



2 Amir receives Qatari, UAE officials who paid respect over PM mother's passing



11 Divided G20 admits trade wars pose a risk to world economy



19 Chechen women going places with female-only taxi service



28 History man Nadal sweeps to 12th French Open and 18th Grand Slam



MP proposes evening work amid soaring temperatures

Minister questioned over delays in payment of salaries to contract workers

MP calls on govt to establish new mobile operator

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Majed Al-Mutairi submitted a draft law yesterday calling on the government to establish a fourth telecom company that offers mobile and data services. The bill states that 50 percent of the new company's shares will go to Kuwaiti citizens, 24 percent to the government and the remaining 26 percent to be sold to a strategic investor in a public auction.

Kuwait has one of the highest mobile penetration rates in the world, and while this has led to market saturation, the three operators - Zain, Ooredoo and Viva - are combating this by building extensive 5G networks and developing mobile broadband content and services.

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Faisal Al-Kandari yesterday proposed a draft law stipulating that government departments dealing with the public work in the evening to avoid the scorching heat of the sun. The draft law, which must be passed in the Assembly and accepted by the government to become effective, states that government offices, especially those dealing with the public, must open from 5.00 pm to 10.00 pm in the summer months. The bill also states that the summer evening timing should start from June 1 and continue until the end of August, a period when the temperature soars in Kuwait to around 50 degrees Celsius.

According to an Al-Qabas report yesterday, Kuwait recorded the highest temperature in the world on Saturday - 52.2 degrees Celsius in the shade - in Mitribah in the north of the country, according to member of the Arab Union of Space and Astronomy Dr Khalid Al-Zaaq of Saudi

Arabia. Soaring temperatures have also caused a spike in the consumption of power, as the load register hit 13,500 megawatts on Friday. Informed sources said it is expected that power consumption will go over the 13,800-megawatt limit in the next three days. Temperatures are expected to reach 50 degrees Celsius today and 51C tomorrow.

Government offices currently open from around 7.30 am to around 2.00 pm for almost all departments throughout the year, except in Ramadan, when working hours are reduced. Kandari said in his proposal that during the summer months, temperatures rise to over 50 degrees, posing a threat to people's lives and constituting a huge pressure on services - especially electricity - sometimes resulting in major fires.

The bill provides flexibility to the Civil Service Commission to decide which departments should open in the evening and can exclude some departments which do not deal with the public. The

lawmaker said a number of studies and researches on climatic change have concluded that temperatures are forecast to rise rapidly in the Arabian Gulf to the brink of 60 degrees Celsius in the future. He said the law is important for the health of both the employees and the public. Several previous attempts to change working hours in the summer months had failed.

Meanwhile, MP Osama Al-Shaheen yesterday asked Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel about government measures to force contractors pay the salaries of their workers. The lawmaker said the United Nations selected III the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a humanitarian leader and Kuwait as an international humanitarian center. As a result, the government must live up to this honor by preserving the image and reputation of the country, he said.

Shaheen added that it has been noticed that many contractors with gov-



MP Faisal Al-Kandari

ernment projects fail to pay the salaries of their workers on time, which could lead to strikes and social unrest. The lawmaker asked the minister about measures being used currently to guarantee and ensure that salaries of workers are paid on time, and inquired if the ministry and the manpower authority have any plan to eliminate any delays in salary payment.

Oman to impose new excise tax to boost revenues

DUBAI: Oman will impose a new tax on sugary drinks and tobacco products starting on June 15, as the small Gulf oil producer seeks to boost state revenues strained by years of low oil prices. A 100 percent excise tax will be introduced for tobacco products, energy drinks, alcohol and pork meat, while a 50 percent tax will be applied on carbonated drinks, according to a statement from an official at the Secretariat General for Taxation published by Oman's state news agency on Saturday.

"The excise tax is a consumption tax and is considered to be indirect taxes. Thus, the final charge is on the consumers, but it is collected in advance at a stage of the supply chain, notably through the business sectors,"

said Sulaiman bin Salim Al-A'adi, director general of survey and tax agreements. Oman has been slow in implementing fiscal reforms aimed at limiting the widening of its budget deficit, while it has increasingly relied on external funding - through bonds and loans - to refill its coffers.

The sultanate had originally planned to introduce a 5 percent value-added tax in 2018, which is now expected to start in 2020. "Further delays in implementation, along with a scenario of lower oil prices, pose downside risks to our assumption of narrower fiscal deficits relative to 2015-2017," S&P Global Ratings said in April, adding that it expected fiscal gains in 2019 coming from the implementation of excise taxes on tobacco and energy drinks.

Oman said at the start of the year it expected its budget deficit to be 2.8 billion rials (\$7.27 billion) this year, or 9 percent of gross domestic product. Sources told Reuters last month that to cover part of the deficit, Oman is expected to issue a new international bond soon in a deal likely to go up to \$2 billion in size. — Reuters

Civil disobedience campaign empties streets of Sudan

KHARTOUM: Four people were killed in Sudan yesterday as protesters launched a civil disobedience campaign against the military after a bloody crackdown on a sit-in demonstration calling for civilian rule. The campaign got underway nearly a week after the assault on demonstrators at the sit-in outside army headquarters in central Khartoum, which followed talks breaking down between protest leaders and military rulers over who should lead a new governing body - a civilian or soldier.

Following the call for the campaign of civil disobedience, protesters set about building roadblocks in Khartoum while markets and shops were closed in several other towns and cities. A doctors committee linked to the demonstrators said two people were killed yes-



KHARTOUM: Residents walk past barricades on a deserted street yesterday on the first day of a civil disobedience campaign across Sudan. — AFP

terday in unrest that rocked Khartoum and two others in its twin city of Omdurman, just across the Nile river.

The Central Committee for Sudanese Doctors blamed forces of the ruling military council and paramilitary "militias" for the four deaths, which it said took the

Continued on Page 24

Modi visits bombed Sri Lankan church

COLOMBO: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an unexpected visit yesterday to a Colombo church bombed during the Easter suicide attacks on his first trip to neighboring Sri Lanka since his election triumph. Modi's cavalcade made a detour to St Anthony's shrine on the way to President Maithripala Sirisena's seafront office in the capital, where a red carpet military parade awaited. "I am confident Sri Lanka will rise again," Modi said on Twitter where he posted photos of himself at the church. "Cowardly acts of terror cannot defeat the spirit of Sri Lanka. India stands in solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka."

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, who received Modi at Colombo's airport, said the two discussed ways to combat militant attacks like the assault on the three hotels and three churches which left 258 dead



COLOMBO: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays respects to victims of the Easter Sunday attacks at St Anthony's Church yesterday. — AFP

and 500 injured. "The two leaders discussed the collective steps to stamp out international terrorism," Wickremesinghe's office said in a statement.

Continued on Page 24

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Local

Amir receives Qatari, UAE officials who paid respects over PM mother's passing

Sheikh Sabah congratulates Jordan's King Abdullah II on 20th Anniversary

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, senior sheikhs, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Al-Sabah Family members yesterday received Qatar's Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani and his accompanying delegation, who paid their respects to Al-Sabah Family over the passing away of Wadha Ali Al-Munir, mother of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak.

His Highness the Amir and Al-Sabah Family members also received UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Lt Gen Sheikh Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who offered condolences over the passing away of the mother of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak. Furthermore, His Highness the Amir and Al-

Sabah Family members received Emirati Minister of Tolerance Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan and his accompanying delegation, who paid their respects to Al-Sabah Family over the passing away of the mother of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak. On Saturday, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem had expressed his condolences over the demise of the mother of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak. In a post on his twitter account, Ghanem extended his condolences to Sheikh Jaber's family on the occasion.

In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to King Abdullah II of Jordan, congratulating him on the occasion of the 20th Accession to the Throne Day. In the cable, His Highness the Amir wished to the Jordanian monarch utmost health, as well as the brotherly people of Jordan utmost prosperity. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Qatar's Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, who paid respect over the passing away of Wadha Ali Al-Munir, mother of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Lt Gen Sheikh Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.



Qatar's Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani offers condolences to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



Emirati Minister of Tolerance Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan offers condolences to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

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KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah leaves for New York to attend a number of UNSC sessions. — KUNA

Kuwaiti FM heads to New York to attend, head UNSC sessions

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah headed yesterday to New York to attend and head a number of UNSC sessions as part of Kuwait's presidency of the council during its 2018-19 non-permanent membership. The UNSC will hold a session tomorrow, headed by Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, to discuss the issue of missing persons during the times of armed conflicts. Kuwait will tender a draft UN resolution in support of protecting civilians during war.

On Wednesday, the Kuwaiti FM will head a UNSC session on peacekeeping and international security to prevent conflicts and encourage mediation. Kuwait considers mediation an integral part of its foreign policy. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled will also preside over a high-level meeting on June 13 focusing on the item connected with the UN cooperation with regional and non-regional organizations. Kuwait will submit a paper during the meeting about ways to bolstering cooperation between the UNSC and the Arab League.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's delegation consists of Assistant Foreign Minister for the Affairs of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's office Dr Ahmad Al-Sabah, Kuwait Permanent Representative to the UN headquarters in New York Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi, and a number of senior officials at the Foreign Ministry. Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran and other officials saw Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at the airport. — KUNA

Al-Babtain's world forum in the Hague begins Thursday

KUWAIT: The World Forum for the Culture of Peace is scheduled to kick off at the Peace Palace in the Hague on Thursday. The event's organizer, Kuwait's Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation, said in a statement yesterday that the forum's agenda would be topped with two themes: teaching the culture of peace and protecting the global cultural heritage, in addition to 17 curricula for teaching peace at schools. Maltese President George Vella is scheduled to address the inaugural speech. The opening session is set to include statements by Dutch Foreign Undersecretary Joke Brandt, Erik de Baedts, the General Director of the Carnegie Foundation-Peace Palace, Chairman of Al-Babtain Cultural Foundation Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain and Prince Turki Al-Faisal Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia.

The first session will be headed by the former Bosnian president, Haris Siljadic, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Yousef Al-

Othameen, Arab Maghrib Union Secretary-General Taieb Baccouche, Yemeni Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Yamani, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Peter Maurer, Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society Dr Hilal Al-Sayer and Palermo Mayor Leoluca Orlando.

The Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah will preside over the second session. It will be addressed by the representative of the Iraqi president, Ali Al-Shukri, Shaikha Mai Bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, President of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA), Yemeni Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Abdullah Lemles and the Minister of Higher Education in Iraq's Kurdistan, Dr Yusuf Goran. The third session will be headed by Terje Rod-Larsen, the President of the International Peace Institute. Speakers include the Maltese parliament speaker, Kuwaiti Minister of Education and Higher Education Hamed Al-Azmi and other dignitaries. The fourth and closing session will be headed by Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, the incumbent President of the International Court of Justice, and other eminent and leading figures. The forum will be held in partnership with the World Peace Foundation, Leiden University in Holland, the ICRC and the Peace Palace. — KUNA

Local

Kuwait contributed KD 26.5 million to international organizations

Co-ops press to open mini-markets at gas stations

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Official foreign ministry statistics about Kuwait's annual contributions to the budgets of regional, Arab and international organizations showed that those contributions amount to KD 26.5 million, including KD 3.133 million for international organizations, KD 10.77 million for Arab and regional ones, KD 1.274 million for Islamic ones, KD 7.253 million for UN peacekeeping troops, KD 3.152 million in voluntary donations and KD 500,000 for activities in the countries housing Kuwaiti embassies abroad.

Gas station shops

Union of Consumer Cooperative Societies (UCCS) Vice Chairman Khaled Al-Hudhaiban urged Oil Minister Khaled Al-Fadhel to allocate special outlets for co-ops at gas stations around Kuwait, noting that

co-ops have the right to have their own mini-markets at gas stations to serve the public and provide competitive prices. Hudhaiban added that the oil ministry had been repeatedly approached in this regard with no response so far, and expressed hope that Fadhel will approve the request.

Automation

The Ministry of Social Affairs has so far achieved 85 percent of the KD 12.95 million project of automating its various sectors pending full automation by 2020 to put an end to paper use and human errors. A report issued by the ministry showed that once the project is complete, all of the ministry's 16 services will be available online. In addition, the report said the Ishbelia old age home project is still delayed after its tender was rejected by the State Audit Bureau and returned to the ministry. The report

explained the KD 4 million project involves building a geriatric house with a capacity of 700 residents.

Rumors denied

Minister of Education Hamed Al-Azmi strongly denied that any of the ministry schools' teaching or administrative staff members take drugs inside schools. Responding to an inquiry by MP Mohammed Al-Dallal about a video on social media, Azmi stressed that the education ministry's social and psychological services' sector constantly coordinates with the interior ministry's narcotics department to boost drug-related awareness in various schools. Separately, undersecretary of the ministry of higher education Sabeeh Al-Mokhaizeem announced receiving applications for the 2019-2020 scholarship program, noting that the deadline for applying is June 20.



Councilmember calls for regulating bedoon vendors' work

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Municipal Council member and head of the Hawally committee Abdullah Al-Roumi filed two proposals on setting certain locations for bedoon watermelon vendors. His proposal came after the municipality recently confiscated their goods and prevented them from selling the fruit "without any consideration for their needs and the fact that this is their only source of income as bedoons," he said in a statement yesterday. Roumi suggested setting up special outlets in various governorates for them as well as setting all the needed

laws and regulations to keep them under the close control of state inspectors to make sure their products are safe. Meanwhile, councilmember and head of the grievances committee Meshaal Al-Hamdhan inquired about the conditions on licensing goldsmiths, noting that this profession requires the use of some materials that could be highly hazardous if disposed in the sewers.

802 complaints

Acting Director of the Public Authority for Manpower Abdullah Al-Motoutah said according to the statistics compiled by the domestic helpers' recruitment department in May 2019, there are 397 registered domestic helper recruitment offices, 530 applications were made in the same period, 67 licenses were renewed and eight new licenses were issued. Motoutah said that the total number of complaints and grievances filed with the department was 802, including 281 that were tended to, 161 amicably settled and 56 referred to courts.

1,575 reports

Manager of the Health Ministry's medical emergencies department Monther Al-Jalahma announced the department dealt with 1,575 reports during the Eid break. He explained that the reports included transferring 968 cases to hospitals and nearby clinics, treating 339 cases onsite (mainly with minor injuries from car accidents, fights or burns) and transferring 268 cases between various hospitals. Jalahma added seven cases were medevacked in the same period.

Summer burials

Manager of the funerals department at Kuwait Municipality Faisal Abdulkareem Al-Awadhi said in view of the high summer temperatures and in order to make things easier for families of the dead and mourners during funerals, the department decided to schedule summer burials at 9:00 am and after Asr and Esha prayers, adding that all needed illumination had been provided for use during nighttime.

News in brief

Kuwait records world's highest temperature

KUWAIT: Kuwait registered the highest temperature in the world on Saturday - 52.2 degrees Celsius in the shade - in Mitrabah in north of the country, according to member of the Arab Union of Space and Astronomy Dr Khalid Al-Zaaq of Saudi Arabia. Temperatures - that reached 49C at Kuwait airport - caused increased consumption of power, as the load register reached 13,500 megawatts, an increase of 600 megawatts, on Friday. Informed sources said "it is expected for the load to go over the 13,800 megawatt limit due to the return of 'whirlpools' and high temperatures during the coming three days." Sources said the maximum operating load that MEW can cover is 13,830, in addition to a 500-megawatt surplus. Temperatures are expected to reach 50 degree Celsius today and 51 tomorrow. — Al-Qabas

'Privatization important'

KUWAIT: State Minister for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel said it is important to continue privatization projects to diversify income sources. "Privatization methods are various and different, as there is the handing of the sector completely to the private sector, and may be limited to handing over management and operation to the private sector," she said. "We began with the T4 airport building and noticed improvements after a Korean company took over its management." She said there are plans to privatize the management of Jahra Hospital through a Korean company, then it will be extended to other facilities if proven successful. — Al-Rai

Actual budget deficit 'undisclosed'

KUWAIT: Former Deputy Premier, Finance Minister and Central Bank Governor Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah said the actual budget deficit is 'undisclosed' due to major expenses not included in it. He said there is unprecedented uncontrolled public expenditure without production or creativity. He said that according to laws that call for not calculating these expenses with the budget expenses, funds are taken from the general reserve to cover them, adding that if the deficit continues, it will be financed by withdrawing from that reserve parallel to borrowing from the markets if the public debt law is passed. Sheikh Salem said if borrowing continues along with withdrawing from reserves without reforming the current situation and having financial discipline, this will lead to the drying of remaining liquid funds in a short time, leading to many risks. He described borrowing without a plan on how to repay the debts as a "strange matter." — Al-Jarida

Motorist killed in King Fahd Road crash

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: An Arab woman was killed in a car accident after her vehicle flipped over on King Fahd Road near Salam. Firefighters and medical personnel handled the accident which created a huge congestion on the key highway. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the accident



KUWAIT: The victim's vehicle is seen after the accident.

Farwaniya fire

Fire broke out in a six-storey building in Farwaniya, prompting Farwaniya fire station to respond. The fire was put out after evacuating the building. No injuries were reported. Meanwhile, investigations went underway to determine the cause of the fire.



The scene inside a Farwaniya apartment after a fire was extinguished.

Swindling cases

A man Syrian was transferred to Farwaniya detectives after he was arrested on arrival over swindling cases filed against him.

Police received a call from the girl's mother seeking help, so they responded along with paramedics.

Family issues

A Kuwaiti man sustained several injuries and almost lost a finger during a fight at his in-laws' house with his two brothers-in-law for reason yet to be known. The two brothers attacked him with a sharp object. He was taken to Sabah Hospital.

Drowning

A three-year-old girl was medvacked to Adan Hospital after drowning in a Khairan swimming pool.

Kuwaiti organization supports first Quran contest in Switzerland

GENEVA: Kuwait's Mercy International - The Association of Social Reform (Sanabel Al-Khair Committee) has supported a Holy Quran contest, the first of its kind to be held in Switzerland, the coordinator of the Switzerland Quiz Competition Jamal Al-Khateeb said yesterday. In a statement to the press, Khateeb praised the association's keenness to support spreading the good spirit of Islam in various societies. He explained that the final number of participants was 50 people between the ages of seven and 70 years, who were competing at five different levels ranging from two parts of the Holy Quran up to 30 parts. He

confirmed that the first five winners of the competition had won the Umrah trip as a first prize and then the other prizes were between \$1,000 and \$250. The competition provided the appropriate environment to compete in memorizing the Holy Quran and formed an additional way of communication between the spectra of the Muslim community in Switzerland without any ethnic considerations, he noted.

It will highlight the new capabilities and talents among the community not only in the recitation, but also in explanation and interpretation of the Quran, especially that all participants know the dominant languages in Switzerland, it will be easier for them to explain the verses to other people. Meanwhile, the chairman of the competition's jury Sheikh Bu Katheer bin Omar said that such activities will stimulate the Muslims of Switzerland to preserve the book of God and the continuation of the message of Islam through the mastering of the verses of the Holy Quran. He added that the competition will



GENEVA: The contest's jury members judging a contestant. —KUNA

strengthen the spirit of persistence not only to memorize the Holy Quran but also to manage its meanings and discover its treasures. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways signed an agreement with Kuwait Integrated Petrochemical Industries Company (KIPIC) to provide special discounts on travel tickets for KIPIC employees. Kuwait Airways CEO Kamel Al-Awadhi and KIPIC CEO Hatem Al-Awadhi signed the three-year contract yesterday.

Local



KUWAIT: Worshippers perform the qiyam prayer inside the Grand Mosque. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat and KUNA



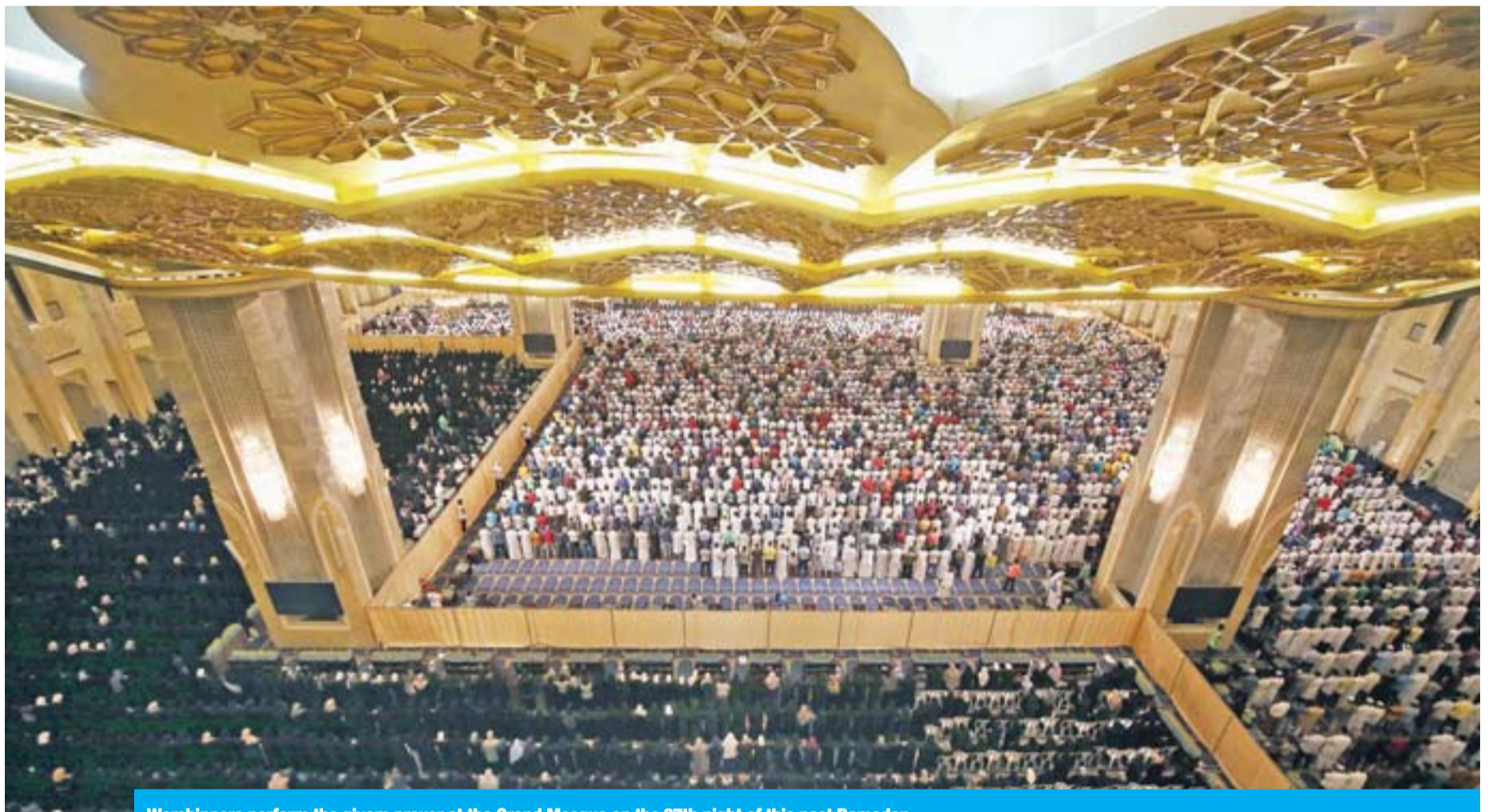
The Grand Mosque.

Grand Mosque remains one of Kuwait's most notable religious, architectural landmarks

KUWAIT: Kuwait has witnessed the construction of an immense number of buildings with distinctive architectural designs in recent years, such as the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center and the many skyscrapers scattered along Kuwait City's landscape, yet the Grand Mosque continues to be one of the country's most notable religious and architectural landmarks. Located on the Arabian Gulf shore in Kuwait City, construction of this outstanding edifice began in 1979 following instructions of the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and it officially opened on January 27, 1986. The Andalusian-style building was designed by renowned Iraqi architect Mohamed Saleh Makiya. Meanwhile, nearly 50 engineers and 450 construction workers worked on constructing the building which cost an estimated total of KD 14 million.

Despite the large number of mosques built around Kuwait since that date, the 'State Grand Mosque' remains Kuwait's largest mosque, covering a total area of 45,000 square meters, including 25,000 square meters for the actual structure, while the remaining 20,000 square meters constitute the building's exterior area that consists of gardens, open yards and outdoor corridors. The main prayer hall has an estimated capacity of 11,000 worshippers, which is often filled during the qiyam prayer in Ramadan, and especially on the night of the 27th day of the holy month when worshippers observe the 'Laylat Al-Qadr' (Night of Power). The mosque's outside yards are also prepared during that night to provide more room for worshippers as the main prayer hall would overflow with people.

The Grand Mosque is considered a comprehensive religious institution that plays an important role in spreading the message of Islam and showcasing Kuwait's role in this regard. In addition to hosting daily prayers, the mosque also houses a large library featuring a vast collection of Islamic publications, and organizes free guided tours for visitors of all religions during weekdays from 9:00 am to 10:45 am and from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm.



Worshippers perform the qiyam prayer at the Grand Mosque on the 27th night of this past Ramadan.



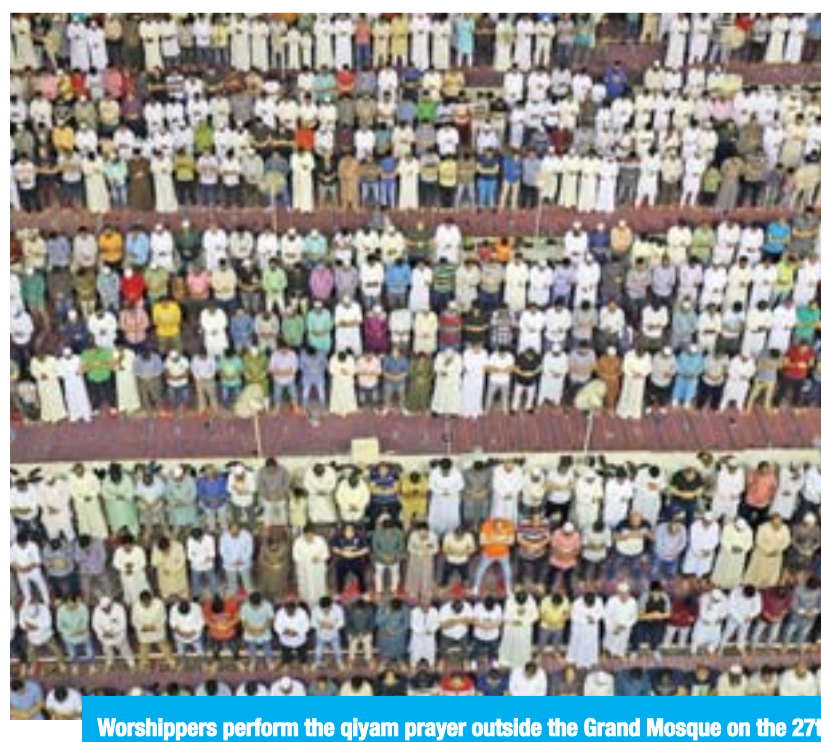
Crowds of worshippers perform the qiyam prayer in the Grand Mosque on the 27th night of Ramadan.



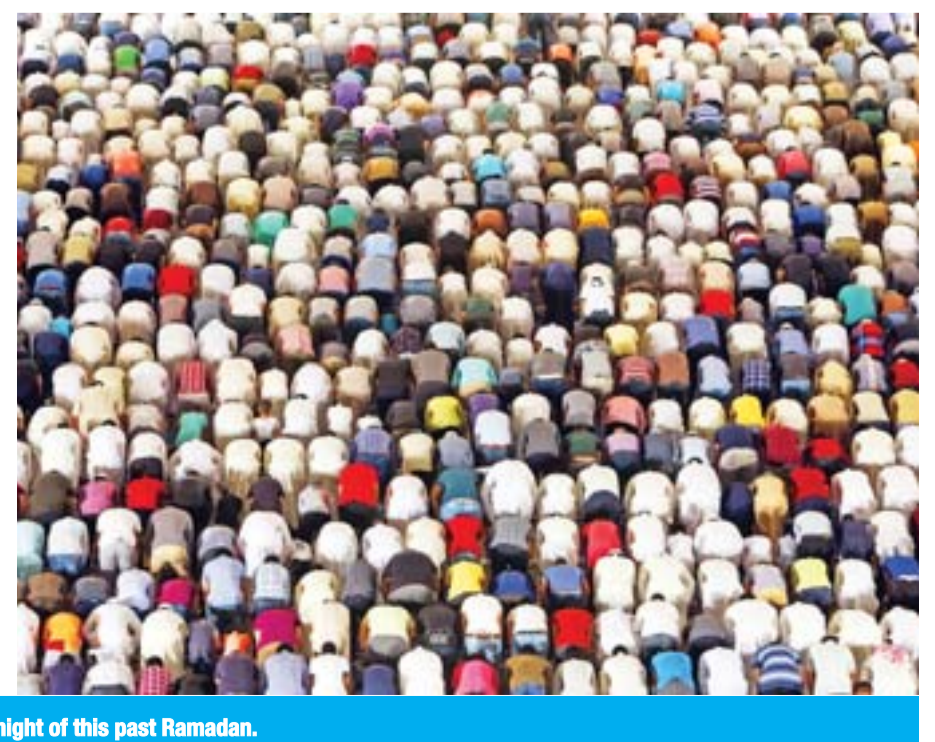
The late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah tours the Grand Mosque during its official opening on January 27, 1986.



The Dome of the Grand Mosque undergoing renovations.



Worshippers perform the qiyam prayer outside the Grand Mosque on the 27th night of this past Ramadan.



Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Traditional Kuwaiti household items displayed at a market in Kuwait City. — Photo by Essa Al-Otaibi (KUNA)

Tunis Congress very important for Arab media: IFJ Secretary General

BRUSSELS: The upcoming World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in Tunis will discuss important issues for the media in the Arab world, according to Secretary General Anthony Bellanger. "For the first time since 1926 when the IFJ was established, we are organizing our global Congress in the Arab world and also in the African continent," Bellanger said in an interview in Brussels. "For this reason this Congress is very important. Our affiliates in Africa and the Arab world are very important for us because many issues in these countries will be discussed in Tunis," he said.

Over 300 participants representing journalists' unions and associations across the world will attend the 30th IFJ Congress from June 11-14, which will put the future of journalism in the digital age at the top of its agenda. "Therefore this Congress in Tunis is very important and symbolic for us," he said, adding that Tunisia has seen a lot of progress in the media sector but still much needs to be done. In the rest of the Arab world media progress is different from one country to another, noted the IFJ chief, stressing the role of news agencies in the Arab world in contributing to the progress of the press.

Bellanger, from France, was appointed in 2015 by the IFJ executive committee. IFJ is present in 146 countries representing around 600,000 journalists around the world, making it the biggest media organization in the world, he said. Bellanger noted that during the Congress on Wednesday there will be regional meetings with the countries of the Arab world and there will be a special session to discuss big issues in the region and it is very important because we hold this once every three years.

Meanwhile, Mounir Zaarour, Middle East and Arab World Policy and Program Director at the IFJ, said that at the margins of the Congress, the IFJ is looking forward to strengthen the relationship and the working program with the IFJ affiliates in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which include journalist associations in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and UAE. "This working program will look into how we can support the future of journalism in the region with these five Gulf countries. We want to strengthen the relations



IFJ Secretary General Anthony Bellanger

with the Associations in the Gulf countries to form a kind of alliance to protect the future of journalism," he added.

The Congress will kick off next Tuesday with debates on three key issues: the future of journalism in the digital age, good trade union practices around the world and the situation of journalism in the Middle East after the Arab Revolutions. Delegates will also discuss and adopt a new "IFJ Global Charter of Ethics for Journalists," which was first adopted in 1954 by the IFJ's World Congress and last amended in 1986. The Congress will also elect a new IFJ President and Executive Committee. —KUNA

KJA accepts e-media journalists' membership

KUWAIT: Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) announced launching its e-media committee after getting Ministry of Social Affairs' approval for e-media journalism staff members, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) editors and the information ministry's news and political program staff members to join KJA. In this regard, KJA Secretary General Adnan Al-Rashed stressed the significance of the new committee, noting that it greatly helps organize e-media activities. The committee includes KJA board member Owayyed Al-Saleeli as Chairman, Nasser Al-Shatli as Rapporteur, in addition to Mohammad Al-Ajmi, Bader Al-Mutairi and Yousif Al-Kout, Rashed added. Speaking on the occasion, Saleeli promised to work on developing electronic media and journalism through holding occasional technical and vocational training courses for e-media journalists.



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Hong Kong political crisis builds after huge protest

To deter shootings, Americans shun naming suspects



WEST BENGAL: Indian supporters of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) shout slogans as they block a road during a protest against the recent killings at Sandeshkhali in West Bengal yesterday. —AFP

4 killed in India political gun battle

BJP, Trinamool rivals accuse each other of killings, intimidation

KOLKATA: A gun battle between supporters of India's ruling right-wing party and a regional rival has killed four people in West Bengal, police said yesterday, as violence raged in the tinderbox state. At least 18 others were injured in the clashes that broke out Saturday in the eastern state that has been on edge since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) launched an aggressive campaign to win parliamentary seats last year.

"Three of the dead were BJP workers while the other was a (regional) Trinamool party supporter," a police official said. Local BJP leader Mukul Roy tweeted that three BJP workers were shot dead and a Trinamool minister said one of his party members was killed in the fight.

Violence peaked across the state during the general election in April-May and has continued even after results were announced, giving a massive nationwide

victory to the BJP. Both the BJP and Trinamool, led by the firebrand Modi critic Mamata Banerjee, accuse each other of killings, intimidation and corruption. Sandeshkhali, the site of the latest gun battle, remained tense yesterday with more than 100 police personnel standing guard in the area, witnesses told AFP.

The BJP, which has traditionally held sway in the Hindi-speaking belt in the north, has been trying hard to pick up support in West Bengal where Banerjee's party has dominated for close to a decade. It won 18 seats in the general election in West Bengal, up from the two that it managed in 2014, en route to its

national win. Trinamool won 22 while centre-left opposition party Congress picked up two of the total 42 seats in the state. Modi's party won a huge 303 seats in the national parliament, increasing its previous tally of 282 seats in 2014.



Violence rages in West Bengal

party flags and posters and when we protested, our workers were shot from point blank range," Basu was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India (PTI). Local

Fight over flags

The clashes in Sandeshkhali broke out over the hoisting of BJP flags and the putting up of posters, said the BJP's general secretary in the state, Sayantan Basu. "They tried to throw away our

minister Jyotipriyo Mullick who belongs to the Trinamool party said one of their supporters was "hacked and shot dead by BJP workers". State elections in West Bengal are scheduled to be held in 2021 with the BJP expected to give a tough fight again. The state has witnessed some of the most violent feuds between rival parties.

Last month, a BJP supporter was shot dead in state capital Kolkata and a car belonging to a Trinamool member was pelted with rocks. In February, a Trinamool lawmaker was shot dead. And last year, a BJP worker was killed and his body was hanged from a tree. Modi has called the killings "shameful and anti-democratic". Political killings are rife across India. While National Crime Bureau data said there were more than 100 political murders in 2016, experts say the figure was likely much higher. Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states are the worst for political murders, the government data shows. —AFP

Tehran urges Europe to normalize ties or face consequences

LONDON: Iran said yesterday that Europe was not in a position to criticize Tehran for its military capabilities, and called on European leaders to normalize economic ties with the Islamic Republic despite US sanctions or face consequences. President Donald Trump last year withdrew the United States from a nuclear deal with Iran and reimposed sanctions. Trump has condemned a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, signed by his predecessor Barack Obama, as flawed for not being permanent and for not covering Iran's ballistic missile program or its role in conflicts around the Middle East.

The European signatories to the deal - France, Britain and Germany - share the same concerns as the United States over Iran's ballistic missile program and regional activities. However, they have defended the nuclear accord saying that at least it puts curbs on Iran's nuclear program and can be the basis for future talks. "Europeans are not in a position to criticize Iran for issues outside the JCPOA," Zarif was quoted as saying by the state broadcaster, using the acronym for the nuclear deal.

"The Europeans and other signatories of the JCPOA should normalize economic ties with Iran... We will halt our commitments or will take action in accordance to their measures." Iran last month stopped some commitments under the nuclear deal and warned that in 60 days it would scale back more commitments if Europeans fail to shield it against the US sanctions. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas will visit Iran this week, during which he will explore options for preserving the fraying nuclear non-proliferation pact.



TEHRAN: A handout picture provided by the office of the Iranian Ayatollah Ali Khamenei shows Iranians gathering to listen to the Iranian supreme leader's speech at his shrine in Tehran. —AFP

Iranian parliament speaker Ali Larijani yesterday also criticized French President Emmanuel Macron for saying last week in a meeting with Trump that they shared the same objectives on Iran. Macron said France wanted to make sure Tehran will not get nuclear weapons: "We had an accord until 2025 and we want to go further and have full certainty in the long run... (Then) reduce ballistic activity and contain Iran regionally."

"The recent remarks by the French president in a meeting with Trump were shameful and inept," Larijani was quoted as saying by Fars news agency. "Macron's comments did not match what he has been telling our president, Mr (Hassan) Rouhani, in their meetings and on the phone." Iran insists its nuclear activities are entirely peaceful, and has repeatedly refused to discuss its missile program. —Reuters

Indian authorities offer cash reward for missing plane

ITANAGAR: Indian authorities have offered a cash reward to boost a desperate hunt for a military transport plane missing for nearly a week and feared to have crashed in a remote northeastern state. The Indian Air Force and Arunachal Pradesh state government announced the 550,000 rupee (\$8,000) reward to get village chiefs to organize search parties for the AN-32 that disappeared from radars last Monday carrying 13 people.

The Soviet-built air force plane went missing near the border with China and air searches, satellite surveys and efforts to pick up signals from the plane have all failed. In addition to using Indian Space Research Organization satellites and other hi-tech means, ground teams have been scouring the Mechuka jungle region for the plane. The air force said it would give 500,000 rupees and the state government offered 50,000 rupees for "credible information" leading to the discovery of the plane. Rewards after air accidents are rare. An \$80 million reward was offered after Malaysian Airlines flight went missing in 2014 on a Kuala Lumpur-Beijing flight. It has not been found. The Indian military has deployed nine helicopters, fighter jets and transporters looking for the plane. The ground search is concentrated in Siang district and involves police, air force and army forces, the Indo-Tibetan border police, civil administration teams, hunters and some local people.

A senior district official told AFP that authorities wanted to get village chiefs more involved. Bad weather has hampered the search in recent days but a full hunt resumed Saturday. The turboprop plane was carrying eight crew and five military personnel on the flight. Many relatives of the missing are waiting in the state city of Jorhat for news. Military spokesman Wing Commander Ratnakar Singh said that no efforts are being spared in the hunt. "We stand in support of the families in these difficult times," Singh said. —AFP

International

US Jewish community tries to defend itself as attacks rise

Guards, 'Tactical Rabbi' to train volunteers on the use of weapons

LOS ANGELES: Armed guards, safety assessments and now even a "Tactical Rabbi" to train volunteers on the use of weapons—such is the reality today at synagogues in the United States facing mounting anti-Semitic attacks. It is at a shooting range in the hills overlooking Los Angeles that a team of AFP reporters met recently with Raziel Cohen, dubbed the "Tactical Rabbi," who was sporting a 9mm pistol on his hip and carrying a semi-automatic rifle over his shoulder.

Cohen was trying to determine how well books can stop bullets. The idea is to transform a library at a synagogue or Jewish school into a shelter in the event of an active shooter situation. "We're trying to bridge the gap between the time that the shooting begins and law enforcement arrives," he said. "The expression that goes on is that we carry guns because we can't carry police officers, which is not just a joke," added Cohen. "The reality is that there can't be police everywhere all the time."

Cohen, who has been passionate about guns since his youth, is a security expert and certified shooting instructor who has taken part in counter-terrorism courses given by retired and elite active-duty military personnel. Born into a religious family, Cohen is also a rabbi for the Chabad-Lubavitch community in Los Angeles. Chabad is a sect of Hasidic Judaism, and Los Angeles is second only to Brooklyn, New York in its number of Chabad congregations.

Cohen said his expertise in security took on more meaning after the April 27 shooting at the Chabad Poway Synagogue near San Diego that left one dead and three wounded. It came six months after a shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue left 11 people dead—the worst attack against Jewish people in the modern history of the United States. "One of the Ten Commandments that's taught very incorrectly is 'Thou shall not kill,'" Cohen said. "It's not 'Thou shall not kill,' it's 'Thou shall not murder.' In fact, in the Bible it says that you have the obligation to protect yourself."

Anti-Semitic incidents in the United States remained at near-record high levels in 2018, according to the Anti-Defamation League, which recorded 1,879 incidents, the third-highest level since the 1970s. 2017 had marked an unprecedented rise in such incidents, with 1,986 cases of harassment, vandalism or anti-Semitic attacks recorded, the organization said. Cohen said given the uptick, it was the duty of the Jewish community to learn to fend for itself. But not everyone agrees with Cohen's reasoning.

'Guns not the answer'

Ivan Wolkind, chief operating officer of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and founder of the federation's security program, said some 500 groups have joined the program, exchanging information and security tips with police or the FBI. Wolkind, a reserve officer with the Los Angeles Police Department, said while he wholeheartedly believes in prevention, he is not convinced that arming worshippers is the answer. "I can't make a judgment as to whether or not people should have weapons in their place of worship but what I can say is to have people carrying weapons without a huge amount of training... is potentially very dangerous," he said.

He said his program focuses on prevention rather than encouraging worshippers to arm themselves. "So we put 98 percent of our energy into what we call left of bang," he said. "So if you think of a timeline where there is pre-incident—everything that happens before an incident—and then the bang is what happens and then there's everything to the right. "We put 98 percent of our energy into left of bang—recognizing, pre-



PACOIMA: Rabbi Raziel Cohen, aka 'Tactical Rabbi', looks on as a student shoots a Glock 9mm pistol during a demonstration at the Angeles Shooting Ranges in Pacoima, California. —AFP

venting and mitigating the effects of an attack."

Wolkind said he fears that people who undergo weapons training may feel overconfident and ignore warning signs leading up to a shooting. "They may stop looking for some of the pre-incident indicators that I feel are so important," he said. He said his secu-

rity program has been so successful that churches, mosques and even the Church of Scientology have reached out for advice. "We've got a lot of experience," he said. "And we are absolutely open to sharing that with anyone and everyone as other people try to do the same thing in their communities." —AFP

How the crisis in Sudan unfolded

KHARTOUM: The deadly crackdown by security forces on protesters in Sudan follows a building standoff between the ruling military and demonstrators demanding civilian rule. The unrest started in December 2018, when citizens revolted against a tripling of the price of bread. In April demonstrators launched a sit-in in front of the military headquarters in Khartoum to demand the departure of the regime of long-time president Omar Al-Bashir.

He was ousted by the army a few days later, but the protesters remained in place in their thousands to press their demand for the military to cede power. On June 3 security forces broke up the sit-in, launching a crackdown that left more than 100 dead in just a few days. Here is a summary of events leading up to the military's move to end the long-running protest.

Talks break down

On May 20, after several breakthroughs, talks between the ruling military council and protest leaders reach a deadlock over who should head a new governing body which should oversee a three-year transition to civilian rule. Protest leaders insist a civilian must head the new sovereign council and that civilians should make up the majority of its members, proposals rejected by the ruling generals. Islamist movements back the military in the hope it will keep sharia, Islamic law, in place since a 1989 coup. On May 28-29, thousands of workers in both

the public and private sectors strike across the country to pressure the military rulers.

Saudi, UAE, Egypt back military

In late May, the head of the military council, Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, visits Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates. As commander of the country's ground forces, Burhan is reported to have coordinated the deployment of Sudanese troops within the Saudi-led coalition which intervened in 2015 in Yemen to support the government against Houthi rebels accused of links with Iran.

The three regional powers have thrown their weight behind the Sudanese military for fear of a repeat of the turbulence that followed the Arab Spring in several countries in 2011. Qatar, however, a long-time ally of Bashir but also a friend to Iran and involved in a bitter dispute with Saudi Arabia and its allies, has seen its influence in Sudan wane since the start of the crisis. On May 31, the military council closes down the Khartoum bureau of the Qatari news channel Al Jazeera, which regularly broadcasts footage of demonstrations. There is no reason given for the order.

Bloody crackdown

On June 3, men in military fatigues move in on the protest camp outside the army headquarters and disperse the thousands gathered there with force. More than 100 have been killed and hundreds wounded since the start of the crackdown, according to the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors, close to the demonstrators. Internet connectivity is disrupted.

A day later the military announces that all previous agreements with protest leaders on the transition are scrapped and that elections will be called "within a period not



OMDURMAN, Sudan: A Sudanese man rides his motorbike around a makeshift barricade blocking a street for cars in Khartoum's twin city Omdurman on the first day of a civil disobedience campaign across Sudan. —AFP

exceeding nine months". Protesters denounce a putsch. In Khartoum and across the country, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) - paramilitaries with origins in the 16-year-old war in the western region of Darfur - are thought to have been behind the crackdown. They are accused of atrocities, including attacks on hospitals. The international community demands an end to the violence and resumption of dialogue.

Civil disobedience

On June 5, as gunfire crackles across the capital, the army says it is open to negotiations "with no restriction". Protest leaders turn down the call for talks with the

military council "that kills people". Saudi Arabia expresses "great concern" at developments and calls for a resumption of dialogue. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, deputy chief of the ruling military council and head of the RSF, says the country will not be allowed to slip into "chaos". Opposition figures are arrested on June 8, a day after meeting Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed who had travelled to Khartoum as a mediator. On June 9, police fire warning shots and tear gas to disperse demonstrators building roadblocks in the capital, in response to a call by protest leaders for "civil disobedience" across the country. Markets and shops are closed in several Sudanese towns and cities. —AFP

Algeria and Sudan: New chapters of Arab revolt

PARIS: The Arab world is again being rocked by revolt, with uprisings in Algeria and Sudan seeing long-time leaders ousted, although in both the military has frustrated popular demands for change. A first wave of revolt in 2011 caused shock waves across many Arab countries, starting in Tunisia where president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was ousted in January after 23 years in power. While Tunisia has since been able to transition to democracy, the results in other countries is bleak.

In Egypt, where mass uprisings forced Hosni Mubarak to quit in February 2011 after ruling for almost three decades, power has settled in the hands of former army chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, accused of repression. Other countries caught up in the 2011 "Arab Spring", such as Libya, Syria and Yemen, have descended into civil war and chaos. Here is a summary of main events in the new Arab world uprisings in Algeria and Sudan.

Algeria

Unprecedented demonstrations erupt in February 2019 after President Abdelaziz Bouteflika says he is planning to stand for a fifth term in upcoming elections. In his 80s, weakened after a stroke in 2013 and rarely seen in public, the wheelchair-bound Bouteflika has been in power since 1999. As

protests grow to demand he step aside, army chief Ahmed Gaid Salah on March 10 pledges that the military shares the "values and principles" of the people.

It is a turning point, with Gaid Salah among those considered loyal to Bouteflika. Two weeks later he demands the president quits or be declared medically unfit to rule. On April 2 Gaid Salah demands impeachment proceedings against Bouteflika. Abandoned by his loyal supporters, the president submits his resignation hours later. But Algerians continue to protest, demanding the departure of the entire ruling system, including Gaid Salah who has become the country's powerbroker.

They reject plans for a presidential election in July, saying Algeria's institutions are too tarnished by corruption to guarantee a legitimate vote. There are massive demonstrations in the capital on May 31, for a 15th consecutive Friday and despite a spate of arrests and detentions. "No elections with this gang in power," the crowd shouts. The constitutional council says on June 2 that a July election would be impossible as only two people had submitted their candidature and both were rejected.

Sudan

Protests in December against a hike in bread prices quickly grow into rolling demonstrations for Omar al-Bashir to quit after three decades of iron-fisted rule. On February 22, Bashir declares a nationwide state of emergency. But the protests grow and on April 6 thousands set up camp outside the army headquarters in Khartoum, some taking inspiration from Bouteflika's ouster days earlier.

On April 11, military authorities announce they have removed Bashir and

that a transitional military council will govern for two years. Protesters denounce a "military coup" and demand civilian rule. Talks between protest leaders and military rulers appear to make headway but break down on May 20 over the composition of a transitional authority. Protesters maintain pressure on the ruling military council, with demonstrations and a major strike on May 28-29.

In late May military council chief Abdel

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International

Fear, anger as border guards tighten net in south Mexico

Mexico deploys 6,000 officers to the southern border

TAPACHULA: Sitting inside a truck at a checkpoint near Mexico's southern border, a soldier is scrolling through images on a screen, looking for human forms hidden in cargo vehicles. The scanning equipment delivering the images to his computer is part of Mexico's new bid to stop undocumented migrants and human traffickers. It is a crackdown that is about to get stronger, under the deal the Mexican government struck Friday with the United States to avoid President Donald Trump's threatened tariffs.

At another checkpoint nearby, officers inspect minibuses and taxis heading north from the Suchiate River, the frontier between Mexico and Guatemala. It does not take them long to find an undocumented family traveling in a minibus. They make them get off-a father, mother and three children, including a baby-and put them in a van with bars on the windows. It is likely the first step toward deportation. "We're here 24/7," one border officer tells AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. And the Central American migrants fleeing in droves from desolate poverty and brutal street-gang violence have begun to feel the impact. Migrant detentions have tripled in Mexico since January, to 23,679 in May. Deportations are also up, to 16,507 last month.

Clamping down

As part of its deal to avert Trump's threat of five-percent tariffs on all Mexican goods-which would have risen incrementally to 25 percent by October-President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's government has agreed to deploy 6,000 officers from Mexico's new National Guard to the southern border starting today.

That will make it that much harder for Central Americans to slip through what has traditionally been a highly porous border. Though some migrants and activists remain defiant. The new deployment "might make the big caravans disappear, but not migration in general. It will continue one way or another," said Ernesto Castanedo, an activist at the Buen Pastor migrant shelter in the southern city of Tapachula.

The shelter houses 600 migrants, mostly Hondurans taking a break on their northward trek. The migrants watch TV, play football and wash their clothes as Unicef workers give their children impromptu classes. "It doesn't matter what Donald Trump does, he can never stop us," said another migrant, 57-year-old Josue Arenal, from Honduras. "Migrants always sneak through. He can close the border, build a

thousand walls, migrants are always going to find a way."

Contraband of all sorts

AFP reporters saw undocumented migrants crossing the border at dawn on rafts, a day after the US-Mexican deal was announced. The customs officers on the bridge appeared indifferent to the thriving black-market operations ferrying migrants and stolen gasoline across the river. "They should go after organized crime," not migrants, said Abraham, 49, a one-time migrant from El Salvador who now works in a migrant shelter.

He experienced first-hand the dangers migrants face when he made his own attempt to reach the United States by hopping the freight train known as "The Beast." Members of a Mexican gang-one of many known for preying on migrants-robbed him and threw him off the train. Severely injured, he spent five years recovering in hospital, before returning to El Salvador. When he made it back to his village, he found his family had already given him up for dead. At the local cemetery, they had erected a tombstone with his name on it over an empty grave. — AFP



CHIAPAS: Migrants heading to United States gather around a fire at a shelter in Tapachula, Chiapas state, Mexico. — AFP

How safe is your state? US scores low on human rights

KUALA LUMPUR: Police brutality, migrant abuse and Death Row ensured the United States scored poorly among rich countries in a new survey released - assessing human rights from Mexico to Mozambique. The Wellington-based Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI) quizzed experts in all of the 19 nations it assessed, including civil society groups, lawyers and journalists, and gauged how each state treats its citizens.

"On safety from the state, the United States is performing significantly below the others," said Anne-Marie Brook, co-founder of HRMI, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. She compared the US performance against that of Australia, New Zealand, Britain and South Korea, all of whom belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. "The United States is the only one that has the death penalty, extrajudicial killings, like police killings that are not justified, and all the things going on at the border with children separated from parents," she said.

Countries surveyed were Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, South Korea, Vietnam, Nepal, Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Britain, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the United States, Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil. Among areas examined: freedom of expression and association, the right to participate in government, and harm inflicted by the state or its agents, from torture to political arrests. Countries were scored across multiple categories, making an overall ranking impossible to set.

The United States also scored low on citizens' right to health and food, and on the right to live free from torture. Deaths involving police in the United States average nearly three a day, researchers wrote in the American Journal of Public Health last year, with black and Latino men twice as likely as white men to die during interactions with police. The US treatment of migrants also came under close scrutiny since US President Donald Trump made stemming immigration from Mexico a high priority of his administration.

US border patrol agents have apprehended almost 45,000 unaccompanied children at the southwest border since October. "For the average person who has bought into the idea of the United States as a world leader, leading democracy, they may find the results surprising," said Brook. The HRMI now had data for about two years, making it difficult to point to trends, she said, though minority groups were identified as most at risk in the countries surveyed.

In Asia-Pacific, Vietnam performed poorly on empowerment rights - freedoms related to opinion, expression and assembly. "The groups identified as most at risk are human rights advocates, journalists, people with particular political affiliations or beliefs, people who protest or engage in non-violent political activity," Brook said. In Latin America, safety from the state was worsening as minority groups encounter police violence, she added.

Britain notched up marked inequalities in quality of life, with disabled Britons especially at risk of rights violations. Australia received a poor score on the right to freedom from torture, which the survey called "a serious problem". The survey singled out free speech as a "very concerning" issue in Nepal. Launched in 2016, HRMI is a global and collaborative project run by academics and people working in human rights. Funded by grants and donations, they track the human rights performance of nations based on their commitments. — Reuters

To deter shootings, Americans shun naming suspects

WASHINGTON: As the superintendent of Jefferson County School District in Colorado, Jason Glass oversees one of the most troubled pieces of property in the United States: Columbine High School. The site of the one of the first - and still among the deadliest - school shootings in the country, Columbine has proved an enduring headache for the school district ever since two students killed 12 of their classmates, a teacher and themselves in 1999.

In an open letter published this week, Glass detailed how every year hundreds of people try to get on campus to "reconnect with the 1999 murders," while in the years that followed, many other school shooters took inspiration from the Columbine attack. Around the 20th anniversary of the killings this year, reports that an armed woman had traveled to the area triggered a lockdown of the high school - and of many other schools in the area - only for the woman to be found dead, an apparent suicide.

"Columbine High School has a gravitational pull for these sorts of individuals," Glass wrote. "Most of them are there to satisfy curiosity or a macabre, but harmless, interest in the school. For a small group of others, there is a potential intent to do harm." Now the school district is considering following the dramatic example set by many other property owners whose buildings were the site of

carnage. "Today school safety experts recommend tearing down buildings where school shootings take place," Glass said. "Since the morbid fascination with Columbine has been increasing over the years, rather than dissipating, we believe it is time for our community to consider this option for the existing Columbine building."

Such a move is not undertaken lightly. Glass said officials were considering asking voters to approve a rise in property taxes to provide "an additional \$60-\$70 million" to build a new high school with added safety features. Yet despite efforts to improve security in US schools and other public buildings in the 20 years since the Columbine killings, the United States still sees hundreds of mass shootings every year.

In a bid to halt the bloodshed, authorities now strive to deny the killers the infamy many of them seek. Late last month, after a city employee killed 12 people in a Virginia municipal building, police and elected officials paid tribute to the victims but made a point of rarely speaking the killer's name. "I did it once," Virginia Beach police chief James Cervera said in an interview. After announcing the shooter's name at a press conference, he took to referring to the man as "the suspect," or "the shooter."

'Contagion'

Researchers say the "copy-cat effect," in which mass shooters take inspiration from other mass shooters in pursuit of fame and recognition, is real. Sherry Towers, a professor of mathematics at Arizona State University, applied models usually used for studying diseases to mass shootings. She told AFP high-profile mass shootings that attracted lots of media attention prompted a "contagion," inspiring others. Adam Lankford, a professor of criminology



COLORADO: In this file photo, school children hug each other in the parking lot outside Columbine High School in Littleton - the site of a school shooting where 15 students and teachers were killed by two former students in a suicide mission. — AFP

at the University of Alabama, said some mass shooters get as much media attention as Hollywood movie stars.

"That's a reward that imitators are pursuing," he said. "Some mass shooters explicitly said that infamy is better than obscurity." Towers said there was a growing understanding among news outlets and politicians that the public eye should not be focused on the perpetrators. Following the killings of 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch in March, New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern vowed never to mention the shooter's name. "He is a terrorist. He is a criminal. He is an extremist. But he will, when I speak, be nameless," she said. — AFP

Deal, no deal or delay: What will May's successor do about Brexit?

LONDON: Who are the candidates vying for British Prime Minister Theresa May's job and what have they said about Brexit? May has resigned, triggering a contest that will bring a new leader to power, with most of the frontrunners expected to push for a cleaner break with the European Union. Below are the 11 Conservative lawmakers who have said they are running and what they have said about Brexit. They are arranged in the order listed by oddschecker, a website that compiles bookmakers' odds.

Boris Johnson, 54

The bookmakers' clear favorite was the face of the official 2016 referendum campaign to leave the European Union. The former London mayor resigned as foreign minister in July last year in protest at May's handling of the exit negotiations. Johnson said in a campaign video that Britain would leave the EU on Oct. 31 "deal or no deal". He has also said a second referendum on EU membership would be a "very bad idea" and divisive.

In a newspaper column, he said: "No one sensible would aim exclusively for a no-deal outcome. No one responsible would take no-deal off the table." He has said he would withhold a previously agreed 39 billion pound (\$49.66 billion) Brexit payment until the European Union gives Britain better exit terms. Local media reported he told a leadership hustings that the Conservatives would not be forgiven if Britain did not leave the EU by Oct. 31 and would face "political extinction." Johnson was educated at Eton College and Oxford University.

Jeremy Hunt, 52

Hunt replaced Johnson as foreign minister in July after serving six years as health minister. That role made him unpopular with many voters who work in or rely on the state-run, financially stretched National Health Service. On Brexit: A "Remain" supporter in the 2016 referendum, Hunt now says that while he would prefer to leave the



Conservative MP Boris Johnson

EU with a deal, he believes a no-deal exit is better than no Brexit.

However, in a Daily Telegraph article he became the most senior leadership contender to reject a threat to leave with no deal by the end of October, saying parliament would block any such move. "Any prime minister who promised to leave the EU by a specific date - without the time to renegotiate and pass a new deal - would, in effect, be committing to a general election the moment parliament tried to stop it. And trying to deliver no-deal through a general election is not a solution: it is political suicide," he wrote.

"A different deal is, therefore, the only solution ... That means negotiations that take us out of the customs union while generously respecting legitimate concerns about the Irish border." He has not however entirely ruled out a no-deal exit, saying he could consider it as a last resort, but that it would likely force a national election in which the Conservatives would be punished by voters. Hunt was educated at Oxford. He speaks fluent Japanese.

Andrea Leadsom, 56

A pro-Brexit campaigner, Leadsom made it to the last two in the 2016 contest to replace Prime Minister David Cameron following the referendum. She withdrew after a backlash to an interview in which she said being a mother gave her more of a stake in the future of the country, seen by critics as an unfair attack on May, who has no children. Leadsom resigned as Leader of the House of Commons last month, saying she did not believe the May government's approach would deliver on the Brexit referendum result. On Brexit: She told the Sunday Times she would put significant effort into encouraging the EU to come up with a "deal that we can all live with", but also said Britain had to leave by the end of October, with or without a deal. Leadsom was educated at the University



Britain's Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt

of Warwick before spending 25 years in banking and finance.

Michael Gove, 51

Gove, one of the highest-profile Brexit campaigners during the 2016 referendum, scuppered Johnson's 2016 leadership bid by withdrawing his support at the last moment to run himself. Seen as one of the most effective members of May's cabinet as environment minister, Gove supported her Brexit strategy.

On Brexit: Gove said he believed he could unite the party and deliver Brexit. Writing in the Daily Mail newspaper, Gove said he would seek a Canada-style free trade agreement with the EU, ruled out a second referendum, and pledged that Conservative lawmakers would be involved in shaping Britain's negotiating position. "We must leave the EU as soon as we can. I want us to leave before October 31 and that will be my goal. I won't be engaging in can-kicking or dithering," he said, adding that he would "always choose Brexit over no Brexit". "If, finally, it comes to a decision between no deal and no Brexit, I will choose no-deal," he said. But Gove said he would not give up on progress and rush into a no-deal Brexit when a deal could be reached with "just a little more time and effort". He said any delay could be a few days or weeks. Leaving without a deal could mean parliament forcing Britain into a general election, he said. Gove, who was adopted as a child, was educated at Oxford University.

Rory Stewart, 46

A former diplomat who once walked 6,000 miles across Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal, Stewart was recently promoted to International Development Secretary. Stewart was first elected to parliament in 2010 and backed remaining in the EU in the 2016 referendum. He opposes a "no deal" exit and vocally advocated May's deal with

Brussels. On Brexit: He told Sky News that he favored a "pragmatic, moderate Brexit". He said he would not seek to change May's withdrawal agreement, which has been rejected by parliament three times, and said anyone who said they could do so by October was "deluding themselves or deluding the country". "We have a deal negotiated with the European Union on the Withdrawal Agreement. What I would be doing in parliament and with the British people is sorting out that political declaration and landing it so we can get out and move on." Stewart was educated at Eton College and Oxford University.

Dominic Raab, 45

Raab, a hardline Brexiteer, quit as May's Brexit minister last year after just five months in the job, saying her draft exit agreement did not match the promises the Conservative Party made in the 2017 election. He had held junior ministerial roles since being elected in 2010. Raab, a black belt in karate, campaigned for Brexit. On Brexit: Raab told the BBC that he plans to seek a "fairer deal" with Brussels, including renegotiating the customs and border plans relating to Northern Ireland. He also said he would not delay Brexit beyond October, however, and was prepared to leave without a deal.

Raab said he expected that if Britain left without a deal, it would likely get to keep around 25 billion pounds of its 39 billion pound exit payment, and the government could use that money to support businesses through Brexit. He caused a stir when he refused to rule out proroguing, or suspending, parliament until the Brexit deadline to prevent lawmakers blocking a no-deal Brexit. Parliament Speaker John Bercow said proroguing parliament would never happen and other candidates have criticized Raab's stance as undemocratic.

Proroguing parliament, which usually happens once a year so the government can outline a new legislative program, is a "prerogative power" - it is a decision for the prime minister, which is given effect by the Queen. Hannah White, deputy director of the Institute for Government think tank, said: "Suspending parliament to prevent democratically elected representatives from making a decision you suspect they wish to take would amount to a coup against Parliament and risk bringing the Queen into a terrible conflict." The son of a Jewish refugee, Raab was educated at Oxford University. — Reuters

International

Hong Kong political crisis builds after huge protest against extradition law

Broad business, legal and social concern over bill

HONG KONG: Hong Kong was plunged into a fresh political crisis yesterday night after several hundred thousand people took to the streets to thwart a proposed extradition law that would allow suspects to be sent to mainland China to face trial. Organizers said their initial estimates put the turnout at well over half a million people, saying it outstripped a demonstration in 2003 when 500,000 hit the streets to challenge government plans for tighter national security laws.

Those laws were later shelved and a key government official forced to resign. Yesterday's outpouring was already raising the pressure on the administration of Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam and her official backers in Beijing. "She has to withdraw the bill and resign," veteran Democratic Party lawmaker James To told crowds gathering outside the city's parliament and government headquarters yesterday night. "The whole of Hong Kong is against her."

After To spoke, thousands were still arriving, having started the march five hours earlier, filling four lanes of a major thoroughfare. Some sat in a nearby park singing "hallelujah", but on a nearby road tensions were building after hours of peaceful protest. Riot police armed with batons and helmets were gathering while government-funded broadcaster RTHK reported that they used pepper spray

on six masked men trying to block the road.

Lam had yet to comment on the rally. The demonstration capped weeks of growing outrage in the business, diplomatic and legal communities, which fear corrosion of Hong Kong's legal autonomy and the difficulty of ensuring basic judicial protections in mainland China. US and European officials have issued formal warnings - concern matched by international business and human rights lobbies that fear the changes would dent Hong Kong's rule of law.

The former British colony was handed back to Chinese rule in 1997 amid guarantees of autonomy and various freedoms including a separate legal system, which many diplomats and business leaders believe is the city's strongest remaining asset.

The unusually broad opposition to the rendition bill displayed yesterday came amid a series of government moves to deepen links between southern mainland China and Hong Kong. Police had yet to issue their own estimate of the protest size. But as tens of thousands reached the Legislative Council in the Admiralty business district, the starting point in Victoria Park was crowded with thousands more still waiting to join the march.

Some carried yellow umbrellas - a symbol of the pro-democracy Occupy protests that choked key city streets for 79 days in 2014.

Streets were packed along the route; Reuters witnesses at various key points estimated the crowd at several hundred thousand. Chants of "no China extradition, no evil law" echoed through the highrise city streets, while other marchers called for Lam and other senior officials to step down.

Good-natured protest

One protester held a sign reading "Carry off Carrie", while another declared "Extradite yourself, Carrie". Another sign said "let's make Hong Kong great again", with a photo depicting U.S. President Donald Trump firing Lam. The genial crowd included young families pushing babies in prams as well as the elderly braving 32 degree C (90°F) heat, some spraying each other with water misters. Debates will start in the council on Wednesday on the amendments to the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance. The bill could be passed into law by the end of June.

Lam has tweaked the amendments but refused to pull the bill, saying it is vital to plug a long-standing "loophole". She has also said speedy action is needed to ensure a Hong Kong man suspected of murdering his girlfriend can be sent to Taiwan for trial. Opposition to the bill has united a broad range of the community, from usually pro-establishment business people and lawyers to students,



HONG KONG: Protesters gesture as they chant 'no extradition' as they rally against a controversial extradition law proposal in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

pro-democracy figures and religious groups. Insurance agents, executives and small entrepreneurs joined bus drivers and mechanics in the streets yesterday. Dozens of people told Reuters it was their first protest march, with some remarking on the strong sense of unity among the diverse crowds. "I come here to fight," said a wheelchair-bound, 78-year-old

man surnamed Lai, who was among the first to arrive. Schoolteacher Garry Chiu joined the protest with his wife and 1-year-old daughter, saying, "It is no longer about me." "I need to save my daughter. If the law is implemented anyone can disappear from Hong Kong. No one will get justice in China. We know there are no human rights." — Reuters

From Baikonur to Borat: Things to know about Kazakhstan

ALMATY: Kazakhs went to the polls yesterday to elect a new president, though long-term former leader Nursultan Nazarbayev is likely to pull the strings from behind the scenes for many years to come. Here are five things to know about the ex-Soviet Central Asian nation:

Space

Kazakhstan is the ninth largest country in the world with an area of more than 2.7 million square kilometers. Since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 it has also been the world's largest country to lack access to a sea. The vast Kazakh Steppe is home to the Baikonur cosmodrome - the world's most famous launch pad nearly 60 years after Yuri Gagarin blasted off from there to become the first man in space. The Russia-controlled cosmodrome has had a monopoly on travel to the International Space Station ever since NASA stopped its launches to the facility.

Chilly steppe capital

Former president Nazarbayev, 78, was

until March the only leader Kazakhstan had known since independence. He described the transformation of a provincial steppe town into the new capital Astana during the 1990s as one of the top achievements of his three-decade reign. The country's capital was previously Almaty. The city was renamed Nur-Sultan in Nazarbayev's honor after he stepped down as president in March. It is known for its futuristic skyline of skyscrapers and chilly winter temperatures that regularly plunge below -20 degrees Celsius. An observation tower in the centre of the city of a million inhabitants is topped with a viewing platform where visitors can place their hands on a gold imprint of Nazarbayev's palm.

Contested history with Russia

Kazakhstan is proud of its nomadic history and marked 550 years since the birth of the first Kazakh state in colorful fashion in 2015. The celebrations followed controversial remarks by Russian leader Vladimir Putin, who said that Kazakhs had never had statehood prior to their country's independence from Moscow. While Kazakhstan and Russia traditionally enjoy strong relations, their shared history sometimes gets in the way. Earlier this year the Russian foreign ministry criticized a Kazakh film-maker's documentary which argued the famine in Kazakhstan during Soviet forced collectivization constituted a genocide.

Hit by oil prices

Kazakhstan is Central Asia's biggest



NUR-SULTAN: People vote in Kazakhstan's presidential elections in Nur-Sultan yesterday. — AFP

economy which has in the past seen double-digit growth, but has struggled to recover from a 2014 plunge in oil prices. It has also been affected by the economic crisis in Russia, which led to a devaluation of the Kazakh currency, the tenge, and to high inflation. Oil accounts for around a quarter of the country's Gross Domestic Product and most of its budget revenues. The world's biggest producer of uranium, Kazakhstan is also overflowing with manganese, iron, chromium and coal. Kazakhstan has linked the future of its economy to neighbouring China, investing heavily in its road network, railways and port infrastructure to facilitate trade links.

Getting past Borat

For all the petrodollars the resource-rich state has invested in image promotion, many beyond its borders continue to associate the country with British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen's 2006 smash hit mockumentary Borat. Baron Cohen's sleazy character has faded from Kazakhstan-related headlines over a decade since the film's release. But he reared his head again in 2017 when Baron Cohen offered to pay fines for Czech tourists detained by Kazakh police after they posed for photos in the capital wearing Borat-style 'mankinis'. — AFP

Nepal authorities face mountainous challenge identifying dead bodies

KATHMANDU: The bodies of four climbers who failed their Everest challenge and left little clue as to their identities have thrown up a new challenge for Nepalese authorities who control the world's tallest peak. Worn by the wind and cold to near skeletons, the remains have been in a Kathmandu morgue since they were brought back from the slopes two weeks ago with nearly 11 tons of trash. Police and government officials admit they face a huge challenge putting names to the dead climbers and sending them back to their home countries. They cannot even be sure how long the corpses had been among scores waiting to be found on the slopes.

A government-organized clean-up team retrieved the bodies between the Everest base camp and the South Col at 7,906 meters (25,938 feet) this climbing season. "The bodies are not in a recognizable state, almost down to their bones. There is no face to identify them," senior police official Phanindra Prasai said. "We have directed the hospital to collect DNA samples so they can be matched with any families who come forward."

Everest afterlife

Nepalese police are going through administrative processes so they can make an appeal for help and inform foreign diplomatic missions about the bodies. But some fear the mystery could take years to solve. "It is a difficult task," said Ang Tsering Sherpa, former president of the Nepal Mountaineering Association. "They need to share more information about the bodies, especially the locations of where the bodies were found, and reach out to expedition operators." More than 300 people have died on the 8,848-metre high mountain since expeditions to reach the top started in the 1920s. It is not known how many bodies are still hidden in the ice, snow and deep crevasses. The body of George Mallory, the British climber who went missing during a 1924 attempt on the summit, was only found in 1999. The remains of his partner Andrew Irvine have never been found. And it is still not known if they reached the top.

Some bodies, still in colorful climbing gear, have become landmarks on the way up to the summit, earning nicknames such as "Green Boots" and "Sleeping Beauty". "Green Boots" is believed to be an Indian climber who died during a 1996 expedition. The body was believed to have been moved away from the main path in 2014. "Sleeping Beauty" is said to be Francys Arsentiev, who was the first American woman to reach the summit without bottled oxygen in 1998, but who died on the way down. — AFP

Syrian rebel town buries goalie who became 'singer of the revolution'

AL-DANA: Thousands of people flocked to the funeral yesterday of a Syrian soccer star turned fighter who became an icon of the revolt against President Bashar Al-Assad. Abdelbasset Al-Sarout, 27, died on Saturday from wounds he sustained in northwest Syria, where an army offensive has pounded the last major rebel bastion for weeks. Once a well-known goalkeeper from the city of Homs, Sarout gained a new kind of fame when the popular uprising against Assad's rule erupted in 2011.

He was dubbed the "singer of the revolution" for chanting ballads at rallies that eulogized slain activists and vilified the president. After Assad's iron-fisted crackdown on the protests, Sarout took up arms and became a wanted man. His path mirrored the uprising's spiral into an armed fight to the death between Damascus and the myriad militias and guerrilla bands that the conflict spawned.

Sarout was moved from a hospital in Turkey, which backs the opposition, across the border on Sunday, with a convoy of cars and motorcycles following the coffin into Syria. People chanted, honked and waved rebel flags on the way to the funeral in the border town of al-Dana, where one of Sarout's brothers is buried. Four of Sarout's brothers and his father had already died fighting pro-government forces.

Crowds stood on the roofs to watch Sarout's body, wrapped in white, being carried through the town. Rebels from his faction, Jaish Al-Izza, fired into the air. In the mosque, men including fighters in combat uniform knelt in front of his body to pray, some of them weeping. "We all know Sarout's songs and golden vocals. Today is a big loss, a sad day for the Syrian revolution. We lost one of its icons," said Ali Al-Zajel, an activist at the funeral. With Russian and Iranian help, Assad's military has reclaimed much of Syria by crushing opposition enclaves in recent years.

Sarout was among hundreds of thousands of civilians and insurgents shuttled to the northwest under surrender deals as the army reconquered their hometowns. Sarout, who fought government forces in his home city, left under such a deal in 2014 after a bitter two-year siege. As rebel factions struggled with infighting and the growing influence of Muslim jihadists, Sarout was accused of switching his allegiance to Islamic State, which he denied in a video in 2015. — Reuters



BAB AL-HAWA: Fellow Syrian rebel fighters carry the coffin of late rebel fighter Abdel-Basset Al-Sarout yesterday at the Bab Al-Hawa crossing point, northwestern Syria, on the way to his funeral after crossing the border from Turkey. — AFP



CHITTAGONG: Bangladeshi fishermen block a highway as they protest against a two-month long fishing ban on the Bay of Bengal in Chittagong yesterday. — AFP

Bangladesh highway blocked as fishermen protest catch ban

CHITTAGONG: Several thousand fishermen blocked Bangladesh's busiest highway yesterday, police said, as protests escalated over a two-month fishing ban in the Bay of Bengal. The fishermen say the 65-day blockade - intended to replenish fish stocks - is driving them out of business. Their one-hour protest at the coastal town of Sitakunda caused several kilometers of tailbacks on the main road linking the capital, Dhaka, to the second city of Chittagong. Local police chief Suman Banik said the demonstration by 3,000 fishermen and their families was peaceful "but it caused a huge traffic jam on this busy highway".

The demonstrators only cleared the road after a government administrator and a local member of parliament promised to help. The fishing ban runs from May 20 to July

23 and navy and coast guard vessels are patrolling the zone to prevent breaches. Bangladesh frequently bans deep sea fishing and catches in coastal rivers to help stocks, but this is the longest imposed for seas near the coast and fishing communities are furious.

About 15 million people in the region directly or indirectly depend on Bangladesh's multi-billion dollar fishing industry. Shyamol Palit, an organizer of the demonstration, said the ban has hit poor fishermen hard, especially the Hindu Joldas community. More than 55,000 Joldas families live in the Chittagong region and are employed in coastal fishing mainly running their own small boats. "The Joldas have taken loans to sail boats this season. This sudden and long embargo has put them in a debt trap," he said.

The government has announced it will provide free rice for nearly half a million families of badly-affected fishermen. But Palit said the scheme is not wide enough and "you cannot run a family only with a sack of rice." The ban has also hit the nearly one million Rohingya refugees who live in camps in Bangladesh after fleeing violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state in recent years. The refugees are not officially allowed to work outside the camps, but thousands are secretly employed on trawlers owned by Bangladeshis. — AFP

Analysis

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CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
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P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Chile ramps up climate ambition, but is it enough?

Chile's new climate change plan, unveiled by President Sebastian Pinera this week, puts the host of this year's UN climate conference on track to play its part in meeting globally agreed goals to limit warming of the planet, researchers said. But green-leaning politicians and activists in the South American nation called on the government to bring forward its deadlines for closing coal-fired power plants. On Tuesday, Pinera unveiled a climate action plan that would shut all coal power plants by 2040, and target carbon neutrality by 2050, meaning the country would emit no more heat-trapping carbon dioxide emissions than it can absorb in its forests. "One of the greatest dangers we confront as humanity is global warming and climate change," said the president.

Eight coal-fired power plants will be closed down in the next five years, he announced. Coal produces almost twice the amount of carbon dioxide as natural gas when burned. By 2050, all economic sectors - including agriculture, waste and industrial processes - should become carbon-neutral, the plan said. Chile's forests absorbed 36 percent of national emissions in 2013, and the 2050 net-zero goal would depend on their contribution to the carbon accounting.

In December, 20,000 to 30,000 delegates, including world leaders, are expected in Santiago for the annual UN climate talks, where governments will be urged to ramp up pledges to reduce emissions under the Paris climate change accord. Research consortium Climate Action Tracker (CAT) told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that if Chile's decarbonization plan became an official commitment under the Paris Agreement, it would be compatible with the most ambitious goal to curb warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7F) above pre-industrial times.

The Paris pact, adopted by nearly 200 nations, set a goal to limit global temperature rise to "well below" 2C, and to "pursue efforts" for 1.5C. But still-rising global emissions are currently on track to fuel at least 3C of warming, climate scientists say. In the build-up to the Paris conference where the climate accord was agreed in 2015, Chile committed to reduce the intensity of its emissions relative to GDP by 30 percent by 2030 from 2007 levels. This target was rated "highly insufficient" by CAT. Moreover, under that plan, CAT calculated that Chile's emissions would actually rise 41 percent by 2030 compared to 2010 levels as the country left itself space for economic growth. Environment Minister Carolina Schmidt described the unveiling of Chile's more ambitious plan this week as "an enormous landmark in the transformation needed throughout the world for sustainable development and carbon neutrality".

Melting glaciers

But not all politicians are satisfied. In late May, opposition leader Catalina Perez proposed a "climate emergency" declaration to the organizing committee for the "COP25" U.N. climate change conference. "It went badly," she said afterwards, with fellow members unable to reach consensus. Meanwhile the effects of global warming are becoming more evident in the Andean nation. "We have to learn to live with climate change," a windswept Pinera said a week ago, as he visited the southern Bio Bio region, which had been hit by highly unusual tornadoes. "It has come to stay."

Scientists are still investigating the influence of climate change on the severity and frequency of tornadoes. Chile is currently affected by a multi-year drought and creeping deserts, which are shifting fruit production to the more temperate south. The country is home to 82 percent of Andean glaciers, nearly all of which are in retreat, threatening water supplies. Flooding, heatwaves and devastating forest fires are other impacts already being experienced - and which scientists predict will worsen as the planet heats up.

On Wednesday's World Environment Day, Perez's Democratic Revolution Party joined 52 civil society groups in a letter urging Pinera to deepen commitments to tackling climate change. Signatories included Extinction Rebellion Chile, Greenpeace Chile and the international youth movement of children skipping school to protest about climate inaction, "Fridays for Future". "We hope COP25 will be remembered by future generations as the moment that the planet's luck changed," it concluded.

Meanwhile, in the inhabited areas around Chile's coal-power plants, air pollution is a far bigger issue than carbon dioxide emissions. Parliamentarian Diego Ibanez, who represents Quintero and Puchuncavi, two of the coal plant zones, warned that the region's children would be "condemned to five more years" of health risks, citing a prevalence of cognitive difficulties and cancer among the local population. Others fear plant closures could result in job losses and rising energy prices, but Energy Minister Susana Jimenez said seven months of talks with the affected industries had preceded the announcement. — Reuters

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A sign commemorating the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO) is pictured in front of its headquarters on June 7, 2019 in Geneva. — AFP

ILO, survivor from League of Nations, turns 100

Of all the institutions set up in Geneva under the League of Nations after World War I, only one, the International Labour Organization, survived the rise of fascism and World War II. Historians have pointed to several reasons why the ILO, which marks its 100th anniversary today, endured while the rest of the League collapsed. They included anxiety in the West about worker uprisings following the Russian Revolution, the election of US president Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, and the ILO's exile in Montreal from 1940-47.

More modern concerns will top the agenda at the ILO's annual congress this week, where dozens of leaders including French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev are expected. Following the #MeToo movement, ILO delegates will consider a convention on harassment and violence in the workplace, but may end up settling for a non-binding "recommendation," the organization's director general, Guy Ryder, told journalists recently.

Under ILO's 100-year-old "tripartite" structure, delegates include government officials, union leaders and private sector employer representatives. "It's going to be hard grind multilateral tripartite negotiations," Ryder said, stressing that he is not expecting a celebratory atmosphere at a congress also due to issue a declaration on "The Future of Work". "I'd love to think there'll be a festive moment in it," Ryder said. "I very much doubt it."

Nazis out, Americans in

In the preamble to the articles that set up the ILO -

originally called the International Labour Office - the Treaty of Versailles stressed that harsh working conditions were so pervasive they "imperilled the peace and harmony of the world". The victorious powers of WWI faced heavy pressure to establish a dedicated world labour office, said Dorothea Hoeltker, who leads historical research at the ILO. This was partly because unions had made significant demands following the crucial role workers played in the war effort, Hoeltker told AFP.

But also the Russian Revolution of 1917 - which, among other things, featured a working class revolt against the elite - forced Western powers to face the prospect of "a complete political and economic system change," she added. The ILO was founded as a cornerstone of the new League, but its fate proved different. The League suffered its first major blow in Nov 1919 when the US Senate rejected American participation, despite president Woodrow Wilson being one of its architects. That left the League almost fully reliant on European powers.

While the emergence of fascist dictatorships in Italy and Germany precipitated the League's collapse, the ILO was saved due largely to Roosevelt's election. The US signed onto the body in 1934, just months after the Nazis walked away, as Roosevelt was in the process of implementing the New Deal - his pro-jobs program designed as a response to the Great Depression. "The New Deal was perfectly in line with what the ILO wanted," Hoeltker said. Roosevelt-ally and former New Hampshire governor John Winant became ILO director in 1939. Because Geneva is surrounded by French territory, Winant moved a scaled-down ILO to

McGill University in Montreal shortly after the Nazis attacked France in 1940. The agency continued working during the war, notably by helping set up social security systems in Latin America.

Stalin says no

The ILO's survival was again threatened after World War II. As the winning powers were shaping a new global governance system, which became the United Nations, the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin expressed staunch opposition to the ILO, especially its tripartite structure that offers roles for unions and employers. "The Soviet Union really didn't want the ILO to exist, Hoeltker said. "They didn't like freedom of association and they didn't want to have employers - capitalist employers - in the organization." Ultimately, the West prevailed and the ILO in 1946 was established as the first specialized agency of the UN, returning to Geneva the next year.

Post #MeToo convention

The ILO's tripartite structure, unique across the UN, still creates complications at times, including during the debate on harassment and violence in the workplace. One of the obstacles in the talks, Ryder said, is that employers have concerns about the extent of their responsibility, especially whether an enterprise should be responsible for harassment among colleagues that happens away from the workplace. "We have to find ways through these outstanding issues," Ryder said. "I'm confident that we will." — AFP

Alternative meat seen as potentially juicy business

No longer at the food fringes, plant-based meats are selling well in supermarkets and emerging as a hot commodity for fast food chains, industrial food companies and Wall Street investors. JPMorgan Chase has estimated the market for plant-based meat could easily top \$100 billion in 15 years. Barclays says the "alternative meat" market could account for around 10 percent of all global meat sales, or up to \$140 billion in 10 years.

Among big restaurant chains, Burger King has been testing since April a vegetarian version of its flagship "Whopper", while McDonald's has unveiled a meatless burger in Germany. Kentucky Fried Chicken is studying non-meat options for its menu. Alternatives to meat are not new, of course, but startups and other growing players in the business have taken advantage of newer technologies to simulate the taste and texture of authentic meat more comprehensively.

At the same time, more consumers are opting for plant-based products out of concern for the environment, animal welfare or for health reasons. The best-known new ventures, Impossible Food and Beyond Meat, have had difficulty at times meeting surging demand for their products, even as Wall Street has bet on their potential. On its first day on Wall Street as a publicly-traded company, Beyond Meat surged 163 percent, finishing the session at \$65.75.

Since then, shares have more than doubled, ending Friday's session at \$139.13, up a stunning 39.4 percent after the company said it anticipates sales growth of 140 percent. Impossible Burger, which is already sold in more than 7,000 restaurants in the United States and Asia, recently raised \$300 million in a financing round that valued the company at \$2 billion.

Enter food giants

Among large food companies, Swiss giant Nestle in April launched its "Incredible Burger" in Europe based on soy, wheat and extracts of beetroot and other plants. In the fall, Nestle plans to offer a pea-based "Sweet Earth" veggie burger in the United States. Anglo-Dutch company Unilever last year bought the Vegetarian Butcher, which has said it aims to become the "largest butcher in the



In this photo taken on Jan 7, 2019 the Impossible Burger 2.0, the new and improved version of the company's plant-based veggie burger that tastes like real beef, is introduced at a press event during CES 2019 in Las Vegas. — AFP

world" with plant-based meat. US company Kellogg has been present in alternative meat since the 1970s through MorningStar Farms. While the brand has not enjoyed the same outsized gains of late as the newer players, it remains the biggest producer in the United States. Others active in the burgeoning business include Brazilian giant JBS, which is launching a vegetarian burger in its home market, and Tyson Foods, a one-time investor in Beyond Meat that plans its own plant-based product.

Sales of alternative meat jumped 23 percent in 2018 in the United States, according to the Food Institute. Yet that accounts for just one percent of the total market for meat, much lower than the 13 percent of milk represented by non-dairy sources such as soy, almond and coconut.

Some risks

In spite of the strong potential, analysts caution against losing sight of some uncertainties facing the industry. "There are risk factors to consider, such as alternative meat products being less healthy than claimed as a result of additives to appeal to customer taste," said the Barclays note. Barclays also pointed to "potential regulatory restrictions" as far as marketing. For example, farm groups have lobbied Washington to restrict the term "meat" to animal-based products.

Also, there is always a risk that emerging stars in the business could be roiled by a recall, said JPMorgan. And the impact of mistakes could be amplified by the growing presence of bigger and more diversified companies that are racing into the market. The conventional companies also have sophisticated supply chains and ready access to capital. — AFP

With Venezuela in collapse, towns slip into primitive isolation

At the once-busy beach resort of Patanemo, tourism has evaporated over the last two years as Venezuela's economic crisis has deepened and deteriorating cellphone service left visitors too afraid of robbery to brave the isolated roads. Gone are the vendors who once walked the sands of the crescent-shaped beach hawking bathing suits and empanadas - a traditional savory pastry. These days, its Caribbean shoreline flanked by forested hills receives a different type of visitor: people who walk 10 minutes from a nearby town carrying rice, plantains or bananas in hopes of exchanging them for the fishermen's latest catch.

With bank notes made useless by hyperinflation, and no easy access to the debit card terminals widely used to conduct transactions in urban areas, residents of Patanemo rely mainly on barter. It is just one of a growing number of rural towns slipping into isolation as Venezuela's economy implodes amid a long-running political crisis. From the peaks of the Andes to Venezuela's sweltering southern savannahs, the collapse of basic services including power, telephone and internet has left many towns struggling to survive.

The subsistence economy stands in stark contrast to the oil boom years when abundance seeped into the most remote reaches of what was once Latin America's richest nation. "The fish that we catch is to exchange or give away," said Yofran Arias, one of 15 fishermen who have grown accustomed to a rustic existence even though they live a 15-minute drive from Venezuela's main port of Puerto Cabello. "Money doesn't buy anything so it's better for people to bring food so we can give them fish," he said, while cleaning bonefish, known for abundant bones and limited commercial value.

In visits to three villages across Venezuela, Reuters reporters saw residents exchanging fish, coffee beans and hand-picked fruit for essentials to make ends meet in an economy that shrank 48 percent during the first five years of President Nicolas Maduro's government, according to recent central bank figures. Venezuela's crisis has taken a heavy toll on rural areas, where the number of households in poverty reached 74 percent in 2017 compared with 34 percent in the capital of Caracas,

according to an annual survey called Encovi carried out by private Venezuelan universities.

Residents rarely travel to nearby cities, due to a lack of public transportation, growing fuel shortages and the prohibitive cost of consumer goods. In some regions, travel requires negotiating roads barricaded by residents looking to steal from travelers. At one such roadblock in eastern Venezuela, a Reuters witness saw a driver fire gunshots in the air to disperse a crowd. "I haven't been to the city center in almost two years. What would I do there? I don't have enough (money) to buy a shirt or a pair of shorts," said a fisherman in Patanemo who identified himself only as Luis. "I'm better off here swapping things to survive."

Coffee for fuel

Venezuela is suffering one of the worst economic collapses in modern history. Inflation has topped 1 million percent, according to figures released by the opposition-run congress. The United Nations says 4 million citizens have fled Venezuela, 3.3 million of them since 2015. Maduro blames the situation on an "economic war" waged by his political adversaries as well as US sanctions that have hobbled the oil industry and prevented his government from borrowing abroad.

The central bank in April released economic indicators for the first time in the nearly four years, showing a less severe cataclysm than figures published by congress. But the bank's data underscored a dramatic contraction and spiraling consumer prices, nonetheless. The bolivar has lost 99 percent of its value since Maduro took office in 2013. In the mountains of the central state of Lara, residents of the town of Guarico this year found a different way of paying bills - coffee beans.

Residents of the coffee-growing region now exchange roasted beans for anything from haircuts to spare parts for agricultural machinery. "Based on the cost of the product, we agree with the customer on the kilos or number of bags of coffee that they have to pay," said hardware store manager Haideliz Linares. The transactions are based on a reference price for how much coffee fetches on the local market, Linares said. In April, one kilo of beans was worth the equivalent of \$3.00. In El Tocuyo, another town in Lara state, three 100 kilo sacks of coffee buy 200 liters of gasoline, which is in increasingly short supply in the OPEC nation due to chronic operational problems at state oil company PDVSA. In Borburata, another town a few miles from Patanemo, Keila Ovalles harvests eggplant, tomato and passion fruit in the backyard of her modest home. She said it was similar to the way her family lived in the early 20th century. — Reuters

Business

MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2019

12 Britain's smaller banks now wallow in giants' shadow**13** W African farm 'bootcamp' gets green entrepreneurs into shape**14** KFH Group achieves leading position in arranging sukuk issuances globally

FUKUOKA: IMF managing Director Christine Lagarde (second row left), US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin (front center), China's Finance Minister Liu Kun (second row right) and other delegation members pose in a family photo session at the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting in Fukuoka yesterday.—AFP

Divided G20 admits risks from trade wars

Fukuoka meeting exposes differences between US and other nations

FUKUOKA: The world's top financial policymakers admitted yesterday that trade tensions had worsened and posed a risk for the global economy, after a G20 meeting that laid bare differences between the United States and other nations.

Following 30 hours of wrangling in what one official described as a "tense" atmosphere, G20 finance minister and central bank chiefs produced a hard-fought final statement acknowledging that "growth remains low and risks remain tilted to the downside."

"Most importantly, trade and geopolitical tensions have intensified," the G20 said, adding they "stood ready to take further action" if required. As a compromise pushed by Washington, the statement omitted language from a previous draft that mentioned a "pressing need to resolve trade tensions."

The statement capped two days of talks in the western Japanese port city of Fukuoka that also tackled the thorny issue of taxing internet giants and, for the first time, the economic challenges posed by ageing. "In our view, this is the best outcome we could deliver. Not the perfect outcome but a good outcome," said EU Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici, who

admitted that reaching agreement was "not an easy task."

"Almost everyone in the room thinks that trade tensions are a threat to growth... It's not always the mood in the American administration," he said. "I wouldn't say it's them against all the others but it looks like it sometimes, even if everyone also criticizes some aggression from China."

'Principal threat'

Trade battles were front and center of policymakers' minds as the US and China continue to threaten each other with tariffs that economists fear could slam the brakes on global growth.

IMF chief Christine Lagarde warned the tariffs could shave global GDP by 0.5 percent or about \$455 billion in 2020 and said trade conflicts constituted the "principal threat" to the global economic outlook. The G20 ministers heaved a sigh of relief just hours before the meeting when the US and Mexico clinched a deal over immigration that stopped Washington imposing five percent tariffs on Mexican goods.

But US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Washington stood ready to impose more tariffs on China if President Donald Trump and China's Xi Jinping fail to strike a deal at the G20 summit later this

month in Osaka. "If China wants to come back to the table and negotiate on the basis that we were negotiating, we can get a great historic deal. If they don't, we'll proceed with our tariffs," Mnuchin told reporters Saturday.

He tweeted Sunday he had had a "constructive" meeting with China's central bank governor Yi Gang, during which there was a "candid discussion on trade issues".

But taking a different line from the other policymakers, Mnuchin said the slowdown in some parts of the world was not due to trade difficulties and even said the friction could benefit some countries if companies relocated from China to avoid tariffs. "There will be winners and losers," said the treasury secretary.

'I don't like them'

The quandary of reforming the global tax system to take into account the rise of internet giants such as Google and Facebook was another issue exercising the minds of policymakers in the coastal city. In the final statement, the G20 agreed to "redouble our efforts for a consensus-based solution with a final report by 2020". However, here again the Fukuoka meeting exposed a difference of opinion over what form this reform should take. Frustrated by

a lack of global action on the issue, some countries such as Britain and France have already introduced a so-called digital tax, but Mnuchin was blunt in his assessment of these policies.

He said the US had "significant concerns" and stated "I don't like them." But Moscovici was more positive, saying he was "rather optimistic" the G20 would clinch agreement on a new set of international tax rules by 2020.

"It's doable, it's more than doable," he told reporters. Appropriately for a meeting held in Japan—on track to become the world's first "super-aged" society in which more than 28 percent of the population is over 65—the G20 ministers discussed for the first time the "challenges and opportunities" posed by ageing. They suggested getting more women and elderly people into the workforce and "promoting elderly-friendly industries", as well as reforming the fiscal and banking systems to take into account ageing populations.

"You basically have a very large portion of mankind that is ageing and then the workforce is shrinking," OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría told AFP in an interview. Solving the issue will require wholesale changes to the way society is organized, added Gurría.—AFP

paper reported.

Companies based outside the United States were told that as long as they maintained business as usual, they wouldn't be punished, the newspaper reported. Last Friday, Facebook announced it would cut Huawei off from its popular social networking app to comply with the US sanctions, further isolating the company that has become the world's second-largest smartphone vendor.—AFP

China warns tech giants after US Huawei ban

WASHINGTON: The Chinese government convened top tech companies this week and warned them of consequences if they cut off technology

sales to the country, US media reported on Saturday.

The meeting followed US President Donald Trump's move last month to blacklist Chinese tech giant Huawei over national security concerns, threatening the firm's global ambitions and ramping up the months-long trade battle between the two countries. Earlier this week, the Chinese government summoned executives from American firms Dell and Microsoft and

South Korea's Samsung, among others, to warn them that any moves to ramp down their businesses in China may lead to retaliation, The New York Times reported.

American companies were told "that the Trump administration's move to cut off Chinese companies from American technology had disrupted the global supply chain, adding that companies that followed the policy could face permanent consequences," the news-

Italy's ruling parties take aim at minister Tria over mini-BOTs

ROME: Italy's coalition parties have pushed back against criticism of proposals to issue special government bonds to help pay state debts, highlighting growing tensions within the heart of the cabinet. The so-called "mini-BOT" scheme, named after Italy's Treasury bills, was drawn up by the far-right, euroskeptic League party and was unexpectedly endorsed by parliament last month in a non-binding vote.

Critics say printing small-denomination bills, with no expiry date, would be akin to creating a parallel currency and as such could open the way for Italy to quit the euro. Economy Minister Giovanni Tria, an academic with no political affiliation, condemned the plan on Saturday, saying mini-BOTs would be either illegal or useless. However, both the League and its government partner the 5-Star Movement, hit back, accusing Tria's ministry of doing nothing to resolve the problem of unpaid state arrears.

"They are always silent, still, stationary, then as soon as someone proposes something new they wake up and say 'Ah, no, it can't be done,'" said 5-Star leader Luigi Di Maio, who also serves as deputy prime minister. "If the tool to pay companies is not the mini-BOT, then the economy minister can find another one," he wrote on Facebook at the weekend.

Italy's other deputy prime minister, League leader Matteo Salvini, also issued a statement, saying the economy ministry should realise it was "urgent" to find a way to pay arrears to state suppliers. "It is a question of justice," he said.—Reuters

Business

Britain's smaller banks now wallow in giants' shadow

UK's Big Five hold a commanding 63% share of retail banking market

LONDON: Computer meltdowns. Unexplained holes in accounting. Personnel management scandals. For smaller banks that want to compete with historic giants of global fame, UK finance has proven to be a minefield. When visiting their local branch or going online, Britons have struggled to break their habit of relying on a big bank with an established name.

Britain's Big Five-Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds, Royal Bank of Scotland and Santander UK-hold a commanding 63-percent share of the retail banking market, according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research.

This dominance remains despite years of hardship that followed the 2008 financial crisis, which saw interest rates fall to historic lows and consumers finding little point in keeping money parked in savings accounts. "The last 20 years have seen significant consolidation in the UK retail banking market," Stephen Jones, chief executive of the UK Finance banking trade association, wrote in a report.

"The structure of UK retail and commercial banking is relatively concentrated, with a notable absence of mid-tier competitors of scale."

Small but crowded field

Paradoxically, this market grip was cemented by the very same crisis that tarnished the big banks' reputa-

tions a decade ago. The Big Five, along with mortgage-specialist Nationwide, together have about £1.8 trillion (\$2.3 trillion, 2.0-trillion-euros) in retail banking assets. Their competitors have a combined total of £360 billion. While relatively small, the field of also-rans is crowded with names such as Metro Bank, TSB (a subsidiary of Spain's Banco Sabadell) and CYBG, which has just merged with Richard Branson's Virgin Money.

They each have millions of clients and are joined by "fintechs" such as Revolut and Monzo-two digital banks with big ambitions that want to expand beyond their young, city-dwelling consumer base.

Costly mistakes

The upstarts have little in common beyond a shared experience of suffering scandals that make newspaper headlines. The most recent involved Metro Bank, which has been losing its luster after a bright launch in 2010 by the US banker Vernon Hill, perhaps best known for calling his clients "fans". Hill has been busy trying to reassure his 1.7 million fans that Metro Bank is still standing, after raising funds, seeing a drop in profits, and coming under the scrutiny of regulators for classifying unsavory real estate loans as "low risk". Metro Bank's troubles came a few months after TSB suffered a comprehensive computer failure caused by a software update, which saw millions of clients lose access to the bank's site and app.

The breakdown forced TSB to part ways with its general manager and cost nearly \$300 million-a hefty sum for a bank that broke away from the Lloyds Banking Group to try its own luck in 2013.

Digital banking wave

Britain's digital banking sector has not been spared either, as it rides the wave of changing consumer habits. Perhaps none experienced more damage than Revolut, which had to take a stern look at its personnel management after a whistleblower accused it of forcing job applicants to work for free.

Revolut's Russian-born boss and founder Nikolay Storonsky now wants to evolve to a more consumer-friendly business model. Beyond these individual problems, which companies in other fields know just as well, smaller banks have to overcome more regulator hurdles, which carry an especially high cost.

They must first be financially strong enough to convince investors to follow them-a task complicated by the gloom of the seemingly endless Brexit crisis.

A decade of low interest rates has even forced behemoths such as Goldman Sachs to venture past their established niches and into the digital space. Goldman's new Marcus online savings account offers higher interest rates than established competitors and is partnering with Apple to launch a credit card.



LONDON: Metro Bank is one of the several upstart British banks that have suffered scandals recently as they battle against the Big Five. —AFP

Marcus has attracted more than \$35 billion in online consumer deposits in the past years, a result that Goldman views as a success.

Industry watchers see benefits in the added competition, which creates more options as brick-and-mortar branches disappear. But a report by parliament's Treasury committee cautions that branch closures are making the elderly feel cut off from their cash. —AFP

NBK Money Markets Report

Dollar selloff boosts Fed's rate cut expectations, US economy cools

KUWAIT: The resilient US dollar has suffered significantly over the past week. After hitting a 1-year high of 98.371 in May, the dollar index has since fallen back sharply towards the 96.450 level. The selloff delivers the first clear indication that the buck is commencing its downward trajectory in response to building Fed rate cut expectations. Up until recently, the US dollar had shown resiliency towards lower treasury yields.

The amplification of Fed rate cut expectations was prompted by dovish comments from St. Louis Fed President Bullard who is a voter this year on the FOMC. Bullard said cutting rates "may be warranted soon," due to the elevated economic risk caused by global trade tensions as well as weak inflationary pressures. At the same time, Bullard has been worried about the yield on the 10-year bond, which has fallen below 3-month yield as well as below the federal funds rate itself. It seems that this inversion of the yield curve has become evident enough to reinforce the case for a rate cut. Historically when the yield curve has been this inverted, the Fed has always cut interest rates and delivered a series of rate cuts. Furthermore, the Fed Chairman dropped his typical reference to the Fed being "patient" in approaching any rate decision and mentioned instead that the central bank was watching the fallout from the trade war and would react "as appropriate." It looks like President Donald Trump may finally get the rate cut he has been asking for.

Year to date, the US 2-year treasury yield has fallen around 64 basis points to 1.86 percent and a 60 basis points drop for the 10-year to 2.08 percent. The sharp drop is not only attributed to increasing rate cut prospects, but also due to strong demand for safe haven US bonds. Interbank rates have also followed the downward trajectory. The 3-month Libor rate is near an 8-month low at 2.45 percent, way below the 2.79 percent seen at the start of the year. The Fed Funds Futures is currently pricing a 98 percent chance for a cut at the December meeting.

In the FX sphere, the dollar index was further pressured on Friday as the US economy only added 75,000 jobs, lower than the median 185,000 predicted by economists. As for wages, the annual rate dropped from 3.2 percent to 3.1 percent, while the unemployment rate remained near a 50-year low of 3.6 percent. The probability for three or four quarter-point Federal Reserve rate cuts this year jumped higher to 60 percent after the labor report was released, from 49 percent seen in the previous session, according to Bloomberg data on federal funds futures. As such, the dollar index was the worst performer in the currencies market losing nearly 1.06 percent of its value. The DXY opened the week at 97.590 and closed on Friday at 96.544.

In the equities market, the Dow Jones snapped a six-week losing streak and the S&P 500 has risen nearly 5.30 percent from its lows seen this month. US Federal Reserve officials have hinted the possibility of lower rates to come, while financial markets' tone indicates that a lower overnight rate in the future is certain. Looking at

fundamentals, stock prices are inversely related to interest expenses. Hence, the prospect of lower rates to come has opened the green light for US stock markets. The Dow Jones gained 4.65 percent in the past five trading sessions.

US Manufacturing

As the global economy is evidently cooling down and trade tensions linger on, the US manufacturing sector is under pressure. The ISM manufacturing index fell to 52.1 in May from 52.8, the lowest reading since October 2016. An alternative indicator, the US Market manufacturing PMI also declined by 2.1 points to 50.5, which was the worst reading since September of 2009. Both surveys have weakened noticeably since late last year. If trade tensions intensify and becomes a norm, the manufacturing sector's direction of travel could be tilted to the downside.

In regards to the service sector, the latest PMI data portrait an optimistic picture as the PMI reading rose to 56.9 in May, from 55.5. It looks like the service sector is doing the heavy lifting for the economy, which accounts to nearly 80 percent of US GDP. The overall economy has grown at a healthy pace in recent quarters, though underlying signs suggest growth is slowing. A weaker manufacturing sector, subdued inflation and the recent private sector just hiring 27,000 versus expectations of 185,000 are signals that the largest economy is losing momentum.

Euro appreciates

The ECB's governing council maintained its loose monetary policy last week as expected and pushed back the timing of its interest rate hike. Governing officials at the ECB pledged to keep rates at their current levels at least through the first half of 2020, instead of the end of this year as it had said only back in March. As for rate cuts, the head of the ECB stated that officials had addressed the Bank's readiness to act in case of "adverse contingency" and several governing members had raised the possibility of additional interest rate cuts or even restarting asset purchases. Current money market futures are pricing in a 45 percent chance of a 10 basis point cut in ECB rates by the end of 2019. In the meantime, the central bank will support the single economy through (TLTRO-III), which provides cheap financing to credit institutions and banks. The lending rate to the euro-zone banks has been established at 10bps above the average main refinancing rate (currently 0 percent), however if lending exceeds a certain benchmark, then 10bps above the marginal deposit rate (currently -0.4 percent) will be applied.

Looking at ECB predictions, growth was slightly revised higher to 1.2 percent for 2019, although for 2020 and 2021 GDP was downgraded to 1.4 percent. Prices are now seen rising just 1.3 percent this year, 1.4 percent next year and 1.6 percent in 2021. Economic data out of the euro-zone has been frail indeed with the manufacturing sector in negative territory, weak growth and a subdued inflation. The most recent inflationary readings disappointed to the down side after headline CPI disinflated from 1.7 percent to 1.2 percent and core price growth tumbled from 1.3 percent to 0.8 percent. Moreover, the global trade war displays no sign of scaling down. Italy is once again in conflict with the European Commission. German industry continues to post dismal figures, stock markets are continuously in the red and a hard Brexit may just be around the corner. Providing banks with cheap funding maybe the only solution at the moment, especially with rates already at 0 percent and no fiscal levers to pull, options are somewhat limited. With universal uncertainty already harming trade, major central banks like the ECB



and the US FED seem to have given up plans to tighten policy.

As for the single currency, the EUR/USD pair soared to a 1.5-month high of 1.1308 after the ECB meeting. The euro appreciated as markets had anticipated an even more dovish motion from the ECB and for the central bank to acknowledge softness in economic growth. Money market futures are now pricing in a 45 percent chance of a 10 basis point euro-zone rate cut by the end of year versus 75 percent before the ECB statement. In addition, the dollar was softer across the board on lower treasury yields, paving the way for the single currency to appreciate. Over the past five trading session, the euro gained 1.44 percent over the USD and was the second best performing G10 currency in the FX market last week.

UK manufacturing

Britain's manufacturing segment contracted for the first time in almost three years as the index fell from 53.1 to 49.4. The shrinkage in the manufacturing sector was attributed to diminishing Brexit related stockpiling, weaker global demand and most importantly the Brexit conundrum. Several firms surveyed in this reading conveyed that some clients had diverted supply chains away from the UK as a result of an uncertain Brexit outcome. The boost from stockpiling was expected to be temporary, while quarterly growth is expected to slow to 0.2 percent in the second quarter. The Bank of England said in its latest inflation report.

As for the services sector, the PMI data improved to 51 from April's 50.4. In spite of the uptick in services activity in May, the average for the sector so far in 2019 is 50.3, down from the 2018 average of 53, elevating fears for the health of a sector that accounts for about 80 percent of UK economic output. The dominant service segment is still suffering a potent cocktail of depressed demand and uncertainty. A sharp depreciation in the Sterling pound since the referendum is increasing transport and input costs, while staff wages are increasing. As a result, service companies are under immense pressure. The progress in the sector's activity in May was counterbalanced by worsening manufacturing and construction PMI indices, which both dropped below the 50 mark indicating a contractionary environment. Overall, a slowdown in the global economy and worldwide trade tensions escalating combined with Brexit uncertainties increases the probability that the UK manufacturing sector could remain in contraction territory. As such, a rate hike from the central bank seems farfetched at the moment.

In regards to the Sterling pound, the GBP incurred its first weekly gain in five weeks against the USD. The positive momentum is attributed to dollar weakness rather than markets feeling more confident that Britain can avoid a no-deal Brexit. The pound gained 0.77 percent versus the USD last week. The CHF also took advantage of the dollar's weakness and found further support due to its risk aversion demand. The USD/CHF pair



ended the weekly session at 0.9876, a 1.20 percent loss for the dollar in weekly terms.

Aussie perseveres despite rate cut

The Australian dollar was barely impacted by the RBA's decision to cut its cash rate by 0.25 percent to 1.25 percent, which is the first policy rate move in nearly three years. Markets have been expecting the loosening of monetary conditions as the overnight indexed swap (OIS) was 102 percent priced for a 0.25 percent cash rate cut just before the announcement. Furthermore, in the Bloomberg survey, 36 of 38 economists had expected a cut. Thus, the perseverance of the Aussie dollar was partly due to an already priced in scenario and a weaker dollar across the board. The AUD/USD rose to a high of 0.7004 after the rate cut decision. It is still all about the labor market. The RBA noted: the RBA cut its cash rate to upkeep employment growth and provide greater confidence that price growth will be consistent with the 2-3 percent target objective. In addition, the RBA expressed concern that recent inflationary results have been lower than projected, however they still expect inflation to pick up. Underlying inflation is forecasted at 1.75 percent in 2019 and 2.00 percent for 2020. The Australian rate market is also predicting a further rate cut this year to 1 percent during the second half of this year. Hence, with more room for the Bank to ease monetary policy amidst increasing downside risks stemming from trade disputes, recent modest Aussie gains are built on shaky foundations. Looking at the preferred safe haven currency, the yen has soared tremendously in response to the latest re-intensification in trade tensions between the US, China and Mexico. Therefore mounting downside risks to the global growth outlook have encouraged a pick-up in safe haven demand for the yen. During May the yen strengthened against the US dollar from 111.37 to 108.68. The USD/JPY depreciated to a five month low of 107.80 last week.

Commodities

In the commodities complex, gold prices soared to \$1,348.08 last week, the highest level in 14 months. Declining US interest costs has made the yellow metal more attractive as the opportunity loss of holding it has diminished. Ever-growing expectations for a US rate cut and concerns that the trade war rhetoric could hit global growth boosted demand for the safe haven metal. On a weekly basis, the price of gold surged 2.52 percent.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30300
The USD/KWD opened at 0.30300 yesterday morning.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.		
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES		
US Dollar Transfer	304.750	
Euro	348.370	
Sterling Pound	391.170	
Canadian dollar	231.670	
Turkish lira	53.920	
Swiss Franc	312.300	
US Dollar Buying	296.550	
ASIAN COUNTRIES		
Japanese Yen	2.816	
Indian Rupees	4.390	
Nepali Rupees	2.097	
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.722	
Singapore Dollar	2.743	
Hongkong Dollar	38.814	
Bangladesh Taka	3.600	
Philippine Peso	5.888	
Thai Baht	9.744	
Malaysian Ringgit	77.916	
GCC COUNTRIES		
Saudi Riyal	81.294	
Qatari Riyal	83.730	
Omani Riyal	791.813	
Bahraini Dinar	809.490	
UAE Dirham	83.000	
ARAB COUNTRIES		
Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.750	
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.171	
Yemen Rial/for 1000	1.224	
Tunisian Dinar	105.050	
Jordanian Dinar	430.570	
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203	
Syrian Lira	0.000	
Morocco Dirham	32.170	
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd		
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate	
US Dollar	304.290	
Canadian Dollar	227.140	
Sterling Pound	388.330	
Euro	342.520	
Swiss Frank	306.445	
Bahrain Dinar	809.220	
UAE Dirhams	83.250	
Qatari Riyals	84.490	
Saudi Riyals	82.040	
Jordanian Dinar	430.470	
Egyptian Pound	18.055	
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.724	
Indian Rupees	4.383	
Pakistani Rupees	2.016	
Bangladesh Taka	3.604	
Philippines Peso	5.807	
Cyprus pound	18.105	
Japanese Yen	3.780	
Syrian Pound	1.590	
Nepalese Rupees	2.741	
Malaysian Ringgit	73.530	
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.545	
Thai Bhat	10.545	
Turkish Lira	50.585	
Singapore dollars	220.210	
BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.381006	0.394906
Czech Korune	0.005462	0.014762
Danish Krone	0.042117	0.047117
Euro	0.337871	0.351571
Georgian Lari	0.131935	0.131935
Hungarian 0.001146	0.001336	
Norwegian Krone	0.031275	0.036475
Romanian Leu	0.065164	0.082014
Russian ruble	0.004694	0.004694
Slovakia	0.009088	0.019088
Swedish Krona	0.028385	0.033385
Swiss Franc	0.301915	0.312915
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.205022	0.217022
New Zealand Dollar	0.197008	0.206508
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.224105	0.233105
US Dollars	0.300550	0.305850
US Dollars Mint	0.301050	0.305850
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003004	0.003805
Chinese Yuan	0.042542	0.046042
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037004	0.039754
Indian Rupee	0.003732	0.004504
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002733	0.002913
Korean Won	0.000247	0.000262
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069475	0.075475
Nepalese Rupee	0.002676	0.003016
Pakistani Rupee	0.001452	0.002222
Philippine Peso	0.005748	0.006048
Singapore Dollar	0.218043	0.228043
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001350	0.001930
Taiwan	0.010152	0.010332
Thai Baht	0.009371	0.009921
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.792194	0.808694
Egyptian Pound	0.018073	0.020673
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000209	0.000269
Jordanian Dinar	0.424078	0.433078
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020455	0.044455
Omani Riyal	0.783682	0.789362
Qatar Riyal	0.079275	0.084215
Saudi Riyal	0.080020	0.081320
Syrian Pound	0.001289	0.001509
Tunisian Dinar	0.098390	0.106390
Turkish Lira	0.045774	0.055619
UAE Dirhams	0.081384	0.083084
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069

Business

W African farm 'bootcamp' gets green entrepreneurs into shape

Program in Tori-Bossito aims to teach basic, traditional ways of agriculture

TORI-BOSSITO, Benin: Machetes in hand and wearing a straw hat against the sun, the participants of an "agro-bootcamp" in the farmlands of the West African nation of Benin harvest maize, cowpeas and rice. "Cut at the base," says Oluwafemi Kochoni, an organic farming teacher, who runs the agricultural workshop to prepare young people for a future sustainably working the land.

"Then leave the plants in place, we will bury them—they will decompose and fertilize the soil." It's beginner's advice but the program in Tori-Bossito, just outside Benin's economic capital Cotonou, aims to teach basic, traditional ways of agriculture to those who have forgotten or never known a life on the land.

In Benin, a poor country next to oil giant Nigeria, some 80 percent of its 11 million people depend on agriculture, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Most are subsistence farmers eking out a living growing crops on small plots where a lack of infrastructure and flooding that can wipe out harvests and seed stocks are key challenges, the FAO warns. But the "agro-bootcamps"—the name is borrowed from the intensive training of the US army—take place close to the suburbs of the city and are aimed at a different market. They are part of a wider movement to encourage self-sufficiency on the continent, which has some two-thirds of the world's remaining uncultivated arable land—but spends \$64.5 billion a year importing food, according to the African Development Bank.

For 27,000 CFA francs (\$45, about 40 euros) a week, agro-bootcampers learn agricultural techniques, follow marketing courses and can network with successful agro-entrepreneurs.

'Ecologically-aware businesspeople'

Like in traditional farming, the agro-bootcamp way of life is communal on the three-hectare (seven-acre)

plot of land put at its disposal for the week by a family in exchange for baskets of vegetables. On the edge of the fields, a border hedge of moringa plants and grasses are grown to help stabilize the soil.

There is also a fish farm in a pond, and another area to grow mushrooms. Behind the scheme is the Gardens of Hope, an organization promoting sustainable ways of farming. "The advice usually received by farmers is based on the use of chemicals," said participant Rachidi Idrissou, an agronomy student in Benin.

"We think of quick yields—and not sustainable production to preserve our land." Benin is a youthful country; nearly two-thirds of the population is aged under 25. Camp organizers want to show young people struggling in the crowded cities looking for a job that working the land can offer an alternative and successful livelihood. Originating from Africa and Europe, the 25 participants in this third agro-bootcamp are mostly men and of eight different nationalities but share a vision of an ecological and sustainable way of farming. They sleep in tents and are kept busy from dawn until long after dusk. "Our belief is that to solve the employment problem in our countries, young people must create their businesses with awareness of ecology of the climate," said coordinator Tanguy Gninkobou.

'A philosophy'

Of the 85 people who have taken part in the last two bootcamps, 10 have already launched new agricultural activities, farms or enterprises, according to organizers. Social networks mean that participants and organizers can stay in touch for support as they develop their farms and small businesses. Participants farm in ways farmers did before the massive movement of people to the cities.

"Initially, it was an alternative to conventional farming, to return to ancestral methods with the respect of the environment," said Kochoni. "Then it became a way

of life, and a philosophy." More camps are planned for later in the year in north Benin, then in Chad and Ivory Coast. Cheikh Amadou Bass, 36, a civil servant in Nouakchott, capital of the desert nation of Mauritania, owns a large plot of land the size of five football pitches in his home village. Bass dreams of showing his young

phone network that will transmit data at far greater speeds—in Egypt for the Africa Cup of Nations, which will be held from June 21 to July 19. "Africa is a market Huawei had identified and which they conquered thanks to a very aggressive strategy based on cheap financing and speed of execution," Satchu told AFP. "The fact that Huawei has equipped the AU says it all," he added.

compatriots that rather than crossing the sea in search of a new life abroad, there are opportunities on the land. "With nature, you have everything at your fingertips," Bass said, enthusing about how manure means chemical fertilizers are not needed. "I have made a great discovery," he added. —AFP



The program aims to teach basic, traditional ways of agriculture to those who have forgotten or never known a life on the land. —AFP

Huawei turns to Africa to offset US blacklist

PARIS: As the US leads a drive for the West to shun Huawei over security fears, the Chinese tech giant has sought to strengthen its position in Africa, where it is already well-established. Huawei has taken a leading role in developing next-generation 5G mobile phone networks around the world.

But it has been in turmoil since Washington charged its equipment could serve as a Trojan horse for Chinese intelligence services. The world's second smartphone maker fiercely denies the allegations, but the US has urged countries to avoid it and several companies have distanced themselves.

They include Google, whose Android operating system runs most smartphones. And as Washington and Beijing duke it out in an escalating trade war, nations around the world are faced with the dilemma of having to choose a side between the world's two top economies.

Russian President Vladimir Putin weighed in on Friday, slamming Washington's attempt to "unceremoniously push" Huawei out of the global market. Earlier in the week, Russia's MTS telecoms giant signed a deal with Huawei to develop a 5G network in the country. Chinese President Xi Jinping, a guest of Putin at an eco-

'Very aggressive strategy'

Huawei, now a major factor in US-Chinese tensions, has looked to strengthen its ties in Africa, last week signing an agreement to reinforce its cooperation with the African Union. "This was a way to show that Huawei is still present in Africa and that they want to remain a major player by positioning themselves in this very important growth sector," said Ruben Nizard, an economist and Sub-Saharan Africa specialist at the French financial services firm Coface.

The deal comes after the French newspaper Le Monde reported in 2018 that China had spied on the AU's headquarters in Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, citing sources inside the organization. The report said the spying began in 2012 after the completion of the AU's new headquarters that was financed by China, and was only noticed when technicians discovered data on the building's servers was being sent to Shanghai.

Both China and the AU reject the allegations. Huawei has established itself across Africa since launching in Kenya in 1998, and now operates in 40 countries, providing 4G networks to more than half of the continent.

It will also showcase 5G—the next-generation mobile

'Big Brother Beijing'

Huawei's presence in Africa goes far beyond selling smartphones and building mobile networks. In South Africa, it provides training at the country's top universities, this year launching a specialized course on 5G.

Kenya's government signed a 17.5-billion-shilling (\$172 million) deal with Huawei in April to build a data center and "smart city" services. The Chinese giant also offers a "safe city" surveillance program. This initiative, according to the firm's website, "can prevent crimes targeted towards the normal citizen, tourists, students, elderly persons etc before they occur".

It has been deployed in Kenya's capital Nairobi as well as Mauritius, with 4,000 "smart" surveillance video cameras set up at 2,000 sites across the Indian Ocean island nation. Some media outlets in Mauritius have condemned the system as "digital dictatorship" from "Big Brother Beijing". But Ghanaian Security Ministry Albert Kan-Dapaah, for one, says Huawei's video surveillance technology helps catch criminals. "When a crime has been committed, thanks to the cameras, we work magic," Kan-Dapaah says in a promotional video for the Chinese firm.

Huawei Marine, the company's submarine cable arm, is helping to deploy a key 12,000-kilometre (7,450-mile) cable system connecting Africa to Asia. With Huawei so



SHENZHEN: People walk past Huawei advertising at Shenzhen-Bao'an International airport in Shenzhen, China's Guangdong province. —AFP

deeply embedded in Africa, the continent may find it difficult to avoid becoming a collateral victim of the US-China bust-up.

"Africa is caught in the middle of a trade war that they should not have to take part in, because they have nothing to gain," said Nizard. —AFP

Trump, AMLO tout deal to avert tariffs on Mexico

TIJUANA, Mexico: Presidents Donald Trump and Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador each declared the deal averting US tariffs on Mexico a win Saturday, as markets breathed a sigh of relief—though rights groups condemned what they called a draconian crack down on migration.

Lopez Obrador said the bottom line on the last-minute deal reached Friday night was simple: "there will not be an economic or financial crisis in Mexico on Monday." Economists had warned the pain of Trump's threatened tariffs—set to start at five percent today and rise incrementally to 25 percent by October—and Mexico's likely retaliatory measures would have been acute for both countries, with potentially global spillover.

Instead, the countries hammered out a deal in which Mexico agreed to bolster security on its southern border and expand its policy of taking back migrants, most of them from violence-riven Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, as the United States processes their asylum claims.

Trump hailed it as a victory, after a week of terrifying his southern neighbor, whose economy depends heavily on exports to the US. "Mexico will try very hard, and if they do that, this will be a very successful agreement for both the United States and Mexico!" he tweeted early Saturday.

Later, he added: "Everyone very excited about the new deal with Mexico!" The relief was palpable in the Mexican border city of Tijuana, where Lopez Obrador led a rally attended by several thousand people to celebrate the deal and "the friendship of the people of Mexico and the United States."

However, the leftist leader—who said he had just spoken to Trump on the phone—also warned his American counterpart that it was not enough for Mexico to tighten its borders, saying Washington also needed to invest in economic development in Central America to stem the exodus from the region. —AFP

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Business

KFH Group achieves leading position in arranging sukuk issuances globally

KFH Capital arranges first \$1.25bn sukuk for STC, launches \$ Sukuks Index

KUWAIT: Chief Investment Banking Officer at KFH Capital, Right arm of KFH Group, Abdullah Sulaiman Al-Haddad said that "The company has succeeded in enhancing its role in the sukuk field by arranging new issuances and enhancing the market and its products, thus placing KFH Capital in a leading position, globally and regionally, and affirming KFH leading position and expertise in this field".

Al-Haddad stated, in a press release, that KFH Capital has finalized recently the arrangement of a \$1.25 billion First Sukuk Issue Transaction for Saudi Telecommunications Company. The sukuk issue is a 10 years transaction with returns approximating 3.89 percent. The transaction comes as part of the company's \$ 5 billion Sukuk Program which is governed by the Sukuk Issuance Regulation 144 A and Reg. S system of the US Securities Act. The Sukuks are listed in the Irish Stock Exchange. Subscription volume reached 3x the targeted amount, thus reflecting the world's tremendous trust in Saudi Economy and the company's capabilities which are rated A1 by Moody's Rating Agency.

Concerning government sukuk, Al-Haddad said that KFH Capital was one of the leading arrangers of the

Turkish government sukuk for \$2 billion where demand on sukuk exceeded \$4.9 with 5.8 percent return for a three-year term. This issue reflects the robust Turkish economy and appetite of Sukuk investors to acquire this kind of sukuk. KFH Capital acted as the Main Arranger of A 1 billion sukuk transaction for Sharjah government for seven years term, 3.854 percent returns, a rating of A3 by Moody's and BBB+ by S&P. Subscriptions amounted 5x the issuance amount. The sukuk were listed on the Irish Stock Exchange and NASDAQ Dubai Index.

Al-Haddad added that the major contribution made by KFH Group in the Premier Sukuk market including (issuance, arrangement and restructuring) has achieved the company a highly reputable position worldwide, placing KFH Group on top of the banks organizing the sukuk issuance transactions through Bloomberg Global Platform where it achieved the first position regionally and third position globally. Al-Haddad reiterated that these positions express the company's endeavor and success in the field of sukuk as well as the powers of the company's human capabilities and expertise in arranging and issuing sukuk for several decades, thus rendering KFH Group as one of the most reputable references in the field of sukuk world-



Abdullah Al-Haddad

wide. Al-Haddad revealed that, for further enhancement of KFH Group contribution to the sukuk market, KFH Capital has launched a new index to follow up and measure sukuk performance, as the first Islamic financial institution that takes the initiative to provide a new revolving instrument to follow up and Annalise \$ issued sukuk in global markets. This contribution comes to affirm KFH Group pioneering role in the Sukuk market and reflect the groups leading position in the premier and secondary Sukuk markets. It also reflects the great trust in the Sukuk product as one of the emerging financial instruments in the debt markets worldwide. The index aims to provide a measurement of one of the most significant Islamic products at present.

He indicated that the company's initiative to launch the index in cooperation with "S&P Dow Jones Indexes" and

listing the same on the Bloomberg Global Platform reiterates the company's keenness to enhance the index related products system which has attracted investors significantly, namely fund managers, wealth managers, banks investment companies.

The availability of an accredited Sukuk index as an analytical instrument shall participate in market promotion, performance enhancement and increased demand on Sukuk product as per highly accurate and accredited information. He affirmed also that the index is considered as the first of its kind for an Islamic financial institution and represents a qualitative addition for the growing Sukuk issuance and trading activity worldwide. The index is a price index which depends on the movement of Sukuk prices and related returns. The index components were distributed into various credit risk categories highly rated by global rating agencies as well as other unrated risks. The index depends on information related to High liquidity Sukuks with high Issue volumes.

The index is limited to \$ issued Sukuks which represent the majority of Sukuks issued by governments, companies and global corporates including GCC countries, Turkey and certain Asian markets.

Gulf Bank's monthly salary draw to be held today

KUWAIT: Today, Gulf Bank will be holding its fifth monthly Salary Account draw live at Q8 Pulse 88.8 FM (Diwaniyat Ayaqout and Al-Ansari show). The draw will be approved by, and held in the presence of, a representative from the Ministry of Commerce.

Commenting on the draw, Ahmad Al-Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications at Gulf Bank said: "Every month, we look forward to strengthening our relationships with our customers by making it possible for them to make their dreams come true. Besides offering our customers a range of benefits, Gulf Bank's Salary account also automatically enrolls its customers into our monthly draws, so all those

enrolled can have a chance to win. We are excited to see who is going to be our fifth winner of the year tomorrow, and can't wait to offer them a cash prize of up to 12 times their salary!"

The Salary account gives new customers the opportunity to receive either a KD 100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank or an interest-free loan of up to KD 10,000. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and will be eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank.

Customers can also enjoy additional benefits like a Visa or MasterCard credit card free of charge for a year, as well as a chance to apply for a loan of up to KD 70,000 or a consumer loan of up to KD 25,000.

The new 2019 Kuwaiti Salary Offer automatically new customers who transfer their salaries to Gulf Bank in the monthly and annual draws. The monthly draws allow customers the chance to win cash prizes of up to 12 times their salary, while the yearly draw gives them the opportunity to win Kuwait's largest salary prize of up to 100 times their salary.



Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the daily draw winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a cash-prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners are:

- Jassim Mohammed Jassim Alghareeb
- Saud Mohammed Saud Alhumaidan

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The higher the level of the deposit, the higher the likelihood to win.

Flydubai arrives at Sochi, Russia's Riviera

DUBAI: Dubai-based flydubai has inaugurated its new service from Dubai to Sochi. Flydubai flight FZ985 arrived at Sochi International Airport (AER) on 07 June and was met with a traditional water cannon salute and a welcome ceremony. The event was attended by Alexander Katorgin, flydubai General Manager for Russia, and Sergey Filippov, Executive Director for Sochi International Airport.

Flydubai has been operating to Russia since 2010 and offers passengers from across its network more options for travel to Moscow and other major Russian cities including Yekaterinburg. In 2018, flydubai accounted for 43 percent of the increase in passengers travelling between Dubai and Russia. flydubai becomes the first GCC-based carrier to launch direct flights between Dubai and Sochi. With the new route, flydubai now serves nine destinations in Russia and in total 21 destinations in Russia, Ukraine, Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Commenting on the occasion, Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations and E-commerce at flydubai, said: "Russia is an important market for us and flydubai becomes the first GCC-based airline to offer direct flights between Dubai and Sochi. Our flights to Sochi, along with the start of flights to Naples in Italy which began on 31 May, are further examples of how we continue to open up previously underserved markets. Our service and the convenience of direct flights, together with the recent changes in visa requirements which are reciprocal for Russians and UAE Nationals, will make Sochi a popular year-round destination and also enable easier access for travellers to Dubai."

Flydubai provides the option for Business Class travel on all its routes in Russia. Business Class passengers enjoy



SOCHI: The flydubai aircraft is greeted with water cannons on arrival at Sochi Airport

a comfortable spacious seat, a choice of meals from an internationally-inspired menu, a generous checked baggage allowance and fast track through immigration and security. The flydubai Business Class experience also provides complimentary access to Inflight Entertainment (IFE) with over 1,000 hours of entertainment and more than 150 films available in Russian on HD touchscreens. Passengers in Economy are provided with comfortable RECARO seats and can purchase extra-legroom seats. Inflight Entertainment and light snacks on board or preorder hot meals prior to their flight.

Emirates will codeshare on this route and for bookings under the codeshare Emirates passengers will receive complimentary meals and the Emirates checked baggage allowance on flights operated by flydubai in Business and Economy classes. The partnership between flydubai and Emirates was announced in 2017 and has expanded to meet increasing demand as passengers realize the benefits,

such as access to an expanded global network, the convenience of travelling on a single ticket with seamless point to point baggage handling, the alignment of the frequent flyer program and a smooth transfer during transit in Dubai.

Sochi is one of the major tourism hubs in Russia located on the Black Sea, popular for its beaches, forests and mountains. It is well known for hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics and being home to some of the best facilities for winter sports.

Earlier this year, authorities from the UAE and the Russian Federation announced a visa-free regime between the countries for the respective passport holders for the first 90 days upon arrival. Flydubai operates flights to over 90 destinations in 47 countries, including popular routes among Russian travellers, such as Dubai (UAE), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Zanzibar (Tanzania).

Kaico, the first dealers in GCC to welcome all-new Peugeot 508

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Company, Kaico Al Shaya & Al Sagar, the authorized distributors of Peugeot cars in Kuwait celebrates its longtime partnership of 50 years by being the firsts among GCC countries to welcome the brand new Peugeot 508.

The arrival of the new Peugeot 508, which offers top-end technological features for an intense driving experience, showcases invention in a new dimension. The radical sedan with a bold look makes no compromises on design. With its dynamic shape, aggressive front and muscular style, you can count on the new 508 to turn heads wherever you go.

The new Peugeot 508 premium radical sedan heralds a new era of sportiness and elegance. Its sculpted lines, finely detailed grill and new light signature emphasize its sleek, bold and innovative spirit. With that being said, you most certainly don't need to worry about compromising style with efficiency, specifically with the new PEUGEOT 508 PureTech 1.6L Turbo engine. The PureTech 3-cylinder turbocharged engine reduces fuel consumption and emissions of CO2 by up to 21 percent compared to the 4 cylinder engine of the same power.

We cannot mention efficiency without mentioning high technology, especially when talking about the latest Peugeot models, so sit back and relax as the new 508 boasts the latest safety features and driving aids. Moreover, feeling inspired while driving is what you should feel every time you start your engine, with precise driving, stimulating steering and exemplary road holding reinforced by controlled suspension, the new PEUGEOT 508 premium radical sedan enhances your driving pleasure and freedom of movement.

KAICO presents its dedication and commitment to their partnership with Peugeot by continuously thriving to be the first to showcase the latest Peugeot cars. To elaborate on the successful partnership with Peugeot, the general manager of KAICO, Ashish Tandon stated, "We are and always will be honored to have had the opportunity to partner with Peugeot, considering the vision of KAICO is providing our customers delightful and exciting products, and PEUGEOT has done just that for us."

Furthermore, Sr. Divisional Manager - vehicles, Nader Salmeh articulated on the matter and has stated, "From the moment we have partnered with Peugeot to hitting the 50 year mark, it has always been an exciting journey to continuously receive and showcase the most reliable and technology driven vehicles out there in the market. And the all new Peugeot 508 is the perfect definition of that".



Al-Tijari announces winners of Al-Najma weekly account

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank conducted the weekly draws on Al-Najma Account and the draw on the "Salary and Cash on Top" campaign. The draws were conducted in the presence of Ministry of Commerce and Industry representative Latifa Al-Jean.

The results of the draw were as follows:

1 Al-Najma weekly account - the prize of KD 5,000 and was for the share of Madassar Abbas Gham Hussain.

2 The "Salary & Cash on Top campaign" prize of KD 1,000 and was for the share of Shouq Hajji Al-Azmi.

The bank stated that the account prizes this year is featured by the highest cash prize and diversity of prizes throughout the year clarifying that Al-Najma Account will offer weekly prize of KD 5,000, monthly prize of KD 20,000 and a semi-annual prize of KD 500,000 in addition to the largest prize - linked bank account payout of KD 1,500,000. Al-Najma Account can be opened by depositing KD 100, and customer should maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 to be eligible to enter all draws on Al-Najma Account prizes. As for the chances of winning, the more balance a customer maintains in Al-Najma Account, the more chances the account holder will get to win, where each KD 25 will give the customer one chance to win, the account also offers additional benefits like the ATM card, a credit card against customer's account and all CBK banking services that customer can enjoy.

As regarding "Salary & Cash on Top" campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees as well as the retirees and which is valid until 31 December 2019 and the mechanism of joining this campaign for availing its benefits, the Bank explained that Kuwaiti employees with a salary of KD 500 and above whether newly recruited or in service can transfer their salary to the Bank and avail the benefits of this campaign by getting instant cash gift of KD 250 or an interest free loan 5 times the salary up to KD 10,000, add to this they will automatically enter the weekly draw on KD 1,000. As for the expatriate customers categorized under Premier Banking Account with a salary KD of 1,700 and above, they will get instant cash gift. The retirees with pension KD 1,000 and above will also get an instant cash gift of KD 150 when transferring their pension to the Bank and automatically enter the weekly draw on a prize of KD 1,000 and avail the benefits of this campaign designated for Kuwaiti and expatriate employees working in private and public sector as well as the retirees. Further, the campaign provides customers with the opportunity to get additional benefits and take advantage of the advanced and unrivalled services and products the bank provides to its customers to meet their needs and expectations.

What's On



The Aqua Park Water Games City recently organized a special program for the Eid holidays which attracted both citizens and expatriates who spent a joyful time playing water games and taking part in the entertainment shows presented by Mustafa Al-Najjar. In this regard, Aqua Park board member and general manager, Mohammed Abdul Redha Khorsheed stressed that the program included new games, cartoon figures and musical bands.

Luna Restaurant at Symphony Style adds new specials to menu

Luna, the award-winning restaurant of Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel is pleased to invite you for a new and exceptional dining experience to sample and enjoy its spiced up and new freshly introduced dishes. The distinctive menu of Luna, which delivers the aromatic authentic Tuscany delicacies, now includes even more variety that you will certainly love and enjoy. The Executive chef of the hotel, Jonathan Spiteri is introducing, starting this March new irresistible options to the existing menu that you can now savor over lunch or dinner.

The new additions involve meals of rich flavors such as the freshly grilled Lobster thermidor, served intriguingly out of a live display of lobster. You can also indulge in the elegantly crafted Duck Confit and its authentic Gnocchi and duck jus. Once you have fully indulged in a remarkable meal, you can enjoy the vibrant taste of tiramisu with

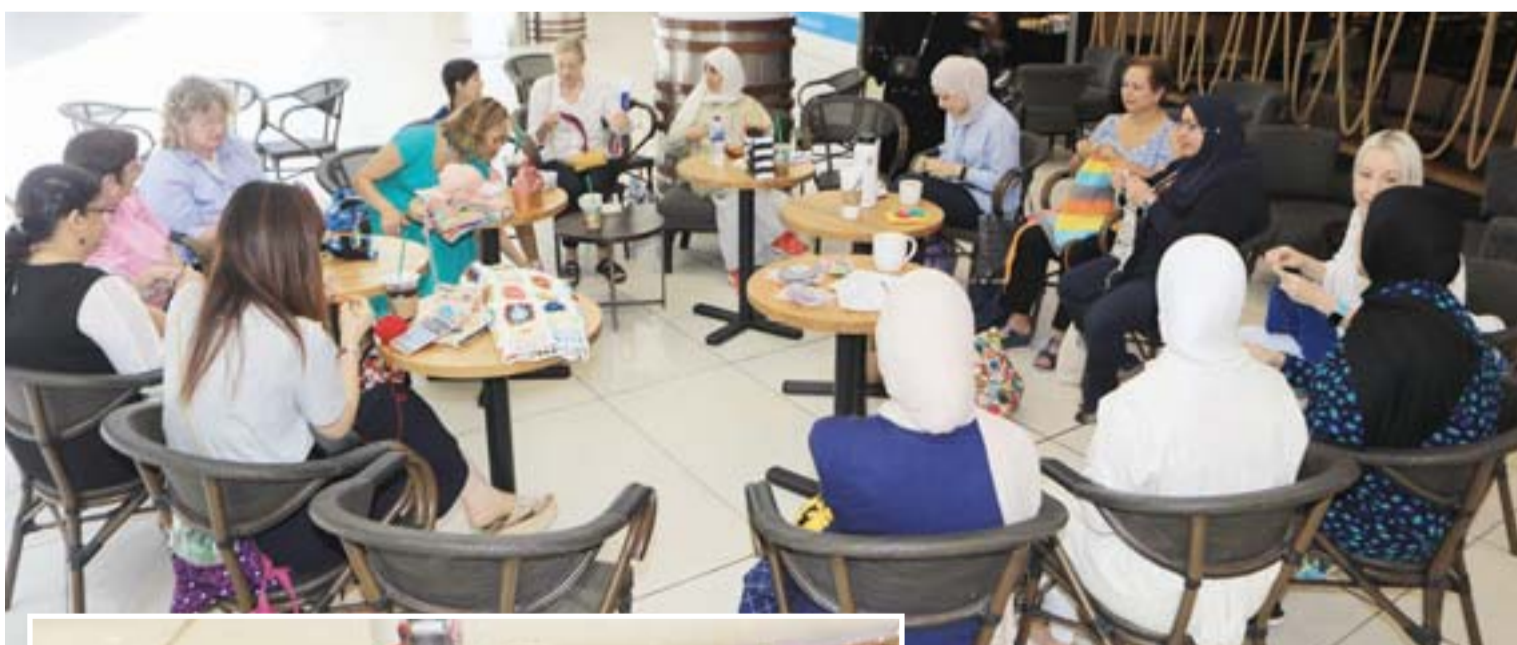


espresso ice cream or a duet of cheese platter served with honey.'

Luna Restaurant has been synonymously known for offering a dining experience like no other and as the destination for all discerning taste-buds who are in love with authentic Tuscany flavors and cuisine. Furthermore, the sublime Italian restaurant offers a diversified range of Tuscan dishes, from pasta and risotto to sea bass and steak. The exceptional chefs at Luna restaurant constantly take care of the details of food using the freshest Italian ingredients and innovate new ideas to improve the restaurant's dining journey.



Kuwait celebrates Worldwide Knit in Public Day



A community of crafters in Kuwait yesterday came together to celebrate Worldwide Knit in Public Day. Aimed at promoting the art and craft of knitting, WWKIPD was started in 2005 by Danielle Landes and takes place on the second Saturday of June each year. It is the largest globally-celebrated knitter run event in the world. This year, knitting groups in 33 countries including the US, New Zealand, Cyprus, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, Germany, India, Brazil, Mexico and Greece as well as Kuwait and others participated. In Kuwait, more than two dozen crafters including citizens and expats from various nationalities came together in Salmiya to knit, crochet, weave, embroider and otherwise celebrate the enjoyment and benefits of textile arts. The annual meet-up was organized by Kuwait Crafters and Kuwait Knitters.



Health

Fishermen helping to overhaul trashy plastic habits off Italy

SAN BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO: On a moonlit night off Italy's coast, fishermen are hauling in the usual catch: cuttlefish, red mullet and plastic waste. But this time, they won't throw the rubbish back. The trash instead is being collected, analyzed and, where possible, recycled in an initially month-long experiment to try to provide a blueprint for cleaning up the sea. "A lot of the fishermen used to throw the rubbish back into the sea, because the law says they can't bring it to land," said Eleonora de Sabata, coordinator for Clean Sea Life, which runs the project. "They're not authorized to carry waste, in ports there's nowhere to put this kind of waste and it's not clear who should dispose of it." That dilemma will hopefully not be an issue for the around 40 fishing boats sailing off the Adriatic resort of San Benedetto del Tronto who are taking part in the initiative.

Since it started, the fishermen have collected around a ton of waste a week for a month, of which 60 percent is plastic. Each day, volunteers catalogue and sort the smelly catch on the quayside. Some is recycled, some is disposed of along with household or industrial waste, but none goes back in the sea. The project had been due to wrap up on June 7, the day before World Oceans Day, but has now been extended through the summer months. Organizers hope it will offer waste management solutions that can be scaled up for the rest of Italy and beyond.

Plastic jumble

Much of the rubbish is single-use, such as bottles,

plates and cutlery, but also includes old nets from fishing or mussel farming and assorted random plastic objects, from medical products to fax machine parts. Fisherman Claudio Uriani, 62, sorts the catch into different buckets, ready to be sold at market. The most voluminous species is the plastic, though. "Let's say we didn't always collect it. There didn't used to be anyone on land to take the plastic," said Uriani, who's been fishing since 1972. "If the fish eat plastic, they get sick, and so we also can get sick." The Mediterranean Sea faces the additional problem of being a virtually closed body of water surrounded by dense human populations. A study by the peer-reviewed Public Library of Science (PLOS) published in 2015 estimated that the Mediterranean contains 1,000-3,000 tons of floating plastic, with an unknown quantity on the seabed.

The Nile river delivers at least 1,500 tons of plastic into the Med annually, according to the PLOS study. Sperm whales wash up regularly on Italian beaches, their stomachs full of plastic. "The rubbish that ends up in the sea all comes from people, from lakes and rivers, it's essential to educate people that what they put in the water ends up in the sea," said harbor master Mauro Colarossi.

'Political decision'

In March European lawmakers approved a new law banning single-use plastic products in the EU from 2021. A draft bill is also before the Italian parliament on the handling of existing waste. Under current laws, if fisher-

men opt to retrieve and dispose of the rubbish they pull in with their catch they could face prosecution for illegally transporting it.

"If fishermen provide a service to the community by bringing this waste to land, it shouldn't be them who have to pay," said Colarossi. It's estimated that 80 percent of waste in the sea comes from land and 20 percent from boats and the fishing industry. "The value of this experiment is to find out what's on the seabed, understand how much is recyclable and how to manage this waste," said De Sabata. "All this information will help decision-makers to take a political decision and so continue." So far up to a quarter of all the waste retrieved was recyclable, depending on whether the polymers in the plastic were still in good enough condition after being in salt water, De Sabata said.

The pollution problem is not just about preventing plastics entering the food chain. If a tin of paint is brought up in the nets from 100 meters below, the whole catch is tainted and must be thrown away. Likewise, fishermen tell of getting so much plastic in their nets that it stops them being able to catch fish. "The problem is in the sea but the solution is and should be on land. There needs to be a political solution, we need to go from alarm to action," said De Sabata. As the ship returns to port after a night of trawling, the fish and the waste are unloaded onto the quayside. "If we did this for a year instead of a month, the sea would be clean," said captain Stefano Voltattorni, heaving yet another crate onto the dock. — AFP



In this photograph taken on May 23, 2019, a bucket of plastic waste recovered from fishing nets sits beside a tray of fish onboard a fishing boat off the coast of San Benedetto del Tronto. — AFP

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PAGE





248 33 199





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ACROSS

1. Greenish-yellow pear.
5. A contagious skin infection caused by the itch mite.
12. Inquire about.
15. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
16. Fortification consisting of a low wall.
17. The syllable naming the fifth (dominant) note of any musical scale in solmization.
18. The 11th letter of the Greek alphabet.
19. A state of high honor.
20. Fiddler crabs.
21. English essayist (1775-1834).
22. Having been read.
23. Occurring or payable every year.
25. The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
27. The basic unit of money in Bulgaria.
29. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
30. A shop where a variety of goods are sold.
33. An Indian side dish of yogurt and chopped cucumbers and spices.
36. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
37. Not in good physical or mental health.
39. One of the most common of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
43. The battle in 202 BC in which Scipio decisively defeated Hannibal at the end of the second Punic War.
45. A domed or vaulted recess or projection on a building especially the east end of a church.
48. A line spoken by an actor to the audience but not intended for others on the stage.
51. Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).
52. Steal goods.
53. A Roman Catholic priest who acts for another higher-ranking clergyman.
55. The lower house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
56. Late time of life.
58. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
59. Look at with amorous intentions.
60. (criminal law) A pleading describing some wrong or offense.
63. Absence of the sense of smell (as by damage to olfactory nasal tissue or the olfactory nerve or by obstruction of the nasal passages).
66. A small parachute or articulated flap to reduce the speed of an aircraft.
68. A small ball with a hole through the middle.
71. (Hawaiian) A small guitar having four strings.
72. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
75. (usually followed by 'to' or 'for') On the point of or strongly disposed.
76. Reproduce someone's behavior or looks.
78. A master's degree in business.
79. A unit of surface area equal to 100

DOWN

1. A large bundle bound for storage or transport.
2. Using speech rather than writing.
3. (prefix) Half or partial.
4. A small tent used as a dressing room beside the sea or a swimming pool.
5. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
6. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
7. Wild sheep of semidesert regions in central Asia.
8. (Norse mythology) God of light and peace and noted for his beauty and sweet nature.
9. A corporation's first offer to sell stock to the public.
10. Suggestive of the supernatural.
11. An infection of the sebaceous gland of the eyelid.
12. Earlier a god.
13. A plain plinth that supports a wall.
14. African mahogany trees.
24. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
26. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
28. A member of the mercantile and professional Hindu caste.
31. Lower in esteem.
32. Any of various cycads of the genus Zamia.
34. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
35. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
38. Gull family.
40. A member of an agricultural people of southern India.
41. Take in a sail with a brail.
42. An industrial city in northern France near the Belgian border.
44. The word class that qualifies verbs or clauses.
46. Wood of a pecan tree.
47. A soft-finned fish of the family Gadidae.
49. Submerged marine plant with very long narrow leaves found in abundance along North Atlantic coasts.
50. Broadcasting visual images of stationary or moving objects.
54. Having a dusty purplish pink color.
57. A special lover.
61. A foot traveler.
62. A sharp narrow ridge found in rugged mountains.
64. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
65. A person who makes things.
67. God of love and erotic desire.
69. A small cake leavened with yeast.
70. South African term for 'boss'.
73. Considerate and solicitous care.
74. The rate at which heat is produced by an individual in a resting state.
77. An ancient city of Sumer located on a former channel of the Euphrates River.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today you won't be able to get away with hiding behind someone else or escaping for some alone time. Even if you're dying for some peace and quiet, the day's activities will force you to become involved with something new. You can't easily ignore what is starting to develop between you and someone else, but you can put off dealing with it. When it comes to a potential new flirtation, procrastination is the perfect tactic—at least for now.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today you need to determine what is the most important thing in your life—or else you may make the mistake of putting the cart before the horse. Think about what needs to happen in order to enable other things to happen, and make that your top priority today. That means if you have to rest or take care of yourself (instead of hitting the town), then so be it. What seems like fun today may cause you some trouble tomorrow, so keep that in mind when your phone starts ringing off the hook.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Someone from your past is back on the scene and is acting on old assumptions about you that you are. Today you'll have to take a chance to move beyond your past actions (good or bad) and show him or her the new person you have become. This will be a subtle yet significant turning point in your relationship—this person's reaction will determine whether or not the future will find you closer together or further apart. It looks like you are not the only one who has changed.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

The dark days of the past are not going to come back to haunt you, so why are you afraid to start down a new path? There is a fresh idea coming into your life, and it will be burning brightly, illuminating the way forward—and showing you that you have nothing to fear. This is a time to trust other people because they honestly do want the best for you. Your instincts have never let you down before, and they certainly aren't going to today.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is a battle going on inside of you right now—the part of you that wants to spend all your time with other people is battling for control with the part of you that just wants to be left to your own thoughts for a while. If you can get out of major social obligations, let your solitude-seeking side win out just for today. You have to spend some time assessing the good things in your life, and the bad things in your life, in order to determine what is holding you back.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

It's a great day for making predictions—your insight is strong and your ability to sense what is about to happen is even stronger. People should rely on you for news on what is coming up next in the worlds of fashion, music, television, comedy, and books—basically, you can forecast anything but the weather. Your connection with the arts is especially strong right now, in part because your creativity is looking for a new outlet. Seek one today, and you will find it.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Goofy games and practical jokes are no longer as appealing as they once were—you are starting to realize that serious ideas can provide a great deal of reward. Utilize your intellect a lot more today, and leave your fabulous sense of humor on the sidelines for now. People need to hear what you really think about the tough issues, and you need to have your position nailed down. Who knows? Your passion could inspire other people to change their minds.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

All your forward momentum is starting to wane a bit, which is both a positive and a negative thing. On the one hand, this time out will finally give you a chance to take in the interesting view you've been missing out on for so long. But on the other hand, this pause means that you are going to have wait even longer for the changes you've been hoping for. Conserve your energy and be more patient. Be confident that you will experience what you deserve soon enough.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Expect a great day full of accomplishments! Some of the puzzles you have been working on are finally coming together, and the picture the pieces are forming is looking pretty sweet! But before you start making any big pronouncements, try to keep this amazing progress under your hat. You will have plenty of time to bask in the spotlight later. But first, you need to wait until everything is done and polished up. Hold off for a big payoff!



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Life is going to take you for a ride today—but it'll be a gentle, relaxing trip. The new knowledge that familiarity brings is pretty interesting, and you'll get a big dose of it today. It seems that getting up close and personal with someone you idolize will remind you that everyone is human and flawed. Let go of big responsibilities for a few hours—let the universe drive, while you sit in the passenger seat and enjoy the view.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This latest project of yours is closer to completion than you might think. If you take time to clean up your work area, organize what you've done so far, or complete the detailed infrastructure, you will quickly see that any doubts you had about meeting this deadline can get tossed right out the window. You are finally starting to realize how capable you really are! Now that there is a bright light at the end of the tunnel, you can expect your mood to brighten.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

In whatever you do today, try to make sure that your ideas are voiced—even if you raise your hand just to make a brief statement. It's important that you are heard. You are dissecting the world around you very effectively now—the questions you have been asking are the right ones, and you are definitely headed in the right direction. Keep going and take advantage of the solid momentum you have built.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Palindromes Are Cool! - Word Search

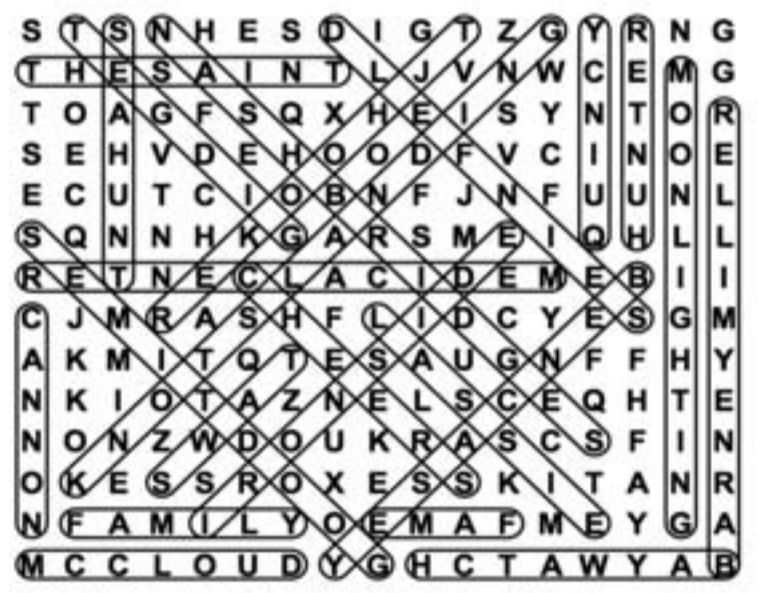
Palindromes: Read the same backwards and forwards



- | | | |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| BIRD RIB | SEVEN EYES | TELL A BALLET |
| KAYAK | SMART RAMS | TEST SET |
| MIRROR RIM | SPACECAPS | TOP SPOT |
| NURSES RUN | STACK CATS | TUNA NUT |
| POT TOP | STEP ON NO PETS | WE FEW |
| RACE CAR | STOP POTS | WE SEW |
| REPAPER | TAHITI HAT | WET STEW |
| ROTATOR | TANGY GNAT | WON'T IT NOW |

Yesterday's Solution

Old TV Shows 6 - Solution



- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| BARNEY MILLER | GOOD TIMES | NASH BRIDGES |
| BAYWATCH | HUNTER | QUINCY |
| BEN CASEY | IRONSIDE | SEA HUNT |
| CANNON | KNOTS LANDING | SEINFELD |
| CHEERS | LASSIE | SWAT |
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Daily SuDoku



hard

Yesterday's Solution



easy

Lifestyle

MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2019



A participant of the Wave-Gothic-Festival poses for a photo at the Victorian picnic on June 7, 2019 in Leipzig, eastern Germany. The yearly music and culture festival of the black gothic scene, that traditionally takes place over the Pentecost holidays, will run from June 7 to 10, 2019. — AFP

Chechen women go places with female-only taxi service

Checking her blind spot, Fatima Dzhambulatova changes lanes on a busy avenue in Chechnya's capital Grozny. In this Muslim republic of Russia, she is spearheading a women-only taxi service. At the wheel of a white sedan bearing the bright purple logo "Mekhkari", the name of the service launched this spring, the 49-year-old taxi driver explains the appeal of women drivers in the conservative region. Some clients have husbands who won't allow them into a car with another man, she says, while some believe women are safer drivers, and others simply prefer riding with a member of the same sex.

In the sparse office of Mekhkari, which means "girls" in Chechen, founder Madina Tsakaeva said she got the idea after realizing she preferred to ride with female drivers, who were hard to find. "It was very rare for our city," she said. "So we did a survey on social media about what people thought of the idea of a women-only taxi." The project eventually got financial backing, the amount of which has not been made public, from the Emirates-based Zayed Fund for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, which opened a Grozny chapter in 2017. So far, Mekhkari has five drivers and a fleet of five cars.

Into the driving seat

Libkan Bazayeva, coordinator of Grozny-based women's rights organization Women For Development, said that the idea for a women-only taxi service in Chechnya had been a long time coming. "In the Soviet era, you could count the number of women who drove on one hand, the whole republic knew them and their entire life story," she said.

That started to change about a decade ago. In 2008, Women For Development organized free driving courses for about 100 women, half of whom began driving in Grozny. Traffic policemen in the city of 270,000 were shocked, Bazayeva said, but the campaign proved "infectious" and women behind the wheel are now common.

'Feel safer'

The Zayed fund stressed the value for conservative Muslims of the female-only taxi company, which only takes bookings for women passengers or women travelling with children. The service "will be very convenient from the point of view of religious norms and traditions," the fund said on its Instagram account in late March, when it made the decision to approve the funding. After the end of two separatist wars with the Russian government, Chechnya has in recent years

seen a resurgence of Islam, encouraged by its leader Ramzan Kadyrov, who has governed the North Caucasus region with an iron fist since 2007.

But it's not only conservative Islamic traditions that compel women in Grozny to use the service: passengers say that they also appreciate what they describe as a less aggressive style of driving. "Men drive more erratically, women are more careful. I feel safer with a woman," 29-year-old Kheda Yusaeva said, from the back seat of Dzhambulatova's taxi. Another reason women might prefer the service is to avoid conflict with their husbands over riding with a male stranger, Bazayeva said, adding that she knew of cases where a man had beaten his wife simply for having a taxi driver's phone number saved in her address book.

'Huge step forward'

"The appearance of women drivers in the sphere of this male-dominated profession is a huge step forward, a big accomplishment in a male world," Bazayeva said. She also said that she believed the initiative was "symbolic" of women's participation in the country's economic life, in a society where their rights are limited. Tsakaeva now has plans to add 15 more cars and is even considering expanding



A view of the Heart of Chechnya mosque is reflected on a metal panel with the silhouette of a woman wearing a scarf in central Grozny. — AFP

to offer deliveries and other services to homes of women who cannot leave the house. When Mekhkari first sought to recruit female drivers, there was no shortage of experienced applicants, Tsakaeva said.

Dzhambulatova said that most of the men she had come across on the job had been

positive, complimenting the car, gesturing with a thumbs-up and asking for the taxi's number-for their wives. "This is a desirable job for me, and I'm very interested in chatting with my clients, I get some very interesting women," the driver said, before adding: "I like being behind the wheel." —AFP

Madonna says she feels 'raped' by New York Times profile

Pop icon Madonna said she felt "raped" by an in-depth profile of her in The New York Times, calling the newspaper "one of the founding fathers of the patriarchy." The New York Times article entitled "Madonna at Sixty" focused too much on her age, Madonna said, arguing it would not have done so were she a man. "The journalist who wrote this article spent days and hours and months with me and was invited into a world which many people don't get to see, but chose to focus on trivial and superficial matters such as the ethnicity of my stand in or the fabric of my curtains and never ending comments about my age which would never have been mentioned had I been a

MAN!" Madonna said on her Instagram account.

"I'm sorry I spent 5 minutes with her," the singer and dancer wrote about the author of the article, journalist Vanessa Grigoriadis. "It makes me feel raped. And yes I'm allowed to use that analogy having been raped at the age of 19." In the article, Madonna had told Grigoriadis that she had "felt raped" when her 2015 album "Rebel Heart" was leaked early. The author said in the piece that "it didn't feel right to explain that women these days were trying not to use that word metaphorically."

The singer said the profile was "further proof that the venerable N.Y.T. is one of the founding fathers of the Patriarchy. And I say-DEATH TO THE PATRIARCHY woven deep into the fabric of Society. I will never stop fighting to eradicate it." The Times article described Madonna in her 1980s heyday as using "her iron will to forge a particular type of highly autobiographical, uber-empowered, hypersexualized female pop star who became the dominant model of femininity across the nation."

But it characterized her current incarnation as that of a "sexagenarian claiming her space among artists two generations younger" and said the audience she per-



In this file photo Madonna poses in the press room at the 2018 MTV Video Music Awards at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. — AFP photos

formed for at the Billboard Music Awards in Las Vegas appeared more enthused about the South Korean K-pop boy band BTS. — AFP



In this file photo French Designer Jean-Paul Gaultier and Madonna arrive for the 2018 Met Gala, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

From hippies to hackers: New film tracks saga of Russia's internet

In the early days of Russia's internet, hippies founded the first telecoms venture with Americans, an astrophysicist ran the country's most visited website and providers punished hackers by kneecapping them with baseball bats. The heady time, which coincided with the 1991 break up of the Soviet Union, is the subject of a new documentary that looks back at a very different era as the Kremlin clamps down on internet freedom in present-day Russia.

Setting the tone, footage from 1990 shows American Joel Shatz and his Soviet partner Joseph Goldin—the duo behind the first Soviet-American telecoms venture—driving a ballistic missile transporter carrying clowns to Red Square after convincing the traffic police that the performance had been approved “by the highest authorities”. Andrei Loshak, a former television reporter, tracks the main personalities behind the Russia-based internet, known as Runet, for the documentary “Holy War. The history of Runet,” to be screened Sunday at Moscow's Beat Film Festival.

His travels take him back and forth across the Atlantic to film the current lives of early internet savants, website editors and trolls, who are now Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, cannabis investors and pro-Kremlin politicians. Although Russia now dominates headlines with ever-tougher legislation restricting internet use, in the 1990s “the internet developed completely freely,” Loshak says.

Russia has benefited enormously: internet access is cheap and home-grown platforms are more popular than US-based corporations like Google and Facebook. “The internet was the place where everything developed as it can develop when the government does not intervene,” he says. In one clip, Russian President Vladimir Putin is shown meeting internet entrepreneurs in 1999 and telling them that the Internet is a “promising initiative” that he would not touch.

“And in fact, he did not touch the internet for 15 years,” Loshak says, adding: “Thanks for that, curiously.” However, a raft of new laws clamping down on internet use were passed following mass anti-government

demonstrations in 2011-12 and Moscow's rift with the West after its annexation of Crimea in 2014.

‘Insane laws’

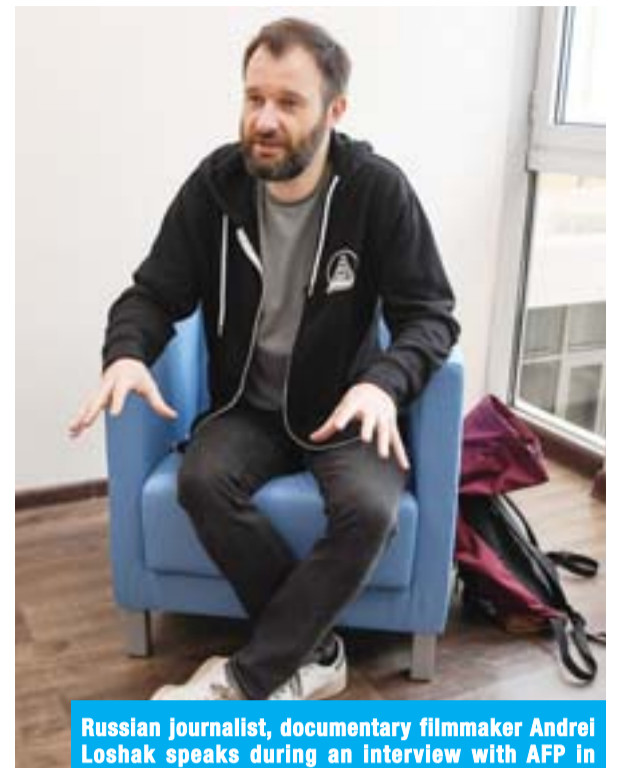
New restrictions of online content are proposed weekly, while internet companies are now required to store personal data in Russia and comply with security services. Many websites and services deemed dangerous for law and order are blocked, from professional social network LinkedIn to the Telegram messaging app—though the blocks are easily circumvented for the moment.

In March, Putin signed laws making it a crime to publish “fake news” or show “disrespect towards authorities” on social media. In May he signed a law on “digital sovereignty” that will provide the Kremlin with the ability to cut off Russia, or a particular Russian region, from the global internet.

Russia now slaps fines on users bad-mouthing Putin online. Current Time, the producers of the documentary, say it is particularly pertinent for younger audiences

who did not witness the early days of the internet in Russia first-hand. “It reminds them that information is not supposed to be censored or weaponised. It's supposed to be free,” they said in a statement to AFP. The “insane laws” will continue, since the government views the internet as a threat, Loshak says. “It's a battle, and it's not very clear who will come out on top.”

The restrictions have already taken a toll. “There are fewer large internet media outlets in Russia now, they have lost their influence,” Loshak says. “And new companies stopped appearing. There have been practically no IPOs” since the Russian internet leader Yandex went public in 2011. But Loshak believes it's too late for Russia to impose a rigid Chinese-style system of censorship because the internet was born in an atmosphere of freedom and that cannot be easily undone. “In China, they didn't have the 90s like in Russia, when everything was swept away and we had real freedom,” he says.—AFP



Russian journalist, documentary filmmaker Andrei Loshak speaks during an interview with AFP in Moscow.—AFP

Jamaica, Bob Marley and football: A FAMILY LOVE AFFAIR



Jamaica's players pose for a team group photo before the friendly match between Jamaica and Panama at the National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica.—AFP photos

In Jamaica, the spirit of Bob Marley is inescapable: it permeates the Caribbean island nation, even its football pitches—a sign of the reggae legend's passion for the sport. After Marley's death, his children picked up the torch—and the country's women's team, who have qualified for their first-ever World Cup this summer in France, owe a lot to the musician's daughter Cedella. “Two things he loved were music and soccer,” says Allan “Skill” Cole, a one-time local football star who befriended the music icon in the 1960s. Cole told AFP that Marley was a football “fanatic”, and liked to organize pick-up matches with his bandmates between concerts.

Cole, who is now a 68-year-old with fine gray dreadlocks, was a teenager at the time. “He wanted to do everything that we did. We trained together, we ran in the morning... The only thing he didn't like was going to the gym,” Cole said at a hotel in the Jamaican capital Kingston. Just a few minutes away, at the Bob Marley Museum, among the portraits of the musician that line the walls is a photo of him on a football pitch, chest squared and socks high, 1970s style. “If I were to play him on a team, I would put him on defense—he was fearless, he loved to tackle,” said Cole, who eventually became Marley's tour manager and even was credited with co-writing some songs, including “War.”

Football is even intertwined with the story surrounding Marley's death in 1981 of skin cancer, which first developed under his toenail. During a game, Marley was tackled and injured his toe. A closer look revealed the rare form of melanoma. Many including Cole believe that an initial infection caused the can-

cer, even if no medical evidence backs up the theory. “That's where the toe first gave signs” that something was wrong,” he said. “But we didn't take it very seriously then.”

In the name of the father

Marley's passion for football runs through his family. In 1998, his eldest son Ziggy recorded the official anthem of the “Reggae Boyz,” Jamaica's men's national football squad, when they qualified for their first World Cup. In 2014, Cedella Marley came to the rescue of the women's team when their program was axed by the national federation and they even slipped off FIFA's official rankings list. Thanks to Cedella, the “Reggae Girlz” quickly regained sponsors and media attention—and launched themselves right into the race for the 2019 World Cup. “She had a vision from her father. I'm fortunate to be part of it. The players are the same way, they talk about it all the time,” said head coach Hue Menzies, with an air of reverence. “She stuck her neck out for us. She has been here from day one.”

In Jamaica, such a gesture does not go unnoticed. On May 19, at the team's last home game before the World Cup begins, the announcer at the National Stadium in Kingston thanked Cedella—a businesswoman, singer and fashion designer—at least a half-dozen times. Marley, who was in the stands, told AFP after the game—a 3-1 victory for the home team over Panama—that her passion for the sport came from her dad. Football “has been in my life since I was born, so it was only natural to be a part of it,” the 51-year-old said after embracing the players—and consoling the



Jamaica's Khadija Shaw looks on ahead of the friendly match between Jamaica and Panama at the National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica.

losing squad.

“They needed help, they are women, they were being told they couldn't play a sport that they love. So we got involved and here we are!” Even if many of the players were not even born before Bob Marley's death, they are aware of his legacy and the power his name still holds in Jamaica. “To have a Marley behind us, it's a great feeling,” said one of the team's stars, striker Khadija Shaw, her eyes lighting up. “Everywhere you go, everybody knows Bob Marley.”—AFP



Cedella Marley attends the friendly football match Jamaica vs Panama at the National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica.



Cedella Marley (center bottom) poses with Jamaica's Women football team ‘Reggae Girlz’ after the friendly football match Jamaica vs Panama at the National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica.



Panama's Aldrith Quintero (left) pulls the shirt of Jamaica's Chantelle Swaby during the friendly match between Jamaica and Panama at the National Stadium in Kingston, Jamaica.

‘I worked here’: Home of Ibanian author Kadare becomes a museum

Ismail Kadare draws the curtain to bring a shaft of light into the Tirana apartment where he wrote furiously during the dark days of communism—a space visitors can now explore first-hand after his former home was turned into a museum. “I worked here, next to the fireplace,” the renowned 83-year-old Albanian novelist told AFP, sitting in the spot where he used to write his drafts by hand. “I wrote on my lap” and “I only worked in the morning,” added Kadare, who penned some of his most famous works, including “The Palace of Dreams”, while living in the third-floor apartment of the concrete building with his family, from 1973 to 1990.

During that time, the windows were covered with heavy drapes to shield their home from the paranoid eye of the communist regime led by former dictator Enver Hoxha, who painfully isolated Albania during his 40-year-reign. The museum, called “Kadare House Studio”, opened in May. With wooden floors and pale green and white walls, the space is sprinkled with personal mementoes: a set of pipes laid out on a table, a typewriter, a shelf full of books and an ID card listing a young Kadare as a “reserve officer”.

There is also a photo of Italian actor Marcello Mastroianni in the film adaptation

Kadare's first novel to win international acclaim, “The General of the Dead Army”. The slice-of-life setting honours the author's wishes that the place be a museum and not a “mausoleum”. With his wife Elena, also a writer, Kadare now splits his time between Tirana and the Latin Quarter in Paris, where he went into exile in 1990 shortly before Albania's communist regime collapsed.

Cubist crime

The intense repression of Hoxha's regime is captured by the fate of the architect of the apartment, Maks Velo, who was sentenced to eight years in prison for the building's cubist design—considered a deviation from socialist aesthetics. However, Kadare says he did not let the dictatorship crush his own creativity. His novels, essays and poems rejected the brand of socialist realism dictated by authorities and instead used allegory, history and myth to expose life under totalitarianism. “Dark times bring unpleasant but beautiful surprises,” Kadare, speaking slowly, told AFP.

“Literature has often produced magnificent works in the dark ages as if it were seeking to remedy the misfortune inflicted on people.” While some poets and creatives were imprisoned—or even killed—by the

regime, Kadare was spared. In her memoirs, Hoxha's widow Nexhmije said the Albanian leader, who prided himself on a fondness for literature, saved the internationally-acclaimed author several times.

Archives from the Hoxha era show that Kadare was often close to being arrested, and his poem “Red Pashas”, published in 1975, saw him temporarily banished to a remote village. Kadare, for his part, denies any special relationship with the dictator. “My work obeyed only the laws of literature, it obeyed no other law,” he insists. The writer eventually fled to Paris to seek asylum a few months before the regime toppled in the early 1990s.

That departure was “an act of healing” and a form of protest, says Kadare, who at the time left several manuscripts in the Tirana apartment that were seized by authorities but later recovered from a police cellar.

‘Against modesty’

Kadare's writing has been translated into more than 40 languages, making him the Balkans' best-known modern novelist and winner of numerous awards. He won the inaugural Man Booker International Prize in 2004 and has been nominated several times



Renowned Albanian novelist Ismail Kadare visits his apartment in Tirana.—AFP

for a Nobel. Although the topic “embarrasses” him, Kadare said he enjoys seeing his name “mentioned among the candidates” for the Nobel. “I am not modest because, in principle, I am against modesty,” he said. “During the totalitarian regime, modesty was a call to submission. Writers don't have to bow their

heads.” As for whether he was happy during the days spent scribbling in Tirana under communism's grip, Kadare finds the question irrelevant. “The people who lived through this period were unhappy, but art is above all that. Art is neither unhappy nor happy under a regime.”—AFP



Model presents a creation by British designer Edward Crutchley on the first day of the Spring/Summer 2020 London Fashion Week Men's fashion event in London on June 8, 2019. — AFP photos

Suited and booted: Menswear on show at London Fashion Week Men's



Tailored suits and leisure wear take center stage at London Fashion Week Men's this weekend, where designers are presenting their latest offerings for spring wardrobes. Designers young and established hold spring/summer 2020 catwalk shows and presentations until today, including the likes of Alexander McQueen, Edward Crutchley, QASIMI and Xander Zhou.

London's central Jermyn Street, known for its menswear stores, hosts an open-air catwalk show on Saturday. In Britain, spending on menswear rose 3.5% to 15.5 billion pounds (\$19.7 billion) last year, according to market research firm Mintel, which estimates a similar growth in 2019. But growth in the British menswear market is seen slowing, with spending estimated to rise 15.4% in the five years to 2023 versus 26.6% growth in the previous five years, it added.

"Although the British menswear market continues to perform well, growth is slowing as the market is becoming more mature while a reliance on discounting is holding back value growth," Samantha Dover, Senior Retail Analyst at Mintel, said. Though smaller in size than similar events held in fellow fashion capitals Milan, Paris and New York, London is known for its traditional tailors as well as its emerging designer talent. London Fashion Week Men's runs until today.—Reuters



British fashion designer James Long (center) acknowledges the crowd after showcasing his collection for Italian fashion house ICEBERG on the first day of the Spring/Summer 2020 London Fashion Week Men's fashion event in London.





The Row Venice organization is a group of women who teach tourists how to row Venetian style, standing up. — AFP photos



Row Venice aims to preserve tradition, both of the rowing style itself, but also the crafting of the 'batela' - a traditional work-boat now out of production.

Gondoleering goddesses teach ancient art to the masses

Big wave incoming, use your legs! shouts Gabriella Lazzari, as her laughing students try out their new gondoleering skills in the sunshine of Venice's lagoon. Lazzari is one of some 20 women who teach tourists from around the world how to row standing up, Venetian style, in "Batela coda di gambero", shrimp-tailed wooden boats. "We take them out to the lagoon so they can do the gondoleering part without crashing into everybody," quips Jane Caporal, who founded the Row Venice organization more than eight years ago in a bid to save the "voga alla veneta" style of rowing. "Obviously Venice is motorized now, so people don't row around in their little boats anymore," she said.

"The idea is to save the tradition. Not just the actual rowing, everything: the boat building, the oar making, the forcola (oar rowlock) making, crafts that have been going for centuries and centuries," she said. Accountant Yezi Jin shrieks in delight as she drives the blade into the water and propels the boat forwards, far from the peaceful canals of Italy's floating city, in the vast open waters where vaporetto waterbuses sail back and forth. "It's hard work, my back's aching, but it's great fun!" the 32-year old from Portland in the

United States said, as her husband, gripping his own oar tightly, tried valiantly to match her pace. "We see all the islands here... it's very different from the Rialto Bridge or being in the crowds," Jin added.

Master craftsman

Most of the women who teach "voga" also race professionally, and Row Venice sponsors them. Caporal sees it as a way of attempting to level the playing field in a sport and profession dominated by men. There is currently only one female gondolier in the whole city. She has had to fight tooth and claw for her share of the 20 million tourists who visit the Serenissima each year, Caporal said. "The number of people certified as gondoliers is controlled by the gondoliers' association. "It's a tightly-closed shop. With Row Venice we've carved out a space for women to work too," she added.

The British-born Australian, who has lived in Venice for 30 years, said she picked the batela—a traditional workboat now out of production—because it is more stable than the asymmetrical gondola and easier to manoeuvre. "I came across one that was sold to me by a rowing club, it had been out of use for years. It was made by a master craftsman who had seen this kind of boat as a boy and remem-



Gabriella Lazzari (left) says it is a pleasure to show tourists around Venice by water, explaining its pollution and high-water problems.

bered it," she said.

The former stockbroking analyst fell in love with it, and was ready to shell out 14,000 euros (\$15,600) for a replica to be made.

But the master craftsman had died. With no-one left alive who knew how to make them, the boat builders had to get the plans from the

city's naval history museum.

'A dream come true'

"It's a pleasure to enable tourists to live Venice by water, and explain the pollution and high-water problems," said Lazzari, in reference to the damage cruise ships cause to the

fragile ecosystem and floods that leave Saint Mark's Square underwater. Just a week ago, a massive cruise ship lost control, crashing into the wharf and sparking fresh controversy over the damage the huge vessels cause to the city. "I tell them about the types of boat there used to be, like the mascareta, so-called because it was used by masked 'working women', or the gondolas, which were the taxis of the rich," Lazzari added.

The Doges of Venice, the Republic's rulers until the 18th century, boasted golden, two-deck ships which were used yearly in a "Marriage of the Sea" ceremony, which symbolically wedded Venice to the water. Row Venice pays tribute to the carnival city's heyday by sponsoring parties held on boats in the lagoon on summer nights.

By day, its craft glide peacefully past ducks diving for crabs and disused boatyards transformed into canal-side gardens. "It was a dream come true," says Alice Hendricks, 71, her eyes sparkling as she gets out of the batela after her first lesson. "It was very challenging, it looks so easy when you watch the gondolieri doing it... but after a few tries with it you kind of get a feeling for it. It's a joy," she said. — AFP

How a Brit got Asia to fall for Macau's Portuguese egg tarts

With their flaky pastry casing, creamy custard filling and brulee topping, Macau's Portuguese egg tarts are as much of a part of the Chinese enclave's fabric as its casinos—but their origin is surprisingly British. Across the city it is not uncommon to see long lines of tourists patiently queuing for the sweet treats, a sight that might not seem all that surprising given the former Portuguese colony's most famous dessert is based on Lisbon's equally renowned pastel de nata.

But the current craze for Portuguese-style egg tarts—which has spread across China and parts of Asia in recent years—owes much of its success to a Brit who blundered into the business. The tale began three decades ago when Essex-born industrial pharmacist Andrew Stow opened Lord Stow's bakery at the southern harbor side village of Coloane. "In 1989, recognizing there were no western street-side bakeries... he decided to do something for the local Portuguese community which was to create a pastel de nata for them," said Eileen Stow, Andrew's sister, who now manages the business.

With no original recipe for pastel de nata to use, Andrew experimented with a heavier British custard filling, based on a family recipe, and Portuguese pastry techniques. The creation initially raised a few eyebrows among Andrew's Portuguese friends in Macau, but the local Chinese community became hooked. Courtesy of the British, Cantonese cuisine already had a version of an egg tart, made with shortcrust pastry and a more jelly-like filling.

"To differentiate it from what they recognized in dim sum, a 'dan tart' (egg tart in Cantonese), they call it a



Chef Dennis del Rosario turning a tray of egg tarts to make sure they cook evenly at Lord Stow's bakery in Macau. — AFP photos



Eileen Stow (center), who manages the business, posing for a photo in front of freshly baked egg tarts at Lord Stow's bakery in Macau.

'po tart'... 'Portuguese egg tart', Eileen said. The creamier, flakier, richer versions were a roaring success. "That's how it grew before the days of likes online. It's just word of mouth," added Eileen, who took over the business after her brother's death in 2006. The business now churns out 21,000 handmade egg tarts per day from three bakeries in Macau, and it also boasts two franchises in Japan and Manila.

A string of rivals have cropped up in the last three decades in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore. One of the best-regarded Macau competitors was set up by Andrew's ex-wife Margaret Wong. She sold her recipe to KFC, which now offers Portuguese egg tarts at outlets across China, a move that has introduced Macau's Portuguese-British hybrid to hundreds of millions more hungry mouths — AFP



A customer (center) leaving Lord Stow's bakery in Macau.



Custard which goes into making egg tarts being stirred at Lord Stow's bakery in Macau.



Customers being served at Lord Stow's bakery in Macau.



Chef Dennis del Rosario preparing to box up cooked egg tarts at Lord Stow's bakery in Macau.



Custard being poured into the pastry molds at Lord Stow's bakery in Macau.

Classifieds

Monday, June 10, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Very hot with light to moderate north westerly wind to variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Relatively hot and Relatively humid over coastal areas with light to moderate variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 26 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 09/06/2019 0000 UTC		
KUWAIT CITY	47 °C	36 °C			
KUWAIT AIRPORT	48 °C	28 °C			
ABDALY	48 °C	31 °C			
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C			
JAHRA	49 °C	34 °C			
FAILAKA ISLAND	45 °C	30 °C			
SALMIYAH	43 °C	32 °C			
AHMADI	39 °C	34 °C			
NUWAISIB	44 °C	29 °C			
WAFRA	49 °C	29 °C			
SALMY	47 °C	30 °C			

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	06/10	Very hot	49 °C	29 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Tuesday	06/11	Very hot	48 °C	28 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 30 km/h
Wednesday	06/12	Very hot with a chance for rising dust over open areas	50 °C	30 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Thursday	06/13	Very hot with a chance for blowing dust	49 °C	33 °C	NW	20 - 55 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:13
Sunrise	04:48
Zuhr	11:47
Asr	15:21
Sunset	18:46
Isha	20:18

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	49 °C
MIN. Temp.	31 °C
MAX. RH	40 %
MIN. RH	07 %
MAX. Wind	N 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ali Modak Intiyaz Shoukat, holder of Indian Passport No. J4440540 wish to correct my name as (given name) Intiyaz Shoukat Ali (sur name) Modak. Hereinafter in all my documents, my name will appear as Intiyaz Shoukat Ali Modak. (C 5544) 09-06-2019

uments shall bear the name Adeniyi Toluwalope Obafemi.

I, Sharoan Cedric s/o Saith Khushnood holder of Pakistani Passport No- BR4429022, would like to correct my name on civil ID# 290207091151, from Sharoan Saith Saith Khushnood to Sharoan Cedric. (C5545)

I, Adeniyi Toluwalope Fatoba - holder of Nigeria Passport Number A10488415 and Kuwait Civil ID Number 275051205279, would like to change my name to Adeniyi Toluwalope Obafemi. From henceforth, all my official doc-

I, Shalom David s/o Saith Khushnood holder of Pakistani Passport No- AF7674522, would like to correct my name on civil ID# 296072900556, from Shallum Saith Khushnood to Shalom David. (C 5545) 4-6-2019

Airlines

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

NOTICE
 June 4, 2019

Mr. Preet Karan Singh son of Mr. Harbhajan Singh, resident of HL-132, Phase 2, Mohali, SAS Nagar, Pin: 160055, Punjab and Ms. Vanessa Eliza Fernandes daughter of Mr. Alberto Silvestro Fernandes, resident of Flat no 6, Tip Top Mansion, IIND Dhawli Panda, Goo, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (welfare2@indembkwt.gov.in) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22533315, 00965 - 22533125).

(Ranveer Bhatti) Second Secretary (Cons) and Marriage Officer. Embassy of India, Kuwait. Email: welfare2@indembkwt.gov.in

NOTICE
 April 10, 2019

Mr. Bijoy Ghosh son of Mr. Pranab Kanti Ghosh, resident of Kayetpara, Sreepally, Nandighat, Ranaghat, Nadia, West Bengal 741225 and Ms. Tamita Ghosh daughter of Mr. Chand Gopal Ghosh, resident of Ghosh Colony, Nandighat, Ranaghat, Nadia 741255, West Bengal, both Indian nationals presently residing in Kuwait have given notice of intended marriage between them under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969. If anyone has any objection to the proposed marriage, he/she may file the same with the undersigned according to the procedure laid down under the Act/Rule within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice. Communications in this regard can be made by Email (welfare2@indembkwt.gov.in, welfare2@indembkwt.org) / letters / telephonic calls (00965 - 22550171, 00965 - 22533125).

(Ranveer Bhatti) Second Secretary (Cons) and Marriage Officer. Embassy of India, Kuwait. Email: welfare2@indembkwt.gov.in

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 10/6/2019				Departure Flights on Monday 10/6/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	IRA	600	Tehran	14:10
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	RJA	645	Amman	14:15
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	FDB	8192	Dubai	14:50
KAC	102	London	00:50	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:00
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	KNE	320	Taif	15:00
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KAC	504	Beirut	01:00	JZR	103	Bahrain	15:05
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
RJA	642	Amman	01:20	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	105	London	15:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	563	Amman	16:00
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	405	Kochi	16:00
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	775	Riyadh	16:05
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:10
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	OMA	646	Muscat	16:20
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:20
THY	768	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	619	Doha	16:25
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	547	Alexandria	16:45
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	FEG	242	Alexandria	16:55
JZR	406	Kochi	03:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:10
RBG	1551	Alexandria	03:15	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	KAC	155	Istanbul	17:35
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	621	Doha	17:50
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	381	Delhi	17:55
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	04:15	SAW	706	Damascus	18:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:10
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:15
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	JZR	127	Dubai	18:20
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	382	Delhi	05:15	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:25
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	JZR	733	Cairo	18:35
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	JZR	261	Beirut	19:10
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	JZR	253	Amman	19:10
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	QTR	1081	Doha	19:20
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	19:20
JZR	702	Asyut	06:10	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
BAW	157	London	06:10	FDB	064	Dubai	19:45
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	SAW	704	Damascus	19:55
KAC	204	Lahore	06:45	KAC	331	Trivandrum	19:55
RBG	559	Alexandria	06:50	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:00
KA	C302	Mumbai	07:05	RJA	641	Amman	20:05
JZR	106	Bahrain	07:10	KAC	357	Kochi	20:05
IGO	1755	CNN	07:10	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:30
JZR	714	Sohag	07:20	FDB	058	Dubai	20:30
RBG	211	Luxor	07:25	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:50
MSC	401	Alexandria	08:00	DLH	624	Dammam	20:55
IRA	601	Tehran	08:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:05
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	KAC	301	Mumbai	21:25
JZR	710	Luxor	08:45	RBG	210	Sohag	21:35
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:50	JAV	621	Amman	21:45
KAC	334	Trivandrum	09:00	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
OMA	641	Muscat	09:00	QTR	1089	Doha	21:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	KAC	203	Lahore	22:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:10
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
KAC	384	Delhi	09:55	THY	1413	Trabzon	22:25
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	UAE	860	Dubai	22:35
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	383	Delhi	22:35
AXB	395	Kozhikode	10:40	JZR	407	Ahmedabad	22:40
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:50
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	KAC	551	Cairo	23:00
FEG	1641	Sharm el-Sheikh	11:00	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
THY	1282	Trabzon	11:05	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	SVA	515	Riyadh	23:25
JZR	114	Doha	11:10	JZR	701	Asyut	23:45
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45
AXB	789	CNN/Bahrain	12:10				
JZR	252	Amman	12:20				
JZR	716	Sohag	12:25				
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30				
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30				



World Wrestling Entertainment star The Undertaker makes his way to the ring during a match at the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) Super Showdown event in the Saudi Red Sea port city of Jeddah late on June 7, 2019. — AFP

US envoy's annexation comments show 'extremist' approach: Palestinian leaders

Germany says two states 'only solution' to conflict

RAMALLAH: Palestinian leaders say a US envoy's comments on Israel having the right to annex at least parts of the occupied West Bank show "extremists" are involved in White House policy on the issue. In a statement late Saturday in response to US ambassador to Israel David Friedman's comments in a New York Times interview, a Palestinian government spokesman said some leading US policy on the issue were "extremists" lacking in "political maturity".

The Palestinian foreign ministry said it was looking into filing a complaint with the International Criminal Court on the issue. Palestine Liberation Organization secretary general Saeb Erekat on Twitter called Friedman an "extreme ambassador of the settlers". "Their vision is about annexation of occupied territory, a war crime under international law," he said. Erekat also renewed a Palestinian call for countries to boycott a June 25-26 conference in Bahrain to discuss economic aspects of a peace deal the White House has been working on.

In the interview published Saturday, Friedman said

some degree of annexation of the West Bank would be legitimate. "Under certain circumstances, I think Israel has the right to retain some, but unlikely all, of the West Bank," he said. Israel occupied the West Bank in the 1967 Six-Day War and its construction of settlements there is viewed as a major stumbling block to peace as they are built on land the Palestinians see as part of their future state.

Friedman has in the past been a supporter of Israeli settlements as has the family of Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and adviser leading efforts to put together the peace deal. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged ahead of April elections to begin annexing West Bank settlements. Bringing settlements under Israeli sovereignty on a large-scale could end any remaining hopes for a two-state solution to Israel's conflict with the Palestinians.

More than 600,000 Jewish settlers now live in the West Bank and annexed east Jerusalem among some three million Palestinians. On the long-delayed peace plan, Friedman said it was aimed at improving the quali-

ty of life for Palestinians but would fall well short of a "permanent resolution to the conflict". Kushner has hinted that it will not endorse international calls for the creation of a Palestinian state.

Publication of the plan looks set to be further delayed after the Israeli parliament called a snap general election for September, the second this year. The plan is regarded as too sensitive to release during the campaign. The Palestinian leadership has already rejected the plan, saying Trump's moves so far show him to be blatantly biased in favor of Israel. Those moves include recognizing the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and cutting hundreds of thousands of dollars in aid to the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Germany's top diplomat yesterday reaffirmed his country's support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ahead of the long-awaited US peace plan. "We are still in agreement that reaching a two-state solution through negotiations is the only solution," Heiko Maas said during a press con-

ference in Amman with his Jordanian counterpart. "We and Germany agree that the two-state solution is the only way to end the conflict," Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said.

Several UN resolutions have enshrined the two-state solution, which envisages separate homelands for Jews and Palestinians, as the path to a peace settlement. Both ministers also stressed the importance of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, just weeks after the US called for it to be dismantled after cutting its roughly \$300 million annual donation. Jordan is home to nearly 2.2 million Palestinian refugees, who make up almost half of the kingdom's population.

Separately, Maas said Germany would give Jordan a \$100 million loan to help cope with economic difficulties in the kingdom where IMF-backed fiscal reforms sparked mass protests last year. Jordan, whose stability is seen as vital for the volatile Middle East, also hosts some 1.3 million refugees from neighboring war-torn Syria. — Agencies

Civil disobedience campaign empties...

Continued from Page 1

overall toll to 118 since the June 3 crackdown to disperse the sit-in. The health ministry says 61 people died nationwide in Monday's crackdown, 49 of them by "live ammunition" in Khartoum.

In the capital's northern Bahari district, people gathered tyres, tree trunks and rocks to build new roadblocks as the campaign began yesterday. "Almost all internal roads of Bahari have roadblocks. Protesters are even stopping residents from going to work," a witness told AFP. But riot police swiftly moved in, firing gunshots in the air and tear gas at demonstrators before clearing the makeshift barriers, he said.

The Sudanese Professionals Association, which first launched protests against longtime ruler Omar Al-Bashir in December, said the campaign of civil disobedience would continue until the military rulers transfer power to a civilian government. In Bahari district, onlookers saw a police truck full of people in civilian clothing but it was not possible to confirm whether they were arrested demonstrators. "We blocked the streets to send a message to those trying to steal our revolution that they will fail," said Emad Ibrahim, 25, a protester from Bahari. "It is a long road ahead for us, but after the sacrifice made by our brothers who have been killed, we believe that we will achieve our goal."

Several protesters said they faced difficulties but were still backing the campaign. "The roadblocks prevented me from reaching the market to buy vegetables," said Hassan Abdelrahim, a vegetable vendor. "This will impact my income, but when I look at these youngsters who are on the streets since six months, I'm not angry even if I lose my income."

Khartoum residents have mostly remained indoors since Monday, when men in military fatigues raided the

protest camp. Several vehicles of the feared Rapid Support Forces, blamed by witnesses for the killings, were seen yesterday moving across some parts of the capital loaded with machineguns. RSF members were also seen surrounding the main electricity station.

Several airlines have scrapped their Sudan flights since the deadly raid and passengers were left waiting outside Khartoum airport's departures terminal yesterday, although it was unclear whether any flights would take off. The downtown business district was largely shut and buses were not running in several areas, but private vehicles were ferrying passengers in some locations. In Omdurman, many shops and markets remained closed but people were seen buying staples in some grocery stores. "Troops were also seen removing roadblocks from some streets in Omdurman," an onlooker said.

In the central city of Al-Obeid, the main market was shut and several bank employees did not report to work, residents said. In the town of Madani, southeast of the capital, people were seen queuing outside closed bakeries while the main market was also shut. "I went to three bakeries and have been unable to buy bread," a Madani resident told AFP by telephone, adding that protesters had built roadblocks on several streets making it difficult for vehicles to pass.

It was the tripling of bread prices that first triggered protests against Bashir in December, which later turned into a nationwide movement against his ironfisted rule. After the president was ousted in April, demonstrators remained camped out for weeks in Khartoum to pressure the ruling generals into transferring power. After several rounds of negotiations between protest leaders and the military, talks broke down in mid-May.

Witnesses say the subsequent assault on the sit-in was led by the RSF, who have their origins in the notorious Janjaweed militia, accused of abuses in the Darfur conflict between 2003 and 2004. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed travelled to Sudan on Friday in a bid to revive negotiations, holding separate meetings with the two sides after which he called for a "quick" democratic transition. — AFP

Iran leader pardons 691 on Eid, but Lebanese excluded

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader pardoned hundreds of prisoners on the occasion of the end of Ramadan, but a Lebanese national who Beirut expected to be released was not among them, authorities said yesterday. In total, the sentences of 691 prisoners were either commuted or deferred as decided by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as a gesture for the Eid al-Fitr holidays, said the judiciary's

Mizan Online news website. Last week, Lebanon said one of its nationals condemned in 2016 to 10 years' jail in Iran after being found guilty of spying for the United States would be on the pardon list.

The Lebanese foreign ministry, quoted by the country's official NNA news agency, said Nizar Zakka would be pardoned at the request of Beirut as a gesture for Eid. But Zakka's name was not on the list, said Iran's judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili. "The individual was sentenced and the president of Lebanon had - in letters to judicial officials - requested a conditional pardon," he said, quoted by Mizan. "This request has been in the judicial process and, in case any decision is taken by the judicial apparatus, information will be provided." — AFP

Modi visits bombed Sri Lankan church...

Continued from Page 1

It added that the two leaders held most of their talks in Modi's limousine while driving the 33 km between the capital and the airport. Modi stopped in Colombo on his return from an official visit to the Maldives, where he inaugurated a radar system and military training center. The two projects, costing \$26 million, were funded by India.

His brief but politically significant visit to the two neighbors came less than 10 days after Modi secured a second landslide election win and as New Delhi seeks to fend off Chinese influence in the region. The Maldives, an archipelago of more than 1,000 tiny coral islands, and Sri Lanka straddle the world's busiest east-west maritime route. India, the traditional ally of both Sri Lanka and the Maldives, had watched with unease

as former governments of strongman leader Abdulla Yameen in the Maldives and Sri Lanka's Mahinda Rajapakse leaned towards Beijing for political and financial support.

Yameen's election loss last September, however, has seen new leader President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih swing back towards New India. Sri Lanka too has moved back toward New Delhi since the defeat of Rajapakse in Jan 2015. Last month, authorities announced a partnership with India and Japan to develop a deep-sea container terminal in Colombo next to a controversial \$500-million Chinese-run facility. The three plan to develop what is known as the East Terminal of Colombo port.

China owns 85 percent of the adjoining Colombo International Container Terminal, which was commissioned in 2013. State-owned Sri Lanka Ports Authority owns the remaining 15 percent. More than two thirds of transshipment containers handled in Colombo originate from or head to India. Sri Lanka, unable to repay a huge Chinese loan, handed over another deep-sea port in the south of the island to a Beijing company in Dec 2017, in a deal that raised concerns at home and abroad. — AFP

Sports

IAAF has been left 'frustrated' as Russian athletes ban upheld

IAAF to rebrand as World Athletics

MONACO: The IAAF has been left "frustrated" by Russian back-sliding on issues critical to the country's reintegration into global track and field, a top official said yesterday. Rune Andersen, head of the doping task force for the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), said he had recommended to the 27-strong IAAF Council, which duly followed his advice, that it uphold its ban on Russian athletes, first imposed in 2015 over mass state-sponsored doping.

Andersen said Russia had paid out more than \$3.2 million (2.8m euros) for the Task Force's work and had also committed to paying any more costs, so the "cost condition has been met". He added "progress has been made on the second outstanding issue," that of retrieving data and samples from a Moscow laboratory at the heart of the scandal.

Those have been passed on to the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU), a watchdog founded by the IAAF to combat doping in the sport, and it will not be until they report back that they have everything they need that the Task Force will consider that issue resolved.

The AIU are also investigating whether Russian athletics federation (RUSAF) officials were involved in the alleged cover up of a doping offence by high jumper Danil Lysenko. "Reinstatement cannot be considered while that investigation remains pending," Andersen said. A Sunday Times story on June 2 alleged RUSAF officials had fabricated documents to show Lysenko, the 2017 world silver medalist, was too ill to provide his whereabouts after failing to make himself available for out-of-competition drug testing.

Russia authorities came out blazing, saying they were victims of an "information war" and questioning the timing of the story ahead of the IAAF Council meeting.

BANNED COACHES, DOCTORS

"Finally the Task Force noted recent allegations that

banned coaches and banned doctors continue to work with Russian athletes," Andersen said.

"If so, that calls into question whether RUSAF is able to enforce doping bans and whether all RUSAF athletes have embraced the change to a new anti-doping culture proclaimed by RUSAF, both of which are conditions to reinstatement.

"The Task Force shares the Council's frustration at progress in two areas being undermined by apparent back sliding in two other areas. "It hopes the outstanding issues can be resolved soon."

The last global event Russia appeared in was the 2015 Beijing world championships, but dozens of Russian athletes cleared by the IAAF have gone on to compete as neutrals.

While US-based long jumper Darya Klishina was the sole Russian athlete cleared to participate at the 2016 Rio Olympics, 74 Russian athletes competed as neutrals last year and 68 have been cleared since the start of 2019. The next chance Russia has of seeing the ban overturned will be at a IAAF Council meeting in Doha just days before the September 27-October 6 world championships in the Qatari capital, leaving a hypothetical window open for its reintegration almost four years on from the initial ban.

Meanwhile, world athletics' governing body, the IAAF, is to rebrand as World Athletics, it was announced yesterday. The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) was initially founded in 1912 as the International Amateur Athletic Federation.

The body, currently presided over by Britain's two-time Olympic 1500m gold medalist Sebastian Coe, took its present name in 2001 and World Athletics should be operational from October.

"World Athletics' builds upon the organisation's restructuring and governance reform agenda of the past four years to represent a modern, more creative and positive face for the sport," said Coe, who took



IAAF president Sebastian Coe (left) and Rune Andersen.

over from disgraced long-time head Lamine Diack in August 2015.

Coe said the IAAF Council, meeting in Monaco, agreed it made "the sport more accessible to a wider audience while giving the global governing body the opportunity to more clearly communicate its mission as the leader of the world's most participatory sport".

"The hope is that our new brand will help attract and engage a new generation of young people to athletics." IAAF CEO Jon Ridgeon was slightly blunter in his

assessment of the IAAF brand.

"The IAAF name has been in existence for over 100 years, but it has little understanding or relevance to those outside of athletics," he said. "The new identity creates a symbol that can stand alone and work with partners and events."

The new brand identity will begin its rollout in October after the world championships in Doha and following congress' approval of the change to the federation's legal name. — AFP

Rugby Australia slams Folau 'media campaign' after leaked letter

SYDNEY: Rugby Australia has lashed out at Israel Folau for disrupting the sport after an explosive letter accusing the governing body of leaking details of his code of conduct hearing was made public. Folau sent the letter to the Rugby Australia board after Sydney's Daily Telegraph ran a series of stories last week on his dramatic fall from grace for homophobic comments on social media.

The reports included intimate details of his tribunal hearing, which was meant to be private. Super Rugby's

record try scorer opted not to appeal against the ruling that he was guilty of a "high level" breach of the sport's code of conduct and instead launched legal action, asserting he was simply posting a message from the Bible. In his letter, which was also obtained by the Telegraph and published on Saturday evening, Folau alleged that Rugby Australia was the source of the leaks, which he called "blatantly unfair". "I would like to know why Rugby Australia has not managed to maintain the integrity of its processes and ensure that information was kept private and confidential," he said.

"For example, I am not 'sick of rugby' and whoever told the media that I am is telling lies. "Another example is the way the media has been told that your expectations were made clear to me by Ms (Raelene) Castle. We all know that is far from the truth," he added, referring to Rugby Australia's chief executive.

"It makes me sad that these things have apparently been told to the media by someone at Rugby Australia. If you are not the source, why has no one come out to set

the record straight?" Rugby Australia hit back in a statement, saying the "media campaign" being run by Folau's camp was affecting all levels of rugby and had overshadowed a crunch Super Rugby match between the NSW Waratahs-Folau's former team and the ACT Brumbies in Sydney.

"Rugby Australia has acted with complete professionalism and integrity at all times through the process in which Mr Folau was found by an independent three-member tribunal panel to have made multiple, serious breaches of the Professional Players Code of Conduct," it said. "While we will continue to respond to any legal action as required and will continue to defend the values that underpin our game and the work done by the hard working volunteers, we will not engage in a running media commentary."

Folau's Instagram post that "Hell awaits" gays and others he considers sinners sparked heated debate in Australia, with some defending his right to express views he sees as central to his religious beliefs. — AFP

Jaguares outplay Sharks to win South African conference

BUENOS AIRES: The Argentine Jaguares won the South African conference and secured a home quarter-final in Super Rugby when they outplayed the Coastal Sharks 34-7 in Buenos Aires Saturday.

Full-back Emiliano Boffelli and winger Sebastian Cancelliere scored two tries each as the home side romped to a bonus-point victory after leading 12-0 at half-time. The winning margin could have been much wider as fly-half Joaquin Diaz Bonilla missed four of eight shots at goal and Boffelli failed with his only penalty attempt.

Topping the South African table confirmed the progress of the Jaguares, who won just four matches of 15 three years ago in their debut season. Beating the Sharks gave the South Americans a 10 win-five loss record this season and they are set to triumph at home to bottom team the Sunwolves next Friday in the final league round.

If the Jaguares win, they will finish second overall behind runaway leaders the Canterbury Crusaders of New Zealand, and enjoy home advantage again if they reach the semi-finals. The Crusaders, seeking a third consecutive title and 10th overall, are on 58 points having completed their 16-match regular season schedule.

Jaguares have 46 points and the ACT Brumbies from Australia 43 and both are assured of home quarter-finals, along with the fourth-placed Wellington Hurricanes from New Zealand. "Winning the South African conference with a match to spare is a wonderful achievement for us," said Jaguares skipper and centre Jeronimo de la Fuente. "The side did not start the season particularly well, but winning twice on our last visit to South Africa and winning three of four matches in Australasia turned it around. "I congratulate all the players in the squad, the coaches and the management for a job well done. We have worked hard and deserve whatever success comes our way."

Sharks skipper and scrum-half Louis Schreuder said: "We had to start well to have any chance of winning here, but instead we found ourselves on the back foot for most of the first half. "We conceded too many penalties during the opening 40 minutes, which often turned promising attacking situations into a need to defend near our tryline.

"However, we are not out of the running for a quarter-finals place. If we can beat the Stormers in Cape Town next Saturday, I believe we will make it." Cancelliere held off rival winger Makazole Mapimpi to score the first Jaguares try after only four minutes and Boffelli then got his first, which Diaz Bonilla converted for a 12-point advantage.

Instead of scoring to nudge back into contention, the Sharks conceded further tries to Boffelli and Cancelliere and trailed 29-0 by the hour mark. The Sharks finally scored 12 minutes from time at Estadio Jose Amalfitani when centre Andre Esterhuizen powered over after a rolling maul and full-back Curwin Bosch converted.

But the Jaguares had the final say in the 80th minute when winger Santiago Carreras ran on to a grubber kick and dotted down for his first Super Rugby try. — AFP

Sir Winston wins 151st Belmont Stakes in upset

ELMONT: Sir Winston came from behind to win the 151st running of the \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes in Elmont, New York by a length on Saturday. Favourite Tacitus, whose late charge came up short, was second and Joevia third around the sprawling, 1 1/2-mile dirt track on a warm, sunny day.

Sir Winston came on strong late, moving from the rail to the outside down the stretch to overtake pace-setter Joevia and finish in a relatively slow two minutes, 28.30 seconds. While making his move, Sir Winston appeared to cut off Preakness Stakes winner War of Will, initially raising the prospect of a challenge similar to one that disqualified Maximum Security after it crossed the line first at this year's Kentucky Derby.

Both Sir Winston and War of Will, however, are trained by Mark Casse and no protest was made. "I said all week long that he was doing really well," a smiling Casse said of the 10-1 winner. "What can I say, it's just exciting."

He said second-favourite War of Will, ridden by Tyler Gaffalione, did not run his best race on Saturday. "I could see War of Will was struggling," Casse said. "He was maybe a little flat today and I saw jockey Joel (Rosario) cut the corner a little bit (on Sir Winston) and I could see where War of Will was getting a little weary."

The win was just the third in 10 starts for Sir Winston, who finished second in the Peter Pan Stakes at Belmont last month. The race is the final leg of US thoroughbred racing's Triple Crown, which was not up for grabs after Kentucky Derby winner Country House did not run in the Preakness due to illness. He did not compete at Belmont either.

The race caps a wild Triple Crown season that saw the first disqualification of a horse that crossed the line first at Churchill Downs and a rider thrown from his horse at the start of the Preakness.

The races were also contested amid growing controversy around the sport as 27 horses have died at Southern California's Santa Anita Park since the racing season began in late December. The latest fatality came on Wednesday when two-year-old colt Derby River was euthanized after suffering a fractured shoulder, renewing calls for a suspension of racing at the venue. — Reuters



MONTREAL: Pole position qualifier Sebastian Vettel of Germany and Ferrari and second place qualifier Lewis Hamilton of Great Britain and Mercedes GP talk in parc ferme during qualifying for the F1 Grand Prix of Canada at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal, Canada. — AFP

Vettel grabs dramatic pole

MONTREAL: Sebastian Vettel ended Mercedes' run of early-season qualifying supremacy on Saturday when he claimed a dramatic late pole position for Ferrari in a crash-hit showdown at the Canadian Grand Prix.

"I feel so very, very happy for the team," Vettel said. "I am full of adrenaline and the last few weeks have been tough for us. The car felt very good and now I hope we can carry that into the race." The four-time champion repeated his 2018 success, when he won from pole, by outpacing championship leader Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes by two-tenths of a second at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve. It was Vettel's first pole position triumph of the season, his first pole in 17 races since last year's German Grand Prix and a signal that Ferrari's superior straight-line speed was well-suited to the track.

"Seb did a stunning lap and he deserved to be on pole," said Mercedes team chief Toto Wolff. "Lewis picked up a couple of mistakes in the hairpin." Defending five-time champion Hamilton of Mercedes had appeared to be on course for his record seventh Canadian pole until the final laps, when he was outpaced by Vettel in the dying seconds. "We're certainly very happy and the entire weekend here we have been performing ok so this is a positive surprise for us," said Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto. "The track will improve. It will be a lot hotter day so it will be a tough race."

Vettel's Ferrari team-mate Charles Leclerc claimed third place on the grid. "I don't really know how I struggled with

the car and the set-up," he said. "Congratulations to Seb. He deserves it and hopefully I'll have a better race from my side tomorrow.

"We are strong on the long run pace and hopefully it will be the same tomorrow and we can have a good run."

Vettel beamed as he talked to a congratulatory Hamilton after the session. Vettel clocked a best lap of one minute and 10.240 seconds to beat Hamilton's lap in 1:10.446. "He's bloody good in qualifying," said Vettel, pointing to Hamilton. "Hard to crack... I really enjoyed it."

"You know what, the feeling in the car when it just keeps coming and the feeling - it felt so good. I enjoyed it and I'm very happy and happy for the team over the last few races, it's been very tough." Hamilton said: "I don't feel disappointment. We gave it everything I had got. They were faster and in the last sector they were killing us, the timing was right, procedures were perfect, we had P1 for a second, but we knew they were quick.

"I'm glad I was able to split the Ferraris. The weather is fantastic, we've got some great fans here so hopefully we can put on a great show." Mercedes had been fastest in qualifying in five of the six races since the start of the year and will now face a battle to extend their record run of six season-opening wins in Sunday's race.

It was the 56th pole position of Vettel's career and came after Kevin Magnussen had crashed into the "wall of champions" in his Haas car at the end of Q2. He was unhurt. Daniel Ricciardo of Renault qualified fourth, ahead of Pierre Gasly of Red Bull and Valtteri Bottas in the second Mercedes. The Finn spun in Q3 and was unable to recover and clock an improved lap.

Nico Hulkenberg was seventh in the second Renault ahead of the two McLarens of Lando Norris and Carlos Sainz. Magnussen qualified 10th. — AFP

Sports

Indians deny Sabathia 250th win, Mets defeat Rockies

Angels go back-to-back-to-back in win over Mariners

CLEVELAND: Roberto Perez homered in his fourth straight game and drove in three runs as the host Cleveland Indians denied CC Sabathia in his bid for his 250th career win with an 8-4 victory over the New York Yankees on Saturday. Rookie Oscar Mercado launched a two-run homer and Kevin Plawewski added a solo shot and a sacrifice fly for the Indians, who have belted 14 homers while winning four of their past five games. The offense was more than enough for Adam Plutko (2-1), who overcame Didi Gregorius' two-run homer in the first to allow just two runs on three hits in six innings. Oliver Perez permitted two runs on as many hits, but three other relievers combined to yield one hit over the final 2 2/3 scoreless innings to end the game. Gleyber Torres had an RBI double and scored on a sacrifice fly in the seventh inning for the Yankees, who have lost five of their past six games.

METS 5, ROCKIES 3

Carlos Gomez and Pete Alonso homered, Steven Matz tossed six solid innings, and host New York beat Colorado. Gomez, Todd Frazier and Wilson Ramos had two hits each, and Edwin Diaz pitched the ninth for his 14th save for the Mets. Nolan Arenado and Charlie Blackmon had RBIs for the Rockies, who fell to 2-3 on their six-game road trip.

ANGELS 12, MARINERS 3

Los Angeles hit back-to-back-to-back home runs in the fourth inning and cruised past visiting Seattle. Tommy La Stella, Mike Trout and Shohei Ohtani went deep off Mariners left-hander Yusei Kikuchi (3-4) in the fourth. Cesar Puello, who finished with four RBIs, homered in the eighth for the Angels. It was Ohtani's first showdown with Kikuchi in the United States and drew widespread interest in their native Japan, where they attended the same high school. The two faced each other five times in Nippon Professional Baseball, with Ohtani going 2-for-5 with a double and three strikeouts.

CUBS 9, CARDINALS 4

Victor Caratini delivered a pinch-hit, tiebreaking, three-run double in the sixth inning, and host Chicago pulled away for a win over St. Louis. Kyle Schwarber doubled, homered and drove in two runs for the Cubs, while Javier Baez finished with a triple and two RBIs. Chicago fell behind 4-0 in the first inning but scored the next nine runs to notch its fifth victory in the past six games. Marcell Ozuna and Harrison Bader homered for St. Louis, which dropped back to .500 with its third loss in the past four games. The Cardinals fell to 0-5 at Wrigley Field this season.

PHILLIES 4, REDS 1

Nick Pivetta pitched his first career complete game,

J.T. Realmuto homered and Philadelphia beat visiting Cincinnati for its fourth straight win. Coming off six scoreless innings against the Los Angeles Dodgers in his previous outing, Pivetta allowed a run on six hits and no walks while striking out six. He had never previously gone beyond 7 1/3 innings. Pivetta (4-1) allowed hits to the first two Reds batters and then didn't allow another baserunner until Joey Votto's leadoff single in the seventh inning.

DODGERS 7, GIANTS 2

Corey Seager had four hits and four RBIs to lift Los Angeles over host San Francisco. Seager finished 4-for-5 with a pair of doubles and has hits in 13 of his last 14 games. Justin Turner, who was questionable to play because of a tight hamstring, went 3-for-3 with two doubles, two runs and two RBIs. Los Angeles starter Rich Hill (3-1) earned the win with five innings of two-run ball, allowing seven hits, walking three and striking out six.

RAYS 9, RED SOX 2 (GAME 1)

Ryan Yarbrough pitched a career-high 7 2/3 superb innings, and Travis d'Arnaud backed him with a three-run homer as visiting Tampa Bay once again stymied Boston's bats in a win to kick off a day-night doubleheader. Yarbrough (5-2) gave up the two runs (one earned) on four hits and struck out seven as the Rays won their fourth straight to tie the New York Yankees atop the American League East standings. The Red Sox, who lost 5-1 Friday after entering the series outscoring opponents 31-13 over a four-game winning streak, were kept to one run until Jackie Bradley Jr. homered in the eighth. Star slugger J.D. Martinez was again sidelined by back spasms.

RED SOX 5, RAYS 1

David Price matched his season high with 10 strikeouts over six innings as Boston beat visiting Tampa Bay to salvage a split of a day-night doubleheader. Price (4-2) played stopper yet again after the Red Sox lost the first two of the four-game series. He gave up one run on five hits and walked two, recording seven of his strikeouts against the Nos. 3-5 hitters in the Rays lineup. Tampa Bay had a four-game winning streak come to an end. As part of a bullpen game, Colin Poche (0-1) took the loss in his major league debut.

WHITE SOX 2, ROYALS 0

Lucas Giolito outdueled Brad Keller, posting a career-high 11 strikeouts, as Chicago defeated host Kansas City. Giolito didn't give up his first hit until a lead-off single in the fourth by Alex Gordon. At one stretch, he got eight straight outs via the strikeout. He matched his career high of 10 strikeouts with two outs in the fifth inning. He broke it with his third strikeout of



CLEVELAND: DJ LeMahieu #26 of the New York Yankees singles against the Cleveland Indians in the first inning at Progressive Field in Cleveland, Ohio. —AFP

that inning. The victory for Chicago set up a rubber game for the series on Sunday, a contest that hasn't gone well for the Royals. They are 0-5 in rubber games in 2019 and 0-13 in rubber games dating back to May 30, 2018.

BREWERS 5, PIRATES 3

Ryan Braun produced a tiebreaking single in the fourth inning, and Milwaukee continued its success over visiting Pittsburgh. The Brewers moved to a season-high nine games over .500, won for the eighth time in 12 games and improved to 5-1 against the Pirates on a day in which they stranded 13 and went 2-for-14 with runners in scoring position. Braun, who hit a three-run homer in Friday's 10-4 win, snapped a 3-3 tie when he lined a single to center field off Michael Feliz (2-2) to score Lorenzo Cain. Mike Moustakas homered, Orlando Arcia had an RBI double and Cain produced a run-scoring single for the Brewers.

ORIOLES 4, ASTROS 1

Andrew Cashner worked six solid innings, Anthony Santander produced a sparkling defensive play, and Trey Mancini scored the go-ahead run on an error in the eighth inning as Baltimore scratched out a victory over host Houston. The Orioles will go for the series victory Sunday in the rubber match. Baltimore is 0-11-1 in its last 12 series, while the Astros are 9-0-1 over their last 10.

Left-hander Paul Fry (1-3) earned the win in relief for the Orioles. Miguel Castro notched his second save.

BRAVES 1, MARLINS 0

Julio Teheran pitched six scoreless innings, and rookie Austin Riley doubled and scored the game's only run as Atlanta defeated host Miami. Luke Jackson got four outs for his ninth save of the season, as the Braves have won 18 of their past 22 games against the Marlins, including the first two contests in this series. For Teheran (4-4, 3.03 ERA), this was the third time this year he has pitched at least five scoreless innings. He allowed just two hits—one single and one double—walked one and struck out five. He got eight ground-ball outs and three flyouts.

TIGERS 9, TWINS 3

JaCoby Jones homered twice and drove in five runs, and Christin Stewart also homered to lead Detroit to victory over visiting Minnesota. Jones finished 3-for-4 and also scored two runs while Miguel Cabrera, Gordon Beckham, Brandon Dixon and Harold Castro each added two hits for Detroit, which snapped a three-game losing streak and won for just the second time in its last 15 home games. Nick Ramirez (2-0), the second of five Detroit pitchers, picked up the victory, allowing one run on three hits and three walks over three innings. He struck out three. —Reuters

Golovkin brutally knocks out Rolls, calls for third Canelo fight

NEW YORK: Former unified middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin turned back the clock on Saturday night with a sensational fourth-round knockout of Steve Rolls in their super middleweight fight at Madison Square Garden.

The 37-year-old Kazakhstan fighter hit Rolls with a short left that sent the Canadian crumbling face first to the canvas with one minute to go in the fourth in front of a crowd of 12,357.

"I feel great, I feel like a new baby," said Golovkin. Golovkin, who was fighting for the first time in nine months and coming off the first loss of his career, chose to fight the heavy underdog Rolls as he jockeys for a third fight against champion Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez.

But in the back of everyone's mind was last week's shocking heavyweight upset that saw unheralded and overweight Andy Ruiz steal three titles by dismantling champion Anthony Joshua. Golovkin made sure there was no repeat of that, using the first three rounds of the 164-pound fight to figure out how to break down the undefeated Rolls.

Golovkin sized him up by winning a close first round. In the second, Rolls (10-1) hit him with a left hook and a left jab that snapped Golovkin's head back. But Golovkin started to see cracks in Rolls' defence in the third round. He stayed patient—even holding off and not throwing punches despite getting Rolls in a vulnerable position. Golovkin's the type of boxer who can put those moments away in his muscle memory bank for use later in the fight.

And that's just what he did to finish off the Canadian in the fourth, first landing a chopping left hand to the top of the head that hurt Rolls. The wobbly-kneed Rolls staggered backwards and then tried unsuccessfully to get Golovkin in a clinch.

Golovkin worked his way out of it and then slammed a short left from a southpaw stance into the face of Rolls for the knockout. "It is my style to knock people out," said Golovkin, who once had a 23 knockout streak. "I told my coach, 'OK I see it now, I see, I just need a little bit of time.'"

Asked who he wanted to fight next,



NEW YORK: Gennady Golovkin of Kazakhstan (red trunks) trades punches with Steve Rolls of Canada (white trunks) during their Super Middleweights fight at Madison Square Garden in New York City. —AFP

Golovkin didn't hesitate. "Everybody knows, I am ready for Canelo. Just bring him, ask him. If you want a big drama show, tell him." Golovkin (39-1-1, 35 KOs) made a number of key changes heading into the scheduled 12-round fight.

He split with long-time trainer Abel Sanchez and signed a lucrative six-fight

deal with US streaming company DAZN which may well smooth the way to a third bout with Alvarez, another DAZN fighter.

This was his first fight with new trainer Johnathon Banks and he hopes also a new beginning for his career. "I come back to my knockout (ways)," he said. —AFP

Neesham, Williamson lead the way as Kiwis demolish Afghanistan

TAUNTON: New Zealand cemented their spot at the top of the cricket World Cup league table with a seven-wicket victory over minnows Afghanistan thanks to a unbeaten half-century by Kane Williamson and fine bowling by their seam attack led by Jimmy Neesham.

The Kiwis, despite losing Martin Gupthill first ball of their innings, never looked in any serious trouble chasing a paltry 173 for victory at Taunton as Williamson and Ross Taylor shared a century partnership for the third wicket before getting home with more than 17 overs to spare.

It was the Kiwis' third consecutive victory and puts them in pole position for the semi-finals, while Afghanistan have recorded three straight losses. "The team have put together some strong per-

formances, but it is important that you just move on and look forward to the next challenge," Williamson told a press conference.

Williamson top-scored with an unbeaten 79 after surviving a missed run-out chance on 22. He hit nine boundaries in his 99-ball innings. Earlier, Afghanistan's batting woes continued after their openers got them off to a brisk start with openers Hazratullah Zazai and Noor Ali Zadran putting on 66 by the 11th over.

But man-of-the-match Neesham, who took a ODI career best 5-31, and Lockie Ferguson (4-37) then grabbed four wickets for four runs to reduce Afghanistan to 70-4. They never recovered and lost wickets steadily before being bowled out for 172 with nearly ten overs to spare. —Reuters

Dhoni removes dagger logo from keeping gloves

LONDON: MS Dhoni took the field without a controversial dagger logo on his wicketkeeping gloves in yesterday's World Cup game against Australia after being ordered to remove the symbol by cricket's governing body.

Dhoni's gloves in the opening game against South Africa bore an apparent military insignia that breached rules laid down by the International Cricket Council. But a different pair of gloves appeared to conform with ICC regulations when India fielded after making 352 for five batting first against world champions Australia at the Oval.

The ICC turned down a request by

the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to allow Dhoni to sport the symbol that gained widespread attention on television and on social media in India, with #DhoniKeepTheGlove trending on Twitter.

According to the World Cup clothing and equipment regulations manual, only two manufacturer identifications can be sported on the back of each glove. Also, any logos should not have any political or racial connotations.

Dhoni is an honorary lieutenant colonel in India's Parachute Regiment. In March, the India team wore camouflage-style caps provided by Dhoni during a one-day game against Australia as a tribute to India's armed forces after 40 troops were killed in a suicide bomb attack in Kashmir.

The ICC has previously ruled against players making political statements and in 2104 the global governing body banned England all-rounder Moeen Ali from wearing wristbands saying "Save Gaza" and "Free Palestine". —AFP

Captain Morgan grateful for Roy's 'luxury' runs

CARDIFF: England captain Eoin Morgan said Jason Roy was a "luxury" after the opener's latest big hundred helped England thrash Bangladesh by 106 runs as the hosts got their World Cup campaign back on course.

Roy's 153 — his third one-day international score of 150 or more in nine hundreds—took England to an imposing 386 for six in Cardiff on Saturday.

It was just the start the World Cup favourites, top of the one-day international rankings, needed after a surprise 14-run loss to Pakistan last time out. "It's a luxury," said Morgan after England made it two wins from three ahead of their match against the West Indies in Southampton on Friday.

"People in general, talk about scoring hundreds. He's an exception to the rule. "He just goes on and get big scores. The rate he can get them at is so difficult to defend.

"He scores all the way around the ground, he takes really good bowlers down, he hits good balls for boundaries. He's great to have in the side. "One of his biggest strengths at the moment is his temperament, compared to the start of his international cricket to right now, I think there is a considerable difference."

Roy has yet to play in a Test match but Morgan insisted: "I've said this before: I do think he could play Test cricket at some stage. "I think he has every attribute to be a Test cricketer." Meanwhile, Jonny Bairstow, who helped Roy put on a rapid 128 for the first wicket after England were sent into bat at Sophia Gardens, said: "Having opened the batting now for a long period of time for England, his confidence will be very high.

"It's great for him to score 150 in the World Cup and you are hoping we can both kick on from that start today, be that a chase or setting, in one of the huge games we've got coming up," added Bairstow, who made 51.

The only worry for England following a dominant display was a hip injury suffered by Jos Buttler when hitting a six during a typically dashing 64. Buttler did not keep wicket, with Test gloveman Bairstow behind the stumps instead. "He is going to be monitored over the next 48 hours, but at the moment it's more precautionary rather than not being able to do his job," said Morgan. "I am quite confident that it's not a serious injury." —AFP

Sports

Germany and Spain open World Cup with tense wins as Norway cruise

Victory over Nigeria puts Norway level with France at the top of Group A

RENNES: The women's World Cup moved up a gear on Saturday with three matches including a narrow German victory over China that left the winners complaining that they were roughed up, but today's three-match programme finishes with a new chapter in the oldest international football rivalry, as England take on Scotland in Nice.

Germany beat China 1-0 in Rennes on Saturday with a 66th-minute goal by 19-year-old Giulia Gwinn. Later, Spain came from behind against first-time participants South Africa to win 3-1 and join Germany at the top of Group B.

In the evening, Norway found there is life after Ada Hegerberg, scoring three times in 20 minutes in the middle of the first half to beat Nigeria 3-0 in Group A. The Germans complained that the Chinese had aimed for their ankles.

"They were often late in the tackles and kept catching our feet," said German captain Alexandra Popp. Coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg said she had not been sure at one stage if star Dzsenifer Marozsan would finish the match.

"A lot of our players were caught on the ankle today, and it doesn't look good for some of them. What Dzseni Marozsan suffered today was brutal." "We were a little surprised by the assertive approach of the Chinese, but it's a competitive game, not a friendly," she said.

In Le Havre, South Africa took a shock lead with their first ever shot on target at a Women's World Cup when Thembi Kgatlana, who plays for Beijing BG Phoenix in China, curled a right-foot shot into the top corner in the 25th minute.

Spain dominated possession, but needed 69th and 82nd-minute penalties, both converted by Jennifer Hermoso, to regain control of the game. Guro Reiten scored Norway's first goal and gave a player-of-the-

match display to suggest Norway can thrive without Lyon striker Hegerberg who refused to come to the tournament.

"I don't think I have played better," Reiten said. The victory puts Norway level with France at the top of Group A. England and Scotland meet for the first time in a Women's World Cup.

England lost in the semi-finals in 2015 and at Euro 2017 but those runs attracted attention and they won the prestigious SheBelieves Cup in the United States earlier this year. "For us as players, we know that there is a lot more interest in our team, and obviously with the results and the success that we have had with the SheBelieves, of course that brings a little bit of pressure and a little bit of expectation," said the captain, Steph Houghton.

Scotland kick off their first World Cup match with memories still fresh from their 6-0 humbling at the hands of England at Euro 2017. The Scots are much-changed since the 2017 humiliation. Former Arsenal boss Shelley Kerr has taken over as coach and key players who missed that game are set to feature this time.

"Probably of all the teams we've got in the group stages this is our toughest game by far. I think Scotland can go a long way in the competition with the quality they've got," said England coach Phil Neville, even though Group D also contains Japan, winners in 2011 and England's semi-final conquerors four years ago.

Leading Scotland into a World Cup puts Kerr in a privileged position. After all, the men have not been to a major tournament since 1998. "Obviously it is our first World Cup, we are the first Scottish team to play at a World Cup for over two decades," said Kerr.

Earlier yesterday, there are two games in Group C. Australia, a constant force in women's football take on a



RENNES: Germany's defender Giulia Gwinn (C) celebrates after scoring a goal during the France 2019 Women's World Cup Group B football match between Germany and China, at the Roazhon Park stadium in Rennes, western France. —AFP

rising power, Italy, in Valenciennes. Then the Samba football of Brazil encounters the Reggae Girlz of Jamaica in Grenoble. While former finalists Brazil still

boast the greatest woman footballer, Marta, Jamaica, appearing for the first time, are the lowest ranked team in the tournament. —AFP

Macau pull out of WCup qualifier in S Lanka citing safety

HONG KONG: Macau's football chiefs have said they will not send a team to Sri Lanka for a World Cup qualifying match this week, citing security fears following the deadly Easter suicide attacks. The decision sparked a rebuke from Sri Lanka's football authorities who insisted the country was safe for international matches and that their team had a right to play on home soil.

The Chinese enclave had been due to play Sri Lanka on Tuesday in the second leg of a qualifying first-round clash. But in a statement the Macau Football Association (MFA) said it had decided not to send a team "due to the recent terrorist attack in Sri Lanka and for the sake of the team's personal safety".

The MFA said it had asked FIFA, the Asian Football Confederation and Sri Lanka's footballing authorities to switch the match to a neutral venue but the request had yet to be granted. "MFA will have to put our players' personal safety as a priority. And, in the view of the fact that we cannot guarantee the safety of the team while they are in Sri Lanka and we cannot afford to take the risk to put our players' lives in danger," the statement, published Saturday night, said.

The decision is a blow for sport in Sri Lanka, a country

that has long hosted international sporting matches but is currently reeling from a series of coordinated Islamist suicide attacks against churches and hotels on Easter Sunday that killed more than 250 people. The Football Federation of Sri Lanka said it had "fulfilled all security requirements" with FIFA and AFC ahead of the match and noted that China had relaxed the travel advisories sparked by the Easter attack. "It is paramount important for any national team to play in their home soil in front of home fans and especially in FIFA Official Qualifiers which fall only every four years," the federation said in a statement, adding it hoped Macau would change its mind.

Macau won the first leg 1-0 at home on Thursday thanks to a second-half goal from Filipe Duarte as the first round of Asian qualifying for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar got under way. —AFP

Goalkeeper Labbe blazing trail for Canada at WCup

CARY: Goalkeeper Stephanie Labbe, who will be right in the firing line for Canada at the women's World Cup in France, knows all about the fight for equality in a male-dominated sport. The 32 year-old is the player who wanted to take on the men at their own game, literally.

After bringing home a bronze medal for Canada in the 2016 Olympics, Labbe sought to rekindle a dying passion for football by training with a professional Canadian men's team. She joined the Calgary Foothills, a minor league club that serves as a feeder outfit for Major League Soccer in the United States, in a bid to keep sharp and show her credentials.

"As a goalkeeper I think it's really good because you're facing fast shots, hard shots, the speed of the game is really quick," says Labbe, who grew up playing on men's hockey and football teams, training with the men. Labbe's performances were such that she ended up in the team for a 4-0 win in a pre-season game, but the overseeing Canadian Professional Development League barred her from featuring in any future matches, insisting on a "gender-specific league."

"It was difficult to be told that you can't play because of something that's completely out of your control," Labbe says. "It's not something that I can go home and work on or change. My gender is my gender."

Despite her frustrations, Labbe hopes her efforts inspire other women "not to limit themselves because of rules and because of gender." "If you can put yourself in an environment where you're going to be pushed and you can show that you can overcome challenges with skill and pace...that's really important for development."

"I think it's really important we celebrate those women." She now turns out for the North Carolina Courage in the American National Women's Soccer League (NWSL), where she is put through her paces in training sessions by a male goalkeeping coach, Nathan Thackery.

"Hold, drive, balance, good!" Thackery barks as he puts Labbe through her paces on the training ground, peppering her with shots. "It's always kind of pushing me, keeping me on the edge of my limits," she says of the sessions.

Amongst her club teammates, Labbe-set to start for Canada when they kick off their World Cup campaign against Cameroon in Montpellier today-is known for her humility. "She has a ton of accolades, but she's more of a silent leader," says Courage defender Merritt Mathias.

As for Labbe's quest for gender parity, Mathias says "it's because of people like her and her success that



Stephanie Labbe

we'll keep driving this fight forward to get equality, if not for us then for the younger generation."

In the US, the current generation of female soccer players has taken their battle to the courtroom. In March, the women's national team filed a discrimination lawsuit against the US Soccer Federation (USSF), suing for equal pay and working conditions to their less successful male counterparts.

The complaint points out that for their 2015 World Cup victory, the women were paid less than one third of what the men earned for losing in the round of 16 a

year earlier. "What they're doing is super important for the rest of us around the world to kind of pave the way for us and to give us an opportunity to then follow into their footsteps," says Labbe, who envisions pursuing something similar in her home Canada.

This will be her third World Cup, and she is hoping to go further than in 2015, when Canada lost in the quarter-finals as hosts. "We want to bring home that trophy. We're also realistic in that we realise there are five or six other teams that are going in and saying the same thing." —AFP

Froome shows form as Boasson Hagen wins Dauphine opener

JUSSAC: Norway's Edvald Boasson Hagen of Dimension Data won a sprint in a reduced peloton of the chief race contenders after a short but challenging opening stage of the Criterium du Dauphine yesterday.

It was the third win of the season for the 32-year-old, who got the edge on Belgian pair Philippe Gilbert of Quick Step and Wout Van Aert of Jumbo. In a race seen as form sharpening for the Tour de France Chris Froome, riding in the black and red of Ineos, finished in the reduced group of around 35 riders after the 142km run over six lush, green, hills in the stunning Cantal region.

"I doubt I'll be keeping the yellow jersey for long," Boasson Hagen joked after the race, but his win is a good sign for his team with the Tour just three weeks away. "I got a bit lucky with the positioning," he said after coming round the back of Gilbert in the home straight in a trademark powerful last 150 metres.

The day was marked by a long range attack that stubbornly clung on to a slender lead until the final 600 metres. At that moment Quick Step ace Julian Alaphilippe put the hammer down with Gilbert on his wheel and a win for one of the Belgian classics specialists looked a certainty.

"It shows I've got the legs," Boasson Hagen told France Television after his sprint. Earlier in the race, on the final climb, Quick Step also tried to get away, but Froome, Michal Kwiatkowski and the Ineos band were onto them immediately.

Monday's second stage, a 180km undulating run from Mauriac in the Cantal region onto Craponne-sur-Arzon in the Haute-Loire offers the peloton eight hills to negotiate. —AFP

Burke hits late goal for Scotland against Cyprus

GLASGOW: Substitute Oliver Burke ensured Steve Clarke's reign as Scotland manager got off to winning start as his late goal condemned minnows Cyprus to a 2-1 defeat in their European Championship qualifying match at Hampden.

Scotland's talismanic captain Andy Robertson, buoyed by his recent Champions League success with Liverpool, fired in a sensational 61st minute strike to open the scoring. The hosts had chances to add to their tally but Hampden was silenced in the 87th minute as Ioannis Kousoulos headed home an equaliser.

The joy amongst the small band of travelling Cypriots support was short-lived as Burke tapped in two minutes later to seal a victory that sees Clarke's side move up to third in Group I, level on points with second placed Russia.

"We put ourselves in a position to win the game with a great strike from Robertson. I couldn't see Cyprus scoring from open play but unfortunately we switched off at a set play and got severely punished for it," Clarke said of the win that moves his side up to third the group.

"But after that the players showed great character and resilience. It would have been easy for them to feel sorry for themselves but they didn't and I think that bodes well for the future." The win comes almost 21 years to the day since Scotland faced Brazil in the opening game of France '98 - the last major tournament the Scots qualified for.

Belgium are up next for Scotland but their performance against the world's top ranked side will need to be at a much higher level if they are to leave Brussels with any kind of positive result. The famous Hampden roar might not have been at full volume but there was an air of optimism among the near 32,000 strong Tartan Army who had become increasingly disillusioned following a shambolic start to their Group I campaign.

Scotland's 3-0 defeat to Kazakhstan in their group opener followed by an unconvincing performance in the 2-0 win over lowly San Marino gave the Scots a mountain to climb in terms of automatic qualification and ultimately cost Alex McLeish his job. In stark contrast to the unveiling of McLeish 15 months previously, Clarke, named Scottish Premiership manager of the year for leading Kilmarnock into third place in the top flight, was a popular choice among the Tartan Army.

However, there was little for the support to get excited about in the first half as the Scots seemed content to soak up the pressure while hitting Cyprus on the break - something Clarke's Kilmarnock side became adept at in the Scottish Premiership.

Scotland's main threat came down the left-hand side as Robertson linked up well with Bournemouth's Ryan Fraser and Callum McGregor of Celtic. However, the lack of a killer final ball meant there were few opportunities for Eamonn Brophy, who was handed his debut by his former Kilmarnock boss.

A Charlie Mulgrew free-kick that was pushed round the post was as close as it got for the Scots with Cyprus more menacing in attack as Marshall saved from Andreas Makris and Pteros Sotiriou.

The hosts started the second half on the front but just as the frustration was beginning to build within Hampden, Robertson struck. The ball broke to the left-back 20 yards out and he arrowed an unstoppable shot past Urko Pardo in the Cyprus goal. —AFP

25 IAAF has been left 'frustrated' as Russian athletes ban upheld

26 Golovkin brutally knocks out Rolls, calls for third Canelo fight

27 Germany and Spain open World Cup with tense wins as Norway cruise



Nadal wins historic 12th French Open

Nadal sweeps 18th Grand Slam title, just two behind Federer's all-time record of 20 majors



PARIS: Winner Spain's Rafael Nadal (2nd R), second-placed Austria's Dominic Thiem (2nd L) pose with their trophies and with President of the French Tennis Federation (FFT) Bernard Giudicelli (L) and Australia's tennis player Rod Laver (R) at the end of the men's singles final match against Austria's Dominic Thiem on day fifteen of The Roland Garros 2019 French Open tennis tournament in Paris yesterday. —AFP

PARIS: Rafael Nadal swept to an historic 12th Roland Garros title and 18th Grand Slam crown yesterday with a 6-3, 5-7, 6-1, 6-1 victory over Austria's Dominic Thiem. The 33-year-old Spaniard becomes the first player, man or woman, to win the same Slam 12 times after seeing off a brave challenge from a weary Thiem in a repeat of the 2018 final.

Nadal is now just two behind Roger Federer's all-time record of 20 majors and three ahead of Novak Djokovic who was knocked out by Thiem in the semi-finals. The world number two also took his Paris

record to an astonishing 93 wins and just two losses having previously won the title in 2005-2008, 2010-2014, 2017 and 2018.

"I want to say congratulations to Dominic. I feel sorry as he deserves to win it as well," said Nadal. "But he has every chance in the future. He has unbelievable talent for the sport and I want to encourage him for the future."

"It's a dream to win again, an incredible moment. When I first played here in 2005 I never thought I would be still playing here in 2019. "It's very special for me." Sunday's triumph confirmed the 'Big Three' strangle-

hold on the Grand Slams having shared the last 10 between them.

It also gave Nadal an 82nd career title and 950th match win. "It's very tough. I gave everything these last two weeks," said Thiem, who had seven fewer winners and seven more unforced errors in the final.

"Rafa, well done. You are an amazing champion and a legend in our sport. "I am happy that you are playing. To win 12 times, it's unreal." "I will try again, for sure."

In a 53-minute first set of brutal hitting and raw physicality, it was Thiem who broke first for a 3-2 lead. But the 25-year-

old's joy was short-lived as Nadal retrieved the break in the sixth game before racing away with the next three games to pocket the opener. Thiem, who had beaten his opponent four times on clay in his career, failed to claim a single point off Nadal's first five service games of the second set.

However, the dogged Austrian pushed and pushed, forced Nadal into three rushed groundstrokes and, from nowhere, broke to take the second set. It was the first set he had managed to take off Nadal at Roland Garros after three previous defeats.

Nadal was riled by the insult. He swept

the first 10 points of the third set, carving out a double break for 3-0 before sweeping to a third break for the set. Thiem, bidding to become just Austria's second Grand Slam champion after Thomas Muster won in Paris in 1995, had played four successive days to reach yesterday's final and the toll was slowly telling. He wasted break points in the first and third games of the fourth set and Nadal pounced to stretch to 3-0. That was soon 5-1 and the relentless barrage continued with Nadal taking the title on a second match point when Thiem fired a return long. —AFP

India secure 36-run win against Australia

LONDON: India's top order fired in unison and their bowlers produced a tidy display to beat reigning world champions Australia by 36 runs in a thrilling World Cup match at the Oval yesterday.

Shikhar Dhawan (117) smashed his 17th ODI century and forged significant partnerships with fellow opener Rohit Sharma (57) and skipper Virat Kohli (82) to power India to a commanding 352-5.

Several frontline Australia batsmen got good starts but none could bat deep enough to see them home as they were all out for 316 in exactly 50 overs.

Steve Smith (69), David Warner (56) and Alex Carey (55 not out) scored the bulk of the runs for Australia, who tasted their first defeat after wins against Afghanistan and West Indies earlier in the tournament.

India's new ball pair of Bhuvneshwar Kumar (3-50) and Jasprit Bumrah (3-61) shared six wickets between them while spinner Yuzvendra Chahal claimed 2-62. — Reuters



LONDON: Australia's Mitchell Starc (L) is run out by India's Bhuvneshwar Kumar during the 2019 Cricket World Cup group stage match between India and Australia at The Oval in London yesterday. — AFP

England win in women's WCup opener

NICE: Nikita Parris blasted home a penalty awarded after a VAR review to set England on their way to a 2-1 win over old rivals Scotland in their opening match at the women's World Cup in Nice yesterday.

Parris scored from the spot in the 14th minute and Ellen White added another goal for Phil Neville's side five minutes before half-time on the Cote d'Azur. A shaken Scotland fought back in the second half, and Claire Emslie reduced the arrears with 11 minutes to go, but they could not find an equaliser.

The Lionesses will still feel they were worthy winners. Among the favourites to win this World Cup, they are now well set up to progress from Group D before facing Argentina in Le Havre on Friday and then returning here to Nice to tackle former winners Japan on June 19. Neville—who resembled men's manager Gareth Southgate, sporting a waistcoat on the touchline—had warned that this would be his team's toughest fixture in the group stage. However, at the Nice stadium where England's men lost to Iceland at Euro 2016 and which registered a crowd of just 13,188 for the occasion, Neville's team ultimately got the job done in the first half against a Scottish side playing their first ever match at the World Cup. —AFP