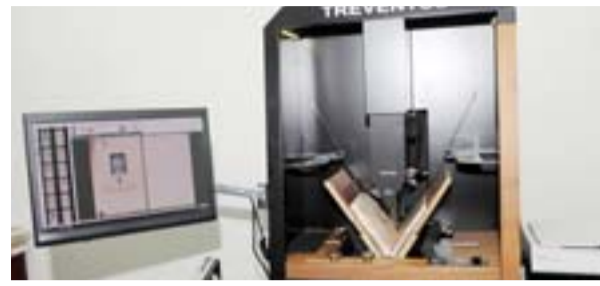




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Budget deficit drops by 60% on back of higher revenues

Spending also surges, with 75 percent allocated for wages, subsidies

MP claims foreign nations blackmail Kuwait over maids

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli said yesterday that some foreign countries have been "blackmailing" Kuwait lately over allegations of mistreatment of domestic helpers in the country. The lawmaker acknowledged that there were a few cases of abuse of domestic helpers "like in all countries of the world",

but this should not be allowed to be exploited to blackmail Kuwait.

Fadhli criticized Al-Durra Company for the recruitment of domestic helpers from abroad, formed by a law passed by the Assembly to help cut maid recruitment costs for families in the country, saying the company has failed to carry out its job. Meanwhile, MP Majed Al-Mutairi submitted a draft law calling to increase government financial assistance to Kuwaiti university students from KD 200 monthly to between KD 250 and KD 400 monthly based on the year of study.



Ahmad Al-Fadhli

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The finance ministry said yesterday that public revenues rose sharply in the 2018/2019 fiscal year mainly due to substantially higher oil revenues and higher-than-expected non-oil income. Although spending rose by 13.5 percent, the budget shortfall fell to KD 1.29 billion, or 60 percent lower than the previous year's deficit and 83 percent below projections, the ministry said in a statement.

Oil income surged 29 percent to KD 18.43 billion and non-oil income increased by 24 percent to KD 2.13

billion. Overall revenues were at KD 20.56 billion, up by 28.5 percent on the previous year, the statement said. Spending also rose to KD 21.85 billion, 13.5 percent higher than the previous year.

The budget deficit for the 2018/2019 fiscal year which ended on March 31, was also much lower than projections because the average oil price for the whole fiscal year was \$68.6 a barrel, much higher than the \$50 a barrel projected while preparing the budget. By law, 10 percent of revenues, or KD 2.05 billion in 2018/2019, is transferred into the reserve fund for future generations or

the country's sovereign wealth fund, whose assets are estimated at around \$600 billion.

The statement said that as much as 75 percent of spending was allocated for wages and public subsidies. Wages accounted for KD 11.45 billion, while subsidies came at KD 4.9 billion, more than 65 percent higher than the previous year. Finance Minister Nayef Al-Hajraf said non-oil revenues recorded a healthy growth for the second year in a row and that capital spending on projects accounted for 14 percent, a good share which the ministry plans to raise to 17 percent in the current year.

Trump presses race as 2020 tactic, attacks black activist

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump branded African-American civil rights activist Al Sharpton a "conman" yesterday, sparking further charges of racism following his recent tirades against prominent black lawmakers, and drawing a rebuke from Maryland's Republican governor and the black former Republican Party national chairman. The attack followed a weekend during which Trump drew fire for targeting Elijah Cummings, a Democratic congressman of color and high-profile Trump critic whose district covers much

of the majority black city of Baltimore.

Trump's dispute with Sharpton appeared to stem from a tweet by the civil rights leader late Sunday, stating that he was headed to Baltimore. "Al is a con man, a troublemaker, always looking for a score. Just doing his thing" Trump tweeted early yesterday, adding that Sharpton "Hates Whites & Cops!" Sharpton shot back, telling reporters in Baltimore that Trump "has a particular venom for blacks and people of color". "He can say what he wants, call me a troublemaker. Yes, I make trouble for bigots," Sharpton said. "If he really thought I was a conman he would want me in his cabinet."

The episode began when Trump called Cummings's district a "rat and rodent infested mess" where no one would choose to live. The controversy comes less than two weeks after the House of Representatives condemned Trump for "racist" comments targeting four first-term Democratic congresswomen, known as the "Squad," who are from ethnic minorities.

"If the Democrats are going to defend the Radical Left 'Squad' and King Elijah's Baltimore Fail, it will be a long road to 2020," Trump tweeted yesterday. "So tired of listening to the same old Bull...Next, Reverend Al will show up to complain & protest. Nothing will get done for the people in need. Sad!" Trump wrote.

A historic port city of 600,000 people, Baltimore presents a mixed picture, with both handsome and affluent neighborhoods and poverty-stricken districts. It has one of the country's highest murder rates. Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, a Republican who had considered challenging Trump for the party's 2020 presidential nomination, blasted Trump's tweets in an interview with WBAL radio and said the president's latest Twitter attacks were only further fueling division and political anger nationwide. "The comments are just outrageous and inappropriate," Hogan said. "I think enough is enough."

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WASHINGTON: People applaud as US President Donald Trump, surrounded by Sept 11 first responders and family members, signs an act to permanently authorize the Sept 11 victim compensation fund during a ceremony in the Rose Garden of the White House yesterday. —AFP

News in brief

CSC announces Eid holidays

KUWAIT: The Civil Service Commission yesterday announced that if the month of Thulqada is of 30 days, Sunday, Aug 11, 2019 will be the Arafat Day holiday, and the Eid Al-Adha holidays will be on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (Aug 12, 13, 14 and 15), as Thursday lies between two holidays. Sunday, Aug 18 will be the start of official work. If Thulqada is of 29 days, Saturday Aug 10 will be the Arafat Day holiday, and the Eid Al-Adha holidays will be on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday (Aug 11, 12 and 13), and Wednesday, Aug 14 will be the start of official work. As for authorities and entities of a special nature, their holidays will be decided by those responsible for their affairs, taking public interest into consideration.

Saudi King Salman's brother dies

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia was gearing up yesterday for the funeral of King Salman's elder brother, the royal court said, after he died at the age of 96. "His Royal Highness Prince Bandar bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud passed away," the royal court said Sunday in a brief statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. "A funeral prayer will be performed for his soul... on Monday... at the Grand Mosque in Makkah." The prince was the eldest surviving son of Saudi Arabia's founding monarch, King Abdulaziz. —AFP

Man pushes boy in front of train

FRANKFURT: An eight-year-old boy died yesterday and his mother was injured when a man pushed them in front of a train in Germany's Frankfurt railway station, police said. The suspect, a 40-year-old Eritrean man who was unrelated to the victims, ran off but was overpowered by passers-by and detained by police. The woman was being treated in hospital after narrowly escaping from the tracks as an arriving ICE high speed train ran over her child. A police spokeswoman said the man tried to push a third person onto the track but the woman managed to defend herself. — Agencies

Teen becomes Fortnite champ, wins \$3 million

NEW YORK: American Kyle Giersdorf, alias "Bugha," became the first Fortnite world champion in the solo division, winning \$3 million at age 16 on Sunday. Originally from Pennsylvania, the young gamer took the lead in the first of six games and never looked back. "It's insane," the young millionaire said after the final, during which he scored almost double the points of his closest opponent (59 to 33).

Aside from the second of six games, Bugha was remarkably consistent despite playing in the first world cup

final, with millions of dollars on the line, in the Arthur Ashe stadium, where the US Open tennis tournament takes place. "This morning he was worrisome, energetic, having fun to make sure he wasn't stressed at all," his best friend Colin Bradley told AFP after the final.

In the game, users are dropped onto an island where they must search for weapons and other resources while eliminating other players - all while trying to stay alive. A sense of placement, a talent for building, brilliance in close combat and rock solid self-control - Bugha had it all in the final. "He's one of the smartest players. He knows when to attack, when not to attack, to stay high ground. He's a strategic player," Bradley said. Having a high position is often a decisive advantage, especially in the closing stages of the game, making it

Continued on Page 24



NEW YORK: Bugha of the US celebrates with the trophy after winning the final of the solo competition at the 2019 Fortnite World Cup on Sunday at Arthur Ashe Stadium. — AFP

Report alleges ethical abuses at UN agency

RAMALLAH: An internal ethics report has alleged mismanagement and abuses of authority at the highest levels of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees even as the organization faced an unprecedented crisis after US funding cuts. The allegations included in the confidential report by the agency's ethics department are now being scrutinized by UN investigators. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) said it is cooperating fully with the investigation and that it cannot comment in detail because the probe is ongoing.

AFP has obtained a copy of the report which describes "credible and corroborated" allegations of serious ethical abuses, including involving UNRWA's top official, Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl. It says the allegations include senior man-

agement engaging in "sexual misconduct, nepotism, retaliation, discrimination and other abuses of authority, for personal gain, to suppress legitimate dissent, and to otherwise achieve their personal objectives." One senior official named in the report has left the organization due to "inappropriate behavior" linked to the investigation, UNRWA said, while another has resigned for what the agency called "personal reasons".

UNRWA said in response to AFP questions that it "is probably among the most scrutinized UN agencies in view of the nature of the conflict and complex and politicized environment it is working in". "Over the past 18 months, UNRWA has faced immense financial and political pressure, but its entire staff body has steered it, serving 5.4 million Palestine refugees through the most unprecedented financial



Pierre Krahenbuhl

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Small states going big on cryptocurrency

LONDON: When Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko met entrepreneur Viktor Prokopenya in March 2017, their discussion was scheduled to last for an hour but went on for three times that long. The meeting, Prokopenya said, ended with Lukashenko asking him to propose regulations to boost the country's tech sector. Prokopenya worked with IT firms and lawyers to draft guidelines to cash in on an emerging digital industry: Cryptocurrencies.

Some two years later, the rules are in place. Investors can trade bitcoin on an exchange run by Prokopenya, while other companies are launching their own cryptocurrency platforms. "The idea was to create everything from scratch," Prokopenya told Reuters in an interview in London. "To make sure that it is free in some of the aspects it needs to be free,

and very stringent in other aspects." Contacted for comment, Lukashenko's office directed Reuters to an account of the meeting on the president's website.

Belarus is among a handful of smaller countries coming up with specific rule books for digital currencies. Their efforts could help shape the development of the global market and the growth of industry players, from exchange platforms to brokers. So far, cryptocurrency companies have often had to choose between two extremes when deciding where to set up shop.

Major financial centers like London and New York, which apply traditional financial services rules to the sector, might be attractive to big institutions seeking safety but the compliance complexity and costs preclude many of the startups at the heart of the fledgling industry. Conversely, lightly-regulated jurisdictions like the Seychelles and Belize allow far easier market access. But states with light rules can offer less protection for investors and have looser checks on money laundering, lawyers say.

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Local

Amir congratulates Moroccan King on 20th anniversary of throne

Sheikh Sabah receives outgoing Pakistani Ambassador



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait Ghulam Dastgir. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah addressed a cable of congratulations yesterday to Moroccan King Mohammed VI, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of ascending to the throne. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad A-Sabah sent similar cables to King Mohammed VI.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received at Bayan Palace yesterday the outgoing Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait Ghulam Dastgir on the occasion of the end of his tenure. Acting Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah attended the meeting. Separately, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh at Bayan Palace. His Highness the Crown Prince also met, separately, with the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Oil Sheikh Talal Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud in which he expressed his sincere condolences over the demise of Prince Bandar bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables on the occasion.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir expressed deepest sympathies over the victims of a shooting incident during a food festival in Northern California, where more than 15 others were wounded as well. His Highness the Amir extended condolences in a cable sent to US President Donald Trump, pointing out he was distraught over the tragic loss of life caused by this criminal act. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to the US president, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent two cables to President of the US Senate Mike Pence and Speaker of the US House of the Representatives Nancy Pelosi. —KUNA



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Undersecretary of the Ministry of Oil Sheikh Talal Nasser Al-Athbi Al-Sabah.

Kuwait chief lawmaker holds talks with Iraqi counterpart



KUWAIT: Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem holds discussions with his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Al-Halbousi. —KUNA



Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Al-Halbousi.

KUWAIT: Kuwait's top lawmaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem held discussions yesterday with his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Al-Halbousi. The talks revolved around bilateral ties, particularly economic and parliamentary relations, according to the Kuwaiti parliament's 'Al-Dostour' news service. The two lawmakers exchanged views on issues of mutual concern, in the presence of a bevy of Iraqi and Kuwaiti MPs, it added. Iraq's top lawmaker, along with a delegation accompanying him, arrived in Kuwait on Saturday to kick off a three-day official visit. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed ambassador of Kazakhstan. — KUNA photos



Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed ambassador of Sudan.

Kuwaiti FM receives new envoys' credentials

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday received credentials of the newly-appointed ambassadors of Kazakhstan, Sudan and Germany. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled wished the best for the diplomats and hoped they would continue their role in bolstering bilateral relations between Kuwait and their respective nations. The receptions were attended by Acting Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols' Affairs Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran and other ministry officials. —KUNA



Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed ambassador of Germany.

Official conveys Amir's condolences on Essebsi's death

KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah conveyed yesterday His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-

Sabah's condolences over the death of Tunisian President Mohamed Beji Caid Essebsi. During his visit to the Embassy of Tunisia in Kuwait, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah also conveyed the condolences of 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, the government and people of Kuwait on the demise of President Essebsi. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah offers condolences at the Embassy of Tunisia in Kuwait. —Amiri Diwan photo

Local

Non-oil revenue up 24% compared to last year's closing accounts

Finance Ministry releases Kuwait's closing accounts for fiscal year ending March 31, 2019

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance yesterday announced the State of Kuwait's closing accounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019. The State's accounts recorded KD20.558 billion in revenue, KD21.849 billion in expenditure, and closed with a fiscal deficit of KD 3.346 billion after accounting the transfer of 10 percent of total revenue to the State's Future Generations Fund (FGF) as mandated by law. The State of Kuwait's fiscal year starts on April 1st and ends on March 31st.

The Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf said, "For the second year in a row, the State of Kuwait's Non-oil revenues continued to grow by 24 percent year-on-year, capital expenditure remains a healthy proportion of the total expenses at 14 percent, and we estimate capex will reach 17 percent during the current fiscal year to stimulate economic growth and to serve Kuwait's 2035 vision, New Kuwait."



Wages, subsidies 75% of expenditure

Expenditure Highlights:

- Wages and subsidies: KD16.334 billion, constituting 75 percent of all expenditure.
- Capital Expenditures: KD3.032 billion, constituting 14 percent of all expenditure.
- Total Expenditures: KD21.8 billion up 13.5 percent from last year's closing accounts.

Balance Highlights:

- The recorded fiscal deficit for the year pre-FGF transfer is KD1.29 billion. The recorded fiscal deficit post-FGF transfer is KD3.346 billion, down 31 percent from last year. This is the fifth consecutive year of deficits for the State of Kuwait.

- By law, the State transfers 10 percent of total annual revenue to the Future Generations Fund (also known as Kuwait's Sovereign Wealth Fund) managed by the Kuwait Investment Authority. This year's transfer total was KD2.056 Billion.

- The actual deficit for the year ending on March 31, 2019 will be covered by withdrawals from the General Reserve Fund (GRF, the State's treasury) in the absence of a law governing the issuance of sovereign bonds. The last active debt law expired in October 2017. In Kuwait, all laws must pass through its freely-elected parliament.

- By law, the Closing Accounts do not include revenue from the FGF, which is managed by the Kuwait Investment Authority. All investment revenue from FGF activities are reinvested by the Fund.

State of Kuwait Closing Accounts				
	Fiscal year ending in 31 March 2019	Fiscal year ending in 31 March 2018	%	% Compared to Budget
Revenue				
Oil	18,428	14,282	29.0%	38.4%
Non-Oil	2,130	1,717	24.0%	20.2%
Total Revenue	20,558	16,000	28.5%	36.2%
Expenditures				
Salaries and Wages	(11,452)	(11,012)	4.0%	(0.4%)
Subsidies	(4,882)	(2,967)	64.5%	(0.1%)
Capex	(3,032)	(3,224)	(5.9%)	(19.0%)
Other	(2,482)	(2,044)	21.4%	(6.3%)
Total Expenditures	(21,849)	(19,247)	13.5%	(4.1%)
FGF Transfer	(2,056)	(1,600)	28.5%	36.2%
Fiscal Balance				
Pre-FGF Transfer	(1,291)	(3,247)	(60.3%)	(83.2%)
Post-FGF Transfer	(3,346)	(4,847)	(31.0%)	(63.6%)
Revenue Highlights:				
• Oil revenue: KD18.4 billion, up 29% from last year				
• Non-oil revenue: KD2.13 billion, up 24% from last year				
• Total Revenue: KD20.558 billion up 28.5% from last year				
• Average Kuwaiti crude selling price for the fiscal year: USD 68.62 per barrel				

Revenue Highlights:

- Oil revenue: KD18.4 billion, up 29 percent from last year
- Non-oil revenue: KD2.13 billion, up 24 percent from last year
- Total Revenue: KD20.558 billion up 28.5 percent from last year
- Average Kuwaiti crude selling price for the fiscal year: \$68.62 per barrel

Defense Minister meets Tajik, Ukrainian envoys



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Tajikistan's Ambassador to Kuwait Zubaydullo Zubaydov. — KUNA photos

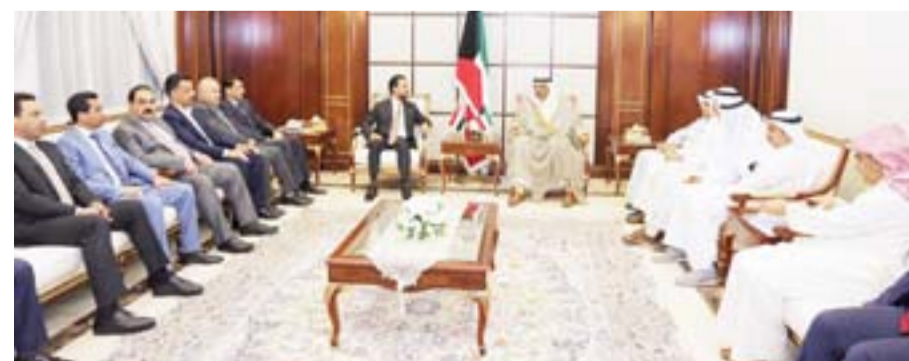


KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the Ukrainian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Oleksandr Balanutsa.

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah discussed bilateral ties with Tajikistan's Ambassador to Kuwait Zubaydullo Zubaydov at Seif Palace yesterday. Sheikh Nasser later received Ukrainian Ambassador to

Kuwait Dr Oleksandr Balanutsa, where they discussed issues of mutual concern, according to a defense ministry statement. During the meetings, Sheikh Nasser expressed content over the depth of friendly relations between Kuwait and the two friendly countries. — KUNA

Foreign Minister receives Iraq's top lawmaker



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Iraq's chief lawmaker Mohammad Al-Halbousi. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with Iraq's chief lawmaker Mohammad Al-Halbousi, focusing on plans to improve bilateral ties. Amid the discussions, which also touched on current happenings around the world, Iraq's top parliamentarian commended His Highness the Amir

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's commitment to ensure a conflict-free Middle East. He was appreciative of the copious amounts of aid Iraq has received from the State of Kuwait, while the Kuwaiti top diplomat pointed out that Halbousi's visit was a testament to close ties both nations share. The talks were held in the presence of a number of Kuwaiti diplomats. —KUNA

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A bird rests on a twig in a garden in Kuwait. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

local spotlight

Rich and developed



By Muna Al-Fuzal

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

US President Donald Trump has asked the World Trade Organization (WTO) to change the status of some members of the organization because they are classified as developing countries although they are rich, threatening unilateral action if this does not happen. These countries are Kuwait, Brunei, China, Hong Kong, Macao, Mexico, Qatar, Singapore, South Korea, Turkey and UAE.

Trump sent a special note to the United States' representative to urge the amendment to prevent developing countries from the benefits which they obtain because of the rules of the organization. The American decision aims to deprive these countries of the facilities that are being provided by WTO to developing countries commercially and economically.

I think this is important for all the concerned countries, but this does not mean that it will affect negatively and directly on Kuwait, because we are an oil state and the Kuwaiti economy is based on the export and sale of oil. The industrial sector, being the largest beneficiary of these facilities, does not contribute more than 4 percent to the economy. Most of the facilities provided to developing countries of the WTO are directed to the industrial sector in order to help them increase exports. I think we should focus on developing industries and raising their competitiveness in light of the opening up of global markets and possible changes.

One of the benefits to Kuwait as an oil-exporting developing country and a member of the World Trade Organization is the elimination of customs and non-tariff restrictions on exports. And because of the special nature of oil and its products in international trade as an imported commodity and a factor of production inputs, importing countries are not subject to customs duties, even if they are relatively low, while exporting countries have imposed self-restraint on their production to maintain prices within the framework of OPEC. The US president said if the WTO did not make substantial progress in reforming this sector within 90 days, it would stop its dealings with those countries as developing countries, adding that the United States will not support any of these countries.

In accordance with resolution no. 206 of 1994, the Council of Ministers authorized the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to follow up the implementation of Kuwait's agreements with the World Trade Organization. Therefore, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry follows up the subject through its embassy in Geneva for any possible effects of the agreements signed by Kuwait as a member of the WTO and the extent of their impact on the flow of trade from Kuwait and the rest of the world in the event of changing Kuwait's status from a developing country to an advanced country. Especially since the US president has called for reforms within 90 days, and this is a short period of time.

However, some local press reports have reported possible effects on some items of the 'New Kuwait 2035 vision' development plan that may be based on facilities from WTO. I think the US' message to the organization should not have an impact on the role of the World Trade Organization on the Arab business community, the importance of linking the World Trade Organization with Arab conventions and to strengthen Arab capabilities in world trade and reforms of trade policies, especially since Kuwait adopts the principle of free economy and its adoption of the trade freedom policy advocated by the organization and developing it with the private sector.

I think there is no specific standard on what makes a country progressive and developing, but there are measurable factors such as GDP per capita. Still, Kuwait is among the Third World countries and faces important challenges and needs cooperation with the WTO. Kuwait is progressing rapidly in many fields with the development of education and it might take time to improve its industrial wealth. But this does not preclude the organization's support and cooperation, especially within the scope of policies to upgrade from a developing nation to an advanced one.

Humidity continues, temperature increases through Friday

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Head of the navigational forecasting department at Kuwait Meteorological Center Derar Al-Ali told Kuwait Times that high humidity is expected to continue in Kuwait today over coastal areas with light to the moderate northwesterly wind, with the possibility of a temperature increase from today through Friday. He said the weekend will witness an increase in temperatures and rising dust over open areas, with active northwesterly winds. "The temperature in Thursday is expected to reach 50 degrees Centigrade, which will hopefully go down by next week," he said.

Kuwaiti meteorologist and astronomer Adel Al-Saadoun said humidity and heat will dominate coastal areas in Kuwait during the week, which in general will have light to moderate winds from the northwest, and dust will recede gradually. In the first weeks of August, humidity and temperatures will significantly increase, but will drop gradually to lower than 47 degrees Celsius. Speaking to Kuwait Times, Saadoun indicated the weather

er during Eid Al-Adha will continue to be hot with northwesterly winds.



MPs to push demographic structure authority

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Some MPs are planning to 'impose' a parliamentary proposal calling for the establishment of a national authority to organize and manage the demographic structure, because MPs believe the government is not serious in dealing with the risks of the current demographic structure in Kuwait and that parliamentary intervention is a must to reach security, social and economic solutions. They said the number of expats should be reduced by at least 30 percent, particularly from large communities,

apart from getting rid of marginal laborers. Meanwhile, government sources said that any talk about plans to increase gasoline prices next year is not on the government's agenda at all, was not discussed and there is no memo about this matter. The sources said the last price increase was in Sept 2016, less than three years ago, which is a short period to evaluate the decision and its effects on the local market and general prices, so any decision for another increase will not be quick and an extensive study is needed.

The sources also commented on talk that the number of cars is large in Kuwait, which creates traffic jams, noting the solution for those jams will not be by increasing gasoline prices, rather by other solutions related to the problem. The sources did not deny that the prices are under a comprehensive study, and will increase one day. They said prices of gasoline and power will not increase during the next two years at least, and in case there is an intention to increase them, it will be within an integrated plan.

Vehicles under Ghazali bridge impounded

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's relations and security information department said patrols were dispatched to Ghazali bridge, where cars were parked in the shade under it. They impounded all the vehicles for parking in an undesignated area and neglecting the vehicle. This action was taken following a video clip that circulated on social media.

In other news, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate, in cooperation with police and the Environment Public Authority carried out a campaign to get rid of violations of preventive conditions in Aswaq Al-Qurain. The campaign resulted in issuing several warnings, and some popular markets and restaurants may be closed because of dangerous violations unless they correct them.



KUWAIT: Vehicles impounded under the Ghazali bridge.

News in brief

Detention for driving over 170 km/h

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's relations and security information department's acting Director General Brig Tawheed Al-Kandari warned about strict punishments against speeding motorists. He said those who drive over 170 km/h will be detained for 48 hours and their cars will be impounded for endangering others and themselves. He said grave violations occur at weekends and more than 30 persons are detained. — Al-Qabas

Ministry moves to recover money

KUWAIT: The education ministry plans to go to court to recover money paid to expat teachers although they have been out of work for years, because school administrations did not inform concerned authorities. Sources said most of the teachers whose cases were discovered lately did not withdraw the money from their bank accounts, as the employees had left the country. They said recovering the salaries requires a court ruling. They said the latest discovered case is that of a secondary school teacher who has been out of work since 2003, which was not reported to the administrative sector. — Al-Qabas

750 plots for livestock farms

KUWAIT: Head of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources Sheikh Mohammad Al-Yousuf revealed a project to distribute around 750 plots for sheep and camel farms with areas of 1,250 sq m within three months. He said the authority has no relation with allocating farming lands, and is only concerned with distribution according to rules, draws and deserving groups. Furthermore, he indicated that allocations are the responsibility of Kuwait Municipality. He added the authority will continue following up the distributed lands and make sure that they are used for the purposes they are licensed for, and in case of any violation, necessary measures will be taken and may reach to taking back the land. Sheikh Mohammad said the fish farming project is in its final stages and can be received from the municipality within a month. On the other hand, he said that proposals for farms on the border and a larger zoo have been cancelled due to unfeasibility and costs. — Al-Anbaa



A KFSD official inspects fire safety conditions.



A warehouse lacking fire safety conditions.

Local

‘Memory of Kuwait,’ a vault containing cultural treasures, valuable knowledge

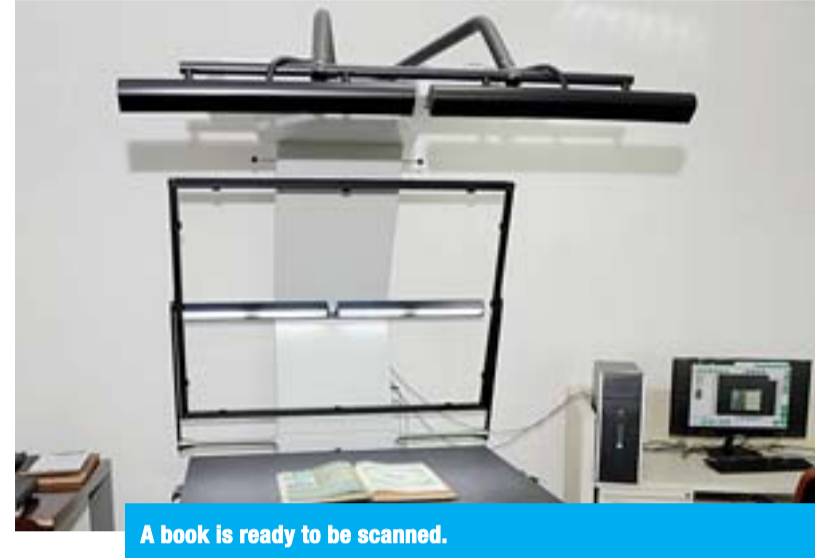
Digital age necessitated launch of this online database: Abduljalil



Dr Amal Abdulwahab



The scanning machine.



A book is ready to be scanned.

KUWAIT: The National Library of Kuwait (NLK), in an effort to preserve the ever-growing library of cultural products and treasures, had launched its ambitious ‘Thakirat Watan,’ or Memory of Kuwait digital library. The June-initiated project gathers over 1,000 multifaceted contents through an easy-accessed digital library as part of NLK strategic plan to involve all components of the society. On the subject, Deputy Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) and Director General of NLK Kamel Al-Abduljalil said that the digital age had necessitated the launch of this online database for all those who are keen on finding knowledge and expanding their horizons.

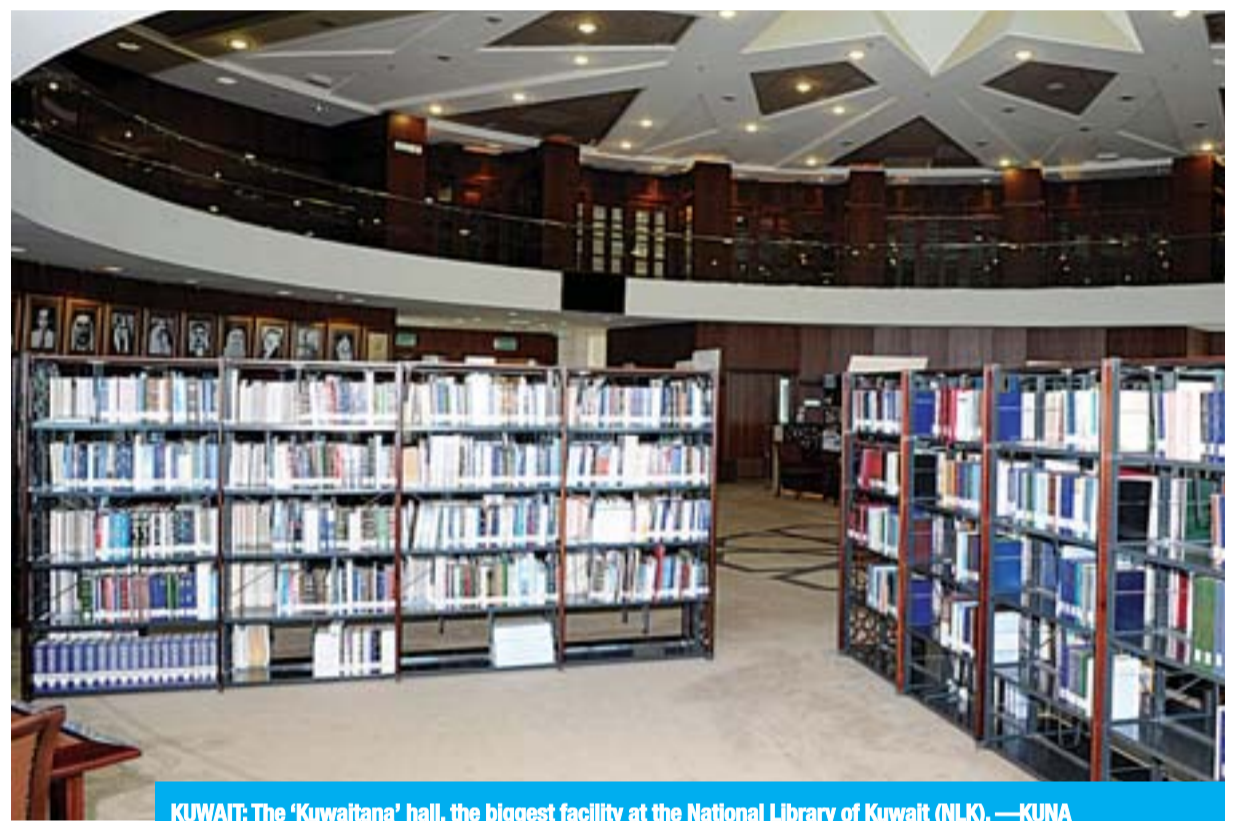
The NLK cooperated with various state entities nationally to embark on the mission to safeguard culture and knowledge produced by Kuwait; indicated Kamel Abduljalil who pointed out that the project took two years to execute. All contents were digitized during the two-year process and staff were trained to operate the system and serve the masses hungering for information and data, he affirmed. He added that all those having access to the internet on various devices and platforms could log in and browse all content related to Kuwaiti culture whether it was old and rare publications, postal stamps, or more. The current

capacity of the digital library is at around 500,000 free audio and visual contents, said Abduljalil, adding it also could host some half a million books with only around five percent fully accessed by those browsing from outside the country for copyright reasons.

Abduljalil revealed that more content would be added to the library bolstering Kuwait's reputation as a country of culture and heritage. In the same vein, NLK digital specialist and head of the digital workshop Dr Amal Abdulwahab spoke of the library digitizing process, saying that the workshop consisted of high-tech equipment facilitating the procedure. The scanning machines could digitize around 3,000 pages per hour and that helps immensely in thriving the content of the digital library, she affirmed. To access the library, one could visit <http://memoryofkuwait.nlk.gov.kw> web link to enjoy the ocean of publications, manuscripts, and documents. —KUNA



Director General of NLK Kamel Al-Abduljalil



KUWAIT: The ‘Kuwaitana’ hall, the biggest facility at the National Library of Kuwait (NLK). —KUNA

WHO commends Kuwait's support to its programs

GENEVA: Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus praised yesterday Kuwait's distinctive support to the different programs ran by the organization in facing crises. After a meeting with Kuwait's Permanent Delegate to the UN and International Organizations headquarters in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, Dr Ghebreyesus expressed thanks to the Gulf country's generous support to all programs provided by WHO in Syria, Yemen, and other areas of crises. He added that the meeting discussed supporting WHO's programs in Syria for the year

2019, targeting affected people from the conflict there, and rehabilitate the health system in some relatively stable areas. He referred to the continued Kuwaiti support to Syria since the start of the conflict, which enhanced the organization's ability in facing health challenges.

Meanwhile, Executive Director of WHO health emergencies Program Michael Ryan said that the Kuwaiti support is always timely, which helps us move as quickly as possible to contain the crises before they escalate. He stressed that cooperation with the Kuwaiti authorities in coordinating programs and intervention, especially in emergencies, is encouraging. In the meantime, Ambassador Ghunaim noted that the meeting discussed Kuwait's commitments before Brussels III Conference on ‘Supporting the future of Syria and the region,’ which held last March. The meeting dealt with the outstanding bilateral cooperation between the two sides and their keenness to strengthen it in various fields, he explained. —KUNA



GENEVA: Kuwait's Permanent Delegate to the UN and International Organizations headquarters in Geneva Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim meets with WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. —KUNA

World Bank Group lauds Kuwait efforts to attain SDGs

KUWAIT: The World Bank Group Resident Representative in Kuwait Ghassan Khoja said yesterday that Kuwait has taken firm steps to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its national planning and development framework. Khoja valued the efforts exerted by the Ministry of State for Economic Affairs and the Supreme Council for Planning and Development in preparing the Kuwait Voluntary National Review 2019, a report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The World Bank Group commends Kuwait's focus on

making and implementing solid and balanced social, economic, and environmental policies, he expressed. Kuwait has worked on implementing measures to attain SDGs, Khoja said, noting the Kuwait Voluntary National Review represents significant steps toward evaluating the assessing progress to attain such goals, and shows the Kuwaiti leadership's determination to achieve fair and comprehensive sustainable socio-economic development.

Meanwhile, Khoja mentioned there are current challenges that could hinder some reformations, indicating the World Bank, through its strategic partnership with Kuwait, constantly aspires to support attaining His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's ‘New Kuwait 2035’ vision. Kuwait took part in a UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) on July 18, themed ‘empowering people and ensuring integration and equality,’ and presented its first voluntary report on objectives of sustainable development at the national level. —KUNA

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The American University of Kuwait received its Institutional Accreditation from the Private Universities Council (PUC), Ministry of Higher Education in the State of Kuwait, and has a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with Dartmouth College (Hanover, N Hampshire - USA).



Afghan presidential candidates fear for safety after attack

YouTube needs 'new set of rules and laws'



GILROY: Police vehicles arrive on the scene of the investigation following a deadly shooting at the Gilroy Garlic Festival in Gilroy, 80 miles south of San Francisco, California on July 28, 2019. — AFP

Three killed in US festival shooting

Suspected gunman dead; six-year-old boy among the victims

GILROY: Three people were killed in a shooting at a major food festival in California on Sunday before police gunned down the suspected attacker, officers said. Among the victims was a six-year-old boy, his grandmother told US media, while at least 15 others were injured. Officers confronted and shot dead the suspect "in less than a minute," said Scot Smithee, police chief of the city of Gilroy, 30 miles southeast of San Jose. A search for a possible second suspect was ongoing, Smithee said, adding that the site of the three-day Gilroy Garlic Festival was "still an active crime scene."

"We believe based on witness statements that there was a second individual involved in some way, we just don't know in what way," he told journalists. The grandmother of six-year-old Stephen Romero said he was shot while attending the event with his mother and other grandmother. Describing her grandson as "always kind, happy and... playful," Maribel Romero told ABC7 News Stephen had died by the time she arrived at hospital.

'Random' shooting

Footage showed people fleeing in terror as shots

rang out at one of the largest food festivals in the country. A witness named Julissa Contreras told NBC a white man in his 30s armed with a rifle opened fire indiscriminately. "I could see him shooting in just every direction. He wasn't aiming at anyone specifically. It was just left to right, right to left," Contreras said, according to NBC. "He definitely was prepared for what he was doing," she said.

Smithee said the suspect appeared to have entered the 50-acre festival site via a creek, using cutting equipment to breach the event's perimeter. Metal detectors and bag searches were in place as part of "very tight security" at the festival, he said. No motive was known but the suspect's shooting appeared "somewhat random," Smithee added. The suspect used "some sort of a rifle," he said. US President Donald Trump earlier tweeted that law enforcement officers were at "the scene of shootings" in Gilroy, urging members of the public to "Be careful and safe!"

Festival director Brian Bowe told reporters it was "horribly upsetting" that the attack happened on the

third and final day of this year's event in Gilroy, which he described as an "amazing... a tightly-knit community." "Our 4,000-plus local volunteers work so hard every year and to see this event end this way is just one of the most tragic and sad things that I've ever had to see," Bowe said. "We feel so upset for those that are impacted - friends, families, neighbors. It's just a horrible thing to experience."

'Senseless violence'

California governor Gavin Newsom said the incident was "nothing short of horrific." "Tonight, (California) stands with the Gilroy community. My office is monitoring the situation closely," he tweeted. "Grateful for the law enforcement's efforts and their continued work as this situation develops." The Mercury News reported that the shooting took place as the festival was winding down. Stagehand Shawn Viaggi hit the ground after hearing "loud pops," it said. "I called out, 'It's a real gun, let's get out of here,' and we hid under the stage," Viaggi said, according to the newspaper.

The Gilroy Garlic Festival features live entertainment including bands and cooking competitions as well as food and drink, and draws nearly 100,000 people over three days each year, according to organizers. The family event is a major focal point for the small city of around 50,000. Thirteen-year-old Evenny Reyes told the Mercury News that "we were just leaving and we saw a guy with a bandana wrapped around his leg because he got shot. And there were people on the ground, crying." "There was a little kid hurt on the ground. People were throwing tables and cutting fences to get out," said Reyes.

"Grateful to first responders who are on the scene in Gilroy and keeping those injured by such senseless violence in my thoughts," Senator Kamala Harris, who is running for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, wrote on Twitter. Shootings are a frequent occurrence in the United States, but despite the scale of the gun violence problem in the country, efforts to address it legislatively have long been largely deadlocked at the federal level. — AFP

Restrictions imposed by the Iran nuke deal

VIENNA: Parties to Iran's 2015 nuclear deal are meeting in Vienna on Sunday for emergency talks called in response to an escalation in tensions between Iran and the West that included confrontations at sea and Tehran's breaches of the accord. Below are some of the key restrictions imposed by the nuclear deal, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Uranium enrichment level

The biggest obstacle to producing nuclear weapons is obtaining enough fissile material - weapons-grade highly enriched uranium or plutonium - for the bomb's core. The deal caps the level of purity to which Iran can enrich uranium hexafluoride, the feedstock for centrifuges, at 3.67%, far below the 90% of weapons grade. It is also well below the 20% level to which Iran enriched uranium before the deal. The 3.67% cap lasts 15 years.

Enrichment capacity

Iran has two vast enrichment sites, at Natanz and Fordow. Much of Natanz is deep underground and Fordow is buried inside a mountain, which is widely believed to protect them from aerial bombardment. The deal allows Iran to

continue enrichment at Natanz but with constraints. It turns Fordow into a "nuclear, physics and technology centre" where centrifuges are used for purposes other than enrichment, such as producing stable isotopes. The JCPOA also: Slashes the number of centrifuges installed in Iran to roughly 6,000 from around 19,000 before the deal. - Only allows Iran to produce enriched uranium with its first-generation IR-1 centrifuges. - Allows Iran to use small numbers of more advanced centrifuges for research, but without accumulating enriched uranium, for 10 years

Uranium stock

The deal caps Iran's stock of low-enriched uranium at 300 kg of uranium hexafluoride enriched to 3.67% or its equivalent for 15 years. That corresponds to 202.8 kg of uranium, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is policing the deal's restrictions. Iran produced tons before the deal. Any excess enriched uranium was either downblended to the level of natural uranium or shipped out of the country in exchange for natural uranium. The United States said in 2015 the deal reduced Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium by 98%, to less than the amount needed for one weapon from enough for about 10.

Cutting off plutonium track

Iran was further from being able to produce a weapon with plutonium than with uranium. It was building a heavy-water reactor at Arak that could eventually have produced spent fuel from



TEHRAN: President Hassan Rouhani (right) greets Oman's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Yusuf bin Alawi Bin Abdullah in Tehran. — AFP

which plutonium could be separated. Under the JCPOA: The core of that reactor has been removed and filled with concrete to make it unusable. - The reactor is being redesigned so as to "minimize the production of plutonium and not to produce weapon-grade plutonium in normal operation". - All spent fuel from Arak will be shipped out of Iran, for the reactor's lifetime. - Iran commits not to engage in reprocessing or reprocessing research activities for 15 years. - Iran can continue to produce heavy water, used as a moderator in reactors like Arak, but its stock is capped around 130 tonnes. It has previously shipped excess amounts abroad for storage or sold them. This restriction lasts 15 years.

More intrusive oversight

The JCPOA: Requires Iran to apply the IAEA's Additional Protocol - which grants the agency wide-ranging inspection powers - and "subsequently seek ratification and entry into force" Grants IAEA inspectors daily access to Natanz and Fordow for 15 years. - Says the deal's signatories must vet Iran's purchases of nuclear or dual-use equipment. Bans Iran from carrying out a range of activities that could contribute to making a nuclear bomb, such as computer simulations of a nuclear explosion or designing certain multi-point detonation systems. In some cases, those activities can be carried out with the other signatories' approval. — Reuters

A suspicious crash? Indian rape accuser fighting for her life

NEW DELHI: An Indian teenager who accused a senior politician of rape is fighting for her life after being critically injured in a crash that killed two relatives, raising suspicions of foul play. Her lawyer was also badly injured in the accident, which occurred in northern Uttar Pradesh state Sunday when a truck collided with their car. Police said yesterday they had arrested the truck driver and were investigating claims that it may have been a hit to silence the young woman.

"We are analyzing all the aspects, we are looking into call details and have recorded statements of eye witnesses," state police chief OP Singh told reporters in Lucknow, the state capital. Top rights body the National Commission of Women urged police to conduct an "absolutely free, fair and speedy" probe and said its team would soon meet the teenager's family. The 19-year-old accused state lawmaker Kuldeep Singh Sengar from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of raping her at his home in 2017, but police in the notoriously lawless state initially refused to take action.

Her father was detained by police and severely beaten in custody - allegedly by Sengar's brother-before

dying from his injuries. The teenager also tried to set herself on fire outside the home of Uttar Pradesh leader Yogi Adityanath, a BJP stalwart, triggering nationwide outrage. Protests across India led to the case being handed over to federal investigators who arrested Sengar last year. He denies the accusations.

Uproar in parliament

The woman's family said the crash was a deliberate attempt to kill her so the rape case does not go to trial. India's parliament was briefly suspended yesterday because of opposition protests over the case. "There could be a possibility of murder behind this incident," said Akhilesh Yadav, a former Uttar Pradesh chief minister and head of the regional Samajwadi Party. But police chief Singh said the crash "appears to be purely a road accident". He said the truck was speeding, but declined to comment further while an investigation was ongoing. However, media reports said suspicions had been raised because the truck's registration number was painted over.

Priyanka Gandhi, a leader of the opposition Congress party, said the accident was "shocking" and questioned why Sengar was still a member of the BJP. The case has shone a spotlight on India's atrocious record on rape. Nearly 40,000 cases are reported every year, according to official figures. Campaigners say the real number is higher, with victims wary of filing cases because of the social stigma and a lack of faith in investigators. Yesterday, a 36-year-old woman died after she set herself on fire in the western city of Jaipur, accusing police of inaction over her rape complaint. — AFP

International

Death toll in Boko Haram funeral attack rises to 65

Dozens more bodies discovered following the assault

GAJIRAM: An attack this weekend by Boko Haram fighters on a funeral in northeast Nigeria has left 65 people dead, almost triple the initial toll, a local official said yesterday. Dozens more bodies were discovered following the assault Saturday by gunmen on a village close to the regional capital Maiduguri. "It is 65 people dead and 10 injured," local government chairman Muhammed Bulama said. Bulama said more than 20 people died in the initial attack on a funeral gathering. Dozens more were killed as they tried to chase after the jihadists. The leader of a local anti-Boko Haram militia confirmed the death toll, while giving a slightly different account of the attack.

Bunu Bukar Mustapha told AFP 23 people were killed as they returned from the funeral and "the remaining 42 were killed when they pursued the terrorists". AFP journalists at the scene saw houses burnt in the attack. Relatives collected the bodies of those slain

for burial. Bulama said he thought the latest attack was in retaliation for the killing two weeks ago of 11 Boko Haram fighters by local residents when the jihadists approached their village. The residents also captured 10 automatic rifles.

Boko Haram fighters have repeatedly attacked the surrounding Nganzai district. In September last year, the group killed eight people and stole livestock in two villages in the area after residents tried to stop them from taking their animals. Boko Haram has waged a decade-long campaign of violence in northeast Nigeria that has killed around 27,000 people and displaced more than two million.

There are persistent attacks despite repeated claims from the Nigerian government that it has broken the insurgency. The jihadists have splintered between the Boko Haram faction loyal to historic leader Abubakar

Shekau and an affiliate of the Islamic State group. Shekau's group tends to hit softer targets including civilians, while the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) has since last year ratcheted up its campaign against the Nigerian military.

In June, 30 people were killed by a triple suicide bombing targeting football fans in Konduga, 38 kilometers from Maiduguri. The attack had the hallmarks of Shekau's faction. Late Thursday, the group attacked a camp for displaced people outside the state capital, killing two residents and looting food supplies after burning a nearby military base. Communities have increasingly turned to self-defense groups to protect themselves against the jihadist attacks. Vigilantes and local hunters have taken up arms to safeguard local residents amid widespread complaints that the military does not do enough to defend them. —AFP

Diplomatic row hits demand; Korean Air to cut Japan flights

SEOUL: Korean Air Lines, the country's top carrier, said yesterday it will suspend flights between the South Korean city of Busan and Japan's Sapporo from Sept 3, due to lean demand amid a worsening diplomatic and economic row between the two nations. Last month, Japan tightened controls of exports of high-tech materials to South Korea, in apparent retaliation for a South Korean court ruling over wartime forced labor.

Such disputes have prompted a widespread boycott of Japanese products and services, from beer to clothes and travel in South Korea. The move added chaos to the airline and tourism industries, which were already grappling with rising competition and falling travel demand to Japan - a destination popular among younger tourists.

Koreans are the second-largest travelers to Japan only after China, accounting for 24.2% of footfalls last year, according to data from Japan National Tourism Organization. The number had tripled over the past five years, data showed. However, the number of Korean tourists to Japan dropped between January and May, even before the diplomatic row had set off. "If the anti-Japan sentiment continues and affects our reservation rates, then we cannot

rule out the possibility of rearranging our Japan routes," said a spokesman at Jin Air, a budget affiliate of Korean Air.

Korean Air Lines has been considering cutting off unprofitable routes between the two countries from mid-August because of rising supply and slowing demand faced even before the row, a company spokeswoman said, adding that the plan has not been finalized. South Korean budget airlines T'way Air and Easter Jet will temporarily halt some of its Japan routes from September, but the decision was taken before the dispute started, industry sources said. "The price competition for Japan routes among domestic low-cost carriers have become too intense lately, making some routes unprofitable," one of the sources said. —Reuters

South Korea's No.2 full-fledged carrier Asiana Airlines and the country's biggest budget carrier Jeju Air do not hold plans to discontinue any routes to Japan, but are "closely watching the situation", representatives at the two airlines said. Japan accounted for 25% of revenue for South Korea's budget carriers, while the corresponding number for full-fledged airlines is about 10%, according to a report by Um Kyung-a, an analyst with Shinyoung Securities.

According to air traffic data, Japan Airlines said it saw a 7% increase in demand for South Korean flights in May compared with a year-ago period, so the carrier has no plans to pull down its capacity. "We will adjust our schedule accordingly if it is necessary," said a spokesman. An ANA spokeswoman also said, "We have not seen any significant impact on flights between South Korea and Japan and we plan to keep our regular schedule going forward." —Reuters

Villagers beat tigress to death after attacks

NEW DELHI: Indian police made four arrests after a mob of villagers brutally beat to death a tigress that had attacked local people. As a mobile phone video of the bloody incident went viral on social media, officials said one of nine people injured by the tigress earlier had died in hospital.

It is the latest in a growing number of man-versus-beast showdowns in India, which experts blame on shrinking habitat and food shortages for wildlife. The tigress attacked people after straying out of the Pilibhit Tiger Reserve park in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, district magistrate Vaibhav Srivastava told AFP. Dozens of armed people surrounded the animal after it entered their village, chased it and bludgeoned it to death with wooden batons and spears, he said.

Thirty-three people were wanted over the killing of the tigress and four had been arrested so far, the magistrate added, saying the villagers were scared and angry after the attacks on humans. The phone video showed people battering the animal as it lay nearly motionless on the ground. Its corpse was cremated so the animal's organs did not get into the hands of smugglers, officials said. Around 30 people were killed by tigers in India in 2018, and more than 60 tigers have died or been killed so far this year across the country. —AFP

African cattle investing - the new cash cow?

JOHANNESBURG: Cattle have long been considered a measure of wealth across Africa - but it is not just farmers cashing in. A pioneering app in South Africa lets investors, eager to benefit from rising global beef demand, buy shares in a cow from their mobile phone for as little as 576 rand (\$41). Self-styled "crowd-farming" company Livestock Wealth connects investors with small-scale farmers via its "MyFarmbook" app, where they can buy their own cow and receive interest rates of between 5% and 14% depending on where they put their money.

Launched in 2015 with 26 cows, the project now includes more than 2,000 cows and has taken in 50 million rand, with 10 percent of investors coming from outside South Africa. Groups of investors can buy a whole cow, while individuals can purchase shares in a pregnant cow or young calf. A pregnant cow costs 18,730 rand and takes 12 months before the newborn calf can be sold for a return, while investing in a calf costs 11,529 rand and takes six months for it to grow enough to be sold.

"We can link small scale farmers to big markets by introducing private capital into the growing phase," said 38 year-old Livestock Wealth founder and CEO Ntuthuko Shezi, who was inspired by his grandparents' farming success. "The household bank account was a crop," added Shezi of his family experience, standing among a herd of cattle at a partner farm in Vryheid, a ranching town in northern KwaZulu-Natal province.

Livestock contributes around 51% to the agricultural economy in South Africa, with global sheep and beef prices rising after droughts in major producing areas. "Many people live in urban areas and they have interests in participating in farming but they cannot physically be there and this offers them a platform to do that," said Wandile Sihlobo, economist with South African agribusiness association Agbiz. Small business consultant Nontokoza Sabela, 34, was once interested in farming - but found the app a better alternative.

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International

UK plays Brexit hardball with a 'stubborn' European Union

Ireland warns over united Ireland; PM heads to military base in Scotland

LONDON: Sterling slid to a 28-month low yesterday as Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government said it now assumed there would be a no-deal Brexit because a "stubborn" European Union was refusing to renegotiate their divorce. Many investors say a no-deal Brexit would send shock waves through the world economy, tip Britain's economy into a recession, roil financial markets and weaken London's position as the pre-eminent international financial centre.

The pound, which was trading at \$1.50 on the day of the 2016 referendum, dropped a cent to \$1.2282, the lowest level since March 2017. Sterling has fallen two cents since Johnson was named as British leader on Tuesday. Johnson's bet is that the threat of a no-deal Brexit will persuade the EU's biggest powers - Germany and France - to agree to revise the divorce deal that Theresa May agreed last November but failed three times to push through the British parliament.

He has said that the EU must drop a "backstop" intended to keep the Irish border open. The backstop would require the United Kingdom to remain aligned to EU customs rules if a future trading relationship falls short of ensuring an open border. The 27 other EU members, though, say publicly and privately that the divorce settlement - including the backstop - is not up for barter. Many

EU diplomats say they believe an election in Britain is highly likely.

"There must be some change from the EU and if the EU are not willing to move at all we must be ready to give the country some finality," Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said, adding that London was "turbo-charging" no deal preparations. Raab said the United Kingdom wanted a deal but repeatedly cast the bloc as "stubborn". Asked if he was threatening the EU - whose \$15.9 trillion economy is nearly six times that of the United Kingdom's - Raab said: "I am not doing any threatening."

Hedge funds increased their net short sterling positions - bets that the pound will fall - to the highest level in nearly a year. And in a sign investors are scrambling for protection against currency swings around the time of the Oct. 31 exit, three-month implied volatility surged to a four-month high. Johnson has told EU leaders he will sit down for Brexit talks when they indicate they are ready to shift on the divorce deal, otherwise Britain will prepare for leaving without a deal, his spokeswoman said yesterday.

'Our union'

Differences over Brexit have strained the bonds that tie the United Kingdom. While the country voted 52-48 to leave in 2016,

Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to stay in the EU while Wales and England vote to leave. The question of the unification of Ireland and British-ruled Northern Ireland will inevitably arise if Britain leaves the European Union without a divorce deal on Oct. 31. Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said. Varadkar also suggested that a so-called hard Brexit could undermine Scotland's place in the United Kingdom.

Johnson makes his first visit to Scotland as prime minister yesterday, as his Conservative Party's leader there said she would refuse to support a no-deal Brexit. "Our Union is the most successful political and economic union in history. We are a global brand and together we are safer, stronger and more prosperous," Johnson said in a statement ahead of the visit. "So as we prepare for our bright future after Brexit, it's vital we renew the ties that bind our United Kingdom."

Johnson's promise to deliver Brexit, with or without a deal, has put him at odds with some in his party who oppose a "no deal" exit - including its Scottish leader Ruth Davidson. Gordon Brown, a Scot and a former prime minister, said this month that Johnson could be the United Kingdom's last prime minister as he could be on a collision course with Scottish nationalists. Last week, Scotland's nationalist leader Nicola Sturgeon



GARELOCHHEAD: Commander Justin Codd (left) chats with Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson (right) aboard Vanguard-class submarine HMS Victorious during a visit to Faslane Naval base (HM Naval Base Clyde), north of Glasgow in Scotland yesterday. — AFP

wrote to Johnson telling him his Brexit plans she would continue preparations for a second independence referendum. — Reuters

YouTube needs 'new set of rules and laws'

PARIS: The video-sharing platform YouTube is striving to block those who would use it to promote racism, hate speech, violence and disinformation, its number two executive has told AFP, as the Google-owned company comes under increasing scrutiny. "YouTube has now grown to a big city. More bad actors have come into place. And just like in any big city, you need a new set of rules and laws and kind of regulatory regime," chief product officer Neal Mohan said in an interview.

Rising public pressure on YouTube and other social media platforms has prodded them to try and limit the negative aspects, lest governments clamp down with more stringent regulation. Media reports said last week that the American tech giant Google had reached a multimillion-dollar settlement with the US Federal Trade Commission over alleged violations of children's data privacy laws on YouTube.

YouTube and other platforms have also been seen as havens for conspiracy theorists denying Holocaust or the September 11 attacks, as well as for Nazi and white supremacist groups. "We must adapt to make sure that those things don't become rampant on our platform," Mohan said. YouTube said in June that it would ban videos promoting or glorifying racism and discrimination as well as those denying well-documented violent events, like the Holocaust. "Two billion users come to the platform every single month," Mohan noted, "so we must take our responsibility as a platform incredibly seriously."

Where 'the magic comes from'

"We want to make sure that YouTube remains an open platform because that's where a lot of the magic comes from, even though there may be some opinions and voices on the platform that I don't agree with, that you don't agree with." Tech giants are facing increased scrutiny, with some political leaders calling for a breakup of the dominant players and others seeking tougher privacy and content moderation rules. "I think first and foremost that that is our responsibility," Mohan said. "Community guidelines that were simple and straightforward 10 years ago don't apply the same way. They must be updated, they must be changed."

However the process is complex and the executive warned against expectations of a rapid solution. "You can't just write a hate speech policy in one weekend. It could result in many unintended consequences," he said. "We update our policies, we consult with many third party experts all across the world" with varied political leanings and points of view to "come up with some language that can then be enforced," he added. "It's not a trivial process to come up with a new policy and a new enforcement regime."

'Borderline' videos

In addition to hate speech, Mohan pointed out that YouTube also scrutinizes videos that consist of "harassment, harmful and dangerous pranks, spam and abuse, fraud," or threats to child safety. He highlighted the problem of "borderline" videos that can spread "harmful misinformation" without explicitly violating YouTube's rules.

In the United States, the company has people evaluate such content, after which it decides to what extent the videos will be recommended to other users. That appears to have reduced recommendations of borderline content by around half, according to YouTube, and the system is due to be expanded to other countries. "People should also be allowed to say things that... not everyone might agree with," Mohan said, while also noting that "we don't have the obligation to recommend every piece of content in a similar fashion."

He suggested that some sort of positive discrimination could be applied to "authoritative sources like AFP or CNN or BBC or the AP or whoever". They in exchange would be challenged to provide "interesting and engaging" content. However he said that YouTube would not shut the door on those who are outside the mainstream media. "A new creator can come along and... by building up his credibility, building up his trustworthiness as a news source," could "establish themselves as an authoritative source on a particular topic." — AFP

Joe Biden to face clash over race in upcoming debate

WASHINGTON: Expect bare-knuckle political sparring when 2020 frontrunner Joe Biden battles his Democratic rivals this week, with challengers criticizing him on racial issues and low-polling candidates seeking last-gasp breakthroughs for their sagging campaigns.

Twenty Democratic White House hopefuls will gather under the klieg lights for their party's second nationally-televised debate, a two-night affair beginning today in Detroit that is expected to bring more heat than the debut showdown last month. "I'm not going to be as polite this time," Biden told a fundraiser in Detroit Wednesday, as the two most prominent African American candidates in the race — senators Kamala Harris and Cory Booker — signaled they will be seize the offensive against the former vice president.

Despite differences over how to go after Republican President Donald Trump, and recognition that issues such as the economy and health care should dominate campaign talk, the escalating conflict over race has emerged as perhaps the prominent issue of the moment ahead of the debate. Trump himself has fueled the divisions, attacking

ethnic minority lawmakers in tweets and campaign appearances that sparked fraught national deliberations about race relations in America. With Biden the clear leader in Democratic polls - he has double the support of number two candidate Bernie Sanders - he is also the primary target.

He will face open confrontation about his record when he takes the stage Wednesday for his rematch with Harris, which will also feature Booker. Both have pointed to controversial positions in Biden's past, including his work with segregationists in the US Senate and his opposition to federally mandated busing to desegregate schools. "If they want to argue about the past, I can do that," Biden said at the fundraiser. "I got a past I'm proud of. They got a past that's not quite so good."

Several candidates have prepared for the two-night clash by wooing black voters, a crucial Democratic demographic. Harris, an ex-prosecutor who has been criticized for opposing some criminal justice reforms while attorney general of California, rolled out a \$60 billion plan for black higher education. Biden unveiled a criminal justice proposal, and Pete Buttigieg, an Indiana mayor in the second tier of candidates, recently presented a plan for what he calls "investment in the empowerment of black America."

Biden, 76, has acknowledged he was ill-prepared to counter the brickbats against him in the opening debate. Polls show many black voters are unmoved by the fracas with Biden, who enjoys good will from African Americans over his eight-year stint as Barack Obama's loyal deputy. A Monmouth University poll released Thursday shows Biden



DETROIT: Democratic 2020 presidential candidate Joe Biden addresses Presidential Forum the NAACP's 110th National Convention at Cobo Center in Michigan. — AFP

with 51 percent support among African Americans in early-voting South Carolina.

Booker, currently eighth in polling according to RealClearPolitics, sought to capture some of that support by noting Biden's new criminal justice plan stands in contrast to the 1994 crime bill Biden helped draft. Booker dubbed Biden an "architect of mass incarceration" for supporting that bill, and he told the National Urban League that a candidate gets "no great badge of courage" for calling Trump a racist today. "The question is, what were you doing to address structural inequality and institutional racism throughout your life?" — AFP



MOSCOW: In this file photograph, Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny addresses supporters during an unauthorized anti-Putin rally in Moscow. Russia's jailed opposition politician Alexei Navalny might have been exposed to an unidentified 'toxic agent,' his personal doctor said yesterday. — AFP

Russia opposition leader targeted with 'toxic agent'

MOSCOW: Russia's jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny might have been targeted by a "toxic agent," his doctor said yesterday, as the Kremlin scrambled to contain a fresh political crisis after major protests. The health of President Vladimir Putin's top opponent deteriorated a day after almost 1,400 people were arrested at an unauthorized protest on Saturday, in the largest police crackdown in recent years.

The Russian opposition leader is serving a 30-day jail sentence for calling Saturday's rally after authorities blocked prominent independent candidates from taking part in Moscow parliament elections in September. On Sunday, Navalny was rushed from jail to hospital suffering an acute allergic reaction. "Some toxic agent may be the reason for Alexei Navalny's 'illness'," his physician Anastasia Vasilyeva said in a post on Facebook, adding that doctors at Moscow's hospital No 64, which treated him, have behaved strangely. Vasilyeva said Sunday the 43-year-old could have been exposed to an "unknown chemical substance". A representative of the hospital said yesterday Navalny was "in a satisfactory condition." "His body temperature is 36.6C," the representative said, declining to release Navalny's diagnosis.

In a new post yesterday, Vasilyeva, who treated Navalny for a serious eye injury in the past, accused the

doctors of not wanting to investigate what had caused Navalny's illness. They say "he simply has hives. But why are you lying?" the ophthalmologist said. "They have decided against establishing the cause of generalized oedema and rash." She told the independent channel TV Rain that samples of Navalny's tissue would undergo independent tests.

She also said she was finally allowed to examine the politician. Vasilyeva and another physician visited Navalny on Sunday but were not allowed to properly examine the politician who had swollen eyelids, discharge in the eye, and rash on his upper body. Vasilyeva said it appeared that he was suffering from acute toxic conjunctivitis and dermatitis. The hospital doctors refused to inform Navalny and his family of his diagnosis and were visibly jittery, Vasilyeva said.

She treated Navalny in 2017 when he nearly lost the sight in one eye after an attack by an assailant. She said she was worried for the condition of the damaged eye. Navalny has never suffered from allergies in the past, his spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh has said. On Saturday, police brutally crushed a peaceful rally after thousands took to the Moscow streets demanding the Kremlin open up the tightly controlled political system. Ahead of the rally police detained a number of popular opposition politicians who have fought to get on the ballot and raided their homes and campaign offices. Despite the crackdown, thousands of protesters-many in their 20s and early 30s-still turned up in central Moscow and clashed with police. Liberal Russian media estimated the turnout at 10,000-15,000 people. The opposition called for a new protest on Saturday. The Bell, a respected Russian-language online media, said the Kremlin had underestimated the Muscovites' anger and readiness to protest. — AFP

UN investigators call for an IS 'Nuremberg'

BAGHDAD: The head of the UN special probe into Islamic State group crimes has called for trials like those at Nuremberg of Nazi leaders to ensure the jihadists' victims are heard and their ideology "debunked". For a year, British lawyer Karim Khan has travelled around Iraq with a team of almost 80 people to gather evidence and witness testimony for the UN body known as UNITAD. "It's a mountain to climb", the human rights specialist told AFP, as the investigative team works to analyze up to 12,000 bodies from more than 200 mass graves, 600,000 videos of IS crimes and 15,000 pages from the group's bureaucracy.

Crucifixions, slavery, beheadings

Five years ago, when their self-proclaimed "caliphate" spanned territory the size of the United Kingdom, the jihadists imposed their brutal rule over seven million people across Iraq and Syria with administrations, schools, child soldiers, a severe interpretation of Islam and medieval punishments. Minority groups considered by IS to be "heretics" or "satanists" were killed by the thousands, tortured or enslaved. IS "wasn't some kind of guerilla warfare or a mobile rebel group... that's one aspect that is unusual" for international justice, Khan said from the ultra-secure UNITAD headquarters in Baghdad.

"There was no taboo" for IS, Khan said. "Who could have thought in the 21st century we would see crucifixion or burning a human alive in a cage, slavery, sexual slavery, throwing people off buildings, beheadings". And all this captured "with a TV camera". Despite the horror, these crimes "are not new," he said. "What is new perhaps with IS, is that the ideology fuels the criminal group in the same way that fascism fuelled the criminal pogroms of Hitler."

Nazi leaders were put on trial at the 1945-1946 international military tribunal at Nuremberg, Germany for the murder of around six million Jews during World War II. Today almost every day Iraqis are sentenced, often to death, but the victims are not present at the trials and the only charge brought is belonging to IS. But Khan said trials where evidence and testimony are exposed to everyone are the only way to turn the page.

After IS, "Iraq and humanity requires its Nuremberg moment", he said. Because of Nuremberg, "nobody could be taken seriously if they would espouse the principles of Mein Kampf (written by Adolf Hitler). In fact alarms bells in the public conscience would be aroused if anybody thought the principles of fascism were an alternative political philosophy", he added. — AFP

International

Rights group accuses Bangladesh of torture; govt calls report 'baseless'

Report based on 300 cases from 2009 to 2017

DHAKA: Bangladesh's law enforcement agencies have used systematic torture on detainees to stifle dissent, an international human rights group said yesterday in a report that the government dismissed as baseless. The report, titled "Cycle of Fear", was jointly produced by the Geneva-based World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) - a coalition of NGOs fighting torture and ill-treatment - and the Bangladeshi human rights group Odhikar.

OMCT said the report was based on an examination of more than 300 cases of what it called torture between 2009 and 2017 and information gathered from alleged victims, members of the executive, the

judiciary, representatives of civil society and of international organizations. Information it received revealed that "Extreme forms of physical violence had been used on detainees, the organization said, citing instances such as shooting in the legs or knees, the breaking of bones, drilling holes in arms and legs, and rape, as well as mental abuse, including mock executions and death threats.

Complaints of torture, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings had increased in recent years and the government had failed to investigate and punish the perpetrators, the organizations said. The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina,

who won a third straight term in a December 2018 election, rejected the report. "We can tell you with emphasis that there is no single incident of disappearance or extrajudicial killing with the knowledge of this government," Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan told Reuters.

"For the last 10 years there is no lawlessness in the country or any application of torture by this government to silence dissent with any government machinery," he added. Gerald Staberock, OMCT secretary general, said torture was used to instil fear and quash dissent, to coerce confessions or as a tool for corrupt law enforcement agents to extract bribes. "We call on

Bangladesh to acknowledge the magnitude of the problem and start a complete overhaul of its law enforcement and judiciary systems," Staberock said.

A political deadlock in Bangladesh fed "widespread impunity", the groups said. Several leaders of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party have been jailed on charges the opposition says are politically motivated. "While the government has declared at various times a 'zero tolerance policy' towards torture and other serious human rights violations, there is little evidence of such a policy ever being pursued and transformed into real accountability," the report said. —Reuters

Modi versus Wild: PM to join Grylls in the wilderness

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is teaming up with British TV adventurer Bear Grylls to venture into India's wilderness to raise awareness about protecting nature, the show's host said. India is struggling to protect its environment and its wildlife, as a huge and growing population puts ever more pressure on its wild spaces.

"People across 180 countries will get to see the unknown side of PM @narendramodi as he ventures into Indian wilderness to create awareness about animal conservation & environmental change," Grylls, star of survival show "Man vs. Wild" on the Discovery Channel, said on Twitter. A trailer for the program shows Modi, 68, driving into the Jim Corbett National Park in northern India guided by Grylls, with images of a tiger, a herd of elephants and deer running in the distance. "You are the most important person in India, it's my

job to protect you," Grylls tells Modi.

Modi said he had grown up in nature and the program with Grylls was a chance to showcase India's rich wildlife. "For years, I have lived among nature, in the mountains and the forests," Discovery quoted Modi as saying in a statement. "These years have a lasting impact on my life. So when I was asked about a special program focusing on life beyond politics and that too in the midst of nature I was both intrigued and inclined to take part in it."

The show, which airs on Aug. 12, is stirring some excitement among fans of Modi, who led his party to a second straight general election victory this year. "This is unbelievable. PM Modi knows how to do it," said one Twitter user, Akash Jain. India, which stretches from snow-bound Himalayan heights in the north to steamy tropics in the south, is home to most of the world's remaining wild tigers. India's tiger count rose to 2,967 in 2018, up a third from 2014, new estimates released by Modi on Monday showed.

More than 3.8 million sq km (1.5 million sq miles) of forest were surveyed in 2018 and 2019, with cameras in about



NEW DELHI: India Prime Minister Narendra Modi reads a document during a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Parliamentary Committee meeting at the Parliament house in New Delhi. —AFP

26,000 locations and hundreds of thousands of kilometers covered on foot. "India is committed to doing whatever it can to further animal protection and conservation," Modi said, releasing the census report. In recent years, endan-

gered wild cats, including leopards, have come into more frequent conflict with villagers as the animals' habitat shrinks. Last week, villagers in northern India beat a tiger to death with sticks after it mauled a man, media said. —Reuters

'Brownface' ad sparks anger in Singapore

SINGAPORE: An advertisement featuring an actor of Chinese origin with his skin darkened to portray different races has sparked anger in multi-ethnic Singapore, prompting an apology from the country's state-owned broadcaster. Race is a sensitive issue in Singapore, home to ethnic Chinese, ethnic Indians and Muslim Malays, as well as a large number of expatriates from all over the world. The ad, part of a government-initiated campaign for cashless transactions in the tech-savvy city-state, featured actor Dennis Chew from broadcaster Mediacorp as four characters.

His skin was darkened to depict an Indian man, he put on a headscarf to act the part of a Muslim woman, and he also portrayed a Chinese man and a Chinese woman. Each character was shown holding a plate of food paid for electronically. "Brownface in a Singaporean ad in 2019. I thought we already went over this," magazine editor Ruby Thiagarajan said on Twitter, in a post that had been retweeted nearly 3,000 times yesterday. "Brownface" or "blackface" are terms referring to the practice of darkening an actor's skin to portray a person of a different race.

Mediacorp, through its celebrity management arm The Celebrity Agency, apologized "for any hurt that was unintentionally caused". "The message behind this advertising campaign is that e-payment is for everyone". The broadcaster, in a statement issued jointly with advertising agency Havas Worldwide, added the actor was chosen as he was "well-known for his ability to portray multiple characters in a sin-



SINGAPORE: Tourists walk along an alley in Chinatown district in Singapore. —AFP

gle production in a light-hearted way". They would not confirm whether the ad had been pulled but it had disappeared from a website as well as some public places where it was displayed last week.

Most of the criticism centered on how the ad had used just one actor from the country's main ethnic group, rather than getting other performers to play

the different roles. "They could have hired an artist for every single race?? Is it really hard?" one Twitter user said. However other social media users said they thought there was nothing wrong with it, and people should not be oversensitive. "This ad reflects Chew's creativity immensely... There is definitely no tinge of racism here," one person wrote on Facebook. —AFP

Afghan presidential candidates fear for safety after attack

KABUL: Candidates jockeying to become Afghanistan's next president lashed out at the incumbent Ashraf Ghani yesterday after deadly violence cast a shadow over the first official day of campaigning. At least 20 people - most of them civilians - were killed and 50 others wounded Sunday when a suicide attacker and gunmen targeted the Kabul office of Ghani's running mate, Amrullah Saleh.

The violence served as a grim reminder of Afghanistan's woeful security situation and the sort of mayhem and murder that have beset previous polls. "The government has not paid attention to the candidates' security," said Qadir Shah, the spokesman for Hanif Atmar, one of the top contenders looking to stop Ghani securing a second term at September 28 elections.

Shah said that he and 12 other candidates had delayed plans to launch their campaigns, primarily over security concerns but also because they see Ghani as using his office for an unfair advan-

tage. Mohammad Hakim Torsan, considered a long-shot candidate, said his supporters worry about a repeat of the kind of violence that marred previous polls, when insurgents launched frequent attacks.

"Most of the candidates are worried about the security, but they still have to campaign. The government must provide security for us and the people," Torsan said. Interior ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said security forces had been preparing for the elections for eight months and taken "serious measures" to protect candidates, including the provision of armored vehicles. No group has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack.

Boycott threats

Saleh, who escaped without serious injury, is the former head of Afghan intelligence and an outspoken critic of the Taliban and Pakistan - a country he blames for backing the insurgents. The Taliban, along with some Afghan stakeholders, made a vague pledge this month to reduce civilian casualties. Security officials have said the insurgent group is now distancing itself from attacks killing ordinary Afghans.

A Taliban spokesman did not respond to a request for comment. Afghanistan's



KABUL: An Afghan municipality worker removes a dog killed at the site of an attack in Kabul, a day after the deadly assault targeting a political campaign office. —AFP

presidential election, the fourth since the Taliban were ousted in a US-led invasion in 2001, is off to a rocky start. The poll has been delayed twice this year as the US leads a push to forge a peace deal with the Taliban, and voters have little faith in the system following widespread fraud allegations in 2014.

Atmar, who was Ghani's former

national security advisor, and 12 other candidates have even threatened to boycott the election unless the international community can help ensure it is "clean". There are also doubts the election will happen at all, with lingering questions about whether Afghanistan should hold a key poll just as the US and Taliban are negotiating. —AFP

News in brief

Indian man bites snake

UTTAR PRADESH: An Indian man who was bitten by a snake got his revenge on the reptile by biting it back and killing it, the man's father said yesterday. The man, Raj Kumar, was relaxing at home, enjoying a drink on Sunday, when a snake slithered into his house in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, and bit him, said his father. "A snake bit him. So, in turn, he bit it and chewed it into pieces," said the father, Babu Ram. The man's family took him to hospital where media said his condition was critical. The snake that bit him was reported to have been a rat snake, which experts regard as usually not venomous. "This is definitely weird," said Raj Kumar's doctor, NP Singh. "I've seen people coming in with snakebites, but never somebody who bit a snake and then brought it with him in a bag." —Reuters

Lead risks from Notre-Dame

PARIS: A French environmental group said yesterday that it had filed a lawsuit accusing officials of failing to move quickly to contain the risks of lead contamination after the fire that ravaged the Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris last April. Hundreds of tons of lead in the church's roof and steeple melted during the blaze, releasing toxic particles that settled on streets and buildings in surrounding neighborhoods. Authorities have insisted that any contamination poses no danger, following a media report last week alleging that they had covered up lead pollution levels in local schools. But last Thursday, city officials indefinitely shut two schools near the gothic landmark after tests revealed high levels of lead pollution on a shared playground. Cleanup work at Notre-Dame was also halted after the top government official in the Paris region acknowledged that anti-contamination measures were insufficient. —AFP

Nigeria bans local Shiite group

ABUJA: Nigeria's government has banned a Shiite Muslim group whose followers have been holding protests to demand the release of their detained leader, accusing the group of inciting violence. At least 20 members of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria have been killed over the past week during a series of protests that have shown little sign of abating, raising pressure on the government. Nigerian police have responded with teargas and gunfire to the protests and a court on Saturday granted the government permission to label the group a terrorist organization. The group, Nigeria's biggest Shiite organization, can appeal the ruling. Its members have been marching in the capital Abuja calling for the release of leader Ibrahim Zakzaky, who has been in detention since 2015 despite a court order to release him. —AFP

5 Sudanese protesters killed

KHARTOUM: Five demonstrators including students were shot dead at a rally in Sudan yesterday, a day before protest leaders and ruling generals meet to resolve the remaining issues concerning the forming of a civilian administration. The two sides have already signed a power-sharing deal that aims to set up a joint civilian-military ruling body which in turn would install civilian rule. That is the main demand of a nationwide protest movement that led to the April ouster of longtime leader Omar Al-Bashir and has since demanded that the military council which took his place cede power to civilians. But ahead of the talks, five protesters were killed yesterday, including four students, in the central town of Al-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan state, a doctors committee linked to the protest movement said in a statement. —AFP

Pope deplores 'evil vice'

VATICAN CITY: Prostitution is an "evil vice" that reduces women to slavery, often carried out by men who call themselves Christian, Pope Francis wrote in a book preface published in Italian media yesterday. "All forms of prostitution amount to slavery, a criminal act, a disgusting vice which confuses making love with relieving one's own instincts by torturing a defenseless woman," said the text published in La Repubblica daily. "A person can never be sold," the pontiff wrote in the preface of a book by Aldo Buonaiuto, a priest attached to the Pope John XXIII Community, a Roman Catholic charity that looks after the poor, prostitutes and troubled. "It is a sickness of humanity, an erroneous way of considering society. Freeing these poor slaves is a merciful gesture and a duty for all men of good will. Their cry of pain cannot leave individuals or institutions indifferent," the pope wrote. —AFP

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

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ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
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P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
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Tech traps UK teens in mental health crisis - can it save them?

For the British teachers grappling with a mental health crisis in the classroom, running a suicide watch or rushing psychotic pupils to hospital can increasingly fall into a day's work. Staff in three London schools recalled a roll call of pupils almost lost: the girl who gulped down pills, another set on jumping off a balcony and the countless teens who needed help to stem their self-inflicted bleeding. "There's been children who have been intentionally trying to walk out in front of cars in the morning and we've had to pull them back," said one school staffer with 12 years' experience.

"The child is hearing voices, says they don't want to live, can't focus in the lesson, is curled up crying in a ball. So at that point we are like, 'Right, you need to go to (hospital) because you need some help.'" In interviews with the Thomson Reuters Foundation, staff in overstretched schools said they had dealt with students as young as nine who Googled suicide, worried about body image and received unsolicited photos of penises.

Mental disorders are set to become one of the 21st century's defining global health challenges, with patient numbers soaring at a potential global cost of \$16 trillion by 2030, according to The Lancet medical journal. The government has vowed to do better given some children wait two years for help as demand rises while services shrink. But with new initiatives - some in school, others digital - professionals said they are now treating more children, reaching more minorities and, crucially, catching them all earlier.

Self-harm

Self-harm tripled to 20 percent among women aged 16 to 24 in England - usually by cutting or overdosing - between 2000 and 2014, the Lancet Psychiatry journal said last month. "The earlier you intervene the better," said Lynne Green, a psychologist who has worked with children for 20 years. "Once belief systems take hold, it becomes really difficult to turn them around. The longer they sit there, they almost become part of the self, part of who I am, and individuals feel it is impossible to change."

From September, schools in 25 trailblazer areas will have National Health Service (NHS) teams on site to help students with minor mental health issues and refer those in urgent need. The government also funds Kooth, an online service that provides information and counselling to 70,000 children a year, while phone apps like BlueIce and TalkLife support young people in the privacy of home.

Childhood is changing rapidly. This generation is the first to grow up with smartphones, and juggle greater academic pressures with overarching worries about climate change as well as everyday anxiety over friends or fitting in. Girls are especially vulnerable, the data shows. Nearly one in four girls in England aged 17 to 19 has a disorder such as anxiety, depression or mania, official data shows, and most of them have attempted suicide or self-harmed.

"We are seeing increased levels of depression or low mood type problems, anxiety, stress," said Green, clinical director at XenZone, which runs the Kooth site. "It was quite unusual to see the under-15s presenting with the more complex mental health disorders. But I am seeing much more of that now, particularly with respect to things like eating disorders and self-harm."

Friends

The NHS gives free talking therapies to more than 1 million adults with depression and anxiety each year. It is now offering similar treatment to students in school, rather than in clinics. This cuts stigma and boosts the level of parental consent, said Becky Maharaj, an NHS staffer working in London schools. She said almost 80% of her patients are from ethnic minorities. Maharaj helps perfectionist girls build social skills by shelving work and online chat to hang with real friends instead.

"There's a correlation between the level of social anxiety we are seeing and isolation," Maharaj said, as all forms of communication move ever more online. "It's very unnatural. 'Whereas in real life, they can just make mistakes and say silly things ... rather than this constructed reality.'"

Jane was so anxious about making mistakes at school that she studied incessantly, banging her head on the desk in tears, and often refused to go in at all. Other days, her mother drove her to the gate for staff to escort her in, crying. "I didn't really want to open up about it, but once you start, you actually can't stop," said the 13-year-old, who has since faced her worst fears and survived a detention, taken up basketball and now spends more time talking to her mother.

"You have that weight lifted off your shoulders ... before I'd just sleep a lot. Now I'm more energetic. And I feel like I am just a different person." — Reuters

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



(Left) Clandestinely installed point-to-point wireless bridge antennas are seen yesterday on the roof of a Havana building, used by Cubans to receive the state Internet signal from a park to their homes. (Right) A Cuban woman verifies the technical parameters of a point-to-point wireless bridge device before buying it. — AFP



Cuba expands Internet under very wary eye

All Cubans can now have Wi-Fi in their homes, as the island's government extends Internet access even while trying to maintain control over its version of the "truth" and to defend its legitimacy, a top official tells AFP. "Cubans support and defend the revolution in every domain, both in the real and the virtual worlds," Ernesto Rodriguez Hernandez, vice minister of communications, said in an interview.

In his eyes, the Internet and social media are tools to "position the truth of Cuba, not to manipulate things," giving them a key role in the political and ideological battles being fought at a time of sharp diplomatic tensions with the United States. The telecommunications sector in Cuba - once one of the world's least connected countries - has doubtless changed more than any other in the past year.

Since December, when mobile phones gained 3G connectivity, an active online community has sprung up on social networks, often questioning the government about the challenges of daily life on the island. Since July 22, Cubans have been able to import routers, register their equipment, and then create private Wi-Fi networks connected to signals from state-controlled operator ETECSA. No longer do Cubans have to go to centralized public sites to connect. "The objective of the country is to provide wider and wider Internet access to the entire populace," the vice minister said.

Steep prices

But the technical requirements set out by new legislation would appear to put an end to the informal networks created in recent years by groups of residents. Such control is the "sovereign right" of the Cuban state, Hernandez says. And connecting is not cheap - \$1 an hour, an exorbitant amount in a country where the average monthly salary is \$50. The lowest 3G rate is \$7 for 600 megabytes. For weeks, hundreds of Cubans have been campaigning on social media under the hashtag #Bajenlospreciosdeinternet (#Lower the price of the Internet).

Since Wi-Fi's arrival in 2013, "the cost of Internet access has dropped by a factor of four," the vice minister says, adding that "it will continue to fall" as communications infrastructure improves. In this country of 11.2 million, 1,400 Wi-Fi hotspots have been installed, 80,000 homes now have Internet access and 2.5 million Cubans have 3G connectivity. But the communist government is moving forward cautiously. "The technology is not apolitical, as some try to present it," Hernandez said, but instead is "manipulated and used." Arguing for the need to "educate" the population, he added: "It does no good to provide internet service to those who do not know... how to distinguish between what is useful and what is harmful: not everything on the Internet is good."

'To protect' Cuba

A series of decrees and measures published in early July in the island's official Journal call for "responsible use by citizens" as well as both "the political defense and cybersecurity in the face of threats, attacks and risks of all sorts". The message is clear: the Internet must be an "instrument for the defense of the revolution", under regulations to be enforced by the communications ministry with the help of the "revolutionary armed forces and the interior ministry".

In short, the Internet will continue to be closely monitored by the authorities, as it has been from the start. Only a small percentage of the Cuban population can access the global internet, as opposed to the government-controlled national Internet, according to the NGO Freedom House. Blogs and websites critical of the government are frequently blocked.

Hernandez defended that practice as normal. "We don't share those Internet sites that can encourage discrimination or deal with subjects that go against morality, ethics and responsible behavior," he said. "It is a right of every state to protect its people and their society from practices of that sort - and I believe that every country in the world does so." — AFP

Sicily lures visitors with 'ethical tourism' free of mafia taint

At the crossroads of the Mediterranean, Sicily has lured hordes of visitors in its 2,500-year history. Today, it is enticing ethical tourists who do not want to line the pockets of organized criminals. Challenging the stereotypical portrayal of Sicilians as mobsters, social enterprises - businesses that aim to do good while making profits - are steering visitors toward mafia-free hotels, restaurants and shops.

In the last decade AddioPizzoTravel, the social enterprise offshoot of an anti-mafia grassroots movement, has been working with locals determined to shake up the status quo by declining to pay the "pizzo" - Sicilian slang for protection money. According to a 2012 study, nearly three-quarters of Sicily's businesses do pay. AddioPizzo also proposes tours geared toward discovering the island's natural and cultural treasures while learning about its history of civic resistance to the mafia, as well as the stories of activists and magistrates who paid with their lives.

"We wanted to promote the beauty of our landscapes and our gastronomy," Dario Riccobono, a founder of AddioPizzo said, adding "without the stereotypes that are usually attached to Sicily." "Also, the beauty of the people who had the courage to say no to the mafia." Beyond ethical holidaymakers, such initiatives have attracted educa-

tors from Italy and elsewhere keen to raise awareness of the anti-mafia movement among their students.

It all began in 2004, when a group of young friends in Palermo, Sicily's capital, plastered their home town with stickers declaring: "An entire people that pays the pizzo is a people without dignity." The pizzo is not just a cash payment, but an implacable mechanism that swallows up businesses and assimilates them into a far-reaching criminal network. In exchange for lower payments, the mafia may impose hiring its associates or using suppliers connected with it, effectively gaining control of the business.

Those who refuse often receive death threats or become the victims of vandalism and arson. They can even face ostracism from the local community and lose their customers. A survey by the Rocco Chinnici Foundation found that small businesses like shopkeepers and artisans on average pay up to 600 euros (\$670) a month in protection money, which many owners view as an inevitable business expense. For larger firms like supermarkets and construction companies, it can reach thousands of euros.

Clean economy

AddioPizzo's act of defiance led to the creation of a support network linking small businesses that refused to pay the pizzo, with local consumers willingly supporting a clean economy. As word spread throughout the country and beyond, would-be visitors to Sicily began contacting the association for mafia-free travel advice, giving birth to AddioPizzoTravel in 2009.

Today the social enterprise works with a network of more than 1,000 businesses in and around Palermo, identifiable by distinctive window stickers proclaiming "I pay

those who are not paying." And far from attracting bullying extortionists, Riccobono said the bright orange badges act as a deterrent because any intimidation or threat would promptly draw police, and media, attention.

"We were amused when we heard the confessions of mobsters-turned-informants," he said. "The mafia prefer to stay away because they know our members wouldn't hesitate to report them to the police. We are a minority, so we are just not worth the trouble." As for the chances of ethical businesses giving in to threats, Riccobono said so far that hasn't been the case. "In the last few years police investigations have retrieved mafia ledgers listing pizzo-paying businesses. But no one from AddioPizzo was in there."

The town of Corleone may have gained worldwide fame thanks to its connection to "The Godfather" book and film trilogy. But anti-mafia association Libera prefers to focus on creating job opportunities for local unemployed people, who might otherwise become ensnared in the net of organized crime. Its affiliate network of social enterprises cultivates organic crops on lands confiscated from the mafia, and has branched out into offering tours and farm stays. Visitors can board at working farms, stock up on locally produced organic wine, pasta and preserves and take guided trips to stone villages perched atop the rugged hills in the Palermo hinterland.

"Such initiatives show that crime-free jobs make sense from an economical point of view," said Lillo Gangi, a Libera activist. "We need to give concrete opportunities if we want to make impactful changes." "Otherwise, it's all too easy for an unemployed 18-year-old to end up earning 3000 euros a month as a drug dealer for the mafia," he added. — Reuters

Pray and protect: Faith saves forests of Cambodia

As a Buddhist monk, Khoem Saray's day is governed by a ritual of prayer, meditation, alms and temple chores. With one big exception - he also patrols a sprawling Cambodian forest and shows villagers how to protect it. Khoem Saray is among a dozen or so monks managing a project that is hailed as a model for conservation in a nation with one of the world's fastest rates of deforestation.

The Monk's Community Forest, established in 2002 by Bun Saluth, chief monk at Samroang pagoda, sprawls over 71 square miles in the country's northwest, on what was once a bloody battlefield under the Khmer Rouge. Today it is the largest community-managed forest conservation site in Cambodia, benefitting nearly 4,000 people in six villages. And proponents say it shows that religion can be a powerful tool in protecting the planet.

"Earlier, the villagers were cutting down trees and encroaching on forest land. Gradually, we made them understand the importance of protecting the forest - for the environment and for themselves," said Khoem Saray. "There is a deep connection between Buddhism and the environment. As monks, we are not interested in making money, so people trust us, and we can spread the word

widely," he said, seated on a wooden bridge above a stream in the forest.

Their efforts have helped conserve several threatened species, including the sun bear, gibbon, leopard and pangolin in the forest's dense evergreen and semi-evergreen canopy. Using religion to drive conservation is one of the most effective models globally, according to Yale University's Forum on Religion and Ecology, amid ever-increasing pressure on natural resources from fast-growing populations and industry.

Religious leaders - from Pope Francis to Indonesian imams - have called for action to protect the environment. Buddhists meditate in forests and consider them sacred, believing the Buddha was born in one and enlightened in another, said Chantal Elkin, a director at the non-profit Alliance for Religions and Conservation. They are at the forefront of harnessing faith to save nature. "The world's religions are regarded in some ways as the first environmental campaigners, as every theology speaks of a respect for nature, and a duty to care for the earth," said Elkin, who wrote a Master's thesis on Buddhism and conservation. "Monks see it simply as their duty to conserve forests."

Land lost

The impoverished Southeast Asian country endured decades of conflict, particularly under the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s. After the regime fell, disputes followed over precious land, exacerbated by the destruction of property records. From the early 2000s, Cambodia began awarding large economic land concessions for mines, power plants and farms to foreign companies to spur growth and reduce poverty. Such deals covered more than a tenth of the

country's land by 2012, human rights lawyers estimate. More than 770,000 people were displaced and an untold number of trees felled to make way for plantations of rubber, sugarcane and timber. Between 2001 and 2014, Cambodia lost 1.44 million hectares of forest, one of the world's fastest rates of deforestation, according to the NASA Earth Observatory.

The government issued a decree in 1993 to set up "protected areas" as a way to preserve land, forests and coastal zones. It also banned logging exports, and in 2012 announced a moratorium on new economic land concessions. In his time in Thailand, Bun Saluth saw monks teaching conservation, as well as anointing trees with prayers and saffron cloth to protect them from logging.

He took these lessons back to Cambodia, but when he tried to establish a community forest in Oddar Meanchey, he said the monks were threatened by villagers and forest officials.

Slowly, they won them over and suggested everyone run the forest together. Logging and hunting are prohibited, but villagers can use traditional fishing methods, collect firewood and gather bamboo, mushrooms, fruit and leaves. There is also a plan for eco-tourism to generate funds. "No trees means no life," Bun Saluth said.

An estimated 95 percent of Cambodia's population practices Theravada Buddhism, and monks have always had key roles in the community, from education to social ceremonies. They are also active in political protests and peace-building. The rush to develop has corralled them into conflicts over land and resources, with monks using their religious authority, local clout and social media to bolster these movements. — Reuters

Business

TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2019

13 VIVA achieves KD 20m net profit during 6-month period ended 30 June 2019**13** Global markets remain bullish on hopes of US interest rate cut**14** KIPCO announces a 13% increase in net profit for first half of 2019

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti traders monitor share prices at the Boursa Kuwait. — File photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

CMA appoints KAMCO to manage Boursa Kuwait IPO

The second and final phase of privatization process of Boursa Kuwait

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced that it has been appointed by the Capital Markets Authority - Kuwait ("CMA"), to manage the initial public offering (IPO) of Boursa Kuwait Securities Company ("Boursa Kuwait"). This appointment comes after an exhaustive tendering process, which was launched on June 2nd, 2019, where the CMA invited all eligible bidders to submit proposals for managing this offering.

As part of the second and final phase of the privatization process of Boursa Kuwait, the CMA will offer 50

percent of the share capital of Boursa Kuwait for subscription to all eligible Kuwaiti nationals in an initial public offering. This is in accordance with Article (33) of Law No. (7) of 2010 regarding the "establishment of Capital Markets Authority and regulating securities' activity".

As the Lead Manager, KAMCO will develop and manage the IPO implementation strategy in line with the timeline and requirements set forth by the CMA as part of this process. KAMCO, in coordination with the CMA, will aim to implement a streamlined subscription, and a fair share allocation process to ensure that all eligible Kuwaiti nationals registered in PACI have the

opportunity to subscribe to the IPO.

Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, CEO of KAMCO, said, "The privatization of Boursa Kuwait is considered one of the most critical transactions at a national level, as it plays a pivotal role in stimulating and fortifying the local economy. It is a turning point in actively pursuing and keeping pace with the standards of international equity markets which is in line with the 2035 Amiri Vision to transform Kuwait into an international financial hub and trade center. We are proud to undertake the role of being the subscription agent for the Boursa Kuwait IPO and are fully prepared to capitalize on our

two decades of expertise to ensure bringing about the successful completion of the IPO."

"We extend our gratitude and appreciation to the Capital Markets Authority for selecting and entrusting KAMCO with such a significant role that enables us to contribute to the restructuring of the Kuwaiti financial and investment sector. We are positive that transactions such as the privatization of Boursa Kuwait will prove momentous for local financial and investment reforms, as it positively reflects on the leading role undertaken by the private sector to support and enhance the local and regional economic scene."

AUB reports a net profit of \$377.5m for H1/2019

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank B.S.C. (AUB) reported a net profit attributable to its equity shareholders of \$377.5 million for the first half of 2019. The net profit reflected an increase of 5.6 percent in H1/2019 as compared to the net profit of \$357.4 million achieved in H1/2018. The Q2/2019 net profit of \$184.7 million represents a 1.1 percent improvement over the Q2/2018 reported profit of \$182.7 million. The Basic Earnings per Share in H1/2019 were US 4.1 cents (+5.1 percent), compared to US 3.9 cents in H1/2018 (EPS: US 1.9 cents in Q2/2019 versus US 1.9 cents in Q2/2018).

Operating income grew by 2.9 percent to \$630.1 million during first six months of 2019 compared to \$612.4 million in H1/2018 mainly driven by an increase in net interest income by \$22.9 million (+4.9 percent) to \$490.2 million in H1/2019 compared to \$467.2 million in H1/2018 attributable to growth in average loans and investments.

Net operating income increased (+4.5 percent) from \$570.1 million in H1/2018 to \$595.8 million in H1/2019. Cost to income ratio stood at 26.5 percent (H1/2018: 26.1 percent) reflecting the continuous focus on the rigorous implementation of broad based

cost discipline and of an intelligent spend approach.

Solid asset quality levels were maintained with a non-performing loans ratio of 2.0 percent (31 December 2018: 1.9 percent) with specific provision coverage ratio of 85.1 percent (31 December 2018: 85.5 percent) and total provision coverage ratio of 188.6 percent (31 December 2018: 214.7 percent).

The Group's total assets at 30 June 2019 increased by 7.1 percent to \$38.0 billion (31 December 2018: \$35.5 billion). Return on Average Assets was at 2.2 percent for H1/2019 (H1/2018: 2.3 percent). The Group's equity attributable to owners at 30 June 2019 stood at \$3.9 billion (31 December 2018: \$3.9 billion). The Group's Return on Average Equity (ROAE) achieved for H1/2019 was 18.4 percent (H1/2018: 18.8 percent).

Meshal Al-Othman, AUB Chairman, commented: "Despite mounting geopolitical tension in the region and subdued operating environments in AUB's major markets, AUB continued its robust performance in first half of 2019 maintaining prudent and healthy growth in core earnings and operating net profit. AUB's continued positive core performance is a testament to its well-managed business model based on diversification and cross border flows through its strategic investments across the Gulf and MENA region. Growth was underpinned by robust risk management and continuous focus to ensure the effective deployment of capital resources across the AUB Group's current and targeted markets."



Meshal Al-Othman

LSE's \$27 billion Refinitiv takeover plan lifts its shares to record

LONDON: London Stock Exchange shares rose more than 15 percent to a record high yesterday after it said it was in talks to buy financial data firm Refinitiv, in a deal worth \$27 billion including debt. The proposed deal, which would turn LSE into a global player in financial data and expand its footprint in foreign exchange and fixed income, comes less than a year after Blackstone bought a majority stake in Refinitiv from Thomson Reuters, which valued it at \$20 billion.

LSE's shares were 15 percent higher at 6,520 pence at 1110 GMT yesterday after hitting a record high of 6,562 pence, taking them to the top of London's bluechip index. Thomson Reuters, the parent company of Reuters, holds a 45 percent stake in Refinitiv. A person familiar with the matter told Reuters that if the negotiations conclude successfully, a deal could be announced this week.

LSE shareholder Royal London Asset Management (RLAM) said it was right the exchange expanded further into data, but that it wanted more information about Refinitiv's business lines.

"We are eager to hear more from management as to their quality and ability to integrate them," Mike Fox, head of sustainable investments at RLAM, holds 0.98 percent of LSE, said in an email. Refinitiv's bonds, issued when Blackstone bought Thomson Reuters' Financial and Risk business to form Refinitiv, rallied across the curve yesterday.

For example, a senior unsecured US dollar November 2026 bond rose 5 cents on the dollar to 109.5, sending the yield - which moves inversely to price - to 5.4791 percent from 7 percent at the end of last week. Refinitiv had \$12.2 billion in debt as of the end of December as a result of its leveraged buyout by Blackstone, which LSE would assume under the proposed deal. A merger with Refinitiv would significantly expand LSE's information services business, which the bourse



operator has been building as a more stable source of cash flow than its primary transaction-reliant businesses.

JP Morgan analysts said the deal would be strategically sensible, and in line with the LSE's strategy to focus on deals that extend into growth areas such as data and analytics and to complement existing businesses. LSE tried to merge with rival Deutsche Boerse AG in 2017, their fifth attempt to combine, but the deal collapsed when European regulators blocked it due to concerns about overlaps in their bond processing businesses.

Deutsche Boerse had been in talks to buy Refinitiv's FX trading platform FXAll but said on Saturday that the deal was unlikely to complete. Deutsche Boerse's shares were 2.1 percent lower at 124.8 euros.

Anti-trust review

LSE's proposed deal is also expected to face a long antitrust review, four sources told Reuters. Berenberg analysts said the size of the proposed deal makes a detailed competition review almost inevitable, with regulators likely to look at the impact of combining Refinitiv's over-the-counter trading platforms with LSE's clearing business. "We do not anticipate any deal to fall foul of anti-trust concerns," the analysts said. — Reuters

KUWAIT'S FIRST ALL-ELECTRIC CAR

CHEVROLET ALGHANIM INTRODUCES BOLT EV



- CHEVROLET BOLT EV CAN TRAVEL OVER 500 KILOMETRES ON A SINGLE CHARGE
- OWNERS WILL GET FREE CHARGER INSTALLED AT THEIR HOMES
- PLANS TO INSTALL 20 PUBLIC CHARGING STATIONS ACROSS KUWAIT FOR MORE CONVENIENCE

Kuwait, Tuesday 30th of July 2019: Chevrolet Alghanim officially announced that Chevrolet Bolt EV, the first all-electric car in the market, will make its debut across Chevrolet showrooms in Kuwait, offering the customers the chance to test-drive and make a purchase decision of this revolutionary vehicle. This launch reaffirms Chevrolet Alghanim's pioneering position in the Kuwaiti automotive market, and its commitment to play a leading role at this pivotal time for the global automotive sector which is witnessing an increasing demand for e-co friendly vehicles.

The all-new Chevrolet Bolt EV offers a best-in-class driving experience, built to travel over 500 kilometers on a single charge, so that owners can easily get through their day and beyond anxiety-free. Chevrolet Alghanim is offering new owners of the Chevrolet Bolt EV a comprehensive after-sales plan that provides them with complete reassurance and comfort backed by 8 years / 160,000 km warranty on the battery. All Chevrolet Bolt EV Customers will receive a free car charger, including installation, with their purchase, in collaboration with Alghanim Engineering Group.



The brand has also announced that, as part of its future all-electric plan, it is working closely with several private and public sector entities to install 20 charging stations across many key areas in Kuwait, all of which will be easily marked on Google Maps for easy customer access.



Chevrolet Alghanim is dedicated to promoting electric vehicles to its customers in Kuwait and to supporting a future of sustainability and renewable energy. To this effect, The Alghanim Automotive Service Center for Chevrolet is certified to service the Chevrolet Bolt EV, which requires less maintenance and upkeep than the traditional gas-powered car, and includes routine tire rotation, cabin air filter replacement, and periodic checks for brakes, hoses, and fluid levels, all performed by highly trained technicians using the highest-standard of equipment.

360 Nm of torque, delivering controlled speed and acceleration from 0 to 100 KM/H in 7.3 seconds. The car is also supported by a 10.2-inch infotainment system with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, as well as an 8-inch driver information system displaying all performance details. Whether it is zipping through the city or humming through longer road trips, the Chevrolet Bolt EV provides spacious comfort and reliability for all passengers.

Chevrolet Complete Care Program:

In addition to being completely reliant on electricity with zero emissions, the Chevrolet Bolt EV features cutting-edge innovations. The game-changing vehicle offers a quiet and peaceful driving experience supported by 204 horsepower and

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A. Alghanim & Sons Automotive enjoy the benefits of the Chevrolet Complete Care Program, which entails new levels of



Commenting on the debut of the All-New Chevrolet Bolt EV, KUTAYBA Y. ALGHANIM, Executive Chairman of Alghanim Industries, praised the long-standing relationship between the company and General Motors (GM) stemming from a common vision to bring the best to their consumers. He emphasized that Chevrolet Alghanim supports GM's vision of a world with zero crashes, zero emissions, and zero congestion. "Our partnership with Chevrolet began in the 1940s, as the discovery of oil paved the way for a modern Kuwait. I am proud that our milestones tie with those of Kuwait and that we continue to successfully adapt to the changes in the global market, by introducing the first fully-electric car to Kuwait. As the world embraces new innovation and technology in the automotive industry, we are pleased to be the company of choice in introducing this innovation to our nation."



OMAR K. ALGHANIM, Group CEO, also commented on this notable announcement, highlighting the company's successful tradition of forward thinking and innovation in its businesses. He said: "We are excited to launch the Chevrolet Bolt EV into Kuwait's market, especially as there is growing interest in our country today to provide adequate infrastructure for a successful, sustainable future. Over the last 70 years we have brought the best of General Motors to our customers, and today we continue responding to our customer's evolving interests and demands, offering them even more options for their car of choice. Alghanim is proud to be at the forefront of technology in Kuwait, and we strive to continue providing propositions that resonate with our customers."



post-sale support, customer care and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24/7 roadside assistance for 4 years. To stay tuned for the latest offers, events, and announcements,

customers are encouraged to follow Chevrolet Alghanim on its social media channels @ChevroletAlghanim or call the hotline 1800022.

Customers can also visit one of Chevrolet Alghanim's showrooms located at Al Rai (Safat Alghanim), Shuwaikh, Sharq and Fahahel to test drive the vehicles featured on our website. For more information, please visit: www.chevroletalghanim.com



BOLT EV

COMPLETE CARE

 **8-YEAR/160,000 KM BATTERY WARRANTY**

 **3-YEAR/100,000 KM BUMPER-TO-BUMPER WARRANTY**

 **1-HOUR SERVICE MULTIPOINT VEHICLE INSPECTION**

Business

VIVA achieves KD 20m net profit during six-month period ended 30 June 2019

Revenues reach KD 139.6 million

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (VIVA), announced the financial results for the for six-month period ended 30 June 2019; whereby VIVA's Revenues reached KD 139.6 million, whereas the net profit reached KD 20 million during the first six-month period ended 30 June 2019.

Commenting on the financial results, Eng Maziad Nasser Al-Harbi, VIVA's CEO said: "Despite the continued competition witnessed in the Kuwaiti Telecom Market, VIVA was able to achieve good levels of revenues as well as enhanced the operational efficiency to ensure generating value and positive return to our shareholders. VIVA achieved these results due to an integrated and sophisticated management approach by a highly professional team that reinforces VIVA's substantial and positive role as a leading telecommunications company that always provides intelligent communications solutions to satisfy the aspirations of its customers and meet their needs."

Commenting on the quarterly results for the three months period ended 30 June 2019, VIVA's CEO added: "The Company's financial results have witnessed remarkable

growth in the second quarter compared to the first quarter of 2019 as the revenue recorded KD 72.9 million in Q2-2019 compared to KD 66.6 million in Q1-2019 representing a growth of 9.5 percent. While EBITDA grew by 3.1 percent to reach KD 19.3 million in Q2-2019 compared to KD 18.7 million in Q1-2019. As a result the net profit for the same period increased by 7.1 percent to reach KD 10.3 million compared to 9.6 million.

He added: "VIVA was able to achieve revenues of KD 139.6 million during the six-month period ended 30 June 2019. Also, VIVA managed to achieve positive earnings for its shareholders as a result of the commitment to elevate the quality of customer service and improving the operational efficiency". By achieving this good level of revenues and profitability during the six months of the year 2019 VIVA reflect its strong leadership in the telecom market, in line with the impressive success of fifth generation (5G) network nationwide launching, to be one of the first telecommunications companies in the middle east that offers this service to its customers with the widest coverage in Kuwait



which also to emulate the international companies in this field."

Al-Harbi added: The joining of Qualitynet Company in the second quarter of this year boosted VIVA's operational and financial results which is substantial supporter for us to successfully implement our corporate strategy to grow in the Enterprise segment, bringing to the International standards. At the same time individual customers will benefit from diversified and enhanced service offerings to solve their needs and requirements.

VIVA was able to achieve a growth of 14 percent in its EBITDA to reach a KD 38 million with EBITDA margin of 27 percent during the first six-month period of 2019 compared to 22 percent during the first six-

month period of 2018. As a result, VIVA reported a net profit of KD 20 million (earnings per share of 40 fils) during the first six-month period of 2019 with a profit margin of 14 percent. VIVA's customer base reached approximately 2.1 million at the end of June 2019.

At the end Al-Harbi added: "VIVA's financial results reflected its ability to compete, sustain revenues and maintain its position as the second largest telecom operator in the Kuwaiti market in terms of market share of revenue volume in the telecom sector. Due to VIVA's secure financial policy we continued to implement the cost reduction program adopted by the company during the previous year to reach the best results to enhance profitability by adopting a balanced and effective financial policy in operating and capital expenditures. To shed the light on the financial position of the company as of 30 June 2019, the total assets at the end of the first six-month period of 2019 reached KD 380 million where total shareholders' equity reached KD 192 million, with a book value per share of 384 Kuwaiti fils. In addition, VIVA has strong financial solvency posi-



Eng Maziad Nasser Al-Harbi

tion, which is considered one of the best companies across the Middle East telecoms companies." The financial results for the six months ended 30 June 2019 are the first consolidated financial results for VIVA after the acquisition of Qualitynet Company on 6 May 2019. Therefore, the consolidated financial results of VIVA include Qualitynet financial results for the period from 7 May 2019 till 30 June 2019.

NBK Economic Report

Global equities bullish on hopes of US rate cut

KUWAIT: Global and regional stock indices gained in the second quarter of 2019, albeit at a noticeably slower pace than in Q1. The slowdown was evident in both regional and international markets. Lack of progress in the US china trade dispute, conflicting economic data, weaker than expected growth in corporate earnings, and rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have raised uncertainty and weighed on markets, partly offsetting the good sentiment from an expected Fed interest rate cut (mostly already priced in) and previously higher optimism about reaching a trade deal.

However, with bond yields having declined considerably this year, investors shifted to equities, willing to take the additional risks that come with equity investment. US and European stocks were the best performers in 2Q19, underperformed by the GCC, while emerging markets trailed behind in negative territory, weighed down partly by weakness in Chinese markets.

Developed equity markets fared relatively well in the second quarter, outperforming emerging markets by a considerable margin. The MSCI world index gained 3 percent q/q, led by the S&P500 (3.8 percent) and the Eurostoxx 50 (3.6 percent), while the DJIA trailed behind (2.6 percent), affected more by trade dispute effects.

These effects were felt across international markets, with a noticeable slowdown in stock performance compared to the first quarter. This coincides with seemingly waning optimism regarding the possibility of a trade deal between the US and China. Additional factors weighing on stocks include mixed earnings estimates



and conflicting economic data, leading to rising uncertainty among investors.

Industrial (freight and transport stocks) in particular were affected, as second quarter earnings were impacted by the effects of tariffs. Nonetheless, markets continued to be fairly bullish, lifted by the Fed's view about the state of the economy, and investors' expectations of a 25-50 bps rate cut in July. The ECB is expected to follow suit, having recently sent dovish monetary policy signals, while eurozone circumstances (low inflation, sluggish growth) remain accommodative. Further support to equity markets likely stems from low bond yields, providing incentive for investors to take on the risks of equities. By contrast, emerging markets fared poorly, yielding negative returns, with the MSCI-EM index down 0.7 percent q/q.

The Shanghai Shenzhen CSI 300 was down 1.2 percent q/q and was subject to major volatility in the second quarter amid slower growth and trade tensions as investors reassessed their risks and positions. Chinese markets were further impacted in June when the US released a blacklist of Chinese firms which includes tech giant Huawei. However, China is responding with measures that include the release of its own 'unreliable entity' list of select US firms, and the recent launch of a large technology board dubbed 'Star' paving the way for the listing of Chinese tech stocks which surged massively in their trading debut on July 21, thereby restoring confidence and sentiment to an extent. Further support likely stems from pro-growth and financial market reforms such as an increase in corporate foreign own-



ership limits. Low short-term borrowing rates could continue to lend support, as well as the possibility of some forms of government stimulus.

Regional markets

GCC market performance over Q2 was mixed but overall positive, with the MSCI GCC gaining 0.5 percent q/q. Although most markets showed strength, the composite index was weighed down by laggard performance in Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Oman. Oman, burdened by pending reforms and weak credit ratings, was the weakest performer, while Saudi Arabia's previous winning streak was snapped by geopolitical tensions, and possibly some profit-taking after gaining strongly in 1Q19, and ended the second quarter nearly flat q/q.

Kuwait has benefited from a stable economy, good corporate earnings, and the MSCI-EM index inclusion (to be implemented in June 2020 subject to conditions) which lifted sentiment and attracted large foreign inflows. Among the best performers of 2Q, Kuwait is also currently the best year-to-date performer, with gains of about 14.8 percent and 21 percent in the All-share and Premier indices. Kuwait's market also benefited from

being relatively undervalued at the start of the year compared to peer markets. Dubai, having suffered large declines in 2018 on weakness in the real estate sector, saw a rebound in 2Q19, also likely due to undervaluation and the somewhat improved performance of property stocks. Finally Bahrain led the region with gains of 4.1 percent q/q, benefitting from recently enacted fiscal reforms, stable credit ratings and GCC aid packages. Overall, GCC markets may also have benefited from improved fiscal positions and relatively low risk free returns, possibly boosting the risk premium of equity holdings, in addition to improved fiscal positions.

Although GCC markets have mostly done well in Q2, and with momentum expected to extend into the near-medium term, downside risk is present. Geopolitical tensions and oil price volatility may weigh on confidence. Should international markets slump, there is the risk of contagion, as we have seen in the past. Finally, there may be a need for a fresh catalyst after the market reclassification euphoria fades in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, in addition to the risk of profit taking and/or corrections after strong gains, of which we have recently seen signs in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

India's tax rise for high earners may trigger fund flight: Ex-RBI governor

NEW DELHI: A former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor, Bimal Jalan, has warned that the higher income taxes the government introduced in its budget could lead to a flight of funds from the country.

"In theory if tax rates are very high, obviously people look for other countries, which have lower interest rates, and also exemptions from income tax," said Jalan, 77, who chairing a central bank panel deciding on how much of the RBI's reserves should be transferred to the government.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her budget this month, raised taxes on people earning more than 10 million rupees (\$145,000) a year to at least 42.7 percent. That included foreign portfolio investors registered as trusts. Analysts and traders say this has been a major reason for foreign investors being net sellers of more than 30 billion rupees of funds from Indian equity markets in July, after they invested more than 100 billion rupees in June.

That has helped to send India's BSE index tumbling more than 4 percent to 37,686.37 since July 1. Parliament passed the budget last week. Indians with taxable income of more than 1 million rupees a year now pay 30 percent of their earnings as income tax plus an additional 4 percent on the amount of taxes paid.

According to the new budget, people and trusts earning more than 5 million rupees a year will pay an additional 10 percent surcharge and 15 percent for those earning more than 10 million rupees.

"The incentive to borrow or invest domestically is certainly impacted by higher taxes. So investors may be sending money overseas, but hopefully it does not lead to round tripping," Jalan told Reuters in an interview on Sunday, referring to funds exiting only to come back, and evading taxes along the way. —Reuters

Total Revenues

139.6

KD million

The Board of Directors of the Kuwait Telecommunications Company (VIVA) is pleased to announce to its shareholders that the company has achieved a net profit of KD 20 million during the First Half of the financial year 2019.

2019
First Half

38
KD Million
EBITDA

2019
First Half

20
KD Million
Net Profit

2019
First Half

40
Kuwaiti Fils
EPS

2019
June 30

2.1
Million
Subscribers

viva.com.kw

f t i s

@vivatelecom

Business

KIPCO announces a 13% increase in net profit for first half of 2019

Q2 results prove that our performance is on the right track: Al-Ayyar

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - has announced a net profit of KD 13.58 million (\$45 million) for the first six months of 2019, an increase of 13 per cent over the KD 12.06 million (\$40 million) reported for the same period last year.

Earnings per share was up 19 per cent from the 5.9 fils (\$1.95 cents) reported in the first half of 2018, to 7 fils (\$2.31 cents) in the first six months of 2019. In the second quarter (the three months ended June 30, 2019), KIPCO reported a 10 per cent rise in net profit to KD 7.1 million (\$23.4 million), compared to KD 6.42 million (\$21.2 million) reported in the same period of 2018. Earnings per share for the quarter was up 11 per cent from 4.40 fils (\$1.45 cents) to 4.88 fils (\$1.61 cents).

The company's consolidated assets came to KD 10 billion (\$33 billion), compared to KD 10.4 billion (\$34 billion)



Faisal Al-Ayyar

reported at year-end 2018. Faisal Al-Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), said: "The results we achieved in the first quarter of the year indicated that our performance will be positive and that our companies will continue to grow, which has been proven true in the second quarter. While we stay cautious, we expect to stay on track for the remainder of the year, supported by the strong performance of our core companies despite the challenging environment in which they operate."

strong performance of our core companies despite the challenging environment in which they operate."

Thatcher & Juman at the heart of Mahboula

KUWAIT: Apartment hunting has always been a hassle and tedious task no matter where in the world you go. Finding a modern apartment with all the necessary and basic amenities as well as additional facilities can be a time consuming chore. At Tijaria Real Estate, we combine the notion of modern living with luxury, comfort and the benefit of convenience. With a huge number of properties within our real estate portfolio, finding the perfect home for you and your loved ones is no longer a challenge.

We are proud to introduce you to two of our most luxurious buildings at the very heart of Mahboula and overlooking Fahaheel highway, Juman & Thatcher that redefined the meaning of living.

The gorgeous Juman Residential Project consists of two building complexes, 12 floors each, consisting of spacious and pristine one, two and three bed room apartments as well 3 and 4 bedrooms duplex apartments along with town houses consisting of 3 floors and commercial shops. In the center of the project, we have an oasis of luxury facilities such as swimming pools, gymnasium, squash court, kids playground area, fountain and a multipurpose hall both suited for adults and children within the resident complex. Amenities also include underground parking, Garbage Chute, Internet and selected sports and OSN channels. Both properties have 24x7 Security present on site.

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stand and imbibe this concept of creating spaces that not only bring comfort but also combine the concept of modern living and creating spaces that you can enjoy just at your door step. We build modern comfortable luxury spaces that you want to come back to with your loved ones no matter where in the world you go.

Gulf Bank announces winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 28th July 2019 announcing the names of the winners for the week of 21st until 25th July 2019. The weekly draw consists of five winners who receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:

Ahmad Yaber Thamer Shamous
Adnan Jawad Jafar Almesri
Anwar Yahya Abbas Ali
Adnan Shayea Ahmad Mansour
Ahmed Rashed Sabah Al-Shoreifat

Gulf Bank's third Al-Danah quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 will be held on 25 September 2019. The final Al-Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16

January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event. Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al-Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app. Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days.

Williams even briefly convinced markets the Fed planned to cut rates by half a percentage point this week, until the New York Fed issued a statement to explain that his remarks about "vaccinating" the economy against serious illness were academic in nature and not meant to signal near-term policy decisions.

Complicating matters is the Fed's desire to make clear that loosening monetary policy is not a reaction to months of pressure from US President Donald Trump to do just that. Investors should get some clarity when the Fed's rate-setting committee releases its policy statement at 2 p.m. EDT (1800 GMT) on Wednesday after the end of a two-day meeting. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell will hold a press conference shortly after.

Economists and traders overwhelmingly expect the Fed to cut its policy rate by a quarter of a percentage point tomorrow, matching the size of each of the nine rate hikes the Fed delivered from 2015 to 2018. The big debate at the July 30-31 meeting will be about what comes next, and how to communicate it. Cornerstone Macro economist Roberto Perli said, "I bet the statement will ... leave the door open to more, to at least another 25 (basis-point cut) down the road," Perli said. But as for what economic threshold would trigger a further rate cut, he said, "I don't think they have a clear idea." The federal funds rate is currently set in a range of 2.25 percent to 2.50 percent. Traders of futures tied to the rate have priced in a full percentage-point drop by the end of next year. — Reuters

A Fed interest rate cut is in the bag. What then?

SAN FRANCISCO: US central bankers are expected to lower borrowing costs this week for the first time since the depths of the financial crisis more than a decade ago. That's the easy part. Whether that inaugurates a series of quarter-percentage-point interest rate cuts that could stretch deep into next year, as financial markets are betting, or something more limited, is by far the harder decision facing Federal Reserve policymakers.

One reason: No clear consensus from Fed officials about why they need to cut rates in the first place, particularly with the US unemployment rate near a 50-year low and the American economy puttering along as the best-in-class performer among developed nations.

Is it a bit of insurance against risks posed by slowing global growth and trade tensions? A step to bolster sluggish inflation? A bid to lift labor markets further? An effort to right kinks in the bond market? Over the last several weeks, Fed policymakers have floated each of these ideas and others. New York Fed President John

KAMCO announces first half financial results for 2019

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, announced its financial results for the period ended on June 30th, 2019. The Company recorded a net profit of KD 1,110,320 for the first half of 2019, an increase of 163 percent in comparison to KD 421,407 during the same period in 2018. Earnings-per-share (EPS) for the period were 4.68 fils, compared to 1.77 fils in 2018. EBITDA for the period was KD 4.15 million versus KD 1.10 million for the same in 2018, an increase of 278 percent. Fee income reached KD 8.68 million, an increase of 130 percent from KD 3.8 million achieved in the first half of 2018. Revenues rose by 178 percent to KD 13.29 million for the first half of 2019 in comparison to KD 4.8 million in 2018.

The Company's assets under management reached KD 4.16 billion (including the effect of acquiring a majority stake in Global Investment House), with new money raised in funds and client portfolios.

Commenting on the results, Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, CEO of KAMCO, said, "We continue to see positive momentum building through the initial stages of implementing our strategic growth and expansion plan. This momentum demonstrates the impact of our increased investments in the business and the significant progress in our transformation as we pursue our long-term goals for growth. While we did incur costs related to our expansion plan, which led to an overall increase in our expenses, we continue to remain profitable with a 163 percent increase in our profits in comparison to the first half of 2018. In addition, KAMCO including its subsidiaries have restructured some of their investments to generate additional liquidity for the business during the first half of 2019. KAMCO's strong financial and liquidity profile was acknowledged by Capital Intelligence Rating's affirmation of KAMCO's 'BBB' long-term and 'A3' short-term credit rating with a stable outlook." "Our equity activity achievements during the first half included the positive performance of our funds and portfolios

under management. Our flagship fund, KAMCO Investment Fund ("KIF"), delivered a return net of fees of 17.64 percent-YTD, and outperformed its benchmark of 17.07 percent, as of June 30th, 2019. KAMCO's GCC Opportunistic Fund achieved a return of 12.55 percent net of fees, outperforming the S&P GCC Composite Index's return of 9.80 percent, as of June 30th, 2019. KAMCO's discretionary portfolios continue to outperform their respective benchmarks, returning an aggregate of over 22 percent."

"During Q2, KAMCO took on the role as joint lead manager in Kuwait International Bank's ("KIB") successfully concluded USD 300 million AT1 Sukuk issuance. Prior to that in Q1, KAMCO was one of three members in the consortium that successfully completed its advisory role in the Boursa Kuwait bidding process organized by the Capital Markets Authority ("CMA"). Other notable milestones achieved during Q2 include KAMCO's strategic acquisition and exit of HP Plaza, a

Class-AA office campus, which falls in line with our commitment to further scale our real estate portfolio with various diversified assets."

Commenting on the markets during this period, Sarkhou said, "Financial markets across the globe remained largely positive during IH-19 with almost all asset classes showing positive returns since the start of the year. This was one of the

best first half performances, as investors across the globe remained optimistic. US equities was the best performing major market with a return of 14.9 percent, while Europe witnessed a growth of 14.9 percent. The overall developed markets surged 15.6 percent since the start of the year resulting in the MSCI World Index gaining 14.9 percent. Commodities were not far behind, recording a gain of 13.3 percent with the Gold index up 10 percent while Brent crude surged more than 20 percent since the start of the year."

"Unlike 2018's performance, GCC markets remained largely connected with the rest of the world during IH-19. However, several region-specific issues affected the growth in the GCC, especially limiting growth during May-19 when the aggregate region dropped more than 5 percent. Kuwait remained the best performing market in the GCC recording 21 percent surge in its large cap Premier Market Index and 14.8 percent surge in its All Share Index for IH-19 primarily due to the tailwind from expectations of an MSCI upgrade which did happen during the last week of June-19."

HIGHLIGHTS

- EBITDA KD 4.15 million
- Net Profit KD 1.11 million, up by 163%
- Revenue KD 13.29 million
- Earnings per Share 4.68 fils
- Fee Income KD 8.68 million
- AUM of KD 4.16 billion

First half financial results for 2019



Apollo Tyres fleet meet

KUWAIT: In its continued commitment to quality automobile services, Federal Trading Company - FTC, (owned by Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar) the Exclusive Distributor for Apollo Tyres in Kuwait had hosted a training/meet for its fleet customers.

"Apollo Tyres", a "Manchester United" partner is a leading global tyre brand with presence across India, Europe and other growing economies of around the world. Apollo sells to more than 100 countries in the world and owns an amazing 25% market share in truck tyre in India on its own. As part of Apollo Tyres awareness and market training programs in Kuwait, FTC hosted representatives from Apollo Tyres International, Fleet Customers, and Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar managers including the GM Ashish Tandon to a business training dinner at the Best Western Hotel, Mahboula.

The event according to FTC Divisional Manager Biju

Nair is meant to "enhance relationship between and among partners as well as creating better information about the initiatives of Apollo Tyre products". Apollo Tyres Regional Head of Sales for the Middle East Angelo Nigli however furthered to describe the presence of Apollo Tyre into the Kuwaiti market as "a huge relief and quality alternative to every automobile user, for its balance between quality and price".

Apart from boasting a significant manufacturing presence with about 5,800 dealer outlets across Europe and 5000 retail dealers in India alone, Apollo Tyres also double as partner with notable institutions of quality output across the globe. It is a major partner with "Manchester United" Football Club. Apollo Tyre enjoys a first choice status for top automobile brands like Chevrolet, Toyota, Honda, Ford, Volkswagen, Hyundai, Renault, Nissan, among several others. Apollo Tyre is of different categories with tyre lines for passenger cars, trucks, farm machines, two wheelers, and OHT categories.

Aside being an exclusive distributor of Apollo tyres, FTC (owned by Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar) also offers various services in addition to Tyre Placement among which includes Japanese Automotive Oil, European Automotive Batteries and more.

What's On



AUB launches blood donation campaign at its headquarters

In cooperation with Kuwait Central Blood Bank, Ahli United Bank has announced the launch of its Blood Donation Campaign yesterday at its headquarter. This campaign is part of the Bank's social responsibility program activities which deepens the concept of solidarity and disseminates the values of fraternization, giving and good among the community members.

The campaign attracted many donors of the Bank's employees that participated in this humanitarian initiative and hurried to donate their blood in an effort to

save the lives of many patients and injured people who are in a dire need of blood donation, as well as their awareness of the importance of blood donation for the donor's health.

Sahar Dashti, General Manager Customer Protection, who is also the Head of AUB Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Team, made the following statement in a press release: "We are very pleased with the response of our employees who participated in the campaign who demonstrated their giving and

real desire to have an effective role in this important initiative. There is no doubt that the great concern that this campaign received will inspire us to organize more of these purposeful community initiatives to raise awareness level of critical health cases that need blood donation."

Dashti added that Ahli United Bank intends to organize a series of initiatives and campaigns aimed at promoting community awareness of the importance of blood donation, pointing out that AUB recently

launched a blood donation campaign at the Boulevard Complex in cooperation with Al Manabr Al Quraniya Society and Kuwait Central Blood Bank, which received great turnout from the Bank's employees, their families and visitors of the Boulevard Park.

It is worth mentioning that AUB Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program including a group of partnerships related to environment, youth, health and supporting the people of determination (differently-abled persons) in addition to other various fields.



Director of Talent Department at Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, which is one of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences Dr Abdullah Al-Sawayed lauded the successful experience of the training camp "Gift", which was held in Jeddah and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia for three weeks, and he underlined the skills that Kuwaiti students had gained in many specialized scientific fields.

Dr Abdullah Al-Sawayed



The Diplomatic Woman Committee (DWC) held a reception for the outgoing committee members who are leaving Kuwait. The event was attended by Honorary President of the Committee Sheikha Hala Bader Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kyrgyz Republic Ambassador Anara Musralieva, and the Argentine Ambassador. Wife of Honduras Ambassador, and First Secretary at Saudi Embassy Sameera Al-Sharhan were also honored.

Health & Science

Innovation rush aims to help farmers, rich and poor, beat climate change

African farmers pool money to buy small robot vehicles to weed fields

LONDON: In decades to come, African farmers may pool their money to buy small robot vehicles to weed their fields or drones that can hover to squirt a few drops of pesticide only where needed. Smartphones already allow farmers in remote areas to snap photos of sick plants, upload them and get a quick diagnosis, plus advice on treatment. Researchers also are trying to train crops like maize and wheat to produce their own nitrogen fertilizer from the air - a trick soybeans and other legumes use - and exploring how to make wheat and rice better at photosynthesis in very hot conditions.

As warmer, wilder weather linked to climate change brings growing challenges for farmers across the globe - and as they try to curb their own heat-trapping emissions - a rush of innovation aimed at helping both rich and poor farmers is now converging in ways that could benefit them all, scientists say. In a hotter world, farmers share "the same problems, the same issues", said Svend Christensen, head of plant and environmental sciences at the University of Copenhagen.

Agricultural researchers, who have teamed up to boost harvests and fight the major blight of wheat rust are now forming an international consortium in a bid to make wheat stand up to worsening heat and drought. "There was a real shift in terms of the intensity of what we do together when we became aware of climate change," said Hans-Joachim Braun, who heads the global wheat program for the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), based in Mexico.

For each 1 degree Celsius global temperatures rise above pre-industrial times, wheat harvests drop 5-8 percent, he said. That means the world will likely see a 10 percent drop in harvests even if governments hold global warming to "well below" 2C, as they have agreed, he said - and that drop would come even as the world's population grows and demand for food rises.

Finding ways to breed wheat that can cope better with heat could help farmers from Australia to India and China,

as well as the people who depend on their grain, he said. "It doesn't matter where you use this trait - it will have an impact," Braun said.

Dare to dream

One idea scientists are working on is to fundamentally reshape how crops such as wheat and rice carry out photosynthesis, to make them better able to continue producing in hot weather, especially if less water is available. The process - like efforts to help wheat and maize start making their own fertilizer - is hugely complex and will likely require decades of work, scientists say.

"It would be a mega-breakthrough. Many people think it's dreaming a little bit because it's so difficult," said Bruce Campbell, director of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). But early tests to improve photosynthesis in tobacco have shown a 40% boost in production - and the technique is now being tested with crops from cassava to maize, said Kathy Kahn, a crop research expert with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Nick Austin, who directs agricultural development for the foundation, said such changes "are going to benefit the poor and rich worlds together" - and could play a key role in keeping food prices affordable. "These technologies... are going to be globally relevant," he predicted. Other efforts to help farmers - including the poorest - adapt to climate pressures have already taken root, Khan said.

Flood-tolerant rice that can withstand being submerged under water, for instance, is now being used by 6 million farmers in Asia to cope with more extreme weather, she said. But Christensen, of the University of Copenhagen, thinks even more high-tech innovations - from weeding robots to drones - are likely to reach poorer farmers too. With Africa expected to see rapid population growth and movement to cities in coming decades, its farmers will need to become more efficient at producing larger amounts of food, he said.



ABIDJAN: A member of the Ivorian Investiv Group startup controls a drone at a tomato farm in northern Abidjan, Ivory Coast. — Reuters

"If you want to increase efficiency, you need to use machinery to do some of the hard work," he added. He believes prices for drones and robots will fall rapidly in years to come, just as they once did for mobile phones. "Maybe you will share this machinery with your neighbor," Christensen said. "A village of smallholder farmers could think of buying one for all their fields."

Two-way flow

As consumers and companies demand to know more about the origin of what they buy, farmers in poorer nations could also adopt systems from blockchain to microchips tucked into cauliflower to help with tracking, said CCAFS principal scientist Philip Thornton. Thornton is working on a "Wild Futures" report, due out later this

year, that will dig into potential high-tech advances and predict how the food system might look in 15-20 years' time, given the pace of technological change, he said.

There is still "quite a lot of uncertainty" about how much high-tech innovation will reach poorer small-scale farmers and especially around how quickly that could happen, he added. But CCAFS director Campbell predicted there would be "many innovations, and the innovations are highly likely to be picked up elsewhere" beyond their source. Christensen said ideas also are increasingly flowing from poorer countries to richer ones, not just in the other direction, particularly because the poorest are in some cases dealing with the strongest climate impacts first. "There's a lot of inspiration from the people in developing countries," he said. — Reuters

India's wild tiger population jumps to almost 3,000

NEW DELHI: India's wild tiger population has increased by more than 30 percent in just four years, according to a new census

released yesterday, raising hopes for the survival of the endangered species. The census found 2,967 tigers in the wild across the country, up from 2,226 four years ago in what Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed as a "historic achievement." "We reaffirm our commitment towards protecting the tiger," Modi said in Delhi as he released the All India Tiger Estimation Report 2018.

"Some 15 years ago, there was serious concern about the decline in the population of tigers. It was a big challenge for us but

with determination, we have achieved our goals." The massive surveys are conducted every four years, with the latest census using 26,000 camera traps that took almost 350,000 images across known tiger habitats, Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said at the census release. Images that showed the big cats were analyzed using computer programs to individually identify each creature. Wildlife and forestry officials also scoured 380,000 square kilometers of terrain.

In 1900, more than 100,000 tigers were

estimated to roam the planet. But that fell to a record low of 3,200 globally in 2010. That year, India and 12 other countries with tiger populations signed an agreement to double their big cat numbers by 2022. Population numbers in the nation have risen steadily since falling to its lowest-recorded figure of 1,411 in 2006. But they are yet to return to the figures recorded in 2002 when some 3,700 tigers were estimated to be alive in the country.

It is believed some 40,000 tigers lived in

India at the time of independence from Britain in 1947. Since then, the indiscriminate killing of the animal for its organs has led to a sharp decline, bringing them to the edge of extinction. India's growing population has also increasingly eaten into the territory of wild animals, pushing them into conflict with humans. New Delhi has sought to improve its management of the predator, reserving 50 habitats - from Himalayan foothills in the northeast to regions in west and central India - exclusively for the animals. — AFP

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CROSSWORD 2270



ACROSS

1. A French abbot.
5. A chronic disease of the nose characterized by a foul-smelling nasal discharge and atrophy of nasal structures.
11. A sudden very loud noise.
15. Not easy.
16. Of or involving the rectum.
17. Socks and stockings and tights collectively (the British include underwear as hosiery).
18. In bed.
19. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
21. A decree that prohibits something.
23. Capable of resuming original shape after stretching or compression.
26. A river in southeastern France.
27. Any of various large edible marine gastropods of the genus *Haliotis* having an ear-shaped shell with pearly interior.
30. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
32. Found pleasant or attractive.
33. A small ball with a hole through the middle.
37. A rich soil consisting of a mixture of sand and clay and decaying organic materials.
42. Web spinners.
46. An affirmative.
47. A very young child (birth to 1 year) who has not yet begun to walk or talk.
48. A city and port in northern Jutland.
50. The friend of Phintias who pledged his life that Phintias would return (4th century BC).
52. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
53. A slow pace of running.
56. A New England state.
57. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
60. (formal) A person who announces important news.
65. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
67. Popular music originating in the West Indies.
68. East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the Orient.
70. (Babylonian) The sky god.
71. Any of various coarse shrubby plants of the genus *Iva* with small greenish flowers.
72. (Irish) God of the sea.
74. The force of workers available.
75. A writing implement with a point from which ink flows.
76. Having few if any teeth.
77. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.

DOWN

1. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
2. A small cake leavened with yeast.
3. A submachine gun operated by gas pressure.

4. A doctor's degree in education.
5. Order by virtue of superior authority.
6. A family of fish in the order Zeomorphi.
7. A unit of area (4840 square yards) used in English-speaking countries.
8. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
9. A streamlined enclosure for an aircraft engine.
10. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
11. (ballet) Quick gliding steps with one foot always leading.
12. Fishes having large mouths with a worm-like filament attached for luring prey.
13. Out of bed.
14. The state prevailing during the absence of war.
20. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
22. A compact mass.
24. Fragrant resin obtain from trees of the family Burseraceae and used as incense.
25. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
28. A major biotic community characterized by the dominant forms of plant life and the prevailing climate.
29. Jordan's port.
31. Type genus of the Gaviidae.
34. A tangible symbol signifying approval or distinction.
35. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
36. Small beads made from polished shells and formerly used as money by native Americans.
38. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
39. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
40. A complex red organic pigment containing iron and other atoms to which oxygen binds.
41. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
43. A Russian river.
44. Italian painter and engraver noted for his frescoes (1431-1506).
45. Swiss painter influenced by Kandinsky (1879-1940).
49. Male red deer.
51. A measuring instrument for measuring angles to a celestial body.
54. Female ruff v l.
55. A fully differentiated structural and functional unit in an animal that is specialized for some particular function.
58. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
59. A unit of weight used in Asia.
61. Pathetically lacking in force or effectiveness.
62. No longer having or seeming to have or expecting to have life.
63. A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
64. The flesh of animals (including fishes and birds and snails) used as food.
66. A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
69. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
73. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You are experiencing an unrealistic feeling today. You may be having to really resist the urge to daydream. Focusing on the tasks set before you seem impossible. You may find your friends and co-workers become frustrated when dealing with this side of you. A bit of soul-searching may be in order. You need to force yourself to snap back to reality and pick up where you left off. Get to the root of the matter that has you preoccupied so you will be able to push forward. Once you realize what caused this mood you should be able to push on and lead a more productive day.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today may find you a bit unsatisfied with your surroundings. It may be someone or the physical place you are in that is just not sitting right with you. You may feel as if someone or something is holding you back or may just feel frustrated by your life in general. This may be a great time for an evening out and about. Change your surroundings. Clear your head but choose your company wisely to avoid any conflict as this is a time you need to have fun. You have to find a comfortable balance between work, life, family, and social life. Taurus, remember it is good for you to get out and enjoy yourself from time to time.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

No problem is too big for you today. This is a great day to make decisions and solve problems. You will find a way around any obstacle that is placed in your path today. This is a day you are in total control and guide yourself easily through the day. You may find an awesome opportunity comes your way today. With your sense of direction this will be a perfect deal for you, Gemini. Jump on this offer.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Remember to count to ten and take deep breaths. Buckle up. Today will be one of those days. You will need to exercise patience and self-control today. This will be a day you may feel pushed beyond your breaking point. You will easily be able to make clear decisions regarding others today. This is a time even frustration and anger will not effect your ability to remain in control of business.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Do you know the difference in sympathy and empathy? This is a day you find yourself you are empathic of others. You are starting to look beneath and beyond the surface what others expose of their self. Call it intuition or whatever you would like. You know how to read people. This may be a talent and curse all rolled into one. The level of empathy you are starting to feel for others may be dragging you down. You have to learn to care for others without emotionally taking their problems on as your own. You are loved and admired for your caring nature.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Resist the need to be "wonderful." Such a reputation may sound good at first, but it's a trap. It sets up unrealistic expectations. It leads to a need to please. And that leads to conflict-inner and outer. Don't punish by trying to maintain an unrealistic reputation. Be yourself. Do what's natural. Remind yourself that you are enough just the way you are.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

As clearly as you are thinking now it is a great time to focus on love, start that diet, or begin that exercise routine again. It is the perfect time for things to be all about you. Physically and spiritually you desire to feel good about yourself again. Libra, you may hit a bump in the road when dealing with someone younger than you today. Your values may be at odds, but this will be a temporary problem. Problems for you are easily solved and you will end the day with much peace in perfect harmony.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are experiencing an unrealistic feeling today. You may be having to really resist the urge to daydream. Focusing on the tasks set before you seem impossible. You may find your friends and co-workers become frustrated when dealing with this side of you. A bit of soul-searching may be in order. You need to force yourself to snap back to reality and pick up where you left off. Get to the root of the matter that has you preoccupied so you will be able to push forward. Once you realize what caused this mood you should be able to push on and lead a more productive day.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A difficult path may lay ahead. You may find that career opportunities could hinder your need for change and self-growth. What may be best for your personal life may totally interfere with your career. Now is a great time to understand those around you. This could be a special time for you and someone you love. Keep your priorities straight and do what is best for your future. Remember, they say money can't buy happiness.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

How do you feel about your position in life? If you answer this in any way other than positive then now is the time for change. You are able to see things very clearly now. Set a goal and make any necessary changes in your life to help accomplish it. With your strength and determination, nothing can hold you back. You are in a great position to be able to communicate your feelings to others. You will find support for your dreams and ideas from those closest to you. Reach for the stars.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a time you may begin to see and truly appreciate the beauty in all that surrounds you. Times when you feel like this, it is best if you steer clear from the mall. These are the times you tend to overindulge and bring home everything in sight. You love it and have to have it are words you would be hearing yourself say. Focus on your family and nature and the beauty all of these things possess. You may find yourself overspending if you focus on material possessions.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

What a wonderful day! Today finds you full of love and appreciation for life. You may have a new outlook on life and a deep gratitude for all that is around you. This mood could leave you showing much affection to those close to you. You find a great sense of peace and fulfillment as you receive this affection in return. You are radiant today. Others will feel attracted and drawn to your warm presence. You may find yourself doing a bit of soul searching as you have found peace in your world and this is a place you want to remain. Focus positive and know you have the support from the ones that matter most.

Wordsearch Puzzle

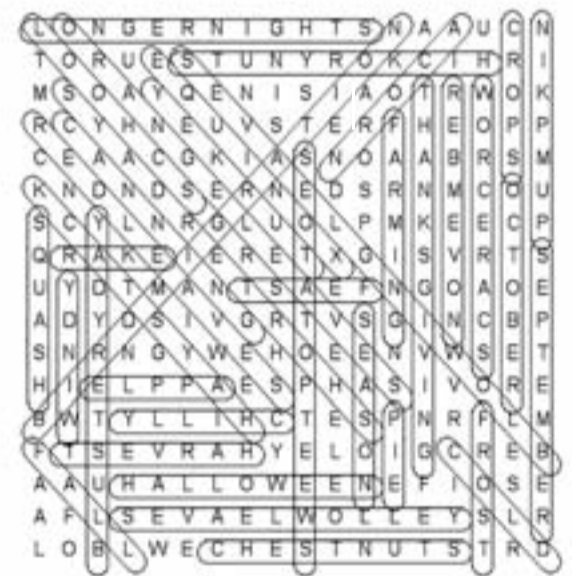
Baby

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 50 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| ALERT | DADDY | LULLABY | RUBBER DUCK |
| AWAKE | DAISY | MILK | SIPPY CUP |
| BLANKET | DIAPER | MOBILE | SKIN CARE |
| BODYSUIT | FEED | MOHMY | SLEEP |
| BOOSTER SEAT | FORMULA | SMALL | SMILE |
| BOTTLE | GIGGLE | NURSERY | SPON |
| BOWL | GRIN | ONESTE | SPON |
| CAR SEAT | HIGHCHAIR | PACIFIER | STROLLER |
| CARRIER | HOODIE | PARENTS | SWING |
| COLIC | INFANT | PLAY | TEDDY BEAR |
| CREAM | INNOCENT | POWDER | TEETHER |
| CRIB | JUMPER | RASH | TIRED |
| CRYING | LAUGH | RATTLE | WIPES |

Autumn



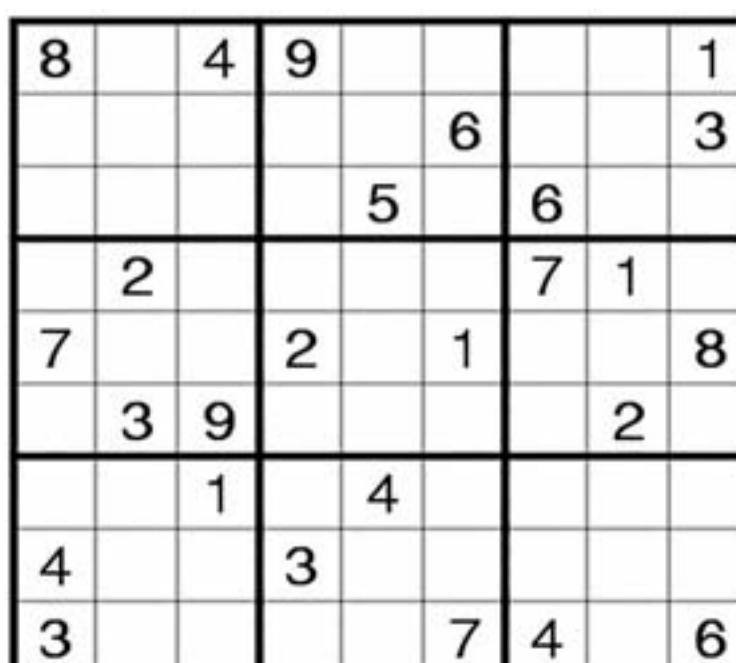
- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| ACORN | EQUINOX | NOVEMBER | SEPTEMBER |
| APPLE | FALL | OCTOBER | SHORTER DAYS |
| BIRD MIGRATION | FARMING | ORANGE LEAVES | SQUASH |
| BLOWING LEAVES | FEAST | PIE | SWEET POTATOES |
| BLUSTERY DAY | FROST | PUMPKIN | THANKSGIVING |
| CANNING | HALLOWEEN | RAKE | TURKEY |
| CHESTNUTS | HARVEST | RED LEAVES | WINDY |
| CHILLY | HAYSTACK | SCARECROW | YELLOW LEAVES |
| COLD | HICKORY NUTS | SCHOOL | |
| CROPS | LONGER NIGHTS | SEASON | |

The hidden sentence is: AUTUMN IS A SECOND SPRING WHEN EVERY LEAF IS A FLOWER

Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2019



More than 400 hot air-balloons take off from the Chambley-Bussieres airbase, eastern France, during a missed attempt to break the simultaneous air-balloon take off world record yesterday in Hageville, as part of the international air-balloon meeting "Grand-Est Mondial Air Ballons" (Gemab). — AFP

Meghan guest edits British Vogue

Prince Harry's wife Meghan will guest edit the September issue of iconic fashion magazine British Vogue, which will see her in "candid conversation" with former US first lady Michelle Obama. The edition, entitled "Forces for Change", will feature 15 women "united by their fearlessness in breaking barriers", including world-renowned primatologist Jane Goodall, according to a statement released by the royal family.

"These last seven months have been a rewarding process... to take the year's most read fashion issue and steer its focus

to the values, causes and people making impact in the world today," said Meghan, also known by her official title the Duchess of Sussex. "Through this lens I hope you'll feel the strength of the collective in the diverse selection of women chosen for the cover," she added. Other women to feature include New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and actor/campaigners Jane Fonda and Salma Hayek Pinault, along with youth climate campaigner Greta Thunberg. The issue of British Vogue will be available on August 2.— AFP



This undated handout photo issued by Kensington Palace shows Britain's Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, Patron of Smart Works, in the workroom of the Smart Works London office.



This undated handout photo received in London by Kensington Palace shows the cover of British Vogue's September issue, entitled "Forces for Change", showing photographs by Peter Lindbergh, which is guest edited by Britain's Meghan, Duchess of Sussex. — AFP photos

BULGARIAN SINGER HITS HIGH WITH RECORD-BREAKING VOCALS

Smilyana Zaharieva knew she had a gift when she saw her audience tremble or cry during her performances. Now an official Guinness world record confirms that the Bulgarian singer has one of the most powerful voices on the planet, which can stay pitch perfect despite being as loud as a rock concert. Zaharieva says she burst into tears when she received the official Guinness world record certificate last month, confirming she had achieved the loudest mezzo-soprano vocal note. "When I saw the monitor reading 113.8 decibels, it surprised me," the 48-year-old told AFP of her record-setting attempt last September.

Tough requirements

Irish teacher Annalisa Flanagan holds the world's loudest shouting record with 121 decibels (dB), but there was no previous singing record. The lively Bulgarian from the southern city of Plovdiv faced a series of tough requirements. Zaharieva had to sing in a quiet studio and go over 110 dB, the average human discomfort threshold, with the sound meter placed 2.5 meters (8.2 feet) away from her while also holding the note for a minimum of five seconds.

According to popular noise level charts Zaharieva's achievement of 113.8 dB roughly amounts to the same loudness you would hear at a rock concert, a symphony orchestra or an emergency vehicle siren. "The Bulgarian folklore voice is characterized by its power," says Dora Hristova, the longtime choir master of the world-famous The Mystery Of The Bulgarian Voices. "Folk singers are born with this physiology, with this natural voice."

'Exceptional register'

As a child, Zaharieva studied folk singing in the National School of Folklore Art in the Rhodope mountains in southern Bulgaria before pursuing a degree from the Plovdiv Conservatory of Music. For several years she was part of another women's choir, The Great Voices of Bulgaria, touring the world. "When I sang people would tremble or cry," she said. But in 1996 she put an end to her career. "One day when I returned home, my little daughter didn't recognize me. That broke my heart," she said.

Opening a tour agency with her husband, she only sang for her family and close friends. "But I felt a void. My voice pushed to resurface," she recalls. In 2015, she set herself the challenge of singing with 101 traditional Rhodope bagpipes, the "kaba gaida"—and her voice held its own. Svetla Stanilova, head of the Plovdiv Conservatory of Music, recognized Zaharieva's "amazing vocal abilities" and "exceptional register".

"The loudness of the voice is an individual quality but it is not the most important one... beauty depends on the voice's timbre," explains Stanilova, one of several experts present at the Guinness World Records attempt. "From all the 26 classes that I've taught, I haven't heard another folklore voice with a similar range." Sofia opera director Plamen Kartaloff was more Skeptical on the record: "What a funny idea to measure one's voice!" he said, adding several opera singers known for their voices—perhaps more powerful than Zaharieva's—never had theirs measured.

Madonna as collaborator?

Keen on yoga and interested in Eastern meditation techniques, Zaharieva wants to explore the curative effects of sound and is seeking to collaborate with other artists. She has already asked American pop-star Madonna. "This voice that has been given to me, I want to use it to help people and find a message to convey," said the mother-of-two and recent grandmother of twins.

Zaharieva uses the crystal lyre instrument, known for its soothing, relaxing and meditative effects, and a chain of large bells—"chanove"—from the Rhodope mountains in sessions she both participates in and organizes. "Each sound corresponds to an energy center in the body and to an organ," the singer explains, adding various combinations of sound can cure illnesses.— AFP



Bulgarian singer Smilyana Zaharieva shows her Guinness certificate during an interview with AFP in a dome-shaped hall in the village of Starosel. — AFP photos



Bulgarian singer Smilyana Zaharieva performs during an interview with AFP in a dome-shaped hall in the village of Starosel.



Bulgarian singer Smilyana Zaharieva performs next to a chain of Bulgarian traditional bells, called "chanove", during an interview with AFP in a dome-shaped hall in the village of Starose.

Lifestyle | Gossip

Westlife pay homage to Celtic music on new album

Westlife pay homage to Celtic music on new album 'Spectrum'. Mark Feehily - who is joined by Shane Filan, Kian Egan and Nicky Byrne in the Irish band - has revealed one of the tracks on their first record since 2010's 'Gravity' has a "Celtic fusion side to it" and he compared it to his solo track 'Sanctuary' from his 2015 LP 'Fire'. He told OfficialCharts.com: "One of them is just a very cool tip of the hat to Celtic music. "It's very contemporary but it's got a Celtic fusion side to it. "I had a song on my album called 'Sanctuary' which sampled Clannad but it had more a pop/hip-hop beat to it. It's kind of in the same world as that. It's cool, edgy and contemporary." Mark recently revealed Ed Sheeran has written half of their new record. As well as the lead single 'Hello My Love', the 28-year-old pop megastar also worked with producer Steve Mac on five of the other tracks on 'Spectrum'. Mark said: "He's done six songs for the album. "So effectively half the album. "One day Ed went in the studio and said 'I just want to write Westlife songs'. It's been a truly organic coupling." The 'What About Now' hit-makers' new studio album is set to be released on September 6, and they think the LP's title perfectly sums up their newfound energy. The group recently said: "The title 'Spectrum' came from us talking about how we

feel younger, happier and more energetic than we ever have in our career. "'Spectrum' is a title that represents the various different shades and colors of our personalities, vocals and general perspectives that all blend together in a unique way to create Westlife. "It's also a word that represents the various shades and colours in the band, meaning it's the perfect metaphor for our different points of view and perspectives but together, they somehow join to work perfectly." The band have also teamed up with James Bay for a collaboration on the album. And they feel the LP displays "the very best version of Westlife possible". They added: "We're all driven by trying to create the best album of our careers. Our fans deserve the very best version of Westlife possible and with this album we feel that we've achieved that. "The album has everything that we love in music, heartfelt emotional songs and also great uptempo's that are designed for our stadium performances. "We couldn't be happier with how the last few months in the studio have gone and we cannot wait for our fans to hear the end results."



The Cure's Simon Gallup replaced by son Eden at Fuji Rock Festival

The Cure bassist Simon Gallup's son Eden Gallup stepped in for his father at Fuji Rock Festival after he was forced to sit out the show due to a "serious personal situation". Robert Smith and co decided to go ahead with the Japanese gig on Sunday (28.07.19), without the 59-year-old band member, to avoid disappointing their fans and they brought out his 29-year-old musician son as his

replacement. In a statement, the 'Friday I'm In Love' band said: "A serious personal situation affecting our bassist Simon arose after the Paleo Festival show on Thursday, and as a consequence Simon was unable to travel with us to Japan. "Very reluctant to disappoint our wonderful Japanese fans, and after much discussion, we decided to go ahead with our Fuji Festival headline on Sunday." The 'Just Like Heaven' hitmakers didn't divulge what the "personal situation" was but they promised Simon will be back on stage on Saturday for their Moscow gig and the rest of their summer festival dates. They added: "We're very grateful to Ed for reaching out across the generational divide to help us out, and join him in welcoming his dad back for our seven remaining summer festival shows." The Cure headlined Glastonbury in June and are set to release their first studio album in more than a decade. Robert can't wait for fans to hear the finished record as they "enjoyed" the creative process so much. He said previously: "We've enjoyed it and we've just recorded a new album for the first time in 10 years." Although the band have finished their new album, the highly anticipated record is not titled and has no release date as of yet. The 60-year-old frontman also added the band had made a comeback for the "right reasons" and while the group may cover different styles of music, the new record still "sounds us" because "it's us doing it". The Cure were selected to be honored in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in March and were inducted by Nine Inch Nails frontman Trent Reznor at the Cleveland ceremony.



Longoria's directing superpower

Eva Longoria has a "superpower" for directing. The 'Desperate Housewives' star is set to make her directorial debut on a female comedy, before turning her talent to a movie about her Latino community and she thinks she will do a great job because she will be "able to navigate those worlds in a very specific way". Speaking at the HollyRod Foundation's 21st annual DesignCare Gala, she said: "Both are really extensions of worlds I know. As a director I'm able to navigate those worlds in a very specific way. And I have a superpower for both." Eva didn't feel she was "reaching her full potential" as an actress. She said: "I knew when I was on set [as an actress] I wasn't reaching my full potential as a human being, and I love telling people what to do - I'm really good at it. I say this confidently, not arrogantly. I'm a really good director because I'm a woman, because directing is about problem-solving and I think woman are the best problem solvers in the world." And Eva previously admitted her "goal" is to direct and produce. She said: "My goal has always been to direct and produce. I want to see my stories reflected on the big and small screens. I want more control over my destiny in this industry. Economic mobility is one way to empower Latinas. Latinas are the CEOs of the household finances and health decisions. I want to give women the tools to make sure they become engines for good. "I want to be the female George Clooney. He directs, produces and stars. I want to be in charge of the final product. Everyone goes, 'Oh, she's an actor - turned - director,' and I'm like, 'No, I was always a director and a producer who happened to become an actor.'"



'The Rock' Johnson's mother cried on set of Hobbs and Shaw

Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson's mother cried on the set of 'Hobbs & Shaw'. The 47-year-old star - who spent part of his childhood in Hawaii - has recalled how his mom Ata Johnson burst into tears as she heard her son speak in Samoan, the language of their ancestors, for a long period for the first time and how the cast all appeared around her and gave her a hug. Appearing on 'Extra TV', he said: "She is incredibly proud of the movie. "It's the very first time in the history of Hollywood that the Samoan culture has ever been showcased on this scale, so it's a big deal. "Within the scene, she never heard me speak in Samoan to this degree. She hears me speaking in Samoan, calling on our ancestors to give us strength ... I look over and she is crying so hard. "When the scene was over, a really beautiful moment - all the boys, the guys that play my brothers in the movie, go over and gave her a hug. He added that it was: "A memory forever." Dwayne - who plays protagonist Luke Hobbs in the spin-off of the 'Fast & Furious' franchise - made a surprise visit to a protest in Hawaii just last week. The 'Skyscraper' actor joined those campaigning against the building of the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea's summit and told them he "stands with" their peaceful protest. He told the crowd he felt honored to be part of the protest, which objects to the telescope because of concerns it will harm land sacred to Native Hawaiians. As dancers performed the hula and chanted, he said: "I stand with you. "This is such a critical moment and a pivotal time. Because the world is watching." He also told reporters: "What I realized today ... it's bigger than the telescope. It's humanity. It's the culture. It's our people, Polynesian people, who are willing to die here to protect this land. "This very sacred land that they believe in so powerfully." The protest - which is blocking a road to prevent construction crews from reaching the summit - is now into its 10th day and Hawaii County Mayor Harry Kim, who is the governor's envoy to the protesters, is in the process of organizing a meeting with Native Hawaiian leaders. He voiced his fears there will be a "very splintered community" if he can't get people to work together for what he hopes will be a common goal. He added: We do not want this to become the cause of a polarized community. That to me is a main issue here." The mayor recalled saying a silent prayer after receiving a call from the governor appealing for his help and hopes he can "do the right thing for the right reasons." But he has no time frame for when he plans to conclude the talks, just "as soon as possible". — Bang Showbiz



Miles Kane wants to film tour documentary

Miles Kane wants to film a tour documentary. The 'Cry On My Guitar' rocker says the "highs and lows" and "emotional" aspect of being on the road would make for an "interesting" watch. He told the Daily Star newspaper's Wired column: "We have been filming a lot of stuff, any sort of documentary or anything I am interested in. "With music, with any artist, I find it interesting the backstage, the hanging out the warm ups, the highs, the lows. "There are so many emotions that go into being in the band, it would be easy to film and you could portray it so easily, you could make a great film." Miles has certainly clocked up the air miles, thanks to tours with Last Shadow Puppets and his solo career. Meanwhile, the 'Kingcrawler' musician - who released new single 'Can You See Me Now' in June - previously admitted he would "never say never" to another Puppets reunion. The 33-year-old rocker formed the side project with Arctic Monkeys frontman and longtime pal Alex Turner in 2008, and although fans had to wait a lengthy eight years between the release of their two albums, 'The Age of the Understatement' and 2016's 'Everything You've Come to Expect', Miles has said there could be another revival of the group in the future. He said: "The Last Shadow Puppets was good, I had great fun with that. Bring them back? Who knows, yeah! Never say never." The 'Don't Forget Who You Are' hitmaker was previously a frontman for The Rascals before embarking on his solo endeavors, and after having been friends with Alex for several years, he's often been compared to the superstar rocker. Miles admitted the comparisons used to upset him when he was younger, but he now has the confidence to know he's "amazing" on his own. He said: "I think it's inevitable - I used to feel the comparison when I was younger, but I don't really care now, you know, you think what you think. I know I'm amazing and I know I make good music. I used to think of the comparisons like that, and it's fair enough, I get it, I'd probably think the same, but I don't really care now." Despite feeling the scrutiny in his early days, Miles He said: "I don't blame people if they want to compare - it's going to happen, so it's cool. And it's not like it's not a bad thing, is it? His new album is great, it's fantastic."

Reynolds teases Deadpool involvement with Marvel

Ryan Reynolds has teased his 'Deadpool' character could be part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The 42-year-old actor has seemingly hinted his own superhero could join Phase 5 of Marvel's story arcs. Celebrating the five year anniversary of the 'Deadpool' test footage leak, he wrote on Instagram: "Investigation heading into year 5. Or as I call it, 'Phase 5'. The point is, I love conspiracy yarn. #LeakAversary (sic)" Meanwhile, creator Rob Liefeld previously insisted 'Deadpool 3' will "totally happen" and he will start working on the next movie "soon". Speaking to a fan on Twitter, he said: "It will totally happen!!! Soon! (sic)" He said earlier this year: "Nothing like deadlines to clear your head... let me be clear Deadpool 3 will happen, some form, some fashion. "That's not a concern to me. Disney paid \$60 billion for Fox and Deadpool is most valuable asset in today's market. Makes more than X-Men films. (sic)" And 'Green Lantern' star Reynolds previously admitted to feeling lucky to have been handed the role of

Nutini buys Capaldi's Chewbacca mask for £10K

Paolo Nutini has purchased Lewis Capaldi's Chewbacca mask for £10,000 and is raffling it off for Frightened Rabbit's Tiny Changes charity. The fellow Scottish musician - who Lewis has previously revealed as his biggest influence - stepped in after the original buyer of the 'Star Wars' prop, which the 'Grace' hitmaker wore at TRNSMT Festival to mock Noel Gallagher recently, failed to pay up the £7,401 bid they put on the item in a recent eBay auction for the band's non-profit. Tiny Changes was set up by the family of Frightened Rabbit's late founding member Scott Hutchison - who tragically took his own life at the age of 36 in May last year - to improve mental health in children and young people. Paolo, who had shared a stage with the band and was a huge fan of Scott's "honest" songwriting, said: "I really wanted to find a way to help out Tiny Changes. "Not only am I a big Frightened Rabbit fan, but I was lucky enough to share the stage with them on several occasions - most memorably for me on Hogmanay in Edinburgh in 2017. "Scott was such a great and honest songwriter who wasn't afraid to convey what he was going through in such a beautiful and honest way. "People could hear and read their troubles in his lyrics and be reminded they weren't alone in how they were feeling. "That really is the power of music. "The idea is now to give people another chance to take it home and contribute to this very important cause." Scott's family said in a statement: "Once again we've been overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone who has gone above and beyond to make this happen." "We'd like to thank DF concerts, Paolo Nutini and his team and of course Lewis Capaldi and his face. We hope you can all be a part of this wonderfully weird little story and get your name in the pot to win this mask. Many tiny changes can start the movement for massive changes." At TRNSMT, Lewis dedicated his rendition of Oasis hit 'Don't Look Back In Anger' to his "dear, dear father" Noel and changed the title to 'Don't Chewbacca In Anger'. The band's former guitarist had fumed in an interview: "Chewbacca should enjoy his 15 minutes. The greatest day of his life that I slagged him off or called him an idiot. "It's the greatest day of his life so far. "He's just thinking, "Wow!" Well, I know you're Scottish and all that, but hell! "It is like a third world country, but for god's sake, man, you must have had a better day than this. Surely!" After the insult, Lewis instantly changed his Twitter username to Chewbacca Capaldi and updated his profile picture to him as Chewbacca. Those wanting to own the mask of Han Solo's companion have until August 5 to enter the competition by texting "TC" to 84902, with entries costing £1.



Deadpool, describing it as a "limitless" experience. The 42-year-old star said: "It's pretty limitless. I would say it's the role that I feel most privileged to have in my entire career. I feel like I was sort of born for it - I love Deadpool. The hardest thing on this set was keeping a straight face, but that's what a mask is for! "There are takes in the movie where I know I'm cracking up laughing under the mask but I'm doing it silently, but I'm supposed to be listening to something serious. It's in there. If you watch you can kind of feel it."





Polish artist Mario, sculptor of St. Simon the Tanner Monastery complex, poses for a picture alongside sculptures. — AFP photos



Polish artist Mario, sculptor of St. Simon the Tanner Monastery complex, climbs a ladder while working.



A view of a relief sculpture made by Polish artist Mario at the St. Simon the Tanner Monastery complex.



A view of a relief sculpture made by Polish artist Mario at the St. Simon the Tanner Monastery complex.



A view of a relief sculpture made by Polish artist Mario at the St. Simon the Tanner Monastery complex in the Egyptian capital Cairo's eastern hillside Mokkatam district.

Artist adorns Egyptian cave church with biblical art



Polish artist Mario, sculptor of St. Simon the Tanner Monastery complex, speaks before a relief during an interview with AFP.

Whistling a tune, Mario nimbly clambered up the scaffolding enveloping part of the rock-hewn St. Simon Monastery atop Cairo's Mokkatam hills to add the final touches to his latest sculpture. He had spent more than two decades carving the rugged insides of the seven cave churches and chapels of the monastery with designs inspired by biblical stories. It was all done to fulfill the wishes of the monastery's parish priest who met Mario in the early 1990s in Cairo. The Polish artist, who had arrived in Egypt earlier on an educational mission, was then looking for an opportunity to serve God at the monastery. "I want you to turn the mountain into an open Bible," Mario recalls the priest telling him. Back then, Mario had no experience in sculpting. But he bought an electric drill and chisel hammer and within days had finished his first sculpture. It told the story of the miracle of the moving of Mokkatam mountain, a feat said to have been done by a 10th century craftsman known as Simon the Tanner to prove the strength of his Christian faith. The monastery is named after him. "I had no idea sculpting was a talent I have, but it turned out (to be) as you can see," said Mario as he showed off

his work around the walls of a vast cavern which regularly hosts gatherings at the monastery.

Across one, he sketched another chronicle about St. Simon, shown brandishing a needle before gouging his eyes out to punish himself for lusting after a woman. Other walls recount stories from the New Testament. "It can take between five days up to half a year to finish a sculpture, depending on the design," he said.

'Masterpiece'

"My work is meant to tell spiritual stories of this mountain and of Christianity in general," he said. "I want them to live on for future generations." Mario says he kept practicing, sculpting for more than 23 years, and completed about 70 sculptures adding to the monastery's allure by giving it an ancient look. Construction of the complex started only in the 1970s, a thousand years after the story of moving Mokkatam mountain believed to have taken place in November 979. Building began after the monastery's current parish priest known as Father Samaan, Arabic for Simon, visited the area and decided to turn it into a worship place. "I also thought then why not carve the miracles

of Jesus on the mountain. It will benefit the people and (create) a lively depiction of these stories," said Father Samaan. Resting at the pinnacle of Mokkatam mountain, the monastery has a commanding view of the megalopolis of Cairo. Unsurprisingly though, reaching the top of the mountain is no small feat.

The grueling trip to the top requires visitors to pass through the teeming slum area known as the city of "Garbage Collectors" of uneven roads and malodorous piles of garbage strewn along the way. Despite the tough journey, the monastery welcomes thousands for services weekly as well as on holidays and celebrations of the Copts, Egypt's Christian minority which makes up about 10 percent of the country's Muslim-majority population. "The monastery is now a masterpiece," Samaan said in his office in one of the churches of the monastery. "We have the pyramids and the artefacts in the Egyptian museum. But they are all ancient but this monastery is new."

'Most comfortable'

For Mario, whose real name is Mariusz Dybich, he grew accustomed to life in Cairo and work at

the monastery. Besides sculpting, he even gives an adrenaline-spiking High Ropes sport course at the monastery. "It is surprising to many that a European man willingly leaves his country to work in a poor slum area as that of the city of Garbage Collectors in Cairo," said Mario. "But I believe it's God who sent me here." The 51-year-old is originally from the city of Krakow in southern Poland but has been living in Egypt for nearly three decades now. He has over the years become known to everyone in the monastery and the thousands of people living in the city of "Garbage Collectors" by his nickname, Mario.

He married an Egyptian woman and has two girls. He mastered over the years the Arabic language and developed a particularly strong command of the Egyptian dialect. He witnessed in Egypt the 2011 uprising which toppled longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak and ensuing years of political and economic turmoil. Yet he does not see himself settling anywhere else. "I just love living here. It's where I am most comfortable among the simple people of Egypt. I would not leave unless God decides otherwise." — AFP

Just Eat, Takeaway.com seek to deliver combo deal

Britain's Just Eat and Takeaway.com of the Netherlands unveiled yesterday a plan to join forces to create a heavyweight in the rapidly-growing food delivery sector with around \$8 billion in annual sales. The combination of the two firms would create a delivery platform worth around \$11 billion capable of competing against Britain-based Deliveroo and Uber Eats of the United States with a strong presence in important markets such as Britain, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands. If the transaction goes ahead, shareholders in Just Eat would own 52.2 percent of the combined firm which will be based in the Netherlands, while a London stock listing would be maintained.

Shares in FTSE-100 listed Just Eat jumped more than

20 percent when trading began yesterday. The firms said that by becoming one of the world's largest food delivery platforms, with annual orders of around 360 million last year, they would be able to leverage investments, particularly in technology and marketing. "The key feature of the combination of Just Eat and Takeaway.com is the limited geographic overlap between the companies," said analyst Russell Pointon at Edison Investment Research. Joining up could "help improve profitability to invest further behind their less profitable markets and fund the fights for market share in what is likely to be a very competitive market," he added. — AFP



In this file photo an app for Just Eat, a food delivery service can be seen on a smart phone in London. — AFP photos



A sign for Just Eat, a food delivery service can be seen above a restaurant in London.

Carlos Cruz-Diez, major figure in kinetic art, dies aged 95

Carlos Cruz-Diez, one of the major figures in kinetic art, has died at the age of 95 in Paris, his family announced Sunday. "It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of our beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Carlos Eduardo Cruz-Diez," said a statement from the family posted on the artist's website. "Your love, your joy, your teachings and your colors, will remain forever in our hearts." The funeral would be held in private, the statement added. The Franco-Venezuelan artist was born August 17 in 1923, in Caracas, and as a young student at the School of Fine Art there financed his studies by drawing comic books.

From 1960, he lived and worked in Paris. "I started by painting slums, misery," he once said in an interview with French daily Le Figaro. "I thought artists should be a reporter of their time and I was very admiring of the Flemish paintings such as Brueghel," he said. "A very long and painful reflection led me not towards abstraction but towards invention. By default. When I understood that paintings could not change social problems." In a career spanning 70 years, Cruz-Diez focused much of his attention on research into the theory of color, applying it in his work.

His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate Modern in London and the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Although he settled in Paris and eventually acquired French nationality, his art remains anchored in his native Venezuela. One of his most large-scale works is the one covering the walls and floor of the Simon Bolivar International Airport at Caracas. Another can be found

in the capital's Plaza Venezuela. He founded three art workshops, in Caracas, in Paris and in Panama, as well as the Cruz-Diez Art Foundation in Houston, Texas, his website noted. — AFP



In this file photo a visitor walks through a work by Venezuelan artist Carlos Cruz-Diez entitled "Chromosaturacion" at La Estampa Museum in Caracas.



In this file photo a man crosses a pedestrian crossing painted by Venezuelan artist Carlos Cruz-Diez toward the Broad Museum in Los Angeles, California. — AFP photos



A Pakistani worker prepares tandoori tea in a stall of a market in Islamabad. — AFP photos



Pakistani people gather to drink tandoori tea in clay pots at a market in Islamabad.

SMOKY TEA BAKED IN CLAY TANDOORI CHAI HEATS UP PAKISTAN



A Pakistani waiter serves tandoori tea in clay pots to customers at a market in Islamabad.

It's a cuppa like no other. Every evening in Islamabad a crowd arrives at Sanaullah's street stall to taste his "tandoori chai"—milk tea served in terracotta mugs, still hot from his traditional oven. The old-fashioned cups are placed directly inside the tandoor, where they are baked at high temperatures. The tea, prepared separately, is then poured in to the cups, where it starts to boil on hitting the hot clay. In Pakistan, where the classic milk tea—thick, strong, and generously sweet—dominates all strata of society, the particular alchemy of tandoori chai seduces patrons intrigued by its traditional roots and distinct earthy taste.



A Pakistani worker places clay pots around a tandoor at a stall in a market in Islamabad.

The tandoor is ubiquitous in South Asia, most commonly used to bake bread. But the concept of making tea this way, is the main draw for many, explains Sanaullah, the jovial owner of a trendy shop located in an upmarket area of the Pakistani capital. "The process of making it is really very interesting, which makes people like it," he said, adding that the tea also has a smoky flavor which attracts many. Sitting among the customers on a low rush stool, Muhammad Ishaq Khawar is a frequent customer.



Pakistani people gather to drink tandoori tea in clay pots at a market in Islamabad.

"There is a different kind of atmosphere, especially the way in which we are served tea. It was a very old system which goes back to the old days when the terracotta pots were used," he explains.

It may seem like a niche product but the drink has become so popular the Tandoori Chai Company cafes, which recently launched in Lahore, has expanded to a second branch. And while coffee culture has caught on in Pakistan's main cities with big name chains and local cafes a hit urban youths, tea, regardless of how it is prepared, is nonetheless an essential component of the daily menu. The country is one of the top tea consumers globally according to research firm Euromonitor International, while a recent study by Gallup found 73 percent of Pakistani tea drinkers have at least two or more cups a day. "Not only in Pakistan, but in the entire subcontinent, it has been mixed in our blood," says Mohammad Asim Khan, a customer at a small eatery in Islamabad. He adds: "Your physical fatigue will go away by taking tea and you get fresh." — AFP



Pakistani people gather to drink tandoori tea in clay pots at a market in Islamabad.



Pakistani people gather to drink tandoori tea in clay pots at a market in Islamabad.



A Pakistani worker prepares tandoori tea at a stall in a market in Islamabad.



Pakistani people gather to drink tandoori tea in clay pots at a market in Islamabad.

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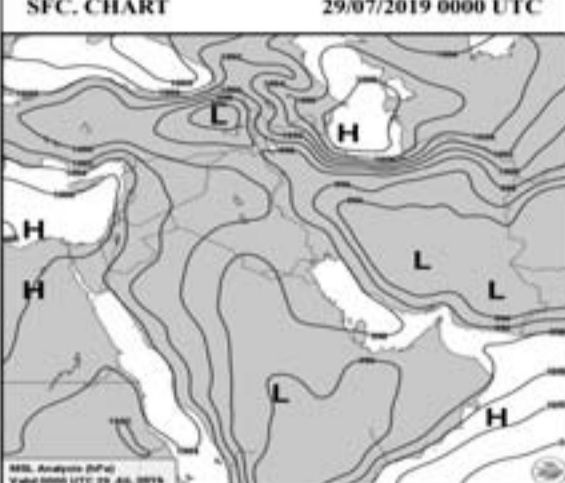
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light variable wind to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 26 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Hot to relatively hot with light to moderate south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 29/07/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	45 °C	33 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	46 °C	28 °C		
ABDALY	46 °C	29 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	47 °C	32 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	48 °C	28 °C		
SALMIYAH	39 °C	32 °C		
AHMADI	42 °C	34 °C		
NUWAISIB	45 °C	28 °C		
WAFRA	47 °C	27 °C		
SALMY	46 °C	29 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	07/30	Very hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas	48 °C	30 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	07/31	Very hot and some high clouds will appear	49 °C	33 °C	NW-VRB	10 - 28 km/h
Thursday	08/01	Very hot and rising dust	49 °C	32 °C	NW	15 - 50 km/h
Friday	08/02	Very hot and rising dust over open areas	50 °C	34 °C	NW	12 - 45 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:36
Sunrise	05:06
Zuhr	11:54
Asr	15:30
Sunset	18:42
Isha	20:09

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	45 °C
MIN. Temp.	27 °C
MAX. RH	33 %
MIN. RH	08 %
MAX. Wind	SE 28 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

GABRIEL SOFIA DA SILVA.
(C 5567) 29-7-2019

I, SALVADOR GABRIEL SOFIA D'SILVA currently holder of Indian Passport No. K4650361 issued at Kuwait on 11/03/2012, presently residing in Kuwait, my permanent address: Pequeno Rumbordem, Curtorim, Salcette, Goa, pin code: 403709, India, do hereby permanently change my name as SALVADOR

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 ALEIXO FERNANDES. (C 5566) 28-7-2019

EMERGENCY 112

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Airlines

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



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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 30/7/2019					Departure Flights on Tuesday 30/7/2019				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	THY	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	SYR
FEG	241	Alexandria	00:05	KAC 766	Istanbul	12:30			Damascus
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	KAC 614	Bahrain	12:30			JZR 213
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	UAE 871	Dubai	12:45			QTR 1075
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	MSR 610	Cairo	12:45			JZR 611
KAC	122	AGP	00:20	AXB 393	Kozhikode	13:10			JZR 123
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	JZR 222	Riyadh	13:30			JZR 115
KAC	102	London	00:50	FBS 118	Sarajevo	13:30			KAC 541
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	JZR 212	Jeddah	13:45			MSR 611
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	UAE 877	Dubai	14:00			THY 767
KAC	182	NCE	01:10	KAC 672	Dubai	14:00			AXB 394
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	FDB 059	Dubai	14:20			UAE 872
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	QTR 1078	Doha	14:25			FBS 119
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC 286	Dhaka	14:35			KAC 673
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	KAC 304	Mumbai	14:45			JZR 103
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	SVA 500	Jeddah	14:45			FDB 060
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	KAC 562	Amman	14:50			UAE 878
JZR	262	Beirut	02:05	KAC 618	Doha	14:50			QTR 1079
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC 788	Jeddah	14:55			SVA 501
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:25	JZR 602	Baku	15:00			KNE 530
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC 692	Muscat	15:00			KAC 563
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	KAC 118	New York	15:00			KAC 743
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	KNE 529	Jeddah	15:05			KAC 775
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	ETD 303	Abu Dhabi	15:15			KAC 615
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	OMA 645	Muscat	15:20			ABY 128
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ABY 127	Sharjah	15:35			KAC 785
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	UAE 857	Dubai	15:45			JZR 304
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC 546	Cairo	15:50			OMA 646
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	FEG 341	Sohag	16:00			KAC 619
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	JZR 732	Cairo	16:10			FEG 442
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	MSR 575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10			MSR 576
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	KAC 502	Beirut	16:15			QTR 1073
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	QTR 1072	Doha	16:15			UAE 858
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	FEG 241	Alexandria	16:45			KAC 283
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	MYW 1219	Tbilisi	17:00			OHY 242
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	SAW 705	Damascus	17:00			KAC 343
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	JZR 116	Doha	17:05			KAC 155
THY	1414	Trabzon	05:05	SVA 510	Riyadh	17:10			KAC 381
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	GFA 215	Bahrain	17:30			SAW 706
MNB	170	Bahrain	05:05	JZR 214	Jeddah	17:35			MYW 1220
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	JZR 124	Dubai	17:40			SVA 511
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	KAC 158	Istanbul	17:40			JZR 721
UAE	873	Dubai	05:40	JZR 104	Bahrain	18:00			GFA 216
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	QTR 1080	Doha	18:10			JZR 127
KAC	552	Cairo	05:50	JZR 612	Doha	18:15			JZR 403
KAC	362	Colombo	06:05	JZR 302	Istanbul	18:20			JZR 501
JZR	702	Asyut	06:10	MSR 620	Cairo	18:30			JZR 733
BAW	157	London	06:20	UAE 875	Dubai	19:05			JZR 253
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	FDB 063	Dubai	19:05			JZR 261
THY	6376	Istanbul	06:30	RJA 640	Amman	19:05			QTR 1081
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	GFA 217	Bahrain	19:05			MSR 621
KAC	106	London	06:40	ABY 123	Sharjah	19:20			FDB 064
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	KAC 744	Dammam	19:25			GFA 218
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	NIA 0161	Cairo	19:30			KAC 331
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	07:05	KAC 616	Bahrain	19:40			ABY 124
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	RBG 555	Alexandria	19:40			RJA 641
KAC	358	Kochi	07:25	KAC 776	Riyadh	19:45			RBG 556
IRA	675	Lar	08:00	KAC 674	Dubai	19:45			NIA 0162
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC 178	Vienna	19:50			JZR 401
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	KAC 166	Rome	20:00			UAE 876
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:05	OMA 647	Muscat	20:05			KAC 353
KAC	384	Delhi	08:10	DLH 624	Frankfurt	20:10			DLH 624
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	MEA 402	Beirut	20:15			OMA 648
JZR	708	Luxor	08:45	RBG 213	Sohag	20:30			RBG 214
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	KAC 620	Doha	20:30			MEA 403
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	KAC 542	Cairo	20:35			KAC 301
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	QTR 1088	Doha	20:40			QTR 1089
GFA	209	Bahrain	09:05	ICV 6752	Luxembourg	20:55			MNB 171
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KLM 445	Amsterdam	21:00			KAC 205
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC 172	Frankfurt	21:00			KLM 445
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD 307	Abu Dhabi	21:10			ETD 308
SAW	703	Damascus	10:00	UAE 859	Dubai	21:15			ALK 230
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ALK 229	Colombo	21:15			JZR 1737
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC 168	Paris	21:20			THY 1403
JZR	726	Alexandria	10:50	THY 764	Istanbul	21:30			UAE 860
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	GFA 219	Bahrain	21:50			KAC 383
KAC	624	Doha	10:55	KAC 564	Amman	21:55			GFA 220
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	QTR 1082	Doha	22:05			ICV 6752
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	ETD 309	Abu Dhabi	22:15			KAC 795
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	KAC 786	Jeddah	22:20			KAC 783
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	AIC 987	Ahmedabad	22:25		</	

Egypt, Jordan leaders hold talks over Israeli-Palestinian peace



CAIRO: Jordanian King Abdullah II (left) meets Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi at the presidential palace yesterday. — AFP

CAIRO: Egypt's President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi and Jordan's King Abdullah II met yesterday to discuss efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reaffirming their support for a two-state solution, Sisi's office said. The meeting comes ahead of an expected visit to the region by US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior White House advisor Jared Kushner, who is pushing a controversial peace plan rejected by the Palestinians and criticized by Jordan.

Kushner's initiative, partially unveiled at a Bahrain conference in June, dangled the prospect of pumping \$50 billion-worth of investment into the stagnant Palestinian economy. But it failed to address key Palestinian demands such as the establishment of their own independent state. The political side of the plan has yet to be released.

In a statement yesterday, Sisi's office said the Egyptian and Jordanian leaders had agreed on "the

importance of intensifying efforts" to resume peace talks. They stressed the talks should abide by the two-state solution long accepted internationally as the basis for a solution: A "Palestinian state based on the June 1967 boundaries with East Jerusalem as its capital".

Trump's administration has broken with that consensus, unilaterally recognizing the deeply contested city of Jerusalem as capital of Israel and slashing funding for the UN agency for Palestinians. The Bahrain forum was boycotted by Palestinian Authority, while Jordan and Egypt sent low-level representatives. The Palestinian leadership has boycotted Trump and accused him of using promises of cash to try to impose political solutions whilst ignoring Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories. After meeting Sisi, the Jordanian monarch headed to Tunisia to offer condolences following the death of president Beji Caid Essebsi. — AFP

was the close communication companies could have with regulators, something that would be difficult in a big financial centre. Bahrain also offered good access to Gulf markets, he added.

Another cryptocurrency trading platform, iExchange, began operating in the Belarusian capital Minsk this month, aiming to attract investors from the CIS market of Russia and the former Soviet states. Co-founder Igor Snizhko said Belarus was the best option because it had a regulatory framework that other countries in the region lacked. Belarus demands audits of issuers of digital coins and details of the projects underpinning any issuance. For trading platforms, the rules include keeping tabs on suspicious transactions to meet international money laundering standards.

"For many the CIS market is very promising and very dangerous at the same time," he added. "Many large and accomplished players are still afraid of one factor - a lack of transparency. We didn't want to work in any 'grey' jurisdiction." Sweeteners offered by Belarus include tax breaks for companies mining or trading cryptocurrencies. The rules, described by PwC as "carrots with no sticks," also give firms looser rules on currency controls and visas.

In the United States, by contrast, digital coin transactions are taxable. In Britain, capital gains taxes apply. iExchange said it had also initially looked at other countries including Estonia and Malta, but chose Belarus because of its proximity to its target market.

The size of the global cryptocurrency sector is hard to gauge because of its complexity and lack of transparency. Still, Ireland-based Research and Markets reckons the sector will grow to \$1.4 billion by 2024 from \$1 billion this year. Other estimates see a faster rate of growth. Crypto regulations vary through the world. While Facebook's unveiling of its Libra coin has prompted signs of a coordinated backlash against cryptocurrencies by major economies, a patchwork of approaches still rules from country to country.

China has even banned cryptocurrencies outright, while an Indian government panel last week recommended a similar measure. Sui Chung of Crypto Facilities, a London-based cryptocurrency futures exchange, said there were clear benefits to being in a major financial hub, including having access to highly skilled employees. "You need to be in place where you can get the staff," he said. "Our product teams, development teams have financial institution experience."

Being regulated in an established center can also allow companies access to deeper, more liquid markets and provide greater certainty on securities law, said Ann Sofie Cloots, one of the authors of a Cambridge University study on cryptocurrency regulation. "It may mean you have a more sophisticated investor base, greater access to capital," she said. "It's also a reputational thing."

To be sure, it is not just the likes of Belarus and Bahrain that have coined their own crypto rules: Some larger countries like France and Japan have also made moves in that direction. But it's the smaller countries that have tended to launch the most sophisticated "bespoke" approaches, according to the Cambridge University study. That could bring clarity to both cryptocurrency companies and related services like banks previously wary of the sector's unclear legal status, said Cloots. — Reuters

telling CNN Sunday: "That is a disgrace and that is why we're going to defeat this president." Cory Booker wrote that "this is painful. This is a moral, defining moment in America" while Kamala Harris, who like Booker is black, said she was "proud" to have her campaign headquarters in Cummings's district and called Trump's attack "disgraceful".

Trump's remarks are seen as a calculated but risky appeal, both to the disgruntled white, blue-collar base that helped get him elected in 2016, and to other whites who haven't decided whom to support in next year's elections. After Trump's tweets attacking the Squad, his approval among Republicans rose five points to 72 percent in a Reuters-Ipsos poll.

Yesterday, Sharpton accused Trump of attacking Cummings and the people of Baltimore "in the most bigoted and racist way". "He attacks everybody. I know Donald Trump. He is not mature enough to take criticism. He can't help it, he is like a child - somebody says something he reacts." Sharpton and Trump have ties going back to their New York City circles, but Trump balked at any close past relationship. Baltimore, as well, has stood up to Trump's remarks, which Mayor Bernard "Jack" Young dubbed "completely unacceptable". — AFP

IS threat hovers over Syria camp, rattling authorities

AL-HOL CAMP, Syria: Stabbing guards, stoning aid workers and flying the Islamic State group's black flag in plain sight: The wives and children of the 'caliphate' are sticking by the militants in a desperate Syrian camp. Months after the defeat of the jihadist proto-state, families of IS fighters are among 70,000 people crammed into the Kurdish-run Al-Hol camp in northeastern Syria. Swarming around an AFP journalist, women clad in black complain of poor medical assistance, a lack of aid, and boiling tents. They also praise the elusive IS supremo Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, saying they are waiting for orders from their leader.

Umm Suhaib, the widowed wife of a jihadist, admits that IS supporters have attacked Kurdish security forces guarding the camp. "Two or three times, the Asayesh were stabbed," said the 23-year-old Iraqi mother of three. The so-called "Muhajirat," female jihadists who travelled to Syria to join IS, are behind the stabbings, she said. "Why do they stab them? Because they allow injustice to prevail," said Umm Suhaib, covered in black from head-to-toe. She also accused the Asayesh of conducting "night raids" on the tents of "sisters", referring to female IS supporters.

Umm Suhaib said her husband, a Tunisian, died months ago fighting the US-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in the eastern village of Baghouz, the IS group's very last bastion in eastern Syria. In March, the SDF announced the defeat of the 'caliphate' - which IS declared in 2014 over parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014 - after it expelled the last fighters from the village. Tens of thousands of people, mostly women and children, were trucked to Kurdish-run camps in north-east Syria during the weeks-long campaign.

In total, some 12,000 foreigners - 4,000 women and 8,000 children - are now living in such camps, according to Kurdish authorities. "We only came to the camp because of Baghdadi's orders," said Umm Suhaib. She has not seen her family in Iraq for nearly three years, but she does not seem keen on going back home. Her only wish is the "return of the 'caliphate'" so that she can "settle there".

Surveillance cameras that operate round-the-clock are omnipresent in Al-Hol and security is especially tight around a fenced section of the sprawling camp, where foreign women are held guarded by Kurdish



AL-HOL CAMP, Syria: An internal security patrol escorts women, reportedly wives of Islamic State group fighters, in this camp in Al-Hasakeh governorate in northeastern Syria on July 23, 2019. — AFP

forces. Unlike Syrian and Iraqi women who are allowed to roam the camp freely, these high-risk prisoners are escorted by armed guards when they want to go to the camp's market or receive aid rations.

"They see us as enemies, and that creates problems," said Amer Ali, the head of the Asayesh force, adding that some women have tried to flee. In June, a woman from Al-Roj camp who had been transferred to hospital tried to escape from there but was arrested before she could flee, medical sources at the facility said. The woman, they said, had removed her black face veil and changed into a white dress to make her getaway.

Earlier this month, a video shared on social media networks showed women clamoring around an IS flag that had been hoisted on an electricity pole in Al-Hol as children chanted "Allahu Akbar" (God is Greatest). IS wants "to spread its ideology through these women", said Ali, confirming the authenticity of the footage. The children too are a problem, he said. "They throw stones at us because their mothers tell them that we killed their fathers, and destroyed their houses," Ali said.

Kurdish authorities have repeatedly warned that the children of jihadists represent a "time bomb" the world urgently needs to defuse. Without rehabilitation and reintegration, these children could become future "terrorists", they have warned. Sheikmous Ahmed, a Kurdish official in northeastern Syria, acknowledged the security challenges. "We do not have the means to stop everything that is happening, but we try to contain these incidents," he said. IS supporters "remain attached to their ideology, and they will always represent a danger," he warned. — AFP

Small states going big on...

Continued from Page 1

The likes of Belarus and other newer entrants - including Bahrain, Malta and Gibraltar - are seeking to offer a third way: crafting specific rules for the cryptocurrency sector, betting they can attract companies by providing regulatory security as well as perks like tax breaks. While there is no guarantee of success, cryptocurrencies represent a rare chance for these states or territories to grab a slice of an emerging market, potentially attracting investment and creating jobs, at a time when big financial hubs are adopting a more conservative, "wait-and-see" approach.

"There are jurisdictions in the see-no-evil, hear-no-evil camp," said Jesse Overall, a lawyer at Clifford Chance in New York specializing in crypto regulation. "On the other end there is the US, UK, EU. In the middle, that's the juicy part of the spectrum." Overall said both countries and companies could benefit from the emergence of frameworks specifically for cryptocurrencies. But states that get the rules wrong could fall foul of global rules to stamp out illicit use of digital coins, he added.

Indeed, there are major questions over whether these nations will be able to consistently prevent the hacks and illegal activities, such as money laundering, that plague the opaque sector and could hammer their reputations as secure centers. Another risk of building rules for an unpredictable and rapidly evolving industry is that they could soon become outdated.

ZPX, a Singapore-based crypto firm, will launch a cryptocurrency trading platform, Qume, next month catering to institutional investors such as high-frequency proprietary trading firms and hedge funds. It has decided to base the business in Bahrain's capital Manama - and the considerations it faced are emblematic of the quandary confronting many players across the industry.

ZPX's CEO Ramani Ramchandran said it decided against operating in a so-called offshore jurisdiction with low or no regulation. Such a base could deter big investors as scrutiny of digital coins heats up from global regulators and politicians, he said. "As the market matures analogous to traditional capital markets, mainstream institutional capital will increasingly look to come to regulated exchanges such as Qume as opposed to 'light-touch' venues in offshore jurisdictions."

Bahrain launched rules in February for cryptocurrency companies such as trading platforms, including rigorous customer background checks, governance standards and controls on cyber security risks. It's also usually far cheaper in terms of compliance and administration costs to set up in smaller locations like Bahrain than in major financial hubs, said Ramchandran. ZPX estimates such costs would come to around \$200,000 a year in Bahrain, versus at least \$750,000 a year in London. Another advantage of setting up in a smaller country, said ZPX co-founder Aditya Mishra,

Trump presses race as 2020...

Continued from Page 1

Many Republicans have refrained from criticizing Trump over his remarks toward Cummings. But Michael Steele, a former lieutenant governor of Maryland who served as chairman of the Republican National Committee from 2009 to 2011, took aim at Trump at a news conference in Baltimore alongside Sharpton. "Mr President, your reprehensible comments are like water off a duck's back when it comes to this community. It just washes off of us," said Steele, who is black. Steele urged Trump to visit Baltimore, saying, "Folks want to talk to you. So just show up. Put the tweet down brother, and show up."

Trump's weekend diatribe ignited a storm of criticism, particularly from Democrats running 2020 presidential campaigns. Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders reiterated his assertion that Trump is a racist

Report alleges ethical abuses...

Continued from Page 1

crisis in its near 70 years of history," it said. The report was sent to the United Nations secretary general in December and UN investigators have since visited UNRWA's offices in Jerusalem and Amman, collecting information related to the allegations, sources familiar with the matter said. Krahenbuhl said in a statement to AFP that "if the current investigation... were to present findings that require corrective measures or other management actions, we will not hesitate to take them."

UNRWA was set up in the years after more than 700,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled their lands during the 1948 war surrounding the creation of Israel. It provides vital schooling and medical services to millions of impoverished refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and the Palestinian territories. It employs around 30,000 people, mostly Palestinians, and its UN mandate is set to be debated later this year.

The report paints a picture of a small number of mostly foreign senior leaders centralizing power and influence while disregarding UN checks and balances. Krahenbuhl himself is alleged to have been romantically involved with a colleague who was appointed in 2015 to a newly created role of senior advisor to the commissioner-general after an "extreme fast-track" process, the report says. This enabled her to join him on business class flights across the globe, the report claims.

In 2018 the United States suspended and later cut all funding for UNRWA, causing a financial crisis that threatened to see its schools and hospitals closed. US

Teen becomes Fortnite champ...

Continued from Page 1

easier to shoot other players. "A lot of people think it's just a game, but he is practicing, dedicated, determined," said Bugha's aunt, Dawn Seiders. "I think he's the definition of a professional."

Epic Games - Fortnite's creators - have spent a whopping \$100 million on the inaugural event, including staging 10 weeks of qualifying culminating in this weekend's tournament. Over the three-day tournament, Epic Games gave out \$30 million in prize money. Every competitor is guaranteed to leave with \$50,000, making them the envy of the schoolyard when they return home.

On Saturday, gamers using the pseudonyms "Nyhrox" and "aqua" became the first Fortnite world champions in the duo division, winning \$1.5 million each. During Sunday's final, the crown jewel of the tournament, three players in addition to Bugha also became millionaires: "Psalm" (\$1.8 million), "Epikwhale" (\$1.2 million) and Kreo (\$1.05 million), all Americans.

President Donald Trump's administration, along with Israel, accuses UNRWA of perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The agency disputes that and says the services it provides would otherwise not be available to Palestinians. After the crisis began, Krahenbuhl established a fund-raising unit outside of the traditional mechanisms but it "reportedly raised only modest amounts," the report says. At the same time, it enabled him to continue travelling with his partner, it says.

Separately, a Krahenbuhl deputy is accused of manipulating the system to find a well-paid job for her husband during the 2018 financial crisis. Her management style is alleged to have included bullying, cutting those she disliked out of decision-making and avoiding checks and balances, it says. The deputy left UNRWA last Thursday for what the agency said was "personal reasons". She could not be reached for comment. Another senior official is described in the report as bullying staff and acting like a "gangster" and a "thug". UNRWA said the official was recently "separated from the agency as a result of inappropriate behaviour" linked to the investigation. He could not be reached for comment.

A senior UNRWA staffer was fired in early July after what she said was several years of trying to raise ethical concerns. UNRWA said she was "separated" following a different investigation unrelated to the internal report, calling it a "standalone case of misconduct". She claimed she was fired for retaliation and is appealing. Documents seen by AFP show multiple times she raised concerns over potential mismanagement, including employees allegedly being promoted beyond their qualifications and supposed nepotism. She told AFP she met directly with Krahenbuhl, but nothing was done. "Most of the time it felt like working for a private company not the United Nations where we are supposed to comply with strict rules and regulations", she said. — AFP

Argentinian player Thiago Lapp, alias "King", made a splash at only 13 years old. He just missed the million-dollar mark (\$900,000) and finished fifth, employing an ultra-aggressive style that helped him eliminate 21 competitors over six matches, the best after Bugha (23). "It's better than watching on TV or Twitch," said Anthony Peralta, who attended the final.

During the weekend's highlights, attendees filled about two-thirds of the Arthur Ashe stadium, which has a seating capacity of 23,000. "I didn't think it would be this much fun," said Carlos Dacosta, another final audience member. "The level of competition that these guys have, it's crazy." "It's massive, what they've done," said French gamer "Kouto", whose real name is Issam Taguine and is a member of France's Team MCES. "Especially everything they've invested in the players."

After placing second during the "Creative Mode" final on Friday, which offers players new game modes they can discover, Kouto will leave New York with \$86,000, which he plans to give to his mother. For him, the popularity of the game - which is free to play and has 250 million users worldwide - is higher than ever, thanks to its fast-paced updates. "It's the game with the most changes," he said. "So you can come back four months later and you'll never feel like you've played the same game. That's what gives the game life." — AFP

Sports

Thaiss walks off, Pujols hits HR No 650 as Angels past Orioles

ANAHEIM: Third baseman Matt Thaiss hit a pair of home runs, including a walk-off solo shot in the ninth, to carry the Los Angeles Angels past the Baltimore Orioles, 5-4, in Anaheim, California, on Sunday afternoon. Thaiss stroked a 95 mph fastball on a full count from Baltimore reliever Mychal Givens (1-5) to right-center to end the Angels' three-game losing streak and prevent the home side from being swept in the four-game series. Albert Pujols hit his 650th career home run, and Thaiss also slugged a two-run homer in the second inning. Brian Goodwin went 2-for-4 with a double, and reliever Taylor Cole (1-1) earned the win for the Angels, who are 1-3 on their seven-game homestand. Pujols, who is sixth all-time in home runs, moved within 10 of fifth-place Willie Mays.

RAYS 10, BLUE JAYS 9

Visiting Tampa Bay overcame a seven-run deficit and scored the go-ahead run in the ninth on Joey Wendle's bases-loaded groundout to defeat Toronto. The Blue Jays led 8-1 after five innings in the rubber match of the three-game series, but the Rays tied the game with three runs on two homers in the eighth. Toronto overcame a seven-run deficit Saturday to win 10-9 in 12 innings. The Rays loaded the bases on two walks and a single against Daniel Hudson (6-3) with one out in the ninth. Wendle drove in a run on a groundout to second against Derek Law.

ASTROS 6, CARDINALS 2

Jose Altuve belted a three-run home run for his 1,500th career hit, and Wade Miley worked five shutout innings as Houston claimed the rubber match of a three-game series against host St. Louis. Altuve was one of three Astros to homer in the series finale, following solo blasts from George Springer leading off the game and Jordan Alvarez with two outs in the third. Altuve drove home Miley and Springer with his 16th homer this season, a 388-foot shot to left-center field off Cardinals right-hander Dakota Hudson (10-5). Altuve reached the hit milestone in his 1,190th game, a franchise record.

NATIONALS 11, DODGERS 4

Stephen Strasburg allowed just one run on two hits in seven innings and added an RBI single, and Anthony Rendon had three hits and three RBIs as Washington surged past visiting Los Angeles, avoiding a three-game

series sweep. Strasburg (14-4), who has won seven straight starts, now leads the majors in victories. He fanned nine, walked none and hit two batters. He has allowed just four earned runs this month and has six RBIs in July. The Dodgers had won 21 of their previous 35 games at Nationals Park.

YANKEES 9, RED SOX 6

Austin Romine and Didi Gregorius hit two-run home runs off Chris Sale as New York beat host Boston to avoid a four-game sweep. Gio Urshela, Cameron Maybin and Edwin Encarnacion had two hits apiece as the Yankees put behind them being outscored 38-13 through the first three games of the series. Domingo German got his 13th win to tie for the American League lead, allowing three runs on four hits and a walk in 5 1/3 innings and matching his season high with nine strikeouts. German (13-2) ended a winless run for Yankees starters who, as a group, had a 16.62 ERA over their previous seven games. In that span, New York allowed seven or more runs in each contest, a franchise-worst streak.

CUBS 11, BREWERS 4

Kyle Schwarber belted two home runs, including a grand slam, and drove in a career-best seven runs as visiting Chicago beat Milwaukee to salvage the finale of a three-game series. After watching their bullpen squander late leads in the first two games, Schwarber and the Cubs' offense put the game out of reach. Schwarber, batting eighth, added a three-run homer and a single, and Victor Caratini hit a pinch-hit, three-run homer to make 10-3 in the sixth. Chicago reliever Brad Brach (4-3) retired the only batter he faced for the win. Cubs starter Jose Quintana was lifted with two outs in the fifth and allowed three runs on four hits.

A'S 6, RANGERS 5

Khris Davis drew a bases-loaded walk with one out in the ninth inning, and Oakland beat visiting Texas after blowing a two-run lead in the eighth. Oakland improved to 24-11 since June 17 despite closer Liam Hendriks proving unable to get the final five outs. Entering the ninth down 5-4, Matt Olson tied the game with an RBI single up the middle. Texas opted to intentionally walk Mark Canha, and Davis won it by taking a full-count fastball that was slightly high and out of the strike zone.



ANAHEIM: Trey Mancini #16 of the Baltimore Orioles is forced out at second by Andrelton Simmons #2 of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim in the fifth inning at Angel Stadium. — AFP

MARINERS 3, TIGERS 2 (10 INNINGS)

JP Crawford singled home the winning run with one out in the 10th inning as Seattle defeated visiting Detroit. Dylan Moore led off the bottom of the inning with a double down the right field line off Tigers right-hander Jose Cisnero (0-2). An out later, Crawford hit a fly ball that fell in shallow center field, with Moore sliding home headfirst before the throw from JaCoby Jones could reach catcher John Hicks. Left-hander Roenis Elias (4-2) pitched a scoreless inning for the victory. The Mariners won their fifth in a row and sent the Tigers to their sixth successive defeat.

PHILLIES 9, BRAVES 4

Catcher JT Realmuto hit a grand slam, and Philadelphia beat visiting Atlanta to salvage a game in the three-game series. Realmuto's blast, his 14th, was one of four homers by the club. Philadelphia also got a solo homer from Bryce Harper, his 18th: a solo shot from

Adam Haseley, his third; and a two-run homer from Rhys Hoskins, his 22nd. The Phillies were leading 2-0 and had the bases loaded with no outs in the fifth inning. After Harper struck out and Hoskins popped out, Realmuto launched a ball deep into the seats in left-center field. It was the first grand slam by a Philadelphia catcher since Mike Lieberthal in July 2006.

GIANTS 7, PADRES 6

With speculation still floating that San Francisco could move Madison Bumgarner before Wednesday's trade deadline, the 29-year-old improved to 6-7 on the season by defeating San Diego in the rubber match of the three-game series. Bumgarner allowed four runs on four hits and two walks with six strikeouts. He threw 86 pitches, with 61 going for strikes as the Giants won for the 13th time in 17 games. Will Smith picked up his 26th save despite giving up a two-run homer to Wil Myers with two out in the ninth. — Reuters

'Phenomenal' Ko Jin-young wins Evian title

EVIAN: South Korea's Ko Jin-young won the Evian Championship on Sunday, her second major of 2019. The 24-year-old, who captured the ANA Inspiration earlier this season, fired a final round 67 for 15-under for the championship and a two-shot victory. Ko had been four shots off the lead overnight but she mastered the rain and cold at the Alpine venue, carding just one bogey on Sunday.

Third round leader and compatriot Kim Hyo-joo, China's Feng Shanshan and Jennifer Kupcho of the United States finished tied for second on 13 under par. "I thought last night I can do it. If I play really good I can win. I never saw the other players shots or scores, so I got the win," said Ko who also returns to the world number one spot after her 269 score for the four rounds.

It was her third title overall for 2019 and she becomes the first multiple-major winner in the same season since Inbee Park in 2015. Ko will have little time to dwell on her success with the Women's British Open due to start at Woburn on Thursday. A 20-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole gave Ko a two-stroke cushion going to the par-5 18th and she played it comfortably for a two-putt par that sealed the win. Kupcho may have played her way into the USA's Solheim Cup team



EVIAN: South Korea's Ko Jin-young holds the trophy as she celebrates after victory in the Evian golf Championships at the French Alps town of Evian-les-Bains. — AFP

with a bogey-free 66.

"It's crazy," Kupcho told lpga.com. "I definitely played really well this week, and it's exciting to see that I can compete where my game is right now. Excited for the rest of the season." "I was just out there having fun. Coming into the day obviously I was a long way back, and I was just like, 'I'm going to go play well. I play really well in the rain so I wasn't worried about it. I came out and played really well.'" Ariya Jutanugarn eagled the 18th hole to finish at 273, one stroke better than her sister Moriya and Park Sung-hyun Park. On 275 were Park In-bee and Megan Khang.

Ko won rich praise from veteran caddie Dave Brooker who has now helped steer five

major triumphs having worked previously with Lorena Ochoa and Grace Park. "She can win anywhere," Brooker said. "The things that impress most about her are her consistency and her ball-striking, as she showed today. She literally didn't miss a shot in 18 holes. Her management of distance control because she just does not curve the ball. It's phenomenal. I've seen anything like it. Most great players I've worked for tend to work the ball one way or the other. "She just hits everything dead straight and it seems to pay dividends because we have a lot of looks at birdie." He added: "It's very difficult to compare one to the other but she's definitely up there with the greats." — AFP

Morikawa wins first US PGA title in Reno

LOS ANGELES: American Collin Morikawa birdied the final three holes on Sunday to win his first US PGA title at the Barracuda Championship in only his sixth start as a tour professional. The 22-year-old, who graduated from the University of California in May, finished on 47 points, three more than US runner-up Troy Merritt in the only US tour event that uses the Modified Stableford scoring system.

The former world amateur number one made his pro debut at last month's Canadian Open, shared second three weeks ago at the 3M Open and shared fourth two weeks ago at the John Deere Classic to secure a spot on next season's tour. "It was something really special to finally get the win," Morikawa said. "I think the gates are open. I've been knocking on the door the past month or so. I've been playing well. I just believed in myself, was able to make some shots and come through." Under the unique format, eight points are awarded for an albatross, five for eagle, two for birdie and zero for par, and a point is deducted for bogey with three deducted for double bogey or worse.

Morikawa birdied seven holes,

including four of the last five, without making a bogey to score 14 final-round points for the victory at Montreux Golf and Country Club in Reno, Nevada. Merritt made a six-foot birdie putt at the par-4 12th for two points to seize the outright lead on 42 points. Morikawa bounced a tee shot off a tree and into the 14th fairway, then took advantage of the break for a birdie to reach 41 points. Morikawa sank a 10-foot birdie from the fringe at the par-3 16th to seize the lead, but seconds later Merritt responded with a dramatic 30-foot birdie putt at the par-4 14th to regain a 44-43 edge.

But Morikawa answered with a 30-foot birdie putt of his own at the par-4 17th, regaining a one-point edge over Merritt. "When I hit it, it was definitely firm but I knew it was a good putt," Morikawa said. "When I hit it I knew it was dead center. It felt good to make the putt but I knew it wasn't over. I knew I had business to do on 18." Morikawa tapped in from three feet for another birdie at the par-5 18th for a 3-point edge, forcing Merritt to go for an eagle at 18 to win. Merritt, who eagled 18 on Saturday, came up 48 feet short of the cup in the fairway on his approach, then rolled his chip past the hole on the left side, clinching Morikawa's victory. "My heart was beating really fast," Morikawa said of watching the final drama unfold. "It's something I've got to get used to." Merritt, who failed to get his third PGA title, settled for his best finish of the season at second on 44 points. — AFP

Chiefs' Hill vows to be better person after no NFL ban

WASHINGTON: Kansas City Chiefs star Tyreek Hill vowed Sunday to be a better person and father after the NFL said it was unable to determine whether he was responsible for an alleged assault that left his young son with a broken arm. The 25-year-old receiver, cheered by Chiefs supporters when he appeared at training camp Saturday, was not banned by the league after Kansas law-enforcement officials said last month a probe into the actions of Hill and his partner Crystal Espinal had ended without charges being filed.

Johnson County District Attorney Steve Howe said he believed the three-year-old son of Hill and Espinal had been hurt but that he couldn't prove who did what. The boy has been removed from the couple's custody. After a four-month investigation, the NFL declared earlier this month it could not be certain Hill violated the league's personal conduct policy and therefore would not suspend him for the upcoming campaign.

Hill thanked the Chiefs' teammates, coaches and executives for supporting him and praised



CINCINNATI: In this file photo taken on August 18, 2017 Tyreek Hill #10 of the Kansas City Chiefs runs with the ball against the Cincinnati Bengals during the preseason game at Paul Brown Stadium. — AFP

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell for getting "all the facts" despite the NFL noting it had only "evidence presently available" and said it could reopen the matter if "further information becomes available." "I can't wait for my new journey, man. I'm excited," Hill said. "I'm working every day to be a better father, a better person, a better citizen, a better teammate and a better son, too, to my parents."

Hill was banned from Chiefs activities after an audio recording became public in April in which he spoke of his son's injuries

and told Espinal she should be "terrified" of him during a conversation in a Dubai airport. He said he wanted to "man up" to "what he did on the audio" in regards to using bad language. Hill had career highs of 87 catches, 1,479 yards and 12 touchdowns last season in sparking the Chiefs within one victory of the Super Bowl. He was pleased with the cheers from fans upon his return. "It felt great," Hill said. "They do a good job as well making me feel like I'm family, so it's great to be back." — AFP

De Minaur dominates to lift Atlanta ATP title

WASHINGTON: Australia's Alex de Minaur captured his second ATP title in dominant style Sunday, dropping just 10 points on serve in a 6-3, 7-6 (7/2) triumph over Taylor Fritz in a battle of rising stars in Atlanta. Third-seeded de Minaur, 20, became just the third player to win an ATP title without facing a break point since the tour began keeping stats in 1991.

German Tommy Haas did it in Memphis in 2007 and American John Isner managed the feat in Newport in 2017. More importantly, de Minaur cemented his return from the groin injury that sidelined him for nearly two months after he claimed his maiden victory at Sydney in January. "This one is really special to me," said de Minaur, who improved to 15-4 on hard courts this season with the US Open looming in August. "I felt like I really needed this. To start the year with a bang and then be slowed down by injuries ... you expect your level to be right there once you come back, but you have to slowly

grind your way back. "I've been playing great tennis and felt like if I could keep it all together, the good results will come. This is a week that will really help me out."

De Minaur, the youngest ever to hoist the Atlanta trophy, lost just seven first-serve points in his four matches of the week — holding in 42 service games. His near-flawless display on serve again on Sunday heaped all the pressure on Fritz and the American was broken in the seventh game of the opening set with a double-fault on break point. De Minaur broke again to pocket the first set when Fritz's drop shot effort failed to clear the net. Neither player faced a break point in the second, and de Minaur was on the defensive early in the tie-breaker with a double fault on the first point.

He won the next three points, however, to seize control, gave himself match point with a service winner and let out a shout of satisfaction after a backhand volley winner sealed the triumph. "I don't think I could start the American hardcourt season any better than this," de Minaur said. "I'm happy with where I am and enjoying every day." Second-seeded Fritz, 21, is projected to reach a career-high ranking of 28th in the world on Monday despite the defeat. "It was a good week," said Fritz, who claimed his first career title at Eastbourne last month. "It's my first time being one of the top seeds and I made it to the final. — AFP

Sports

Dressel emerges with Phelps aura after a controversial world swim

Heroics of swimming's tattooed golden boy were often overshadowed

GWANGJU: American superstar Caeleb Dressel has invited comparisons to Olympic legend Michael Phelps after lighting up a world swimming championships plagued by doping rows, a sexual harassment arrest and a fatal nightclub accident. Dressel came away from Gwangju with six gold medals and two silvers, winning all four of his individual events and obliterating Phelps's 10-year-old 100 meters butterfly world record for good measure.

But even the heroics of swimming's tattooed golden boy were often overshadowed by an explosive doping controversy, which was looming even before Chinese giant Sun Yang set foot in South Korea. Following bombshell allegations in a FINA doping panel report, claiming the triple Olympic champion had allowed blood vials to be smashed with a hammer after being visited by testers, several swimmers made their feelings very clear.

Australia's Mack Horton and Briton Duncan Scott refused to shake Sun's hand after losing to the hulking Chinese swimmer, provoking a furious reaction from Sun, who yelled at Scott: "You're a loser!" Sun, who retained his 200 and 400m freestyle world titles, insisted he was "protecting each and every athlete" by refusing to let what he called "unlicensed" testers take his blood. "He's not a drug cheat," Sun's coach Denis Cotterell told AFP, adding that Chinese swimming has taken "meticulous care" to clean up its act since the state-sponsored doping of the 1990s.

"It's absolutely critical for the athletes, the association, for the whole sake of China's respect on a world stage that they're well and truly distanced from that past," said the Australian, claiming that Sun was one of the most tested athletes in swimming. "He's tested year in, year out. You can't have the performances he's had over the years without doing the work."

Anderson could hold key to Ashes: McGrath

LONDON: Australia great Glenn McGrath believes the form of England spearhead James Anderson could determine the course of the Ashes. Australia hold the urn but head into Thursday's opening Test at Edgbaston looking for their first series win in England since 2001. Anderson has been battling to overcome a calf injury but McGrath believes he could have a huge impact on the five-Test series if he stays fit.

"On home soil with the Dukes ball, he's the best in the world bowling in those conditions," McGrath told the Sun in an interview. "He is a big player and if he has a big series for England, Australia will find it tough. If Australia bat well and can get on top of him, that'll make a massive impact on their chances." The 49-year-old McGrath, working with online trading broker ThinkMarkets to encourage more young people to get into sport, added: "But Jimmy is on his way to 600 Test wickets, which is absolutely incredible."

Anderson is now just 25 wickets shy of becoming the first fast bowler to take 600 in Tests, having surpassed former paceman McGrath's haul of 563 against India last September. "Jimmy's got the record now and it won't be beaten," said McGrath. "For a fast bowler to beat whatever record he sets, they are going to have to play 150 Tests-plus." This season's Ashes is being played with last year's Dukes ball, which has a bigger seam

Hamilton heads home with gift-wrapped two points

HOCKENHEIM: Lewis Hamilton was cancelling all engagements and planning to fly home and rest late Sunday night when he was handed a gift-wrapped ninth place and two precious points after a tumultuous German Grand Prix. The 30-second penalties given to Alfa Romeo's Kimi Raikkonen and Antonio Giovinazzi, more than five hours after the race, for data irregularities in their cars' starting systems cost them seventh and eighth places respectively.

They were relegated out of the top 10 as Mercedes' defending five-time champion rose from 11th to ninth and Robert Kubica was lifted to 10th, thereby scoring the struggling Williams team's first point this year. The Alfa Romeo team said they would appeal the stewards' decision, meaning that the final result will remain provisional pending the outcome of that action. "We suffered a dysfunction of the clutch that was beyond our control and we will further investigate the issue," said team chief Frederic Vasseur. "We respect the FIA's process and the stewards' work, but will appeal this decision."

The late drama, which means Hamilton actually extended his lead in the driver's championship to 41 points ahead of teammate Valtteri

'Dangerous' at Olympics

Above the fray, Dressel repeated in the 50 and 100m freestyle, as well as the 100m butterfly — but not before setting an eye-popping new world best of 49.50 seconds to eclipse Phelps's old bodysuit mark by 0.32. Inevitably, talk turned to next year's Tokyo Olympics and whether Dressel can emulate Phelps, who racked up a record eight gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Games. But Dressel revealed he had been feeling the strain.

"I've got pimples on my face, I'm losing some hair," said the 22-year-old, who swept to seven gold medals at the 2017 world championships in Budapest. "This is a lot of stress but I'm not sitting in my room flipping through my medals. I won less than seven, that doesn't bug me one bit. "If this is where we're at heading to Tokyo, we'll be very dangerous next year," added Dressel, after the United States once again topped the medals table with 14 golds — nine more than nearest rivals Australia. Dressel said he had been "absolutely devastated" to hear that two people had died and several athletes injured when a balcony inside a Gwangju nightclub collapsed at the weekend.

'Days of Our Lives'

Australian officials subsequently announced relay star Shayna Jack had tested positive for a banned substance before the championships — an opportunity for schadenfreude for the Chinese — before Hungarian swimmer Tamas Kenderesi was arrested on charges of sexual harassment after an alleged incident at a nightclub. "The scriptwriters for 'Days of Our Lives' couldn't have written a better script for this world championships," said Australia's Cate Campbell, who won two relay golds and took silver behind American Simone Manuel in the women's 100m free. "It's thrown a bit of



GWANGJU: Gold medalist USA's Caeleb Dressel poses with his medal after 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

everything at us."

In the pool, nine world records tumbled in Korea. Hungarian teenager Kristof Milak pulverizing Phelps's 200m butterfly mark by a whopping 0.78 seconds in arguably the pick of them. But with Sun facing a September hearing before the Court of Arbitration for

Sport, the specter of doping was never far away. Asked about athletes vilifying China's sporting hero, Russia's Yulia Efimova took a long pause. "Of course it's not good," said the former doping offender. "It was really hard for me, just a girl against the world when everyone hates me. I hope it will not happen again." — AFP



LONDON: England's Stuart Broad (L) and England's James Anderson warm up before the start of the first day of the first cricket test match between England and Ireland at Lord's cricket ground. — AFP

than the one now in use for the 2019 English domestic season.

While that should benefit both Anderson and new-ball partner Stuart Broad, six-time Ashes winner McGrath thinks the 2018 Dukes will aid Australia's attack as well. "Pat Cummins will bowl really well with it and if Mitchell Starc is swinging that new ball 150 kilometers per-hour-plus and bowling attacking lengths, he's a handful for anyone," he said.

"It's going to be whether our batsmen have learned and adjusted from last time they were here, when they just went too hard at the ball." Australia have won just three of their past 19 Tests in England including the match at Edgbaston in 2005, when McGrath was

Bottas, came after many had left the circuit. But it was an appropriate finale to an epic and chaotic race won with buccaneering style by Max Verstappen of Red Bull. Even after five pit-stops and having survived a full 360-degrees spin on a rain-hit circuit, the 21-year-old Dutch tyro showed he had the talent and mental strength to triumph in all conditions.

'Thanks dad'

As Hamilton, unwell and struggling with a sore throat, floundered, made two mistakes, survived a crash and pitted six times in a race of four Safety Car interventions, Verstappen concentrated and survived. He was quick to praise and thank his father Jos, who had survived an infamous refueling blaze in the Benetton pits 25 years' earlier at the same event, for his tips on wet-weather racing. "My dad helped me a lot, I think," he said. "I had a lot of practice when I was young, in the wet. I worked many hours together with my dad who was also pretty decent in the wet. "He gave me the right tips and not only about driving in the wet, but making decisions as well, while driving, and paying attention to what's happening around you. "And, of course, experience in life. In Formula One! I think if you do over 90 races, you have experienced a lot already and you can make better decisions."

His sumptuous win ahead of Ferrari's local hero Sebastian Vettel, who enjoyed some redemption for crashing out while leading in 2018, and third-placed Russian Daniil Kvyat of Toro Rosso was his second in three outings and the seventh of his career. It also meant that the podium featured two Honda-powered drivers and one from Ferrari — a rare Mercedes-free zone. "It was very tricky out there," said

ruled out on the morning of the match after injuring his ankle treading on a stray ball during fielding practice. While the former pacesman refused to give one of his trademark Australia whitewash forecasts, he said Tim Paine's men could retain the Ashes.

"Teams around the world are becoming stronger at home and worse away. That is a massive concern," he said. "But having been here for the World Cup, a lot of Australia's players have been able to adapt and adjust to conditions, to play on the pitches and get a little bit of a feel for everything. "We have got the players to do it. But they are going to have to be on the top of their game if they are going to compete with England in their own conditions." — AFP

Verstappen. "We had to stay very focused, we couldn't afford to make any mistakes. Now, after the race, I think I can say that I did that 360 for the crowd, but it was tricky! "The communication between myself and the team was crucial and I think we made the right calls. That gave us the victory."

Snakes and Ladders

As Verstappen flew home, giving new dad Kvyat a lift, Hamilton and his team boss Toto Wolff reflected on an "Armageddon" weekend that saw an unwell Hamilton give up what seemed a certain win as he spun twice and endured a chaotic 50-second pit stop. "I was eight seconds in the lead at one stage, had it all under the control," he said.

"But things are thrown at you all the time in conditions like that. It was like snakes and ladders and I was hitting the snakes. "But, we win and we lose together. It shows you how easy it is to get a weekend wrong, processes wrong, but we stay united, we'll pull together and we'll regroup." The Briton deserves credit for getting into his car in the first place. "I think he was not healthy and that was the case the whole weekend," said team boss Toto Wolff. "He did the most to get himself in an ok place to race — and I think many of us would have not considered being in a racing car. But he did." The illness may have something to do with Hamilton's off day at the wheel, his exertions certainly left him drained. "I have cancelled everything I have for the next few days," said Hamilton. "So I'm going home, I will probably sleep the next few days and try and get over this bug." Hamilton has little time to recover before the Hungarian Grand Prix begins on Friday. — AFP

India's skipper Kohli rubbishes rift with Sharma

MUMBAI: India skipper Virat Kohli said yesterday that talk of a rift with star batsman Rohit Sharma was "ridiculous" and "baffling" and insisted all was well in the team camp ahead of the West Indies tour. Rumours of cracks within the Indian team were reported by local media after Kohli's team bowed out of the World Cup following their semi-final loss to New Zealand earlier this month.

Sharma — the vice-captain of the one-day and Twenty20 international side — recently unfollowed Kohli and the captain's Bollywood wife Anushka Sharma on Instagram, adding fuel to the suggestions the two senior players were not on good terms. But Kohli dismissed the speculation ahead of the team's departure for the tour of West Indies, which starts on August 3 with the first of three Twenty20 internationals followed by three ODI matches and two Tests.

"In my opinion it's baffling to be honest. Ridiculous to read some stuff that comes out," the 30-year-old told reporters in Mumbai. "Here we are feeding off lies, we are overlooking facts, turning a blind eye to all the good things that have happened. And creating fantasies and scenarios in our head and we want to accept this is the truth." "I have seen this for too long now. It's bringing personal lives into the picture. It is disrespectful after a moment."

Sharma was key to India's semi-final finish in the 50-over showpiece event, with the opener topping the batting chart with 648 runs including a record five

Hungarian swimmer 'sorry' for touching nightclub dancer

GWANGJU: Hungarian swimmer Tamas Kenderesi has apologized for "thoughtlessly touching" a nightclub dancer after being arrested on sexual harassment charges during the world championships. The 22-year-old Olympic bronze medalist has been banned from leaving the country while police investigate the incident at a bar in Gwangju, around 330 kilometers south of Seoul, at the weekend.

Kenderesi has admitted making contact with his accuser but denies charges of sexual harassment. "After coming back from the toilets and heading towards the dance floor, I touched the backside of a Korean girl who was working as a dancer at the club," the swimmer said in a statement. "I did not even stop behind her — I took only a single, perhaps thoughtless move, which seriously angered this girl who filed a complaint against me."

"Realizing the seriousness of the situation, I was absolutely cooperative throughout the entire process," added Kenderesi, who finished last in the men's



MUMBAI: Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli smiles during a promotional event. — AFP

centuries in nine matches. Kohli, the world's top Test and ODI batsman, scored five fifties but was unable to record a three-figure score. Stories circulated that the two big guns were leading different camps during the World Cup in England, with pundits suggesting the captaincy could be split between the pair.

"I have played the game for 11 years, Rohit's played for 10 years, it's bizarre that you know... this from the outside when the changeroom environment is so good," said Kohli. "Please come and see for yourself, how to talk to a young Kuldeep Yadav or talk with respect to a senior like MS Dhoni. We can't show you a video. "It baffles you as a leader, as a coach, and as a team when lies are being floated around. And they are made to look believable. We have had no issues." Meanwhile the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has invited applications for backroom positions including the head coach. Coach Ravi Shastri's tenure ended after the World Cup and was extended for the West Indies series. — AFP

200 meters butterfly final last week. "I deeply regret what happened and I wish to beg for the Korean girl's forgiveness. But I strongly deny that I'm guilty in any kind of sexual harassment." Hungarian team officials and swimming's governing body FINA confirmed that Kenderesi had been released from custody but would not be allowed to leave the country for the next 10 days.

Kenderesi added that he had not been shown the video of the incident but insisted: "I honestly believe my words will be justified by the footage (and reveal) I did not commit any serious offence. However, I have to understand that I hurt certain moral norms, which are the foundations of the local values." After the athlete's arrest, FINA executive director Cornel Marculescu told AFP: "For now he is free but he cannot travel out of Korea. We will see what the next step is." Kenderesi's arrest came a day after an indoor balcony at a Gwangju nightclub collapsed, killing two local people and injuring several athletes competing at the world championships. — AFP

Sports

'My greatest victory': Bernal hails Tour de France triumph

The first Colombian winner of cycling's greatest prize

PARIS: Egan Bernal clinched victory in the Tour de France on Sunday, parading into Paris safely in the overall leader's yellow jersey, becoming the first Colombian winner of cycling's greatest prize and its youngest in more than a century. With the sun setting behind the Arc de Triomphe, the 22-year-old Ineos rider completed the 21 stage, 3,409km (2,118 miles) marathon around France 1min 10sec ahead of 2018 champion and teammate Geraint Thomas.

Colombian spectators thronged the Champs Elysees to witness the traditional eight-lap finale, where Australia's Caleb Ewan, also 22, won his third stage of the 2019 edition on the culminating mass bunch sprint. The champion was welcomed by his younger brother Ronald, his parents and girlfriend, Xiommy Guerrero before embracing his teammates. "I thank France for organizing the best race in the world, and for granting my greatest victory," Bernal said in French. "I simply can't believe I have won it," said the tearful Bernal before stepping onto the winners podium alongside Thomas and third-placed Dutch Jumbo team rider Steven Kruijswijk.

Bernal placed his hand on his heart and sang along with the national anthem before addressing the massed crowds in four languages. "I should say thanks to all my team thank you 'G' (Thomas) for the opportunity," said the youngster in recognition of Thomas' acceptance that Bernal was the better option for Ineos in the Alps. "Today I am the most happy guy in the world. I just won the Tour de France," he said "Vive la France, Vive la Colombie," he said finishing in French.

The stage itself was won in a hotly contested mass bunch sprint by Australian speed king Caleb Ewan, his third win on his debut Tour. "This was the best one by far," said the Australian. The highest Tour in history, as it

was billed, suited Bernal, who grew up at 2600m altitude and who thrived on a course featuring seven mountain stages and five summit finishes, scampering away from his closest rivals.

He had to weather a searing four-day heatwave that saw runner up Thomas wobble in Pau and was warned by a speeding motorbike when racing downhill at 100kph when a freak hail storm caused a mudslide ahead. That was Friday when he clinched the overall lead from French hero, the daring Julian Alaphilippe who had set the thrilling tone of this Tour with a dashing 14 day tenure in yellow. "It was an honor, it was my duty, it was unforgettable," Alaphilippe said on Sunday after missing out on becoming France's first winner of the Tour since Bernard Hinault in 1985.

French pride

Alaphilippe won two stages, the first a rampage through the Champagne region that set the tone for the Tour, and the second a stunning time-trial win at Pau. He was awarded the combativity award on Sunday for the most attacking rider and came fifth in the overall standings and when stepping off the podium went over to his wheelchair-bound father and cried in his arms.

He finally lost his lead after two of three Alpine stages where the final real action played out, before Bernal defended it Saturday on a long 33km climb to the Val Thorens ski-resort, itself shortened because of storms and mudslides. France also won the King of the Mountains jersey with Romain Bardet, who appeared early in the Tour to have flopped, but rallied to win the polka dot jersey.

On the traditional non-contested procession to Paris, the Ineos team were all wearing a yellow trim to their



PARIS: Spain's Jonathan Castroviejo (L) and Great Britain's Geraint Thomas (R) congratulate Colombia's Egan Bernal (C), wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, as he celebrates his victory on the finish line of the 21st and last stage of the 106th edition of the Tour de France cycling race between Rambouillet and Paris Champs-Elysees. — AFP

claret and black outfits. Charismatic Slovak sprinter Peter Sagan won a record seventh green points jersey without adding to his 12 stage wins, but brought more drama

relentlessly and missed out on the yellow jersey on stage one by a photo-finish. "That's seven, maybe eight next year," said the three time former world champion. — AFP

S Korean soccer fans to sue over Ronaldo benching

SEOUL: More than 2,000 South Korean soccer fans will sue a sports agency after superstar Cristiano Ronaldo stayed on the bench when his Juventus side played a friendly in Seoul last week, a law firm said yesterday. The star Portuguese striker did not play a single second of the match against a K-league all-star team, ignoring appeals from the sell-out 65,000 crowd at the World Cup Stadium to lace up his boots.

With frustration mounting some even chanted the name of his great Argentine rival Lionel Messi. When the game was first announced, organisers said the contract with Juventus obliged Ronaldo to play for at least 45 minutes, prompting many fans to splash out, according to Seoul law firm Myungan. Tickets — priced from 30,000 won (US\$25) to 400,000 won (\$338) — sold out in just two and a half hours when they were released on July 3. "So far, more than 2,000 fans have contacted us to pursue the suit," Myungan attorney Kim Hun-ki said.

"We plan to officially file the suit on their behalf sometime next week, if the agency does not offer a concrete plan to compensate the ticket holders before then." The Italian team's flight from Nanjing in China was delayed, so that they landed only five hours before the scheduled start, delaying kick-off by an hour. Robin Zhang, CEO of The Festa, the Korean agency which



SEOUL: A South Korean football fan wears a mask of Juventus FC's Cristiano Ronaldo prior to a friendly football match between Team K League and Juventus FC. — AFP

arranged the game, told local broadcaster SBS in tears that she had complained to Juventus vice chairman Pavel Nedved during the match.

He responded: "I also hope Ronaldo plays. But he says he doesn't want to. I'm sorry there's nothing I can do," she

limping out of Chile's Copa America third-place play-off match against Argentina earlier this month. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side wrap up their pre-season against AC Milan in Cardiff on Saturday.

Jiangsu move on from Bale

In other news, Chinese state media proclaimed Gareth Bale's move to Jiangsu Suning definitively cancelled after the club signed the big Croatian Ivan Santini instead yesterday. The Chinese Super League limits the number of foreign players each team can have and Jiangsu reached their quota by signing the Anderlecht striker, Xinhua news agency said.

Like Real Madrid's Bale, Santini is aged 30 and an attacker, although he enjoys nothing like the profile or reputation of the pacy Welshman. With the Chinese transfer window closing on Wednesday, Jiangsu moved for Santini, saying: "He will greatly enrich the team's offensive tactics in the Chinese Super League." It comes a day after Bale's move to China collapsed because of wrangling between Real and Jiangsu over the fee, a source said.

Bale, who has been in the Spanish capital since 2013, had been expected to join the CSL outfit on a three-year deal worth over US\$1 million a week. Real boss Zinedine Zidane has made no secret of his wish to get rid of Bale and said he thought it would be "best for everyone" if his departure could be arranged quickly. Bale's agent branded that "disrespectful" of a player who helped the side to a Spanish league title and four Champions Leagues since arriving from Tottenham six years ago. However, injuries have limited Bale to fewer than 80 starts in La Liga in the last four seasons. He has also been the subject of criticism in the Spanish media for his struggles with the language, and for the amount of time he spent on the golf course. — AFP

told SBS, adding that she will find "ways to compensate" ticket holders. Ronaldo has been subjected to a backlash on social media. "He betrayed the 60,000 audience and belittled us," a Korean who attended the game posted on Instagram. "I'm no longer a Ronaldo fan." — AFP

Draxler hopes 'egos' can fire PSG in Europe

SUZHOU: Midfielder Julian Draxler said yesterday that the single-minded "egos" of Neymar and Paris Saint-Germain's other star forwards did not always make it easy for the team. And the German World Cup winner told AFP in an interview in China that he was still hurting from the French club's failure to go farther in the Champions League last season.

PSG play Sydney FC in a friendly on Tuesday in Suzhou, China, but Draxler already has his mind on what promises to be another big season for the club and him personally. Draxler, part of Germany's 2014 World Cup-winning squad, said it was "a pleasure" to play with the attacking triumvirate of Neymar, Edinson Cavani and Kylian Mbappe — even though it has its challenges. The Brazilian star Neymar, who is in China but will not be involved in the match as he works his way towards full fitness, has made clear that he wants to return to Barcelona.

"All of them are exceptional players, it is hard to find in the world players of this level," said Draxler, who arrived in the French capital in January 2017 for a reported 36 million euros from Wolfsburg. "But of course they have their own minds, their own heads, they live football, they want to score every game, so they have an ego."

So sometimes it's not easy for the whole team, but if you are lucky enough to play alongside these players, it's just a pleasure every day." Like Neymar, Draxler — who has more than 50 caps for Germany — has been linked with a move away from the perennial French champions, having been in and out of the starting XI. Asked how he would summarize his time in France so far, Draxler blew out his cheeks and paused.

"It's two-and-a-half years now since I arrived and I won a lot of (domestic) titles so I am happy about that," he said. "I became a better player than I was before, so that's positive, but what is negative is what we achieved in the Champions League. "We did not go far in the Champions League and that was one of the goals when I signed."

Bankrolled by Qatari money and coached by Draxler's fellow German Thomas Tuchel, PSG went out in the last 16 of the Champions League after conceding a late goal home to an injury-hit Manchester United. "It hurts a lot, it hurts still that we did not go through," said Draxler, five months on. "But from the potential in the team, we are ready to go far in the Champions League." Draxler was linked over the summer with Bayern Munich, Bayer Leverkusen and Tottenham Hotspur, but he made it clear that he is focused only on showing PSG what he can do. He said that he has "space to improve — a lot". — AFP

Lukaku misses friendly trip amid transfer talk

LONDON: Romelu Lukaku will miss Manchester United's pre-season friendly against Kristiansund today amid renewed speculation of a potential move to Inter Milan. United are reported to have rejected a £54 million (\$66 million, 59 million euros) bid for Belgium striker Lukaku from Serie A club Inter. Lukaku was sidelined by injury for all four of United's pre-season games during their tour of Australia, Singapore and China.

After suffering an ankle injury, Lukaku trained on his own on the eve of the final match of United's tour — last week's 2-1 win against Tottenham in Shanghai. On Sunday, a picture appeared on the 26-year-old's social media accounts of him and his agent Federico Pastorello, accompanied by the message "soon to be continued." Lukaku is said to be keen to join Inter after a difficult spell at United since his £75 million move from Everton in 2017.

With Inter believed to have been given an imminent deadline by United to conclude the deal, the former Everton striker was absent from his club's 26-man travelling party to Norway. United announced the squad on their official website yesterday ahead of the match at Oslo's Ullevaal Stadium. Meanwhile, United defender Eric Bailly is not part of the group heading to Norway after he sustained a knee injury in the victory over Tottenham. Alexis Sanchez was another not included for United after



SINGAPORE: Manchester United's Romelu Lukaku (C) sits on the bench with teammates during the International Champions Cup football match between Manchester United and Inter Milan. — AFP

Klopp says City showdown won't influence title bid

EDINBURGH: Jurgen Klopp says Liverpool's Community Shield clash with Manchester City on Sunday will have no bearing on their battle for the Premier League title. The two sides will renew the rivalry that saw them take the title race to a tense final day last season. City eventually claimed their second successive Premier League crown by a single point as Liverpool's bid for a first title since 1990 reached a painful conclusion.

Klopp's men made amends for that angst just weeks later as they beat Tottenham in the Champions League final and the Reds are expected to fight it out with City for the major honours again in the coming campaign. A win against Pep Guardiola's team at Wembley would be a welcome psychological boost for Liverpool. But, having seen his pre-season plans disrupted by the absence of key players such as Mohamed Salah, Sadio Mane, Roberto Firmino and keeper Alisson due to the Copa America and African Cup of Nations, Klopp isn't putting too much stock in the result of the curtain-raiser to the English top-flight season.

"For me, it has nothing to do with the rest of the season," Klopp told reporters. "It's a game and, even if we only have eight players available, I would like to try to win it. "If we win it, good. Will it have an influence on the season? I don't think so. "If we lose it, not good. Will it have an influence on the season? No, again, I don't think so. "We have to prove ourselves during the season, not in one game. If I have to say this would be the statement for the season, I would be really mad."

Klopp admitted he was surprised the Community Shield isn't taken more seriously in England as he prepares to take part in the match for the first time. "It's a final. This is the first time that I realised nobody sees it like that to be honest. A 'curtain-raiser' is unbelievable," he said. "We think constantly about the game and how we can prepare for it and then everyone thinks, 'Oh, do they really play?' "That's not too cool, but it's how it is. I don't know exactly why people play this competition if it means nothing. Why don't we cancel it then? "In Germany I won it five times, but nobody mentions it. We played every year. The Super Cup, you win it, nobody cares, you lose it and some care."

'Most difficult game'

Klopp said he would not take risks with his line-up against City, especially with players just returning to training ahead of Wednesday's friendly against Lyon in Geneva. Mane will remain absent until next week after playing for Senegal in the African Cup of Nations final. But with his side having suffered a 3-0 defeat against Napoli in Scotland on Sunday — a third pre-season loss in four games — Klopp hopes Liverpool avoid another blow to their confidence if they are similarly below par against City. "We saw last year that City is the most difficult game to play during the season," Klopp added.

"We didn't defend counter-attacks well against Napoli. We lost the ball in the wrong moments and didn't protect it, and if that happens against City, you don't have a chance. "You have to be ready. It's a good test of the things that are there. We have to defend in a good way because if you don't defend well against City we can get a proper knock. "I don't think we can expect to play our best game of the season on Sunday. "That's how it is with pre-season. But it's about winning a football game. Hopefully we'll find a way to do that." — AFP

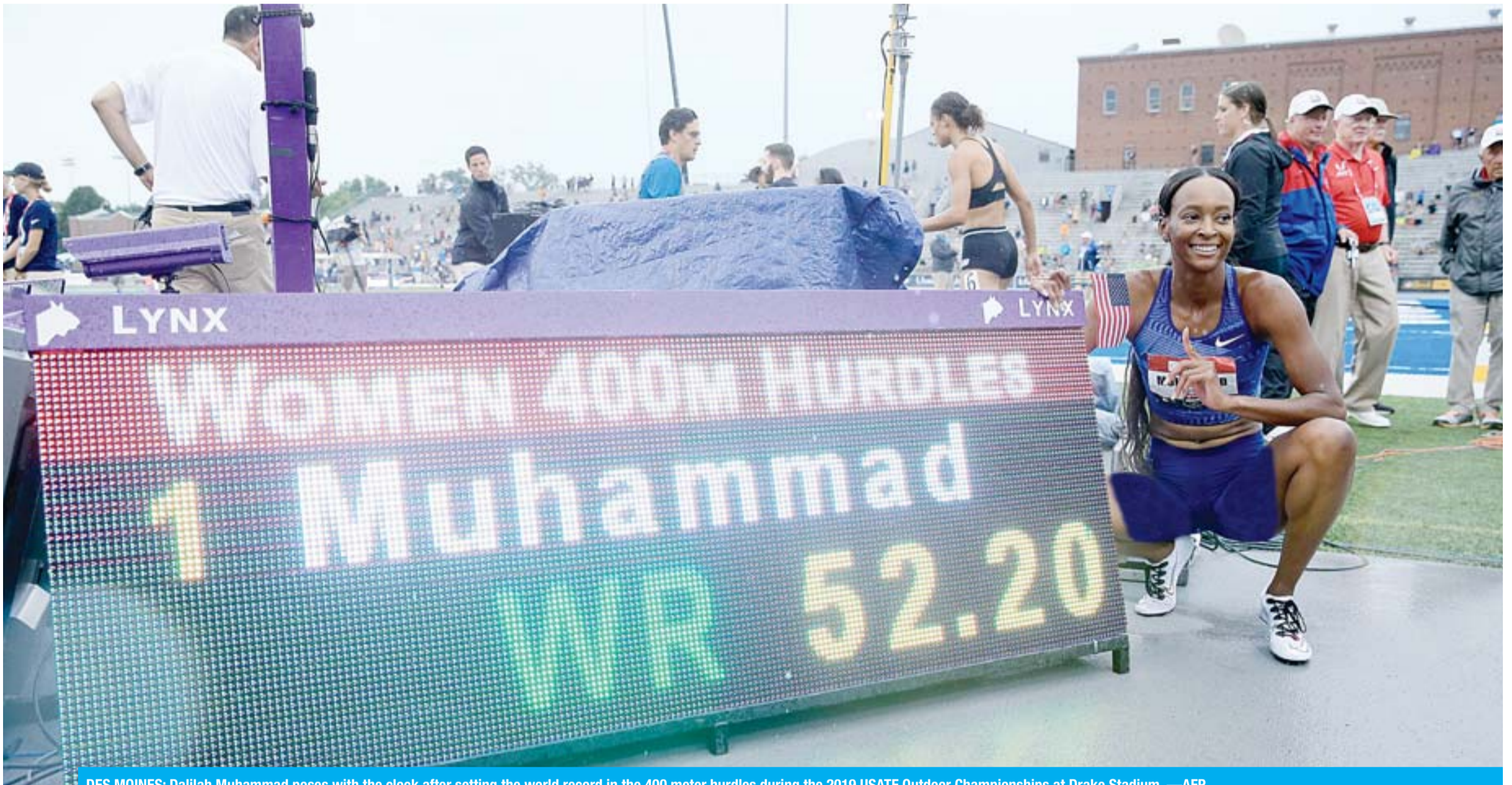
25 'Phenomenal' Ko Jin-young wins her second major of 2019



26 Dressel emerges with Phelps aura after a controversial world swim



27 'My greatest victory': Bernal hails Tour de France triumph



DES MOINES: Dalilah Muhammad poses with the clock after setting the world record in the 400 meter hurdles during the 2019 USATF Outdoor Championships at Drake Stadium. —AFP

Muhammad shatters hurdles record

One of the longest standing records in women's athletics

DES MOINES: Olympic champion Dalilah Muhammad shattered one of the longest standing records in women's athletics on Sunday with a superb display to clinch victory in the 400m hurdles at US Championships. The 29-year-old powered home to win in 52.20sec at rain-soaked Drake Stadium, obliterating the 16-year-old previous world record of 52.34sec set by Russia's Yuliya Pechonkina in 2003.

"I'm just shocked," Muhammad said. "My coach kept telling me (the record) was there. I just had to trust that and go for it. 'I wanted it so bad I knew I had to go out there and prove myself.'" Muhammad, the first American woman to win Olympic gold in the event at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro games, later revealed she had an injury scare heading into this week's event, suffering a concussion in a training run two weeks ago.

However, she revealed she had been quietly confident that she could threaten Pechonkina's benchmark.

"I was hoping for it this weekend," Muhammad. "I just trusted in what we'd been working for up to this point." Muhammad had set a furious pace over the opening 300m to lead coming into the home straight, and then pulled clear from Sydney McLaughlin, who finished sec-

ond in 52.88 and Ashley Spencer (53.11). Muhammad's record-breaking display put the seal on the final events of the four-day meeting, the US trials for this year's World Championships in Doha.

Lyles romps in 200m

In other events, charismatic rising sprint star Noah Lyles made sure of his spot on the team for Qatar with a blistering win in the 200m. Lyles, who warmed up in the blocks by copying mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor's swishing arms routine, scorched to a win in 19.78sec, with 100m winner and rival Christian Coleman crossing second in 20.02. Ameer Webb was third in 20.45.

Lyles, who broke into a dance routine inspired by NBA star Kevin Durant after sealing the win, was neck-and-neck with Coleman with around 60 metres to go before pulling clear to take the tape. "All I cared about today was the win," Lyles, 22, said. "USA's the hardest team to make and anything can happen over the three rounds. "This was my first time going over three rounds so I was really excited to see what I could do," added Lyles, who was unfazed by the rainy conditions. "We train in all conditions. I live in Florida and it is hot and rains at any time in

the day," he said. "Light drizzle doesn't bother me."

Sprint rival Coleman meanwhile confirmed he plans to attempt a sprint double in Doha. "That's the plan right now," Coleman said. "I feel like I was built to do both." In the women's 200m, meanwhile, Dezerea Bryant took victory with a time of 22.47, crossing ahead of Brittany Brown and Angie Annelus. The men's 110m hurdles saw an upset with Daniel Roberts beating Grant Holloway, this season's fastest man over the distance, with a time of 13.23sec. Holloway finished second in 13.36 while Devon Allen was third in 13.38. The men's 1,500m saw Craig Engels score a notable victory over 2016 Olympic champion Matthew Centrowitz, winning in 3min 44.93sec.

Centrowitz was second in 3:44.97 while Josh Thompson was third in 3:45.25. In the women's 3,000m steeplechase, reigning world champion Emma Coburn powered to her sixth consecutive US crown to win in 9min 25.63sec. Coburn, the 2016 Olympics bronze medalist, held off a late challenge from Courtney Frerichs down the stretch, with Colleen Quigley finishing third. Coburn's winning time was roughly 30 seconds slower than the world leading time this year set by Kenya's Beatrice Chepkoech of 8:55.58. —AFP

India to travel to Pakistan for Davis Cup tie

NEW DELHI: India's tennis team will travel to Pakistan for their Davis Cup tie, the country's governing body chief confirmed yesterday, despite strained relations between the nations. Sporting ties between the two nuclear-armed countries, which have fought three wars since gaining independence from the British in 1947, are currently strained to say the least.

Long-running political tensions were heightened in February after a deadly suicide attack — claimed by a militant group based in Pakistan — in Indian-administered Kashmir killed 40 Indian troops. But the All India Tennis Association (AITA) said the government had no issues with the players crossing the border for the Asia/Oceania Group 1 tie to be held on September 14 and 15. "Yes, they are set to tour Pakistan," AITA president Praveen Mahajan told AFP. "We informed the government about it and they were OK with it."

"We did not require a clearance from them because it is an international event but we do not do anything without asking the government." India cut bilateral cricket ties with its neighbor after the 2008 Mumbai attacks, with authorities blaming Pakistani militants. Some Indian fans and ex-players called for the team to boycott its recent cricket World Cup match against Pakistan. After India's victory, a top minister described the triumph as "another strike" on enemy territory.

An Indian team last toured Pakistan in 1964 for the Davis Cup, where they defeated the hosts 4-0. Pakistan lost 3-2 when they toured Mumbai in 2006. Until a few years ago, Pakistan was forced to host its home Davis Cup ties at neutral venues as teams refused to travel to the South Asian nation over security concerns. But Mahajan said India has not demanded any "special security" arrangements for the upcoming tie to be played at the grass courts of the Pakistan Sports Complex in Islamabad. India are likely to announce their touring squad in the first week of August. —AFP

World Test Championship begins with Ashes

LONDON: The opening day of the Ashes series between England and Australia at Edgbaston on Thursday also marks the start of the International Cricket Council's new World Test Championship. The aim is to give individual Test series greater context and spark a worldwide revival of interest in the five-day game

What is it?

The top nine nations will compete in a total of 72 Tests across a two-year period, with the aim of determining the best Test team in the world. The teams involved will be Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and West Indies. The two teams who top the points table over that period will then play each other in a one-off World Test Championship final at Lord's in June 2021, before a new cycle starts.

Format

Each team will play three series at home and three away, consisting of two, three, four or five Tests. There will be 120 points available per series shared out equally over the num-

ber of matches — so a five-Test series has 24 points per match available to the winner and a three-match campaign 40. If the match is drawn, points are awarded on a 3:1 points ratio — so in a Test where 60 points are available for a win, a draw will see both sides take 20. Matches involving Afghanistan, Ireland and Zimbabwe will still have Test status but the results will not be counted in the World Test Championship.

Reaction

"Test cricket is the pinnacle of our sport," said England's leading Test wicket-taker, James Anderson, in an ICC statement. "It is the very essence of cricket and the majority of players want to strive to play the purist form of the game. The ICC World Test Championship is another brilliant initiative for the sport, adding context and relevance to every Test series. Every Test matters, but even more so now."

Australia captain Tim Paine said: "If the World Test Championship helps to ensure that all countries make Tests a high priority then that has to be good news for the game in general and the continuing health of the format in particular." India skipper Virat Kohli said: "We are awaiting the ICC World Test Championship with great enthusiasm as it adds context to the longest format of the game. "Test cricket is very challenging and coming out on top in the traditional form is always highly satisfying. The Indian team has done really well in recent years and will be fancying its chances in the championship."

England director of cricket Ashley Giles says the World

Test Championship could lead to a change in England's priorities following their World Cup triumph. "We've had a focus on the white ball for the last four years and perhaps the time has come to redress that balance," Giles told Sky Sports News.

"It was important that the pendulum didn't swing back to 50-50, it had to swing right back to white-ball cricket, which we'd never done in this country. "Perhaps that (affected the Test team) but we needed to do it if we were serious about winning the 2019 World Cup, which we've done." Reflecting on the potential impact of the Test Championship, he added: "I'm a fan. Test cricket has obviously been marginalized in some parts of the world with the pressure of the shorter forms and the popularity of white-ball cricket."

"This country doesn't really struggle with that. Test cricket remains popular and the Ashes is sold out this year. England versus Australia doesn't need any more promotion but around the world it's not that easy." Steve Waugh, currently with the Australia squad as a team mentor, captained one of the most successful teams in Test history between 1999 and 2004. He won 41 of his 57 matches at the helm and would have enjoyed the chance to seal that success with silverware. "It is great for Test match cricket. I played a lot over 18 years and many people said we were the number one Test side in the world," he said. "But unless you hold up a trophy or get to that final match you're not really sure. I think Test cricket really needs this. You need something to hang your hat on if you are the best Test team in the world." —AFP