appointment of Djamel Belmadi proved a stroke of genius from a federation that had burned through five coaches in two turbulent years. — AFP



ALGIERS: Algerians gather in the May 1st square in the capital as they prepare to welcome the Algerian national team. — AFP