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Iraq finds suspected remains of Kuwaiti martyrs in mass grave

Iraqi parliament speaker arrives in Kuwait to boost ties



MUTHANNA, Iraq: A mass grave with buried remains of suspected Kuwaiti martyrs is seen in the desert of this Iraqi province. — KUNA



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem receives Speaker of the Iraqi parliament Mohammad Al-Halbousi yesterday. — KUNA

BAGHDAD: Governor of the Iraqi province of Muthanna Ahmad Manfy announced yesterday the discovery of a mass grave with indications that the buried human remains might belong to Kuwaiti martyrs who were executed by the former regime in the governorate's desert. "Local security forces and intelligence found initial information of discovering a group cemetery in the desert of Al-Muthanna," said Manfy.

He noted the local authorities informed competent authorities to take legal action to confirm the discovery. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

recently found some remains of suspected Kuwaiti martyrs in the desert of Muthanna, and took DNA samples to identify the bodies. Kuwaiti authorities have indicated that the human remains will be locally reexamined for final authentication.

Meanwhile, Speaker of the Iraqi parliament Mohammad Al-Halbousi, accompanied by a delegation, arrived in Kuwait yesterday, starting a three-day official visit to the country. Al-Dustoor news network said Halbousi was received on arrival by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and legislators. Ghanem

later held a luncheon in honor of Halbousi, attended by a number of Kuwaiti lawmakers. The governors of Kuwait's six governorates, in addition to a bevy of Iraqi MPs, were also present.

Two days ago in Baghdad, the Iraqi parliament's spokesperson Hamed Shaker told KUNA that Halbousi's delegation will include Cabinet Secretary General, Hamid Al-Ghazzi, Chair of the Reconstruction Fund Mustafa Al-Haiti, 10 governors, the head of the parliamentary oil and energy commission Haibat Al-Halbousi and chairman of the energy committee Sherko Miroyo. The Iraqi officials and legislators

will discuss with their Kuwaiti counterparts means of investing the \$30 billion fund pledged at the previously held Kuwait conference for aiding Iraq, he told KUNA.

The visit coincides with mutual efforts to cement and expand economic and commercial relations, with plans to carve out a free trade zone, facilitate cross-border commodity transport and businesses. Officials from the two countries, during a landmark visit by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to Iraq on June 19, held consultations on best avenues for boosting relations and cooperation in the economic and business sectors. — KUNA

News in brief

Eid Al-Adha on Aug 11

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti meteorologist and historian Adel Al-Saadoun said yesterday that Eid Al-Adha will fall on Sunday, August 11. He told KUNA that the first of Thul Hijja month will be on Friday, August 2 and Arafat Day will be on Saturday, August 10. — KUNA

270 kg of drugs, \$30K busted

KUWAIT: Customs officers, in coordination with the interior ministry, yesterday foiled an attempt to smuggle more than 270 kg of hashish and shabu, as well as \$30,000 in cash, into Kuwait through the Abdaly border. — Hanan Al-Saadoun



MoI arrests violators in raids

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's relations and security information department said security campaigns resulted in removing several street markets selling large quantities of various foodstuffs that do not meet health conditions, as well as arresting 20 residency law violators in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. Meanwhile, Ahmadi security forces carried out several campaigns in Mina Abdullah, arresting 60 persons without IDs, eight absconders and three with expired residency permits, as well as 10 bottles thought to contain liquor. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun (Pics on Page 3)

Disabled expats get some benefits

KUWAIT: The public authority for the disabled said several services will be provided to non-Kuwaitis, including opening a medical file, issuance of a disability ID and To Whom It May Concern letters, in addition to educational support for children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis. — A Saleh

State funeral for Essebsi as new polls loom

TUNIS: Thousands of Tunisians yesterday attended the funeral of president Beji Caid Essebsi as the North African nation gears up for snap elections as early as September to defend the democratic gains of the Arab Spring. Essebsi, the country's first head of state elected in nationwide polls, died Thursday at the age of 92, triggering fears of political unrest in a country seen as a rare success story following the Arab Spring uprisings.

Navy rescues hundreds from Indian train

NEW DELHI: Indian navy helicopters and emergency service boats came to the rescue of more than 800 people stranded on a train in floods near Mumbai yesterday. The Mahalaxmi Express left Mumbai late Friday for Kolhapur but travelled only 60 km before it became stranded after a river burst its banks in torrential rain, covering the tracks. The train was stuck for about

Eight killed as quakes hit Philippines

MANILA: Eight people were killed and dozens injured when a series of earthquakes struck islands in the far northern Philippines early yesterday, toppling historic buildings and sending terrified locals fleeing their homes. The tremors hit the province of Batanes, a group of sparsely populated islets north of the

French President Emmanuel Macron and other foreign leaders also travelled to Tunisia to pay their last respects. Representative of HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attended the funeral. Sheikh Nasser conveyed condolences of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah, HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the people of Kuwait on the demise of the president.

Thousands of Tunisians mourners lined the 20-km road from the presidential palace in Carthage, where the body was laid in state, to the Djellaz cemetery in southern Tunis where Essebsi was buried. Officers in full uniform carried the coffin

Continued on Page 24

12 hours in Thane district before authorities called in the Indian navy and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) who deployed helicopters, boats, and divers.

Indian Railways said the train was emptied in about five hours after the operation started. Nine pregnant women were among those taken off. Aerial images showed boats taking people wearing life jackets away from the stricken train, trapped in a sea of muddy brown water that covered surrounding fields. Ambulances and at least 37 doctors were sent to treat passengers, who were also given food and water, Indian Railways said.

Continued on Page 24

nation's largest Luzon island, tearing deep cracks in roads and forcing the evacuation of a hospital. Authorities said some of the dead, including two babies under a year old, were crushed by the walls of their own homes.

"We saw houses shaking. Some of the walls of the houses collapsed and fell on the victims," Police sergeant Uzi Villa told AFP. "Some people died because they were sleeping soundly since it was still early," he added. Many people were still asleep when the first tremor struck around 4:15 am (2015 GMT Friday), followed just under four hours later by a

Continued on Page 24



TUNIS: Military officers carry the coffin of late Tunisian president Beji Caid Essebsi during his state funeral at the presidential palace in the capital's eastern suburb of Carthage yesterday. — AFP (See Page 2)



BADLAPUR, India: Indian passengers are rescued on a boat from a train that became stranded in floodwaters between Badlapur and Vangani following heavy monsoon rains yesterday. — AFP



ITBAYAT, Philippines: This handout picture taken yesterday shows the damage to the Sta Maria de Mayan Church on Batanes island after a pair of strong earthquakes struck the region. — AFP

Local

Amir's representative condoles with Tunisian government, people on president's death

Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry official offers condolences at embassy



TUNIS: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah offers condolences yesterday on the passing away of former Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi. —KUNA photos



Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attends the funeral of former Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi.

TUNIS/KUWAIT: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, offered condolences on Friday to the Tunisian government and people on the passing away of former President Beji Caid Essebsi. In a statement to KUNA, Sheikh Nasser prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow blessing upon Essebsi and paid tribute to Essebsi's accomplishments at domestic and foreign levels. Meanwhile, Tunisian former Prime Minister Habib Essid praised the historic ties between Tunisia and Kuwait. His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on Friday arrived in Tunisia to partake in the funeral of late President Beji Caid Essebsi. In Kuwait, acting deputy foreign minister Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah offered condolences on Friday at the Tunisian embassy's building to the Tunisian

Government and people on demise of President Beji Caid Essebsi. Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser recalled the late president's sagacious leadership and admired efforts for regional stability.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had sent a cable of condolences on Thursday to Tunisian interim President Mohammad Al-Nasser over the death of former Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi. In the cable, His Highness the Amir offered sincere condolences to the Tunisian president, people and the family of the late leader, saying that the Arab world

has lost a national leader who contributed to serving and defending its just issues. His Highness Sheikh Sabah reminisced the late Tunisian leader's great accomplishments and contributions to safeguarding the Tunisian people's unity, security and stability, and to capitalizing on their energies for development and building.

Amir, Crown Prince send condolences

His Highness the Amir spoke highly of the late Tunisian president's role in strengthening existing relations between Kuwait and Tunisia and developing joint cooperation, praying to Allah the Almighty to bestow mercy upon him and grant

his family patience. More cables of similar sentiments were sent by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem to Tunisian interim President.

In the meantime, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah sent a cable on Friday to Tunisian Defense Minister Abdelkarim Al-Zbidi expressing sincere condolence over the passing away of former President Beji Caid Essebsi. A press statement by the Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations of the Kuwaiti Defense Military said that Sheikh Nasser also sent a similar cable to Hafedh Caid Essebsi, offering sincere condolence for the demise of his father, the late Tunisian President. —KUNA



Tunisia seeks to benefit from Kuwait's experience in UNSC

VIENNA: Tunisian Foreign Minister Khamis Al-Jhinaoui said yesterday that Tunisia looks forward to benefit from Kuwait's successful experience in the UN Security Council (UNSC) when it takes its place as a non-permanent member next year. The Tunisian Minister said that Tunisia will be Kuwait's successor in the council after it ends its term as a non-permanent member in December 2019. "Tunisia will be the voice of Arabs in this Council, just as Kuwait was doing during its membership," Jhinaoui said. He also praised the level of cooperation and coordination between him and his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah who showed his willingness to handover the Kuwaiti experience to the brotherly country of Tunisia. Jhinaoui noted that a Tunisian delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will travel to Kuwait to look over the details of the important diplomatic experience in the UNSC. —KUNA

Labor unions discuss role in Kuwait 2035 vision with Minister

KUWAIT: A delegation representing syndicate of public labor unions has discussed with Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan their role in achieving the vision of Kuwait 2035. In a press statement yesterday, the federation's chairman Hussein Al-Azmi said that Roudhan affirmed during the meeting their pivotal role in contributing to implementing the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to make the country a financial and commercial center. The delegation discussed with the minister the Kuwaiti workers' movement in general, Azmi said, indicating that Roudhan expressed his understanding of the fundamental role played by the unions as a link between workers and officials. Azmi pointed out that Roudhan stressed on keenness of the government, under chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to support labor federations. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan in a group photo with the delegation. —KUNA

NBK trains young entrepreneurs in LOYAC's KON program



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) took part in the training sessions of the participants in LOYAC's KON program. As a platinum sponsor, NBK provided lectures and guidance on business models during two training sessions held by Bodour Al-Adsani from NBK Consumer Banking group and Mashari Al-Abdul Jalcel from NBK Business banking group.

KON training sessions started on July 2, 2019 and will be ongoing until August 7, 2019. Throughout the six weeks program, leaders, mentors and trainers, will encourage the participants to create a profitable busi-

ness plan that solves social challenges. NBK's sponsorship and participation in the program comes as a part of its strategic partnership with LOYAC. NBK is dedicated towards supporting talented young people and empowering them towards achieving their goals.

KON is one of the initiatives that help invest and support young youths. NBK is elated with the outcome of the program every year and looks forward to seeing the participants moving into key leadership roles in their near future. This social entrepreneurship program is co-created with Babson College, the most prestigious

entrepreneurship college in the United States and the number one institution in the world for entrepreneurship education. The program aims to introduce young adults between the ages of 12 to 16 to the business world and to turn their ideas into action.

KON students will experience different stages during the program, thinking, planning and doing. The experiential learning journey the students undertake throughout the six weeks supports them to learn skills that include creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration. The students also learn technical skills to write

up a successful business plan, and how to pitch their business ideas to investors. By the end of the program, students will be able to present their business ideas before a jury panel, in addition to a professor from Babson College.

NBK believes that investing in human resources is investing in our future. The KON program goes along with NBK's initiatives to invest in youth and support their aspirations. LOYAC is a nonprofit organization that runs several programs for the youth to develop their professional skills, enhance their personal growth and help them find their sense of purpose by extending themselves to others.

Local



KUWAIT: Dozens were arrested in police crackdowns at makeshift markets in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh on Friday. — Hanan Al-Saadoun

Fireman injured in 18-storey building blaze



KUWAIT: Fire engines are seen outside a Hawally building where a fire was reported.



Heavy damage inside a Khaitan apartment where a fire was reported.

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Hawally and Salmiya fire stations responded to a fire that started in a basement of a Hawally building. The basement was used as a seamstress' shop, where textiles were stored. The 18-storey building was evacuated and fire was put out quick-

ly. A fireman was injured, treated in hospital and discharged in stable condition. No other injuries were reported. In a separate incident, Farwaniya fire station men responded to a fire that started on the sixth floor of a building in Khaitan. Firemen evacuated the building before putting out the blaze.

Ministry prepares for rain season

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Public Works began an early maintenance campaign of sewer networks in an operation that will continue until the end of the next rainy season. The maintenance works should help prevent a repeat of the crisis that followed the rains in November of last year, which submerged cars and flooded homes and streets, official sources said. "Maintenance teams have new equipment and more staff, and duties are given to groups to prevent scattered work and guarantee jobs are done," the sources said. They added that senior government instructions were given to make undersecretaries and managers follow maintenance in the field and not rely on written reports only, adding that any defect means the immediate termination of officials.

In other news, the Ministry of Social Affairs asked owners of private nurseries to go personally or send their representatives to the women and childhood department at Abdelwahab Abdelrazaq Club in Qadsiya to update the data of their nurseries. The ministry's call follows the Cabinet's decision to abolish decision 36 approving the transfer of authority to issue licenses to nurseries and supervise them from the social affairs to the education ministry and asking the fatwa and legislation department to prepare the legal means to keep this authority with the social affairs ministry.

The ministry asked nursery owners to have the following documents with them: Civil ID and a copy, original license and a copy, letters issued from Kuwait Municipality, health ministry, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate and interior ministry, in addition to the company establishment certificate for educational companies. The ministry decided the updating days as follows: Capital governorate - July 28 until Aug 1, Hawally from Aug 4 until Aug 8, Ahmadi from Aug 18 until Aug 22, Jahra Aug 25 until Aug 29, Farwaniya from Sept 1 until Sept 5 and Mubarak Al-Kabeer from Sept 8 until Sept 12.



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Local

Kuwait extends \$5 million in aid for UNRWA activities in Syria

Fully integrated coordination with IOM to support Syrian refugees: Ambassador

NEW YORK/GENEVA: Kuwait's Permanent Representative at the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi delivered \$5 million in aid to the UNRWA office in New York. Kuwait's fresh humanitarian aid is aimed at supporting the UN refugee agency's activities and services offered to Palestinian refugees in Syria. "This contribution is part of Kuwait's unwavering backing to the Palestinian cause and Palestinian people and refugees," Otaibi said in a statement to the press. "It is also meant to help UNRWA offer basic health, educational, relief and social services to Palestinian refugees, especially those who have been locked in hardships since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis," he added.

However, he emphasized that more international efforts should be exerted in order to provide necessary financial resources to UNRWA so that it could carry on its services to refugees. The Kuwaiti diplomat vowed that the State of Kuwait would remain to be a key partner to UNRWA. UNRWA is providing support for over five million Palestinians in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza Strip and the West Bank including East Jerusalem.



Supporting Palestinian refugees in Syria

Meanwhile, Kuwait's permanent delegate to the UN Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim said that there is a fully integrated plan being coordinated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support Syrian refugees. Ambassador Ghunaim said that several regional cases have been discussed in the meeting with IOM Director General Antonio Vitorino, in addition to the Syrian case. "During the meeting, Kuwait has donated \$3 million as part of its commitment to the organization when it pledged to the third Brussels Conference on 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the region,' last March," said Ghunaim. The Ambassador added that the meeting with the Director General was fruitful, as they discussed several humanitarian cases with the focus on finding quick solutions to the crisis. He also said that Vitorino has praised His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's humanitarian achievements in the region and the world. — KUNA



NEW YORK: Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi delivers \$5 million in aid to UNRWA office in New York. — KUNA

Kuwait ramps up global aid delivery

KUWAIT: Living up to its UN-bestowed moniker of 'Humanitarian Center,' Kuwait has long been accustomed to doling out aid for the less fortunate around the world, thanks to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah's penchant for altruism. Kuwait's humanitarian endeavors run the gamut from food and healthcare aid to educational assistance, where a Kuwaiti charity on Friday renovated a quartet of schools in neighboring Iraq's northern Nineveh Governorate. Kuwait has contributed immensely towards ensuring an adequate number of schools in Iraq's war-battered city of Mosul. Nehla Zainal, an Iraqi education official said. She explained that such gracious initiatives are "no stranger to Kuwait," as charities from across the country hurried to build a myriad of schools and other education facilities all over Mosul in a bid to grant Iraqi students an opportunity for a sound education.

On a related note, Kuwait handed out 120 tons of food aid to Syrian refugees and displaced Iraqis, delivered by Kuwait Relief Society as part of efforts to mitigate the misery the people of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region have had to withstand. The initiative stems from His Highness the Amir's profound desire to stand by Kuwait's larger neighbor, the Gulf state's Consul General in Irbil Dr Omar Al-Kandari said. Meanwhile, in Jordan on Friday, the same Kuwaiti charity opened a sewing factory to allow a bevy of Syrian refugee women the opportunity to ply their trade, Kuwait Relief Society's Director General Khaled Al-Shameri said.

On the initiative, he explained that it represents an earnest attempt on the part of Kuwait to allow a plethora of Syrian women the chance to eke out a living given how their lives have been thrown into disarray because of a raging



Students are seen in a newly-opened Kuwait-sponsored school in Nineveh, Iraq.

civil war in their country. Elsewhere, Kuwait on Thursday handed out some 1,000 food baskets to hapless Yemeni families residing in the war-torn nation's Socotra archipelago, as part of a years-long Kuwaiti aid campaign. Also in Yemen, the government signed a memorandum of understanding, alongside Kuwait Relief Society, to refurbish a student dormitory in the port city of Aden at a cost of \$142,000. In Sri Lanka, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) inaugurated on Thursday a center for physiotherapy and rehabilitation treatment in the northern city of Jaffna, a testament to Kuwait's omnipresence even in some of the world's most impoverished regions.

As part of efforts to exterminate poverty in Yemen, Kuwait Relief Society has funded the inaugural phase of a project to allow some 50 Yemeni families the chance to own an auto rickshaw. Such endeavors can actually make a difference in people's lives by enabling them to better cope with everyday struggles, according to Ayoub Abu Baker, an

official at the Yemeni Office for Social Affairs and Labor. With the annual Islamic festival of Eid Al-Adha fast approaching, Kuwait Food Bank (KFB) on Wednesday put the finishing touches on a nationwide campaign to provide mutton for more than 15,000 people, as per the tradition of slaughtering animals such as sheep and goats and sharing the meat among family and friends.

Kuwait Food Bank has signed a deal with the General Secretariat of Awqaf to launch this endeavor in the first day of Eid Al-Adha, said KFB's Director General Salem Al-Hamar. Speaking on Kuwait's contributions to humanity, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah highlighted the importance of KRCS' role as a distinguished body in the field of humanitarian work. Amid a meeting with KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, the minister praised the venerable Kuwaiti charity for its efforts to provide humanitarian and relief assistance on both local and international levels. — KUNA

Kuwait urges Afghanis to intensify efforts to end conflict

NEW YORK: Kuwait on Friday called on all Afghani parties to double their diplomatic efforts to iron out differences and help end bloodshed in their war-torn country. "We urge all parties to participate constructively in diplomatic efforts to achieve peace in order to promote the interests and wellbeing of the Afghan people," said Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi in a special UN Security Council session on women, peace and security in Afghanistan. He stressed that military operations had never brought a lasting peace.

"Kuwait deeply believes that a lasting

peace in Afghanistan and the whole region will be achieved through a negotiated diplomatic settlement," he said. The Kuwaiti envoy stated that while the path to peace has difficulties, the starting point should be national and inclusive reconciliation. He reiterated Kuwait's condemnation of attacks against Afghan civilians and stressed that perpetrators must be brought to justice. Otaibi underscored the importance of international and regional efforts for peace in Afghanistan. He also hailed the positive outcome of the Afghan talks in Qatar several days ago and the US-Afghan announcement on Thursday of an agreement to intensify efforts to reach a negotiated settlement of the crisis in Afghanistan.

"We cannot talk about political reconciliation without discussing the central role of women," he continued, citing their important role in society," the Kuwaiti envoy said. "Women must be empowered to participate in political and reconciliation processes." He reiterated that the diplomatic efforts in Afghanistan must be accompanied by a large investment in the education and infrastructure. — KUNA



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi speaks during a special session on women, peace and security in Afghanistan. — KUNA

KAPF helps pilgrims with KD 375,800

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Awqaf Public Foundation (KAPF) announced yesterday that it will provide KD 375,800 (\$1.1 million) to help a number of pilgrims from Kuwait who are unable to perform this ritual and have not before. In a press statement, KAPF Acting Deputy Secretary-General Osama Al-Sayegh said that the Secretariat implemented the project of Hajj Bank for this year in cooperation with government agencies and private Kuwaiti charity inside the country.

Sayegh noted that what the Secretariat has done comes as a commitment to implement the conditions of those charitable people by paying their aids to help those who are unable to perform this holy ritual. This project is carried out through cooperation agreements with Kuwaiti governmental and private entities with considerable experience in this field and through detailed plans and studies submitted to the Secretariat, he added.

Sayegh pointed out that the bodies approved for the implementation of the Hajj this year are the International Islamic Charitable Organization and the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. He appreciated the efforts of these institutions to enhance cooperation and partnership with KAPF to implement their projects with high transparency for all beneficiaries within Kuwait. — KUNA



KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer (right) and Sri Lanka's Health Minister sign documents during the inauguration of a center for physiotherapy and rehabilitation treatment in the northern city of Jaffna.



Food parcels distributed to displaced Iraqis in Kurdistan.

Watering birds in public, good initiative during summer heat

KUWAIT: As heat in Kuwait rises, many good initiatives are being shown by the good people, as they provide water and food for birds in public squares to protect them from summer heat. Watering birds in the squares and public places and in front of houses is a good initiative that will help birds and even pets to withstand the high temperatures and quench their thirst. — Photos by Ghazi Qafaf (KUNA)



Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Aerial view of Souq Sharq's marina during a rainy day. — Photo by Hajar Al-Ofaisan (KUNA)

Kuwait works to ensure construction materials' subsidies reach benefactors

Prices monitored to make sure no ill practices taking place



This archive photo shows workers a construction site at Al-Mutlaa housing project.



KUWAIT: This archive photo shows a government house under construction at the Jaber Al-Ahmad City. — KUNA photos

KUWAIT: In light of decree 232/2018, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is working diligently to ensure that construction materials' subsidies were reaching benefactors directly and not used in an illicit manner to create a black market. In 2018, KD 125 million (around \$412.5 million) worth of subsidies were given by the ministry in a clear indication towards its mission to eradicate malice use of funding. Head of subsidies department at the ministry Salah Al-Rashidi said that the ministry was monitoring prices of construction materials to make sure that no ill practices were taking place. Decree 232 aims to create more options for citizens for their construction needs, revealed Al-Rashidi who noted that subsidies were now paid not only for limestone and paints, but also extended to other materials such as electrical cables, ceramics,

porcelain, water and heat insulators, and so on.

KD 30,000 per citizen

In accordance with the ministry's regulations, subsidies for construction materials should not exceed KD 30,000 per citizen who is given KD 8,460 (around \$27,000) for 50 tons of steel, 100 meter of white stone, 2,000 bags of cement, and 450 meters of ready-mixed concrete. The ministry also offers 15,000 cement blocks at around KD 1,920 (around \$6,300), KD 5,000 (around \$16,500) for central air-condition, KD 800 (\$2,600) for outer paint material, and KD 1,300 (\$4,290) for limestone. All these facilities are made available for citizens who have to meet several conditions, indicated Rashidi, affirming that subsidies by the ministry were given to ensure that the materi-

als were available in a legit manner. Meanwhile, speaking on the ills of a secondary or black market for construction material, Khaled Al-Otaibi, head of the quality development team, a voluntary group, could not stress enough on the negative impact of the presence of such market. Though providing more options by the ministry to the citizen is a good step, it would be advisable to add more materials to the subsidies list to prevent others from taking advantage of citizens, Otaibi affirmed. By doing so, Kuwaiti nationals could fully benefit from the government construction loan, which currently barely covers the need for house construction, he added.

Citizens' needs

The issue of house construction all boils down to the

needs of citizens. Mohammad Al-Mutawa, a Kuwaiti national, said that specifying certain materials that meet the subsidies criteria might lead certain individuals to sell subsidized goods that they were not in need of creating a debacle. Selling material to other house owners within the boundaries of the neighborhood should be considered as a black market activity, he indicated, saying that instead of wasting material, it was put into good use, a matter that should be applauded and not frowned upon.

On the flipside of the coin, citizen Khaled Al-Yaseen praised the government for providing subsidies on basic construction material, saying that it enabled him to construct a house based on his needs. The government loan in addition to subsidies is a great deal for citizens and it will enable them to build adequate dwells, he added. — KUNA

Bottles for agriculture, innovative way to protect environment

KUWAIT: Recycling bottles and mugs for planting and agriculture has become fashionable in Kuwait, providing an innovative way to safeguard and protect the environment. The hobby also could create an eye-soothing panorama for anyone on the condition of placing the recycled material in the right place. — KUNA



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US approves sales to support Pakistan's F-16s, India's C-17s

Bully or broker: EU wonders which Johnson will come to Brexit talks

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AL KHUMS: Members of the Libyan Red Crescent inspect the washed up body of a migrant on the beach in the Al-Khums, 130 kms east of the Libyan capital Tripoli yesterday. —AFP

Libya rescuers recover 62 bodies at sea

Deadliest shipwrecks in the Mediterranean this year

TRIPOLI: Rescue workers said yesterday they had plucked the bodies of 62 migrants from waters off the Libyan coast a day after one of the deadliest shipwrecks in the Mediterranean this year. About 145 migrants were rescued by the Libyan coastguard Thursday after their overloaded boat went down east of the capital near the port city of Khoms.

Aid agencies initially feared that scores of migrants had drowned, with the number of missing estimated at more than 110 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and fishermen reported the waters were full of floating bodies. "Our Red Crescent teams have pulled 62 migrants" from the water since Thursday evening, the head of Libya's Red Crescent rescue unit Abdelmoneim Abu Sbeih said on Friday.

"The bodies are still floating onto the shore continuously, it's not possible to give a total number," he added. Survivors reported there were some 400 people aboard when it went down, according to global charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF). One of the fishermen who was the first on the scene to save the survivors recounted finding "bodies floating on the

surface of the water where the boat went down". The head of the UN refugee agency Filippo Grandi called the wreck "the worst Mediterranean tragedy of this year".

Libyan navy spokesman General Ayoub Kacem said most of the rescued migrants were from Eritrea, although Palestinians and Sudanese were also among the group waiting to be taken on to reception centers. A member of the Libyan coast guard said the outfit did not "have the means" to launch a high seas search and would "have to wait for the sea to return the bodies so we can pick them up". Local authorities were gathering and storing bodies of the victims but were facing numerous problems and struggling to find burial places for them, according to municipal source in Khoms.



Number of missing estimated at more than 110

"Traumatized" UN chief Antonio Guterres said he was "horrified" by the latest tragedy at sea. "We need safe, legal routes for migrants and refugees. Every migrant searching for a better life deserves safety and dignity," he tweeted. The migrants had been apparently headed out to sea on three boats lashed together, MSF mission chief Julien Raickman told AFP by telephone on Thursday.

One of the survivors, Abdallah Osman, recounted how their boat started taking on water about 90 minutes after setting out to sea hoping to reach Europe. "The Egyptian captain decided to turn back," he said. Osman, a 28-year-old Eritrean, said a passing ship saw that their boat was in distress but took no action. MSF nurse Anne-Cecilia Kjaer met with survivors, including some who had

"swallowed a lot of sea water and had respiratory" problems. "Many children could not swim, and even those who knew how to succumbed to exhaustion," she said.

Kjaer said the migrants were already "traumatized" from dangerous journeys across deserts where they were "captured by traffickers, subjected to violence and torture, and (then) saw their loved ones die at sea". The capsized boat came only a few weeks after some 68 migrants died when an Italy-bound boat sank off Tunisia. Before the latest shipwreck, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the IOM said 426 migrants had perished in the Mediterranean this year.

Amnesty International lambasted the European Union over the latest deaths. "This high number represents a new low for European leaders. They have done everything they can to pull up the drawbridge to Europe," it said. "yet people are still risking their lives to come to Europe". Libya, which has been wracked by chaos since the 2011 uprising that killed president Muammar Gaddafi, has long been a major transit route for migrants, especially from sub-Saharan Africa, desperate to reach Europe. —AFP

Boko Haram: From an Islamist sect to armed insurgency

LAGOS: Boko Haram started out as an Islamist group railing against corrupt officials in northeast Nigeria but its decade-long insurgency has now devastated the region. The campaign of violence has cost at least 27,000 lives, displaced some two million people and spawned an affiliate of the Islamic State group. Here is some background:

Hardline

Boko Haram aims to create a hardline Islamic state in northeastern Nigeria. The group's nickname loosely translates from the Hausa language as "Western education is forbidden". Its founder and spiritual leader Muhammad Yusuf pinned the blame for Nigeria's ills on Western values left by former colonial master Britain. He also accused the country's secular leaders of corruption and neglecting development in Muslim regions. Yusuf came to the attention of authorities in 2002 when he began to build a following among disaffected youths in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital in northeast Nigeria. He was killed in police custody in July 2009 after an uprising in Maiduguri that prompted a military assault. Some 800 people died in the action, and Boko Haram's mosque and headquarters were left in ruins. Many of its supporters fled the country.

Violent turn

Boko Haram was broadly peaceful before Yusuf's death. But his successor, his right-hand man Abubakar Shekau, undertook a violent campaign of deadly attacks on schools, churches, mosques, state entities and security forces. Some Boko Haram

members are thought to have trained with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in northern Mali in 2012 and 2013. Among the group's most notorious acts was the April 2014 kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from the remote northern town of Chibok in Borno state. Fifty-seven fled in the immediate aftermath, and more than 100 of the 219 who spent years in captivity have since been released, found or escaped. The mass abduction brought world attention to the insurgency at a time when Boko Haram was seizing territory across the northeast, which became a largely no-go area, with the violence spilling over into Cameroon, Chad and Niger. In August 2014 Shekau proclaimed a "caliphate" in the Borno town of Gwoza, and in March 2015 pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria.

Fight back

The violence has destroyed property and farmland in the mainly rural northeast and sparked a humanitarian crisis and acute food shortages. An offensive since 2015 by regional armies—troops from Nigeria and backed by others from Cameroon, Chad and Niger—drove jihadists from most of the areas they had seized. But regular bloody raids and suicide bomb attacks continue. Mass court action for people suspected of being members of Boko Haram started in October 2017. Most were released, largely due to lack of evidence, and more than 100 convicted for belonging to the group and taking part in attacks.

Split

A faction led by the son of Muhammad Yusuf, Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi, broke away in 2016 in opposition to Shekau's indiscriminate targeting of civilians. The splinter Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) group has the backing of IS. It targets the armed forces and has since July 2018 carried out numerous attacks on military bases. Shekau's faction is meanwhile responsible for suicide bombings targeting civilians. Since last year Barnawi has reportedly been sidelined in ISWAP by more radical commanders. —AFP

10 years into jihadist rebellion, no reprieve for Nigeria's displaced

MAIDUGURI: Maiduguri resident Ahmed Muhammed wanders through the rubble left behind as he recalls the outbreak of fighting in his city a decade ago that launched the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. "We heard shooting - badadadadadada - here, there, everywhere around us," the 44-year-old railway worker said. "We thought the end of the universe had come."

In late July 2009, tensions between the hardline Islamist sect and authorities in northeast Nigeria boiled over as the group launched a wave of attacks and security forces fought back ruthlessly. The epicenter of the violence was the compound of the group's founder Muhammad Yusuf. After several days of fighting, Yusuf and hundreds of Boko Haram members were dead and a conflict had been unleashed that would devastate the region. The mosque and the homes that once stood there are now just a pile of debris — an unmarked monument to the suffering of the past 10 years. In the decade since the uprising began, some two million people have been uprooted from their homes and 27,000 killed as the bloodshed has spilled into neighboring countries. Boko Haram has turned vast swathes of territory into a no man's land and forced its way into international headlines by abducting hundreds of schoolgirls. While the Nigerian army has pushed the fighters from major towns, the jihadists have splintered into factions and spawned an offshoot aligned to the Islamic State group that has unleashed its own campaign of violence.



DALORI, Nigeria: Men pray next to coffins during a burial ceremony, after two people were killed by Boko Haram fighters in Dalori camp for internally displaced people, near Maiduguri. —AFP

Waves of the conflict crashed over Hadiza Bukar's village near Baga close to the shores of Lake Chad in 2015 when Boko Haram fighters stormed through the area. Bukar fled with her newborn twin sons, leaving behind her husband and two other children. She has not heard from them since. What remains of the family is now among the roughly quarter-of-a-million people displaced and struggling to survive in and around Maiduguri, capital of Borno State. Studded across the city are government-approved camps and informal settlements of corrugated iron, sticks and shreds of tarpaulin. The only place Bukar found to live is at the ground zero of the insurgency that tore her life apart. Her makeshift home stands on the edge of the ruins of Yusuf's former compound. When the downpours come in the rainy season the place turns into a quagmire. "Many people told us stories about what happened here. —AFP

International

Lebanon secures release of American citizen from Syria

Suicide bomber kills 6 regime soldiers in Syria

BEIRUT: Syrian authorities have released a US citizen and he has been handed back to his family, thanks to the mediation of Lebanon, a Lebanese security official said on Friday. The security official did not give the name of the released American, but he was later identified as Sam Goodwin, 30, from St Louis, Missouri.

"Sam is healthy and with his family," his parents Thomas and Ann Goodwin said in a statement. "We are forever indebted to Lebanese General Abbas Ibrahim and to all others who helped secure the release of our son." The statement gave no other details, saying, "Right now, we appreciate our privacy as we reconnect with Sam." A spokeswoman for the family said Goodwin had travelled to Syria "as part of a personal interest to travel and experience every country of the world" and was last heard from on May 25.

The Lebanese security official said the country's security chief Abbas Ibrahim had conducted the mediation. While not identifying Goodwin as the person released, the official said it was not Austin Tice, a journalist who disappeared in Syria in 2012. The US State Department said it was aware of reports a US citizen had been released but could not comment due to privacy considerations. Several US citizens have been held in Syria since the war began there in 2011, including people held by jihadist groups such as Islamic State.

The United States has declined to say who it believes is holding Tice, but has said it believes he is alive and has sought the help of the Syrian government's close ally Russia to free him. Last year the family of another American, Majd Kamalmaz, told the New York Times he had disappeared at a government checkpoint in Damascus in 2017. Last month Ibrahim flew to Iran to complete the release and repatriation

of Nizar Zakka, a Lebanese citizen with permanent residency in the United States who was detained there in 2015.

Suicide bomber kills 6

Meanwhile, a suicide bomber killed six soldiers yesterday in the southern province of Daraa, in a rare deadly attack against the cradle of the uprising that sparked Syria's war, a monitor said. The bomber, who was riding a motorcycle, blew himself up at a military checkpoint killing the six soldiers and wounding several other people, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Syria's state news agency SANA also reported a suicide bombing but said it happened during an "army raid" that targeted "terrorists", a term used by authorities to describe rebels and jihadists. SANA said several soldiers were wounded when "a terrorist detonated an explosive belt during an army raid". It was not immediately clear who was behind the blast, but pro-regime forces in Daraa province face explosions and gunfire on a near daily basis, although they are usually not deadly.

Earlier this month, an six soldiers were killed in an explosion that targeted an army convoy near Yadud village, some seven kilometers outside the provincial capital of Daraa city, according to the Observatory. Russia-backed government forces last summer retook the province, following a deadly bombardment campaign and surrender deals that saw part of the population board buses to a northern opposition holdout. Government institutions have since returned, but army forces have not deployed in all of the province.

And local anger has grown after hundreds were detained despite the so-called "reconciliation deals",



ARIHA, Syria: A member of the Syrian Civil Defense (White Helmets) carries a victim at the site of a reported air strike on the town of Ariha, in the south of Syria's Idlib province yesterday. —AFP

and many others forcibly conscripted into President Bashar Al-Assad's army. In March, dozens of people took part in a protest after a statue of the president's late father, Hafez al-Assad, was erected in Daraa to replace one destroyed by protesters at the onset of

the 2011 uprising. Syria's eight-year conflict, which evolved from a brutal crackdown on anti-government protests into a full blown civil war involving regional and international players, has killed more than 370,000 people. —Agencies

87 Sudanese killed as security forces break up protest

KHARTOUM: The head of a Sudanese investigation into the violent break up of a protest by security forces said yesterday that 87 people were killed and 168 wounded in the June 3 incident in Khartoum, citing a higher death toll than previous official estimates. Fath Al-Rahman Saeed, the head of the investigative committee appointed by the public prosecutor, said some members of the security forces fired live ammunition at protesters who were holding a sit-in to demand the military cede power.

He told a news conference that three officers had violated orders by moving forces into the sit-in area outside the Defense Ministry, a focal point for protests that had led to the ouster of long-time President Omar Al-Bashir on April 11. Saeed said 17 of those killed were in the square occupied by protesters in the worst bout of violence since Bashir was toppled, adding that 48 of the wounded were hit by bullets.

An order was also issued to whip protesters, he added. The Health Ministry had previously put the death toll at 61, while opposition medics have said 127 people were killed and 400 wounded in the dispersal. "Some outlaws exploited this gathering and formed another gathering in what is known as the Columbia area, where negative and illegal practices took place," Saeed said. "It became a security threat, forcing the authorities to make necessary arrangements to clear the area," he said.

There was no immediate reaction to his comments from the opposition coalition Forces of Freedom and Change, which is negotiating with the ruling military



KHARTOUM: A man wears a banner reading 'blood versus blood' as Sudanese protesters demonstrate in Khartoum. —AFP

council to finalize an agreement for a three-year transition to elections. The committee found that some members of the joint force tasked with clearing the Columbia area "exceeded their duties and entered the sit-in square ... and fired heavily and randomly", leading to the killing and wounding of some protesters.

Saeed gave the ranks and initials of eight officers he said had been charged with crimes against humanity, which is punishable by death or life imprisonment under military law. He did not give their full names. A brigadier general, referred to only as AAM, mobilized a riot force of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, on the orders of two senior officers but not members

of Sudan's top leadership, and told them to whip protesters, Saeed said.

Saeed said the committee had not uncovered any incidents of rape, although the US-based Physicians for Human Rights cited local medics as saying women had their clothes torn off and were raped. It was not possible for Reuters to independently verify the reports of rape. Activists say Sudanese women are reluctant to publicly say they were raped to avoid any social stigma. Sudan's military council, which took power after former military officer Bashir was deposed, has previously denied any rape took place. —Reuters

Iraq Kurds accuse PKK of Turkish diplomat's murder

ARBIL: The authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan have accused Turkish Kurdish rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) of ordering the July 17 murder of the Turkish vice-consul in regional capital Arbil. The federal government in Baghdad has often blamed the PKK for carrying out attacks against Turkish targets from its rear bases in Iraq's northern mountains but a statement issued late Friday was a rare accusation against their fellow Kurds by the autonomous regional authorities. The PKK's armed wing had denied responsibility for the assassination.

But the Iraqi Kurdish authorities said that based on a detailed confession by the suspected Turkish Kurdish gunman, Mazloum Dag, 27, the murder was carried out on the orders of top PKK commanders. Turkish Vice-Consul Osman Kose was gunned down with two Iraqis while they

dined on a restaurant terrace in Arbil. Iraqi Kurdish security services said that the murder had been three months in the planning by PKK commanders in their heavily fortified hideouts in Iraq's Qandil mountains.

They said they had arrested three Turkish and three Iraqi suspects. Dag's arrest last Saturday was immediately seized on by the Turkish media as his sister Dersim is a member of parliament for Turkey's main pro-Kurdish party, the People's Democratic Party (HDP). The HDP, the country's second largest opposition group, is regularly accused by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of links to the outlawed PKK. The HDP "strongly" condemned the Arbil attack, calling it an "absolutely unacceptable provocation attempt".

In May, Turkey launched a major ground offensive and bombing campaign against the PKK in Qandil, the latest of many in the military's three and a half decade campaign against the rebels. Analysts have suggested the attack on the Turkish diplomat might have been carried out in retaliation for the killing of several PKK commanders in the latest bombing campaign. Following Kose's murder, Turkey broadened its cross-border operations, launching air strikes against PKK bases and members in the Kurdish-held Makhmur area south of Iraq's second city Mosul. —AFP



ARBIL: Photo shows 27-year-old Mazloum Dag, a Kurdish man from Turkey who was identified as the suspected shooter in the murder of a Turkish diplomat, standing at an undisclosed location in Arbil. —AFP

Trump paves way for sanctions in Mali conflict

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump issued an executive order Friday laying the groundwork for sanctions against those who have exacerbated the "deteriorating situation in Mali," the White House said. The decree will freeze assets and suspend travel for "individuals or entities that seek to undermine the peace, security or stability of Mali." Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

Mali is struggling to quell unrest that began in 2012 in the north and spread to other parts of the country, despite aid from French and UN forces. "Extremist groups are exploiting ethnic tensions and expanding

their networks well outside Mali's borders," Pompeo added, without specifying who might be targeted by the sanctions. A US senior administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that anyone sanctioned "can no longer access the United States financial system." Last week Washington imposed sanctions on an Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist group in Mali that carried out deadly attacks on the country's armed forces. In 2015 a peace agreement was signed with some armed factions, but parts of Mali remain beyond the control of the government and the armed forces.

The UN mission to Mali, known as MINUSMA, "has faced more violence and danger than any other peacekeeping mission in UN history," Pompeo said. The Trump administration has signaled its disinterest in such missions by cutting its financial contribution to UN peacekeeping and pushing for major cuts in blue helmet operations worldwide. In 2017 the United Nations introduced sanctions against individuals accused of obstructing the country's peace process. —AFP



GAO: Senegalese soldiers of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) patrol on foot in the streets of Gao. —AFP

News in brief

Planes hit Haftar airbase

TRIPOLI: Libya's UN-recognized government said its forces struck a desert airbase Friday that has been a key staging post for the transport of troops and supplies by eastern-based strongman Khalifa Haftar. Since April, the government has been battling an offensive against the capital by Haftar's forces, who already control most of the far-flung oases and oilfields of the desert south as well as their eastern stronghold. "The air force struck a gathering of mercenaries at the Al-Jufra base, destroying a hangar for drones belonging to a hostile country," on Friday night, government forces said on Facebook. They said they also destroyed a munitions depot and hit an Ilyushin Il-76 military transport aircraft. Pro-Haftar television channel Libya Al-Hadath confirmed the base had been attacked but gave no details. —AFP

14 killed in jihadist attack

OUAGADOUGOU: Armed men described as jihadists raided a village in Burkina Faso's restive north, killing 14 people, plundering and burning shops and motorbikes, local and security sources said yesterday. The raid took place on the night of Thursday to Friday with "around 20 individuals attacking the village of Diblou and killing 14 people," a security source said. "The terrorists burnt shops and motorcycles. Almost the entire market was looted," a local resident said. "Almost all the inhabitants fled to neighboring areas." The poor Sahel state has been battling a rising wave of jihadist attacks over the last four years which began in the north but have since spread to the east, near the border with Togo and Benin. Most attacks in the former French colony are attributed to the jihadist group Ansarul Islam, which emerged near the Mali border in December 2016. —AFP

Romania police chief sacked

BUCHAREST: The chief of police has been sacked in Romania after the murder of a 15-year-old girl who telephoned three times to report her own kidnapping. "I called for the sacking of the police chief ... because drastic measures are required," said Interior Minister Nicolae Moga late Friday. The girl, identified as Alexandra, was snatched Wednesday as she tried to hitch-hike home to Dobrosloveni in southern Romania, police said. On Thursday morning she managed to ring the emergency number 112 three times and provide clues to police about the place she was being held by a car driver who picked her up. Police chief Ioan Buda had told journalists she shouted down the phone, "He's coming, he's coming" before the phone call was cut off. Relatives of Alexandra alleged the police failed to take the alert seriously and finally reacted too late. —AFP

Yazidi prince takes over

BAGHDAD: Hazem Tahsin Bek yesterday succeeded his late father as prince of the Yazidi religious minority that was brutalized by the Islamic State group in northern Iraq. He was enthroned in a ceremony in Lalish, the Yazidis' holiest site in Iraq's mountainous northwest, after having been named by their five-member High Spiritual Council which includes Baba Sheikh, their religious chief. The new hereditary leader, a 56-year-old former deputy in the Iraqi Kurdish parliament, is in charge of running the community and cooperating with Kurdish authorities in the north and the federal government in Baghdad. His father, Tahsin Said Ali, died last January in Germany of a long illness after almost 75 years as head of the community, whose men were killed en masse and women and girls abducted as "sex slaves" by IS. Of the world's nearly 1.5 million Yazidis, the largest number - 550,000 - lived in Iraq, with smaller numbers in Kurdish-speaking areas of Turkey and Syria. —AFP

International

Bully or broker: EU wonders which Johnson will come to Brexit talks

New British PM wants Irish backstop axed from Brexit deal

BRUSSELS: The European Union is offering new British Prime Minister Boris Johnson a wary welcome, insisting it will consider any detailed new ideas he has on Brexit but cautious lest his gambit is ultimately to blame Brussels for a no-deal departure. The 27 remaining EU members say publicly and privately that the divorce settlement, agreed with London but rejected three times by Britain's parliament, is closed. Johnson says the Irish backstop, an insurance against a hard border on a new EU frontier between Ireland and Northern Ireland, must be struck from that Withdrawal Agreement.

"He wants a deal without a backstop, which he himself knows doesn't work," said an EU source who has been involved in Brexit discussions. "They have to come with a credible idea." On the eve of his leadership victory, Johnson evoked the spirit of the moon landing 50 years ago to say frictionless trade at the Irish border was achievable after Brexit, which is due to happen on Oct. 31. "October is around the corner. The moon mission was planned for several years. It could take 10 years to develop a technical solution," said an EU diplomat.

Johnson has spoken by telephone with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, as well as Jean-Claude Juncker, head of the European

Commission, which has led the EU side of Brexit talks. The British leader has invitations, but so far no scheduled visits to meet his European counterparts before a G7 meeting in France at the end of August. Johnson's itinerary so far has focused on Britain.

Johnson has said he would prefer an exit deal, but was willing to pull Britain out of the European Union at the end of October without one, ideally with both sides retaining zero tariffs. EU sources dismiss the idea of such a mini-deal or managed no deal, lacking a divorce bill of over 30 billion pounds (\$37.1 billion) and retaining certain perks of the single market. "Say you want my car, but we can't agree on the price. So you say let's have a mini-deal so that you can drive it around for two years until we reach an agreement. Why would I accept this?" an EU diplomat said.

Snap election, blame game

Johnson said in a speech yesterday, while also insisting the Irish backstop be ditched, that he had very friendly relations with EU leaders and that Britain would be neither disengaged nor aloof and would try to solve the problem. Even if some are lukewarm towards Johnson, they welcome the end of a two-month period with no effective British leader and say a stronger prime minister might be good.

"It might make a difference. We don't know in advance. It could be like Nixon going to China," an EU diplomat said, referring to US President Richard Nixon's 1972 visit to Beijing that abruptly normalized US-China relations. One diplomat described Johnson as a chameleon. "He has many facets. He can be charming. Now he's put forward the bully, but he is capable of acting differently."

Many in Europe though are already downbeat. Norbert Roettgen, an ally of Germany's Merkel, said in a tweet addressed to Johnson that "neither boastful speeches nor bullying" would make the EU abandon its principles and unity. Some EU diplomats and officials believe Johnson is already bent on a no-deal Brexit, even if the current British parliament appears unlikely to accept this and, in the view of many in Europe, it would devastate the UK economy. But the no-deal call may be more for domestic consumption.

"He wants to be divisive, clear, to talk to his base, probably with a view to call an election soon. We can't rule out an election before October 31," an EU diplomat said, adding that a larger majority could make Johnson more willing to accept a compromise and push it through parliament. A UK election campaign could also likely see a ramping up of the blame game, with Brussels the target, even if EU officials insist compromises on the back-



MANCHESTER: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson gestures as he gives a speech on domestic priorities at the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester, northwest England yesterday. — AFP

stop and Brexit extensions at Britain's request demonstrate EU flexibility. "There will be a communication war ... The truth is that blam-

ing Brexit or a no deal on the EU may be a good communication strategy, but it's simply not the reality," an EU source said. — Reuters

US leader announces controversial asylum deal with Guatemala

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump announced Friday that a "landmark" asylum agreement has been reached with Guatemala, as the United States ratchets up pressure on its southern neighbors to stem the flow of migrants towards its border. The White House said Guatemala would now be considered a "safe third country," meaning that US-bound migrants who enter Guatemala would be required to seek asylum there instead.

But the US Department of Homeland Security said the term did not appear in the text agreed on Friday, of which few details were initially known. Trump said the deal will "provide safety to legitimate asylum seekers and stop asylum fraud" in the region. "This landmark agreement will put the coyotes and smugglers out of business," the president said, referring to the "bad people" who have trafficked thousands of migrants through Mexico to the southern US border.

In another immigration-related triumph for Trump, the Supreme Court on Friday issued a ruling allowing the president to proceed with plans to divert \$2.5 billion in Pentagon funds toward construction of a border wall with Mexico. "Big VICTORY on the Wall," Trump tweeted after the ruling. "Big WIN for Border Security and the Rule of Law!" The dual victories come as the president prepares for his second run at the White House in 2020. Stopping illegal immigration remains a key priority for the Republican, who won the election in 2016 in part on his pledge to build a border wall.

Back to Guatemala

The asylum agreement with Guatemala comes days after Trump threatened tough retaliation against the small Central American country if it did not sign on to an asylum deal — threatening a travel ban, tariffs, remittance fees or "all of the above." Friday's agreement, signed in the Oval Office by Guatemala's interior minister, Enrique Degenhart, and US Acting Homeland Security Secretary Kevin McAleenan, would apply to Salvadoran or Honduran migrants passing through Guatemala towards the United States, if not others.

Their asylum claims should now be filed in Guatemala, McAleenan said. If Central American migrants instead "make a journey all the way to the US border, they would be removable back to Guatemala if they want to seek asylum," he noted. The deal is expected to be up and running in August, McAleenan said. US authorities have recorded a dramatic rise in detentions of migrants over the past year, many of those fleeing chronic poverty and gruesome gang violence in Central America.

Serious questions about the pact remained. It was not immediately clear how the agreement signed Friday would jibe with a provision of Guatemala's constitutional court, which recently blocked the idea of a deal making Guatemala a "safe third country" for asylum requests. McAleenan conceded that the term "is a colloquialism" and is not in the text itself. A top Democrat assailed the deal as "cruel and immoral," as well as illegal, arguing that Guatemala lacks sufficient asylum and protection processes. "Simply put, Guatemala is not a safe country for refugees and asylum seekers, as the law requires," said House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Eliot Engel, adding that he expects the "counter-productive" deal to be challenged in the courts. — AFP



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump speaks after announcing an agreement with Guatemala regarding people seeking asylum in the Oval Office of the White House on July 26, 2019. — AFP

Massive manhunt in Canadian wilderness for murder suspects

MONTREAL: Two teen triple murder suspects on the run in the central Canadian wilderness—perhaps holed up in thick, insect-infested forest inhabited by wolves and bears—were staying one step ahead of a massive police manhunt Friday. Since Tuesday, the village of Gillam near Hudson Bay has been on the alert for Kam McLeod, 19, and Bryer Schmegelsky, 18, who are wanted for three murders. They are believed to be behind the killings of Australian Lucas Fowler and his American girlfriend, Chynna Deese, as well as Leonard Dyck, a 64-year-old Canadian man.

Police consider the Canadian teens to be armed and dangerous, and have warned the population not to approach them if spotted. The fugitives wound up near the Manitoba province village 600 miles north of Winnipeg after an epic 2,000-mile chase across three provinces that began in British Columbia, on the Pacific coast, where their three victims were discovered earlier this month. The teenagers were initially considered by police in British Columbia to be "missing" after their car was found torched last Friday.

But police then discovered the body of a man later identified as Dyck, a botany professor at the University of British Columbia, near another burned-out vehicle believed to have been used by the pair. Earlier this week, the police named the two natives of Vancouver as formal suspects in the three murders. Fowler, 23, and Deese, 24, were discovered shot to death on July 15 along the side of the Alaska Highway near Liard Hot Springs, British Columbia. The teens had been spotted driving a Toyota across northern Saskatchewan. That vehicle was found by strawberry pickers late Monday near Gillam, triggering a massive manhunt, with trackers using teams of dogs to hunt down the fugitives in the thick woods and swamps.

'Atrocious' insects and bears

There were two reported sightings of the wanted teens in Gillam, but none since Monday. "We believe they are still in the area," Julie Courchaine, a spokeswoman for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, said



MONTREAL: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police released photos of Kam McLeod, 19, and Bryer Schmegelsky, 18, who are considered main suspects in the slayings of 23-year-old Australian Lucas Fowler, and his US girlfriend Chynna Deese, 24. — AFP

Thursday. Police had received 80 tip-offs about the suspects in the previous 48 hours, Courchaine said, and a roadblock has been set up on the only road—an unpaved track—leading into and out of Gillam.

As well as tracker dogs, police officers were deploying drones and armored vehicles in their search of the area's dense forests, where vegetation in some places is nearly impenetrable. Gillam Mayor Dwayne Forman said that if conditions on the ground were tough for the police, they were much worse for the fugitives. "They're up against some brutal terrain. It's a swamp, heavy-treed area. The insects are atrocious through [the] swamps," he told CTV television.

The woods are full of black bears and the occasional polar bear that wanders in from the Hudson Bay area, around 100 miles away, Forman said. "I would be extremely surprised if they could survive a long duration up here," the mayor said. "It's tough going up here. If they don't have bug jackets, once that sun goes down, the bugs are out like crazy, enough to drive you insane," said Clint Sawchuk, owner of an outdoors equipment

store. Sherry Benson-Podolchuk, a retired Manitoba police officer, said: "If they're not in a vehicle, then they have to be on foot, and that must be pretty brutal for them." "They don't have the training, they don't have all the equipment that you would need to survive for several days without food or water," she added. Peter German, a former high-ranking federal police officer, added: "One would hope that these young fellows would simply give themselves up at this point and no harm would come to them or to the police or public."

"Time is actually on the side of the police at this point because these fellows are not prepared for what they're experiencing if they are in the woods," German said. In an interview with the Canadian Press, Schmegelsky's father said his son was deeply troubled and wanted "his pain to end." "He's on a suicide mission... he's going to be dead today or tomorrow," Alan Schmegelsky said, explaining that his son never recovered emotionally from his parents' divorce in 2005. "I'm so sorry all of this had to happen. I'm so sorry that I couldn't rescue you," said the older Schmegelsky, in tears. — AFP

US Speaker Pelosi denies curbing impeachment

WASHINGTON: US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi insisted Friday she is not squashing efforts to impeach President Donald Trump, as some Democrats took a determined step towards launching an impeachment investigation. Democrats have struggled to formulate a new battle plan against the Republican president after Robert Mueller's lackluster testimony before Congress this week failed to reveal a clear path for impeachment.

Pelosi, the top Democrat in Congress, has frustrated some members of her party after signaling she will only move forward with proceedings aimed at ousting the president if there is overwhelming evidence of wrongdoing, and if the divisive move has public support. "No, I'm not trying to run out the clock," Pelosi told reporters as members of the House of Representatives left Washington for a six-week summer recess.

"We will proceed when we have what we need to proceed - not one day sooner." Some colleagues including House Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler wasted no time advancing efforts to obtain potentially damning evidence, a move some Democrats said leaves little doubt the panel has launched an impeachment investiga-

tion. Nadler on Friday filed a petition in federal court seeking grand jury secrets, including witness testimony, that Mueller gathered during his two-year investigation of Russian election interference and possible obstruction of justice by Trump. "Because Department of Justice policies will not allow prosecution of a sitting president, the US House of Representatives is the only institution of the federal government that can now hold President Trump accountable for these actions," Nadler said, quoting the legal filing made to Judge Beryl Howell, who supervised the Mueller grand jury.

Attorney General Bill Barr has repeatedly declared that Congress should not have access to the material. The US Constitution gives Congress the power to remove a president, and Nadler's filing directly references the possibility of initiating impeachment. "The House must have access to all the relevant facts, and consider whether to exercise its full Article I powers, including a constitutional power of the utmost gravity: recommendation of articles of impeachment," Nadler said, again quoting the filing.

'Crossing a threshold'

Nadler spoke Friday flanked by several members of the powerful Judiciary Committee, including some who considered the court petition a significant step towards an impeachment inquiry. "We're now crossing a threshold with this filing," congresswoman Veronica Escobar said. "and we are now officially entering into an examination of whether or not to recommend the articles of impeachment." Without an ironclad case, an impeachment



WASHINGTON: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) walks out of her office after a meeting with Rep Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. — AFP

in the Democratic-led House will almost certainly die in the Senate, where Trump's Republicans hold a 53-47 majority.

While Nadler downplayed any divisions with the speaker, Pelosi doubled down on her position two days after Mueller's testimony in a performance that Trump branded a disaster for Democrats. Mueller did not provide camera-friendly soundbites or bombshell revelations, though Democrats say he brought his report's findings to a broader American audience. Some 95 Democrats went on record last week supporting impeachment efforts, and a handful more announced their backing after Mueller's testimony. Pelosi was unfazed.

"I'm willing to take whatever heat there is to say, the decision will be made in a timely fashion. This isn't endless," she said. "Their advocacy for impeachment only gives me leverage," she went on, adding: "I have no complaint with what they are doing."

Lawmakers are running out of time to launch impeachment procedures, given that the 2020 election campaign will kick into full gear within months. Many of the Democratic candidates in the large presidential field have called for Trump's removal, including senators Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders and Kamala Harris. — AFP

International

US approves sales to support Pakistan's F-16s, India's C-17s

Ten soldiers killed in two separate incidents in Pakistan

WASHINGTON: Washington has approved \$125 million worth of support for Pakistan's F-16 warplanes, and also \$670 million worth of support for India's C-17 transport planes. Approval to support US-built aircraft for the two south Asian rivals were approved by the US State Department, and announced simultaneously by the US Defense Security Cooperation Agency. The approval for technical and logistics support for Pakistan's F-16s comes just days after Prime Minister Imran Khan met with US President Donald Trump at the White House.

The potential sale will support US foreign policy and national security "by protecting US technology through the continued presence of US personnel that provide 24/7 end-use monitoring," the statement announcing the Pakistan approval read. Separately, the DSCA said that India asked to buy spare parts and test equipment for their Boeing C-17 transport planes, and is seeking personnel training, among other things, "for an estimated cost of \$670 million."

"India needs this follow-on support to maintain its operational readiness and ability to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) assistance in the region. India will have no difficulty absorbing this support into its armed forces," the statement announcing the approval read. Both statements added that the proposed sales of equipment and support "will not alter the basic

military balance in the region."

Ten soldiers killed

In another development, ten Pakistani soldiers were killed by militants yesterday in two separate incidents in the country's northwestern and southwestern provinces, the military said. Six soldiers patrolling near the Afghan border were killed in North Waziristan district when militants opened fire from the Afghan side, according to the military. Separately, the army said four paramilitary troops were killed in the southwestern province of Balochistan during an operation against militants. Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed his condolences to the families of those killed, and tweeted: "I salute our armed forces personnel who continue to lay down their lives fighting terrorists to keep the nation safe."

North Waziristan - once a focal point in the global war on terror - held provincial elections for the first time earlier this month, a key step in bringing the northwestern region into the political mainstream after years of turmoil fuelled by militancy. Washington has long insisted the area provides safe havens to militants - including the Taleban and Al-Qaeda - an allegation Islamabad denies. Security has improved in recent years, but lower-level attacks still occur and the area remains notorious for the availability of cheap guns, drugs, and smuggled goods. — Agencies



HYDERABAD: Indian Air Force Suryakiran team members fly past in formation at the Air Force Station Hakimpet in Hyderabad yesterday to mark the Kargil war 20th anniversary. India's army chief warned Pakistan that it would get a 'blooded nose' if there was a repeat of a bloody battle which took place 20 years ago. — AFP

Flaws seen in Trump's calm response to North Korean missile launches

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Friday played down North Korea's latest launch of short-range ballistic missiles, calling them "very standard," a response some analysts said exposed flaws in his approach to Pyongyang and ignored the threat posed to allies Japan and South Korea as well as the US troops they host.

North Korea said Thursday's launches were a warning to South Korea "warmongers" to stop importing weapons and conducting joint military drills, a message that analysts said was also aimed at the United States. The launches were the first North Korean missile tests since Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met last month and agreed to revive denuclearization talks stalled since their failed summit in February.

North Korea conducted similar tests in May and the new launches came after Pyongyang accused Washington of going back on a pledge by Trump to Kim by planning to hold military drills with South Korea next month and warned that the talks were at risk. Asked whether he was troubled by the tests, Trump, who is keen to hold up his engagement with North Korea as a foreign policy success ahead of his 2020 reelection bid, told reporters at the White House: "No. Not at all."

"We'll see what happens, but they are short-range missiles and many people have those missiles ... very standard missiles," he said, reiterating that he has a very good relationship with Kim. Trump also said Kim had not called the tests a warning to the United States. "He didn't say a warning to the United States. They have their disputes, the two of them; they've had them for a long time," he said of North and South Korea.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has also sought to play down the launches, even though all ballistic missile tests by North Korea are banned by UN Security Council



SEOUL: People watch a television news screen showing a file footage of a North Korean missile launch, at a railway station in Seoul. North Korea fired two short-range missiles into the sea on July 25, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said, after warnings from Pyongyang over military exercises between Washington and Seoul next month. — AFP

resolutions that Pyongyang rejects as infringing on its right to self-defense. Pompeo said on Thursday fresh talks were still possible with North Korea and he anticipated they would take place in a couple of weeks. "You know, lots of countries posture before they come to the table," he told Fox News.

Game plan needed

Joel Wit, founder and senior fellow at the 38 North think tank in Washington, who has long been an advocate of engagement with North Korea, said the administration was right to take a patient approach, but added: "It should also have a game plan to unveil at some point to demonstrate that its patience is running out." Trump hinted at some impatience in an interview with Fox News on Thursday, saying: "I think with North Korea we've been doing very well. But that doesn't mean it's going to continue." He did not elaborate.

Other analysts said Trump appeared too desperate to try to get a deal, even at the expense of raising the risks posed to US allies Japan and

Korea, which are both within range of Kim's short-range missiles, as are tens of thousands of US troops based in North Asia. "Trump already damaged alliance solidarity and deterrence when he demonstrated during his state visit to Tokyo in May that he would give North Korea a pass on missiles aimed at America's allies, rather than the United States," said Daniel Russel, the State Department's top diplomat for Asia until early in the Trump administration.

He said Trump's willingness to turn a blind eye to further violations of U.N. resolutions sent another message to Kim: "My reelection bid requires I claim my North Korea policy is working, so you have leverage over me and a virtual free hand to keep manufacturing nuclear weapons ... all I ask is that you don't conduct a nuclear test or launch an ICBM that I can't ignore." Trump has repeatedly held up Kim's nearly two-year freeze in testing of nuclear bombs and intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States as evidence of the success of his engagement with North Korea. — Reuters

Moscow's police arrest hundreds

MOSCOW: Russian police arrested more than 300 people as they gathered in Moscow yesterday to demand free and fair elections, a monitor said, following a crackdown on the opposition. The rally comes a week after the capital's biggest demonstration in years, when some 22,000 people protested the authorities' decision to block opposition candidates from standing for the city council in September. Investigators raided the homes and headquarters of several disqualified candidates in the run-up to the fresh rally yesterday.

Top Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny was jailed for 30 days for calling for the demonstration. Other leading opposition figures and would-be candidates were also arrested in the hours leading up to the event, which comes amid declining living standards and a fall in President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings. OVD Info, which monitors protests, said at least 317 people had been arrested in the first hour of the demonstration. "Honestly, I'm scared," 42-year-old IT worker Alexei Sprizhitsky told AFP at the demonstration. He said the last time he had seen this level of pressure on activists was in 2012, when Putin's return to the Kremlin after four years as prime minister sparked a wave of protests.

'We want free elections'

Local polls are a rare opportunity for dissenting voices to participate in political life as anti-Kremlin parties have been squeezed out of parliament over Putin's two decades in charge. Security was tight in central Moscow and police shut down the area outside city hall where protesters were planning to gather, forcing participants out onto side streets.

"This is our city!", "Shame!" and "We want free elections," the crowd chanted as police blocked off the site. Politician and disqualified candidate Dmitry Gudkov was arrested shortly before the march. Earlier he had said the future of the country was

at stake. "If we lose now, elections will cease to exist as a political instrument," he said. "What we're talking about is whether it's legal to participate in politics today in Russia, we're talking about the country we're going to live in."

While pro-Kremlin candidates enjoy the support of the state, independent candidates say they have been made to jump through countless hoops in order to get on the ballot for the city polls. After activists and ordinary Muscovites staged pickets last week, including outside the local election commission building, investigators said they were launching a criminal probe into obstructing the work of election officials. If found guilty, organizers risk up to five years in prison.

'Afraid all my life'

Navalny ally Ivan Zhdanov said he had been arrested shortly ahead of the demonstration. Barred candidate Ilya Yashin meanwhile announced he was detained in the early hours of yesterday morning following a raid on his home. Would-be candidate Lyubov Sobol, who this week launched a hunger strike, was arrested at the demonstration.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin called the unauthorized protest a "security threat", adding that "order will be ensured according to the relevant laws". Elena Rastovka, a 68-year-old pensioner at the demonstration said: "I've been afraid all my life, but enough is enough. If we stay at home, nothing will change. Authorities arrest people who want to challenge them. Look at what they're doing—the authorities do not like the people."

Some said it was the authorities' heavy response that had turned a local issue into a major protest movement. "Who would have thought it would become important to take part in such a bizarre and boring affair as the Moscow parliament election?" asked Viktoria Popova, a 30-year-old illustrator, ahead of the rally. Nearly 11,000 people indicated interest in the rally on Facebook. Police asked media to notify the authorities if they planned to cover the protest and urged Russians to skip the rally altogether. — AFP



BOGOTA: People take part in a demo against the murder of social leaders in Bogota, Colombia on July 26, 2019. — AFP

Thousands protest in Colombia against killings of activists

BOGOTA: Thousands rallied across Colombia Friday to protest the killing of hundreds of human rights activists since the signing of a historic peace deal with FARC guerrillas. Demonstrators gathered in major cities under the slogan "defending the peace" to denounce the deaths. 462 campaigners have been killed since 2016, according to the country's ombudsman. "They are killing us but seeds of life and dignity are being born," Luis Acosta said as he walked toward Bolivar square in the capital Bogota, which was packed with protesters.

Colombian president Ivan Duque joined a rally in the port city of Cartagena but was jeered by parts of the crowd, videos posted on social networks showed. "Today we are united in a fight against violence and drug trafficking, which has fueled the organized armed groups that have attacked social leaders in the country," Duque said earlier. The rallies were called after the killing of activist Maria del Pilar Hurtado last month, in northern Colombia. A video of her son crying next to her body was widely shared in the country.

Some protesters carried banners of FARC, the former guerrilla group, who signed a 2016 peace deal with authorities that ended half a century of armed conflict and established them as a left-wing political party. The group has criticized the lack of security guarantees for its members after the signing of the pact and said 140 ex-guerrillas and 31 relatives have since been killed. Armed drug-trafficking groups, National Liberation Army rebels, and the armed forces are mostly responsible for the deaths, prosecutors said. — AFP



MOSCOW: Protesters walk in downtown Moscow during an unauthorized rally demanding independent and opposition candidates be allowed to run for office in local election in September. — AFP

Two die as Korean nightclub balcony collapses

GWANGJU: Two people died and 16 were injured, including athletes taking part in swimming's world championship, after a balcony collapsed under the weight of party-goers at a South Korean nightclub, police said yesterday. The balcony at the Coyote Ugly club close to the athletes' village was a mangled wreck after it gave way and plummeted around five meters (16 feet) onto people below, sending hundreds of terrified clubbers running to the exit screaming.

Eight athletes including an Olympic gold medalist -

US water polo player Kaleigh Gilchrist, who won at the Rio Games - were caught up in the tragedy. "An internal balcony collapsed at a club in Gwangju, killing two," said Song Gi-ju, a detective with the Gwangju Metropolitan Police Agency. "We have a total of 16 injured and among them 10 are foreigners. Of the 10, eight are athletes participating in the championships."

Song said the two dead were locals and not involved in the swimming championships, adding that police were investigating the possibility the balcony may have been illegally constructed. The owner of the club - which was packed with more than 300 people as the balcony crumbled - will be investigated on charges of accidental homicide, police added. The eight injured athletes include three Americans, two New Zealanders, one Dutch, one Brazilian and one Italian.

"A structure collapsed all of a sudden with people standing on it. Screams filled the area with broken parts

flying all over," said a 32-year-old who was injured in the collapse, according to South Korea's Kukmin Ilbo newspaper. "The site of the collapse was at the centre of the club where customers were most heavily located," said the party-goer, surnamed Kim.

'Awful tragedy'

A 38-year-old and a 27-year-old were rushed to hospital in grave condition but both died from their injuries, according to local media. The world championships organizing committee said most of the athletes were treated for minor injuries and have returned to their accommodation. USA Water Polo said Gilchrist suffered a deep left leg laceration and underwent surgery yesterday at a Gwangju hospital. Fellow US water polo players Paige Hauschild and Johnny Hooper were given stitches for an arm and hand injury respectively, it said. "This is an awful tragedy," said Christopher

Ramsey, CEO of USA Water Polo. "Players from our men's and women's teams were celebrating the women's world championship victory when the collapse occurred. Our hearts go out to the victims of the crash and their families." Ramsey added that all the American water polo players were "safe". The Australian water polo team were also present but escaped without injury.

The New Zealand men's captain told Radio Sport: "We were just dancing and then the next minute we dropped five or six metres and everyone started rushing out of the club after that. "We, I guess, fell on top of the heads of other people that were beneath us." Swimming's world body FINA said it would "activate all measures to ensure health care and assistance is provided whenever necessary". "FINA deeply regrets the situation and sends its best wishes to any victims of this accident," it added. The world championships end today. — AFP

Analysis

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Washington Watch

Abuse of religion to foster extremism is a universal phenomenon

By Dr James J Zogby

When Americans express concern about religious extremism and violence, they almost always are thinking about Islam. The problems posed by the politicization and weaponization of religion, however, are deeper, more widespread, and more dangerous. Several years ago, I moderated a panel discussion on "Using Religion to Justify Violence." The panelists, which included former government officials and prominent media analysts, focused their remarks exclusively on Islam.

When it was my turn to ask questions of the speakers, I attempted to broaden the conversation, asking pointed questions about: then-President George W. Bush's penchant for saying that in executing the war against Iraq he was carrying out "God's will"; or the growing threat of white "Christian militias" operating in remote areas of the US; or the Christian evangelical movement's belief that Israel's conquest of Palestinian land and oppression of Palestinians was justified by biblical prophecy. The panelists would have none of it and treated my questions as merely a distraction from their discussion of Islam and Muslims.

Just for the record, I have a PhD in Comparative Religions and spent extensive time studying both the Abrahamic faiths and the religions of India. With this background, I feel comfortable asserting that all of the world's major religions have groups and individuals who have used and are today using religion to justify violent behavior and extreme political objectives. In some countries, extremist and violent currents, far from being on the margins, are in the mainstream.

The current ruling party in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), headed by Narendra Modi, rode to power on a wave of extreme Hindu nationalism. Modi himself was for many years banned from entry into the United States for the role he played in fomenting anti-Muslim riots that took the lives of over one thousand. And in Sri Lanka, there are Buddhist militias who complain that Muslims are occupying "Buddhist lands" and have, therefore, sworn to wipe out the Muslim threat to their island country.

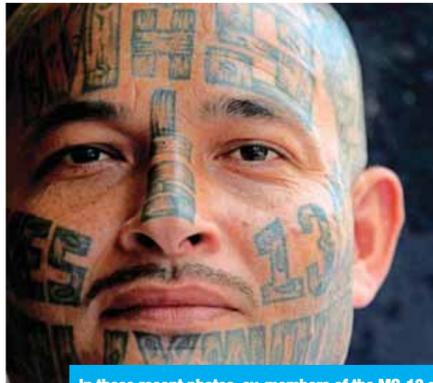
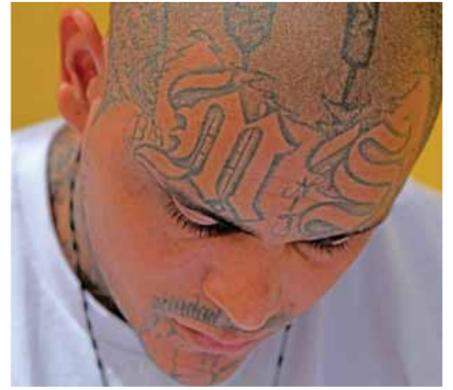
Christianity, of course, has not been immune from these extremist currents. One need not go back to the Crusades or even to the way the Christian religious language was used to mobilize support for the two World Wars and other wars since that time. Back then, as patriotic crowds sang "Onward Christian soldiers..." Americans were taught that we were killing "the Godless Huns." Just this month, Washington played host to Christians United for Israel (CUFI), which can only be described as a religious extremist group, arguing that their support of Israel is essential to carrying out God's plan - which includes, among other things, the ingathering of the Jews, their eventual conversion to Christianity leading to the Battle of Armageddon, and the return of Jesus. The fact that speakers at this event, including the Secretary of State and the Vice President share this extremist ideology, and speak openly of fulfilling "God's plan" must also be acknowledged.

And then there's the problem of extreme Jewish nationalism which includes a number of influential Israeli parties and political and religious leaders among its adherents. A number of prominent rabbis have been quoted arguing that because "the souls of gentiles aren't human" the commandment "thou shall not kill" doesn't apply to taking their lives. This problem, therefore, of the use of religion to justify an extreme political agenda is worldwide, as is the weaponization of religion - that is the use of religion to validate violence against others. This is clear enough in the case of the Sri Lanka Buddhist militias, Modi's incitement against Muslims, Al-Qaeda's or Hamas' acts of violence against innocents or even those of the Jewish settlers who have tormented Palestinians in the occupied territories (one prominent faction of which is called "Gush Emunim" - "the band of the faithful").

It is, therefore, of critical importance that we understand, expose, and combat this problem of the politicization and weaponization of religion - which is the use and abuse of religion. In the first place, we must see it as a universal problem plaguing all societies. No religion is immune. Next, we must understand that the reason why it occurs is less the fault of the particular religion, in question. There are no justifications that can be found in any of the religions, as they have evolved over time, to justify the slaughter of innocents or the violation of their rights or dispossession of their properties - not in the teachings of the Buddha, the Vedas, the Upanishad, the Mosaic Law or the prophetic vision of Isaiah, the Quran, or the teachings of Jesus.

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

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



In these recent photos, ex-members of the MS-13 gang are pictured at the Santa Ana and Chalatenango prisons in San Salvador. — AFP

Young asylum seekers in US easy prey for gangs

Young Central American asylum seekers fleeing violence and poverty in their home countries are increasingly falling prey to the notorious MS-13 gang in the United States, authorities say. The youngsters, most of them from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, are proving to be easy targets for the gang which takes advantage of their vulnerability as immigrants. "They are young victims who very likely left their countries in the hope that they would find security and prosperity in the United States," Los Angeles County district attorney Jackie Lacey said last week as she announced a sweeping indictment against 22 members of the gang.

"Instead, these victims had the misfortune of crossing paths with violent gang members who preyed on the vulnerabilities of their immigrant experience," he added. According to 2009 FBI statistics, MS-13 is one of the largest Hispanic street gangs in the US, operating mainly out of Los Angeles, where it was formed, as well as other states including Atlanta, Dallas and New York. The gang, which is behind a number of heinous killings, is estimated to have 30,000 to 50,000 members worldwide, with between 8,000 and 10,000 in the US.

Authorities say the gang, which is involved in drug smuggling, prostitution rings, weapons trafficking and alien

smuggling, focuses on extorting and threatening the Latino community in the areas where it operates, making new Central American arrivals - especially unaccompanied youngsters - ideal targets. Mark Edberg, a professor at George Washington University, said many teen migrants end up in the US in communities where the same gang they were fleeing from catches up with them. "They basically feel pressure to join because now they're here, they ran and they're still being monitored by the gang," Edberg told AFP. He added that as the political discourse in the United States toward asylum seekers has gotten more toxic, social support for new arrivals has also decreased.

Political ploy?

"With the political climate and (the hardships) facing parents and families, that increases the likelihood that these kids feel they have no other option" than joining a gang, Edberg said. "If you're 12 or 14 or 15, you understand that in that neighborhood the structure of power and prestige ... is connected to gang involvement." Laure Emiller, spokeswoman for the FBI's Los Angeles office, said while the recruitment of immigrants by gangs is nothing new, "it has been particularly notorious recently with the MS-13." Of the 22 people indicted last week in connection with a series of

grisly murders, including the machete killing of a rival gang member who was dismembered and had his heart cut out, 19 were undocumented, authorities said. And most, if not all, had ties to MS-13 in Central America, they added. But some are skeptical of the alarm bells sounded by law enforcement and dismiss them as nothing but a political ploy that feeds into President Donald Trump's animus toward immigrants.

"If you're a kid from Central America or Mexico, who are you going to hang out with? White people?" questioned Jesse de la Cruz, a legal expert on gangs and himself a former gang member. "No, that kid is going to be with people like him. Does that mean that he knows they are gang members? Absolutely not," he added. He said that many young asylum seekers are being targeted and are deemed guilty by association, even if they don't belong to a gang. Still, Edberg said one couldn't dismiss out of hand the influence gangs like MS-13 could have on new arrivals from Central America. He recalled an interview with a young boy in prison who describe the violent modus operandi of MS-13 with new recruits. "He used some religious metaphors in describing the initiation," Edberg said. "He used the term being baptized ... and he said that the requirements were that he had to show that he would be willing to take a bullet." — AFP

Somalia moves to reform army, pay troops

Deployed in one of the world's most dangerous conflicts, Somali soldiers risking their lives daily against Al-Shabaab insurgents were growing weary of being paid months late and shortchanged by their superiors. "We never received the complete amount," a captain told AFP on condition of anonymity, grumbling about "middlemen" who siphon off troops' meagre wages - some as low as \$100 a month - and plunder budgets meant for weapons, rations and uniforms.

Then in March, his pay arrived on time, in full and straight to his bank account, in what officials say is the first step in a radical shake-up of its graft-ridden armed forces. The government, under pressure from foreign backers, has started paying troops directly, bypassing army commanders previously tasked with disbursing their pay but diverting the money instead. Under the new system, payments are linked to a biometric database containing soldiers' fingerprints, personal details and bank accounts, replacing patchy records kept on Excel spreadsheets.

Officials say about 10,000 "ghost soldiers" were expunged from the records - roughly one in three troops according to government estimates, though analysts questioned these figures. These fictitious troops either did not exist at all or had long ago deserted. By taking control of salary payments, Mogadishu is seeking to cut out powerful commanders who for decades ran the Somali National Army (SNA) "as private fiefdoms," Fiona Blyth from the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia wrote in an April report. The shake-up was fiercely resisted in some quarters of the army, with several soldiers deserting their barracks in March in protest.

A game changer?

But the government is pressing ahead. In July it also began registering fighters from an allied militia into its security forces, and identifying older or injured soldiers for retirement. Mogadishu says the reforms are a milestone in decade-long efforts to rebuild the army into a force capable of taking over when the roughly 20,000 African Union AMISOM peacekeepers leave. "We are not there yet. A lot of things need to be done first... but ultimately I think it will be a game changer," a government adviser told AFP.

African soldiers were deployed in 2007 to provide muscle until Somalia's army could stand on its own. AMISOM's withdrawal is slated for 2021. Somalia's donors have long complained that there is little to show for the hundreds of millions poured into rebuilding the SNA. In 2017, after a decade of international money and support, an internal review concluded the army was a "fragile force with extremely weak command and control and military capabilities". Many units lacked weapons, basic medical supplies and even uniforms. That same year, the United States suspended aid for the SNA over fraud concerns. But recent efforts to boost accountability and professionalism in the military



In this file photo taken on Dec 18, 2016, Somali security forces patrol along the coast of Qaw in Puntland, northeastern Somalia. — AFP

have struck a chord with traditional allies. The United States announced this month it was resuming limited, non-lethal assistance to an army unit in Lower Shabelle, where SNA and AMISOM troops liberated key towns from Al-Shabaab in April and May.

"The US notes several Somali-led steps towards security sector reform over the last year, notably the biometric registration", a State Department official told AFP. Mohamed Ali Hagaa, a cabinet minister and top defense official, told AFP this "clearly demonstrates increased confidence in the security sector".

Army in name only

Analysts say the reforms, though important, gloss over a sobering reality: The SNA is nowhere near ready to secure a nation mired in civil war, clan violence and jihadists still controlling swathes of countryside. "It's really an army in name only," said Matt Bryden, director of Nairobi-based think tank Sahana. "Just because an individual has been biometrically registered and is on some payroll list, doesn't mean that they are actually a trained soldier in a formed unit."

The SNA faces a formidable foe in Al-Shabaab, which this month alone bombed the Mogadishu mayor's office, blew up a checkpoint near Somalia's international airport and stormed a hotel with gunmen, collectively killing 49 people. In January, heavily-armed jihadists overran a military camp on the outskirts of Kismayo, killing at least eight soldiers in one of their frequent ambushes of SNA locations. Efforts by Somalia's international partners to ready the SNA for war have been criticised as being uncoordinated and piecemeal.

Some are trained by the British, others by the EU or the Turkish. Until 2018, the United Arab Emirates drilled its own troops in Somalia while the US, which focuses on drone strikes and Somalia's special forces, mentors another unit. Encouraging these myriad stakeholders - all with their own strategic ambitions in the Horn of Africa nation - to work together has been difficult, say analysts. Until this happens, the SNA would be "highly uneven in their effectiveness," said Paul D Williams, associate professor at the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. "Ideally, greater coherence would come from fewer partners directly training and mentoring the SNA. But no single country has proved willing to offer the entire package," he said. — AFP

Grim fate of Tanzania dissidents

Some turn up dead or injured. Others are never heard of again: A wave of kidnappings in Tanzania that appears to target critics of the government has set the nation on edge. In May, high-profile dissident Mdude Nyagali was snatched by four gunmen after leaving work, and was dumped, seriously beaten, in a village two days later, according to the main opposition Chadema party. The incident came just hours after he had branded President John Magufuli a "hypocrite" in a Twitter post. He later blamed security forces for his kidnapping.

Nyagali was one of the lucky ones. In February 2018 Chadema member Daniel John was kidnapped in the middle of a political campaign, only to turn up dead with machete wounds to the head. Two years earlier, Ben Saanane, an assistant to Chadema leader Freeman Mbowe, disappeared and his fate is still unknown. "I cannot recall a wave of kidnappings of this magnitude before 2016," said Aidan Eyakuzze, a civil society activist who has written op-eds criticizing a clampdown on Tanzanian media and Magufuli's approach to democracy.

The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) counts 17 kidnappings since 2016 of "human rights defenders, journalists, businessmen, politicians and artists". "People say they are afraid because no one seems to be safe. In public transport and bars, people no longer talk politics. They are scared of the people seated next to them," an Arusha bus driver told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Magufuli, whose nickname "tingatinga" means "bulldozer" in Swahili, swept to power in 2015, presenting himself as a no-nonsense, corruption-busting, man-of-the-people. However rights watchdogs say a climate of fear has set in since his election. "Kidnappings have increased, mainly targeting people who openly criticise the regime, in particular political opponents," said Fatma Karume, former president of the Tanganyika Law Society. "Even amongst us, in the CCM (ruling party), people are afraid. No lawmaker dares to say anything out of fear of being targeted or struck off the list of candidates in the next election," an MP from the party told AFP on condition of anonymity.

'Lies'

Opposition parties place the blame on the government, recalling that since Magufuli's election, their meetings have been banned, top officials arrested while newspapers have been shut and their journalists arrested or threatened for criticizing authorities. Opposition lawmaker Tundu Lissu has blamed authorities for an attack in 2017 which saw him shot multiple times at his home. "The regime is behind all this. These are the tactics of a regime which does not accept any criticism," said lawmaker Halima Mdee, leader of Chadema's women's branch.

A Tanzanian journalist, speaking on condition of anonymity, said those who survive their kidnappings often remain mum on the details out of "fear of retaliation". Opposition members and rights activists say that investigations into the kidnappings go nowhere. As for the government, it says many of the disappearances are faked. "On social media there are people fabricating kidnappings and disappearances. This can divide the nation and sow panic among the population," Interior Minister Kangi Lugola said earlier this month at a public gathering.

He ordered police to "find and arrest those spreading these lies in order to turn the population against the government". In March last year, student activist Abdul Nondo was kidnapped and found injured. But when he reported the incident to police he was arrested for making it up. A court acquitted him in Nov 2018. The THRDC this month called for a "national conference" to discuss the issue of kidnappings. — AFP

Business

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National Bank of Kuwait selected for the leading FTSE4GOOD Index

The only bank in Kuwait to be listed in the prestigious sustainability index

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced that based on FTSE4Good's June 2019 index review, NBK has been selected to be a constituent of the FTSE4Good Index Series. NBK is the only Kuwaiti bank to be included in the prestigious sustainability index.

FTSE Russell's FTSE4Good Index Series, widely regarded as one of the world's leading Environment-Social-Governance (ESG) indices, is a key tool in helping investors identify companies that meet globally recognized sustainability standards.

"Over the last three years, NBK has been proactively evolving our sustainability performance, with a plan to fully meet global sustainability-related standards and to strengthen our position among the leading ESG companies in the GCC," said Nasser MUSAED Al-Sayer,

NBK Group Chairman.

"FTSE4Good valuable recognition of NBK Group is a testament to our hard work across the sustainability spectrum over the years," Al-Sayer noted.

"We are extremely proud of our notable contributions to laying solid foundations for sustainable development in line with the strategic national development plan 'New Kuwait 2035'. This is perfectly aligned with our leading position that we firmly established through our significant contributions to key environmental and social responsibility initiatives across Kuwait as we aim to provide a model for sustainable development best practices that is focused on our commitment to all national and international regulatory and industrial sustainability frameworks."

NBK has long been considered a leader throughout the Middle East in corporate

social responsibility, having donated around KD 200 million over the last 20 years, including some major financial contributions to dozens of worthy charities and exciting community activities, most notably NBK Children's Hospital. Over the past three years, NBK has expanded the scope of its social contributions in line with the Global Reporting Initiative (known as GRI Standards). NBK has also maintained the good practice of issuing comprehensive Sustainability Reports in 2016, 2017, and 2018.

Through its clearly defined sustainability goals, NBK managed to reduce its consumption of power by 5.9 percent, water by 22 percent, greenhouse gas emissions by 6.8 percent. The Bank also recycled 92.3 tons of paper, and NBK Tower, its LEED Gold Certified new eco friendly headquarters, is almost completed. On the social sustainability front, NBK's commitment towards its customers was reflected in a new record high customer satisfaction rating of 96 percent in 2018 (3 points higher than 2017). NBK has always been keen on employees' development, with last year's development and training programs topping over 80,302 hours. Moreover, female representation in NBK work force exceeds over 45 percent.

NBK plays a major role in promoting sustainable development in Kuwait, as it is the key financing partner to the Kuwaiti

Al-Sayer: We have been proactively evolving our sustainability performance over the last three years

- We reap the fruits of our labor through joining FTSE4Good index

- We are extremely proud of strengthening our sustainable development in line with the strategic vision of "New Kuwait - 2035"



Nasser MUSAED Al-Sayer

- Giving Back to the Community
- Leading in Governance

Thanks & appreciation

On behalf of NBK Group Board of Directors, Chairman Nasser Al-Sayer, expressed his gratitude and appreciation to all NBK employees across various departments from entry levels to senior executive positions for their loyalty, dedication and efforts that led to such significant achievement.

Al-Sayer affirmed NBK's keenness to involve all employees in implementing NBK strategic plan aimed at promoting that "Sustainability is Everyone's Responsibility".

government in implementing the developmental and environmental projects, mainly the Clean Fuel Project, solar energy projects, Kabad Water Treatment Plant and the wastewater treatment project, in addition to providing financing facilities to major housing, water treatment and hospital building projects.

NBK is keen on achieving six key sustainability focus areas, as follows:

- Serving Customers
- Caring for Our Environment
- Contributing to Sustainable Economic Development
- Respecting & Developing People

NBK's key contributions in strengthening sustainably in 2018

- KD 782 thousand contribution towards social initiatives
- 6 Special Needs Branches
- 10700 participants in NBK sponsored sports activities
- 17 percent increased recycling
- KD 1.14 million spent on employee training and development programs
- 12 minutes average complaints turnaround time

Johnson: Brexit a 'massive economic opportunity'

MANCHESTER, UK: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday said Brexit was a "massive economic opportunity" but had been treated under his predecessor Theresa May as "an impending adverse weather event".

In a speech in Manchester where he pledged new investment in Leave-voting areas, Johnson promised to step up negotiations on post-Brexit trade deals and set up free ports to boost the economy.

"When people voted to leave the European Union, they were not just voting against Brussels, they were voting against London too," he said. Johnson promised to give more powers to local communities, as well as boost broadband and transport infrastructure in a speech focused on domestic issues. "Taking back control doesn't just apply to Westminster regaining sovereignty from the EU, it means our cities and counties and towns becoming more self-governing," he said.

"Leaving the EU is a massive economic opportunity to do things we've not been allowed to do for decades," he said. Asked about the prospect of Brexit negotiations, Johnson said he was willing to engage with EU partners but only if the backstop clause was removed from the current divorce agreement struck by May. The backstop seeks to ensure a free-flowing post-Brexit border between British Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, an EU member state, in all eventualities.

"The approach of the UK government is not going to

be disengaged or aloof or waiting for them to come to us, we are going to try to solve this problem," he said. "We can't do it as long as that anti-democratic backstop, that backstop that seeks to divide our country, divide the UK, remains in place. We need to get it out and then we can make progress."

'Absolutely' rules out election

The new leader earlier tried to dampen speculation he could call an early election. The former mayor of London, who only took charge on Wednesday, has promised to take Britain out of the EU by the latest deadline of October 31 — deal or no deal.

But he has focused on domestic priorities in his first few days in office, including a pledge on Friday to reverse drastic cuts to the police force made under May. Commentators have speculated that he could be preparing to call a general election, hoping to regain the Conservative majority that May lost at the polls in 2017. Johnson on Friday "absolutely" ruled out initiating such a poll before Britain leaves the bloc.

"The British people voted in 2015, in 2016, in 2017," he said during a visit to the central English city of Birmingham. "What they want us to do is deliver on their mandate, come out of the EU on October 31.

"They don't want another electoral event, they don't want a referendum, they don't want a general election."

However, Britons could be headed to the polls if MPs bring down Johnson's new government in a no confidence vote in order to try and prevent a no-deal Brexit from happening. Britain voted 52 percent in favor of leaving the European Union in a shock 2016 referendum that partially reflected deep resentment over economic inequality. Johnson said Saturday's speech intended to "set out his vision to rebalance power, growth and productivity across the UK". —AFP



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson gestures as he gives a speech on domestic priorities at the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester, northwest England yesterday. — AFP

Trump uncorks French wine threat in digital tax retaliation

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump vowed "substantial" retaliation against France on Friday for a tax targeting US tech giants, threatening to slap tariffs on French wine and blasting President Emmanuel Macron's "foolishness." "France just put a digital tax on our great American technology companies," Trump tweeted about the law, which targets US giants like Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon.

"We will announce a substantial reciprocal action on Macron's foolishness shortly," he said. Later, he confirmed earlier hints that wine may be the target. "Might be on wine or something else," he told reporters. Trump and Macron spoke on the phone Friday, discussing the digital services tax among other issues, the White House said. It did not say whether potential tariffs on French wine were part of the conversation.

Trump, a proud teetotaler, said he'd "always liked American wines better than French wines even though I don't drink." Explaining how he comes to that preference, he noted: "I just like the way they look."

French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire indicated that Paris was not backing down on its tech taxes.

"Universal taxation of digital activities is a challenge for us all. We want to reach an agreement within the G7 and the OECD. In the meantime, France will implement its national decisions," Le Maire said.

Sour grapes

Trump has generally got along well with Macron, avoiding some of the more stormy episodes marring traditionally stable relations with other close US allies in Europe and Asia. But his drive to correct what he sees as unfair trade practices by allies and rivals alike has stirred unprecedented discord.

And this is not the first time that he has mused about taking aim at France's renowned wine industry.

In June, he told CNBC television that domestic wine makers had complained to him about the difficulties of entering the European market. "You know what? It's not fair. We'll do something about it," he said. The current row, however, is linked to a law passed by the French parliament this month on taxing digital companies for income even if their headquarters are elsewhere. This would aim directly at US-based global giants like Amazon.



PARIS: French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire addresses journalists at his ministry in Paris yesterday a day after US President vowed "substantial" retaliation against France for a tax targeting US tech giants, threatening to slap tariffs on French wine and blasting French President's "foolishness." — AFP

White House has announced plans for a similar tax. Deputy White House spokesman Judd Deere noted that France's digital services tax was already the subject of an investigation at the US Trade Representative's office, potentially opening the door to economic sanctions.

Washington is "extremely disappointed by France's decision to adopt a digital services tax at the expense of US companies and workers," Deere said.

"The Trump administration has consistently stated that it will not sit idly by and tolerate discrimination against US-based firms," he said in a statement. "The administration is looking closely at all other policy tools."

Transatlantic drinks tab

Wine from the likes of California does face higher barriers than European imports in the other direction. Depending on the type and alcohol content, imported wine faces US duties of 5.3 cents to 12.7 cents (5 to 12 euro centimes) a bottle, according to the US International Trade Commission. Sparkling wines are taxed a higher rate of about 14.9 cents a bottle. US wines shipped to the European Union face duties of 11 to 29 cents a bottle, according to the Wine Institute, a trade body promoting US exports. According to France's Federation for Wine and Spirit Exporters, a bottle of American white wine with an alcohol volume of 13 percent will be subjected to an 11-cent tax, while an equivalent bottle of European wine would pay about half that to enter the US. — AFP

Business

US economic growth slows in Q2, 2018 falls below Trump target

Drop deals a sharp blow to Trump's economic message

WASHINGTON: The American economy cooled in the second quarter of 2019 to a still-solid pace, government data showed Friday, while officials also slashed an economic figure prized by President Donald Trump.

Newly revised data covering the past five years now show the world's largest economy actually slowed in the year after Trump and congressional Republicans pushed through a sweeping, \$1.5 trillion tax cut.

The change dealt a sharp blow to Trump's economic message and also highlighted how momentum had deteriorated in the final months of 2018 when the Federal Reserve last raised interest rates in defiance of intense pressure from Trump.

The central bank next week is widely expected to cut its benchmark lending rate, reversing December's increase. The Commerce Department reported that gross domestic product in the April-June quarter slowed to 2.1 percent from the first three months of the year, down sharply from 3.1 percent growth in the first quarter, but that was better than expected, helped by strong consumer spending.

Taken together the new data portrayed an economy that enjoys robust strength in some quarters but has begun to sputter worryingly in others, even while the US is outshining sluggish economies in Europe, Japan and elsewhere.

Analysts had expected second quarter growth of just 1.8 percent, but the economy got a boost from strong spending on autos, food and clothing. "Not bad," Trump tweeted Friday, "considering that we have the very heavy weight of the Federal Reserve anchor wrapped around our neck."

"USA is set to zoom!"

Federal spending also took its biggest leap in a decade—with non-defense expenditure rising at the fastest pace in 21 years—a one-time jolt as the govern-

ment resumed paying employees following the five-week partial government shutdown at the start of the year. But that was not enough to make up for tumbling investment in factories and commercial buildings, which sank more than 10 percent for the quarter, and falling income from software royalties and other intellectual property.

A banner number no more

Amid a global economic slowdown, weakening foreign demand for US exports meant American factories sold fewer autos, parts and factory equipment. The ailing American manufacturing sector also produced fewer non-durable goods while retail and wholesale trade softened.

Declining travel exports, dominated by tourists and foreign students, also weighed growth down for the quarter. In the revisions that stretch back to the final quarter of 2013, the Commerce Department said revised and newly available data showed October-December 2018 was much weaker than previously reported, notably spending on healthcare and autos.

The fourth quarter of 2018 expanded just 1.1 percent, down from the 2.2 percent reported in March.

As a result, growth between the fourth quarter of 2018 and the fourth quarter of 2017 — the measure of annual growth favored by the White House and many economists — was chopped down to 2.5 percent from 3.0 percent. Economists say comparing the fourth quarter to fourth quarter of the prior year gives a more accurate picture of the economy.

The downward revision stripped Trump of the banner 3.0 percent number he had repeatedly hailed in public appearances and social media as the greatest economic performance in 14 years.

A prior Commerce Department estimate of 2.9 percent average growth for all of 2018 compared to all of



LOS ANGELES: Shipping containers are pictured stacked on a ship docked at Yusen Terminals (YTI) on Terminal Island at the Port of Los Angeles in Los Angeles, California. —Reuters

2017 was unrevised. But Trump in March specifically rejected this measure.

"The press tried to make it 2.9. I said, 'it's not 2.9,'" Trump said during speech to supporters in Ohio.

"I said, 'We're going to break three.' And we did." In policy documents, the White House claims the president's economic agenda of tax cuts, slashed regulation and trade reform will push the US economy to three percent annual growth over a decade.

Instead, the economy actually slowed following the tax cuts from 2.8 percent in 2017.

White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow on Friday echoed Trump's view that any sluggishness could be blamed on the Fed and that the economy was otherwise robust. "I think, you know, to keep this thing going in the face of severe monetary tightening in 2017 and '18, seven rate hikes, I think it's almost a miracle that the economy is growing as rapidly as it is," he told CNBC. Wall Street was little moved by the numbers, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq rising instead to record closes on strong earnings from Google, Starbucks and others. —AFP

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 28. 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 five winners of the KD 1000 prize: Abdulrahman Esmail Mohammad Ramadhan, Sanad Faleh Sanad Al-Faer, Fahad Faleh Khusaiwi Al-Otaibi, Sakeenah Hasan Naser Al-Sayegh and Nahy Armsh Smer Al-Dhafeeri.

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!

NBK signs partnership agreement with Careem

KUWAIT: Ensuring it offers the best and latest banking services and payment facilities to its customers, National Bank of Kuwait signed a partnership agreement with Careem, a leading car booking app, and that to provide customers with an online payments acquiring to facilitate seamless payments acceptance at the click of a button when using Careem's car booking services.

Careem is the region's leading technology platform and has been operating in Kuwait since 2017. Leaders in the ride hailing industry, Careem have expanded to offer on demand delivery services and operates Careem Bus in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Careem operates in 14 countries across more than 100 cities in the greater Middle East and was recently acquired by Uber for a record \$3.1billion.

Speaking of the latest agreement, NBK General Manager Consumer Banking Group, Mohammad Al-Othman, said: "We are pleased to announce our latest partnership with Careem as part of our commitment to providing the best online payment solutions and at the highest standards of safety that enable customers to complete their transactions electronically and increase non-cash payments."

He added that NBK has become the bank of choice of leading companies in supporting and developing their services in markets in which NBK operates, and specifically the Kuwaiti market. The Bank's ongoing partnership with leading

organizations reaffirms the level of excellence and competitiveness of its products and services locally and through its globally present operations.

Al-Othman said: "At NBK, we promise our customers new benefits and features through partnerships with leading and trusted companies in an aim to continue enhancing the banking experience they receive, and giving them access to easy and fast solutions to make their payments."

Al-Othman affirmed that the partnership falls in line with NBK's efforts to developing integrated and advanced banking solutions that facilitate customers and businesses' daily transactions. The partnership between NBK and Careem gives customers an easy, safe and convenient way to pay every time. "Through our new partnership with NBK, Careem customer payments will now be collected via NBK. We are delighted to join forces in Kuwait with such an established institution as NBK and look forward to rolling out further, exciting developments together in the future," said Khaled Nuseibeh, General Manager of Careem, GCC countries.

NBK is constantly expanding its products and services to provide customers with easy and secure payment solutions that meet their needs and banking requirements. The bank ensures that these solutions and every other service are secure every time customers use them. NBK Mobile Banking App is regularly updated, and recently introduced new updates and services for a fully-secure banking experience when customers manage their accounts and complete one of many banking transactions available through the app. The regular updates and enhancements on NBK Mobile Banking App ensure that the latest payment services are available to customers and that they meet their needs.



These include the Swift Tracker Service through which customers can track their money transfers conveniently anytime, anywhere by simply logging in to the NBK Mobile Banking App and clicking on the account statement history to view the status of their transfer.

NBK also launched the Standing Orders service that will allow customers to establish a monthly standing order through the Mobile Banking App to make automatic recurring transfers, in addition to making amendments or

deleting these standing orders. The NBK Mobile Banking App also features the e-Payments Service to make electronic payments for purchases at a large number of local and international companies such as telecoms, retail facilities, entertainment and more. As for the Quick Pay feature, NBK provides its customers with an easy way to receive or transfer amounts from and to friends, or make payments for bills immediately even on weekends or public holidays.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.750
Euro	342.540
Sterling Pound	381.390
Canadian dollar	233.970
Turkish lira	54.410
Swiss Franc	311.130
US Dollar Buying	297.400
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.805
Indian Rupees	4.420
Pakistani Rupees	1.919
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.725
Nepali Rupees	2.756
Singapore Dollar	224.580
Hongkong Dollar	38.996
Bangladesh Taka	3.588
Philippine Peso	5.969
Thai Baht	9.873
Malaysian ringgit	77.941
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.321
Qatari Riyal	83.757
Omani Riyal	792.073
Bahraini Dinar	809.750
UAE Dirham	83.027
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.500
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.352

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.224
Tunisian Dinar	110.020
Jordanian Dinar	430.590
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.420
Rate for Transfer	
US Dollar	304.240
Canadian Dollar	232.290
Sterling Pound	380.530
Euro	342.105
Swiss Frank	301.030
Bahrain Dinar	809.085
UAE Dirhams	83.235
Qatari Riyals	84.475
Saudi Riyals	82.025
Jordanian Dinar	430.395
Egyptian Pound	18.335
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.728
Indian Rupees	4.412
Pakistani Rupees	1.894
Bangladesh Taka	3.603
Philippines Peso	5.948
Cyprus pound	18.100
Japanese Yen	3.810
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.763
Malaysian Ringgit	74.750
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.665
Thai Bhat	10.825

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.371586	0.385486
Czech Korune	0.005291	0.014591
Danish Krone	0.041413	0.046413
Euro	0.332928	0.346628
Georgian Lari	0.132196	0.132196
Hungarian	0.001149	0.001339
Norwegian Krone	0.031062	0.036262
Romanian Leu	0.065326	0.082176
Russian ruble	0.004826	0.004826
Slovakia	0.009116	0.009116
Slovenia	0.028201	0.033201
Swedish Krona	0.300966	0.311966
Swiss Franc		
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.203011	0.215011
New Zealand Dollar	0.196801	0.206301
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.226481	0.235481
US Dollars	0.300650	0.305950
US Dollars Mint	0.301150	0.305950
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002989	0.003790
Chinese Yuan	0.042758	0.046258

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037081	0.039831
Indian Rupee	0.003847	0.004619
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002725	0.002905
Korean Won	0.000247	0.000262
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070431	0.076431
Nepalese Rupee	0.002681	0.003021
Pakistani Rupee	0.001312	0.002052
Philippine Peso	0.006018	0.006318
Singapore Dollar	0.217503	0.227503
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001354	0.001934
Taiwan	0.009935	0.010115
Thai Baht	0.009535	0.010085
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.802202	0.810264
Egyptian Pound	0.018659	0.022019
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000210	0.000270
Jordanian Dinar	0.424927	0.433927
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000157	0.000257
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021412	0.024512
Omani Riyal	0.786427	0.794331
Qatar Riyal	0.083051	0.083885
Saudi Riyal	0.080180	0.081480
Syrian Pound	0.001292	0.001512
Tunisian Dinar	0.102060	0.110060
Turkish Lira	0.046624	0.056469
UAE Dirhams	0.082339	0.083167
Yemeni Riyal	0.000991	0.001071

Business

Zain Kuwait launches 'Play eeZee' promotion for prepaid customers

Fun online game entitles customers to win one of four free instant prizes

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced the launch of its latest promotion for prepaid (eeZee) customers entitled 'Play eeZee'. The new promotion offers prepaid customers the chance to enjoy playing a fun online game for free to win one of four exciting instant prizes.

Zain specially designed the new offer for its prepaid (eeZee) customers with the aim of offering them the chance to enjoy a number of free prizes during the summer. The company is keen on meeting the needs and aspirations of its customers, considered the largest family of subscribers in Kuwait.

Once a customer recharges their eeZee line with KD 5 or more, they will instantly receive an SMS message containing a link that will give them access to a fun online game on their smart device (Internet connection not required). Once the link is clicked, the

customer will be shown four cards with four different exciting instant prizes. The customer can simply choose their favorite prize and begin the game. The prizes will then be hidden from view and the cards will be randomly shuffled, where the customer must visually track their chosen card carefully. Should the customer selects the correct card, they will win their favorite prize instantly for free. In case the customer fails to select the correct card, they will instead win another exciting instant prize for free.

The instant prizes featured in the game include extra GBs, local minutes, international minutes, balance validity, and bonus credit. All customers have to do is simply recharge their balance with KD 5 or more to win one of the exciting instant prizes for free the first time. The value of the instant prize will increase when the amount recharged increases. Customers who

wish to win another instant prize may play again for a second and third times for KD 1 only per turn. The game is available in six different languages: Arabic, English, Farsi, Urdu, Hindi, and Tagalog.

The new promotion was specifically designed to complement the needs and aspirations of Zain's prepaid customers. By launching this new innovative promotion, the company aims at creating a new concept for the services it offers, as well as offering convenience with flexible plans that meet the different personal and professional needs of its prepaid customers.

Zain is committed to offer the most flexible and innovative offerings in the market for both prepaid and postpaid customers, reinforcing its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best services and offers to the largest family of subscribers in Kuwait.



US approves merger of T-Mobile and Sprint

WASHINGTON: US antitrust authorities on Friday approved the \$26 billion merger of T-Mobile and Sprint in a deal that brings together the third- and fourth-largest wireless operators as the industry moves toward deployment of superfast 5G networks.

The tie-up aims to create a strong number three US operator to compete against sector leaders Verizon and AT&T and expedite 5G deployment, but consumer groups have complained it would mean reduced competition and higher prices. The deal calls for Sprint to sell some of its prepaid wireless operations to satellite TV operator Dish Network, which would create its own telecom service.

"With this merger and accompanying divestiture, we are expanding output significantly by ensuring that large amounts of currently unused or under-used spectrum are made available to American consumers in the form of high quality 5G networks," said Makan Delrahim, head of the Justice Department's antitrust division.

Delrahim added that the agreement would provide Dish with the resources needed to "provide a full range of mobile wireless services nationwide." T-Mobile, whose parent is German-based Deutsche Telekom, and Sprint, controlled by Japan's SoftBank, say the merger will be good for consumers.

It will create a "bigger and bolder competitor than ever before-one that will deliver the most transformative 5G network in the country, lower prices, better quality, unmatched value and thousands of jobs," said T-Mobile chief executive John Legere, who will retain the CEO job upon completion of the merger.

"Today's results are a win-win for everyone involved. We cannot wait to get to work bringing this pro-consumer, pro-competition New T-Mobile 5G network to US customers from coast to coast."

Sprint executive chairman Marcelo Claure said the tie-up "will allow the US to fiercely compete for 5G leadership" and that the combined firm would build "one of the world's most advanced 5G networks, which will massively revolutionize the way consumers and businesses use their connected devices to enhance their daily lives."

Legere told analysts on a conference call he expected regulatory approval to be completed soon, with the merger completed by the end of the year.



WASHINGTON, DC: The T-Mobile logo is seen outside a shop in Washington, DC. US antitrust authorities approved the \$26 billion merger of T-Mobile and Sprint in a deal that brings together the third- and fourth-largest wireless operators as the industry moves toward deployment of superfast 5G networks. —AFP

Higher prices?

Earlier this year, 14 states sued to block the deal. The Justice Department said five agreed to the settlement, which still requires approval in court.

New York state attorney general Letitia James said a group of state regulators would maintain their effort to block the merger. "The coalition today reaffirmed its commitment to opposing this merger, which would reduce competition and increase prices for consumers," James said in a statement.

Legere said the companies were "willing to engage" with opponents and that "our intention is not to close while the litigation is ongoing."

Joshua Stager, of the New America Foundation's Open Technology Institute, said the deal fell short of retaining four "viable competitors" for the sector, adding that the effort to sell assets to Dish was "needlessly convoluted." "DOJ does not need to bend over backwards to fix a bad merger. It can simply block the deal," he said. —AFP

Government or no government, Spain's economy fares well

MADRID: Spain may have been waiting for a new government for months but its economy does not seem to mind as it grows much faster than the eurozone average. Since an inconclusive general election in April, socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has been at the head of a caretaker executive that can only handle day-to-day business with no agreement for a new government in sight.

His conservative predecessor Mariano Rajoy also ruled in a caretaker capacity for around 10 months in 2015 and 2016 before managing to form a minority government.

Forecasts raised

After a long recession, Spain returned to growth at the end of 2013. Then from 2015 to 2017, it registered three successive years of economic growth above 3 percent before slowing to 2.6 percent in 2018. But after the economy fared better than expected at the start of the year, international financial institutions have upped their growth forecasts for Spain in 2019.

The European Commission increased its forecast to 2.3 percent from 2.1 percent compared to an expected 1.9 percent in the eurozone overall. Meanwhile the International Monetary Fund raised its forecast for Spanish economic growth

to 2.3 percent from 2.1 percent and Spain's central bank bumped it up to 2.4 percent from 2.2 percent. Economic growth "will continue to be fuelled by the buoyancy of private domestic consumption," the central bank predicted, underscoring a rise in salaries and low interest rates that have boosted people's purchasing power.

One of the key measures of socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez was to increase the minimum wage by 22 percent to 1,050 euros (\$1,200).

But the central bank said the rise in salaries "is, at first glance, less conducive to the growth of consumption" than job creation. Spain's unemployment has tumbled from a high of 27 percent in 2013 to 14 percent end of June, even if it remains the second highest rate in the eurozone after Greece.

Catching up

The Spanish economy, like that of other eurozone countries such as Ireland and Portugal, is still catching up following a devastating economic crisis and is therefore not so sensitive to political ups and downs, said Josep Comajuncosa, an economist at Barcelona's ESADE business school. "Workers and the production capacities of companies that were not used during the crisis are now integrated into the production process" as many have found a job again and firms are getting more orders, he said.

The rise in household consumption, an increase in exports and a slight uptick in public spending compensate for uncertainty over company investment, he added. But in any case, "uncertainty from global problems-trade wars, Brexit-has a lot more influence than the little added



BARCELONA: Passengers queue in front of check-in counters of Spanish airline Iberia at Barcelona's 'El Prat' airport yesterday. A weekend strike by ground crew at Barcelona airport, Spain's second largest, has already forced the cancellation of over 100 flights. —AFP

uncertainty that an absence of government can generate in Spain."

Long-term impact?

Some crucial reforms remain at a standstill due to successive political deadlocks. For instance, public investment in infrastructure is carried out on the basis of budgets that are rolled over from one year to the next as governments fail to get a new one approved. "As a result, public investment is much lower than what it should be, like in the 'Mediterranean corridor' (along the eastern coast) or the regions of Valencia and Catalonia" which are the source of many exports, said Comajuncosa.

And thus the political deadlock "reduces the potential for growth in the

future," he added. Mari Cruz Vicente of the CCOO union, one of the biggest in Spain, added that "we have been without a stable government for years, which has prevented us from facing (economic) and labor market challenges."

She says it is "urgent" to modify a labor reform adopted by the conservatives in 2012, which has been held responsible for a rise in job instability by facilitating lay-offs.

The union also wants a major reform of the pensions system, which is in heavy deficit, and to adjust pensions to inflation. International financial institutions also regularly ask for reforms to university and professional training to make it better adapted to the needs of companies. —AFP

Trump hails strong US dollar, but doesn't rule out intervention

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump sent more confusing messages to financial markets and trading partners on Friday, hailing the strong US dollar but refusing to rule out using intervention to get a more favorable exchange rate. That appeared to contradict comments from a top economic advisor just hours earlier who said the White

House had ruled out a move to weaken the dollar. "The dollar is very strong. The country is very strong. The dollar is a beautiful thing in one way but it makes it harder to compete," Trump told reporters.

But when asked why he had ruled out taking action when it was discussed at a meeting with his economic team on Tuesday, Trump said, "I can do that in two seconds. I didn't say I'm not going to do something." Trump has repeatedly accused countries like China and Germany of taking advantage of weaker currencies to boost exports to the United States but according to a report in Politico on Friday, he smacked down a push by White House trade hardliner Peter Navarro to weaken the dollar to

compensate. Larry Kudlow, head of the White House National Economic Council, had told CNBC earlier Friday that despite persistent concerns about actions by other countries to influence their currencies, "we have, as a matter of policy, ruled out currency intervention." The fact the White House was even discussing intervention was a bombshell to some economists.

"The administration was seriously considering currency intervention... That in itself is extremely concerning," Gregory Daco of Oxford Economics said on Twitter. "I see this as a key risk over the next 12 months," he said. Adam Posen, a former central banker who leads the Peterson Institute for International Economics, said

Kudlow felt obliged to go on record about White House policy amid increased recent speculation that Trump was considering launching an effort to move exchange rates.

He cautions that "if we start attacking the currency policy of Japan and China for doing quantitative easing or loose monetary policy, that's just going to backfire on us." The United States is growing faster than many of its major trading partners and as those economies slow their currencies will tend to lose value, making their exports more competitive. The euro is relatively weaker than the dollar because the European economy is slowing but trying to counteract that is "probably going to cause more economic damage," Posen said. —AFP

US stocks end at records, Europe higher as rate cuts anticipated

NEW YORK: Stock markets in Europe and the United States pushed higher on Friday, with Wall Street indices scoring fresh records, as investors remained confident about the prospect of interest rate cuts.

In Europe, investors focused on the likelihood the European Central Bank will move forward with measures to boost the economy at its next meeting in September, despite the fact that in his comments on Thursday ECB chief Mario Draghi was less dovish-or open to an easing of monetary policy-than expected. "The prospect of a rate cut in September is still on the table and traders are snapping up relatively cheap stocks," said CMC Markets analyst David Madden.

"Yesterday acted as a speed bump and today dealers are reshaping their outlook, which remains broadly positive," he added. Frankfurt stocks finished the day 0.5 percent higher and Paris 0.6 percent. London climbed 0.8 percent, with the weaker pound a plus for companies listed there that report their earnings in other currencies. Wall Street also enjoyed a strong session, with both the S&P 500 and Nasdaq shooting to new records following generally good earnings as investors anticipated an expected Federal Reserve interest rate cut next week. Confidence remains strong that the Fed will cut interest rates next week even after a recent spate of largely solid economic data, including Friday's better-than-expected US growth report for the second quarter.

Progress on trade?

The new records came as President Donald Trump both warned of retaliatory tariffs on French wine due to a French tax on American tech giants and also threatened to withdraw recognition of China's "developing nation" status at the World Trade Organization.

But those moves were not consequential enough to outweigh hopes that next week's face-to-face trade meetings between the United States and China will lead to progress, said Art Hogan, chief market strategist at National Securities. Hogan said the exchange of goods between the United States and France was comparatively small, while the threat against developing nations at the WTO appeared to be a ploy for another bargaining chip in trade talks with China.

"I don't think that this is necessarily another escalation," Hogan said. Among individual companies, Google parent Alphabet surged 10.5 percent after reporting that earnings tripled in the second quarter from a year earlier to \$9.9 billion and announcing \$25 billion in stocks buybacks.

Starbucks was another big winner, surging 8.9 percent as it lifted full-year profit and sales targets and reported a six percent jump in comparable store sales. Telecom giants T-Mobile and Sprint won 5.4 percent and 7.4 percent as US antitrust enforcers approved their \$26 billion merger.

The deal calls for Sprint to sell some of its prepaid wireless operations to satellite TV operator Dish Network, which would create its own telecom service. Dish climbed 0.9 percent. —AFP



NEW YORK: The Google logo adorns the outside of their office Google Building in New York City. Wall Street stocks rose early Friday, following a batch of mostly good earnings and a mixed report on second-quarter US economic growth. Shares of Google's parent company, Alphabet, surged nearly 10 percent. —AFP

Business

New Ford Edge: The smartest, safest and most advanced Ford SUV ever

New-look Edge redefines midsize SUV segment with vast array of driver assist technologies

DUBAI: With a new look and a host of new features as standard equipment, including more standard driver assist technologies than any other midsize SUV, the new Ford Edge is the company's most technologically advanced SUV ever produced. The new Ford Edge offers a comprehensive range of camera- and sensor-based driver assistance technologies designed to make journeys more comfortable and less stressful, and to help drivers avoid or mitigate the effects of collisions: including the Middle East debuts of Post-Collision Braking and Evasive Steering Assist.

The new Edge launches in the Middle East with a choice of engines: the 250hp 2.0-litre EcoBoost inline four cylinder for Ambiente, Trend and Titanium models, and the 335 horsepower 2.7-litre twin-turbocharged EcoBoost V6 for the all-new Edge ST performance SUV.

Smart SUV for a smart world

The new Ford Edge is the first vehicle to be equipped with Ford's full CoPilot360(tm) suite of safety features. On Ambiente and Trend models, the CoPilot360 features include: Auto High Beam Headlamps

- Blind Spot Information System with Cross-Traffic Alert

- Lane Keeping System which includes Lane Keep Assist, Lane Keeping Alert and Driver Alert

- Pre-Collision Assist with Automatic Emergency Braking, Pedestrian detection, Forward Collision Warning and Dynamic Brake Support

- Rear View Camera Titanium and ST models also get the following features: Post-Collision Braking, which helps to reduce the impact of a potential secondary collision by automatically applying moderate brake pressure when an initial collision event is detected; slowing the vehicle can potentially lessen injury to occupants and further damage to the vehicle

- Evasive Steering Assist, which helps drivers steer around stopped or slower vehicles to help avoid collisions. Designed to operate at city and motorway speeds, it uses radar and a camera to detect slower-moving and stationary vehicles ahead and provides steering support to enable drivers to manoeuvre around a vehicle if a collision is imminent

- Adaptive Cruise Control with Stop-and-Go and Lane Centring Assist helps the vehicle maintain a comfortable driving distance from vehicles ahead and helps reduce stress during long, light-traffic road trips by helping keep the vehicle centered in its lane.

Driving and parking in towns and built-up areas is made more comfortable and less demanding with features including Cross Traffic Alert, Ford Adaptive Steering, Active Park Assist with Perpendicular Parking, Side Parking Aid and Park Out Assist that helps drivers pull out of parking spaces.

Powerfully sophisticated performance

The new Edge uses Ford's latest powertrain technologies to deliver effortless performance alongside optimised fuel-efficiency. A small, high pressure turbo and larger, low pressure turbo work in series at low rpm for greater responsiveness and enhanced torque. At higher engine speeds, the larger turbo works alone to produce the boost required to deliver peak power.

Ford's new eight-speed automatic transmission has been engineered to further optimise fuel-efficiency and deliver responsive performance and smooth, swift gearshifts. Tuned to meet European driving expectations, the transmission features:

- Adaptive Shift Scheduling, which assesses individual driving styles to optimise gearshift timings. The system can identify uphill and downhill gradients and hard cornering, and adjust gearshifts accordingly for a more stable, engaging and refined driving experience

- Adaptive Shift Quality Control, which assesses vehicle and environmental information to help adjust clutch pressures for consistently smooth gearshifts. The technology can also adjust shift smoothness to suit driving style

Connected and comfortable interior

An available wireless charging pad nestled in the new Ford Edge forward media bin now enables cable-free charging of compatible devices, and Ford's SYNC 3 communications and entertainment system - compatible with Apple CarPlay and other mobile platforms - enables drivers to control connected smartphones, audio, navigation and climate using voice commands and an 8-inch color touchscreen.

Customers can further upgrade their audio experience with a new premium B&O PLAY sound system that has been specially tuned for Edge. The system uses a 10-channel Digital Sound Processor to control and equalize each of the 12 speakers, ensuring an even sound distribution throughout the cabin. A surround sound option delivers an even more enveloping audio experience.

The new Edge also offers a new fully configurable 3D digital instrument cluster that allows drivers to personalize the layout of the speedometer, rev-counter and vehicle information displays to suit their own preferences - and even adjust between one of seven colors - while maintaining a simple, elegant appearance. Further available comfort and convenience technologies include a full length panoramic glass roof, heated and cooled front seats, heated rear seats and a heated steering wheel.

With harmonious, high quality materials and cutting-edge design, the spacious new Edge interior exudes a premium feel. A redesigned center console features a new rotary gearshift dial for the eight-speed automatic transmission that frees up space



and allows easier access to the wireless charging pad, while enhancing the vehicle's modern, sophisticated feel.

An electronic parking brake button in place of a conventional parking brake lever also helps maximize space and hous-

ing adjustable cup holders and a deep storage box with enough space for books, toys and tablets. An even larger swing-bin glovebox sits under the dashboard, and further stowage is available in the instrument panel top.

KFH launches KFH-Pass service 'Postpone your installments as needed'

KUWAIT: Seeking to provide the best financing solutions and diversified banking services that meet its customer's needs, KFH has launched KFH-Pass service "Postpone your Installments as needed". The new service allows customers to postpone one of their installment payments.

The Group deputy general manager Products at KFH, Mohamed Ghandour said that KFH designed this service to facilitate the needs of customers and their lifestyle. By applying for a personal finance, customers are able to choose a month in a year to postpone a payment. Through KFH-Pass service, Ghandour explained that customer can schedule one monthly installment after completing the transaction via KFHonline or the KFH application for smartphones. This service gives customers more flexibility in changing the month they wish to postpone their installments during the financing period according to their personal needs. Ghandour added that the goal of KFH Pass service is to provide more flexibility for customers to relieve them from the burden of their other monthly expenses, such as school payments, summer travel season, etc. The service also helps customers to meet their other emergency financial obligations when needed, easily postponing the date of installments due without the need to visit the bank branches.

"Customers are able to select the expected postponement months when applying for funding. In doing so, the total funding period should not exceed the maximum repayment periods set by the regulators, 60 months for the consumer financing or 180 months for the housing financing. Customers are entitled to choose the deferred month each year with a maximum of 5 months for consumer financing and 15 months for housing financing," Ghandour added. He also noted that KFH has previously launched several online banking and financing services such as KFH Auto, KFH Express and Personal Finance Application Online. KFH Pass is aimed at enhancing the flexibility of paying financing installments, enabling customers to manage their monthly financial obligations as per KFH's strategic plan for digital transformation.

He said that the new KFH-Pass service will be available to KFH customers who have a regular salary transfer at the bank, when requesting new consumer or housing financing, starting from the launch date of the service. KFH is keen to provide its customers flexible, safe and fast banking and financing services in accordance with the highest standards of the online banking realm.



Mohamed Ghandour

KAMCO acts as issuance advisor and subscription agent for KIPCO's capital increase

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, acted as the Issuance Advisor and Subscription Agent for Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) K.S.C.P.'s ("KIPCO") recently completed capital increase offering.

The offering was well received and oversubscribed

Burgan Bank offers free Eideya Delivery service to premier banking customers

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the free Eideya Delivery service to Premier Banking Customers in collaboration with "Qiblah" company for concierge services. This service enables Premier Banking customers to receive new bank notes before the Eid holidays at their offices or homes, avoiding the hassle of waiting in the branches at that time of the year.

To request this service, Premier customers can simply contact Qiblah concierge services starting 9 am until 6 pm, by calling 22317755 or emailing Burganpremier@qiblah.com.kw to request the amount of Eid money required and state their address in order for the concierge messenger to deliver it

Deutsche Telekom first to market in Germany with limited 5G rollout

BERLIN/FRANKFURT: Deutsche Telekom stole a march on its competitors by announcing a limited rollout of 5G services in its German home market on Wednesday, targeting early adopters in cities with the high-speed mobile technology. Existing 5G trials will be opened up to public use in the German capital Berlin and in Bonn, where Deutsche Telekom is headquartered, with four more cities to follow this year. By the end of 2020, 20 German cities will get 5G coverage. "Our goal now is to get 5G to the streets, to our customers, as quickly as possible," Deutsche Telekom's Germany head, Dirk Woessner, told a glitzy presentation in Berlin. Networks running on 5G offer much faster download speeds than existing 4G services while latency - or reaction times - is reduced to milliseconds. That can power multiplayer video games or run billions of devices and sensors connected to the industrial Internet of Things (IIoT).

Deutsche Telekom bid 2.17 billion euros (\$2.45 billion) for 130 Megahertz of the 420 MHz of 5G spectrum allo-

by existing shareholders, with a total of 529.89 million shares subscribed, whereas total shares offered were 452.75 million, resulting in an oversubscription of 1.17 times. At an offer price of 210 fils per issue share, the total value of the subscribed shares reached KD 111.28 million compared to the value of the offered shares of KD 95.08 million. This transaction successfully registered an increase of 452.75 million new ordinary shares, representing an increase of approximately 29.3 percent of the existing issued and paid share capital of KIPCO from KD 154.73 to 200.00 million.

This capital increase is intended to solidify KIPCO's existing capital structure, whilst supporting its long-term strategy of expanding the Company's business in the areas of banking, media, insurance, industry and education. Khaled Fouad, Chief Investment Officer of KAMCO, said, "In line with our commit-

ment to delivering on our promise to our clients and supporting them in achieving their strategic objectives, we are proud to have led this successful transaction in our capacity as the sole issuance advisor and subscription agent. We would like to acknowledge the collaborative efforts of Capital Markets Authority, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Kuwait Clearing Company and all parties involved, all of whom were vital to the success of this transaction."

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ment to delivering on our promise to our clients and supporting them in achieving their

What's On



Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said that Ahmadi governorate has many facilities that make it a tourist and entertainment attraction, due to its location, beaches, farms and landmarks. The governor spoke during his patronage of the summer entertainment festival, organized by Ahmadi governorate at Kuwait Magic Mall with the participation of many officials and private organizations under the slogan "Our beautiful summer in Ahmadi 2."



Joyalukkas spreads joy with Golden Summer Surprise promotion

Thousands visited Joyalukkas showrooms across the GCC, Singapore, Malaysia, UK and USA to participate in the Golden Summer Surprise promotion. A draw to win up to 200 gold bars across was conducted the showrooms. The world's favorite jeweler, Joyalukkas, is geared up to celebrate this year's summer with offers like never before.

All Joyalukkas showrooms across the world

have been adorned with the latest collection of jewelry. The celebration of success is passed on to their patrons with irresistible offers. This year's edition was made more special by the launch of an extraordinary limited-edition summer collection.

"The response to Golden Summer Surprise has been overwhelming, with more patrons participating than we could have expected," said

Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group. "I thank our loyal customers for their continued support and congratulate the winners for a win they definitely deserve." Joyalukkas's Golden Summer Surprise promotion saw lucky winners go home with gold bars via raffle draws across GCC, Singapore, Malaysia, UK and USA.

EQUATE Petrochemical Company joins AEPW

The EQUATE Petrochemical Company became part of the Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW) on July 10, 2019, joining 11 other new members with a shared vision of developing and bringing to scale solutions to help eliminate plastic waste in the environment. Dr Ramesh Ramachandran, EQUATE Group President and CEO, said the membership marks a milestone in EQUATE's journey to create a more sustainable global and local environment.

"Joining the Alliance helps to amplify our efforts to bring solutions to address a global need," he said. "We have joined a strong team composed of the world's top minds from across the entire plastics value chain and we look forward to being a part of the positive impact this organization is going to have for generations to come. We strongly believe that partnerships across government, industry and communities will be the key to addressing the long-term need to end plastic waste, while still recognizing the critical importance of plastic in improving the lives of billions," Ramachandran added.

Naser Al-Dousairi, Senior Vice President of The EQUATE Group, noted that "EQUATE is already active in this space, addressing the issue of plastics

waste through both the company's products and opportunities for action in local communities. Equipolymers, an EQUATE subsidiary, was the first company to innovate a chemically-recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET), also, Viridis 25 uses 25 percent recycled plastic material and is clearly pushing the envelope in recycled plastic production through partnerships with other innovative companies such as Coca-Cola."

EQUATE is also investing efforts in individuals and organizations to promote recycling, by partnering with community groups, industry and government to raise awareness on the importance of recycling and correctly recycle PET. The alliance members have developed together a global vision and a comprehensive integrated strategy focusing on 4 key action pillars: Infrastructure development to collect and manage waste and increase recycling; Innovation to advance and scale new technologies that minimize waste; Education and engagement of governments at all levels, businesses, and communities to mobilize action; and, Clean up of concentrated areas of plastic waste already in the environment.

Launched in January 2019 with 27 founding members, the alliance now includes 39 companies around the world that make, use, sell, process, collect, and recycle plastics. This includes chemical and plastic manufacturers, consumer goods companies, retailers, converters, and waste management companies. Member companies have committed over \$1.0 billion with the goal of investing \$1.5 billion over the next five years to help end plastic waste in the environment. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development is a founding strategic partner.



Health & Science

Global warming reshapes almanac for tea growers in China's Yunnan

Drought in Yunnan delays, cuts spring harvest of pu'er variety

NANNUOSHAN, China: Que Liu and his wife Si En spend their mornings picking pu'er leaves in an ancient tea garden in a forest not far from their hillside village, one of many that dot the subtropical highlands of southwest China. Coveted by tea connoisseurs, pu'er is a variety distinguished by its earthy tones and complex taste structure, with each successive steeping releasing a unique flavor, devotees say. But pickings this year have been slim at Nannuoshan, one of six major pu'er mountains in Yunnan, where the hottest weather and lowest rainfall in decades have lowered output.

"Drought has cut production by about half this spring," said Zi Sai, the couple's son. Provincial officials blame climate change for the greater frequency of drought in recent years, warning that rising temperatures threaten losses in crop production. Extreme weather will also rewrite tea-growing seasons among the ethnic minority groups living in Yunnan, such as the Aini, to which the 49-year-old Que Liu and his family belong.

Production seasons in Yunnan, which for centuries had

been part of a tea trading network linking Tibet and imperial China, have been dictated more by the taste buds of wealthy tea-drinkers in the last two decades. But this year, the worst drought since 2010 slowed the growth of new leaves, delaying the picking season 15 days and slashing output. "In a good year, we can pick as much as 300 kg in the spring, but this year, my family's output was only 160 kg," said Zi Sai.

The tea leaves they gather sell for 3,000 yuan per kg to well-to-do customers, predominantly businessmen in Zhejiang and Guangdong, who snap up fermented pu'er compressed into "bing", or circular cakes. "To meet clients' orders, we had to borrow tea leaves from my relatives," the 25-year-old said.

Droughts common

Droughts, common through China's history, have shown a new ferocity in the last two decades, with this year's episode shattering some records, even though its geographical spread was modest and it didn't last as long as some. Yunnan's rainfall of 212.1 mm in the four months

through June was the lowest since at least 1961, national climate data shows, accompanied by the hottest conditions in almost six decades. "The entire precipitation pattern has changed due to global warming," said Xiao Chan, head of weather services at Beijing's National Climate Center.

Temperatures ranged as high as 40 degrees Celsius from March to April, he told Reuters, adding that May saw fewer days of rain and less rainfall. A previous drought in 2009 and 2010 parched a swathe of provinces from China's southwest to its northeast, coming a year after parts of the Yangtze River fell to their lowest levels in 150 years. In 2005, southern Guangdong province suffered its worst drought in half a century, while in 2001, more than 20 million people were left without drinking water by drought that decimated tens of millions of hectares of farmland.

Mean annual temperatures will keep rising over the next 10 to 30 years, the Yunnan government warned in 2016, adding that rain patterns disrupted by climate change will threaten the output of crops such as tea, tobacco and rubber. — Reuters



NANNUOSHAN, China: Qiu Liu, 48, an ethnic Aini tea farmer, clears weeds at his tea plantation at a mountain village in Nannuoshan in Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. — Reuters



Understanding link between humidity and asthma

Ever wondered why your asthma feels worse in Kuwait's hot summers? Blueair's General Manager for Middle East & Africa, TR Ganesh explains how the weather plays its part - and offers some tips for asthmatics to survive the summer. Stepping outside for even a few minutes can leave you feeling sticky, while your clothes often seem to be instantly soaked through. But beyond the need for extra hydration and increased laundry bills, Kuwait's legendary humidity brings with it several health concerns.

Those suffering from asthma and frequent allergies are often the worst hit. Hot and humid weather, particularly when the amount of water vapor in the atmosphere crosses 50 per cent, has been linked to increased asthma attacks. Researchers at the University of Kentucky Medical Center have shown how when patients breathed air that was controlled for temperature and humidity levels, asthmatics faced greater airway resistance than non-asthmatics, while hotter and damper air led to a greater frequency of coughing attacks.

In a separate study of more than 25,000 asthma-related clinic visits, analysts at Children's Hospital of Michigan found that a simple 10 percent increase in humidity was linked to one extra emergency visit at the clinic, and a 10-degree ascent in temperature brought about two extra asthma visits. Those findings help explain why asthmatics in Kuwait often have such a hard time in the muggy summers. Humidity over the coming weeks is expected to touch 80 percent in the country's coastal areas, even as the hazy conditions are set to continue.

Atmospheric moisture levels over 60 percent offer the perfect breeding ground for mould and dust mites, some of the most typical asthma triggers. Air pollution also increases with a rise in humidity, and ozone molecules, with their detrimental effect on lower lung function, are a particular concern. However, another major contributor is the temptation to stay indoors at a time the mercury touches its annuals highs. Not only can air-conditioning units harbor up to 1,000 dust mites and 250,000 allergenic dust mite fecal pellets, triggering respiratory allergies, but indoor air is up to five times more polluted than outdoor air, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Most people around the world spend 90 percent of their time indoors and must therefore remain alert to the quality of the air they are breathing. Indoor air pollution is caused by everyday activities such as cooking, use of cleaning and hair products, air fresheners, candles, open

fires and smoking. In addition, outdoor air enters homes and workplaces through ventilation. Exposure to indoor air pollution can lead to a wide range of diseases including acute and chronic respiratory conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and pneumonia, lung cancer, ischemic heart disease, stroke and cataract. Polluted indoor air can also trigger asthma and allergies.

Besides seeking medical advice, a number of precautionary measures can help improve indoor air quality and with it, allow asthmatics to breathe easier. These include:

1. Open the window - your indoor air is on average five times more polluted than the outside air.
2. Vacuum frequently and regularly wash beddings and other textiles.
3. Reduce or remove carpets, which trap unhealthy particles such as dirt, fungi and dust mites.
4. Avoid unnecessary chemicals - use natural cleaning products instead.
5. Cut down on the use of perfume and hair spray.
6. Invest in plants - according to NASA, English ivy and Peace lily best eliminate household pollutants.
7. Put a certified asthma-approved air purifier in the rooms, where you spend most of your time.

The World Health Association (WHO) considers air pollution to be the single biggest environmental risk to human health with 9 out of 10 people in the world breathing polluted air. However, with a few preventive measures, asthmatics don't need to be limited by the summer's extreme temperatures and high humidity.

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- Fellow of American College of Surgery
- Canadian Board of General Surgery
- Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- American Board of Colo-Rectal Surgery
- American Board of Surgical Critical Care

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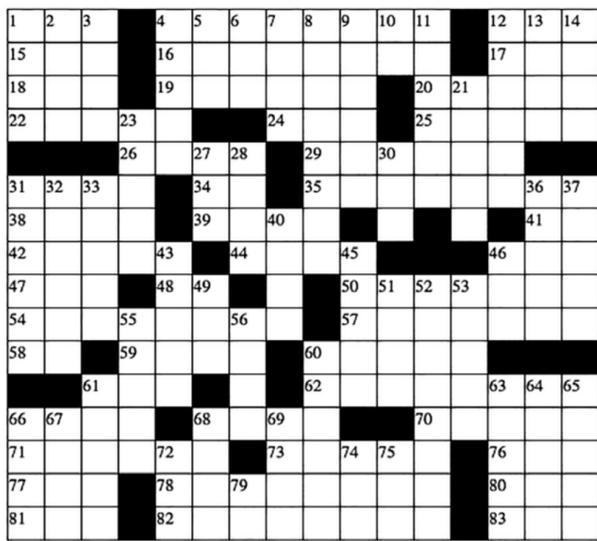
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ACROSS

1. A hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland.
4. Type genus of the Dipsacaceae.
12. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
15. 10 hao equal 1 dong.
16. Pour water on.
17. (Scotland) A small loaf or roll of soft bread.
18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
19. Free from fear or doubt.
20. Jordan's port.
22. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
24. (prefix) Bad or erroneous or lack of.
25. An award for winning a championship or commemorating some other event.
26. A South American shrub whose leaves are chewed by natives of the Andes.
29. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
31. A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
34. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
35. Military supplies.
38. A manner of performance.
39. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
41. A public promotion of some product or service.
42. A genus of Ploceidae.
44. South African term for 'boss'.
47. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
48. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali metal group.
50. An alloy of mercury with another metal (usually silver) used by dentists to fill cavities in teeth.
54. An isomer of glucose that is found in honey and sweet fruits.
57. A small valve (or valve-like structure).
58. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
59. Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
62. One of four subclasses or superorder of Monocotyledones.
66. French filmmaker (1908-1982).
70. A crown-like jewelled headdress worn by women on formal occasions.
71. Food that is discarded (as from a kitchen).
73. A city in southeastern South Korea.
76. Any of various dark heavy viscous substances obtained as a residue.
77. Black tropical American cuckoo.
78. Someone who pays (or otherwise incites) you to commit a wrongful act.
80. (Old Testament) Adam's wife in Judeo-Christian mythology.
81. Informal abbreviation of 'representative'.
82. Fungi with yellowish gelatinous sporophores having convolutions resembling those of the brain.
83. An informal term for a father.

DOWN

1. Bony flesh of herring-like fish usually caught during their migration to fresh water for spawning.
2. A sock with a separation for the big toe.
3. Showing characteristics of age, especially having gray or white hair.
4. A public dance hall for dancing to recorded popular music.
5. A strong emotion.
6. A communist nation that covers a vast territory in eastern Asia.
7. Perennial of wet and marshy places in the northern hemisphere.
8. Roman general who was governor of Britain and extended Roman rule north to the Firth of Forth (37-93).
9. Conqueror of Gaul and master of Italy (100-44 BC).
10. The local time at the 0 meridian passing through Greenwich, England.
11. A man who serves as a sailor.
12. A port city in southwestern Iran.
13. A small cake leavened with yeast.
14. A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
21. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
23. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
27. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
28. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
30. A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
32. Someone who communicates vocally in a very loud voice.
33. Large antelope with lightly spiraled horns of desert regions of North Africa.
36. A clique that seeks power usually through intrigue.
37. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
40. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
43. A wall hanging of heavy handwoven fabric with pictorial designs.
45. The taste experience when a savoury condiment is taken into the mouth.
46. Sexually transmitted urethritis (usually caused by chlamydia).
49. Wild and domestic cattle.
51. The officer below the master on a commercial ship.
52. Brush turkeys.
53. Being eight more than fifty.
55. A narrow headband or strip of ribbon worn as a headband.
56. A subdivision of a larger religious group.
60. The capital and largest city of Zimbabwe.
61. (nautical) Of an anchor.
63. Marked by features of the immediate and usually discounted past.
64. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
65. Worn or shabby from overuse or (of pages) from having corners turned down.
67. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
68. An ancient Assyrian city on the River Tigris and traditional capital of Assyria.
69. (physics and chemistry) The smallest component of an element having the chemical properties of the element.
72. Standard time in the 8th time zone west of Greenwich, reckoned at the 120th meridian west.
74. An inflammatory complication of leprosy that results in painful skin lesions on the arms and legs and face.
75. A colloid in a more solid form than a sol.
79. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today finds you somewhat emotionally detached on a personal level. You may feel as though you want to be alone and just keep to yourself. Ideas are what count for you now. You seem to put any type of personal concerns on the back burner. You have no tolerance for drama nor anyone that seems to intrude in your life or has a negative opinion of your choices. You seem to find yourself drawn to all that is new and unusual. This is a different side of you that is starting to emerge. You may find you are being drawn out of your shell and have developed new taste and a new approach to life and the way you choose to live it. You may be truly finding out who you are.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

The exchange of ideas is very important to you. You wish to surround yourself with like-minded individuals. Those that have different outlook on life are not tolerable to you now. You may find yourself working well with a colleague today, and the exchange of ideas seems to make this a productive day. You seem to be very open to expressing yourself and your feelings to others and this feels great to you. You feel more alive than you have in years.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

It seems as everyone around you is noticing your more unique qualities today. Someone close to you may be supportive of that which sets you apart from the crowd. Problems seem no match for you today. You are as sharp as a tack. New ideas and even inventions may start to develop in your mind today. This is a great day to make a note of the exciting ideas that come to you today. You may find you have a gift of knowing what others want and you may just be able to create it.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today may find you unemotional and detached. You may be in a private mood and unable to feel close to anyone. You wish everyone would keep their distance and let you be. You are focused solely on your ideas and have no time for people. You really have no tolerance for anyone who does not have the same mindset you do. This is a time in your life where you may experience spiritual growth and find an inner peace you have long wished for. Enjoy this time.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

They say you live and you learn. The cycle you are entering now involves just this. You have successfully turned stumbling blocks into stepping stones your entire life. Now is the time to reflect and apply your experiences to your current situation. You are being beyond your years. This is a time to tend to all matters in your life you have been avoiding and focus on your future. A great understanding of life and the strength you possess come to light at this time.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Repetition is key to making a practice second nature. The change you are considering may seem hard at first. And it will be. But as you consciously practice doing it over and over, it will become a habit. The habit will become second nature. Ta da! It's ingrained in your character. Which is what you are aiming for.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may be feeling a need for change. A deep desire for emotional security takes hold now and you feel your most content when surrounded by family and those closest to you. Relationships are a priority in your world now. You feel as if things in your life are monotonous and you are ready to spice things up. This may mean a shiny new car purchase, a vacation, or simply surrounding yourself with a new group of friends. Any direction you choose, this will be a time of excitement and give you a fresh start and a more focused outlook. We all need a bit of change from time to time. Keep life interesting and exciting.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Today finds you somewhat emotionally detached on a personal level. You may feel as though you want to be alone and just keep to yourself. Ideas are what count for you now. You seem to put any type of personal concerns on the back burner. You have no tolerance for drama nor anyone that seems to intrude in your life or has a negative opinion of your choices. You seem to find yourself drawn to all that is new and unusual. This is a different side of you that is starting to emerge. You may find you are being drawn out of your shell and have developed new taste and a new approach to life and the way you choose to live it. You may be truly finding out who you are.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Those sentences that start with, "I am not supposed to say anything, but..." may be just what you want to hear today. You seem to be drawn to hear the gossip others have to tell. Knowing what is going on in the lives of others seems to draw you in. You may find comfort in knowing your problems seem minimal when listening to what others are going through. Whether it is right or wrong, it is comforting to know your problems aren't as big as they seem. It seems ideas are what really count for you now. You are becoming drawn to all that is new and unusual. This may be a great time of change for you. Out with the old and in with the new.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are highly imaginative when it comes to your thoughts and ideas. There are no limits to the thoughts and ideas that are going through your mind now. You may seem to be emotionally detached now. Ideas are what count for you now. Narrow minded personal concerns seem trivial and you dismiss them all together. You have no tolerance for others who do not operate at this level. The new, unusual, and avant garde are the things that instinctively appeal to you now. You have taken a giant step outside of your normal comfort zone.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may be feeling an emotional detachment from everyone and everything around you. Ideas are what count for you now. You may find yourself wanting to be surrounded with like-minded individuals. Those who don't seem to see things from your point of view get on your nerves. You have zero tolerance for drama and for any trivial matters that seem present. It seems, the new, unusual, and avant garde are the things that appeal to you now. Aquarius. A new outlook on life and new interest seem to turn up the excitement for you. This is a good time to take a step out of your comfort zone and live a little.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Now is a time that your health seems to be a major concern for you. You feel the need to get serious about getting healthy. Join the gym, start meal planning, or just get up and get moving. These will be the things that can be new habits for you. You want to feel as good about your self as you feel about the things in your life. Today is the first day of the new healthy way of life for you. You may seem to be feeling emotionally detached from those close to you. You are entering a phase in your life where you place much emphasis on idealism. You may find that you are not very tolerant of others who do not look at life this way.

Wordsearch Puzzle

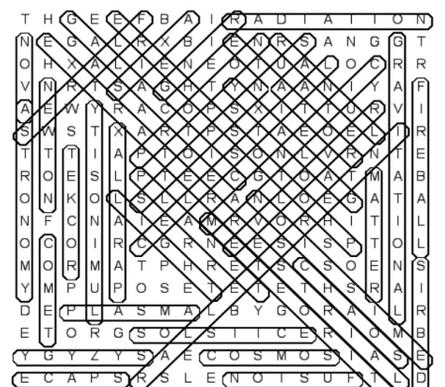
Australia

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 49 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| ADELAIDE | DIDGERIDOO | MARSUPIALS | QUEENSLAND |
| AUSSIE | DINGO | MELBOURNE | RAINFORSTS |
| BEACHES | DOWN UNDER | MONARCHY | RUSSELL CROWE |
| BOOMERANG | EMUS | NEW SOUTH WALES | SEAFOOD |
| BRISBANE | EUCALYPTUS TREES | NICOLE KIDMAN | SHRIMP |
| CANBERRA | HUGH JACKMAN | OCEANS | SURFING |
| COMMONWEALTH | KANGAROO | OUTBACK | SYDNEY |
| CONTINENT | KEITH URBAN | PARLIAMENT | TASMANIA |
| CORAL SEA | KOALA | PERTH | VEGETITE |
| CROCODILES | KOOKABURRA | PLATYPUS | VICTORIA |
| DESERTS | KYLIE MINOGUE | PRIME MINISTER | WOMBAT |

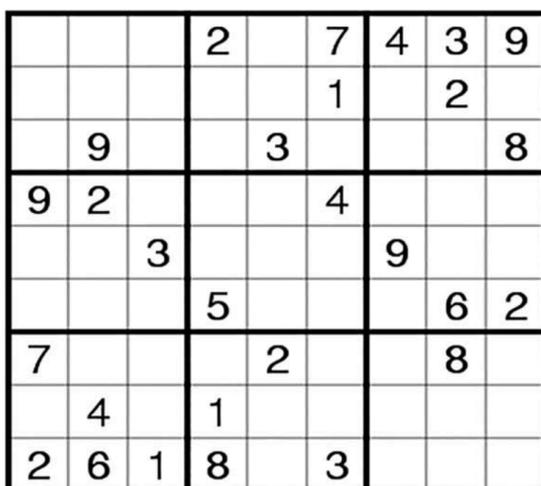
Astronomy 2



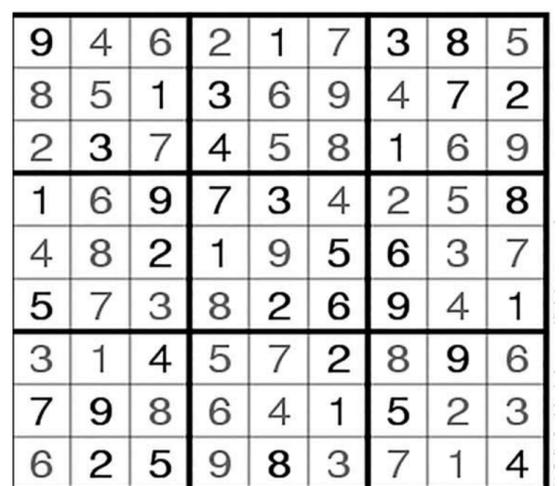
- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| ASTRONOMY | FIREBALL | MAGNETIC | RADIATION |
| AXIS | FLARES | MATTER | REVOLVE |
| CELESTIAL | FUSION | METEORITE | RING |
| CHAOS | GALACTIC | NEWTON | ROCKET |
| COMET | GALAXY | NOVA | ROTATE |
| COSMOS | GRAVITATIONAL | OZONE | SOLSTICE |
| DEBRIS | HYDROGEN | PARALLAX | SPACE |
| EMISSION | INTERSTELLAR | PHOTOSPHERE | SUNSPOTS |
| ENERGY | LIGHT | PLANET | SYZGY |
| EXPLORATION | LUMINOSITY | PLASMA | |
| EXTRATERRESTRIAL | LUNAR | PROTON | |

The hidden message is: THE BIG BANG THEORY WAS FIRST PROPOSED BY GEORGES LEMAITRE

Daily Sudoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JULY 28, 2019



Dancers with masks participate in the 'Tastuanes' (an indigenous pre-Columbian word for 'leaders'), a Catholic feast in veneration of Santo Santiago (Saint James the Apostle), in Tonalá, Jalisco State, Mexico, on July 25, 2019. — AFP photos

KARACHI VICE: PAKISTANI COP CHANNELS POLICE STORIES INTO GRITTY NOVELS

His father was assassinated by a notorious Karachi hitman, while his police partner was murdered by the Taliban. Personal tragedy haunts the hard-boiled novels that are turning top cop Omar Shahid Hamid into one of Pakistan's most popular English-language authors. For nearly two decades Hamid has worn a badge in Karachi, the mega port city on the Arabian Sea that for years was rife with vicious political and extremist violence. Now a deputy inspector general, he is also fast becoming one of Pakistan's most recognizable writers, publishing four books in quick succession since 2013.

His work has even nabbed the attention of major streaming outlets on the hunt for new original material from South Asia, including Netflix, which has already seen major success with similar material in TV series such as Sacred Games, about Mumbai's corrupt underworld. Hamid said the secret to his success is his unflinching accounts of political corruption, contract killers, and crooked cops alongside nuanced portraits of Karachi's divided neighborhoods. "Books like mine wouldn't work if I pulled punches," he tells AFP. "It's that grittiness, that uncompromising reality that I think a lot of readers enjoy." At times the reality has hit dangerously and heartbreakingly close to home. Hamid did the bulk of his writing while he was on sabbatical after being advised to leave Karachi and take a break from policing in 2011 when he was threatened by jihadist groups.

Close to reality

Weeks after the release of his first novel "The Prisoner", his mentor and police partner Chaudhry Aslam—the inspiration for one of the book's protagonists—was killed in a Taliban-claimed suicide blast. In his third novel "The Party Worker", Hamid portrays the rise of a brutal hitman who killed at the behest of a fictional political party ruling the city with an iron fist. For Karachi insiders, the character mirrors the life of feared hitman Saulat Mirza, who served as the feared enforcer for the once-powerful Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) party—and whose list of victims include Hamid's own father, Shahid.

"It's less a thing of making a sketch of Saulat Mirza," explains Hamid, calling the character a "sketch of a particular type of young man... who kind of in the last 30 years or so essentially gave their lives away to these ideologies thinking they were doing the right thing." The goal is not to excuse such actions, he insists. "Understanding the motivations of someone is a positive tool if you're someone who has worked as an investigator in counterterrorism for a very long time," says Hamid.

"What he has written is fiction but it's very close to reality," says Faheem Siddiqui, Karachi bureau chief for Geo News. "As a crime reporter, I know what had happened in the city. It took a great deal of courage to write about these events." Hamid's plots go beyond his own losses to appear at times like thinly disguised retellings of the seismic moments that have rattled Karachi in the last 30 years—from the murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002 to the killing of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's brother Murtaza.

Dangerous city

Once a quiet port nestled on the Arabian Sea coastline, Karachi was transformed by the flood of refugees from neighboring India after partition in 1947, setting the stage for disputes that needle the metropolis to this day. Years later the port became a conduit for weapons, narcotics, and a new flood of refugees from war-torn Afghanistan, transforming politics and ratcheting up violence to make Karachi one of Asia's most dangerous cities. "The last 30 years have been a rollercoaster ride," explains Hamid.

"If wasn't politico-ethnic violence it was sectarian violence in Karachi that lead to jihadist terrorism." Writing, he explains, was a release. "I had a lot of frustrations about things that had happened in my career until that point," says Hamid. "I felt a need to vent about them." The themes Hamid explores may surprise those looking for screeds to lionize the police and demonize its enemies, with stories of extrajudicial killings and corrupt officials frequently appearing.

Though he often takes aim at Karachi's dangerous and powerful, he has received little blowback, he admits. But



he says his latest novel "The Fix" released in June may ruffle more feathers, as he explores corruption in cricket. "For a nation of cricket fanatics and conspiracy theorists, it's strangely been an area that has never really been explored," he explains. For all his explorations of Karachi's darkest corners, Hamid remains hopeful for his beloved home, while admitting the sweltering, overflowing city may seem like "an absolute hellhole" to outsiders. "It may not be everyone's cup of tea," he shrugs. "But as a city, it will keep going." — AFP

Pakistani police officer and crime stories writer Omar Shahid Hamid gestures as he speaks during an interview with AFP in Karachi. —AFP photos



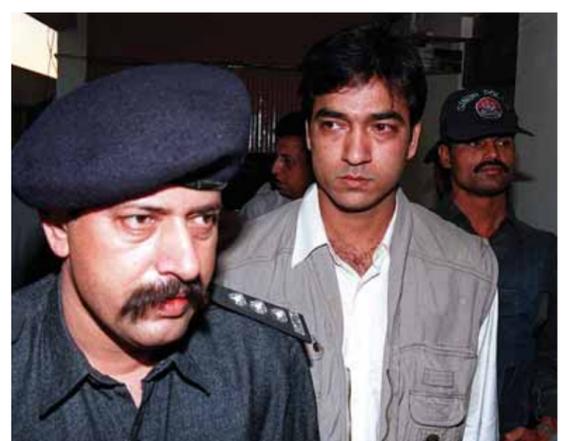
Pakistani police officer and crime stories writer Omar Shahid Hamid gestures as he speaks during an interview with AFP in Karachi.



In this file photo taken on July 5, 1997, a police officer inspects the bullet-riddled car of Shahid Hamid, managing director of the state-run Karachi Electric Supply Corporation (KESC), who was killed along with his driver and guard by unidentified gunmen in Karachi.



Faheem Siddiqui, Karachi bureau chief for Geo News, gestures as he speaks during an interview with AFP about top cop-turned-writer Omar Shahid Hamid in Karachi.



In this file photo taken on December 11, 1998, Pakistani police officer Chaudhry Aslam (left) escorts Saulat Mirza (center), a suspect in the murder of six US nationals and numerous killings, in Karachi.

Lifestyle | Features



Piano constructor and builder David Klavins walks to his new creation, the M470i vertical concert grand piano, with a height of 4,70 meters, at the new "Lativa" concert hall in Ventspils, Latvia. — AFP photos



Piano constructor and builder David Klavins plays his new creation, the M470i vertical concert grand piano.



Piano constructor and builder David Klavins stands next to his new creation, the M470i vertical concert grand piano.

World's largest concert piano strikes chord in Latvia

Soaring to new musical heights, a German-born innovator has crafted what is believed to be the world's largest grand piano. It is without question one of a kind: attached high on the wall of a concert hall in Latvia, the steel-framed vertical grand piano hangs as if in mid-air some three storeys above the audience. To play it, pianists must climb a steep flight of steel stairs to a balcony. Although the Guinness Book of World Records has not yet measured the new instrument, it was made by David Klavins whose Model 370 piano unveiled in 1987 is currently regarded as being among the world's largest. Klavins' standard new model, the 450i Vertical Concert Grand piano, is 4.5 meters high, making it one metre taller than its predecessor.

The custom-built 450i piano installed at a new concert hall in the Baltic seaside port and resort town of Ventspils is even larger: its imposing navy blue-painted steel frame is six meters high. With some strings measuring almost five meters, the instrument emits bold, sonorous music. "The

most suitable music for this instrument would be all the very expressive works, for example Rachmaninoff, Scriabin but also Beethoven's sonatas would sound totally different on this instrument," Klavins told AFP. The innovator, who has Latvian roots, has worked on pianos nearly all his life, driven by a desire to push the boundaries of the instrument first created by Italian Bartolomeo Cristofori around the year 1700.

High school dropout

"Since I was 16 years old and dropped out of school to become a piano restoration apprentice, I have been trying to explore new designs and principles, which deviate from the 140-year-old construction of the traditional grand piano," Klavins, now 65, told AFP while sitting at the 450i. He crafted his first vertical piano in 1985. Now at his workshop, the Klavins Piano Manufaktura based in the town of Vac just north of the Hungarian capital Budapest, he dreams up his signature vertical designs. It is not just

his new instrument's mammoth size that makes it stand out: having no wooden casing means that audiences seated in the concert hall can see its long, steely strings.

Laying them bare in this way lets music lovers "hear every sound nuance un-muted," Klavins said. Opening this Friday in Ventspils, the Latvian venue where the piano is installed, boasts two concert halls with a combined seating capacity of 1,000. It is also home to a music academy for emerging young talent. "Traditional pianos are meant to be transported in and out of the concert venues, but my vertical design has to be mounted on the building's structure," Klavins said.

Size matters

"The size of the piano and length of strings do not set records for a record's sake: the idea is to create the best imaginable sound for all the performers and listeners who come to this particular hall," he added. On display to the public for the first time on Friday, the instrument has

already created a buzz among piano enthusiasts. "Composers and performers from all around are interested in playing the new Klavins piano, which will open new avenues of artistic expression for them," said Miks Magone, the creative head of the new concert venue.

Pianist Lubomyr Melnyk from Canada, known for a technique using an extremely rapid succession of notes, will be among the first to play the 450i next week, Magone said. One of six German pianists will also use it in a performance of "Six Pianos" by Steve Reich, he added. Ventspils Mayor Aivars Lembergs has his fingers crossed that the record-breaking piano will help the industrial port city of 40,000 rebrand itself into a family-friendly tourist destination. "We're hoping to attract foreign music lovers as well," he said. — AFP

A\$AP Rocky, the eccentric Harlem rapper on trial in Sweden

Contrarian businessman with a penchant for fashion and boyish smile, the past decade saw rapper A\$AP Rocky rise out of poverty in Harlem to become one of contemporary hip hop's VIPs. Now the 30-year-old artist has found himself living in Swedish jail, as his alleged involvement in a street brawl has morphed from local incident to a case of global fascination. Rocky is the de-facto leader of A\$AP Mob—a New York-based hip hop collective of rappers, fashion designers, producers and music video directors—many of whom also use the A\$AP moniker, an acronym that stands for "Always Strive and Prosper."

businessmen out of my brothers," he said at the time. In January 2013 he released his debut studio album, entitled "Long.Live.A\$AP," which jumped to the top of the Billboard charts. He has since released two more studio albums, most recently in 2018.

'Pretty Flacko'

Despite his New York roots Rocky—a pescatarian who has extolled the creative benefits of LSD—has crafted a well-traveled sound, nodding to scenes from Houston to Atlanta to the Bay Area. "I would not consider myself to be a quote unquote real New York rapper," he told The New York Times in 2011. "I don't even like New York rappers." Still, he did tell the Times he took pride in their approval: "It bring a tear to my eye to see native New York people give me my props because New York is stubborn and arrogant." The adolescent A\$AP Rocky saw his father imprisoned and his brother shot dead. He began selling crack to get by, living for a time in a homeless shelter with his mother.

But from a young age he held that a key to success was developing a unique style musically but also in terms of fashion: he often describes cutting class in his teenage years to try and nab items from Manhattan luxury stores. The rapper with a chiseled jawline sports box braids and refers to himself as "Pretty Flacko," boasting of his looks, swagger and group orgies on the "gigantic" \$100,000 bed he designed. A master of the sharp flamboyance that's long been tradition in Harlem, Rocky is partial to the Belgian designer Raf Simons, whom he saluted in the A\$AP Mob song "Raf." "I don't do fashion. I am fashion," he told Esquire in 2018. The rapper was working the European festival circuit and still had a slew of summer tour dates when he was arrested on July 3 along with three other people, following the brawl in Stockholm on June 30.

Prosecutors announced Thursday that he will be tried for assault next week over the fight, a decision likely to outrage legions of fans and fellow artists, some of whom have accused the Swedish justice system of racism over the case. Even Donald Trump has weighed in on the case after urging from lifestyle mogul Kim Kardashian and rapper Kanye West, calling Sweden's prime minister over Rocky's plight. The rapper has held that he acted in self-defense, and faces a maximum penalty of two years in jail if convicted. "The thing with me is if I feel disrespected I won't hesitate to fight," Rocky told British GQ in 2012. "But it takes a lot to make me feel disrespected." — AFP



This combination of pictures shows recording artist ASAP Rocky (left) in Los Angeles, Swedish Prime minister Stefan Lofven (center) in Paris and US President Donald Trump (right) at the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP

Named Rakim Mayers in homage to half of the influential East Coast rap duo Eric B. & Rakim—his late sister was named Erika B.—the New York son began finding prominence after the viral success of videos for his singles "Peso" and "Purple Swag" on YouTube in the summer of 2011. Shortly thereafter he dropped the mixtape "Live.Love.A\$AP" to critical acclaim, pairing dazed soundscapes with a charismatic flow and taking on classic rap themes like promiscuity and drug use. He triggered a bidding war among labels, eschewing commitment to any one place, finally signing in October 2011 a record deal with a label owned by Sony worth \$3 million — \$1.3 million of which went to his company A\$AP Worldwide to support the collective.

"The plan is to not only release great music, culture, and style for myself and A\$AP worldwide, but to also be the next major artist/exec in the business and make great



Saudi director Haifaa Al-Mansour

Venice announces star lineup but just two films by women

Stars including Robert De Niro, Brad Pitt and Scarlett Johansson will attend this year's Venice Film Festival, organizers said Thursday, with 21 films vying for the Lion d'Or although only two by women made the cut. "Numerous films this year deal with the theme of the feminine condition in the world which, even when directed by men, reveal a new sensitivity, proof that the scandals of recent years have left their mark on our culture," Mostra director Alberto Barbera said as he presented the lineup in Rome. The festival was criticized last year for selecting just one film directed by a woman, and this year the number has doubled.

Saudi Arabia's Haifaa Al-Mansour will screen "The Perfect Candidate" about a female doctor trying to run in local elections in the conservative kingdom and Australian comedy "Babyteeth" by Shannon Murphy is also competing. The 76th Venice festival opens on August 28 with Japanese director Hirokazu Kore-eda's "The Truth", featuring French stars Catherine Deneuve and Juliette Binoche as well as 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. Many US stars and big Hollywood productions feature at

the festival, seen by many as a springboard for Oscar success. Brad Pitt stars in the highly-anticipated "Ada Astra", a science fiction film directed by James Gray about an astronaut travelling the solar system in search of his father. Robert de Niro will attend the premier of "Joker", directed by Todd Phillips and tracing the origins of Batman's famous enemy, with the grimacing superclown played by Joaquin Phoenix.

Steven Soderbergh's "The Laundromat" will also be shown, a thriller about the Panama Papers investigation starring Antonio Banderas, Gary Oldman and Meryl Streep. Controversially, the festival will also show Franco-Polish director Roman Polanski's "J'accuse" about France's 19th century Dreyfus scandal, starring Jean Dujardin. Polanski fled to France in 1978 after admitting the statutory rape of a 13-year-old girl in the US. The 85-year-old has been a fugitive ever since from the US justice system, despite repeated attempts to have him extradited. The festival closes on September 7 with Italian director Giuseppe Capotondi's "The Burnt Orange Heresy" starring Mick Jagger and Donald Sutherland, screened out of competition. — AFP

Fashion mourns end of the line for Sonia Rykiel

Fashion mourned Thursday the demise of the troubled French fashion label Sonia Rykiel that once symbolized the rebellious spirit of 1960s Paris. A court in the French capital ordered the winding up of the loss-making brand founded by the "Queen of Knits", once an icon of youthful revolt against the stuffy fashion establishment. The designer, who died nearly three years ago from Parkinson's disease aged 86, popularized dressing all in black and made her name with the "Poor Boy Sweater" that film star Audrey Hepburn made a key part of her look. Despite the boom in luxury French fashion, a buyer could not be found to take on the label since it went into receivership in April.

"It's like she has died a second time," declared Agnes Trouble, the veteran French

designer and founder of the Agnes b. brand. "It's the end of an era. Dior and Saint Laurent are (now) about bling—they no longer have the Parisian elegance they used to have" and



In this file photo taken on June 3, 2010 French fashion designer Sonia Rykiel poses in Paris, on the eve of the start of an exhibition of 200 of her drawings. — AFP photos

that Rykiel symbolized, she told AFP. Several of the brand's 131 workers burst into tears in court when the winding up order was made. Their lawyer Thomas Hollande told AFP that the decision would mean them losing their jobs. Rykiel's first boutique opened on the Left Bank of the French capital in May 1968 just as students took to the streets outside demanding an end to the old order.

Black is the color

She was credited with making wearing black from head to toe the epitome of Parisian cool, once saying she didn't like wasting time choosing colors. "I like to dress very simply—perhaps a black crepe jacket and black crepe trousers," she said. Red-haired Rykiel caught the revolutionary spirit

of the time with easy to wear clothes that often bore political slogans, and she signed a famous feminist declaration in 1971 that paved the way for the legalization of abortion in France.

So great was her influence on Paris fashion in the 1970s—when the scene was dominated by the friends-turned-bitter-rivals Karl Lagerfeld and Yves Saint-Laurent—that she was known as "Coco Rykiel", a nod to the pioneering female designer Coco Chanel. But last year her brand—half of whose sales were in France—lost 30 million euros (\$33.5 million). Several investors had expressed interest in taking the house on, including the former chief of the Paris brand Balmain, Emmanuel Diemoz, and a Chinese conglomerate, but all came to nothing. — AFP



In this file photo models present creations for Sonia Rykiel during the 2018/2019 fall/winter collection fashion show in Paris.

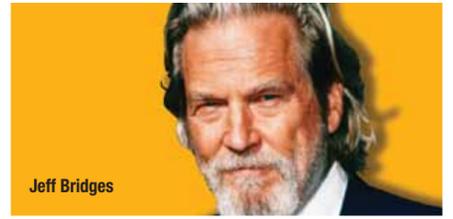
Lifestyle | Music & Movies

Jeff Bridges to star as retired CIA officer in TV series

Oscar winner Jeff Bridges is joining other Hollywood stars making the leap to television by taking on the role of a retired CIA officer in FX drama "The Old Man." Based on the bestselling novel of the same name by Thomas Perry, the film centers on Dane Chase (played by Bridges), who left the CIA decades ago and has been living off the grid since. The former agent is pulled from retirement and forced to reconcile with his past when an assassin comes after him. "Jeff Bridges is an iconic, extraordinary actor and to have him as the star of

this series is an incredible moment for FX," said Nick Grad, president of programming at the cable network. "The Old Man" marks the first major role in a television series for the veteran actor who is one of Hollywood's most bankable stars, best known for his role in cult comedy "The Big Lebowski," the drama "Crazy Heart" and most recently "Bad Times at the El Royale." He has earned a total of seven Oscar nominations since his first role as "infant at train station" in John Cromwell's 1951 drama "The Company She Keeps." He won best actor for "Crazy

Heart" (2009), demonstrating his skill as a musician to play the alcoholic Bad Blake, a man struggling with demons as he battles to recapture his glory days. "Jeff Bridges is one of the most important actors of his generation," said Jon Steinberg, one of the writers of "The Old Man." The series will be produced by The Littlefield Company, which is behind such hits as "The Handmaid's Tale" and " Fargo." — AFP



A file photo shows (From left) Iranian actor Reza Akhlaghirad, Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof (center) and Iranian actress Soudabeh Beizaei arriving for the Un Certain Regard prize ceremony at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP photos

Cannes demands release of jailed Iranian film director Rasoulof



A file photo shows Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof posing during a photocall for the film 'Lerd' (A Man of Integrity) at the 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.

The Cannes film festival called Thursday for the "immediate and unconditional release" of the Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof, who was jailed for a year Wednesday for "attacking the security of the state". The dissident director—who was previously sentenced to six years in prison in 2010 for filming without a permit—won the Certain Regard section of the world's biggest film festival two years ago with his acclaimed film about small town corruption, "A Man of Integrity". As well as the prison sentence, an Iranian court also banned him from leaving the country for two years and getting involved in "any social or political activity", according to the festival.

It expressed its "utmost dismay" at the verdict, saying in a statement that "facing the censorship imposed by the Iranian authorities", Rasoulof "keeps telling the reality of his country. "Mohammad Rasoulof is a film-maker, an artist. For this

reason, he is now deprived of his freedom," the festival added. Rasoulof also won the Certain Regard best director prize in 2011 for "Goodbye" about a lawyer who is banned from working by the government.

Rasoulof made the movie while he himself was out on bail and banned from filmmaking. His French distributor Michele Halberstadt told AFP that it was "absurd to accuse him of attacking the security" of the Islamic republic when the only weapon he had at his disposal was the "light and shadow of his palette". She said his passport had already been confiscated and that he had been banned from working and travelling freely since 2017. Iranian filmmakers are regularly the target of the country's often opaque legal system, and subject to bans, restrictions and the threat of prison sentences. — AFP



S Africa bids farewell to 'White Zulu' Johnny Clegg

South Africans bade an emotional farewell Friday to singer Johnny Clegg, who defied apartheid with his unique fusion of African and Western culture and sounds. Ten days after Clegg succumbed to a long battle with cancer, hundreds of fans gathered at a memorial service in Johannesburg where fellow musicians paid homage to the "White Zulu" by performing some of his best-loved tunes. Actor John Kani delivered a moving eulogy for Clegg, whose music blended Zulu rhythms with Western styles and who defied the apartheid regime's laws of racial segregation.

"It was very easy for Johnny to make a choice and just enjoy white privilege and be a rock star, but he had a heart that told him: 'You have to see the plight of other people as well,'" Kani said. Apart from a solo career, Clegg created and performed in two inter-racial groups, Juluka and Savuka, enduring constant harassment at a time when black and white South Africans were prohibited from mixing by law. Clegg, whose best-known track was arguably Asimbonanga (We Haven't Seen Him), written for then-imprisoned anti-apartheid fighter Nelson Mandela, saw his work repeatedly censored by the white minority regime.

Born in Lancashire, Britain, Clegg moved to Johannesburg with his mother when he was six years old. Exposure to migrant workers in adolescence introduced him to Zulu culture, dancing and music, and his involvement with black musicians saw him frequently arrested.

Country 'in mourning'

As a singer, he often performed in traditional Zulu dress, complete with animal skins and tails, and was known for his flawless rendition of the high-kicking Zulu war dance. After a career that brought international stardom, Clegg died at his home in Johannesburg on Tuesday last week, aged 66. "Our country and cultural workers across the globe have been in mourning," said Nathi Mthethwa, the minister of arts and culture. "Through his music, he inspired courage as we struggled to extricate ourselves from a long night of despair," Mthethwa said, adding Clegg's work would forever "form part of our national memory."

Clegg's son Jesse took to stage with the Soweto Gospel Choir to perform a song he wrote with his father, entitled: "I've been looking". "Despite his successes, he regarded being a dad as his highest duty," Jesse said. Long-time musical partner and mentor Siphosiso Mchunu praised his friend's talent as a lyricist, recalling how Clegg had penned a love letter on his behalf to a woman who would later become one of Mchunu's six wives. "We won her eventually!" he reminisced. The memorial closed with more than 30 South African musicians performing his hit "The Crossing", in which Clegg sang of "coming home". He was buried last week in a private ceremony. — AFP

Jay-Z, John Fogerty drop out of embattled Woodstock 50 fest

Rap mogul Jay-Z has pulled out of an August bash commemorating Woodstock's 50th anniversary, a source said Friday, the latest blow to hit organizers after months of setbacks. Speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity a source close to the matter said Jay-Z, arguably the top act, would no longer bring down the curtain on the festival that reportedly will now be held in Maryland on a smaller scale, instead of upstate New York where the 1969 blow-out took place.

Rocker John Fogerty—who played the original weekend of peace, love and music with his band Creedence Clearwater Revival—said he would be returning there to mark the anniversary but would not perform at the Maryland commemoration. This is despite his having appeared alongside promoter Michael Lang in March to announce the Woodstock 50 line-up, where he was featured. "John Fogerty knows where he will be for the anniversary weekend of Woodstock. At only one site... At the original one—the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts," the artist's team said in a statement obtained by AFP.

The August 16-18 Bethel Woods celebration—marking the original festival that saw hundreds of thousands descend on a dairy farm to see Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin and other icons in the pouring rain—will feature sets from Ringo Starr, Santana and Fogerty. Just weeks after Lang—who was behind the original weekend—unveiled the Woodstock 50 line-up, the festival's lead financier announced its cancellation, citing production difficulties.

Festival organizers insisted the show would go on, but hit hurdle after hurdle, including the withdrawal of the planned venue at Watkins Glen, New York. The artists' contracts were linked to that original venue. Other towns in upstate New York denied permit applications for the event, until Thursday when The New York Times and Bloomberg reported that the fest, also slated for August 16-18, would be held at the Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia, Maryland. Organizers have not responded to AFP requests for comment regarding the new location.



In this file photo Rapper Jay-Z poses in the press room at the 55th Annual GRAMMY Awards at Staples Center in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

which has a capacity of just 19,000, a far cry from the 100,000 people Woodstock 50 had once anticipated to descend over the three-day weekend. — AFP

Hamilton confirms involvement in Hollywood documentary

Lewis Hamilton has confirmed he is an executive producer of an upcoming Hollywood documentary about nutrition and performance expected to be released in September. The defending five-time drivers world champion, taking part in this weekend's German Grand Prix for Mercedes, said he will appear in the film along with Novak Djokovic, Chris Paul, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jackie Chan. "Performance is everything and it all begins with having the right kind of fuel in our bodies," Hamilton said on Twitter. "I'm proud to be Exec Producer on 'The Game Changers'. It's a revolutionary new documentary movie and I can't wait for you guys to see it this September."

The film, in which Titanic director James Cameron is also involved, focuses on veganism, nutrition and fitness and raises questions about the value of meat in a diet. It is directed by Louis Psihoyos, who won an Oscar for the documentary feature The Cove in 2010. Hamilton, who became a vegan two years ago, spoke of the importance of diet for performance. "Just look at Djokovic: that little bit extra that's there, that people are reluctant to look in to..." he said. Hamilton will be involved in the making of another film this weekend as the crew from a Netflix documentary, Drive to Survive, go behind the scenes with his Mercedes team. "I don't have to do much, just do my job and hopefully they'll catch the good sides of me and edit out the bad," he quipped. — AFP



Smith gets fresh all-CGI clone in 'revolutionary' new sci-fi

Will Smith does battle with a younger clone of himself in new sci-fi action thriller "Gemini Man," which filmmakers say represents Hollywood's biggest leap forward yet into futuristic computer-generated imagery. Several movies have employed "de-aging" techniques to airbrush away wrinkles on grizzled stars, but the fresh-faced younger Smith in Paramount's film is entirely built with special effects—right down to his eerily realistic pores, sinews and blood vessels. "In the past we would have had Will Smith's son play it—he would have been put in different hair and makeup, and we'd have called him a 'clone,'" director Ang Lee told reporters in Los Angeles.

"But it doesn't look good in this media," he added, referring to the film's state-of-the-art 3D shots, which include several close-up, visceral fight scenes. "Gemini Man" has been trapped in development for more than two decades, bouncing between studios, directors and stars as Hollywood has waited for technology to catch up with the movie's plot—the trailer shows a young clone assassin sent by a shadowy organization to kill his older self.

The techniques used in the upcoming film, out in October, are similar to those used in Disney's recent "live action" version of "The Lion King." But creating a realistic-looking human face has been an unachievable goal of visual effects for a long time, said effects supervisor Bill Westenhofer. "Every single one of us are experts... over millions of years, the face is how we look at someone and tell that they're lying to you or that there's an illness," he explained. "The subtleties of what tells you that are subconscious. So for us to go in and try to recreate that digitally is really hard."

Smith and stunt doubles acted out the younger character's part in motion-capture suits before the visual effects were applied on top of their movements. Filmmakers went through old photographs and footage of Smith from his twenties—the age of his character's clone "Junior" in the film—including "Bad Boys" and "Independence Day." They studied the morphology of aging, and looked at human anatomy from how facial muscles interact right down to the microscopic level of skin pores and melanin pigment. Producer Jerry Bruckheimer, who has been on board with the project for over a decade, said the "revolutionary" leap in technology and detail was the equivalent of "going from black and white into color." — AFP



Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton reacts after the qualifying session of the German Formula One Grand Prix at the Hockenheim racing circuit yesterday in Hockenheim, southern Germany. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



Photo shows 92-year-old Betty Dowsett enjoying the chance to leave palliative care to spend a few hours in the sunshine in Brisbane's City Botanic Gardens.



Photo shows 92-year-old Betty Dowsett (left) enjoying the chance to leave palliative care to spend a few hours in the sunshine in Brisbane's City Botanic Gardens.



Photo shows 92-year-old Betty Dowsett (left) enjoying an ice cream with Queensland Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Steven Miles (right) as she takes the chance to leave palliative care for a few hours to enjoy the sunshine. — AFP photos

Australian ambulance to grant patients' dying wishes

Inspired by an Australian ambulance crew who took a dying woman to the beach on her way to hospital, officials have announced a dedicated vehicle to grant final wishes to terminally ill patients. In late 2017, ambulance officers in the northern state of Queensland took a detour on the way to hospital as per the wishes of a dying patient who wanted to see the ocean one last time. The touching

gesture was captured by a photo showing a paramedic beside a stretcher facing the ocean at Hervey Bay, on Australia's northeast coast.

This week the Queensland state government announced it was dedicating a decommissioned ambulance to granting dying wishes of terminally ill patients, such as visiting their pets, their children, their grandchild-

ren or visiting an art gallery or museum. "Fulfilling the final wishes of people can be challenging as you could be transporting someone who can't walk, or sit in a chair, or who might require continuous oxygen or other medical appliances and support," Queensland Health Minister Steven Miles said in a statement. The Australian-first initiative is modeled on a similar program run in the

Netherlands. "With the Ambulance Wish Queensland program medically trained volunteers, adapted ambulances, and necessary equipment will transport people to fulfill their wish successfully and safely," Miles added. —AFP

Fishing for plastic on Amsterdam's eco-friendly canal cruises

Equipped with fishing rods and thick gloves, a group of people peers into the water from one of the many boats that line Amsterdam's famous canals. But it's not fish they're hunting on their cruise along one of the Dutch capital's most famous tourist attractions—it's plastic. With eco-tourism booming around the world, the canal cruises run by the Dutch group Plastic Whale are reeling in big business. "It's a completely other way of visiting Amsterdam," Plastic Whale founder Marius Smit told AFP.



"Obviously you're on the beautiful canals of Amsterdam in a really nice boat, but at the same time you're active as well, and you add something positive to the canals and to the city because you're making it cleaner," Smit set up the company eight years ago, aiming to create "economic value" from the plastic waste the tours dredge from the canals. Plastic bottles are separated from the rest of the trash and are then recycled to be used in office furniture—or in building more Plastic Whale boats.

In 2018 the Plastic Whale cruises, which also run in the port city of Rotterdam, drew 12,000 visitors and this year they expect more, said Smit. Britain's Prince Harry was due to be among the visitors earlier this year but had to cancel due to the birth of his son Archie.

Pineapples and shoes

On a hot summer's morning, seven people are lined up on the bright green boat decorated with smiling whales. Angela Katz, an Australian who has lived in Amsterdam for just over a year, is on her second tour, after learning about the cruises through Facebook. "I really enjoyed it but also it's really eye-opening just how much rubbish there is in the

canals," said the 51-year-old graphic designer, fishing rod in hand.

During the two-hour tour they fish out a bizarre range of objects including various shoes, ski gloves, bleached out soda cans, wine bottles, a nappy, and even a whole pineapple. "I think the Netherlands has an image of being very environmentally friendly so it is surprising," added Katz, who brought her husband on the cruise as well as two friends and their three children who were visiting Amsterdam. One of those friends, Guy O'Loughnane, from Vancouver in Canada, said he was particularly surprised by the amount of "stuff that is not even used", such as unopened bottles. Last year, the thousands of amateur fishermen on Plastic Whale's boats collected 46,000 plastic bottles, said Smit. "And for every bag of bottles that we take out of the canals, we take out two or three bags of other kinds of materials," he added.

'Tourists aren't careful'

Plastic in the sea, rivers and other waterways is a problem around the globe, causing harm to marine ecosystems. Just how much plastic is in the canals of the city dubbed the Venice of the North is hard to estimate, but solutions are easier to find. "Tourists aren't careful," says Angela Katz as she stands in front of a pile of rubbish. Marius Smit says however that despite the growing strain on Amsterdam from huge numbers of tourists, local residents are also "careless with their own waste". "It's a combination of factors," he says, explaining that the city's bins fill up more quickly because of the numbers of tourists, and then people simply place their rubbish beneath them.

"So before you know it there is a lot of waste on the streets, then it begins to rain or the wind begins to blow and it rains or blows into the canals," he says. Amsterdam is increasingly a victim of its own success, with its canals, architecture and notorious red light district attracting around 18 million visitors last year, more than the entire population of the Netherlands. The Plastic Whale tours are part of a growing trend, with Amsterdam authorities separately launching a series of initiatives to direct tourists to alternative activities and ease the pressure on the top sites. Smit however says that tourists are outnumbered by the Dutch on the cruises. "Interest in the environment is growing explosively within Dutch society in general," he said. — AFP



Young visitors make photos at the 'Selfie Museum' in Budapest downtown. — AFP photos

Budapest 'selfie museum' a hit with Instagram generation

A new so-called 'selfie museum' in Budapest that lets visitors pose by pink palm trees and frolic in multi-colored sprinkle baths has proved a hit with social-media savvy locals and tourists alike. With almost 30,000 visitors since it opened last December, the "Selfie Museum", billed as the first of its kind in Europe, is already one of the Hungarian capital's most popular attractions. Its creators say their idea, inspired by a similar venue in the US, is targeted at the younger generation looking for an edge to their status updates or profile pictures. "We play with shapes and colors, and try to push people's borders and let their creativity bloom," Lilla Gangel, who co-founded the museum with her partner Balazs Koltai, told AFP.

Visitors entering the first of 11 exhibition rooms are met with palm trees growing from the walls and pink-coloured ceilings and surroundings. "Here you can stand out from the crowd, perhaps by finding a crazy new perspective like an aerial photo, or by playing with the quirky props," said 33-year-old Gangel. "There are more and more places on the internet where you can share photos, we're living in this type of world now, whether we like it or not," she said.

The selfie opportunities among the 11 interactive installations at the 400-square-metre facility include a ride on banana swings, a climb on a unicorn, or a lounge on giant macaroons. Word about the new museum has spread fast, unsurprisingly, on platforms like Instagram and Snapchat. "They're typical teenagers, they like Instagram and photos," Oli, an Israeli tourist told AFP while her young daughters threw exaggerated poses behind her.

"These are the times we are living in, what can you do," she laughed. Typical visitors are aged between 13 and 30, according to Gangel, although recently a pair of pensioners popped in to top up their photos for an annual calendar they present to each other. Panka Major, an 18-year-old Hungarian student, said she was an avid user of social media but lamented that "nowadays everyone checks their phones every minute". "It's a natural thing but also bad, as you do not live in the moment, and instead reach for a phone to record it," she said. — AFP



In this file photo volunteers fish plastic out of a canal as they take part in the annual Kings Fishing to make the canals plastic-free again organized by the Plastic Whale Foundation in Amsterdam. — AFP photos

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Sunday, July 28, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 50 km/h causing rising dust over open areas and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 10 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 27/07/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	35 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	47 °C	35 °C			
ABDALY	46 °C	30 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	47 °C	34 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	49 °C	29 °C			
SALMIYAH	41 °C	35 °C			
AHMADI	44 °C	35 °C			
NUWASIB	49 °C	33 °C			
WAFRA	47 °C	33 °C			
SALMY	45 °C	27 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	07/28	Hot and	46 °C	31 °C	VRB-NE	08 - 28 km/h
Monday	07/29	Hot and Relatively humid specially over coastal areas	45 °C	30 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 28 km/h
Tuesday	07/30	Very hot	49 °C	33 °C	SW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Wednesday	07/31	Very hot	50 °C	35 °C	NW	08 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:35
Sunrise	05:05
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:30
Sunset	18:44
Isha	20:11

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	47 °C
MIN. Temp.	36 °C
MAX. RH	19 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	N 71 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

Career Opportunities for Teachers at Private American School for the 2019-20 Academic Year

Positions include:

Department	Positions
KG	English Teacher
High School	English Teacher

- Only for English Native Speakers
- Females Only for KG position

To apply for this position, submit your resume, covering letter and recent photograph to recruitment@abs.edu.kw

CHANGE OF NAME ALEIXO FERNANDES. (C 5566) 28-7-2019

I, ALEIXO ANTONIO FERNANDES S/o ANTONIO FERNANDES holder of Indian Passport No. H9001947 & Civil ID No. 270042505672 has changed my name from ALEIXO ANTONIO FERNANDES to ALEIXO FERNANDES hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of

I, MAZINA PEREIRA R/o H.No. 902/1, Sibrete Velim, South Goa have changed my name from MAZINA REBELLO to MAZINA PEREIRA, hereafter in all my dealing and documents, I will be known by the name MAZINA PEREIRA. (C 5565) 25-7-2019

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988



Flight Schedule

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

ARRIVAL FLIGHTS ON SUNDAY 28/7/2019				DEPARTURE FLIGHTS ON SUNDAY 28/7/2019			
AIRLINES	FLY	ROUTE	TIME	AIRLINES	FLY	ROUTE	TIME
FEW	441	ASUT	00:05	SAW	704	DAMASCUS	11:00
IGO	1757	KOCHI	00:10	JZR	731	CAIRO	11:15
KAC	540	SHARM EL-SHEIKH	00:10	KAC	221	RIYADH	11:20
THY	772	ISTANBUL	00:20	KAC	157	ISTANBUL	11:30
DLH	625	DAMMAM	00:50	GFA	214	BAHRAIN	11:35
KAC	102	LONDON	00:50	MEA	405	BEIRUT	11:55
AHY	119	BAKU	00:55	SYR	342	DAMASCUS	12:00
KAC	504	BEIRUT	01:00	QTR	1075	DOHA	12:10
JZR	128D	DUBAI	01:25	JZR	213	JEDDAH	12:25
UAE	853	DUBAI	01:40	JZR	715	SOHAG	12:35
KLM	446	BAHRAIN	01:45	JZR	123	DUBAI	13:10
PGT	858	ISTANBUL	01:50	JZR	115	DOHA	13:25
THY	1464	ISTANBUL	01:50	KAC	541	CAIRO	13:30
KKK	1268	ISTANBUL	01:55	ETH	3621	ADDIS ABABA	13:30
JZR	262	BEIRUT	02:05	MSR	611	CAIRO	13:45
ETH	620	ADDIS ABABA	02:15	KAC	515	TEHRAN	13:55
QTR	1086	DOHA	02:40	THY	767	ISTANBUL	14:00
KAC	414	BANGKOK	02:40	AXB	394	KOZHIKODE	14:10
GFA	211	BAHRAIN	02:50	UAE	872	DUBAI	14:15
PGT	860	ISTANBUL	02:50	KAC	673	DUBAI	15:00
THY	768	ISTANBUL	02:55	FDB	060	DUBAI	15:05
OMA	643	MUSCAT	03:05	UAE	878	DUBAI	15:30
ETD	305	ABU DHABI	03:05	QTR	1079	DOHA	15:30
RJA	648	AMMAN	03:05	SVA	501	JEDDAH	15:45
PGT	856	ISTANBUL	03:10	KNE	530	JEDDAH	15:55
MSR	612	CAIRO	03:15	JZR	405	KOCHI	16:00
KAC	418	MANILA	03:20	KAC	563	AMMAN	16:05
QTR	1076	DOHA	03:30	KAC	775	RIYADH	16:05
JZR	254	AMMAN	03:55	ABY	128	SHARJAH	16:15
OHY	352	ISTANBUL	04:00	ETD	304	ABU DHABI	16:20
LMU	510	CAIRO	04:00	KAC	785	JEDDAH	16:20
KAC	382	DELHI	04:05	OMA	646	MUSCAT	16:20
IGO	1751	CHENNAI	04:10	KAC	619	DOHA	16:25
KAC	784	JEDDAH	04:25	FEG	442	ASUT	16:55
PGT	7220	ISTANBUL	04:30	KAC	675	DUBAI	17:00
JZR	1738	CAIRO	04:45	FDB	052	DUBAI	17:10
JZR	734	CAIRO	04:55	QTR	1073	DOHA	17:25
THY	1414	TRABZON	05:05	KAC	283	DHAKA	17:40
FDB	069	DUBAI	05:05	KAC	503	BEIRUT	17:40
MNB	170	BAHRAIN	05:05	UAE	858	DUBAI	17:40
THY	770	ISTANBUL	05:20	FEG	242	ALEXANDRIA	17:45
KAC	344	CHENNAI	05:30	KAC	621	DOHA	17:50
JZR	404	HYDERABAD	05:35	KAC	343	CHENNAI	17:50
UAE	873	DUBAI	05:40	KAC	381	DELHI	17:55
KAC	552	CAIRO	05:50	SVK	511	RIYADH	18:10
JZR	722	ALEXANDRIA	05:55	JZR	771	DOHA	18:15
JZR	402	MUMBAI	06:05	GFA	212	BAHRAIN	18:20
BAW	157	LONDON	06:10	RJA	649	AMMAN	18:20
KAC	284	DHAKA	06:15	UAE	874	DUBAI	18:25
KAC	714	SOHAG	06:20	JZR	121	DUBAI	18:35
KAC	678	DUBAI	06:40	RBG	550	ALEXANDRIA	18:35
KAC	204	LAHORE	06:45	KAC	175	FRANKFURT	18:35
RBG	559	ALEXANDRIA	06:50	KAC	165	ROME	18:35
KAC	302	MUMBAI	07:05	BAW	156	LONDON	18:35
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	IGO	1756	DOHA	18:35
QTR	8511	DOHA	07:20	FDB	054	DUBAI	18:35
KAC	358	KOCHI	07:25	KAC	177	VIENNA	18:45
FDB	053	DUBAI	07:50	KAC	545	CAIRO	18:50
QTR	1084	DOHA	08:00	KAC	501	BEIRUT	18:50
JZR	708	LUXOR	08:00	KAC	561	AMMAN	18:55
KAC	332	TRIVANDRUM	08:05	KAC	117	NEW YORK	19:05
KAC	384	DELHI	08:10	KAC	791	MADINAH	19:10
UAE	855	DUBAI	08:25	QTR	1085	JEDDAH	19:10
ETD	301	ABU DHABI	08:50	KAC	787	DOHA	19:15
OMA	641	MUSCAT	09:00	KAC	671	DUBAI	19:15
ABY	125	SHARJAH	09:00	KAC	161	GENEVA	19:15
GFA	209	BAHRAIN	09:05	KAC	691	MUSCAT	19:20
QTR	1070	DOHA	09:20	JZR	601	BAKU	19:20
IGO	1753	AHMEDABAD	09:40	QTR	8512	DOHA	19:20
FDB	055	DUBAI	09:40	JZR	307	ISTANBUL	19:25
JZR	410	DELHI	09:50	KAC	773	RIYADH	19:40
SAW	703	DAMASCUS	10:00	KAC	741	DAMMAM	19:40
SVA	512	RIYADH	10:00	JZR	301	SHARJAH	19:40
JZR	112	DOHA	10:25	UAE	856	DUBAI	19:50
GFA	213	BAHRAIN	10:40	ETD	302	ABU DHABI	19:55
MEA	404	BEIRUT	10:55	OMA	642	MUSCAT	20:00
QTR	1074	DOHA	11:00	KAC	101	LONDON	20:05
SYR	341	DAMASCUS	11:00	GFA	210	BAHRAIN	20:10
JZR	724	ALEXANDRIA	11:35	QTR	1071	DOHA	20:30
JZR	122	DUBAI	11:45	KAC	155	ISTANBUL	20:40
JZR	706	ASUT	11:50	KAC	617	DOHA	20:40
				FDB	056	DUBAI	20:40
				IGO	1754	AHMEDABAD	20:40
				SVA	513	RIYADH	20:55

Oman's top diplomat in Iran amid mounting Gulf tensions

Iran says missile tests defensive, needs no one's permission

TEHRAN: Iran's neighbors have made talks impossible through their "hasty and arrogant moves", a top security official told Oman's foreign minister in Tehran yesterday amid a tanker crisis. Oman, a past mediator between Iran and its foes, sent its top diplomat to the Islamic republic amid amplified tensions between Iran and the United States and its allies, including in the Gulf.

"Some of the region's countries have not only removed the possibility of talks because of hasty and arrogant moves and behavior, but have also made managing regional crises a serious challenge," said Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. Shamkhani, who spoke after meeting with Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi, also hit out at a British plan for a European coalition to escort tankers in the Gulf.

"Security measures for the region must use local capabilities and cooperation between regional countries, and foreign countries' interference will achieve nothing but increase problems," he said, quoted by the website of Iran's state television. Tensions in the Gulf have soared since last year when President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from a landmark

2015 nuclear deal with Iran and reimposed sanctions on the country.

In retaliation, Iran said in May it would disregard certain limits the deal set on its nuclear programme and threatened to take further measures if remaining parties to the accord, especially European nations, did not help it circumvent US sanctions. Tensions have escalated further in the region with a string of incidents involving tankers and drones. The United States and Gulf powerhouse Saudi Arabia accused Iran of being behind multiple attacks on tankers in the Gulf in June, which Iran denies.

On July 19, a British-flagged tanker was impounded by Iran's Revolutionary Guards with its 23 crew aboard in the Strait of Hormuz. The seizure was seen by London as a tit-for-tat move for British authorities detaining an Iranian tanker off the UK overseas territory of Gibraltar in early July.

Shamkhani called on all countries to "respect international maritime law in order to maintain security". "In contrast to the British maritime piracy, who illegally detained an Iranian oil shipment in Gibraltar, Iran's move was completely legal and was made in order to implement maritime rules and maintain maritime security," he said. Bin Alawi also

held talks with Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, in Tehran yesterday. Oman has called for the release of the UK-flagged Stena Impero and for London and Tehran to resolve their dispute diplomatically.

Meanwhile, Iran said yesterday missile tests were part of its defensive needs and were not directed against any country, after Washington said Tehran had test-fired a medium-range missile. A US defense official said Iran tested what appeared to be a medium-range ballistic missile on Wednesday that travelled about 1,000 km, adding that the test did not pose a threat to shipping or US personnel in the region.

"An informed source at the armed forces staff said Iran's missile tests are natural within its defensive needs. This missile capacity is not against any country, and only aims to respond to possible aggression," Iranian news agencies reported. "Iran does not need the permission of any power in the world for its self-defense," the reports quoted the military source as saying.

Trump pulled out of the international agreement on Iran's nuclear program last year and stepped up sanctions on Tehran. He said the nuclear deal was flawed because it did not include curbs on Iran's development



TEHRAN: Oman's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yousef bin Abdullah bin Abdulrahman Al-Adhbi (left) is greeted by Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif (right) in Tehran. — AFP

of ballistic missiles or its support for proxies in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and Iraq. Iran has ruled out talks with Washington over its military capabilities, particularly the missile pro-

gram that it says is defensive. It denies the missiles are capable of being tipped with nuclear warheads and says its nuclear program is peaceful. — Agencies

WHO says e-cigarettes 'undoubtedly harmful'

RIO DE JANEIRO: Electronic cigarettes are "undoubtedly harmful" and should be regulated, the WHO said Friday as it warned against the use of vaping products by smokers trying to quit their deadly habit. The growing popularity of e-cigarettes, battery-powered devices that enable users to inhale addictive nicotine liquids, has raised fears among policymakers worldwide of a new gateway addiction for young people.

While vaping exposes users to lower levels of toxins than smoking, the World Health Organization said the devices still pose "health risks" to users. "Although the specific level of risk associated with ENDS (electronic nicotine delivery systems) has not yet been conclusively estimated, ENDS are undoubtedly harmful and should therefore be subject to regulation," the WHO said in a new report on the global smoking epidemic.

There was also "insufficient evidence" to support claims of their effectiveness in assisting smokers trying to quit conventional cigarettes, it said. "In most countries where they are available, the majority of e-cigarette users continue to use e-cigarettes and cigarettes concurrently, which has little to no beneficial impact on health risk and effects," the report said.

Big tobacco companies have been aggressively marketing e-cigarette

and heated tobacco products in recent years as they seek new customers. They argue such products are far less dangerous than traditional cigarettes and can help some smokers completely switch to "safer" alternatives. But the WHO warned misinformation spread by the tobacco industry about e-cigarettes was "a present and real threat."

As well as nicotine, e-cigarettes also contained metal-laced aerosols, which Vinayak Prasad, who leads the WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative, said "are known to damage the heart, all of them are known to damage the lungs". "They're also now looking at the long-term effect whether it can even cause cancer, but it's not very well established," Prasad told AFP. Restrictions on the use of e-cigarettes around the world is increasing. San Francisco last month banned the sale and manufacture of the products.

China, home to nearly a third of the world's tobacco smokers, is also planning to regulate the vaping devices. More effort was needed to help smokers quit, the WHO said in the report, noting only "30 percent of the world's population have access to appropriate tobacco cessation services," such as counseling, telephone hotlines and medication. Without assistance, only four percent of attempts to stop smoking succeed.

Tobacco claims more than eight million lives each year either from direct use or second-hand smoke, according to the WHO. While the number of users has declined slightly since 2007, it remains stubbornly high at 1.4 billion, the vast majority of them men. "People who quit tobacco can live longer, healthier and more productive lives," the WHO said. — AFP



This photo taken on June 28, 2019 shows a promoter of an e-cigarette company smoking an electronic cigarette. — AFP

Outrage as Trump brands Baltimore as 'infested mess'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump was hit with new accusations of racism yesterday after he attacked a prominent African-American lawmaker and branded the majority black city of Baltimore an "infested mess". Trump's outburst came in a series of sharply worded tweets aimed at Democratic Representative Elijah Cummings - a high-profile critic of Trump's administration whose district covers much of Baltimore.

"Cummings (sic) District is a disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess," the president wrote, calling it "the worst run and most dangerous anywhere in the United States. No human being would want to live there," he said in an attack ostensibly provoked by Cummings' criticism of the harsh conditions facing would-be asylum seekers at the Mexican border. "Rep. Elijah Cummings has been a brutal bully, shouting and screaming at the great men & women of Border Patrol about conditions at the Southern Border, when actually his Baltimore district is FAR WORSE and more dangerous," Trump charged.

The president's morning diatribe ignited a storm of criticism, less than two weeks after the US House of Representatives condemned him for "racist" comments targeting a Somali-born lawmaker. The top Democrat in Congress, Nancy Pelosi - whose father served as mayor of Baltimore - accused Trump of a "racist" attack. "@RepCummings is a champion in the Congress and the country for civil rights and economic justice, a beloved leader in Baltimore, and deeply valued colleague," Pelosi wrote on Twitter. "We all reject racist attacks against him and support his steadfast leadership."

The Democratic mayor of Baltimore Bernard "Jack" Young - who is black - rejected Trump's rhetoric as "hurtful and dangerous". "It's completely unacceptable for the political leader of our country to denigrate a vibrant American City like Baltimore, and to viciously attack US Representative Elijah Cummings," Young wrote in a statement.

Prominent Democratic presidential candidate, Kamala Harris, tweeted that she was "proud" to have her 2020 campaign headquarters in the Cummings district. "It's disgraceful the president has chosen to start his morning disparaging this great American city," said Harris, one of two leading black candidates in the race to succeed Trump.

Cummings himself tweeted: "Mr. President, I go home to my district daily. Each morning, I wake up, and I go and fight for my neighbors. It is my constitutional duty to conduct oversight of the Executive Branch. But it is my moral duty to fight for my constituents."

people and each Tunisian has the right to attend his funeral," the late leader's son Hafeedh Essebsi said in a Facebook message on Friday.

Essebsi is the first president to receive a state funeral since Tunisia gained its independence from France in 1956 and the government has declared seven days of mourning. Tunisia's first president Habib Bourguiba was buried in a hasty ceremony in 2000, under the reign of now ousted autocratic president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who lives in exile in Saudi Arabia. Tunisians unable to attend the burial packed cafes in the capital to watch a live television broadcast. A military band preceded the funeral procession as it wound its way to the cemetery while air force jets flew overhead letting off red and white smoke trails - the colors of the national flag.

Following Ben Ali's departure, Essebsi founded the secularist Nidaa Tounes (Call of Tunis) party, which he led to victory at the polls in 2014. The party formed a coalition with the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha, which lasted four years before the two parties split. Essebsi's death comes amid a power struggle between Prime Minister Youssef Chahed and the president's son, that has led to the premier being sidelined from Nidaa Tounes to form his own rival party, Tahia Tounes.

It also comes amid a debate over who will be able to stand in the presidential election which the electoral commission said could "probably" be held on September 15, two months earlier than planned. Under the constitution the interim president has 90 days to organize elections. Essebsi, whose health deteriorated in the past few weeks, has left behind unfinished business. — Agencies



BALTIMORE: In this photo taken on April 12, 2019, a man walks by a mural painting on a rainy day in the McElderry Park area. — AFP

As chairman of the House Oversight Committee, Cummings - one of the most prominent African Americans in Congress - has launched investigations into Trump administration policies, including reports of poor treatment at migrant detention centers. Trump's attack was reminiscent of

his recent, racially-charged criticism of four young Democratic lawmakers, all women of color, who he suggested should "go back" to the "crime infested" places they came from. In fact, three were born in the US and all four are American citizens. — AFP

State funeral for Essebsi...

Continued from Page 1

draped in the Tunisian flag into a ceremonial room at the Carthage palace packed with dignitaries, placing it on a dais. Parliament speaker Mohamed Ennaceur, who was sworn in as interim president hours after Essebsi's death, paid tribute to the late leader describing him as "the architect of national reconciliation". "He was determined to successfully achieve democratic transition," in the birthplace of the Arab Spring uprisings.

Essebsi's widow and tearful family members were flanked by Macron, Spain's King Felipe VI, Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and other regional and European leaders. Macron hailed a leader who "in these times of threatening obscurantism... was keen on keeping Tunisia enlightened, tolerant and committed to universal values". Mourner Amira was among large crowds who packed the cemetery for the final farewell to Essebsi. "It is a sad day. I feel deep pain at losing a dear person who united us. History will remember him," she said.

Farah, an architect, said she came "to pay tribute to his work on behalf of women". The interior ministry said it was deploying a large number of security forces to guarantee a smooth ceremony, adding however that it would respect "spontaneous gatherings by citizens". "President Beji Caid Essebsi belongs to the Tunisian

Navy rescues hundreds from...

Continued from Page 1

A spokesman for the state company added that a "special relief train" would take people onwards on their journeys.

Eight killed as quakes hit...

Continued from Page 1

second, stronger jolt. The biggest of the quakes - of magnitude 5.4 and 5.9 - struck within hours of each other, according to the US Geological Survey.

At least three aftershocks followed, which prompted edgy locals to spend hours in town squares waiting for the string of quakes to end. Authorities said two people were reported missing, though they have not completed a search of the area because debris was blocking some roads. Raul de Sagon, mayor of worst-hit Itbayat town, told AFP that eight people had been killed and around 100 others were hurt, including seven serious cases that

Heavy monsoon rains battered Mumbai forcing the cancellation of 11 flights from the financial capital's international airport yesterday. Nine incoming planes were diverted to other airports. The main highway from Mumbai to the resort of Goa was closed because of rising waters. At least 20 cm of rain fell in some parts of Mumbai over 24 hours. More than 250 people have died in flooding across India in the past two weeks, with Assam and Bihar states in the north the worst hit. The army said it had rescued more than 150 people stranded in their homes in Assam's Nalbari district in recent days. — AFP

had to be flown out.

Itbayat's hospital was damaged and patients had to be wheeled to safety, while at least one high school and the area's 19th-century church were heavily damaged. Batanes is pounded every year by tropical cyclones and typhoons that blast through the Philippines and homes are built of stone to survive the annual onslaught. "We always experience typhoons so houses here are made to withstand strong winds," de Sagon said. "But we were not prepared for earthquakes such as this."

The Philippines is part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire", an arc of intense seismic activity that stretches from quake-prone Japan through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin. The country's most recent deadly quake occurred in April when at least 11 people were killed and a supermarket collapsed in a 6.3-magnitude tremor that hit a region north of the capital Manila. — AFP

Sports

Red Sox's Betts belts 3 HRs to beat Yanks

BOSTON: Mookie Betts homered in each of his first three at-bats and had four hits and five RBIs total as the Boston Red Sox once again romped past the visiting New York Yankees, winning 10-5 on Friday. Betts led off the bottom of the first with a homer before hitting another solo shot in the third and a two-run moonshot in the fourth. The right fielder doubled home a run in the sixth and grounded out in the eighth, settling for his fifth career three-homer game. Four of those have come from the leadoff spot in the order, a major league record. JD Martinez also went deep and drove in three runs, and Rafael Devers had three hits as the Red Sox posted at least eight runs against the Yankees for the fifth straight meeting. Yankees starter James Paxton (5-6) gave up seven runs on nine hits in four innings, though he struck out nine and walked none. New York starters have failed to pitch past the fourth inning in six straight games.

GIANTS 2, PADRES 1 (11 INNINGS)

Pablo Sandoval came through with another extra-inning homer, his two-out, 11th-inning shot leading visiting San Francisco over San Diego. San Francisco improved to 7-0 in extra-inning games since the All-Star break. Sandoval's 13th-inning homer Tuesday gave the Giants a 5-4, walk-off win over the Chicago Cubs. On Friday, his 13th homer of the season came on a 1-2 pitch from Logan Allen (2-3). The 365-foot drive just cleared the leap of Padres left fielder Wil Myers. The victory was the Giants' sixth straight over the Padres, who are 6-14 in their last 20 games and have lost eight straight home games. San Francisco has 18 wins in the past 22 games.

CARDINALS 5, ASTROS 3

Paul Goldschmidt homered for a fifth consecutive game, his three-run blast in the eighth inning lifting St. Louis over visiting Houston. The Cardinals won their sixth consecutive game and claimed the opener of a three-game interleague series by parlaying two late-inning homers into four runs against the Houston bullpen. St. Louis starter Jack Flaherty tossed six innings of two run ball, striking out nine, and Houston starter Jose Urquidy gave up one run in six innings. Neither received a decision. Michael Brantley homered and drove in all three runs for Houston.

BREWERS 3, CUBS 2

Ben Gamel's two-out single in the eighth inning scored two runs and lifted Milwaukee over visiting Chicago. Trailing 2-1, the Brewers loaded the bases with

one out in the eighth inning on a walk and two hit batters. Jesus Aguilar popped out, but Gamel lined a 1-0 pitch from Pedro Strop to right, scoring Keston Hiura and Eric Thames. Adrian Houser (4-4) pitched 1 2/3 innings, and Josh Hader worked the ninth for his 23rd save in 25 tries. Brandon Kintzler (2-1) took the loss in a game in which each team collected only four hits. David Bote hit a two-run homer for Chicago.

ROCKIES 12, REDS 2

Daniel Murphy belted a three-run homer to highlight his second career six-RBI performance as Colorado cruised to a win at Cincinnati. Murphy added a bases-clearing double as part of a six-run ninth inning to continue his dominance of the Reds in the season series. The 34-year-old finished 2-for-5 on Friday to improve to 10-for-17 with seven extra-base hits (four doubles, three homers), 11 RBIs and seven runs scored in four games vs. Cincinnati. Josh VanMeter homered to lead off the second inning for the Reds.

DODGERS 4, NATIONALS 2

Justin Turner belted a tiebreaking three-run homer in the eighth inning to lift visiting Los Angeles over Washington. The Nationals retired the first two batters in the eighth before Joc Pederson walked and Alex Verdugo singled off reliever Tony Sipp (1-2). Turner then lifted a 3-1 fastball over the fence in left-center off Kyle Barraclough for a 4-1 lead. Dodgers left-hander Hyun-Jin Ryu allowed one run and eight hits in 6 2/3 innings, lowering his major-league-leading ERA to 1.74. Washington starter Anibal Sanchez gave up a run in the first before retiring 20 consecutive batters.

BRAVES 9, PHILLIES 2

Brian McCann homered and had two hits to lift Atlanta to an easy victory at Philadelphia. Ronald Acuna Jr. added two hits and three RBIs for the Braves. Sean Newcomb (4-1) earned the win in relief for Atlanta, which had lost six of the previous eight games. Jean Segura paced the Phillies with three hits, including a homer. Scott Kingery, Cesar Hernandez and Adam Haseley added two hits each for the Phillies, who had won five of six.

METS 6, PIRATES 3

Zack Wheeler, making perhaps his final start with New York, tossed 5 1/3 solid innings in his return from the injured list and earned the win against visiting



BOSTON: Mookie Betts #50 of the Boston Red Sox reacts as he returns to the dugout after hitting a solo home run in the third inning of a game against the New York Yankees at Fenway Park. — AFP

Pittsburgh. Wheeler (7-6), who was activated prior to the game after missing the previous 18 days due to a right shoulder impingement, allowed three runs on six hits and no walks while striking out seven. The Mets are 8-5 since the All-Star break and need to win one of the final two games against the Pirates to capture their fourth series in five tries since play resumed. Pittsburgh has lost six straight and has the National League's worst second-half record, 2-12.

MARLINS 3, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Harold Ramirez hit a walk-off sacrifice fly in the ninth inning as Miami rallied to beat visiting Arizona. Arizona reliever Greg Holland (1-2), who has 17 saves, entered the ninth with a 2-1 lead. He gave up a leadoff double to Garrett Cooper, walked Neil Walker and allowed a Starlin Castro single before Jorge Alfaro's sacrifice fly tied the score. Diamondbacks reliever Yoshihisa Hirano served up the game-winning drive on an 0-1 splitter. It was Miami's third sacrifice fly of the game, and it extended the Marlins' win streak to three games. Arizona

starter Zack Greinke, the subject of trade rumors ahead of the July 31 deadline, pitched six strong innings and got a key hit but was left with a no-decision after Miami rallied against his bullpen.

TWINS 6, WHITE SOX 2

Max Kepler and Nelson Cruz homered, and Michael Pineda pitched seven strong innings to lift visiting Minnesota over Chicago. Pineda limited the White Sox to two runs on six hits with a walk and five strikeouts. Minnesota grabbed early control of the game with a five-run second-inning against White Sox rookie Dylan Cease. Byron Buxton's RBI sacrifice fly and a run-scoring single by Cruz bookended the scoring around Kepler's three-run home run. Kepler's club-leading 27th homer of the season was the team's 200th of 2019 and came in Minnesota's 103rd game. With the blast, the Twins became the fastest team in major league history to reach 200 home runs, eclipsing the 2005 Texas Rangers, who hit their 200th and 201st home runs in the team's 122nd game. — Reuters

Coleman eyes Doha gold after US trials win

DES MOINES: Christian Coleman believes his best is yet to come as he targets a 100m gold medal at this year's World Championships in Doha. The 23-year-old sprinter underscored his status as the world's fastest man on Friday after powering to victory at the US Track and Field Championships. Coleman, who had earlier beaten world champion Justin Gatlin in the semi-finals with a time of 9.96sec, clocked 9.99sec into the wind to leave the field in his wake.

It was the first major outdoor title of Coleman's professional career, and provided further evidence that he is ready to improve on his 100m silver medal from the 2017 World Championships. Coleman, however, was in no mood to bask in the win, telling reporters afterwards that his sights were already locked on Doha. "The mission's not over," Coleman said. "I came into the year wanting to win a gold medal in Doha. This is what I had to do to get

there. And that's just what I focus on every single day. "Attack every practice, attack every single workout, attack all the things that I have to do get a gold medal." While the 37-year-old Gatlin cannot be overlooked, Coleman's results this year suggest he has finally gained the upper hand over his old friend and rival.

No nerves

Two years ago, Coleman was the fastest man in the world heading into the US trials in Sacramento, only to tighten up in the final and lose to Gatlin, who would go on to win gold in London. This year, Coleman arrived at the trials once more with the fastest 100m time of the year — 9.81sec. But there was not the slightest hint of nerves on Friday as Coleman swept to victory in the final after outpacing Gatlin in the semis.

Coleman, who qualified for the US Olympic team in 2016 while still in college, said he is more comfortable racing at an elite level now. "I barely squeaked on the team in 2016 and I was like a sophomore, just soaking it all in," Coleman said. "The next year in 2017 I had a really good collegiate season, but it was my first time being on that global stage. I didn't really know what to expect.



DES MOINES: Christian Coleman runs to victory in the 100 meter final during the 2019 USATF Outdoor Championships at Drake Stadium. — AFP

"This time making the world team, I know what it takes to get there, and I know what to expect. I'll be a little bit more comfortable so it's going to help me a lot." Coleman, the world indoor champion and record holder over 60m, is adamant that he is still yet to reach his peak. "If you look at my progression

throughout the years I've always got better and better and I take great pride in that, always trying to be better than I was last year, or last week or yesterday," he said. "I feel like I'm in the best shape of my life but I've still got more to go. I can just keep getting better, there's things I can improve on." — AFP

NFL Rams ink coach McVay to five-year contract extension

LOS ANGELES: Sean McVay, who coached the Los Angeles Rams to their first Super Bowl appearance in 17 years, has signed a five-year contract extension with the NFL club, the team announced Friday. McVay has gone 24-8 in two seasons guiding the Rams, delivering their first playoff berth since 2004 in the 2017 season and into the championship game of the 2018 campaign, falling 10-3 to New England this past February.

"I'm very thankful to be a Ram for many years to come," McVay said. The Rams open training camp this week for the league's 100th season hoping to take the final step and capture their first NFL crown since winning the 2000 Super Bowl while based in St. Louis. McVay, 33, is signed through the 2023 campaign and with the team moving into a new stadium next year should help stabilize the Rams' recent success. The new deal replaces the final three years McVay had on the contract he signed with the Rams in January 2017 at age 30 as the youngest coach in modern NFL history after serving as offensive coordinator for the Washington Redskins.

Rams general manager Les Snead's contract was also extended through 2023. McVay took over a Rams squad that went 4-12 and guided it to an 11-5 mark, the first winning season since 2003, and the NFC West division title thanks largely to an offensive revamp that had the Rams lead the NFL in scoring behind quarterback Jared Goff. Following up an NFL Coach of the Year season, McVay directed the Rams to a 13-3 record last year and two playoff wins before a dramatic Super Bowl loss to the Patriots. — AFP

Australian's positive test hits swim championships

GWANGJU: Australian relay world-record holder Shayna Jack denied wrongdoing yesterday after she failed a drugs test and was forced to miss the swimming world championships in South Korea. The 20-year-old, part of Australia's 4x100m freestyle team that set a world record at last year's Commonwealth Games, failed an out-of-competition test late last month and has been suspended, Swimming Australia said.

The first positive test related to the Gwangju world championships is embarrassing for Australian swimming after Olympic champion Mack Horton's protest against Chinese rival Sun Yang in Gwangju over salacious claims he smashed vials of blood following a test last year. Jack, who returned home days before the start of the world championships in South Korea citing "personal reasons", denied deliberately taking a banned substance.

"I did not take this substance knowingly," Jack posted on Instagram. "Swimming has been my passion since I was 10 years old and I would never intentionally take a banned substance that would disrespect my sport or jeopardize my career." But American Lilly King savaged the swimmer later yesterday. "She's a drug cheater," sniffed the Olympic champion. "She has tested positive on a drugs test — doping is doping." Australian officials ushered Jack back to



GOLD COAST: In this file photo taken on April 6, 2018 Australia's Shayna Jack smiling after the swimming women's 50m freestyle qualifications during the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games at the Optus Aquatic Centre in the Gold Coast. — AFP

Australia from a world championship training camp in Japan after the results of the June 26 test and gave her a provisional suspension, Swimming Australia said. "Swimming Australia is and always has been committed to a clean sport," CEO Leigh Russell said in a statement. "We have consistently supported a zero tolerance approach to doping and have been strong supporters of a rigorous and consistent approach to drug testing both here and overseas."

Australia's Horton took a highly visible stance when he snubbed Sun at a medals ceremony, provoking a furious reaction from China's 11-time world champion, who accused him of "disrespecting China" by not stepping on the podium. Britain's Duncan Scott copied Horton after Sun retained his 200m freestyle title and several swimmers, including King and fellow Olympic champion Adam Peaty, spoke out in support of the two. — AFP

'I'm just protecting athletes', insists China swim star Sun

GWANGJU: China's Olympic swimming champion Sun Yang has hit back at sniping rivals accusing him of doping violations, telling them: "I'm standing up for all of you!" Athletes have vilified Sun at the world swimming championships in South Korea this week following a leaked FINA doping panel report that alleged the Chinese giant allowed blood vials to be smashed with a hammer after being visited by testers last year.

FINA cleared Sun to compete after agreeing that the testers had failed to produce adequate identification or follow correct protocol, prompting World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) to appeal that decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). After reclaiming his 400 and 200 metres freestyle world titles earlier this week, both Australia's Mack Horton and Briton Duncan Scott staged dramatic podium protests, refusing to shake Sun's hand, provoking a furious reaction from triple Olympic champion.

"I shouldn't have to put up with these kinds of insults," growled Sun after closing his punishing Gwangju schedule in the men's 4x200m free on Friday. "But I have a big heart — there are millions of athletes in the world and if a few want to hurl insults, I can take it," added the 27-year-old. "It's pointless arguing with them, it means nothing to me. FINA made it clear I didn't commit any doping violation. What I'm doing is protecting the rights and interests of every athlete." The 11-time world champion grew suspicious of the independent testers who knocked on the door of his Hangzhou villa late at night last September, insisting they were not properly accredited.

'No drug cheat'

"Imagine if testers without the right documents show up at your home to take blood and urine," said Sun, whose case is set to be heard by CAS in September. "And if they make out a false report, I would have no opportunity to argue," he added. "Every word I've said is true and I have all the evidence to prove it. I'm simply standing up for myself and every athlete out there."

Sun's Australian coach Denis Cotterell told AFP that the swimmer had been made a scapegoat for grievances against FINA, the sport's governing body. "He's not a drug cheat," said Cotterell. "He takes meticulous care with what he ingests. You can't have the performances he's had over the years without doing the work. He's been tested year in, year out — hundreds of tests, winning every year over this period of 10 years." Horton began his war of words with Sun back at the 2016 Rio Olympics when he labelled his hulking rival a "drug cheat" in reference to a three-month suspension Sun had served after testing positive for trimetazidine, an ingredient in his heart medication. — AFP

Sports

My time is over: Malinga finishes in style as Sri Lanka crush Bangladesh

Malinga rattled Bangladesh with a fiery opening spell

COLOMBO: Lasith Malinga shone in his farewell match after Kusal Perera struck a quick-fire century as Sri Lanka crushed Bangladesh by 91 runs in the first one-day of a three-match series in Colombo on Friday. Malinga rattled Bangladesh with his fiery opening spell, reducing the visitors to 39-4 in the process, without allowing them to recover from the damage despite the best efforts by Mushfiqur Rahim and Sabbir Rahman.

Mushfiqur made 67 while Sabbir added 60 as the duo shared an 111-run partnership for the fifth wicket but Bangladesh stuttered to 223 all out in 41.4 overs replying to Sri Lanka's 314-8. Retiring Malinga claimed 3-38 while Nuwan Pradeep (3-51) and Dhananjaya de Silva (2-49) played their parts in the win. "I feel it's the right time for me to retire from ODIs. I have been playing for the last 15 years for Sri Lanka and this is the right time to move on," Malinga, who finished his ODI career with 338 wickets, said after the game. "My time is over and I have to go."

First blood

Perera struck 111 off 99 balls with 17 fours and a six, his fifth ODI century, to set up Sri Lanka's total after skipper Dimuth Karunaratne won the toss and elected to bat first. Left-handed Perera put on 97 runs with Karunaratne for the second wicket before adding 100 with Kusal Mendis for the third wicket. Shafiqul Islam, who finished with 3-62 in his first match in three years, drew the first blood for Bangladesh when he had opener Avishka Fernando caught by

Soumya Sarkar at slip for seven.

Perera was reprieved on 49 runs when the third umpire overturned a caught behind decision off Shafiqul. Part-time seamer Soumya ended the valiant knock of Perera as he was caught at short fine leg by Mustafizur Rahman. Mendis, who was dropped on 28 by Mahmudullah Riyad off Soumya, fell to Rubel Hossain the next over after making 43 off 49 balls. Mendis walked after a muted appeal for caught behind from wicketkeeper Mushfiqur and bowler Rubel.

Angelo Mathews took Sri Lanka's total past the 300-run mark with 48 off 52 balls. Mustafizur dismissed Mathews before finishing with 2-75. Malinga, who was unbeaten on six with the bat, hit the leg-stump of opener Tamim Iqbal in his fifth ball with a deadly yorker. Tamim, who debuted as Bangladesh's 14th ODI captain, was unable to open his account and the team's other top-order batsmen did hardly any better.

Pradeep trapped one-down Mohammad Mithun leg-before for 10 and Malinga bowled out opener Soumya for 15 in the next over. Kumara compounded Bangladesh's problem once he removed Mahmudullah for three. De Silva ended the resistance of Sabbir, forcing him to give a catch at deep midwicket to leave Sri Lanka's victory all but a formality. Malinga took the final wicket fittingly to end the brief entertainment by Mustafizur, who made 18 off 14 balls before being caught by Thisara Perera at mid-off. The second match will be held at the same ground today. — AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan cricketer Lasith Malinga looks on during the first One Day International (ODI) cricket match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh at the R Premadasa Stadium. — AFP

Root relieved as Ireland battle ends in victory

LONDON: England captain Joe Root defended his side's batsmen ahead of the Ashes after Chris Woakes and Stuart Broad spared their blushes by pounding Ireland out for just 38 to complete a crushing Test match win at Lord's. The hosts had been bowled out for 85 in their first innings on Wednesday but, with night-watchman Jack Leach making a career-best 92 second-time around, they were able to set Ireland a target of 182 on Friday.

Ireland then collapsed in a mere 15.4 overs, with Woakes taking a Test-best 6-17 and fellow seamer Broad 4-19 as England won by 143 runs. A match scheduled for four days rather than the usual five allocated for a Test was all over before lunch on the third. England's top-order problems remain a worry ahead of next week's first Test against Australia in Birmingham, with the Ashes-holding tourists looking to win a series away to their arch-rivals for the first time in 19 years.

But Root insisted a "substandard" pitch prepared by Irish groundsman Karl McDermott, in his first season at Lord's, was to blame for their batting woes in England's first match at the 'home of cricket' since they won the World Cup there 12 days earlier. "First innings, last innings... when you are getting scores like that it tells a story in itself," said Root. With doubts over Australia's batting as well, the Ashes could come down to which side can give their attack enough runs to play with. "Australia will be thinking, it's doing a bit in England," said Root with a smile. "It's hard for



LONDON: England's Jonny Bairstow (C) celebrates catching the ball to take the wicket of Ireland's William Porterfield for two on the third day of the first cricket Test match between England and Ireland at Lord's cricket ground. — AFP

anyone to read too much into these very extreme conditions but I'm sure the bowlers will like the look of the surfaces here and it's bubbling up nicely for a very entertaining first game." Root was one of five players in the England side that beat Ireland — Jason Roy, Jonny Bairstow, Moen Ali and Woakes were the others — who had also played in the World Cup final. Fellow World Cup-winners Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes were rested from the Ireland game but they all now face a frantic Ashes schedule of five Tests in just over six weeks.

'Gutted'

"You have to suck it up and get on with it," said Root. "It's a hard slog for guys to play all five of these games and be at the top of their game." Meanwhile England coach Trevor

Bayliss questioned his side's attitude. "For matches like this we have to take a good hard look at ourselves," he said. "We have no problems getting up for games against Australia and India. "Do we take the foot off for matches like this? Are we able to get in the mood to compete and be ruthless?"

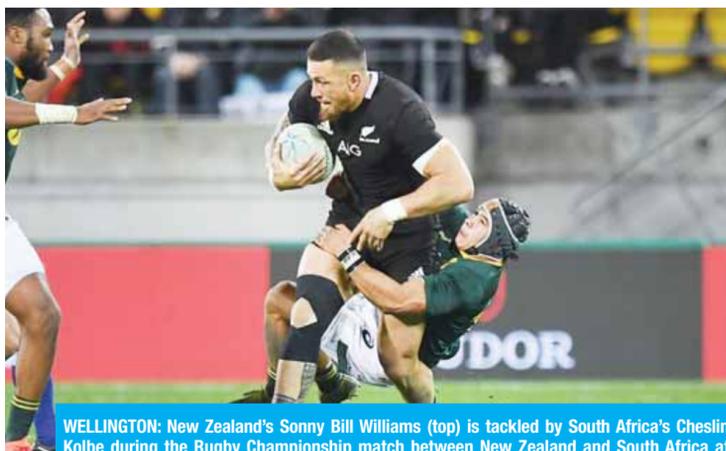
Ireland have yet to win any of their three Tests following previous defeats by Pakistan and Afghanistan. But this was arguably the most painful given their fine start, with veteran pacesman Tim Murtagh taking 5-13 on his Middlesex home ground in England's first innings. Ireland's second innings, however, was the lowest by any Test side since 1955. "We're pretty gutted," said Ireland captain William Porterfield. "We had the chance to win it. That shows you how much it hurts." — AFP

Springboks snatch last-gasp draw with All Blacks

WELLINGTON: Coach Rassie Erasmus said the Springboks were "lucky in a big way" after a last-gasp try by scrum-half Herschel Jantjies snatched a thrilling 16-16 draw with world title-holders New Zealand in the Rugby Championship. The dress-rehearsal for their highly anticipated World Cup opener didn't disappoint as South Africa were on top in the first half but fell away in the second until Jantjies' crucial score at the death.

"For the first 35 minutes we played really well. In the second half I think they totally dominated except the last minute," Erasmus said. "So, fairly lucky in a big way." Although the All Blacks were outplayed for most of the first half in Wellington they still managed to turn with a 7-6 lead, scoring their only try of the game just before the break. But while they took control in the second half they were restricted to penalties as they built a 16-9 lead.

Then, in a reversal of the first half, the game ended with the Springboks storming back. Jantjies grabbed a bouncing ball to score his try in the final minute, with Handre Pollard kicking the conversion under pressure to leave the scores level. As the Springboks celebrated, the All Blacks were distraught with captain Kieran Read saying it felt like a loss. "I think so. If you saw the reactions from the two sides (a loss) is what it feels like," Read said. "When you come back to draw it feels a lot better. It's one of those things. The bounce of the ball in the 80th minute and you draw a Test match.



WELLINGTON: New Zealand's Sonny Bill Williams (top) is tackled by South Africa's Cheslin Kolbe during the Rugby Championship match between New Zealand and South Africa at Westpac Stadium. — AFP

We don't go out to draw and lose so our shed's a bit down."

'Not going to panic'

The match may also have come at a high price for the All Blacks, just two months out from the World Cup, with star lock Brodie Retallick taken to hospital with a dislocated shoulder. All Blacks coach Steve Hansen said he was awaiting test results to learn if Retallick had suffered a break as well. However, Hansen put a positive spin on the game. "The last couple of seconds was pretty tough to watch but we've done that to plenty of sides ourselves so sometimes you've got to take your own medicine," Hansen said.

"But there were enough signs there to say that if we keep execution away, get our timing better, get our execution better then we're

going to hurt some teams. So we're not going to panic. "We had to find some things out, we've found them out which is great and we're reasonably happy, not so much with the performance but we are happy with what we're seeing and where we know we can go."

The Springboks had their own injury problems with Faf de Klerk, whose clever kicking game placed the All Blacks under pressure throughout the first half, failing a head injury assessment in the third quarter which brought Jantjies off the bench. Just a week after his two-try debut against Australia, Jantjies again played a significant role in the outcome of the game. The Springboks were on top for most of the first half apart from one brief moment when the All Blacks mounted a 60-metre attack from rare turnover ball, and the end result was a try to Jack Goodhue converted by Beauden Barrett. — AFP

Emotional Genia leads Wallabies win over Pumas

BRISBANE: Australia recovered from last week's loss to the Springboks to beat Argentina 16-10 in the Rugby Championship yesterday, giving scrum-half Will Genia an emotional send-off in his final Test in Brisbane. A week after their disappointing 35-17 loss to South Africa, the Wallabies gave Genia a fitting farewell at his home ground prior to his retirement from Tests after the Rugby World Cup.

He was outstanding against the Pumas, organizing the backline brilliantly and often getting the Wallabies out of trouble with a fine kicking game. Both sides scored one try each, but three penalties from Christian Lealiifano — back with the Wallabies after fighting off leukemia — saw the Wallabies home in front of 32,000 supporters at Suncorp Stadium. Former bad boy James O'Connor also came on in the second half for his first appearance since the Wallabies tore up his contract in 2013 following a series of transgressions.

The Wallaby defense, which leaked five tries in last week's loss, was vastly improved this week as they easily handled the threat from the dangerous Pumas outside backs. They held the visitors tryless until six minutes from full-time when number eight Facundo Isa crashed over at the back of a rolling maul to get the Pumas to within six points. The win will give under-siege Australian coach Michael Cheika some breathing space after a series of poor results in 2018 and their defeat at the hands of the Springboks.

"I think we earned it, we worked

Aussie greats baffled by Carey squad omission

SYDNEY: Alex Carey's omission from the Ashes squad was met with disbelief yesterday by former Australian greats Mark Waugh and Shane Warne, while Mark Taylor said he was surprised Joe Burns and Kurtis Patterson missed out. Australia named a 17-man squad for the five-Test series against England on Friday, with opener Cameron Bancroft recalled alongside Steve Smith and David Warner following their bans for a ball-tampering scandal in South Africa last year.

Matthew Wade also made the grade, having not played a Test for nearly two years, following recent outstanding form with the bat. He can act as back-up wicketkeeper to captain Tim Paine, as could Bancroft, which meant the fast-improving Carey, who starred for Australia at the recent World Cup, was controversially overlooked. "Got to be kidding re Alex Carey," 128-Test veteran Waugh tweeted. "For me Alex missing the squad is the biggest shock particularly after his bat-

hard," Cheika said. "We were able to build the game, build the score, through moments when we had the dominance, and in the moments we didn't have dominance we found a way to get out of a jam." However, the Pumas will rue their lack of discipline in Brisbane. The visitors, who were so impressive in their 20-16 loss to the All Blacks last weekend, dropped the ball at key moments against the Wallabies.

"The opportunities were there, there were two clear chances in the first half and one in the second, and we lost by six points," Pumas coach Mario Ledesma said. "But my concern is much more the set piece — the scrum in the second half and the lineout in the first — we were clearly dominated. "It's really difficult at the set piece, without quality ball, to win the game." After Lealiifano and Nicolas Sanchez traded early penalties, Argentina should have scored the first try in the 25th minute, only for front-row Nahuel Tetaz Chaparro to drop the ball a meter out with the line wide open.

They were punished five minutes later when Australian winger Reece Hodge finished off a fine attacking move which started from an attacking scrum on the 22 meter line. Lealiifano found Marika Koroiobete on the inside, the big winger then dummying to centre Samu Kerevi before passing to fullback Kurtley Beale.

Beale then drew the defense before giving Hodge a simple run to the line to give the Wallabies a 10-3 lead at the break. Lealiifano made it 16-3 in the second half with two penalties as the Pumas began to struggle at the scrum. The Wallabies always looked in control, but they let the Pumas back in the game when they conceded a penalty at the breakdown with five minutes remaining. From the ensuing line-out, Isa barged over to get the visitors within striking distance. But they never looked like overhauling the Wallabies and an Argentina knock-on in front of their own posts was a fitting end to the game. — AFP

ting during the World Cup and being the second best gloveman."

Spin king Warne was also stunned at Carey's omission. "Very surprised/disappointed that Carey didn't make the Aussie squad," he said on Instagram in posting what he believes will be Australia's team for the opening Test at Edgbaston. Warne has Bancroft opening with Warner and Wade coming in at number six, while opting for fast bowler James Pattinson instead of Mitchell Starc alongside Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon.

Former Australia captain Taylor said opener Burns and middle-order batsman Patterson missing out was tough to take given both made centuries in Australia's last Test, against Sri Lanka. "I was disappointed Kurtis Patterson didn't make the squad. You can't help but feel a little bit sorry for both him and (Joe) Burns," Taylor said. "They're both coming off hundreds in their last Test matches." Taylor said their omissions reflected the country's current selection ethos. "It's a sign of the times," he said.

"They (the selectors) are picking on recent form rather than their last Test matches, and I guess you could say that Bancroft, (Marnus) Labuschagne, and Wade won that battle of the batsmen." Australia hold the Ashes but have not won a Test series away to England for 18 years. — AFP

Sports

Colombian star Bernal wraps an 'incredible' Tour de France

Only needs to cross the finish line to win 2019 Tour edition

VAL THORENS: Egan Bernal all but clinched victory in the Tour de France defending his overnight lead in the penultimate stage which left the Colombian only needing to cross the finish line on today's parade into Paris to win the 2019 edition.

The champion in waiting said he was so nervous on the climb he counted down the kilometres on the way up as defending champion Welshman Geraint Thomas ended the day in second overall, with Dutch rider Steven Kruijswijk in third. The stage itself was won by 2014 winner Vincenzo Nibali who broke from the main contenders late in the final climb to win by 17sec at the line where he raised his finger to his lips, kissed it and raised it to the sky.

"I still have to get Paris but it's incredible," said the rider who is set to become the Tour's youngest winner since Francois Faber in 1909. "I'm a little calmer now," added the modest Colombian. "It'll take a few days to realize what I have achieved." To be honest I was feeling good today, I kept thinking 5km, 4km, 3km one less, one less to go each time. "When we got to the finish and Geraint held out his hand I realized it was over and I was going to win the Tour de France."

Bernal and Thomas, co-captains at Team Ineos, crossed the winning line a few seconds ahead of their key rivals and smiled broadly at each other as they held hands in unity to mark the moment. Ineos principal Dave Brailsford appears to have masterminded seven

tour wins from the last eight editions with Bradley Wiggins, Chris Froome and Thomas having taken six and Bernal within a parade of the latest triumph.

Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe, who led for 14 days before cracking on Friday's weather neutralised stage finished down the field to drop to fifth place overall. Bernal, who is set to become Colombia's first Tour winner, now leads Thomas by 1min 11sec and Jumbo-Visma's Kruijswijk by 1min 31sec ahead of the professional day of racing ending in the French capital.

Nibali, who won in 2014, came second on this year's Giro d'Italia and while he looked wiped out early in the Tour was radiant when picking up a stage win late in the game. "To win here is a great joy," said Bahrain Merida's Italian captain. Yesterday's race embarked in cool conditions in 12 Celsius (53.6 Fahrenheit) atop the Val Thorens ski resort at 2,356m altitude. Green jersey wearer Peter Sagan said he was delighted the race had been shortened today.

"Tomorrow is Paris and one for the sprinters, so let's see, a win in Paris would be great," said the Slovak gunning for the sprinter's jersey for a record seventh time. "It's been a beautiful Tour," he said. Frenchman Romain Bardet redeemed what had looked like a disastrous three weeks for him by rallying to win the 'King of the Mountains' polka dot jersey with two fine performances in the Alps. Today's final parade to Paris embarks late and is due to finish beneath the Arc de Triomphe. — AFP



VAL THORENS: Colombia's Egan Bernal celebrates his overall leader's yellow jersey on the podium of the twentieth stage of the 106th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Albertville and Val Thorens. — AFP

Hamilton on pole in German Grand Prix, disaster for Ferrari

HOCKENHEIM: Lewis Hamilton secured a gift-wrapped record-extending 87th pole position of his career yesterday when he made the most of a double disaster for Ferrari in qualifying at the German Grand Prix. The defending five-time world champion, who had struggled for pace and consistency in his Mercedes in practice, improved to clock a best lap in one minute and 11.767 and outpace Max Verstappen of Red Bull by 0.346 seconds.

Hamilton's Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas was third ahead of Pierre Gasly in the second Red Bull while Charles Leclerc, who had been fastest for Ferrari in final practice, failed to run in the Q3 top-10 shootout due to a fuel systems problem with his car. The Monegasque will start 10th, 10 places ahead of his luckless Ferrari team-mate Sebastian Vettel who was unable to take part in qualifying due to a turbo problem and will start at the back of the grid for his home race.

Kimi Raikkonen was fifth for Alfa Romeo ahead of Romain Grosjean of Haas, Carlos Sainz of McLaren, Sergio Perez of Racing Point and Nico Hulkenberg of Renault. "Congratulations Lewis - you never stop amazing us," said Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff as the Briton drove his slow-down lap. "Thanks, Toto," he replied. "A great job guys - I don't know how we did that."

Hamilton's lap was the only one in the 1:11's all weekend at the Hockenheimring, where he last took pole in 2008, and gave his team a perfect cause for celebration on the anniversary of 125 years of motorsport and their 200th Formula One race start. "My first lap was spot-on and the second lap was better in places," said Hamilton.

Verstappen said: "We could have been closer, but went a bit wide and bottomed out and I lost the rear end, but this is a good



HOCKENHEIM: Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton shakes hands with Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen after the qualifying session of the German Formula One Grand Prix at the Hockenheim racing circuit. — AFP

result." Bottas said: "I think the weather is going to play a big part tomorrow. I'm a bit disappointed, especially with the pace in Q3. Ferrari had been very quick here... so we're in a good place." On an overcast and much cooler day after heavy overnight rain, the Williams team were first on track for Q1, in front of an enthusiastic crowd boosted by Verstappen's 'orange army' and many local supporters for Vettel in Ferrari red.

Luckless Vettel

Leclerc was soon on top for the 'scarlet scuderia' ahead of Verstappen, but it was bad news again for the luckless Vettel. After sitting in his car, stranded under repair in the Ferrari garage, he climbed out, condemned to start from the back of the grid. "I don't know exactly what happened, but we lost the turbo and the car would not run. I feel bitter, of course, as the car is great and it's a big chance lost - but we have another chance tomorrow."

"I am looking forward to the race, of course, but I would prefer to be right up at the front than at the back." After struggling with

their own problems, Hamilton and Bottas qualified third and sixth for Mercedes with Gasly and Raikkonen between them, while British rookies Lando Norris of McLaren and Alex Albon of Toro Rosso joined the Williams men George Russell and Robert Kubica with Vettel in taking an early exit.

Hamilton was first out in Q2 on mediums as the sun returned following a dull morning in Baden-Wuerttemberg. His initial lap in 1:12.149 set the standard with Leclerc and Bottas slotting into second and third before Gasly, defying his critics, split them. The Q3 session began with Mercedes out first again in their anniversary-liveried cars while Ferrari were besieged as Leclerc's car was under examination in their garage.

As Hamilton set the pace ahead of Verstappen and Bottas, Leclerc climbed out of his Ferrari and out of contention. "We brought upgrades here, but the Ferraris were on another level all weekend. I think my time at the end was good enough to compete with Charles, if he had done a lap!" said Hamilton. "The track is incredible and it gets faster every year." — AFP

Bale set for £1mn a week Jiangsu move

PARIS: Real Madrid forward Gareth Bale was Friday on the verge of signing a "£1 million a week" deal with Chinese Super League outfit Jiangsu Suning, reports claimed. The 30-year-old Welshman has already been told by Real coach Zinedine Zidane that he does not form part of his future plans at the Spanish giants.

Spanish daily Marca claimed that Bale, who has been at Real since 2013 since signing from Tottenham, will earn 22 million euros per season in China and that the deal is almost finalized. However, later reports by Sky Sports in England suggested the player's representatives were negotiating a mind-boggling £1 million a week contract before the Chinese transfer window shuts on Wednesday.

Real boss Zidane said last weekend he thought it would be "best for everyone" if Bale's departure could be arranged quickly — comments Bale's agent branded "disrespectful" of a player who helped the side to a Spanish league title and four Champions Leagues since arriving from Tottenham six years ago. Zidane then insisted Monday he meant no disrespect before Bale came on as a substitute in a midweek 3-2 friendly win over Arsenal in the United States.

"He had a good game and I'm happy for him," Zidane said. "I do not know what's going to happen, for now he's with us. It did not change anything." Bale's agent Jonathan Barnett has already insisted that any deal which sees the Welshman leave the Bernabeu would have to be a permanent one and not one that sees him shipped out on loan.

Beckham's MLS club signs first two players

MIAMI: Former England football star David Beckham's MLS expansion club, Inter Miami, announced its first two player signings on Friday, 19-year-old Argentine players Matias Pellegrini and Julian Carranza. Pellegrini, a left wing, was dubbed "El Primero" in a tweet welcoming him to the club while forward Carranza will join him on the field next year.

Inter Miami will keep Pellegrini with Superliga Argentina side Estudiantes de La Plata through January 2020 until he joins the US squad on a transfer. Carranza will remain on loan at Banfield until January 2020 before he joins Inter Miami on a transfer. "It's important for us that we found young, exciting attacking players that are on the upside of their career and have the potential to be really good players in this league," Inter Miami sporting director Paul McDonough said. "We will continue to build and add quality players that are the right fit for our club. We started with

"There will be no makeshift deals to get him out of the club," said Barnett. "Gareth is one of the best players on the planet. I can guarantee you he will not be going on loan to any club."

Barcelona beat Iniesta

In other news, Carles Perez scored his first two goals for Barcelona as the Spanish giants won 2-0 against a Vissel Kobe side featuring Andres Iniesta, a legend of the Catalan club. As Kobe's Iniesta, David Villa and Sergi Samper were all reunited with their former team, it was Perez who stole the limelight with a top-class double. The 21-year-old, a product of Barcelona's academy, played a one-two inside the box and nutmegged the goalkeeper for his first goal, and fired a stunning left-footer for his second in the dying minutes.

Iniesta had his chances and 28,000 fans sighed their frustration as he put a fierce shot just wide. "It was my first goal for Barcelona and I'm glad to score even two," Perez said. "It's been my dream to score goals for this great team since my childhood," he added. Iniesta said: "I am glad Barcelona were able to come here and play. It was a good game honestly as we played well."

The World Cup-winner, who lifted 32 major trophies with Barcelona, signed for Kobe last May in a deal worth a reported \$30 million a year. Iniesta, 34, became team captain in April. Kobe also announced the signing of Belgium defender Thomas Vermaelen, after the 33-year-old reportedly turned down an offer to join countryman Vincent Kompany at Anderlecht. Yesterday's win wrapped up Barcelona's pre-season friendlies in Japan following their 2-1 loss to Chelsea earlier this week. World Cup-winning French striker Antoine Griezmann and former Ajax midfielder Frenkie de Jong, who both made their unofficial debuts in the Chelsea match, played again on Saturday with no goals. — AFP

youth, but we know it's also important to have veteran players who come from both overseas and within the league to balance out the roster over time."

Pellegrini debuted for the La Plata side last year and has scored three goals in 15 matches. He made two Copa Libertadores appearances and has played on Argentina's under-20 and under-17 national squads. Carranza, who moved to Buenos Aires at 13 to join Banfield's academy, is in his second season with 10 goals in 30 matches. "Both Julian and Matias showed us they really wanted to take the next step of their career with Inter Miami," McDonough said. "We liked that Pellegrini can play inside and out wide, has very good aerobic capacity and can cover a lot of ground, while Julian is a very grounded player with an impressive work rate. He's the player that strives to score goals and is very good in the box."

Beckham, 44, is Inter Miami's president. He retired in 2013 after a 20-year career, but part of the MLS contract he signed in 2007 to play for the Los Angeles Galaxy included the chance to buy a future MLS expansion club at a discount. Beckham utilized his option in 2014 to purchase an MLS club for \$25 million and planned it for Miami but struggled to find a suitable stadium site and it was not until January 2018 that MLS approved the team for Beckham, its colors, name and logo being revealed last September. — AFP

Inter edge PSG on penalties with Neymar left out

MACAU: Portuguese midfielder Joao Mario scored the final spot-kick as Inter Milan beat Neymar-less Paris Saint-Germain on penalties in Macau yesterday. With their want-away Brazilian superstar left out of the trip to the former Portuguese colony, PSG were seconds from victory before Samuele Longo's injury-time equalizer made it 1-1.

Inter goalkeeper Samir Handanovic saved from Adil Aouchiche and then Arthur Zagre before Mario stepped up to slot the winner for Inter, who edged the penalties 6-5. The win for Antonio Conte's side comes just days after they lost to Italian rivals Juventus on penalties in a friendly in China. Neymar, linked with a move back to his former club Barcelona, remained in China's Shenzhen, PSG's previous stop on their Asian tour, while his team-mates flew to gambling enclave Macau.

In a scrappy game in sweltering Macau, Inter were quicker out of the blocks forcing three fine stops from PSG's Alphonse Areola in the first 10 minutes. New signing Stefano Sensi and Ivan Perisic were instrumental in the early Inter attack, producing quick probing passes and causing problems behind the PSG defense.



MACAU: Inter Milan's Samuele Longo (C) scores the equalizing goal past Paris St Germain players during their International Super Cup football match. — AFP

In Neymar's absence it was French World Cup-winner Kylian Mbappe who drew cheers from the 8,800-strong crowd with his driving runs, although he was often let down by his final touch. Just before half-time Mbappe was brought down by Milan Skrimiar and new signing Pablo Sarabia floated a free kick which a climbing Thilo Kehrer glanced into the net.

Inter leapt into the attack in the second half, with Perisic jinking his way into the box

to force another fine save from Areola, before sending the rebound soaring over the bar. Inter continued to squander chances, with the heat adding to their frustration, with Perisic seeing another chance creep over on 78 minutes. But in the last minute of injury time substitute Longo picked up a bobbling pass trickling through the PSG box to drive the ball into the bottom corner, past the otherwise rock-solid Areola, who thumped the ground in frustration. — AFP

25 Coleman eyes Doha gold after championship win



26 My time is over: Malinga finishes in style as Sri Lanka crush Bangladesh



27 Colombian star Bernal wraps an 'incredible' Tour de France



GWANGJU: USA's Caeleb Dressel competes to win and take gold in the final of the men's 100m butterfly event during the swimming competition at the 2019 World Championships at Nambu University Municipal Aquatics Center. — AFP

Hot ticket: Dressel romps to treble

Nightclub deaths rock world swim championships

GWANGJU: American superstar Caeleb Dressel produced more fireworks yesterday as he romped to a hat-trick of gold medals, taking his tally to six on a dark day when a fatal nightclub accident shook swimming's world championships. Day seven also threw up further doping controversy with Australian officials announcing freestyle relay world-record holder Shayna Jack had tested positive for a banned substance, explaining her mysterious no-show in South Korea.

But Dressel, swimming's squeaky-clean, tattooed glamour boy, helped refocus attention on the pool as he retained his 50 meters freestyle and 100m butterfly world titles in style, before leading the American mixed 4x100m freestyle team to a new world record. "It doesn't just come together by accident," said Dressel, after becoming the first swimmer to win at least six gold medals at two world championships. "It wasn't easy but I don't want it to be easy, I really don't."

Bouncing on his toes like a prizefighter before the 50m free, Dressel exploded from the blocks and never looked back, clocking a championship best 21.04 sec-

onds, comfortably clear of Brazilian Bruno Fratus and Greek Kristian Gkolomeev, who tied for silver in 21.45. Dressel, who scooped seven gold medals at the 2017 world championships in Budapest, let out a roar of delight but had very little time to savor the moment. After the shortest of breathers, the 22-year-old was back for the 100m butterfly final and after a long, hard stare down lane four, he got it done again.

World record

Once again making his signature fast start, the American touched in 49.66 — the second-quickest swim ever, a night after shattering Michael Phelps's 10-year-old world record. Russia's Andrei Minakov took silver a full body-length behind, with South African Chad le Clos third. Just when his rivals thought it was safe to get back in the water, Dressel gave the United States relay quartet the lead they would keep, Simon Manuel bringing the Americans home in a world record of 3:19.40, just over half-a-second in front of Australia.

"I'm glad it's over," said Dressel, who also took a silver in the 4x100m mixed medley and could win a seventh gold in the men's 4x100m medley relay on the final day. "But tomorrow I will be ready to swim one more, and one more fast." Dressel's heroics came after the shock news that two locals died and eight athletes were injured after an indoor balcony at a Gwangju nightclub collapsed in the early hours yesterday, sending party-goers plummeting over five meters onto people below. A doping controversy followed when it was revealed Jack had failed a drug test, a development that could not have come at a worse time for Australia, after Mack Horton's highly public podium snub of China's Sun Yang on day one.

'We stand for clean sport'

Horton refused to step on the podium in protest at claims made in a leaked FINA doping panel report that Sun had allowed blood vials to be smashed with a hammer after testers visited him last year. "I shouldn't have to put up with these insults," Sun, a three-time

Olympic gold medalist, said later, insisting he was standing up for all athletes by refusing to let "unlicensed" testers take samples. "I'm protecting myself and all athletes, I have nothing to prove."

Aussie sprinter Cate Campbell chose her words carefully when asked about Jack, who has denied knowingly taking a banned substance. "We stand for a clean sport," said Campbell. "I think the fact that Shayna isn't here strengthens that stance." Others were more forthright, le Clos sniffing: "If you test positive, you shouldn't be allowed to swim."

Meanwhile, American great Katie Ledecky displayed a champion's heart to win her fourth successive 800m freestyle gold after being pushed to the limit by European champion Simona Quadarella. Ledecky, who withdrew from her 1,500m title defence and 200m heat through illness, held off the Italian to win in 8:13.58 and capture a 15th world title. Elsewhere, Sweden's Sarah Sjöström swept to victory in the 50m fly in 25.02, becoming the first woman to win three world titles in the event. — AFP

Atletico humble Madrid 7-3 in fiery friendly

NEW JERSEY: Diego Costa scored four goals as Atletico Madrid embarrassed La Liga rivals Real Madrid 7-3 Friday in a pre-season friendly at MetLife Stadium. Costa had a hat-trick by halftime and added one more goal before he was sent off in the 63rd, when both teams were reduced to 10 men after a testy shoving match.

"We started the game very poorly. In a top-level match such as this, we had a very bad start, Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "The players are well aware and they're disappointed. "We don't need to dwell on it, this is a pre-season game. They were better in every respect and that's all there is to it." The first meeting outside of Europe between the Madrid rivals proved a dismal night for Zidane's Real Madrid, who saw Serbian starlet Luka

Jovic hobble off after an awkward collision with Atletico keeper Jan Oblak in the 24th minute.

Zidane can only hope the news on his injury will be better than that on Marco Asensio, who could miss most if not all of the La Liga season after rupturing a knee ligament against Arsenal on Tuesday. Portuguese 19-year-old Joao Felix, signed from Benfica this month for 126 million euros (\$142 million), scored his first goal for Atletico, and helped set up two more.

Angel Correa also scored for Atletico, who had run the score to 5-0 at halftime and 6-0 before Real Madrid got one on the scoreboard before a packed house at the East Rutherford, New Jersey, home of the NFL's New York Jets and New York Giants. Costa set the tone in the first minute. Put through in the area by Felix he fired across his body to make it 1-0. Felix struck in the eighth, slotting home a ball that was cut back to him by Saul Niguez.

Hazard contributes

Real Madrid keeper Thibaut Courtois could only watch Correa's 19th-minute blast into the bottom left corner. Costa bagged

his second to make it 4-0 in the 28th, Saul winning the ball after a poor pass from Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos and sending a pass for Costa. Costa made it 5-0 on the stroke of halftime, converting from the penalty spot after he was brought down in the area by Isco. Atletico's lead swelled to 6-0 in the 51st minute when Costa teamed with Felix for his fourth of the night, Felix slotting a pass through Real Madrid's defense for Costa to arc over Keylor Navas.

Eden Hazard helped Real Madrid pull back a goal in the 59th with a cross that Nacho bundled over the line. Minutes later Daniel Carvajal's late challenge on Thomas Lemar saw tempers flare, with both Costa and Carvajal sent off. Undeterred, Atletico grabbed their seventh goal in the 70th thanks to a superb solo run by Vitolo, who seized the ball from two defenders and beat two more to score.

Karim Benzema converted an 85th-minute penalty and Javi Hernandez scored in the 89th to trim the deficit, but there was little for Real Madrid to be proud of. "I'm not concerned, but I'm hurt. You don't play to lose. But we can't be looking backwards, it was a bad game and now we have to



NEW JERSEY: Atletico Madrid's Diego Costa celebrates after scoring his third goal during the 2019 International Champions Cup football match between Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid at the MetLife Stadium Arena in East Rutherford. — AFP

focus on what went wrong so we can try and make sure it doesn't happen again," said Zidane. Welsh star Gareth Bale — reportedly on the verge of a lucrative move

to Chinese Super League outfit Jiangsu Suning — was sent on with less than half an hour remaining but couldn't provide a spark. — AFP